EXPERIENCING BULLYING IN SCHOOL: EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS' NARRATIVES

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List of abbreviations

AB – Anti-bullying

ABA – Anti-bullying Alliance

AR - Action Research

ASD – Autistic Spectrum Disorder

CBT – Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

DFE- Department for Education

DCES - Department for Education and Skills

DCSF – Department for Schools and Families

DE – Diary Extract

DFEE- Department for Education and Employment

Disc – Discussion from Focus Group

EP – Educational Psychologist

EPiTs – Educational Psychologists in Training

ES - Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems

EST - Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory

FG – Focus Group

GT – Grounded Theory

HMI – Her Majesty's Inspectorate

HMSO – Her Majesty's Stationery Office

HO – Home Office

IIRP – International Institute of Restorative Practice

IPA – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

LA – Local Authority

LGB – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual

LEA – Local Education Authority

MW - Memory Work

NI – Narrative Inquirist

Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

OIT – Olweus Intervention Programme

RP – Restorative Practice

RJ – Restorative Justice

SEALS – Social & Emotional Aspects of Learning Resources

SEN – Special Educational Needs

SENCO – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator in Schools

SENDIST – Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

SG – Strategy Group

TA – Thematic Group

TAMHS – Targeted Mental Health in Schools Project

UN – United Nations

V2 - Vignette 2

YP - Young Person

Abstract:

A role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) is to advise on behavioural issues within schools. This may involve incidents of bullying.

This study explores whether personal experiences of bullying affect an EP's perception and their professional behaviour. It considers EPs' narratives of bullying using a narrative inquiry approach. EPs relayed their personal or professional vignettes about bullying within a group and discussions were recorded. EPs then wrote diary extracts reflecting on their experience and then a second written vignette. This is a qualitative mixed method approach using Thematic Analysis of the various narratives and in accordance with social constructionist principles.

This process is used to examine how EPs were affected by bullying incidents and how the process of engaging in storytelling and listening to narrative from others in a group affected their views. For some the process was therapeutic. It also became apparent that in some cases, when EPs categorised the stories of others, ranking them and comparing them with their own experiences, the impact was negative.

The group developed rules and norms about story delivery. Those that did not adhere seemed to become isolated, a surprising development within a group of informed professionals. Isolation from a group is a component of bullying.

EPs were observed using their stories to negotiate a place in the group, testing story acceptability and displaying apprehension. The ethical problems of delivering personal stories in a group were highlighted. Encouragement to over-disclose to fit a group norm was evident.

Data emphasise the importance of providing time for reflection away from the group, as individuals seemed to adopt group perceptions that changed when away from the group.

The study delivers insights into bullying, perceptions of the role of the EP, how personal experiences impact upon professional roles and ideas for further research and suggestions for the enhancement of future training for EPs.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT AND RATIONALE.

1.1 Context and rationale

Bullying is an important social phenomenon that has become an issue of national focus (Ofsted, 2012). High profile coverage by media of bullying related suicide cases has increased this awareness (Sun Newspaper, Payne, 2013). Bullying is regarded as pervasive, touching almost all individuals at some time in their lives (James, 2010).

Bullying has become a popular focus in research. This is demonstrated by a literature search using PsychINFO in October 2013.
There were 34 text results worldwide between 1860 and1993. This increased to 5319 articles in the twenty years from 1993 to 2013.

Foucault (1984c) describes how "truth," what people perceive as fact, comes to being. This "truth" is reinforced through literature and art:

> *"Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth; that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true."* (p. 71).

This appears to be the case in terms of bullying with significant researchers such as Olweus (1996) having categorised "bullying" and these categories in turn having been adopted as "truths" by governments and other ecological systems (ES) (See 3.3.2(i), and Figure 3, Bronfenbrenner,1979).

The development of effective anti-bullying strategies has become a national and local strategic priority (DFE, 2012). In my work role of co-ordinating the LA's anti-bullying strategy group (SG), cultural influences appear to have impacted upon this SG.

This study considers narrative case studies and the extent that accepted "truths" about bullying affect perceptions about personal experiences; or how dominant personal narratives impact upon perceptions about what is seen as "truth."

I have experienced adult group members sharing their experiences of bullying in this SG. These experiences appear to have encouraged a focus upon specific elements of a bullying theme when the group is working upon development of policy. Sharing personal narratives within the SG appears to have shifted individual and group perceptions about bullying issues. For example, certain topics such as homophobia have become prevalent at particular times. These narratives have contributed towards building cultural homogeneity within the group. There appears to be a benefit in sharing stories and this has contributed towards selecting Focus Group (FG) methodology involving relaying narratives (Wilkinson, 2008; Crossley, 2011).

When I became Anti-bullying Strategy Leader, I found some of the research unclear and contradictory. For example, of 253,755 young people (YP) asked in the last British government commissioned National Survey (Chamberlain et al., 2010) 46% reported having experienced bullying in school. In contrast, other research demonstrated the difficulty in YP understanding what bullying was (Pikas, 2002; Green et al., 2010).

From personal experience I have found that the rigid definitions themselves (see below) have caused confusion (also Bradshaw et al., 2007). Because of confusion about how individual contexts fit with generalised "truths" about bullying definitions, identification of relevant supportive factors and choices of intervention for these cases was difficult (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008a). This seems to support the choice of case study qualitative approaches in this study.

My focus is on EP experiences of bullying in school as a YP or professional, having approached this study following 8 years teaching in state schools and 10 years working as an EP in a LA (Local authority). The project focuses on how EP personal experiences of bullying impact upon the way EPs focus and attempt to solve problems within schools. EP work inevitably influences other educational settings as they are often regarded as experts around behaviour. My belief is that bullying is part of an EP's normal workload as a main criterion for referral to EP Services for support is around behaviour (Kelly, Gray, 2000).

How EPs are affected by the school expectations and general pressures on the way in which they work and how they respond is also an area of interest in the research. It is my experience and understanding that EPs often work with a patch of schools and each school is allocated EP support time. Schools then decide how best to draw down this time. EP work involves consulting with school professionals, parents and pupils. Schools often ask for initial reports defining "within child" difficulties in order to help gain funding, to gain ideas for support, or to demonstrate effectiveness in supporting their pupils (Miller et al., 2007). Pressure continues to come from schools to present "within pupil" difficulties rather than to consider systems and processes with a view to improving the wider environment, using preventative measures, which may in turn support the YP.

Discussion of a bullying incident, using mediums such as narratives, may lead to externalisation of the problem, and help to contextualise the incident and highlight environmental factors rather than personal flaws, (White and Epston, 1990). This seems contradictory to the aims of school professionals who seem focussed upon defining "within child" difficulties.

I am interested in whether the possible victim reluctance to discuss personal experiences was relevant to EP participants. I am interested in whether this has brought about extended internalisation rather than release through discussion (Tanaka, 2001). For this reason, Narrative Inquiry approaches are of interest and have been adopted in this study. The process of engaging in storytelling in a group may impact upon perceptions shifting and demonstrate how other peoples' responses can influence perceptions.

The effects of bullying are described as significant in both physical and emotional terms. Research also indicates other negative outcomes and adverse effects on mental health, non-engagement in education and employment, and involvement in crime (Green et al., 2010). Researchers, Sansone, 2013; Farrington et al., 2012; Delvaney et al., 2012, discuss the impact of bullying as one of "multiple adversities" suffered in childhood. Conversely, there is some evidence that there can be positive outcomes following some experiences of bulling, resulting in increased empathy and understanding for others and improved inter and intrapersonal skills (Thornberg et al., 2013).

Thornberg et al. (2013) suggest that, as a result of bullying, some individuals choose "caring" professions in later life. The experiences of EPs are therefore particularly relevant to this study. This fits with Burnham (2013) who comments upon personal experiences influencing EP's choice of profession:

> *"The decision to become an EP has a vocational element; it is striking to observe the extent to which participants saw the business of being a psychologist as primarily an articulation of personal attributes, values and beliefs whose development preceded professional training rather than being acquired as a part of that training."* (p.23).

The dynamics of my EP work team have also led me to reflect upon how personal experiences and group influences might affect the group's social constructions and so influence EPs' professional approaches.

When an individual, as a professional or otherwise, has experienced a highly charged emotional pressure, such as a direct experience of bullying, it may also be difficult to remain totally objective. I am interested in how EPs' experiences affect their approach to similar practical casework. Do they perceive themselves as being objective? Do their personal constructs, based on personal experiences, result in specific interpretation of the data?

Before progressing any further, the reader should also understand a particular approach to words and word meaning, which has implications throughout the whole study.

Miller and De Shazer (1998) discuss the difficulty in the use of terms within a context and the difficulty upon interpretations. They liken word meaning to be like:

> *"a game that children sometimes play in which one person whispers a story to another person who then whispers it to a third person. The third person passes the story to a fourth person, and so it goes. This process continues until everyone has been told a version of the initial story. At this point, the last person to hear the story tells it to everyone else, and the final version of the story is compared with its initial version. The "fun" of the game comes from the differences between the two stories, and from game players' attempts to explain how the initial version got transformed as it was conveyed from one person to another. There is a serious side to this game as well. We sometimes use it to demonstrate how rumors emerge and are spread in communities."* (p.6).

The very terms "bully" and "victim" even are likely to be suspect to interpretation, perhaps "rumours" which are different depending upon what is believed:

> *"New words are used to describe the action, new lessons may be drawn from the stories, and the events in question may be placed in very different social contexts as the stories pass from person to person. In the case of rumors, however, we often cannot agree on who initiated the story. Even when we agree on this, we may not agree that the first version of the story is the most credible one. Deciding who and what to believe may become a serious problem for community members, many of whom are seriously concerned about getting the story "right." It certainly does not help when the authors of competing stories insist that their versions are the only true and credible ones."* (p.6).

Thus, it is important that the reader takes this into account when terms such as "bully" and victim" are used in this thesis, being aware that researchers have had differing interpretations, often viewing these terms to be fixed and "static." The reader may also have been influenced by these "rumours" as well as myself the writer.

1.2 Aim of study

- To explore stories and perceptions of EPs who have had personal and professional experiences of bullying in schools.
- To explore how the narratives are "advanced, elaborated and negotiated in a social context," (Wilkinson, 2008, p.189).
- To consider how personal experiences impact upon professional practice.
- To enhance EP understanding in order to improve future practice.

1.3 Outline of study and structure of the thesis

Chapter 2, Part 1 of the literature review will explain some of the different bullying categories that are dominant within the research and will also attempt to demonstrate the complexity of generalising on themes that arose in this research across different contexts.

The review attempts to demonstrate how and why some of the themes that have dominated have become a form of "truth." Previous research and psychological theory about bullying is reviewed as these may influence EP perceptions about what is "truth" which in turn affects approaches in their work.

Part 2 of the literature review will provide a brief explanation about the EP role and how EP's might be influenced by Ecological Systems Theory (EST) Bronfenbrenner (1979) (see 3.3.2) and other psychological theory at specific times. The participants in the project are EPs who may be viewed as "experts" and they influence what is defined as "truth" within the systems in which they work.

Part 1 of the methodological Chapter 3 will discuss epistemological stances that have affected the nature of the research. I have adopted a critical realist stance in the research process. Some of the epistemological references are also relevant in the literature review, so it may be important to navigate to some of these pages whilst reading Chapter 2 for further explanations if needed.

Part 2 of Chapter 3 discusses rationale for the choice of narratives, followed by Part 3, rationale for choice of focus groups (FG) and Part 4 rationale for use of diary extracts (DEs).

Chapter 4 discusses the method of research. I decided to explore the bullying experiences of EPs using a variety of different communication mediums. Use of different mediums is said to give the opportunity for changes in perspective about an event (Vygotsky, 1934). EPs wrote down personal or professional stories of a bullying experience (Appendix 6) and then shared them verbally, without interruption, in a group. This was then followed up with a FG discussion about the stories (Appendix 7). EPs then engaged in writing DEs for a week after the FG (Appendix 8).

Bion's (1961) work on group dynamics influenced the choice of methodology. Bion suggests that it is difficult to remain impartial and not be influenced by the group. As bullying is felt to be a social phenomenon (James, 2010), exploring bullying narratives within a group might reveal more about the process of negotiating narratives related to bullying with others and how groups can affect individual perceptions. In addition, it was thought that reflections away from the group in DEs may reveal some of the individuals' response to group influences and the acceptance or rejection of themes.

I felt that bullying case studies related to recalled experiences of bullying may demonstrate the complex inter-relatedness of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory (EST), discussed in 3.3.2 (i) and how factors that affect both victim and perpetrator are not isolated to the individual but affect and are affected by ecological-systems. There is little research around bullying using case studies for young people (YP). This may be because of ethical difficulties in engaging with children to gain stories. Notably there are more work place bullying case studies with adults, (Tracey et al., 2006).

The participants engaged in providing narratives but, because I hypothesized individuals would attempt to categorise and focus upon themes in the FG, I used a thematic analysis (TA) approach rather than narrative analysis (NA). This approach is discussed in Chapter 4, Methods. I was interested in how EPs would negotiate around themes, rejecting or accepting them within the group and later as individuals. Crossley (2011) explains how interpersonal dialogue expands understanding and to complete personal narratives in isolation cannot have as great an impact.

Data used for research, discussed in the method chapter, was then transcribed initial vignettes from EPs (Appendix 6), transcripts of the FG (Appendix 7) and information provided from EP DE's (Appendix 8), including a second re-written or new narrative of an experience of bullying (Appendix 9). A personal research diary recorded my own contemporaneous reflections throughout the process. In the analysis I did not view these data sets separately.

The Narratives and Analysis Chapter 5, discusses the impact on the EPs of engaging in the process of sharing narratives and how this experience might impact upon their role in future. This section also discusses the themes that seemed important to EPs around bullying and the impact these themes had/have on the EPs. There is also a discussion about EP's perceptions of their role. Some limitations that relate to specific themes are also discussed within Chapter 5. There is a separate section addressing the limitations of the research, Chapter 6.

At each stage of the study there seemed to be different EP reflections about the process of engaging in the research and different findings. These findings were complex and contradictory (Smith, 2006). It was interesting to observe in

the FG discussion how attempts were made to categorise emotions and recollections and reactions to judgements made by other EPs. The full impact of this was not truly revealed until individual DEs were submitted. DEs had the impact of challenging observations and judgements made during the earlier stages of analysis, with some unexpected findings about individual's responses. This also caused me to challenge my judgements made during my own professional practice, particularly when engaging in group work.

The conclusion, Chapter 7 summarises the main findings and suggests opportunities for further research. It addresses issues relevant to EP training and for those that may be interested in engaging in group narrative experiences. Ethical dilemmas of engaging in group work are also considered.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

> *"Word meanings are dynamic rather than static formations"* (Vygotsky, 1934, p.124).

During this section I review and consider the difficulty in providing accepted and clear definitions around bullying and how researchers' definitions may have become generalised across cultures. I aim to demonstrate that despite generalised definitions, controversy and confusion and different interpretations persist, perhaps because word meanings change over time.

Harper's Etymology Dictionary (2013) demonstrates the extremity of language change over a long period. It describes how the term "bully" was used in the 1530's as a term for "sweetheart." This meaning changed in the 1600s from "fine fellow" to "harasser of the weak." Thus etymological considerations need to be taken into account:

> *"Our language is constantly changing, and we accept that the meanings of words mutate over time"* (Burr, 2003, p.33).

It is also difficult to make comparison across research findings because of the use of different constructs by researchers and participants. Kelly (1991) discusses how personal constructs are based upon personal experiences. What is defined as "teasing or name calling" may differ depending upon personal experience.

I will also explore how anti-bullying agendas have become more of a priority over recent years, though it is difficult to determine why this is so. The reciprocal relationship between media, covering extreme experiences such as suicide, government and research appears to have influenced this popular discourse and is reviewed. This is relevant in the research as this generates cultural influences on EPs at this time and expectations of them relating to national and local priorities.

Chapter 2 will consider the complexity in determining which are cause and which are effect factors for pupils being bullied because of differing contexts and the sometimes confused perceptions of participants.

Chapter 2 will also review temporal factors which impact upon definitions and perspectives, which may change depending upon when and where analysis is made, for example an older person looking back with hindsight might have different perceptions to themselves as a YP or a current YP. A greater focus by psychologist researchers around psychological traits may also hold different understandings for researchers and research participants and readers of research. I explore how each context is different and that qualitative research is important in demonstrating this:

> *"Alternative interpretation of the data is always possible… Qualitative research does not allow the researcher to identify generally applicable laws of cause and effect".* (Willig, 2008, p.158).

I will also demonstrate the difficulties in establishing which interventions might support anti-bullying and why it is difficult to generalise around these interventions as they must be adapted to specific contexts. These interventions may support one individual at the expense of another, for example providing definitions of Autism to pupils may provoke empathy for one YP but contempt for another YP (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008a). Supportive factors may be relevant in one context, but not in another, hence demonstrating the difficulty of providing "evidence based practice,"(Isaacs et al., 2013).

Because the stories provided by the participant EPs are so varied it has been difficult to constrain the literature review. Themes that emerged in the research touched upon definition, cause, impact, supportive factors and confusion around all of these. I have tried to limit them to those relevant to themes that emerged from this piece of research.

2.2 Bullying definitions: confusions and bullying continuums

Olweus (1996) provided a definition of bullying; "Negative actions" to a person "repeated over time", involving "discomfort", with "imbalance of power", with difficulty in "defending self." Olweus, (1996) describes different types of bullying. This might involve "physical contact, words" or "making faces or mean gestures and intentional exclusion from a group" (p.266).

The Department for Education (DFE) (2012) use some of Olweus's (1996) definition, but add to this by listing groups that might be vulnerable. They also provide examples of methods used in bullying such as the use of the internet:

> *"Behaviour by an individual or group repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgments about each specific case."*

DFE (2012) develops policy and legislation that is influential within educational systems using Ofsted or the LAs as a way of monitoring. This DFE (2012) definition reveals how "expert" definitions, such as Olweus's, create a form of "truth" as it is promoted by them. Berguno et al. (2004) state that a greater number of pupils' responses in their study provided a canonical definition of bullying:

> *"It is interesting to note that children indicated that being ridiculed was not necessarily an example of bullying, unless it was a regular and persistent event……Properly bullied is when everyone is horrible to you all the time."* (p.491).

This may reveal the influence of culture on individuals' perceptions. Foucault (1984c) discusses how "truth" supports in clarity to the population around expected behavioural norms. The term bullying seems to define what acceptable behaviour isn't. However, not following group norms/expectations seems to be one of the causes of being targeted as a victim.

Ringrose and Renold (2010) suggest that there has been a change in perception of bully and victim, both positions now becoming a negative concept. Previously, it has been argued, (Pelligrini, 1999) that the term bully was associated with more popular pupils. Ringrose and Renold (2012) suggest that these labels have led to a deviance away from normalised behaviour as classed through literature and culture and these labels are now provided as a way of isolation and exclusion. Those professionals that use the terms might also be bullying:

> *"Once labelled as 'bully' it could function in contradictory ways, as a marker of weakness, pathology, sexual deviation"* (Ringrose and Renold, 2012, p.58).

Ringrose and Renold (2010) cite the fact that boys violent bullying is often overlooked as being the expected norm as "play fighting etc." However, when behaviour moves away from the expected norm, such as hitting girls, it is classed as bullying. I am interested in EP's perception of the term and the extent that the term is used to formulate rules about expected behaviour.

Olweus's (1996) research seems to be used by the media to support the demonising and stereotyping of bullies. Payne (2013, May 26), writing in the Sun newspaper, cites his findings:

> *"Bullies are typically rule breaking students who commit vandalism, have early sex and drink alcohol. By the time that they are 24, 60% have committed a crime."* (p.36).

Woodhouse (2013, May 26) wrote in the Sun newspaper that "Schools boot out 26 bullies each day". In this article he cites the school census which showed 15,040 suspensions for bullying from 2008-2011, with 160 permanently excluded. This demonstrates how research statistics can build greater publicity about bullying, and thus adds momentum, leading to increased legislation or demonisation.

Smith, Polenik, Nakasita, Jones, (2012, p.243); Marini (2006), comment that generic definitions of bullying are unhelpful. They have attempted to separate bullying into a variety of subgroups.

The subgroups focus upon separating the way bullying is orchestrated. Smith, Polenik, Nakasita, Jones (2012), separate direct bullying "(comprising physical and verbal)" and indirect bullying:

> *"more covert in nature and may occur via a third person (e.g. spreading malicious rumours, purposefully isolating others from social situations.)"*(p. 243)

These researchers suggest different intervention methods should apply to these different behaviours (also see Marini, 2006). When considering case studies, it appears that the context of each incident differs and there may be overlap in methods the bully uses that are difficult to separate. This difficulty in turn makes it difficult to select the intervention.

Subtypes may be delineated further, for example, Tanaka (2001), in Japan, identified a subset of bullying as "shunning," a term used for being ignored by peers.

Table 1, (DCSF, 2007b) demonstrates how researchers have attempted to delineate bullying into subtypes, asking a sample of parents and YP to determine whether these subtypes have been experienced by their child or themselves if they are the YP.

Table 1. DCSF (2007b) bullying experiences responses.

Types of bullying experienced by children (prompted)	Parents of children aged 5-11	Parents of children aged 12-17	Children aged 12-17
Any type of bullying	53%	62%	46%
Any type of teasing/name calling	42%	45%	31%
Any type of physical bullying	37%	44%	28%
Any type of cyber-bullying	8%	22%	19%
Teasing / name calling	41%	42%	31%
Bullying at school	23%	33%	21%
Being threatened	10%	17%	10%
Ignored / excluded	14%	12%	4%
Bullying elsewhere	9%	18%	11%
Abusive SMS	5%	14%	10%
Abuse on SNS	3%	10%	8%
Abuse on IM/MSN	3%	6%	4%
Disability bullying	4%	4%	1%
Theft / extortion	2%	5%	4%
Racist bullying	2%	4%	2%
Abusive email	1%	4%	4%
Homophobic bullying	1%	3%	2%

Notably a level of understanding might be needed around these subtypes – such as "homophobic bullying" by the participants. Interpretations may be based upon different experience. The use of the term "gay" may be more easily understood, but also hold different connotations for different people, in different contexts and at different times.

Some researchers have focused upon self-bullying, also termed as "internalisation." Thornberg et al. (2013) cite victims "double victimising" as in being bullied by individuals and then internalising the incident and bullying themselves. Marini et al. (2006) suggest that this is greater for those that experience indirect bullying. Tanaka (2001) suggests that this leads to further difficulties in engaging with others and provides an example of "internalisation":

> *""I was very ashamed." Then she became very unstable and was unable to be her usual self. She said; "I always felt excluded by the rest of the group. Everything my friends said and did seemed to represent their hatred for me. This made me very distressed and angry with myself. I think these kinds of things all day long, so my mood is very anxious.""*
> (p.468).

Other subtypes might be defined by the level of impact upon the victim, suggesting that bullying is placed on a continuum, from least harmed to most seriously harmed/death. The death of Sylvia Lancaster's daughter, killed for looking different as a Goth might cross over into the realm of "Hate Crime" (BBC, 2008). If pupils are also rating their experiences on a continuum, comparing personal experiences to extreme cases, then this might support them in negating their own experiences. Sylvia Lancaster has reported having to put pressure on the authorities to define her daughter's death as a "Hate Crime," because Goth culture was not identified within these set definitions. This case illustrates rigidity in legal terms of concepts such as "Hate Crime" and how individuals can influence change (See Bronfenbrenner, 3.3.2(i), figure 3). Individual behaviour can affect other ecological systems changing overarching beliefs and values which in turn, impact upon other ecological systems in turn.

The fact that categorised subtypes become prescriptive adds to the complexity around what constitutes bullying and seems to have led to a need to check individual behaviours against definitions. In a meeting with the Diversity and Equality Policy Officer for my own LA, we discussed the definition of prejudice based bullying. She was adamant that any type of bullying could be termed prejudiced. This resulted in us consulting the Ofsted website for the definition, which seems to demonstrate the rigidity of defined terms. Resulting confusion about these terms may lead to uncertainty about which interventions may support, and anxiety around engaging in interventions when participants and family members may be emotional. In my opinion, a confident supportive approach is needed and definitions may lead to caution by professionals. Paradoxically, this confusion may lead to individuals using prescriptive, "evidenced based" interventions, in order to protect themselves, when these may not be right for the individual context.

What determines a victim and a bully might differ. Depending upon context, for example, many regard bullying to be related to school and to be related to peer against peer. Teacher bullying of YP might not be construed as bullying because of a tendency to focus upon peer groups.

Bullying could be said to take place within the home or in other contexts. For example, Sahfilea Ahmed was murdered by her father for allegedly transgressing away from her parents' cultural ideals. Fitting in with peers and not appearing different is cited as an important protective factor that prevents bullying (Salmilvalli et al., 1996). Hence contradictions between values at home and school can lead to incidences of bullying.

Others might define bullying by who it is directed towards; those that are deemed to be the wrong colour, those with disabilities and SEN, or perceived the wrong sexuality These governmental definitions might highlight the importance of protecting vulnerable groups.

The DCFS (2008b) state that:

> *"Some children with SEN and disabilities may not recognise that they are being bullied or that their own behaviour may be seen by someone else as bullying."*

This challenges Olweus's (1996) requirement of pupils being aware and feeling "discomfort" and further indicates the problematic nature of defining bullying.

Stonewall (2012), an LGB charity, advocate that:

> *"Ninety-eight per cent of young gay pupils hear the word 'gay' used as a form of abuse at school, and homophobic bullying is often directed at heterosexual pupils as well."*

High profile charities, such as Stonewall, through conducting and publishing research, may have encouraged, the Government and Ofsted to prioritise their groups in inspections (Ofsted inspectors have recently been trained by Stonewall). This may mean that those groups that are less high profile do not get their views taken into account. Conversely one might argue on examining the statistics of the DFE (2007b) survey, Table 1, that the way the survey was defined; putting questions about homophobia later, might mean figures are under-represented.

Within groups of pupils with SEN, there has been further delineation, for example a focus upon YP with autism. Humphrey and Symes (2010a) suggest that YP with autism are 3 times more likely to be bullied. Reid and Batten (2006) report that over 40% of these YP have experienced bullying. Humphrey and Symes (2010a) demonstrate in their research the difference between individual cases, showing the difficulty in generalising and demonstrating that there could be even further delineation.

2.3 Olweus's influence

Olweus (1993) has been influential in research and developing knowledge around bullying. His research (1973, 1978) was regarded as the first large scale study (Wolke, 2003; Aluede et al, 2008). In 1983, 3 boys in Norway committed suicide and the government attributed events to bullying related factors. This led to interventions in Norwegian schools based upon Olweus's (1978) Bullying Intervention Programme and was subsequently felt to have had positive impact. The evaluation showed reductions of 50% or more in students' reports of being bullied (Olweus, 1996). However, this success has not since been replicated. Later researchers, who have evaluated Olweus's data, challenge the extent that it was the programme alone that reduced bullying.

They comment upon how other ecosystems should be attributed to the success of the programme; for example, the determination by head teachers and the Government to reduce bullying (Wolke, 2003). Never the less, this intervention is cited as a successful evidence based intervention (Allen Report, 2011). The Allen Report to the British Government simplistically advocates evidence based interventions. It is difficult to provide clear evidenced based interventions because of the complexity of ES, which change due to context/time/cultural influences, (Smith, 2006).

Olweus's perceived high profile approach to combating bullying has led to later researchers citing his research, using his definition of bullying and his questionnaires, (Wolke, 2003). This helps to demonstrate that what people perceive as fact, comes to being, reinforced by literature.

2.4 Increased media and Government focus

In the UK, bullying has become more of a public issue and of interest to the media which, as a result, may have impacted upon government priorities. Suicides, thought to be related to bullying, have been had media profile, such as the Ayden Keenan case cited in a Sun Newspaper (Payne, 2013). Ayden's Law, aims to make bullying illegal in schools.
The Beat Bullying Organisation has actively promoted this, demonstrating charity and media influences.

Cross (2013, May 26) comments in The Sun:

> *"Our research suggests that countries that are the most effective at tackling bullying have an anti-bullying strategy focused on prevention and early intervention. But strategy needs to be underpinned by legislation that in the most severe cases gives justice to those affected and prevents further incidents."* (p.36).

Beat Bullying cites 49 states in the USA having created anti-bullying legislation in response to high profile bullying cases. Channel 5 (2013) broadcasted the story of Phoebe Prince's suicide, which was attributed to bullying, in Massachusetts. This demonstrates how international actions can also influence UK perceptions. As illustrated in Figure 3, Ecosystems can influence perspectives (3.3.2(i)).

Programmes related to extreme cases inevitably catch the popular media's attention. This may relate to the fact that viewers want to understand extreme cases in order to be able to negotiate around difficulties if they face them in future. This aligns with Damasio's (2012) ideas about imagining others' adversity in order to survive similar experiences in the future.

Anti-bullying momentum has also been built up through the rise of internet blogging which enables greater sharing of extreme cases. Basil (2013) an internet blogger, discusses a suicide victim:

> *"Rebecca Ann Sedwick, the 12 year old girl who jumped to her death after relentless texts and on-line posts "Why are you still alive?"…Where were the parents of Rebecca's life ruiners?"* (Basil, 2013)

Basil goes on to share her victim story and invites commentary from others.

Papyrus, a charity that supports those at risk of suicide, are keen that variables such as bullying are not used to determine causes for suicide and instead are keen to ensure an understanding of the complexities of situations, (Flynn, 2012).

Considering predominant themes is important in order to determine the extent that EPs might be being influenced by cultural expectations or current publicity around research at the time.

2.4.1 Legislation and Acts, Raising the profile of bullying

Soon after Norway's (Olweus Intervention Programme, 1996) interventions, the DFEE (1998) sponsored the School Standards and Framework Act. This Act advised that schools should have a policy and:

> *"Code of practice for tackling bullying, which is owned and understood and implemented by all members of the school community and includes contact with external agencies."*

Having a policy became a legal duty in 1998. The need to keep children safe rose in prominence, particularly after Victoria Climbie's death (2003), demonstrating how individual high profile cases affect change and other ES.

The DFES's (2004) Every Child Matters Agenda, advocated the monitoring of children's wellbeing through 5 outcomes, one of them being "staying safe." The 5 outcomes were "also about helping to keep children safe from bullies" and seemed to be within safeguarding guidelines. Ofsted (2004) focused on schools:

> *"Having policies and procedures that clearly demonstrate an ethos of zero tolerance to bullying and harassment.*"

The Education and Inspections Act (HMI, 2006) included further bullying legislation, suggesting that head teachers should have a priority to promote a respectful ethos. This aimed to promote a pro-active development of systems in schools that would establish positive environments rather than **reacting** to bullying incidents. The Act also discussed powers and expectations of schools to "regulate the conduct of pupils at a time when they are not on the premises of the school."

Conversations with head teachers in my own LA (Prescott, 2010) demonstrated that their focus was more upon evaluating pupils "staying safe" and "community focus." No school in the LA asked direct questions to pupils about bullying experiences in their questionnaires. One head teacher commented to me that pupils might not understand the bullying concept. He cited a child construing an argument in the school yard about who could be the princess in the game as bullying. Another head teacher commented upon parents misconstruing bullying when they were in fact complaining about "petty squabbles."

The Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) initiative and accompanying materials were introduced by the Government (DCFS, 2005). This programme was aimed at promoting emotional wellbeing.
One of the themes focused upon was AB. Within this programme, pupils were provided with definitions of bullying, thus further conceptualising the phenomenon. It could be said that the Government was becoming more prescriptive in the use of definitions and also the use of interventions, even though this is clearly a complex phenomenon dependent upon context,

Research was also commissioned by the government, using questionnaire type data. The DFE (2007b) survey stated that:

> *"Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and wellbeing."* (DFE, 2007b, p13).

Increased focus was upon which children might be potentially vulnerable. The DFE (2008a) cited charities, such as Hunt, Jenson (2007) Stonewall's, research. This focus perhaps reflected the moves towards the Equalities Act (2010).

Change was occurring at different levels of ES, (see figure 3). Recently a gay ex-soldier came to an anti-bullying conference to tell his story. He talked about being gay and the conflict in wanting to be a soldier in the 1990's. During this time, the charity LGB Stonewall had been pressurising the Army, ranking them as one of the worst organisations, leading to negative media profile. The soldier described the introduction to his Army career where his officer had commented "We don't tolerate faggots here."

What came across in his talk was his likeability and humour and I could see that he had integrated well with his peers. Thus outer systems of figure 3, such as Stonewall and media pressure, were impacting upon changing times, whilst James was working at a different level, in turn influencing change, both in the 1990s and the present day, through his narrative delivered at the conference.

Chronosystem (Figure 3) is time and I have tried to demonstrate how time and culture impact upon Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ES and thus there is an inability for ES to remain static.

Whilst previously there had been a greater focus upon racism, the Equality Act (HMI, 2010) introduced the broader concepts of:

> *"Protected Characteristics: - Age, Gender, Disability, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Belief, Sexual Orientation, Transgender, Pregnancy/Maternity, Marital/Civil Partnership Status."*

The 2010 Equality Act influenced attitudes and approaches within school. If pupils are overheard using discriminatory language, then professionals must act or they are personally liable.

Following a change of government in 2010, the white paper 'Importance of teaching" (DFE, 2010) put even more focus upon AB, stating:

> *"Parents and teachers want pupils to be able to learn in safety, but we know that bullying is still a significant problem. Unsurprisingly, pupils who are bullied are more likely to be disengaged from school and do substantially worse in their GCSEs than their classmates. So tackling bullying is an essential part of raising attainment."* (p.31).

However, at the same time, the more prescriptive National Strategies from the previous Government, such as SEAL were abandoned.

The Coalition Government (2010) in the DFE Paper (2010) took a simplified stance:

> *"Existing anti-bullying guidance is too long and fragmented, so we will rationalise and simplify this from nearly 500 pages to around 20 pages. This will help head teachers to develop an anti-bullying approach for the whole school which protects the most vulnerable. And we will work with non-government organisations such as Stonewall and the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) to promote best practice."* (p.31)

This DFE paper also raised the profile of charitable organisations in influencing policy. However, reducing something so complex to a few pages may have led to greater generalisation around bullying.

This Paper began to provide general guidance around what schools should be doing, rather than providing prescriptive resources such as SEAL.

A rationalised version followed with advice to head teachers, staff and governing bodies (DFE, 2012) suggesting that:

> *"Schools should:*
>   i. *Involve parents*
>   ii. *Have positive behaviour policies – based on respect*
>   iii. *Gather information*
>   iv. *Involve pupils*
>   v. *Regularly evaluate*
>   vi. *Implement disciplinary sanctions*
>   vii. *Openly discuss difference between people and value diversity*
>   viii. *Use specific organisations or resources for help*
>   ix. *Provide effective staff training*
>   x. *Successful schools:*
>   xi. *Work with the wider community*

xii. *Make it easy for children to report bullying*

xiii. *Create an inclusive environment*

xiv. *Celebrate success"*

Ofsted's (2012) criteria for 'outstanding' performance also involved the following:

> *"Pupils need to understand different forms of bullying and are instrumental in preventing its occurrence. The school has a proactive approach to the identification of any bullying and this prevents it from happening."*

Thus more schools in the LA have begun to develop questionnaires specifically around bullying for pupils and involve school councils in order to be seen to be evaluating levels of bullying. They have also begun to work with pupils and parents to develop understanding of what bullying is.

To achieve "outstanding" from Ofsted there should be no bullying in schools. This may lead to hiding of information. During an informal discussion with a high school member of staff, who had asked for a witness to racist comments in his class, when informed about the protocol of needing to record and report, he commented, "We are actively encouraged not to fill in forms." This highlights problems of recorded incidents impacting upon school inspection results. Inspection policy and monitoring may have impact upon the reliability of subsequent research.

Ofsted (2012) continue to be interested in what schools are doing to support their most vulnerable groups. Recently a Stonewall representative brought in their resources that could be used to challenge homophobia and promote diversity in schools. This event was well attended by most representatives of schools in the borough, possibly demonstrating the role of Ofsted in instigating change.

Recent Ofsted research seems to advocate not separating bullying from other behaviours. Ofsted research (2012) comments that:

> "The combined documents [bullying and behaviour policy merged] represented some of the strongest policies. This was because these schools, with one exception, saw bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour, rather than as something separate." (p.6)

This might indicate a movement away from bullying terminology, as isolated from other positive and negative behaviours. Ofsted (2012) advocate that clear procedures should be evident for dealing with bullying and the response should be reviewed. Recent Ofsted research notably provided examples from individual contexts/case studies rather than using questionnaires, demonstrating a shift away from questionnaire type research.

The development of School Performance Tables and comparison of pupils against an expected norm could be regarded as unhelpful in reducing bullying. There may be increased vulnerability for those that do not achieve this norm, as they are perceived as different and not fulfilling requirements. Difference is considered to be a variable for bullying (DFE, 2012). Tanaka (2001) discusses the "high regard for uniformity and homogeneity" in Japan and that this, as a result, led to increased tormenting if pupils appeared not to conform. Pressure to perform and conform could be seen to contradict Ofsted's (2013) core value of "valuing people's difference." The Government seems to be reinforcing the culture of comparison of self with others, in order to determine acceptability. Increased pressure to perform may also impact upon pupils' emotional wellbeing.

DFE (2013b) states:

> "The new national curriculum tests will be more demanding, with a higher and more ambitious expected standard. This will ensure that pupils who clear the bar are genuinely ready to succeed in secondary education," (2.2)

Vygotsky (1934) discusses the importance of a pupil being ready to learn. If a child is not ready, but is expected to achieve certain targets, then this may impact upon emotional wellbeing for both the teacher and the YP.

2.5 Research on bullying

A review of the bullying literature indicates that the methodologies used differ. Observational and longitudinal studies and case study research provides different data, (James, 2010).

> *"Concurrent associations may not always be the same as those suggested by longitudinal trends"* (Smith, 2012a, p.226).

Smith (2012a) stresses the need to consider the complexity of bullying; therefore case study data is relevant. Questionnaire type surveys seem to dominate in bullying research. Pikas (2002), comments upon questionnaire data:

> *"We find the data do not give observations about what really is happening behind the backs of teachers. They give the students' answers on a questionnaire asking them "Are you being bullied? And "Have you been bullying by others?" thus, behind the figures supposed to give "the amount of bullying?" we can find an accumulation of feelings about bullying containing a mixture of 2 contradictory motives: (1) sensitive pupils exaggerating their being treated badly and (2) victims who deny themselves that they are being bullied."* (p.323).

Research statistics do not give consistent results, possibly because of the problematic nature of definition. Researchers do not always focus upon Olweus's definition of it happening repeatedly over time (DFE, 2007; 2009, Survey).

Differing research designs also impact upon the ability to make comparisons between studies.

In one survey (DCFS 2007b), 36% of unprompted parents stated concerns about bullying and 61% when prompted [and given specific bullying behaviours] stated concerns about this. This variation in response perhaps reveals the difficulty in ascertaining levels of concern. Bradshaw et al. (2007)*;* Marini et al, (2006); Bevan et al. (2013); Tanaka, (2001), suggest that there is a need to prompt in questionnaires, as pupils or parents do not perceive that more abstract forms, such as indirect bullying are termed as bullying without prompting.

Prompting in interview situations will affect results and, in turn, publishing summaries of these results will influence cultural perceptions of what is "truth" in terms of bullying, in turn impacting upon government policy.

In DFE survey (2007b) concerns were found to increase or decrease depending upon the age of the child. It is difficult to determine why this is so. Parents of 5-11 years had increased concerns around bullying. After this (11-16), other concerns seemed to take precedence for parents such as alcohol and smoking. It is difficult to fully establish the level of concern towards bullying as high levels of alcohol consumption rather than reduced concerns about bullying may have skewed results.

The most prevalent type of bullying appears to be verbal name calling and teasing (DCFS, 2007b; Bradshaw, 2007; James, 2010; Bevan et al, 2013).

The DCFS Survey (2007b) found that:

> *"Bullying – including 'physical bullying', 'teasing / emotional bullying' and 'cyber bullying / bullying on the internet' – is a concern for 35% after prompting. 16% mention bullying as a main safety concern unprompted."* (p.15).

The research suggests bullying is a "top concern" but this seems to be a value laden judgement based upon those statistics cited.

In terms of actual bullying taking place, this was also difficult to determine, James' (2010). The difference between parental and pupil responses also demonstrates the difficulty in relying upon survey data. A recent Ofsted survey (2012) cited:

> *"Almost half of the pupils wrote about an incident where they had felt picked on or bullied at some point while at their current school." (*p. 6).

The concepts of "picked on" or "bullied" are based upon differing individual perceptions of terms, based upon differing experiences. The Tell Us survey (Chamberlain et al, 2010) provided similar statistics.

Other predominant themes that arise in the research data, which are relevant to categories cited by EPs, are discussed below. These involve bullying being regarded as a natural phenomenon, which relates to survival instincts, characteristics of bullies and victims, group influences including the role of

bystanders and defenders, supportive factors such as the role of adults, pupil voice and interventions.

Research suggests that bullying decreases over time in secondary school, but there seems to be a rise on transition from year 6/ key Stage 2 to year 7 Key Stage 3. (James, 2010). Frisen et al. (2012) questioned pupils who had been bullied about why it stopped and they suggested that it was through the development of empathy skills:

> *"I think it stopped when we grew up and people got more mature and started to realise that it's another person's feelings they are playing with."*

Bradshaw et al. (2007), in their study found that professionals in schools underestimated the extent of bullying. The DCFS (2007b) survey suggests that:

> *"more children are 'accepting' of bullying as a part of life (38% of children agree with this compared with 29% of parents). Moreover, 47% of children agree that bullying has to be quite bad before doing something about it."* (p. 5).

Thus this research suggests that large amounts of bullying might go unreported, perhaps because pupils regard bullying behaviours to be on a continuum and perceive that if they reported behaviour it would be dismissed as "normal" and "low level". Ofsted (2012) research commented upon pupils in one school suggesting that adults seemed to dismiss certain behaviours as not bullying:

> *"Teachers were sometimes 'blind' to some of the physical behaviour around the school, such as jostling in corridors, and that some seemed to think that 'boys will be boys', as if that excuses everything."* (p. 20).

Bradsaw et al.'s (2007) research found that:

> *"Approximately 13% of staff agreed that "bullying is a part of life that everyone has to go through."* (p. 371).

A canonical view that humans need to learn to cope with adversity in order to survive may indirectly mean that negative behaviours are condoned.
An ABA Survey (2011) with parents who had disabled children reported a case where, "School said he had to get used to it, as all children would be called names."

A misperception of bullying may also be a possibility because of internalising behaviour and a blaming of self and perceiving that bullying is deserved. This may lead to a protective stance; anticipating negative behaviour leading to isolation and withdrawal. Jackson (2002) a pupil with autism commented:

> *"ASD kids don't always realise when friendly messing about is actually friendly stuff… Mum has seen and known for sure that the kid in question was just trying to get me to join into a game."* (p. 146).

Thornberg et al. (2013, p.317) cite pupils describing themselves as being socially isolated as peers withdrew. To protect themselves, they describe victims "social shielding" and "self-isolating" "disassociating" and "turning off emotions" "self-inhibiting … holding themselves back in social situations" because of the fear of making "social blunders." Thus like Bronfenbrenner's (see 3.3.2(i), Figure 3), (1979) EST, the environment impacts upon the individual and the individual affects other systems in turn.

Thornberg et al. (2013) comment that victims seemed to accept their fate as if there was nothing that could be done. This may result in under-reporting of bullying incidents and the need for outer circles to be proactive in both encouraging reporting and responding to it.

2.5.1 Characteristics of a Bully

In our recent LA AB conference (2013), a police commissioner commented "Bullies are cowards." (Negative personal experiences might lead to labelling). I am interested in the extent that EPs are influenced by culture and personal experience; particularly as we are encouraged to separate the behaviour from the person in our professional practice (IIRP, 2007).

Sullivan (2006, p.18), who studied bullying characteristics, suggests that if characteristics are known, then early interventions can be put in place to support the pupil. Differing contexts make generalisation difficult.

Olweus (1996), Pelligrini et al. (1999) suggests that a bully seems to be motivated by a need to achieve power or control. They have a:

> *"Strong need to dominate… enjoy[ing] being in control and subdu[ing] others."* (Olweus, 1996, p.269)

However, Crick and Dodge (1996) discuss reactive anger responses that have not been thought through by some children who are aggressive. Smith et al. (2012) suggest that reactive anger is a behaviour that may be more related to those pupils who are both victims and bullies (termed victim-bullies).

Olweus (1996) suggests that one attribute of the bully is that they may have had a "lack of warmth and emotional involvement" (p.270). Olweus (1996) found that:

> "Bullies had unusually little anxiety and insecurity. They did not suffer from poor self-esteem." (p. 269).

However Peets et al., (2011) found differently, suggesting that knowledge of specific contexts is necessary.

Wachs (2012) found that bullies have "moral disengagement."
Gini (2006) and Olweus (1993) comment upon bullies having low empathy.

Sutton et al. (1999a) however describe bullies as manipulative, rather than lacking social skills or empathy, demonstrating contradictions between researchers.

Gini (2006); Sutton et al. (1999a) advocate delineating empathy further by considering the level of theory of mind bullies might have and the level of "moral cognition." Other constructs that relate to empathy, make comparison between research difficult. Gini (2006) suggests that bullies have good understanding of the perception of others, but do not understand moral implications of their own behaviours (termed by her as justification for behaviour.) Marini et al. (2006) also comment that bullies seem to justify and normalise their aggressive behaviours.

Sutton et al.(1999a) and Smith, Polenik, Nakasita, Jones (2012) suggest that the type of bullying, direct or indirect should be taken into account, as those that lead groups and are involved in more indirect-bullying and might have different traits.

2.5.2 Impact of Groups

Gini (2006) provided stories about bullying to YP on a 1:1 in order to consider YPs' perspectives and understanding about these stories. Individuals labelled as bullies could read and respond appropriately to the stories, showing a level of understanding. The fact that this study took individuals away from their group may have impacted upon her results. The YP were not being placed in a group context, where emotions may take over. Bion (1961) discussed how individuals are influenced in a group and behaviour differs in a pair or alone. Berger, Rodkin (2011) demonstrated that by moving groups peer behaviours changed, both positively and negatively. "Peer affiliations are dynamic and change continuously." (p.406).

It seems important to study bullying within groups in order to unpick and understand group values or rules rather than to focus upon individual traits in isolation. This aspect has influenced the methodological choices in this research.

Olweus (1996) suggests that a negative environment may support the bully in having needs fulfilled:

> *"Aggressive behaviour is in many situations rewarded with prestige". (p. 269).*

Pelligrini et al. (1999) suggested that bullying enabled the perpetrator to be more accepted in a group. Such pupils were rated as "aggressive and popular" by teachers and they were also found to be "popular and feared" (Bradshaw et al., 2007). Thus environments that value aggression may promote bullying, (O'Connell et al., 1999).

Salmivalli and Voeten (2004) comment that:

> *"Group norms may regulate bullying-related behaviours through processes such as peer group pressure and conformity to it."* (p.247).

Werner and Hill (2010) found that spending time in "relationally aggressive groups", led to increased "relational aggression by individuals."

Gini (2006a) discussed the role of groups and the desire to stay within the group as a reinforcer to specific behaviours:

> *"Social power and group status can be seen as two of the primary motives in peer victimization."* (p.61)

This seems to promote a need for an overall school systems approach to changing perceptions around valued behaviour.

Variables that Espelage (2002) found to determine acceptance within groups, were for boys "toughness and aggressiveness" and for girls "appearance." Tanaka (2001); Thornberg et al. (2013), Wachs (2012) discuss how group norms are difficult to define.

Damasio (2012) suggests that the desire to fit in groups to perform to an expected norm in order to be accepted is part of survival. Hence bullying may be an evolutionary phenomenon that will be difficult to eradicate. O'Connell et al. (1999), discusses the idea that pupils watching or condoning bullying relates to a desire to be part of the powerful group rather than aligning with the weaker victim.

Damasio (2012) comments upon the tendency to focus upon negative behaviours, comparing ourselves to others as part of a survival mechanism. Thus those that are weaker or different to the group might make us feel safer within a group. Hence all of us at times, may bully. Highlighting the weaknesses of others may create a sense of security. Ensuring a safe ethos and encouraging YP to focus upon self-achievements not making comparisons is important, though difficult to achieve.

Perception of self through experience and prediction of how others see you, Erriksson (1968) suggests, influences behaviour:

> *"The young person, in order to experience wholeness, must feel a progressive continuity between that which he has come to be during the long years of childhood and that which he conceives himself to be and that which he perceives others to see in him and expect of him."*
> (Erikson, 1968, p. 87).

Erikson (1968) discusses how environment impacts upon the development of self and presents what he perceives as stages of development that a child needs to go through. Erriksson discusses "identity formation" through entering different stages and by considering the response of others. However, he suggests that physical development also dictates the entry into the next stage. This seems to relate to Piaget (1969) who discusses fixed stages a child has to go through in order to progress to the next stage and also Vygotsky (1934), in that the child has to be ready to learn. The focus of this study will not be around fixed developmental stages, but social influences, such as desire to be accepted in a group and the strategies used to test acceptability.

Erikson also discussed how rules and expectations formed by parents formulate expected norms. As Burr (2003) suggests, we categorise and compare with our expected norm, often developed through culture and parenting. How others perceive us determines our sense of identity.

Erikson (1968) suggests that YP are testing responses and a sense of loyalty from others by using behaviour, such as bullying. Erikson might suggest that this type of experimentation or behaviour is inevitable.

2.5.3 Bystander Role

Espelage (2002) provides a definition of bystander:

> "the role that peers play in promoting bullying and victimisation by either, failing to intervene to stop victimisation, or affiliating with the students who bully." (p.1).

O'Connell et al. (1999) in their observations of video footage of playground bullying found that:

> "peers spent 54% of their time reinforcing bullies by passively watching 21% of their time actively modelling bullies, and 25% of their time intervening on behalf of victims." (p. 439).

The bystander being there is felt to be important in supporting a bully (Bradshaw, 2007; Sutton & Smith, 1999a; Salmivalli, Voeten, 2004). Thornberg and Junget (2013) discuss justification by bystanders for watching and becoming "morally disengaged." These involve:

- Attributing bullying behaviour to the victim deserving it.
- Comparing the negative behaviour to other types of negative behaviour and minimising it.
- "De-humanising the victim,"
- "Justifying the negative actions – as leading to more positive means", for example conforming.
- Distorting the act and minimising it, including minimising own participation or contribution in the act as others behaved worse. (O'Connell et al., 1999).

O'Connell et al. (1999) discuss Bandura's social learning theory (1977), (See 3.3.2(v), epistemological influences). This theory is based upon watching others' behaviour, perceiving that it gains positive results and copying behaviour. O'Connell et al. (1999), identified three conditions, based upon Bandura's theories that influence the likelihood of modelling in terms of bullying behaviour:

> *"Children are more likely to imitate a model when: the model is a powerful figure; the model is rewarded rather than punished for the behaviour; and the model shares similar characteristics with the child."* (O'Connell et al.,1999, p.344).

Winnicott's theories discussed in the Epistemological stance, 3.3.2(iv) seem to be relevant in understanding bullying. Theorists acknowledge that his theories have been open to interpretation. Martin James wrote to Winnicott in 1961, telling him that there was a:

> *"mixture of fright and misunderstanding [surrounding] your work in some circles. Those with literal or obsessional minded approaches cannot comprehend your allusive and illustrative skills, which I find so attractive'* (p. 165; Rodman 2003)

Aitken and Herman (1997) discuss how the traditional perspective of a transitional object, described in 3.3.2 has been adopted by theorists to describe the use of "transitional spaces" in adulthood:

> "*transitional space s are theorized as the spaces out of and from which culture arises . As with play (an object), in culture there is something to make use of (a tradition), but the child / adult also has the capacity to bring something of her inner self to the tradition.* (p.63)

I am interested, similar to them in how

> "*children learn about environments? What aspects of the environment do children respond to and what kinds of emotional and intellectual adaptations occur? How are behaviors acted out and practiced? In what ways is space negotiated and restructured to suit individuals and how, in turn, does the experience of places mold subjectivity?* (p.64)

I am interested howbullies might be using victims within "transitional spaces" in order to negotiate a place within the group, negotiating with others (bystanders) over what is and isn't acceptable. Silent watching may be regarded as approving of the bullying.

Bradshaw et al. (2007) found that, after witnessing bullying, pupils did not discuss it with others, such as adults or peers, thus dialogue was not used as a way of clarifying events.

2.5.4 Protective characteristics that support an individual not being targeted as a victim

Some researchers, rather than considering risk factors, consider protective factors:

- Friendships: (Oleuk-schemesh et al., 2012; Skrzpiec et al., 2012)
- High satisfaction in school (Wachs, 2012)
- Self-efficacy. Bandura, (1977) ; Peets et al., (2011) discuss how this supports in being accepted in a group. This seems to be determined by the extent and ease that a child can perceive that they can execute a task. Bandura (2001) comments upon successful groups needing individuals who feel that they will have positive agency:

> *"One cannot achieve an efficacious collectivity with members who approach life consumed by nagging self-doubts about their ability to succeed and their staying power in the face of difficulties."* (Bandura, 2001, p.16).

- Self-esteem

Bandura (2001) identified four core features of human agency; "intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness and self-reflectiveness." Like Vygotsky (1934), he suggests that social interaction and language skills can support individuals in becoming "conscious" about agency. If the individual is isolated, these skills may not develop.

Communication used as a problem solving tool is illustrated through a narrative that my daughter told me about a situation that developed around her rowing team training. She told me that her team was preparing for practice but needed help to move the rowing machine. Another girl (Kate) came in and helped move it and then sat on the machine and refused to move, commenting that her team would take their turn first. My daughter described a sense of unfairness in this.

This narrative made me reflect upon the goals each individual focused upon at this time, something Bandura (2001) considers to determine self-efficacy. Kate seemed to be 'own needs' driven, aimed at gaining power / development of status. She didn't appear to be motivated by formulating peer relationships. My daughter and I discussed the consequences of the choice Kate had made which resulted in her alienating herself from peers. We discussed alternative choices Kate could have made. The power of storytelling seemed important in helping my daughter to consider this situation in order to determine her own future behavioural responses and to diffuse her anger at the situation. Relaying her story seemed to help my daughter see that the choices Kate had made might serve immediate needs but in the long-term might not support her in being part of the group. This event also demonstrates using someone else's negative behaviour to identify alternatives and learning self-development through social referencing. However, in promoting positive self-development, this may lead to isolation of others. Interventions that might support one individual may not support others.

Billington (2000) discusses the fact that:

> *"The work of the modern psychopathologist demands effectively that we measure people's behaviours and potentials against one another."* (p. 84).

It may be more effective that EPs/parents/teachers reinforce positive behaviours observed of individuals without making comparison in order to create more positive ES. However emotive experiences may make this difficult to do.

Billington (2000) suggests those that are measured against the norm can either choose to accept their label within the group or be "excluded."

- Fitting in with group norms was found to be a protective characteristic (Salmilvalli et al.1996), together with an ability to adapt behaviours to the rules of the group, (Berger, 2008; Berger; Rodkin; 2011; Isaacs et al., 2013). Aitken and Herman (1997) discuss their perception of Winnicott's theories (1971) (See 3.3.2(v)) and "how transitional spaces" support in negotiating what is acceptable behaviour. Winnicott (1971) discussed how a mother initially uses "transitional objects" such as a security blanket or toys to model "give and take" and thus develop reciprocity skills and a sense of "otherness." When an understanding of this is developed, there may be a greater self-efficacy in using transitional spaces more appropriately and in understanding the norms of acceptability. They interpreted Winnicott's theory as him suggesting that there is

  > *"a fluid, recursive process of separation involving intuition, experimentation and play. Winnicott's principal concerns lie with how children (and adults) bridge the gap between egocentricism and recognition of an external world, and how they negotiate and renegotiate the relations between self and other.* (p.65)

- The ability to do this may relate to the importance of having supportive family as parents are the first to model.
- Supportive family/supportive other groups

2.5.5 Defenders

Gini (2006) considers characteristics of defenders. This:

> *"requires a high level of social ability and a well-developed understanding of both cognitive and emotional states of others."* (p.536).

Because of their social standing, defenders may have a greater sense of safety, (Gini et al., 2008a; O'Connell et al., 1999). Thornberg and Jungert (2013); Poyhonen et al. (2012) found that those with higher self-efficacy were even more likely to engage in defender behaviour.

Thornberg and Jungert (2013) considered other traits. They found that those pupils that had "moral sensitivity" were less likely to engage in bullying behaviour. They suggest that if this is engrained there is more chance of automaticity in defending and not considering impact on themselves later. The social context becomes less dominant in this person's choice of response. Thornberg and Jungert (2013) define those that stand and watch but feel guilt for not intervening as having moral sensitivity but perhaps less self-efficacy to intervene.

2.5.6 Characteristics of a victim

> *"Characteristics of bullying victims… are factors that mark the young person out as being different from others"* (Green et al., 2010, p.12).

Other research using pupil reports, describe victims as being:

> *"odd, deviant in some way…..students disturb the existing order and threaten the status quo – and its demand for conformity."* (Thornberg et al., 2013, p.310).

Tanaka (2001); Thornberg et al. (2013), Wachs (2012), suggest that this deviance from the norm cannot be categorised and generalised. Thornberg et al. (2013) suggest that it is determined by:

> *"a social construction produced in the peer group associated with its culture and social norms."* (p. 310).

Acceptable behaviour is often determined by experience. The response by others leads us to predict and anticipate future responses towards behaviour. (See 3.3.2(ii)). Kelly's (1991b) dichotomy corollary discusses the fact that constructs exist as opposite poles. Researchers in bullying might determine themes that emerge, but then seek to consider opposites. One might suggest that this leads to victim's traits being the opposite to those of the bully. If we consider Olweus's definition below – the "weak" victim is on one pole, but the opposite may be the "strong" bully.

Olweus (1996) comments upon personality traits of victims:

> *"typical victims are anxious and insecure….cautious sensitive and quiet when attacked by other students, they commonly react by crying… and withdrawal."* (p. 268).

Olweus (1996) also found that:

> *"It is younger and weaker students who are most exposed to bullying."* (p. 267).

One victim attributed the cessation of bullying to:

> *""I spoke up for myself, pressed the one who behaved badly against a wall, and told him how I felt….The bullying stopped when I simply started to ignore what the bullies were saying."* (Frisen et al. 2010).

Olweus (1996), labels victims as "passive and submissive." They:

> *"suffer from low self-esteem; they have a negative view of themselves. They often look at themselves as failures and feel stupid and ashamed… The victims are lonely and abandoned at school. As a rule they do not have a single good friend in their class."* (p. 268).

He believes that they find it difficult to be assertive and do not behave aggressively. Those that do react violently, he labels "provocative victims" a less common type of victim, with:

> *"anxious and aggressive behaviour patterns…They behave in ways that may cause irritation and tension around them."* (p. 268).

Wachs (2012) suggests lack of friendships increases the risk of being a victim but other factors are also relevant:

> *"In particular victims and cyber victims are more likely to have multiple social and emotional difficulties. The number of friendships in school is not a buffer against victimisation on its own; however having no friends seems to be a strong risk factor. This may relate to the quality of peer contacts in school.* (p. 356).

Olweus (1996) states that external factors, such as hair colour, weight or different dialect, were not a variable for determining a victim. He believes it is more likely to be:

> *"personality characteristics/typical reaction patterns, in combination with physical strength or weakness in the case for boys."* (p. 267).

Frisen et al. (2012) questioned pupils who had been bullied:

> *"I was bullied for being chubby as a child. As I grew older my chubbiness disappeared and the bullying stopped."*

Thus this contradicts Olweus's findings. Thornberg et al. (2013) (Also Bradshaw et al., 2007) highlight physical traits being regarded as setting off the bullying:

> *"wearing the wrong clothes, being a swot, big nose."* (p. 315).

They comment that this seemed to be strengthened by victims internalising the bullying, feeling different, blaming themselves and withdrawing, leading to isolation. Hence they demonstrate the complexity of focusing upon one theme on its own.

Olweus, a psychologist, focussed upon psychological traits, something that may be perceived to be more important to adults, than to young people.

Gini (2006) discusses how victims appeared to have reduced theory of mind and ability to understand the perspective of others. This may relate to why pupils with autism diagnosis are regarded to be more likely victims, (Humphrey, Symes, 2010a).

In completing a literature review and identifying characteristics of victims, or what might cause victims to be victims, the research in my opinion is contradictory. For example, Strohemeier and Dogan (2012) found loneliness to be less of a risk factor. Berungo et al. (2004) found it to be more of one.

Bidirectional influences of cause & effect are difficult to determine. Berungo et al. (2004) advocate a need to "suspend causal assumptions" (p.485). Green, Collingwood, Ross (2010) suggest that factors such as poor socials skills "may develop as a response to being bullied." (p.20).

Green et al. (2010); Olweus (1996) found that pupils who attended a school with a high proportion of children on free school meals, were less likely to be bullied.

Green et al. (2010) also found that children in care were more vulnerable as well as children who were carers of others.

Transition to a new school is regarded to make pupils more vulnerable as they are not aware of social norms.
Ofsted (2012) found in their research that:

> *"In 22 schools, pupils saw the 'buddy system' for new pupils as an important part of modelling the school's expectations for new pupils."* (p. 22).

Like Olweus (1996), Green et al. (2010) found that certain family structures did increase vulnerability for those pupils especially in step families. Case study research is difficult to find. In my journal I write about Jimmy, a boy in high school who was referred to me because of concerns around continued isolation from peers. The importance of understanding ES (See 3.3.2(i)) is highlighted by this case. School had completed personal hygiene work with Jimmy, but smell continued and peers were commenting. On undertaking a home visit, where pet urine was evident, it became clear why Jimmy could not get rid of this smell. Home environments might make pupils more vulnerable and unable to follow social expectations. This highlights the possible need to explore each incident case by case and not make assumptions around variables, such as lack of self-awareness. Notably, in this case, when staff were able to understand causes they developed a greater sense of protection towards him.

Males are much more likely to be bullying victims than females, (Olweus, 1993; Joliffe et al., 2006; Bevan et al., 2013). Joliffe et al., (2006), comment that physical bullying is more likely against boys than girls.

However, Bevan et al., (2013) suggest that YP sometimes dismiss indirect bullying (and this is directed to a greater extent towards girls) so this might skew results.

2.5.7 Impact

There seems to be much evidence to demonstrate the negative impact of bullying behaviour, on victims. Impact might involve externalising behavior such as violence (Smith et al., 2012) ; anxiety (Boulton, 2013; Menesini et al., 2009; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000); depression (Menesini et al., 2009; Espelage et al., 2013; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000; Zwierzynska, 2013); self-esteem (Blood et al., 2011; Lund, 2006); and attachment (Eiden et al., 2010) and parental and peer relational problems, (Menesini et al., 2009). Marini et al., (2006); Isaacs et al., (2013), suggest that those that have been victims are more likely to be rejected by peers later in life.

Tremlow at al. (2006) suggest "vulnerable children suffer significant trauma" p.196 as a result of bullying. Tanaka (2001) suggests "trauma" would be more likely to occur if the perception of isolation is reinforced when they seek help from a series of people such as a friend, teacher or parent:

> *"The victim's identity is characterised by a negative image of self within a coherent collective story."* (Tanaka, 2001, p. 472).

Menesini, Modena, Tani (2009); Gini, Pozzoli (2008b); Skrzypiec (2012) and Marini et al. (2006) found that victim-bullies had more negative outcomes in terms of physical and mental health than bullies or victims alone. Marini et al. (2006), suggest that this seems to increase, when bullying involves indirect approaches. As Billington (2000) discusses, pathologising, rather than focusing upon societal relationships, may lead to increased negative impact on the victim. This seems to reinforce the fact that victims feel there is something wrong with them.

Thornberg et al. (2013) reported that some victims had found that bullying had a positive impact; for example greater reflection around interactions and inter and interpersonal skills improving as a result. They reported that those who viewed the bullying as having a positive impact seemed to have externalised the bullying away from their own traits, to the problem traits of the bully and the environment.

2.5.8 Role of Adults

> *"For children to internalize control, discipline must be seen as fair and consistent. If excessive punishment and bullying by teachers is not dealt with, students will see teachers as adversaries, not as positive role models."* (Tremlow et al., 2006, p.189).

Allen (2010) discusses teacher attributions' for pupils' behaviour. She suggests that there is a continuum for attribution. On one end of the scale pupils are bad and need control "(Behaviourist)." On the other end of the scale they are good and need support "(Humanistic)." She suggests that how teachers attribute behaviours, guides their management in the classroom. It is this management, she argues, that impacts upon ES. These behaviours are interpreted and modelled by the pupils. Teacher modelling of aggressive behaviour, with perceived positive results, may encourage pupils to view that aggressive behaviour will gain positive results, (Crick and Dodge, 1996).

Teacher modelling the importance of social relationships may support pupils in choosing relationships over status and power. Bandura (2006) argues that infants evaluate behaviour based upon the feedback provided and adapt behaviours accordingly [developing a "personal causality and an agentic self"]. By establishing ethos/communities that do not reinforce aggressive behaviours, he argues change is possible. Vygotsky (1934) discusses how "consciousness" comes from "social experience". This relates to Bandura's Social Learning theory (1986). Bandura (2001) argues that self-efficacy being modelled can have an impact upon those observing. Agency seems to be important as a protective factor against bullying. Bandura (2006) comments:

> *"People are self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting. They are not simply onlookers of their behaviour. They are contributors to their life circumstances, not just products of them."* (p. 264).

One illustration of this can be found in my own research diary. I describe sitting in the staff room when a teaching assistant came in and engaged in a conversation with two other teachers.

"You'll never guess what my Laddo's done now," she commented.
The three professionals seemed to cohere as a group discussing this child. This made me reflect upon the use of the "weak" to support a group in becoming more cohesive and feeling stronger. This victim may be regarded as being used as a tool for negotiation within a transitional space. This seems to align with Aitken and Herman's (1997)_interpretation of Winnicott's (1971) theories away from traditional psychoanalytical theory and considering it within a social context (See 3.3.2v).

Later, in a conversation with the head teacher, I challenged this use of language and expressed concern. This felt a potentially threatening situation for me but, because I had felt valued by the head teacher and because of the positive relationship that existed, I felt strong enough to address this issue. This example is used to illustrate how teacher/EP self-efficacy is important in changing group dynamics. However, as discussed below the changing ES for EPs may make this sense of challenge more difficult.

Tremlow et al. (2006), in their questionnaires to teachers, established that there were 2 types of bullying teacher, those that were the bully-victim and those that were the bully.

Classroom management using punitive approaches without support and nurture may result in a bully teacher. Classroom management which involves permissive behaviours may result in the teacher being a bully-victim.

This theory may also relate to parental behavioural management approaches. Olweus (1996) attributes bullying behaviour to:

> *"Permissiveness of the parent… without setting clear limits to aggressive behaviour towards peers… the child's aggression is likely to increase."*
> (p. 270).

Smith (2005) focused upon parenting style, and found that an authoritarian approach to parenting can result in a punitive approach with peers. Olweus (1996, p.270), suggested that use of "physical punishment" by parents and "violent emotional outburst" may make a child more at risk of becoming a bully. He also comments that "too little love and care and too much freedom" are also causes.

Olweus (1996) sites factors that combat bullying – "increased interest and involvement from adults," "firm limits, we don't accept bullying in our school" consequences that are "non-physical, non-hostile" "monitoring and surveillance" and "adults both at home and at school acting as authorities." (p. 274).

Parents and friends being told about the bullying and being supportive were found by Thornberg et al. (2013) to have positive impact for victims who were able to see the bullying incident as positive in developing skills for the future.

As part of the training in RP (IIRP., 2007) teachers are asked to think of their best teacher and how they reacted when, as a YP, they had done something wrong. As demonstrated by Fajet et al. (2005), new teachers' greatest influences were their own past experiences of who they regarded as good and bad teachers. Social referencing led to them adapting their behaviour accordingly. This may also be the case for EPs and is an interest of this research.

Burr (2003) comments:

> *"Our ways of understanding the world does not come from objective reality, but from other people both past and present. We are born into a world where conceptual frameworks and categories used by the people in our culture already exist."*

We might describe an experience using a narrative, but in turn attempt to form categorisations and comparisons with other events.

Allen (2011) argues that teachers also learn from other teachers. A lack of variety of methods to watch may therefore lead to inflexibility in approach. This might help to explain the historical acceptability of the use of the cane.

Tremlow et al. (2006) discuss in one study that teacher violence became the expected norm "but fear impairs the capacity to learn." (p.188). Allen (2011) also comments:

> "Bullying begets bullying and aggression begets aggression. When a child disrupts a class and challenges a teacher, publicly embarrassing or belittling him or her, the teacher may react with anger, hostility, and coercion. In other words, when bullied, some teachers bully back." (p.11).

Hence environmental factors may cause bullying.

2.5.9 Role of parents and teachers when told about incidents:

Frisen et al. (2012) found that pupils, who had been asked about what had stopped bullying, said that bullying ceasing was most likely to be attributed to parents having stopped it. Green et al. (2010) found that when parents reported incidents of bullying at the age of 14 or 15 then there was less likelihood of bullying at 16. However some findings suggest that the majority of pupils do not tell adults (Samivalli, Poskiparta, 2012; Thomson, Arora, 1991). Staff who reported that bullying was a part of life, (Bradshaw et al., 2007), felt that they were more likely to agree with the statement that they might make things worse if they intervened. Hence this might explain why pupils do not discuss incidents with some adults as they are not inclined to intervene.

Bradshaw et al. (2007); DFE (2012) discuss the importance of communicating teacher interventions after the event to victims and reviewing the impact of those actions. Modelling that the child is important enough to do something about it and that the adult cares may prevent internalisation. This approach might challenge Bradshaw et al.'s. (2007), Matsunga's (2009), Tanaka's (2001) findings that pupils perceived staff intervening in bullying would make it worse.

> "I learnt through the experience that I could not rely on my teacher or parent to solve the problem. Only if I change my personality could the situation be cleared up." (Tanaka, 2001, p.468).

Tanaka (2001) discusses the importance of adults understanding that a child might view a situation differently to an adult and what may be important to a child, may be less so for an adult. She provides an example of parents dismissing the YP's concern about bullying because this was not their adult priority. Academic achievement was more important to them. This in turn made the YP feel unimportant, perhaps reinforcing the fact that they deserved to be a victim.

Tanaka (2001) discusses the importance of parents finding other groups, perhaps out of school, for YP to go to, in order to challenge potential negative self-perception that might be being reinforced in the school environment.

Tanaka (2001) also discusses the fact that parents appearing "perfect" without mistake making makes it difficult for pupils to discuss perceived flaws or difficulties.

Ofsted (2012) research suggests that proactive intervention, for example reinforcing the fact that teachers are available to speak to on a number of occasions, particularly on transition days, supported pupils.

Questionnaire research may not reflect the reality of bullying when focusing upon specific contexts. However, pupil questionnaires may be used to provoke discussion and raise awareness. Table 2, illustrates some results of questionnaire research that asked for perceptions about bullying. Professionals might show this to YP to challenge perceptions and encourage dialogue.

Table 2: DFE (2007b) Parental and Children attitudes to bullying

Agreement with attitudes towards bullying (ability / actions to influence risk of bullying)

Legend: ■ Parents of children 5-11 ■ Parents of children 12-17 ■ Children 12-17

I do things to reduce the risk of my child(ren) being bullied	78% / 75%
I help my child(ren) / My parents help me to deal with bullying	73% / 85% / 76%
There is nothing I / my parents can do to stop bullying	13% / 16% / 19%
There is nothing my child(ren)'s / my school can do to stop bullying	13% / 14% / 23%
Bullying is a part of growing up	29% / 29% / 38%
Bullying has to be quite bad before I would do something about it	47%

Source: Parents B1b,c,h,l,g / Children B1c,g,h,f,k
Base: Parents / carers of children aged 5-11 in England (n=388) / Parents / carers of children aged 12-17 in England (n=322) / Children / young people aged 12-17 in England (n=508)

2.5.10 Teachers who bully

Allen et al. (2011) and James et al. (2008) discuss the lack of research teacher bullying. Tremlow et al. (2006) suggest that "45% of teachers admitted to having bullied a student." (p.194).

> *"Bullying is a hazard of teaching, and that all people bully at times and are victims and bystanders at times."* (Tremlow et al., 2006., p.194)

If expected norms of behaviour are defined by teachers and YP stray from these norms there may be more chance of being victimised, as the YP may be perceived as challenging. James et al. (2008) commented that pupils' perceptions of teacher bullying differed from teachers' perceptions:

> *"Teachers are moral agents, in the sense that teachers are daily called upon to make decisions with the potential of impacting upon their students' moral development."* (p.54).

Being reprimanded for talking out of turn might be perceived as bullying by the YP, but enforcing classroom management by the teacher.

James et al. (2008) discuss the impact of being bullied by a teacher on a pupil and the fact that as the teacher is accepted as the one with power there might be a greater sense of hopelessness in shifting the "power balance".

There is also, in these circumstances, less chance of bystanders intervening to support the victim. The fact that there might be an audience of other pupils:

> *"Increases the humiliation through its public nature and also sends a message to the others in the class that this person is unworthy of better treatment."* (James et al., 2008, p.169).

Bradshaw et al., 2007 found that "53% of staff members reported that they had been bullied as a child." (p.372). However, they found that childhood experiences did not appear to impact upon self-efficacy in dealing with bullying incidents as a teacher, though, it did for those that perceived they had been bullied as a teacher within their current environment, by either pupils or other staff members.

Tremlow et al. (2006, p.194) considered teachers' perceived reasons for bullying. They found that those that were victims as a child were more likely to notice other teachers bullying, be victims of bullying and be bullies. Personal experience appears to impact upon behaviour. This relates to the research.

2.5.11 Pupil Voice

"Pupil voice" seems to have become a de-rigueur construct. The DFE (2013) state:

> *"The idea of pupil voice is to increase the influence of students in the provision of their own education by ensuring their views are included when schools make key decisions."*

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) Article 12 suggests that children have a right:

> *"to say what they think should happen, when decisions are being made that will affect them and have their opinions taken into account."*

The Children's Act (1989) also comments upon the need to listen to children. The development of a Children's Commissioner (2004) whose role is around giving the child a say and protecting their rights also highlights how government appeared to be taking listening seriously.

The Education and Inspections Act (2006) required governing bodies to consult with school staff and pupils around behavior policy. ES seems to be influencing school professionals including EPs. We are required in my authority to write children's perspectives on all of our reports.

The IIRP (2007) in anti-bullying interventions also advocates providing pupils with a voice, even if decisions are not taken based upon this voice.

"Gillick confident" or meeting "Fraser Guidelines" is used within medical, educational and social care settings (NSPCC, 2012). The Fraser guidelines (UK House of Lords decisions,1985) are used to assess whether the child is competent enough to make their own decisions. However, this might not take into account how social situations / group influences might lead to less informed decision making by children, despite appearing "competent" in a 1:1 situation. Bion (1961) discusses how groups influence perceptions and behaviour in groups.

Researchers are also engaged in gaining pupil voice. Lewis and Porter (2007, p. 223) discuss limitations around adults gaining pupils' opinions; these may vary depending upon the epistemological and ontological stance of the researcher. The method of questioning used may influence the child in giving the responses they perceive they should give; Fielding (2004) suggests that we might give children our adult voices.

Gaining pupil views may be problematic. In a recent Pastoral Education Plan meeting for a child in foster care, a fixed format from the paperwork dictated that the child's views be sought. Observing this process made me reflect upon whether the child's views were really sought or a bureaucratic exercise had been undertaken. The SENCO asked the child their perceptions of how they felt they were getting on in school

"We feel that you have settled well in school, is this how you feel?" [whilst nodding at the child, who nodded back in response, mirroring the behaviour of the SENCO].

These leading questions made me reflect on how gaining the pupil's voice seems to be a government priority and is being followed as a process by schools (possibly to follow Ofsted guidelines) but may not serve a specific function of gaining real information and perspective.

Smith et al. (2004), O'Connell et al. (1999) also comment upon the fact that:

> "Self-reports of bullying and victimisation, although not necessarily
> inaccurate, do not correlate to information about bullying and
> victimisation from peers or teachers or from observations." (p. 554).

Frisen et al. (2013) found in asking 18 year olds who had experienced
bullying what interventions had helped commented:

- Support from school professionals, for example moving the pupil or the
  bully away into another class. This was felt to be the top intervention.
- Support from peers helped – "A friend of mine noticed how the bullies
  treated me and then she went and told the teacher."
- Finding another group to go to also was reported as supporting.
- Support from parents. Ranked 4th so was seen as less relevant by
  pupils whose bullying had stopped.
- Change of school.

2.6 Interventions

Certain interventions may be less successful depending upon context and
temporal factors.

Isaacs et al. (2013) comment:

> "The 'one-size-fits-all' approach to applying generic interventions is likely
> to not have the most widespread efficacy. There is evidence to show
> that certain interventions are more or less effective depending on
> contextual factors such as peer, teacher, and school characteristics." (p.
> 571).

I also suggest that some interventions may benefit one individual but at the
expense of others.

2.6.1 Systemic Interventions

Olweus (1993) in his Intervention Programme (OIT) advocates not just the
targeting of individual incidents but anti-bullying being part of a system and
ethos. This is also advocated by the IIRP, (2007).
Practitioners comment in RP & OIT upon the need for commitment by
management, (Thorsborne, 2005; Hopkins, 2006; Morrison et al., 2005;
Howard, 2009; Welden, 2008; Oliver, Bevan, 2007; Mirsky, 2009).

OIT (1993) advocates having a:

> *"co-ordinating committee to oversee the initiative; surveys to assess needs and measure change; well disseminated policies and clear rules prohibiting bullying; education that promotes awareness for parents, staff and students and individual support for victims and consequences (nonviolent) for bully."* (p. 84).

Notably these appear similar to DFE (2012) advice.

Allen (2010) comments that research about bullying intervention programmes show less impact than would be hoped, though whole school programmes appear to have better results.

Within OIT and other systems approaches, environmental considerations are also taken into account. Systems approaches are also promoted by Ofsted (2012) who comment upon the "need for structured breaks, clear posters with expectations and clear valuing of difference portrayed on walls".

2.6.2 Valuing diversity as part of curriculum

Within a Systems approach, valuing diversity is advocated as part of the curriculum and in school life (Ofsted, 1212, Thornberg et al., 2013).

In determining interventions, one might be to challenge the use of the construct "bullying." It might be more positive to consider approaches that encourage more positive group dynamics, celebrating diversity rather than focus upon individual weaknesses.

2.6.3 Teacher modelling positive behaviour (RP)

Systems that advocate modelling positive behaviours and allowing pupils to have forums to practice these are viewed to be important, (IIRP 2007)

IIRP (2007) advocate that there not solely be reactive interventions such as conferences to deal with negative incidents.

IIRP (2007), Pikas (2002) and Mosley (1996) advocate the use of circles for pupils to express views and feel listened to. Bandura's (1977) and Vygotsky's (1934) principles which advocate that social interaction can lead to reflection are important.

The adult modelling positive relationships was found to be the second most effective strategy in combating bullying (Thompson, Smith, 2010). These interventions might be more likely to be adopted by schools because of this government research.

Macready (2009) discusses modelling of RP language to pupils, which pupils in turn might model to others. The IIRP (2007) provide a script. They suggest these questions promote a fair process. Presenting views after an incident helps to prevent feelings of shame and as a result negative behavioural responses (IIRP, 2007).

Figure 1 - Restorative questions, (IIRP, 2007) –

Restorative Questions 1 -
To respond to challenging behaviour

When challenging behaviour, why would these questions consistently achieve 'fair process'?:

- **What happened?**
- **What were you thinking about at the time?**
- **What have your thoughts been since?**
- **Who has been affected by what you did?**
- **In what way have they been affected?**
- **What do you think you need to do to make things right?**

This script encourages individuals to describe the incident without feeling a need to defend themselves. The repetitive language of this script, however was discussed by Wachtel (2008):

> *"When teachers started using the restorative questions, the students began to say, "Why are all you teachers asking the same questions?"* (p.2).

This reveals the possible mechanical nature of a systems approach. Although it ensures consistency, there appears to be an artificial nature to it, which takes away the warmth of a non-scripted response. However, in times of conflict/stress, we might respond inappropriately. The use of scripts may support in preparing us for these times.

These scripts advocate not using "Why?" questions, as they might lead to defensive answers, without an ability to relay the story and feel. The IIRP (2007) similar to Epston and White (1990) suggest that being listened to and telling stories can have a positive impact upon both victim and perpetrator.

The series of questions from the IIRP script supports in processing and coming to resolution, similar to canonical storytelling processes (See below, methodology.) Through the experience of telling, and listening to other perspectives of the story, the IIRP (2007) and Nathanson (1992) suggest that both victims and perpetrators experience 9 effects, 6 negative affects, 1 neutral and 2 positive ones. These are demonstrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Nathanson's (1992) 9 effects of Shame as cited by IIRP (2007)

Theory of Affects - The Nine Affects

Positive	+ Interest – Excitement
	Enjoyment – Joy
Neutral	Surprise – startle
Negative	Distress – Anguish
	Disgust
	Dissmell
	Anger – Rage
	Fear – Terror
	Shame - Humiliation

NATHANSON 1992

© IIRP UK 2007   18
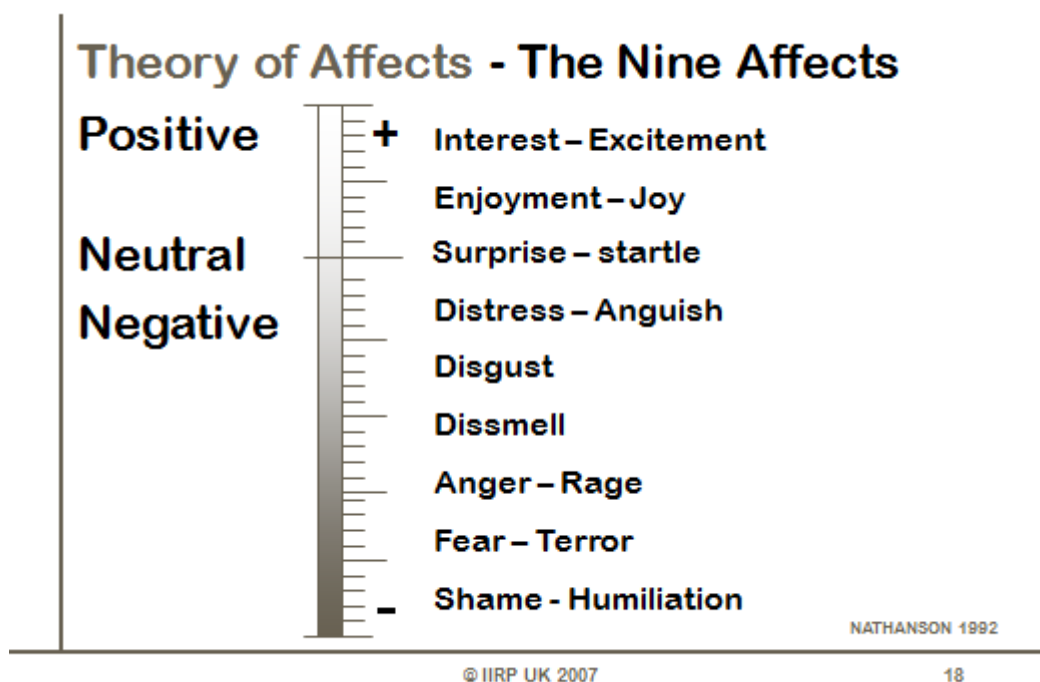
In order to transfer to the two positive, there is a need to work through the negatives, as the story is told. After telling and listening, an individual might re-construct the story differently and this leads to what Nathanson (1992) refers to as a "startle moment" (neutral) affect meaning that new information has led to the ability to move towards a positive future and the ability to have resolution. Bruner (1991) might call this a breach in the story. However, because individuals have to face negative emotions, initially, they might not want to engage in the process.

I am interested in whether this was the case for EP participants in the research and whether there were "startle" moments.

The IIRP scripted questions may not always lead to resolution, as they do not seem to take into account the level of language ability for some individuals. Facing a group of people and having to tell a narrative to them, for someone with language difficulties, might be too difficult and as a result may not enable the story to be heard or told. This increases the importance of pupils engaging in storytelling away from difficult incidents. It also raises the issue of power imbalance within groups and possible negative impact of this. This is of interest in the research.

2.6.4 Bystander Interventions – KiVa, Pikas

KiVa – Is a Finnish anti-bullying programme. The focus of the intervention is on the bystander and their reactions; how these serve to encourage or discourage bullying. If the bully perceives the bystanders to approve, this approval seems to encourage repetition. If the bystander, stands watching, but does nothing, this is also regarded as supporting the bully.

> *"Influencing the behaviours of classmates can reduce social rewards that the bullies gain."* (Salmivalli and Poskipart, 2012 p.46)

Skills to be targeted are bystander "empathy" for victims and "self-efficacy" to defend victims. KiVa also appears to have had impact upon "less internalising of the problem by the victim" (Salmivalli and Poskipart 2012, p.50).
This is regarded as positive evidence based intervention. However, Frisen et al. (2013), in their research found that bystander interventions were not as successful as other interventions. They wonder the extent that fear of loss of status by the bystander, them being selected as the next victim, leads them not to intervene. Group pressures and the ability to rationalise when in a group, rather than to separate from the group are factors that seem to make bystander intervention difficult.

Other researchers (Wachs, 2012), consider empathy difficulties and advocate strategies to build empathy within schools, such as the PIKAS approach. It is hoped that through helping bystanders and bullies to understand the impact of their behaviour on others the group might separate and empathise with the victim.

Rigby et al. (2011) demonstrate reflections from school bullies about other's points of view, after being involved in a series of meetings around a bullying incident:

> *"'We are going to be finishing Year 7 soon and when we look back on primary school, we want to have happy memories and for Tom to feel OK and us to feel good about ourselves'"* (p.351).

The fact that recent Ofsted (2012) research advocates that schools that provide support in empathy building skills are more successful in tackling bullying suggests that this research has been taken as a form of truth. However, Joliffe et al. (2006) argue that teaching empathy successfully is "questionable" (p. 548)

2.6.5 Mentoring

Many researchers seem to advocate peer mentoring schemes (Gini, 2006a).

Cowie et al. (2002, p.457) define different mentoring approaches: "befriending, conflict resolution, or counselling-based; or as they promote a more flexible approach of pupils being present and available.

In order to keep up momentum for mentoring and ensure pupils engage mentors need to feel what they are doing is valued. In one school I visited pupils were supposed to organise structured games in the yard. However, the desire to be with their own friends at lunch time meant that this was done half-heartedly or not at all. Cowie et al. (2002) cite a case that reinforces this point:

> *"We never see her (teacher in charge) at [School] Council, do we? All we do is go to her office and pick up the sheets, all the forms that if we need to fill in we fill in. That is it. We don't see her. We don't have regular meetings with her or anything and there is nothing fixed. (Peer supporter)"* (p.460).

A local school has won Diana Awards for their Mentoring scheme. Year 6 pupils act as buddies to support others in the school. The mentors are rewarded for supporting others and as a result, children aspire to achieve buddy status in the school. This seems to have supported a positive ethos throughout the school, as pupils are keen to demonstrate their "buddy" qualities. On reflecting upon the success of this scheme to an EP colleague, she questioned but "what about those that do not achieve buddy status, how

do they feel?" This made me reconsider the effectiveness of this approach. A hierarchical system had been set up. This may have a detrimental impact on those who were not selected, possibly encouraging them to internalise – "What's wrong with me?" Hence interventions may benefit some and not others. The EP colleague also asked about the impact of an elevated status for peer mentors on transition to high school. "In primary school, these pupils were big fish in a little pond what a shock when they get to high school?" This case illustrates the complexity of interventions.

Cowie et al. (2002) suggest that peer support programmes can be supportive, though pupils need to have a good level of communication, problem solving skills and empathy. Besag (2006), in her study on girls, suggests a need to have an understanding of friendship patterns and using the girls who bully strengths in negotiating and mediating. The group dynamics need to be considered, as pupils can be seen to take on the components of key groups. This might also be the case for a Circle of Friends Approach. Newton et al. (2013) discuss the fact that this approach builds empathy and understanding of a child. However Frederickson et al. (2005) discuss the fact that pupils initially attempt to support a pupil, but momentum reduces, particularly if the child, who is being supported, does not adapt their behaviour to the expected norm. This approach seems to be around supporting change in a child's behaviours that are perceived to go against norms. Newton et al. (2013) describe perceived success:

> *"We've invented a ' three tap code'.....if he starts talking on the carpet one of us taps the floor near him... then he shuts up."*

This seems to gel the group based upon a child's deficits.
It seems that focussing upon negative attributes have to be accepted before re-inclusion in the group. This seems to focus upon within child difficulties, not what the environment might have done to create the situation:

> *"If we are looking for an explanation of the social world, either in terms of what individual people do and feel or in terms of groups, classes or societies, we should not look inside the individual, but into the linguistic space in which they move with other people."* (Burr, 2003, p. 54)

Cowie (2002) reports pupil mentors in a secondary school supporting isolated pupils:

> *"We go into the dining room with Y7s and we keep an eye out even though we are not on duty. We just look and if we see anyone upset we go and talk to them, or we start up a conversation, like, even if they are not upset. We start a conversation, you know, just how are you finding the school?"* (p. 460).

It does not take into account the pupils desires not to be singled out. Tanaka (2001) describes one pupil, who was supported by a key pupil as feeling "deeply ashamed."

2.6.6 Individual Interventions

Epston and White (1990) suggest having storytelling skills enable greater flexibility in thought processes and problem solving. I argue that intervention strategies using storytelling or making away from sensitive topics such as bullying themes, are important.

Thornberg et al. (2013) focus upon storytelling using sensitive topics and suggest interventions that deal with "lingering internalisation" (p.236) are important. They suggest that the use of narratives, which support the externalising process and enable victims to develop new more positive narratives, may help. This fits with Epston and White and Epston's (1990) Narrative Therapy approach, where pupils are encouraged to tell their story and are then encouraged to develop alternative stories by looking for exceptions where original parts of the negative story do not exist. They demonstrate this visually by plotting alternatives to the original story on a graph. This supports in building up:

> *"personal agency. This can be facilitated by encouraging persons to identify those expressions of aspects of lived experience that would have previously gone unstoried."* (p.17).

I am interested in whether this might be the case for EP participants:

> *"The positive after effects of bullying in terms of acquiring life skills expressed by some of the informants in the current study indicated the non-fixed and indeed changing potential of the ontological narratives, and hence of their identity and patterns of attitudes and behaviour."* (Thornberg et al., 2013, p.326).

Fransella (2004) describes Personal Construct Psychology Self-Characterisations. This involves writing in the third person.

She states that:

> *"experience shows that people do, indeed, often find this way of writing easier than using the first person."* (p.8).

She intimates that this is because there is no need to:

> *"confess to certain things and give a catalogue of faults."*

Fransella (2004, p.9) suggests in analysis of self-characterisations that it is important to read through to get context, then look for themes. She suggests that the first sentence is around "the person's general orientation to life at present time." Presenting facts provides a sense of stability, but then this leads to "inner realities" afterwards. She intimates that the last sentence possibly demonstrates "where the person sees themselves as going." Thus similar to Bruner (1991) she seems to be considering the structure of canonical stories and how understanding this might be used to support intervention.

The problem with this approach is that the reader may overly interpret information. She suggests "resisting interpretation" is important. Fransella sees the purpose of self-characterisation, as the therapist showing interest and building relationships. I am interested in the extent EPs interpret and categorise other people's stories and its impact on the narrator.

Tamaka (2001) discusses the use of literature as an intervention; the structure of literature/stories read, which emphasises a character with weakness, overcoming adversity. Literature such as Cat's Eyes by Attwood (1998) may have supported one of her case studies in overcoming isolation and a feeling that they were alone in their experience.

Resilience variables described by Wassell, Brigid (2004) are:

> *"Social competencies, a secure base, education / achievement, friendships, talents and interests, positive values."* (p.14).

Prince-Embury (2007) comment that a resilient child has a
"sense of Mastery, such as "I think I can; having positive self-expectations."
(p.4). This has been discussed above in terms of self-efficacy.
Prince-Embury (2007) also talks about "relatedness." Thus it seems that supporting positive relationships is important.

Rigby (2001); Camodeca and Goosens (2007), suggested that victims being assertive and able to deal with bullies could have positive effects. This fits with Frisen et al.'s (2012) findings with 18 year old previous victims, who commented upon what had supported them, "I got more self-confident and then people stopped bullying me."

Kidscape organisation advocates the use of Assertiveness Training with victims and show positive results for victims:

> *"Kidscape reports that 85% of children say they are no longer being bullied, and a further 8% say the situation has improved."* (Warr, 2011)

However, Camodeca and Goosens (2007) found that those they defined as defenders "favoured solving their conflict through nonchalance."
Tanaka (2001) suggests that interventions should very much depend upon the type of bullying used and showing nonchalance to a group, who are excluding you, because you don't conform to the expected norm, would have little effect – they don't want you.
This raises issues about generalised interventions without knowledge of the child.

I have attempted to discuss research around bullying and the complexities and contradictions in research. Vagueness in research findings may impact upon EPs trying to deal with bullying in their role.

2.7 Educational Psychology Paradigm and the changing EP role

Fallon et al. (2010) define the EP role:

> *"EPs are fundamentally scientist-practitioners who utilise, for the benefit of children and young people (CYP), psychological skills, knowledge and understanding through the functions of consultation, assessment, intervention, research and training, as organisational group or individual level across educational, community and care settings, with a variety of role partners."* (p. 4).

This description seems to define our role positively and may have purpose to position EPs in a positive light. This positive projection of the EP role does not reveal the conflicts for EPs in reality and the difficulties in supporting YP.

Because the research involves EP participants and considers how bullying may impact upon professional practice, it is important to consider EP

perceptions of what the role entails. Other stakeholders, such as parent, teacher, LA, government, YP can influence the way we might approach our role. Bullying is a social phenomenon but if we are expected to focus upon child deficits by stakeholders, this might impact upon the way we give advice in terms of bullying interventions.

Miller et al. (2007), comment upon the dominance of "psychopathology" within the role because of pressure placed upon us to define a child in order to explain behaviour.

They also comment upon pressure to be experts in order to protect/justify our role and thus livelihood.   If the role seems to be around "listening" to stakeholders and being "mere advocates," this might negate our role and make it defunct:

> *"However, if there really is a fundamental re-adjustment of the professional position in relation to the subjects of our inquiry, encapsulated by a desire to resist social exclusion, might EP lose its authority as it relaxes its claims to knowledge and truth?"* (p. 484).

Burnham (2013) summarises comments made by participants in her research about the premise of their role:

> *"The primary purpose as being mediators of useful outcomes, making a difference to the lives of others, rather than creators of generalisable knowledge."* (p. 25).

Miller et al. (2007) provide a brief history of the EP profession, describing how it developed as a result of various children not appearing to fit the conforming norm within schools. They comment that EPs were mainly engaged in measurement, "ranking and categorisation." (p.478).

Research, at the time also appeared focussed upon "ranking and categorisation"; through the use of mainly quantitative approaches, with few qualitative methods up until 2007.

One might argue that EP methods at this time perhaps reflected those favoured by government and policy makers. EPs were perhaps pressured to conform to these norms of measurement. However, one might argue that at this time there was clarity to our role, a justification and therefore job security (Love, 2009).

Foucault (1984c) discusses the theme of experts and "absolute savants" emerging in the 19th and 20th century (EPs, as discussed, are influenced by research literature and government policy and who pays them).These experts he argues consciously or unconsciously support the imposition of dominant societal views and themes. Our role as EPs seems to take on this role, where we:

> *"Occupy a specific position – but whose specificity is linked ….to the general functioning of an apparatus of truth."* (Foucault, 1984c)

This is important to consider, as the research focusses upon EPs' perceptions and experiences; EPs influence educational contexts.

Frustration expressed by EPs perhaps instigated change. This relates to EST (1979) Figure 3, where individuals also influence the outer circles, ES.

> *"Educational psychology …. Has adapted successfully to change itself, but has been the facilitator of considerable change."* (MacKay, 2010, p.252)

Billington (2000) discussed the negative impact of labelling on individuals and how one moment in time does not enable an individual to be described in a specific way:

> *"I argue that any claims to accuracy made by a particular theory or representation can too easily become as individual photographs, attempting to freeze individualised moments and experiences in time and space…… I suggest that by failing to acknowledge processes and by choosing instead the category, we deny the human experience."* (p.90)

Billington (2000) and Kelly et al. (2000) may have influenced Warnock, who criticised the bureaucracy of the Statementing process (Shaw, 2003.)

Our history of categorising has perhaps defined our role to others. Kelly and Gray (2000) discuss the work of EPs and comment upon EPs providing training for schools. (Also mentioned in Gillie, 2012 report and DFE, 2011b). In my own experience, I find that schools want to use EP time to give support around individual pupils and do not want to buy in training, unless they are struggling around a particular YP. A sense of urgency created by an individual seems to lead towards a desire for support, thus training for teachers, which may be preventative, may be neglected. This conflicts with

the general view that work around bullying interventions seems to be more effective when considering systems.

Kelly and Gray (2000) discuss work away from schools, supporting families. This is a factor felt to support victims and bullies.

Further shifts in EP attitudes seem to have occurred since Kelly and Gray's (2000) publication, for example a shift away from the use of consultation processes. Their promotion of consultation appeared to demonstrate a move away from within child labelling and advocating that work should be completed with the person with the problem, for example the teacher, (Wagner, 2000). Although this appeared to free up time, it does not take into account opinions and voices of other stakeholders and raised important ethical issues of the voice/views of the child and parent (House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2006).

EPs are provided with support around consultation in their training, though this might focus around Solution Focussed approaches (Kennedy et al., 2008), which seems to be around not sinking into the problem, not enabling the story to be told, but looking for solutions. However, as Lewis and Miller (2011) suggest:

> *"the maintenance of these verbal acquisition skills is usually left as the individual's [EP's] responsibility despite the long acknowledged propensity for treatment drift in practice that is not monitored nor subject to modification through feedback."* (p.196).

Hence, how do we, as EPs, know whether we have been successful in a consultation or not? We may base this upon personal judgement/experiences and the immediate need to please the person with the problem or the person paying the EP.

Lewis and Miller (2011) considered one consultation with a parent. They found that the EP:

> *"tended to respond to these statements in ways that preserved neutrality."* (p.196).

He did this through asking questions. However, he kept control of the discussions by promoting himself as an expert, relaying observations.

Enabling the story to be told seems to be a current focus for theorists which might indicate future shift for EPiTs around consultation processes.

Another variable for change in the EP role might be financial constraint on an over-burdened system. Thus one might argue that literature/research has been selected to support and justify this shift.

The DFE (2011b) suggests EPs should focus upon "educational contexts". The Green Paper for SEN (2011) suggested that there is "over-representation" and "over-identification" of pupils defined as having SEN and suggests that those with summer birthdays and those in poor educational environments are inappropriately termed as having SEN. They intimate that this may relate to poor teaching approaches. The fact that they aim to:

> *"Introduce an indicator in performance tables which will give parents clear information on the progress of the lowest attaining pupils."* (p.58).

suggests that schools will be held accountable. This might reveal a shift away from within child deficit labels by the Government and a focus upon performance of schools (environmental factors) in supporting pupils who may be underperforming. However, schools may continue to want EPs to support schools in defending their approaches by labelling pupils. EP's perceptions about their role in terms of supporting a social phenomenon, bullying, may become even more interesting.

Since 2012 the schools in my LA have been able to buy in additional time from the service following council budget reductions to the service overall. This means it is schools rather than LAs who are paying for EP time and EPs may consequently feel less able to challenge schools. This demonstrates how changing times (EST Chronosystems) impact upon the role of the EP. There may be a contradiction between stated government aims (moral) and the actual nature of the work completed by EPs (justification for those that are paying us.) With the Draft Code of Practice (2014) and reduced LA funding, the power balance toward other stakeholders, such as school and parent has changed.

Parental voice may lead to a need to defend practice. A parent may be focused, like school professionals on moving blame away from themselves,

thus reinforcing a deficit medicalised label. Care needs to be taken by the EP not to succumb or collude with this pressure.

The avocation for EPs to be providers of evidence based psychology (DFE 2011b) may also cause difficulty based upon the different contexts. Burnham (2013) describes EPs reporting the difficulty of providing practical strategies for a specific context and relating it to specific evidenced based truth:

> *It was uncomfortable to admit how improvised and situational much of it was. And if this work was not very rigorous or scientific, what kind of work was it? Was it psychology at all, let alone good psychology?"* (p.27).

This makes it difficult for EPs to fulfil MacKay's (2010) requirement that: "Our future must be an evidence-based future" (p.248). EPs must evaluate their role based on the perceptions of the immediate stakeholders such as parents, teachers and pupils making EPs more answerable to them.

Burnham (2013) discusses EPs needing to check themselves, by imagining whether comments may be supportive or critical. She cites one EP commenting:

> *"Ewan: … "You can't say, 'Well, I don't think your child at three should be going to a nursery full time so that you can go to work, because I believe that to be wrong.' That could cause all sorts of difficulties"* (p. 23).

Thus there seems to be a contradiction between personal beliefs and what might be termed evidenced based beliefs and whether these can be proven and the ramifications of voicing these beliefs. Judgements made by EPs during the research may be interesting as they might influence their practice. The fact that this research looks at bullying, and thus behaviour, may reveal some key EP perspectives about their role.

To conclude, in this literature review I have discussed the difficulty around providing definitions for bullying and cultural influences upon definition; bullying legislation and its influence upon reactions within schools; the influence of media, and extreme reactions to bullying such as suicide, upon government reactions, which in turn influence schools; difficulties in establishing what is truth in terms of bullying research; difficulties generalising and the importance of considering individual contexts.

I have also discussed the difficulty in determining and generalising on cause, event and effect and the difficulty in determining positive intervention strategies.

In addition the changing influences upon the EP role have been outlined as this is relevant to discussing with EPs how personal experiences, such as bullying and cultural influences, impact upon the way they work.

This background leads to the following research questions.

2.8 Research Questions

- What are the stories/narratives of EPs who have experienced bullying and to what extent do the themes relate to existing research?
- What impact did the process of storytelling within a group have on participants and me as facilitator?
- To what extent do personal experiences impact upon professional practice?
- How might this research be used to enhance EP understanding so as to enhance future work practice?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The objective of the research is to consider EPs' personal and professional stories about bullying. I am interested in how these stories impact upon their behaviour in personal and professional contexts. I would also like to explore whether telling the stories and then reflecting upon these experiences, using different mediums of communication and different forums, may change the EPs' views.

This is a qualitative mixed methods study, including elements of case study (narratives) and a FG and later reflections in DE.

This chapter details the process of coming to the research method, though its approach relates to Mercia's (2011) comments acknowledging the overlaps and complexities:

> *"I had always found [traditional methodologies] to be very useful as they structure the work which seems like a tangled ball of string……I believe [now] however, that this writing needs to work with its entanglement because any disentanglement would result in an over-simplification of it."* (p.12).

The chapter will be structured in the following way:

- The research aims (3.2) will be discussed.
- My epistemological position (3.3) will be discussed as this contributes to the choice of research method and the method chosen to analyse the data.
- The process of selecting the research methods and thus the rationale behind the choice of research methods, such as narratives (3.4).
- Ethical Considerations (3.7).

3.2 Research aims

Whilst writing the aims, I wanted to be flexible and adaptable and if other interesting information arose from the research to use it. Whilst taking this approach I wanted to remain vigilant and aware that sometimes researchers might want to fulfil their aims and what they seek, they find.

The aims were:

- To explore the perceptions of EPs who have had personal and professional experiences of bullying in schools.
- To explore how the narratives are "advanced, elaborated and negotiated in a social context," (Wilkinson, 2008, p.189).
- To consider how personal experiences impact upon professional practice.
- To enhance EP understanding so as to improve future work practice.

3.3 Epistemological position and some personal background

3.3.1 Researcher Reflexivity

To engage in becoming conscious or reflexive I believe there is a need to declare the epistemological stance.

It is important to acknowledge the problematic nature of attempting to conceptually define etymological terms. This has been addressed earlier in the literature review. Like Kelly (1991a, b) I believe constructs are based upon experiences and the meaning gained from these by individuals may differ, thus, the research has relativist leanings.

Emerson and Frosh (2009); Riessman (2008); Foucault (1984a, p.103). stress the importance of recognising the researcher in the process and how their presence, the lense they have, may influence the narrative provided by the participants and in turn the research itself:

> *"Consequently it is not enough that we should do without the author and study the work itself......In current usage, the notion of writing seems to transpose the empirical characteristics of the author into a transcendental anonymity."* (Riessman, 2009, p.104).

Sometimes it is difficult to be conscious of the stance taken, but by trying to make this explicit the reader is better able to make judgements about researcher objectivity. Moore (2005) acknowledges the difficulty in being fully aware of the influences that lead to the researcher's reality, to fully establish where value systems have come from:

> "Language, power, social factors and history shape our views about reality truth and power" (p.109).

I expect that the experience of doing the research will influence and shift my phenomenological perspective, though I may find it difficult to explain how this happened, as it is not always possible to be aware of this stream of consciousness. This is a fluid, rather than a static process.

I am a mother of 2 girls currently aged 12 and 10. One has been bullied in the past. In preparing my personal vignette I became more aware that my own negative experiences have made me more vigilant about ensuring my girls are "in the know." (Appendix 10). Thus like Kelly (1991), I believe that past experiences and how these are negotiated impact upon future beliefs and in turn behaviour.

My work as an EP involves leading the Anti-bullying SG for the LA, thus I may be influenced by current publications. I am a RP
 Trainer, an approach advocated in a recent study to combat bullying (Thompson & Smith May, 2008), thus this may affect my perception of this intervention and bias my analysis.

I have an older brother, younger sister and two half-sisters. When I was 9 years old my mother died. The feeling of difference (losing my mother at this early age) may mean that I may unconsciously focus upon certain aspects in my research, such as family.

Denzin and Lincoln (2002) comment upon the need for a reflexive stance around the way we have become conscious about something and the influences that have led us to look at one perspective particularly. Not having the correct clothes to acceptably fit in was an awareness of the time. This may influence the focus taken in the TA. I am also tall. My elder daughter is tall. Some of the bullying was targeted around physical appearance.

Hence the physiological causes of bullying may predominate, as this affected my daughter and me.

I acknowledge that despite checking and questioning, objectivity is impossible to achieve. I will make assumptions and interpretations based on my own experiences and acknowledge that these may be challenged. These experiences are real to me, though I also acknowledge that such influences will affect my interpretation of experiences provided by EP participants (see ethics below).

Paradigms are structures used to reflect upon stances taken. Shifting to other paradigms may help me reflect upon a different stance and challenge and question it. This approach may still not achieve objectivity. This was why I was keen that EPs participated in different communication methods, Riesman (2009) comments upon herself revisiting research at a later date and considering agency and viewing her research differently. It depends upon the focus that the researcher is taking:

> *"The same bricks (the data) could be used to build a number of different buildings."* (Willig, 2008, p.13).

I need to be aware of ontology. Foucault (1984d) discusses that ontology (nature of being) of ourselves is based around how we evaluate ourselves in relation to knowledge held, how we use the knowledge in order to gain power or influence others and thirdly:

> *"ontology in relation to ethics, through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents."* (p.351).

This suggests that there may be contradictions around our ontology; aims of gaining power or respect via completing this thesis, may conflict with ethical concerns. It is also crucial that I try to monitor these influences throughout the research. This will be further discussed in 3.7, Ethical Considerations. The focus will be on the researcher's stance and interpretation which I acknowledge can be challenged.

Denzin and Lincoln (2002) discuss "community" and the fact that we as researchers are publishing to a community with an aim of furthering education. How personal experience might influence an EP's role might support other EPs in being more reflective about their practice.

Kvale (2002) discusses "pragmatic validity" the sense that what "truth" is. This should be questioned, but based upon best fit we make generalisations that support or negate perspectives. Silverman (1993) suggests that there is no "stable reality" (p.201), thus classification or categorisation is impossible as there needs to be consideration of "shifting goals and practices" (p.202). However, I believe that we categorise in order to make sense (Burr, 2003). I encourage the reader to make judgements and challenges about the categorisations. Unlike Positivists, I believe that there are alternative "truths." It is difficult to establish truth and fact, based upon changing stances or positions taken, contexts and times, (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000).

Positivism defined by the Oxford Dictionary (2013) is "a philosophical system recognizing only that which can be scientifically verified or which is capable of logical or mathematical proof."

> *"Statistics provide representations of the world that reflect the material that has been identified and measured, and this material is already infused with choices made by the investigator."* (Parker, 2005, p.9).

My research seems to align with Silverman (1993) who comments:

> *"such simple minded triangulation of data fail to do justice to the embedded, situated nature of accounts."* (p.200).

This comment also helps to explain why questionnaire research was not a methodology selected.

Triangulation through diary or group or through written narratives will not provide generalised truth, though will help me consider "pragmatic validity".

Reading Mercia's (2012) struggle in applying research methods and Bion (1961) who suggests that it is important to challenge yourself by entering uncomfortable arenas as this provokes greater reflexivity seemed to support me in choosing more flexible methodologies:

> *"The aforementioned balance which is vital for stability was very much shaken and through the spiralling process of instability and stability emerged a continuous discovery."* (Mercia, 2012, p.2)

I became interested like Mercia, in questioning whether our truth is actually supporting us or not. Meeting as a group might make taken for granted truths more explicit.

Kvale (2002) suggests that unless there is clarity and a rigorous reflection on methodology chosen, then there may be difficulty in presenting clarity of thought and process, leading to clarity of results and analysis. Unless there is a reflection upon how the research may contribute to prior research then it becomes defunct. I agree with this interpretation, but acknowledge its difficulty based upon comments made by Mercia (2011) above.

I will now discuss epistemological influences, and the paradigms that I shift into during the research in order to challenge my 'truths', but acknowledge that personal experiences also affect interpretation. These theories in turn may determine the nature and focus of the analysis.

3.3.2 Epistemological Influences
3.3.2 (i) Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EST and its influence on Epistemology

Figure 3 illustrates a number of systems and provides examples of them. Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests that individuals interact with and influence other systems in the outer circles and in turn these interact and influence us and also other systems within the circles. I have tried to demonstrate in Chapter 2 how the outer circles, such as media, literature, government culture and legislation, influence the inner and vice versa, such as suicide and extreme bullying cases which might particularly influence the outer circles.

Figure 3: Nielson (2011) provides a diagram of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EST.
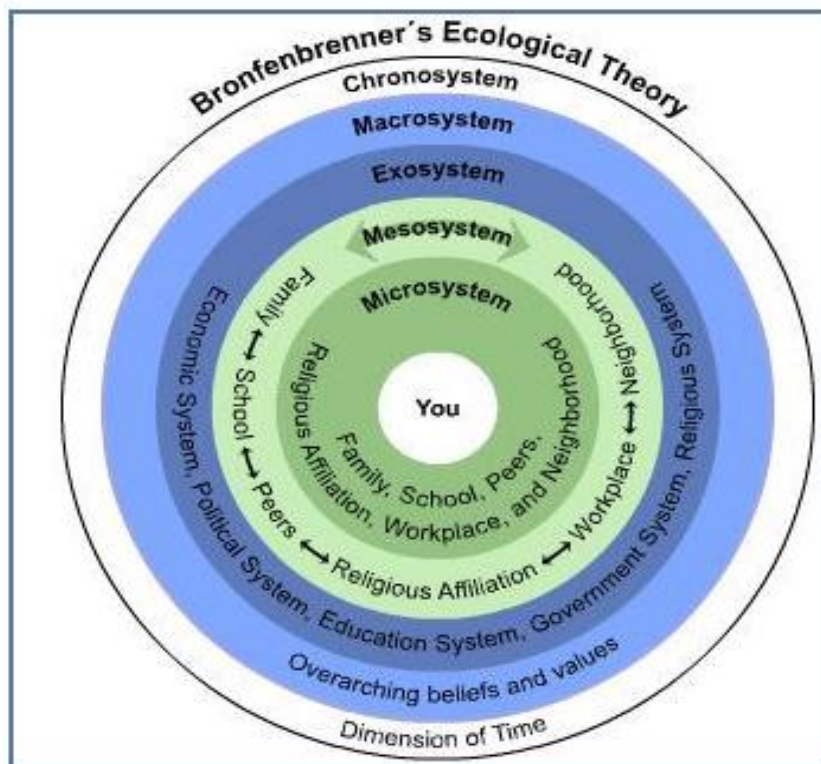
EST influences my perspectives as a researcher and the choice of the use of groups because interaction within them may demonstrate how these ES interact.

Billington (2000) comments:

> *"These relations are not merely inter-personal, they are intra-personal and inter-subject."* (p.87).

This research aims to consider social influences rather than to focus upon individual's traits or deficits.

3.3.2(ii) Kelly's influence on epistemology

Although I have not applied Personal Construct Psychology as a rigid theoretical framework, Kelly has influenced my choice of methodology and analysis. His theories seem to underpin critical realism.

Kelly (1991) similar to Social Constructionists such as Burr (2003) suggests that there is no absolute truth. Kelly differs from Burr because he considers the differing individual experiences impacting upon our reality or truth, rather than culture. This is also the case for Vygotsky, Winnicott, Erikson, and Bandura – Constructivism.

You the reader of this thesis will have different truths or beliefs to me, based upon your different experiences. Kelly (1991a) argues that all present interpretations can be subject to revision after further experiences.

Like a scientist, we all interpret an event and form hypotheses and use these hypotheses to predict and deal with future events.
I am interested in how EP experiences of bullying have influenced future predictions, possibly in their professional practice.

Kelly (1991b) describes 12 corollaries and these help us to determine the way that we anticipate events. We test whether these constructs are validated through our behaviour. Narrative Inquirists (NI) seem to align to this theory but add to this by suggesting that we particularly do this construing through storytelling to help us process (See below, White, Epston, 1990; Riessman, 2008; Clandinin, Connelly, 2000).

Kelly's (1991b) dichotomy corollary discusses the fact that constructs exist as opposite poles. The person uses these constructs to predict what might happen but, in turn, predict what won't happen. Researchers in bullying might use this approach in determining themes that emerge, such as having empathy and having no empathy. EPs might do this in the work that they do within an educational context, depending upon the constructs that they feel are important at that time. For example in my own work, I might consider the "control over the environment a pupil might have" and the "control over the environment a pupil might not have." This might be an important construct for me at present and is used in my analysis.

The experience corollary that Kelly (1991b) refers to seems to be relevant to this research. Kelly suggests that a person changes and adapts constructs based upon different and on-going experiences. This research aims to consider how events might be construed and how this construing in and out of a group might affect perceptions. The experience of hearing different stories about bullying by others might therefore be expected to change constructs

about our own personal experiences. The experience of writing stories out, telling aloud, reflecting in diaries, using different mediums to interpret, might "modulate" constructs. In a different context and with different people, the experience might be different. Hence I take a critical realist stance in the fact that I may attempt to generalise this research, but understand that this may not be truth.

Some constructs are more concrete and are thus more difficult to change. When these are challenged, this may result in "hostile" behaviour. It might be interesting to consider the extent that EP's constructs are changeable and where reactions against change occurs when discussing bullying stories within the FG.

It is also important to note, that the experience of engaging in the process of this research, through reading articles and through experiential learning, may lead me to adapt and engage in new constructs, but each time, Kelly (1955) might suggest, I would be looking for alternative opposites to each construct or belief system. I may also be resistant to constructs and it is important that I monitor my own emotions during the process of the research, (See research diary). Notably, as an observer and researcher, my experiences and therefore predictions will be different to another's interpretation. This should be taken into account by the reader. It is hoped that as they read and challenge my and other's perceptions, they understand that they may be construing events based upon their different experiences. This seems to be a fundamental element to critical realist approaches in research.

The Choice corollary, discussed by Kelly (1991b), perhaps separates himself from social constructionists who might argue that society and culture has a greater influence and takes choice away, making us unconscious about the influences and institutionalism that we belong to and, in turn, making it difficult to question reality and truth.

It will be interesting after the FG to consider the extent that reflection in diaries seems to differ or be similar. It may also be interesting to evaluate the extent that my beliefs around what took place in the FG may be challenged by the DEs after the event.

Kelly (1991b) discusses the commonality corollary, the extent that one person's construct may be similar to another person's construct. Fransella (2004) suggests that having constructs in common with others helps people to get along. It might be interesting to consider the extent that EPs have similar constructs around bullying and their perception about their role.

The sociality corollary also appears to be relevant in this research, the extent that:

> *"one person construes the construction process of another; he may play a role in a social process involving the other person."* (Kelly, 1991b, p.5).

This suggests that we attempt to understand other people's constructs and by attempting to understand, we are supported in getting along with the other. The process of storytelling might help the listener to attempt to construe the other person's event and thus begin to understand their world based upon these experiences. Fransella (2004) discusses the need to "subsume" the construct system of the other person. Good storytelling might support this process. I am interested in whether we align with the constructs of the best story told and negate the constructs of the story that is told in a less canonical way.

Kelly (1991b) discusses the fragmentation corollary, where certain constructs are in contradiction to others and lead to different behaviours depending upon the environment. Kelly discussed slot movement, or slot rattling when an individual begins to construe certain behaviours as unlikeable (1991b, p.19-20). This might involve the movement from one pole to the opposite extreme. For example, a person may perceive themselves as "anxious" and act on the opposite pole; acting as "un-anxious" as possible. This attempt at the extreme opposite becomes tiring and might lead to the rattle back to the opposite pole of being "anxious" again. Neither pole is supportive to the person or societal group. I am interested in whether extreme events such as bullying incidents impact upon EPs in this way.

Damasio, a neuroscientist (2012) discusses sense of self. He talks about a "complex kind of consciousness" that he labels "extended consciousness":

> *"Many grades and levels that provides the organism with an elaborate sense of self – an identity – a persona ….richly aware of the lived past, of the anticipated future and keenly cognizant of the world beside it."* (p.5).

He talks about the dependence of memory and also the fact "that when it reaches its human peak, it is also enhanced by language."
Hence consciousness is determined by past experience and present positioning, understanding that the way we position ourselves might impact on future behaviour. My research seems to be influenced by this theory. The language that we use has been influenced by others in our past and our present, **but it is ours**. This very much relates to Vygotsky's (1934) theories.

3.3.2 (iii) Constructivism – Vygotsky's influence on epistemology

Vygotsky (1934) discussed how language enables us to experience the experiences of others, through interactions with them and this in turn shapes our future behaviour. Vygotsky (1925) suggests that interaction with others and feelings about these interactions enable us to become more conscious of what might be a form of truth or reality. Through these interactions and the response of others, we learn and adapt behaviour of what is or isn't acceptable. Vygotsky (1934) discussed how "inner speech" helps with planning, which is then tested by "outer" speech. Both have the function of communicating.

Task orientation and co-ordination of tasks seems to be a focus for Vygotsky (1930). He suggests that focus upon task needs to have social organisation. Using others and testing responses of others displays what is correct, increasing levels of knowledge. This methodology involves EPs focusing upon a task (delivering bullying stories) and testing hypotheses around this, thus developing the Zone of Proximal Development. Through the social process (FG) individuals are testing reactions and building knowledge. Language used in engaging in the methodological tasks tests the responses of others as to whether these tasks have been successfully orchestrated and where adaptations might be needed.

This as discussed in the literature review, is also the case for the bully. The task is to be accepted within the group, the language and response of group members is important in determining whether the bully will continue or adapt their behaviour to an alternative. Value systems and approaches modelled by others influences what is perceived as acceptable behaviours. Hence, in schools where bullying is evident, the ethos may encourage this behaviour or reduce it.

Vygotsky (1934) discusses the need for readiness to learn. If the child or individual is not ready, and the environment is not taken into account to support the learning or isn't differentiated, then learning may not take place. This theory might help to explain why certain anti-bullying interventions are not successful, particularly if the environment is not conducive to supporting the learning.

The environment needs to be taken into account in the FG.

Vygotsky (1934) discussed the difference between social speak and inner speak, the latter which is used to problem solve to self. He suggests that inner speech develops more effectively through increased social contact with others:

> "Those that are accustomed to solitary independent thinking do not easily grasp another's thought and are very partial of their own." (p.139).

Hence he suggests that thoughts remain "egocentric". Only when inner speak is placed in a social arena is it able to be negotiated and changed. The need for further clarification to the audience might in turn lead to a shift in meaning. This seems to be relevant for bullying, in that individuals because of shame may not discuss thoughts around their experiences and become stuck, ruminating or self-bullying.

Vygotsky (1934) discusses the fact that:

> "Compared with external speech, inner speech appears disconnected and incomplete… Quite frequently shortened sentences cause confusion." (p.139).

This is a feature of the methodology, as inner speech may be negotiated and changed through the FG experience for participants or by writing narratives and DEs.

Vygotsky (1939), comments upon written language being difficult to acquire:

> *"Written language is more difficult because it has its own laws, which differ, in part, from those of oral speech and these laws have still not been completely mastered by the child."* (p.45).

I am interested in EP levels of understanding about written structures in storytelling.

3.3.2(iv) Winnicott's influence on epistemology

Winnicott (1971) discusses the use of "transitional objects". [He provides an examples; the breast/food/security blanket].
He discusses how the transitional object, for example a security blanket is:

> *"affectionately cuddled as well as excitedly loved and mutilated."* (p.7).

Some theorists (Ekerantz & Rudhe, 1974) suggest that the transitional object must be an object and that it is used in a positive sense to soothe and establish a sense of otherness and to support being away from the mother-child relationship. Winnicott focused on the early childhood relationship, where an understanding of otherness and other's needs is built through negotiation with an object. When a mother fails to meet needs immediately through transitional objects, such as food, a negotiation occurs.

Walker (2012) and Kuhn (2005) suggest that this negotiation can be extended further, commenting upon a:

> *"wide breadth of the definition of object as being both concrete and abstract."* (Walker, 2012).

Walker (2012) states further that:

> *"Winnicott (1971, p.4) stipulates in his writings the occurrence of transitional objects and patterns move with us into our later lives …..It seems that transitional objects travel and extend from childhood into adulthood and their ubiquity and variety lend themselves to further exploration."* (p.14)

Winnicott (1971) suggests that the absence of the mother for too long might mean the transitional object loses its "symbolism/effect" and becomes "meaningless." The use of objects relies upon the response of others to justify

their importance. Winnicott (1971) discusses the importance of play and the use of transitional objects through play to negotiate what behaviour is accepted and what might be rejected.

> *"Playing facilitates growth and therefore health; playing leads into group relationships; playing can be a form of communication."*

This seems similar to Vygotsky (1933). He suggests that play is an area where the Zone of Proximal Development is at its optimal and through this interaction we learn further. Winnicott's (1971) use of transitional object has thus been extended to incorporate the (1) the object as abstract and (2) the object(s) as phenomenon, phenomena or even a process or other people. Campbell and Morgan (2005) suggest that:

> *"transitional phenomena remain enigmatic and hard to define. This elusive sense seems to be just what Winnicott seeks to describe in the child's approach to the "relationship between what is objectively perceived and what is subjectively conceived of."*

Walker (2012) interprets the use of "transitional phenomena" in adulthood and the fact that previous "transitional relatedness experiences" impact and lead to fears of the loss of a "stable holding environment" p.11. This in turn impacts upon negotiation with others. He discusses how "friends" for one of his clients have:

> *"unconsciously become transitional objects in his [client's] time of anxiety and his infuriation with them, which could also be interpreted as "destroying" is emplaced to test them in the hope of non-retaliation or in other words "survival" (Walker, 2012., p.11).*

Willock (1992) states
> *"in the course of maturation, the original transitional object gradually loses importance as the child shifts its interest to an ever-widening array of increasingly meaningful objects. The hypercathexis of the original object, which had made it so precious, is spread out over the whole transitional territory between inner reality and external world, that is over the entire cultural field of play, artistic creativity and appreciation, religion, dreams and so on."* (p.105).

In this thesis, I too have extended Winnicott's use of "transitional objects, phenomena" and "spaces" in particular, suggesting they could be adapted both in terms of bullying and in terms of the process. Narratives used in the FG might be considered to be "transitional phenomena."

"In the transitional world of play, children figure out their relationship to their worlds, discover themselves, and work out anxieties and conflicts. Adults do not play in quite the same way, but they too, need transitional activities to express their inner worlds and work out anxieties and conflicts."(Willock, p.102.)

This study may reveal negotiation of narratives and how they may help to expand imagination. Imagination, Vygotsky (1930) suggests comes about through play or experiences such as negotiating narratives, as breaches and the unexpected occurs and we then use our imagination to negotiate next steps (Figure 4).

Vygotsky argues (1930) that there has to be some experience that can be developed upon in order for imagination to be utilised. Participants might use imagination because there is confusion and breaches around their explanations of an event, so gaps are filled in order to support the story (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Zittoun, Cerchia (2013, p. 308). Diagram to demonstrate functions of imagination.
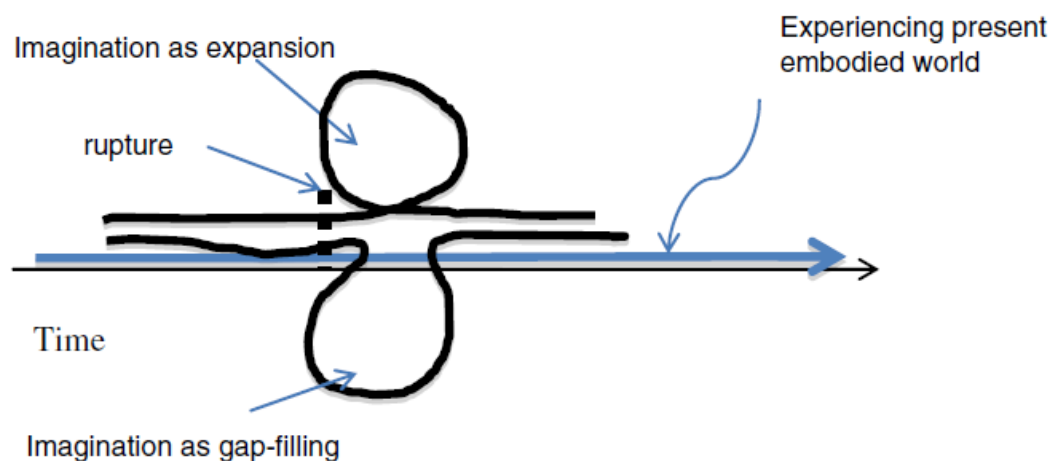
"Through resonance between narrative and personal experience, the work of imagination can be nourished with real emotions, and it can in turn guide the reader's experience through some ways of naming, distancing or transforming them." (Zittoun, Cerchia, 2013, p. 321).

The storytelling process may have impact upon participants, (either challenging the gap filling or supporting it). Bruner (1990) discusses stories having a breach or a surprise and it may be through telling these stories that alternate realities are tested, similar to the function of play. Imagined responses are tested in order to possibly problem solve and come to solutions.

The participant EP first writes the narrative, filling gaps for possible causes and breaches. Then the participant, as he/she writes the narrative, imagines the possible responses of the listening participants and adapts the story based upon the imagined responses. Telling the story also enables the participant to check whether their imagined hypotheses around the bullying incidents are acceptable or not in the FG.

The use of narratives within the FG seems to be a possible extension of Winnicott's "transitional phenomena" as interpreted by Kuhn (2005), Aiken &Herman (1997). They discuss how art might be used to negotiate within a "transitional space". Many EPs discussed at the time that they felt nervous about how their narratives might be received and one might argue that during the FG the negotiation of themes coming from the narratives was in many ways similar to a child negotiating play with their mother.

3.3.2 (v) Bandura

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) argues that children seeing adult behaviour and modelling it is a more effective learning approach than isolated teaching methods, for example methods such as direct instruction.

Bandura like Kelly focused upon anticipatory responses, whereas Vygotsky (Ferrari et al., 2010) focused upon "reflex" responses, similar to Pavlov's theories, about over-learned responses. If an event is replicated enough responses may be more automatic, and conditioned and repeated without thought. Dawes (2008) comments:

> *"The brain is using past experience stored as memory and anticipatory memory (an imagined future) as a basis for giving meaning to the information that flows into us from our environment. So we don't see what we sense, we see what we think we sense. This is because what we are experiencing moment by moment, has already been processed, or given meaning by our brain. In short, any the time you perceive an object in front of you, the brain has already decided its meaning."* (p.27).

This may help to explain anxiety triggers around bullying and comments made by participants in the research that they felt that they were there again when writing the story and felt like a child.

Bandura's (1977) theories around self-efficacy are important within the thesis. Self-efficacy is defined as; our own estimates of our ability, the sense that we perceive that we can achieve a task.

The sense of "I can do" is relevant in terms of bullying defenders, but also in terms of perception of self and perhaps willingness to disclose the narrative in the FG. Those that may be more willing to disclose may feel a greater sense of agency, enabling participants to have thoughts such as "I can disclose this story, describing my weaknesses, because I feel strong in other areas and I can trust those to whom I am disclosing." The group ethos may impact upon the self-efficacy of individuals, for example, thoughts might include "She's put out her story, placing herself in a vulnerable position, so I can do the same." On the other hand, if one person puts out a story in a way that is deemed not acceptable to the group, then this might lead to labelling and rejection by the group and impact upon self-efficacy.

I aim to reflect on this during the FG.

3.3.2(vi) Harre

Harre (2004) comments that:

> *"All higher order mental processes exist twice; once in the relevant group, influenced by culture and history, and then in the mind of the individual. The development of a human being is dependent as much on interpersonal relations as it is on individual maturation."* (p.2).

This comment seems to take a constructivist approach rather than a social constructionist approach, because there is a sense of agency, not dictated by culture alone, but a desire of the individual to portray themselves in a way that is accepted by those around us. In discussing positioning, Harre (2004) discusses the different numbers of "self". These include:

> *"The autobiographical self, the hero or heroine of all kinds of stories…..the autobiographical selves of real people can differ from story to story. Then there is the social self or selves, the personal qualities that a person displays in their encounters with others. This `self' too is multiple."* (p.2).

Foucault (1989) might agree with this perspective, suggesting the stories we tell about ourselves might change over time, depending upon cultural influences. He also comments upon the fact that individuals are given fixed labels/identities by others, which are then adopted.

Harre (2004) continues with his definition of `positioning theory':

> *"the study of the way rights and duties are taken up and laid down, ascribed and appropriated, refused and defended in the fine grain of the encounters of daily lives."* (p.3).

He suggests that we anticipate responses and position ourselves based upon the desired response that supports the "self" that we might want to portray.

Even if EPs are positioning themselves in certain ways during the research (Harre, 2004), then it provides information around what they would like to project at that time.

I acknowledge that certain beliefs may not be revealed, because of perceived judgement of others and expectations of the culture of the time. This further supports why a relativist and critical realist stance is taken throughout the research.

3.3.2 (vii) Burr and Foucault

Social Constructionists such as Burr (2003) argue that we should question the orientation of our knowledge based on the fact that we are influenced by time and culture.

Foucault (1989) argues that our rational sense of questioning is not possible as we are embroiled in the systems and the influences of the time. It is only by looking back over time that we can establish what these influences might have been. This supports the choice of EPs telling retrospective stories.

Burr (2003) discusses the importance of language and how language develops a sense of truth through interaction:

> *"Words we use may have arbitrary meanings, but once words become attached to particular meanings they are fixed in that relationship, so that the same word always has the same meaning. This explains how all the users of a particular language are able to talk to each other, to deal in the same currency of concepts."* (p.52).

Burr (2003) discusses how having awareness of the power of interaction helps us to challenge what is truth:

> *"The concepts we operate in are tied in with the kind of society we live in,"* (Burr, 2003, p.51)

meaning we often construct meaning through experience and scaffolding from parents. However, unlike Constructivists, Social Constructionists might argue that parents have also been influenced by culture at the time.

Foucault (1989) demonstrates how narratives become truth and get adopted. He demonstrated, using genealogical approaches, how medicalised deficit labels became a form of truth. One might argue the concepts of what is a victim and what is a bully have become a form of truth and a way of separating those that do not conform, placing them into these categories.

As EPs, agents for those in power (the state / parents), one might argue that we adhere to this labelling process. Foucault (1989) might argue that discourse is used to influence and gain power over others. It might be interesting to observe discourse between EPs, which might in turn influence educational systems.

Burr (2003) argues that it is important that we are aware of:

> *"the possibility of alternative constructions of the self and other events in one's world"* (p.48)

and challenge what is truth. Narrative Inquirists seem to align with this theory. Emerson and Frosh (2009) describe the difference between psychoanalysis and NI. NI does not take the description of events as truth, but more a construction. This will be a stance taken throughout this thesis.

> *"If we are looking for an explanation of the social world, either in terms of what individual people do and feel or in terms of groups, classes or societies, we should not look inside the individual, but into the linguistic space in which they move with other people."* (Burr, 2003, p.54).

For this reason, I am interested in focusing upon a **group** of EPs with narratives around bullying.

Knowledge of Social Constructionism guides me in being cautious about the decisions I make about the research and what is truth in terms of the literature review. This helps me to be:

> *"suspicious of our assumptions about how the world is meant to be."* (Burr, 2003, p.3).

Choosing different mediums, language, written formats, group and individual arenas attempts to promote greater reflection and to a small extent enables EPs and the researcher to distance themselves from influences at different times:

> *"A multitude of alternative versions of events are potentially available through language."* (Burr, 2003, p.64).

Burr (2003) acknowledges the fact that it is a natural process to develop:

> *"concepts and categories"* and these become *"a framework for meaning."* (p.8).

This helps to justify why a TA approach has been taken in the analysis of data.

Formation of categories becomes evident in the FG. I argue that first we listen to the stories and then we analyse and categorise them through interaction about them. For this reason, just using narratives alone without the social interaction might mean important information is lost:

> "*If language is indeed the place where identities are built, maintained and challenged, then this also means that the language is the crucible of change, both personal and social*"
> (Burr, 2003, p.56)

3.4 Rationale for use of narratives

Clandinin and Connelly (2000), suggest that throughout history a variety of research using narrative inquiry (NI) is evident. These differ depending upon the field of inquiry. Their definition of NI is:

> "*It is collaboration between researcher and participants over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An enquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses with such spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling and reliving and telling, the stories that make up peoples' lives both individual and social…. NI is stories lived and told.*" (p.20).

This particularly maps onto my research method, which involves "social interaction" about narratives within a FG. This research also involves diary reflections about the storytelling process away from a group forum.

The complexities of attempting to conceptualise terms such as storytelling and narratives arise when considering NI. Riessman (2008) comments that:

> "*Storytelling is only one form of oral communication; other discourse forms include chronicles, reports, arguments and question and answer exchanges.*" (Riessman, 2008, p.5).
> "*In word narrative is everywhere, but not everything is narrative.*" (p.4).

Genette (1972) discusses the difference in definition between a story and a narrative. He intimates that both a story and a narrative are a sequence or succession of events that are told or relayed, but suggests there is a "temporal duality" in narratives. The story had a specified time of when it happened, but when the story is told by the narrator at another specific time it becomes a narrative. Because of the disposition of the narrator, certain snapshots or aspects might be promoted and others neglected, depending upon what was significant for the narrator at that time.

It is anticipated that telling stories in a group forum and then later in DEs may change narratives again. I use the terms storytelling and narratives interchangeably.

> *"People make sense of their lives according to narratives available to them. Stories are constantly being restructured in the light of new events."* (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.2).

Narratives have expected structures / features (Bruner, 1990). If we do not conform to these the reader/listener might not engage. This possibly places constraints on the author about telling the story using a specific format and structure, which possibly leads to a different perception by the author after using this format.

Riessman (2008) insists that there should be a:

> *"Sequenced story line, plot and characters, particulars of setting."* (p.5).

Bruner (1990) adds to this definition of narrative, suggesting that there needs to be "Particularity" taking a specific form based on culture, for example romantic narratives. This helps the reader to make certain predictions – because they have experienced romantic narratives before.

> *"A narrative cannot be realised save through particular embodiment."* (p.7).

Bruner (1990) discusses "Narrative Banalisation" a story that uses a trusted and known structure and we predict the point from that structure. Parker (2005) and Bruner (1990) refer to genre being an important part of narrative in helping the reader make predictions. Bruner (1990) suggests that in order for the narrative to be accepted, even if there are breaches made to the expected plot, we have to comply with the expected "mode of telling".

Parker (2005), Bruner (1990) suggests that there is a difference between plot and the "mode of telling" and a good narrative engages the reader through familiarity and then surprises them with something different and unexpected.

Narratives have a purpose, to make sense of events through storytelling (Riessman, 2008; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Webster and Mertova, 2007). Riessman (2008) discusses early definitions of narrative:

> *"Aristotle understood that narratives are moral tales, depicting rupture from the expected."* (p.4).

Bruner (1990) agrees with this, discussing "canonicity and breach". There must be a breach away from the expected. The attempt to make sense of an event by the author becomes the narrative. Labov (1972) also refers to this breach, referring to it as a "complicating action within the structure of the story."

I am interested in the way the EPs tell their stories and the extent that these follow a canonical mode of telling. Often, canonical stories end with "resolution." Hence EP's storytelling might force resolution. EPs may set the scene, depicting a character as weak but succeeding in the end, as they might follow a canonical structure and manipulate their story to follow this, similar to fairy stories. Considering the needs of the listener may force them to change their story and in turn view it differently.

Bruner also discusses "referentiality" as essential as part of the narrative structure. He suggests that readers and listeners need to be able to relate to the story and reference parts of the story to their own worlds or narratives in order to engage. Hence the narrator considers the listener, sets the scene and attempts to encourage the listener to associate with the main character through a canonical storytelling process.

Bruner (1990) discusses "Intentional state entailment" which suggests that the central character has beliefs and feelings and intentions and these will relate to the happenings of the story:

> *"Agency is always present in narrative… a basis for **interpreting** why a character acted as he/she did."* (p.7).

Bruner (1990) comments that this does not provide "causal explanations". I interpret that he means that this is a context bound narrative perspective of the narrator at the time and may not be a form of "truth." Canonical storytelling may affect this truth because expected structure to engage the listener may change the story. This might include an expectation of resolution at the end or breaches where the main character overcomes adversity.

EP knowledge of other EPs, their roles and expectations at the time, might influence the way these stories have been written and read aloud. This research may be classed as "insider" (Mercer, 2007) and thus EP participants may feel judged by other EPs and myself as an EP observer. This will have impact upon the way they tell their story. I tried to make it clear in the introduction to the FG that we were not there to judge others, (Appendix 3). Parker (2005) also discusses the importance of considering social context and culture at the time and how this might influence the telling of the story. Hence this justified the group context. Harre (2004) discusses how "social selves" might also change depending upon context and time. The selves that participants might want to project within the FG were of interest. This might reveal the perspectives of EPs at this time or the kind of projected self that EPs might want to portray. Parker (2005) warns of those in qualitative research feeling that they might have "a rigorous set format for interpreting what people say" (p74). Interpretations are difficult for the person performing and even more difficult for the researcher. Thus I make it explicit in this method again that these are my interpretations. Harre (2004) comments:

> *"Clearly interpersonal relations must enter into communal forms of remembering, deciding, problem solving and so on. Among the most important are rights and duties and their distribution among the people involved."* (p.2).

Bruner (1990) suggests that stories are "accrued" and become culture. Foucault (1989a) would also agree with this, citing Calvin's writings as influencing culture at the time. This fits with Webster and Mertova (2007):

> *"In narratives, our voice echoes those of others in the socio-cultural world" (*p.2).

Bruner (1990) refers to "hermeneutic composability." He suggests that there must be a point or meaning to the story, an interactive nature, depending upon the time and context. Hence, to tell a story in isolation, without interaction, seems to lose the key features of the interactive storytelling process. Hence group interaction was selected as a method.

There may be benefits to storytelling:

> *"Participants become experts in their own narratives, participants can be encouraged to develop confidence in articulating their own chosen narratives; that participants can make choices about preferred narratives, for example those associated with feelings and interpretations of the emotional lives of themselves and others."*
> (Billington and Todd, 2012, p.7).

When we face events that we find difficult, hard to predict and respond to, we often relay the story to others and this might help us to understand it better. However, if stories are too painful, then the story might remain untold. Bullying might be one example of this. Parker (2005) suggests that stories often involve an event that is "disturbing or incomprehensible." This fits with a bullying event. Discussing stories can help to externalise situations away from the story being about a weakness in the main character, to other factors. Not telling these stories to others may lead to a sense of the storyteller becoming stuck and anticipating similar events. (White and Epston,1990). I am interested in whether this might be the case for EPs.

Narratives have been chosen as a method because:

> *"Narrative is well suited to addressing the complexities and subtleties of human experience in teaching and learning."* (Webster, Mertova, 2007, p.1).

Memory Work (MW) influenced my choice of using narratives in groups as a method. MW was first developed by Haug at al., (1987). She worked with a number of researchers. Each researcher developed a written narrative in the 3rd person, around a specific theme. The researchers, then met together to discuss the narratives. I liked this approach as it seemed to tap into development through discourse, extending meaning for participants and myself. This seemed to help challenge the individual researcher by providing other interpretations towards the narratives provided.

Whilst reading examples of MW methodology I wrote my own 3rd person narrative and 1st person narrative (Appendix 10) of a bullying incident that I had experienced. The aim of this was to consider how writing from different perspectives might impact upon me differently. I found, when writing about the same incident, that there were different revelations in each format and it led me to reflect upon the differing approaches to narratives.

I had considered asking my research participants to write 3rd person (he/she/pseudonym)) person and 1st (I) person narratives. However, I felt that data would be too vast and DEs enabling participants to reflect away from the group might be a more helpful method. Writing 3rd person accounts might also be ethically unviable, as they potentially lead to greater disclosure, possibly because of a belief that they are anonymised, (Fransella, 2004).

Much of MW research seemed to be based upon political and gender affiliations. Reading MW research in 2013, written in the 1990s and narrative analysis, using TA such as Brown's (1999) on anger and girls helped me to understand how societal influences at the time might lead to a focus on specific themes and analysis. This might be true for my research read ten years from now. I liked this. I enjoyed criticising stances and interacting with their interpretations.

Critics of TA (Emerson and Frosh, 2009) suggest the researcher looks for what they have decided. This led to the rejection of adopting MW solely, as my direct involvement might lead the group and skew the data. I wondered whether I could encourage EPs to interpret the stories in a FG and these interpretations might in turn challenge my interpretations. If themes were selected and categorised by the group, without direction from me, this might be interesting and force me to reflect upon emerging themes that I had not considered prior to and during the group. If these themes were also challenged away from the group this would also be interesting and demonstrate the interactional nature of categorisation, but also the possible rejection of these away from a group situation. Burr (2003) influenced the choice to use TA of narratives because she suggests that it is a natural process to develop:

> *"concepts and categories" and these become "a framework for meaning."* (p.8).

I am interested in the process and impact of categorisations placed on other's stories.

3.5 Rationale for choice of FG method

Stewart et al., (2007) describe elements of a FG method. This involves participants meeting to discuss something "concrete" that that they have experienced. The reason for having a group is motivated by wanting to observe the rejection or acceptance of others' views. This seems to fit with my research aims.

Figure 5 demonstrates the collaboration between participants, joint understanding and learning in Action Research (AR) Methodology also involving a group. In some ways my research holds elements of AR approaches.

Vygotsky (1962) discusses how inner voice conversations that we have with ourselves are often abbreviated, missing out key features, as the purpose is to make sense rather than convey meaning:

> *"In inner speech…a single word is so saturated with sense that many words would be required to explain it in external speech."* (p.148).

Encouraging the delivery of a story provokes a need for explanation, no longer "fluttering between thought and word." (p.149) and thus this may lead to a shift in perception, particularly when it has to be delivered to a group. I am interested in the impact on EPs of preparing the narratives (PLAN), relaying the narratives (ACT) and the response of listeners (EVALUATE) and reflection later.

Figure 5: Kagan., Birton., Siddiquee. (2007) AR flow diagram.
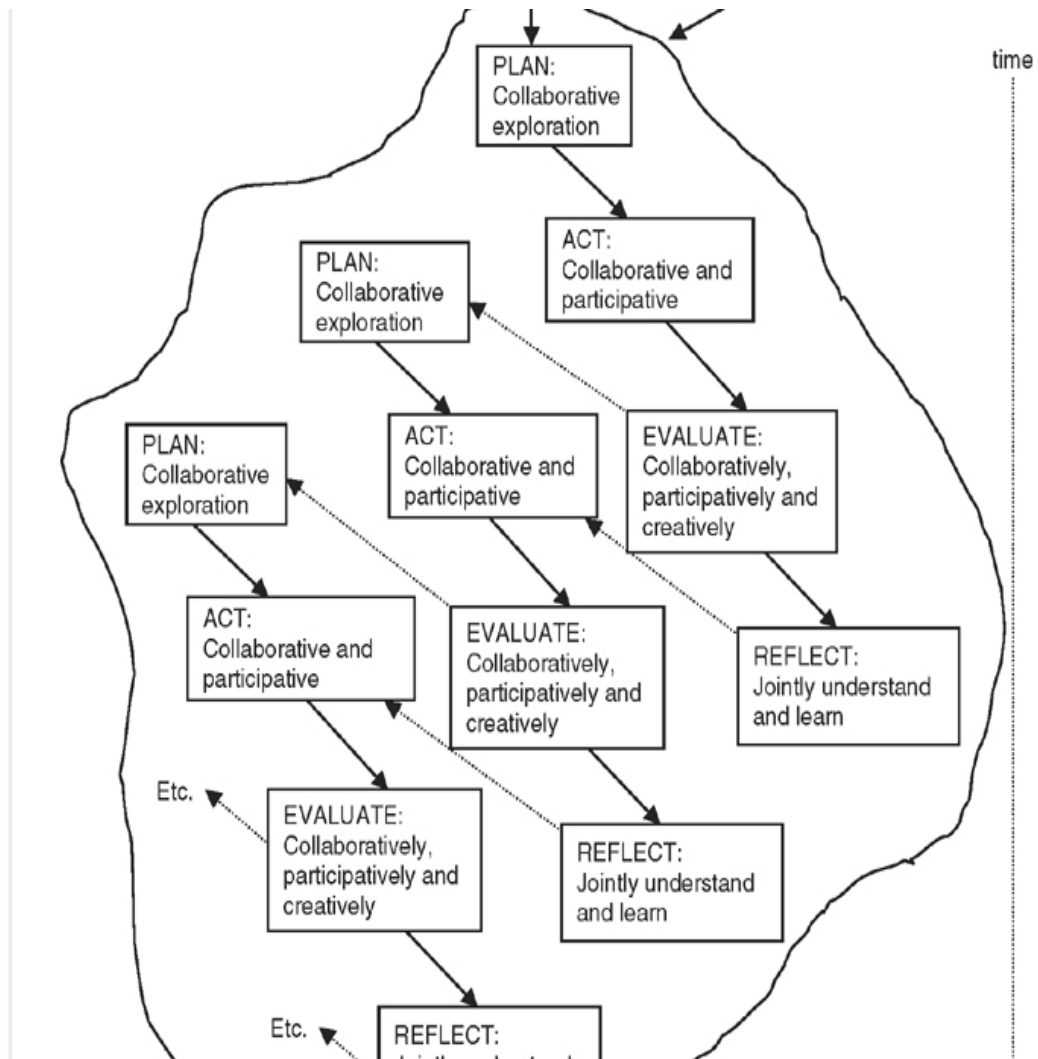
 "AR is a deeply collaborative process of inquiry, operating simultaneously at individual, interpersonal, group, organisational, community (and indeed societal) levels. Thus AR involves a focus on practical and political issues, reflection on one's own practices and the involvement of others in the research." (Kagan et al., 2007, p.32).

In my research I aim to consider the impact on myself as well as participants.

However, this methodology is different from canonical views around AR. Kagan et al. (2007) suggest that AR is the study of a problem with a goal of improvement locally, with a cycle of action until a solution is found.

"AR is always to do with change." (Kagan et al., 2007, p.32).

The aim was to discuss participants' narratives of bullying and consider what these narratives might tell us in terms of the research questions. There was no aim for action from these stories, although I was interested in the impact the storytelling process might have on individuals and the possibility that it may influence professional practice. This was not explicitly discussed with participants. (See ethics below).

This research method did not involve:

> *"a dynamic process of spiralling back and forth among reflection, data collection and action, development of a plan of action to respond to a practical issue."* (Kagan et al., 2007, p.32).

Unlike AR described by Figure 5, the method selected involved just one experience of each different medium of communication (PLAN, ACT, EVALUATE, REFLECT).

Barbour (2007) discusses how holding different FGs with different participants is an approach that enables challenge and reflection, over what themes do or do not emerge in both. However, because data also involved narratives and DEs the amount of data may have become over-whelming. Therefore another FG was not held, but raises potential for further research.

Some might consider it a limitation of the research (Kagan et al., 2007), as replication of the methods may have led to continued different findings. I argue that experiencing different mediums of communication enables greater reflection rather than the repeat of the same method.

Unlike AR my method did not involve:

> *"collaboration between researcher and participants" (*Kagan et al., 2007, p.32).

It was a dilemma whether to include my own narratives and to join in as part of the group or sitting as an observer. Silverman (1993) suggests that observation might provide more information, thus encouraging greater subjectivity. Bion (1961) discussed how, when involved in a group, it is difficult to be reflective about personal feelings. In a group if there is emotion, then it is "tense and confused" (p.59).

However, Riessman (2008) would suggest that by listening I have already lost subjectivity and that sitting as an observer may negatively affect group dynamics. Stewart et al., (2007) suggest that if the researcher discloses personal information this may serve to make participants feel more comfortable and in turn more willing to share. However, encouraging over-disclosure could be viewed as unethical.

Bion (1961) influenced my choice to observe rather than participate. He discusses how participants may look to me to lead and as a result, they would provide similar narratives and wait for guidance from myself around themes. Mercer (2007) also comments upon the fact that as I am also an EP, this is insider research. As a result, participants may want to provide answers to please a fellow EP, leading to:

> *"Pragmatism [in achieving a better working relationship with me] rather than candour."* (p.8).

Hence I decided to remain quiet, with no input, other than to introduce the narrators and read the introductory script.

The dilemma of whether to ask the group specific questions in the FG, was also reflected upon. Asking questions might provide an ability to "drill down" (Stewart et al., 2007) or clarify comments made. Bion (1961) again influenced my choice of not asking questions. By asking questions fellow EPs may interpret my desires and thus this would be faux data.

Stewart et al. (2007), suggest that FGs:

> *"that rely entirely on unstructured and indirect questioning may not yield sufficiently definitive findings."* (Stewart et al., 2007, p.8).

This might be a limitation for the research. However I felt that asking participants to provide vignettes would prevent this, as they could be used as "transitional phenomena" (Winnicott 1971, as adapted by Willock, 1992; Kuhn (2005) and Aitken & Herman (1997)). Kuhn (2005) discusses how adults continue to use objects to negotiate a sense of otherness:

> *"the dynamic equilibrium of inner and outer reality is not confined to the transitional objects of childhood, but continues in adult life. These processes are never completed and we continue re-enacting play and other transitional processes throughout life in engagements with our adult phenomena. These are associated by Winnicott with culture in general including creative enjoyment of, or participation in art and religion."* (p.402.)

Stewart et al. (2007), discuss how the use of direct questioning prevents reflection, commenting that "human thought is visual, metaphorical, and emotional" (p.8) also seems to justify use of narratives rather than direct questioning.

FGs are regarded to be advantageous in research (Stewart et al., 2007) because they "stimulate" (p.46), enabling the participants' comments to be elaborated upon. They can provide "security." Unlike direct questioning to participants, they enable reflection whilst one person speaks and the ability to direct comments away, if the participant feels uncomfortable, as others may interject on their behalf Bullying is a sensitive topic, so seems to fit this method. It also enables participants to recognise when they have been misunderstood and enables further clarification, without direction or influence from the researcher.

Groups should have a common identity, (Stewart et al., 2007). This is the case for my research in the fact that participants were all EPs.
The fact that the topic bullying, a social phenomenon, seems to relate to the FG purpose which is to study:

> *"behaviour topics, including social interaction patterns and personal space; group composition, cohesiveness, decision making, and productivity; and conformity, leadership, and social power."* (Stewart et al., p5).

seems to support my choice to use FG

3.6 Rationale for using diary extracts

One limitation of FGs cited by Stewart et al. (2007) is that:

> *"The "live" and immediate nature of the interaction may lead a researcher or decision maker to place greater faith in the findings than is actually warranted."* p.44.

Reflections about these in DEs away from the group is of interest.

Stewart et al. (2007) discuss the fact that in FG methodology; there is a need to take into account demographic considerations for participants. These involve – "age, sex, income, occupation, education, religion, and race." (p.20), but also – physical attractiveness and "personality characteristics," the way participants react to others, involving – "empathy, independence, sociability, and social insight." (p.22). This will be discussed below in "participation".

A shift in perspectives may occur when reflecting in the DEs away from the group. The fact that these are also in written format may also impact on this. Vygotsky (1934) discusses how written format is more "formal" and even greater explanation is needed as it is away from a social situation where tone, body language and context also convey meaning so verbal language can be abbreviated.

> *"It is as much a law of inner speech to omit subjects as it is law of written speech to contain both subjects and objects."* (p.145).

I also liked the idea of participants writing their narratives down after the FG, as this is a different position from that of verbal dialogue/vignettes. Mercia (2012) comments upon this being of benefit to her:

> *"I was encouraged to write what concerns me, and this served to increase my awareness of these issues. Writing has highlighted these concerns and given them a different form."* (p.16).

Keeping a research diary supported me. A different context, may lead to a different phenomenological stance for participants, which in turn may shift the researcher's view. Bion (1961) comments:

> *"We are constantly affected by what we feel to be the attitude of the group to ourselves."* (p.32).

He suggests that most of us do not vocally express these feelings, we internalise it and it affects our behaviour. Hence, DEs might reflect these unexpressed feelings. Bion (1961) suggests that groups might struggle to provide an individual perspective and discusses the problem of anonymity. He discusses the fact that for any group we will never:

> *"be arriving fully equipped as an adult, filled with instinct to know…. Exactly how to live and move and have his being in the group."* (p.89). (See results)

Bion suggests that as individuals we are naturally "herd animals" (p.95) and being part of the group might take precedence over providing ideas as an individual. Moving away from the group, he describes as "inalienable." (p.95); for this reason, there may be difficulty in establishing own individual thoughts.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

I was mindful of ethical considerations and gained approval from the University Research Ethics Committee (Appendix 4 for approval letter dated 16.06.13). I also took advice from the ethical reviewers.

I was also mindful over the fact that this is a university thesis, which impacts upon how conversation and written data are transcribed and analysed. For this reason I explicitly clarified with participants that this was not just a conversation and that data gained from narratives, FG discussions and DEs would be used in research, (Appendix 1, 2).

Information leaflets were provided and signed letters of consent obtained. EPs were advised in the consent form and also at the start of the FG that they could withdraw from the process or withdraw consent to use the information provided at any time (See Appendices 1-3). They were also advised of what would be expected of them, such as time spans. There was also clear communication of where further clarification or concerns about the research could be expressed to external parties in the consent forms.

Prospective participants were asked to agree to confidentiality with regard to the FG discussion at the consent stage and at the start of the FG in order to preserve their own anonymity and that of other participants (Appendix 3). I also made it clear that, on reflecting upon the process in DEs, named EPs should be anonymised and reflections about the process should not be discussed with others out of the group.

Written consent to tape record vignettes and the FG was gained. All transcriptions and written data were anonymised and this was communicated to EPs in the consent letter. Tape recordings of the FG will be destroyed once the thesis is accepted. This was communicated to participants. Written case studies will be returned to participants.

Mercer (2007) discusses some of the ethical dilemmas for "insider researchers." As an EP, I am part of this heterogeneous group. She discusses the fact that there may be greater potential for participants trying to please the researcher because of a desire to keep a good working relationship. Although I did not work with EPs, I was conscious that participation might be deemed as a favour to me, though there was no concrete reward provided for doing so. I had previously worked with 5 of the EP participants.

The BPS (2006) discusses the importance of being clear about objectives and the process. I tried to do this, but was mindful about the fact that as suggested by Mercer (2007) providing research questions to participants may lead to the prescribed response they felt I wanted.

Mercer (2007); Silverman (2000) comment upon one limitation for insider research being possible power relationships, for example, if the participant or the researcher holds a management role. I hold no management position. One member of the group held a management position. However, she did not manage any of the other participants. Hierarchical positions might be determined by other factors, such as age or gender; or the level of intimacy between group members. I provided the ability to withdraw from the process or the ability to express discomfort if needed, as this might be difficult to determine beforehand.

As participants would be presenting oral narratives and written narratives about potentially distressing experiences some feeling of discomfort was to be expected. These feelings might be increased by the group situation and sharing, depending upon the ethos/culture of the group. Bion (1961) suggests purpose and ground rules can support in counteracting this. At the start of the FG session, I read a script asking for respectfulness, not talking over others (Appendix 3). I emphasised the fact that participants can remove themselves from the group if they feel uncomfortable or could express the fact that they wanted there to be a change of focus away from themselves. I hoped that this would encourage participants to feel that they had a sense of control over events. No one expressed discomfort or removed themselves from the group.

Lysaght (2009) suggests there is a need to be cautious as a researcher:

> *"Providing the opportunity for another to tell a story about significant events is a bit like opening Pandora's Box"* (p.36).

I was mindful of the need to be flexible depending on the process of the session and was aware that approaches from narrative therapy may be utilised as appropriate, for example, 'externalising the problem' (White and Epston, 1990). Use of this technique to support EPs in seeing the problem as separate to them was not needed during the delivery of vignettes or the FG.

I was also mindful of the fact that I was an EP and the research was with a small group of other EPs. This may, as Drake (2010) comments, make it difficult to "engage critically with the data," (p.85). Familiarity with some EPs might lead me to make assumptions about the data, using judgements based upon prior interactions and experiences unconsciously. I might also make:

> *"assumptions that [my] own perspective is far more widespread than it actually is."* (Mercer, 2007, p.6).

It was important that I tried to be explicit about these judgements and use a research diary to reflect. However, analysis is needed as:

> *"A researcher in the position of 'scribe' rather than 'author' diminishes the text instead of enhancing it. But taking on the mantle of 'author' also means taking responsibility for expressing authorial understandings and theories that emerge as a result of a complex process involving other people."* (Drake, 2010, p.96).

I was mindful of the delicate balance of considering the costs to individuals **and** the benefits in supporting other EPs in reflecting about their role. I was mindful of BPS (2006) guidelines around researchers considering the:

> *"foreseeable threats to their psychological well-being, health, values or dignity."*

The difficult balance between benefits to the readers and costs to the participants caused a dilemma that had not been anticipated fully, until I came to the analysis stage in the research. Hastings (2010) also discusses this dilemma and how changes in the researcher's perspective during the research might impact ethically:

"I argue it may ultimately lead to presenting a story that was not originally intended nor sought, and for which participants have not given, and may not have given, consent. There must always be an emergent aspect of the research _ an interplay between the design and what emerges." (Hastings, 2010, p.313).

The interpretation by the researcher might contradict with the participants' perceived objective of providing stories about bullying. Hastings (2010) also reflected upon this dilemma:

"There is a collision between the need to hear the authentic voice and an equally pressing need to tease out aspects of teacher [in my case EP] subjectivity and the power of institutions." (p.313).

Like Drake (2010); Hastings (2010) I believe these are my interpretations of the EP interpretations and these can be challenged, but they are mine.
 I could have checked out interpretations on an individual level, but like them, feel that as the researcher is central to the research, interpretations are valid and it is for the reader to interpret and critique them.

"Trying to convert what they said into 'stories' forced a framework upon their words that excluded much of what they actually said about their own understanding and also excluded what this author gained in understanding simply from the very act of having the conversations with them. Whose voice is heard and the authenticity of what is said, recorded, analysed, and ultimately written, gives the author power." (Drake, 2010, p.97).

I acknowledge that my interpretations can be challenged but:

"It is not appropriate to do nothing to the text, but to imagine that the analysis reveals 'the truth' is also somewhat foolhardy, such that other readers/analysts would almost certainly construct a different truth, another fabrication within the norms of a different discursive tradition." (Hastings, 2010, p.316).

I was mindful about preserving "mutual respect and confidence between investigators and participants." (BPS, 2006). I tried to place myself in the shoes of participants and question – "If I was one of them, would I be okay with this?"

Originally I aimed to provide written feedback to participants about analysis (Appendix 11). However, as comments made by individual EPs (although made anonymous) could be located back to individuals (by members of the group) these could be potentially upsetting, I felt that the data should stand as it is, as part of my interpretations.

"In whose best interests is it to not show them what I have written? I considered whether it was perhaps preferable to protect them from harm, in that they might find the reading of my analysis quite hurtful?" (Hastings, 2010, p314).

I held an informal meeting for participants where I orally provided brief feedback, using information from Appendix 11 and then we engaged in dinner together. Comments made, particularly in DEs, were of interest and they felt valid to include in the research, particularly as EPs had been explicitly made aware that all data may be used.

Mercer (2007) discusses a potential "double edged sword of insider accounts" the fact that:

"Insider researchers usually have considerable credibility and rapport with subjects of their studies, a fact that may engender a greater level of candour than otherwise would be the case." (p.7).

I did not anticipate the extent of this.

However the validity and realness of the research would be affected if I took out things that were pertinent to the research questions. In a discussion with my tutor (as suggested by BPS guidelines, 2006), we decided that the thesis would remain closed to the public for 5 years and unless requested by participants I would not provide written feedback.

Mercer (2007) also comments upon the fact that checking out written analysis may not confirm validity or:

"trustworthiness. Unfortunately such a belief fails to take into account of the fact that the perspectives of individual information may be ambivalent at any given moment, may change over time and may contradict one another to such an extent that consensus is impossible." (p.12).

She further comments that rather than confirming current analysis, this generates new data:

"The same person can have multiple understandings of reality, depending on the situation, and their verbal descriptions of these various understandings (be they genuine or consciously contrived) will be different at different times and with different people." (p.12).

Mercer (2007) also discusses use of incidental data (time spent with participants after the data collection, where comments might be revealed) within research and the ethical use of this without informed consent. Because participants had not signed consent, it was not used. This was confined to my research diary, (unless I specifically asked an EP to use it and read to them what I would be putting down).

3.8 Final note on language

Throughout the thesis I have looked to warn of the dangers of treating words and the meaning of words as both static and as immediately knowable.

De Shazer comments that:

> *"anything your reader can do for himself leave to him"*
> (Wittgenstein, 1984, p.77, as cited in De Shazer, 1997, p.139.)

He also comments that we should however stay with the language in order to make sense. For this reason when terms such as bully and victim are used, I urge the reader to interpret these with caution, knowing that [the reader] may have heard stories and used these to interpret events.

De Shazer (1997) discussed the use of terms such as "bully" within a sentence using the verb to be, such as "the bully is…" This implies that this is a "steady state, something permanent." However, similar to the IIRP (2007) I urge the reader to interpret this as not a description of a person, but emphasise the fact that there may be a need to separate the "act" from the "actor."

For this reason, even when the terms "bully" and "victim" are used, there should be no assumption of a common understanding. Indeed, there have been occasions I have found the lure of such reductionist readings difficult to resist and as a reader you may want to be alert to those times.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

This chapter will discuss the research methodology and the rationale behind the choice of analysis

4.1 Design of study

The research involved three stages that were inter-related. There were 7 EP participants. These were recruited via letter (Appendix 1).

1. Each participant prepared a 3 minute vignette (short narrative) about an experience of bullying, either in a professional or personal experience capacity.

2. Each participant attended a FG of 2 hours. This was split into 2 parts. After a short script about ground rules for the group was delivered, (Appendix 3), EPs took it in turns to present their prepared vignette. The participants then engaged in a discussion without researcher direction. I then provided the group with stamped addressed envelopes with an empty diary and covering letter explaining the next stage involving DE reflections (Appendix 5).

3. Participants kept a diary for 7 days. In this they reflected on the session and also revised or re-wrote or created another vignette about an experience of bullying in school, either from a professional or personal perspective.

I made it clear that all vignettes were expected to be different (Appendix 5). On looking back, I feel that this was a good choice as one participant did comment upon the fact that despite being told at the start that narratives were expected to be different she felt she had delivered hers incorrectly.

Data used for research were:

1) Initial vignette, transcribed
2) FG, transcribed
3) Diary Extracts (DEs) by 7 EPs including a second written narrative of their experience of bullying.
4) Personal research diary, with events that provoked reflections. This was not part of thematic analysis (TA).
5) Informal meeting for verbal feedback

This data set were considered in combination and not separately.

4.2 Participants

The participants were to be 6 to 8 EPs who have narratives about bullying in school. The EPs were already known to me and were recruited from the local region, (Appendix 1). EPs were not recruited from the team that I work in. This helped to prevent some of the limitations cited by Mercer (2007) in engaging in insider research. Because we are from the same EP group we may have similar outlooks. I also wanted to discuss my thesis research in peer supervisions and be challenged around my findings by people who were isolated from the event. This proved a helpful choice.

Initially, when I approached EPs, there was a keenness to want to know who else was participating and asking for certain EPs to be included or not included. This caused a dilemma as if I wanted group dynamics to be positive this might be beneficial, for disclosure of information and feeling a sense of trust, (Stewart et al., 2007). However, choosing like-minded EPs might mean that the group would not reflect the different perspectives of EPs. I wrote to EPs separately, not revealing the other participants (20 letters sent, 8 replied agreeing to participate).

The selection was not based upon age or gender, but around whether they had experienced a bullying incident. All of those that agreed to participate were selected. Seven that were asked, but not included, said that they did not have a bullying incident to describe.

EP participants had a range of experience, some having worked within the profession for 20 years or more and one having recently come to the profession.

The participants were –

- Sally and Ann (pseudonyms used in transcripts), 2 EPs working in one LA – Both female, aged around 50 and 60 years old respectively. Ann had previously held a specialist EP role working with children who are looked after by carers.
- Joan and Amy, 2 EPs working in one LA - Both female, aged around 40-50 years. Joan held a specialist EP role supporting Emotional Wellbeing.
- Sarah, 1 EP working in one LA – Female aged around 40 years, holding a Senior EP role.
- Jane, 1 EP working in one LA – Female aged around 50 years, new to the profession.
- Tom, 1 EP – working privately – Male, aged around 40 years. He had previously held a specialist EP role working with children who are looked after by carers.
- One failed to attend due to illness.

A limitation of the research may be around demographics, imbalance in age and gender. My sample seems to represent general EP gender bias. Age ranges varied from 30 to 60 years of age, though 4 out of the 7 were within 40-50 years.

Mercer (2007) discusses demographics in terms of "researcher insiderness" and the fact that this should be interpreted on a continuum. For example, I am a female so therefore there may be some alignment with females. I am also 40 so there may be some alignment with 40 year old interpretations. I believe that it is impossible to separate all demographics and be conscious about levels of influence. Stewart et al. (2007) discuss the fact that leaderships emerging in the group may promote greater conformity; they discuss how social power evolves and reasons for it evolving.

Being aware as an observer of "reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power" (p.29), may help me to be aware of limitations as a result of demographics. However, the larger the group to take demographics into account, the less the chance there may be for individual expression in the FG. I aimed to consider demographics during observation. This was another reason for not participating in the group.

Procedure

Each member of the group was given the same task of presenting a vignette without interruption and there were initial ground rules. It was expected that vignettes would be different and there was no incorrect approach. I hoped dominance or challenge in the group would be avoided and thus facilitate more open discussion. Stewart et al. (2007) discuss how an "artificial leader," the moderator, who supports in rapport building and explaining ground rules, can support in eliminating the emergence of a leader elsewhere.

I decided not to dictate who would go first in delivering their vignette as this may also demonstrate my desire to influence the results. I hoped that group cohesiveness might develop based upon having a joint task (narratives). Bion (1961) discusses how task groups help to reduce animosity.

Stewart et al. (2007) discuss how seating arrangements may influence power relationships. I had a round table which supported this process (Stewart et al. 2007), but decided not to dictate seating of participants as this may remove the naturalness of the process.

I had previously engaged in a group consultation approach with SENCOs and found that using a table, rather than an open space between participants, helped them to relax. This may also relate to Stewart et al.'s (2007) comments upon respecting personal space. The use of a table, where chairs are placed around it at equal distance, may also help a feeling of fairness.

FG normally last between 1.5-2.5 hours (Stewart et al., 2007). In my case, after the vignettes had been delivered without interruption, the aim was that group discussion would last for 1.5 hours. Sometimes observation can be made through a 1 way mirror. However, in order to develop rapport, I felt a natural home setting would be more fitting. I am aware, that being the only observer may impact upon data analysis.

4.3 The process of selecting the method of analysis and the rationale behind this choice

Data included 7 verbal vignettes – transcribed, 1.5 hours of FG discussion - transcribed and 7 written DE's and 7 second written vignettes. TA was the approach taken. Braun and Clarke (2006) define TA as:

> *"A method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, it often goes further than this and interprets various aspects of the research topic."* (p.7).

Because the EPs were a heterogeneous group, and data came from a number of sources, not narrative alone, it was felt that this approach, rather than narrative analysis, was a better fit.

> *"TA involves the searching across a data set- be that a number of interviews or FG or a range of texts – to find repeated pattern of meaning. The exact form and product of TA varies."* (Braun and Clarke., 2007,p.15).

Figure 6 demonstrates the process of a TA approach.

Figure 6: A Flow diagram to show the process of treating the data. This is in line with TA that is prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

1
- Listen repeatedly to taped vignettes
- listen repeatedly to taped FG discussion

2
- Read repeatedly the DEs
- Read repeatedly the written vignettes

3
- Transcribe the verbal vignettes, using the coding. (see Appendix 6)
- Transcribe the FG (Appendix 7).
- Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that TA "does not require the same level of detail in the transcript as conversation, discourse or even narrative analysis."(p.17). They do suggest "verbatim account of all verbal (and sometimes non-verbal [e.g. coughs] utterances." (p.17). I have included this (Appendix 6).
- "A common criticism of coding is that context is lost." Keeping observation notes of the context will help when I come to read the transcripts.
- Read repeatedly transcriptions. (Steps 1-3 has the purpose of familiarising the researcher with the data, (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

4
- Generate initial codes. Coding data that are interesting. "Codes identify a feature of the data (semantic content or latent) that appears interesting to the analyst" (p.18) (See appendix 13).
- "Organise these into meaningful groups."(p.18).

5

- "Sorting the different codes into broader themes." (p.19) (See Appendix 12, for how this has been done).

6

- "Reviewing themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 20)
- "Refinement and discarding" (p. 20).
- If themes "haven't got enough data to support them or data is too diverse," these will still be noted and selected if I feel that they were relevant and important to the research questions.
- Braun & Clarke (2006) suggest that "themes might collapse into each other… or be broken down". This was the case

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- Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest visual representation – mind maps. See figure 7 for an example of how this has been done.
- Defining key themes that relate to the research questions and naming them.

8

- Writing the report. I hope to discuss and analyse key themes and how these fit with the aims of the research.
- They suggest need for "coherent logical argument and to substantify these with vivid examples or extracts to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme," (p.23). I hope to achieve this.
- They insist that the "data should be embedded with analytical narrative." (p.23). As suggested these will be related to relevant literature.

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- Braun & Clarke (2006) suggest that each of the above stages should be revisited in order to check hypotheses made at a different time and perspective.

Brown (1998) uses a TA approach and puts interpretation into transcriptions, e.g. [saying to self]. These are observational judgements made by the researcher, but help readers to follow the researcher's opinions as they are made more explicit. These interpretations are included in my transcriptions. Table 3 below shows interpretations used during transcription.

Table 3: Table to show transcription Codes:

Key Code –

BOLDWORDS	Emphasised/stressed/shouted
(( ))	Difficult to decipher
(whispered)	Interpretation of how words spoken.
(5)	Measures pauses in seconds
//	Interrupted

Riessman (1993) advocates also including "non-lexical expressions" (p. 44) such as "umm" "er" and repetitions. These may help readers to see where there is hesitation or reflection by participants. Thus, unlike some TA transcription, I have not "cleaned" up the transcription, making it easier for the reader to read. I followed elements of NI approaches towards transcription, but not at the expense of loss of content for the reader.

Emphasis within speech might reveal where participants wanted views to be heard. Where there is skimming over of views by EPs, with less elaboration, this might reveal non-canonical views. This might help to challenge what is accepted as truth and might support reflexivity (Barbour, 2007; Emerson and Frosh, 2009).

Riessman (2008) discusses interpretations about where there may be use of "ventriloquism" as this may indicate, as Brown (1998) discusses where language has been heard and repeated.

This may be a performance to gain perceived approval. Brown (1998) calls this a "double voiced expressiveness" (p.105), indicating that this is the voice of the person but also the voice of someone else that has influenced perceptions. The importance of spotting this is that:

"These voices… represent competing points of view." (p.106).

Brown suggests that we might look for shift in voice and:

"trying on different viewpoints…. [These] dramatic shifts in opinion signify their experimentation and their struggle." (p. 109).

Brown (1998) suggests that observation of voice tone and pitch may support in analysis of presentation of desired self, for example:

"Ventriloquating conventionally desirable images of femininity, girls' voices become breathy, whispery." (p.110).

She also discusses how shocking language may be an attempt to test "insider status with the group." These will be noted by me in the analysis.

I rejected a discourse analysis approach or an approach similar to Emerson and Frosh (2004) which analyses the micro level of the language. Coding the narrative, using Emerson and Frosh's approach (2004) made content difficult to read. They deliberately make the content difficult to follow purposefully. They seem to advocate:

"A close reading of the text …… that deliberately distance the reader from the text, at the same time attending to the emotional and conceptual movement of textual themes." (p.3-4).

I wanted the reader to remain close to the content. This might allow them and myself to gain an overview, finding contradictions in statements made in order to establish the extent that someone might be positioning themselves as a desired self (Riessman, 2008; Barbour, 2007).

Barbour (2007) and Riessman (2008) advocate noting silences, pauses and repetitions. I have included these. These may as Barbour suggests provide information about the purpose of speech, for example creating:

> *"a supportive environment for others, staking a claim to membership of a specific group, or emphasizing her or his separation from others."* (p.123).

I acknowledge that these are interpretations but help the reader to find out how these interpretations have been made.

Stewart et al. (2007) stress the importance of observation in FG analysis. This advocates notations around eye contact and non-verbals.

> *"When cues in different modes (e.g., audio vs. visual) are contradictory, then receivers are apparently more influenced by visual than by auditory cues."* (Stewart et al., 2007, p.30).

Bion (1961) suggests that we cannot always pick up communication and there are subtle levels which do not just involve language or nonverbal responses:

> *"I added that there might be still other means of communication not yet recognised, perhaps because powers of observation were still very limited."* (Bion, 1961, p.70).

Riessman (2003) suggests that transcripts alone cannot convey meaning. Observation is important:

> *"The displays of self and identity that are not only spoken but also enacted and embodied."* (p.23).

This quote helped me to reflect upon the need to accept my research as it is and understand that there will be different interpretations.

Detailed observational notes are not included in my transcripts. My notes during and after the research are included in my research diary.

A criticism of TA (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Riessman, 2008; Barbour, 2007) is that quotations from the text may be taken out of context and are manipulated to fit themes. All verbal data were transcribed and all verbal and written data was line numbered. This is placed in appendices 4,5,6,7, in order to make it easy to locate and read context if the reader wishes. This enables the reader, as Bruner (1990) suggests, to consider narratives as a whole:

> *"A story can only be realised when its parts and whole can, … be made to live together."* (p.8).

Line referencing enables the reader to refer to the codes listed easily within the full transcription. Hence readers can easily challenge my interpretations and form their own.

Barbour (2007); Stewart et al. (2007) comment that FG method is particularly effective for thematic coding. Both discuss software packages to aid with coding. However, I felt that I could get closer to the data if I manually coded.

Barbour (2007) discusses presenting broader themes and sub themes diagrammatically in order to support structure, though advocates not relying upon the literature review in dictating themes to search for. She also advocates looking for exceptions. Barbour (2007) and Reissman (2008) suggest that where tensions and contradictions are made this supports the researcher in evaluating the rich data. These were helpful supports in my coding methods.

Braun and Clarke (2006) also suggest visual representation to demonstrate how themes have been organised. Figure 7 illustrates an example of this. Appendix 13 demonstrates the process of coding whilst Appendix 12 illustrates how these codes were then placed into subordinate themes.

Figure 7: Diagram to show how themes were organised in relation to the research question.

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                                      ┌──────────────────┐
                                    ┌─┤     Empathy?     │
                                    │ └──────────────────┘
                                    │ ┌──────────────────┐
                                    ├─┤  Shifts / expands │
                    ┌────────────┐  │ │       views       │
                 ┌──┤ Impact on the├─┤ └──────────────────┘
                 │  │ listener:   │  │ ┌──────────────────┐
                 │  │ disclosure  │  ├─┤   Therepeutic?   │
┌──────────────┐ │  └────────────┘  │ └──────────────────┘
│ Process of   │ │                  │ ┌──────────────────┐
│ engaging in  ├─┤                  └─┤ Changes behaviour │
│ story telling│ │                    └──────────────────┘
│ in groups    │ │                    ┌──────────────────┐
└──────────────┘ │                  ┌─┤    Disclosure    │
                 │                  │ └──────────────────┘
                 │                  │ ┌──────────────────┐
                 │  ┌────────────┐  ├─┤   Therepeutic?   │
                 └──┤ Impact on the│ │ └──────────────────┘
                    │ writer:     ├─┤ ┌──────────────────┐
                    │ disclosure  │ ├─┤ Experiential learning│
                    └────────────┘  │ └──────────────────┘
                                    │ ┌──────────────────┐
                                    ├─┤ Expands/ shifts views│
                                    │ └──────────────────┘
                                    │ ┌──────────────────┐
                                    └─┤ Changes behaviour │
                                      └──────────────────┘
```
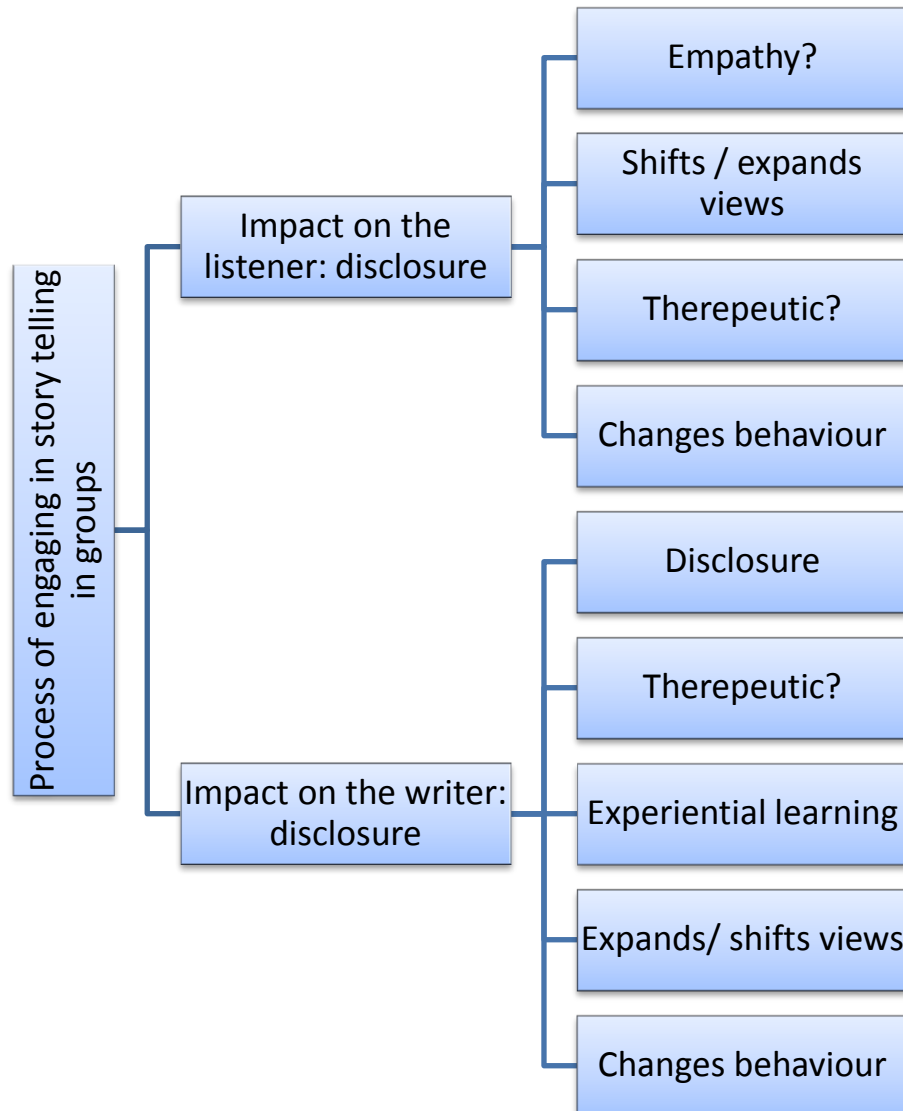
Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise a need to provide a:

> *"theoretical framework and methods match what the researcher wants to know."* (p.8).

Reflection on epistemological stance around analysis of data is important. Barbour (2007) discusses themes that are predicted prior to research that emerge "a-priori codes" and those that arise within the research group "in-vivo codes."

Being explicit around emerging themes and which are unpredicted may help the reader to be aware of influences on the researcher. I did not engage in this because it was difficult to be truly conscious about these influences, though I refer to influences in my research diary.

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest TA is different to Grounded Theory (GT) or Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as they are "theoretically bounded" (p.8). For this reason, TA allowed me to be more flexible, taking relevant epistemological stances (see above), whilst accepting that data do not always map onto specific theory. Both Riessman (2003) and Emerson and Frosh (2009) NIs, advocate the flexibility in adaptation of narrative approaches and merging approaches and theories. Riessman (2003) comments upon:

> *"In my view understanding complex lives requires more than one theoretical lense."* (p.23).

Willig's (2008) stance predominated throughout the research and explains why IPA was not adopted:

> *"IPA tells us more about the ways in which an individual talks about a particular experience within a particular context, than about the experience itself"* (p.67).

When considering themes that relate to research questions, I feel it important that themes are not just selected based upon the number of times that they occur, but are observations about what participants felt to be important or were interesting to me the observer. Problems with TA are that it can be "potentially paralysing to the researcher trying to decide what aspects of their data to focus upon." (p.27).

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that:

> *"Researcher judgement is necessary to determine what a theme is…. Rigid rules do not work."* (p.10).

I have considered the limitations of TA and strategies to overcome these:

> *"Some of the worst examples of TA… used questions put to participants as the themes identified in the analysis"* (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.15)

This is why, in the initial introduction to the FG, I have not included direction, relying upon narratives to encourage discussion.

One criticism of TA is that I might "squeeze data to fit available categories, rather than the categories being derived from the data." (Barbour, 2007, p.123). In order to overcome this, there may be some overlap and repetition of codes within themes. Analysis of data can be "theoretical, deductive top down" or "inductive or bottom up" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.11). Emerson and Frosh (2004), NI, advocate a bottom up approach. I also aim to do this bottom up, searching for codes and then creating themes around these. I am aware that if I do this, this may mean themes do not relate to the research questions and there may be a need to amend the research questions. However, this approach is less rigid and I have stated that my stance may change as I interact with other participants and the data. There will not be a pre-existing coding frame. I am also aware that the loose research questions allowed for flexibility.

Emerson and Frosh (2009) provide a fixed format for structural narrative analysis as does Labov (1972). However, by adhering to these fixed approaches I might be criticised for using a similar format of other researchers and therefore get the same results. Parker advocates consideration of the process and braveness in the choice of research method.

Despite agreeing that storytelling has a canonical structure, I found a structural analytical approach constraining. The structural analysis advocated by Labov (1972) also seems to be interpretive. Riessman (1993) discusses how, on later reading of the text after using Labov's approach to analyse narratives, she may have attributed which aspects were Orientation or Complicating Action differently.

I liked Billington's (2012) approach of writing the narrative (quotations) first and allowing readers to interpret before engaging in the researcher's analysis. However, I found this difficult to do and wanted to help the reader determine my thought processes by being more explicit. This might be a limitation of the research in that I was similar to Emerson and Frosh (2009) directing the focus of the reader.

Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight a potential limitation that the researcher:

> *"fell victim to methodology where you committed to method rather than topic/content or research questions."* (p.28).

This might be a possible pitfall, because of constructivist leanings I am interested in process as well as content and how it impacts on findings.

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVES AND ANALYSIS

The data set were not analysed individually, but as a whole.

A number of themes emerged during the research process and these are also addressed and examined and related to the research questions, which are:

- What impact did the process of storytelling within a group have on participants and me as a facilitator?
- What are the stories/narratives of EPs who have experienced bullying and to what extent do the themes relate to existing research?
- To what extent do personal experiences impact upon professional practice?
- How might this research be used to impact upon future training of EPs?

These themes were further broken into sub-themes and I have tried to present these visually as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) in flow diagrams (Figure 8-11).

5.1 - Theme about the power of stories and the impact of engaging in a group storytelling process

5.2 - Theme about bullying, including:

5.2.1 Confusion around the construct of bullying.

5.2.2 Causes of bullying and confusion about these.

5.2.3 Supportive factors and interventions for EPs .

5.2.4 Impact of bullying on EPs .

5.3 – Theme about how the engagement in narratives and the group experience has contributed to EPs professional practice

5.4 – Theme about what the process revealed about EP's perception of their role.

5.1: The Power of stories and the impact of engaging in telling stories in groups.

Engaging in the process of sharing stories and the positive and negative impact of disclosure for the listener and narrator is a theme that is considered firstly. Figure 8 illustrates subthemes that arose.

Figure 8: The Power of stories and the impact of engaging in telling stories in groups.

Process of engaging in story telling in groups

- Impact on the listener: Disclosure
  - Empathy?
  - Shifts / expands views
  - Therepeutic?
  - Changes behaviour
- Impact on the writer: Disclosure
  - Therepeutic?
  - Experiential learning
  - Expands/ shifts views
  - Changes behaviour
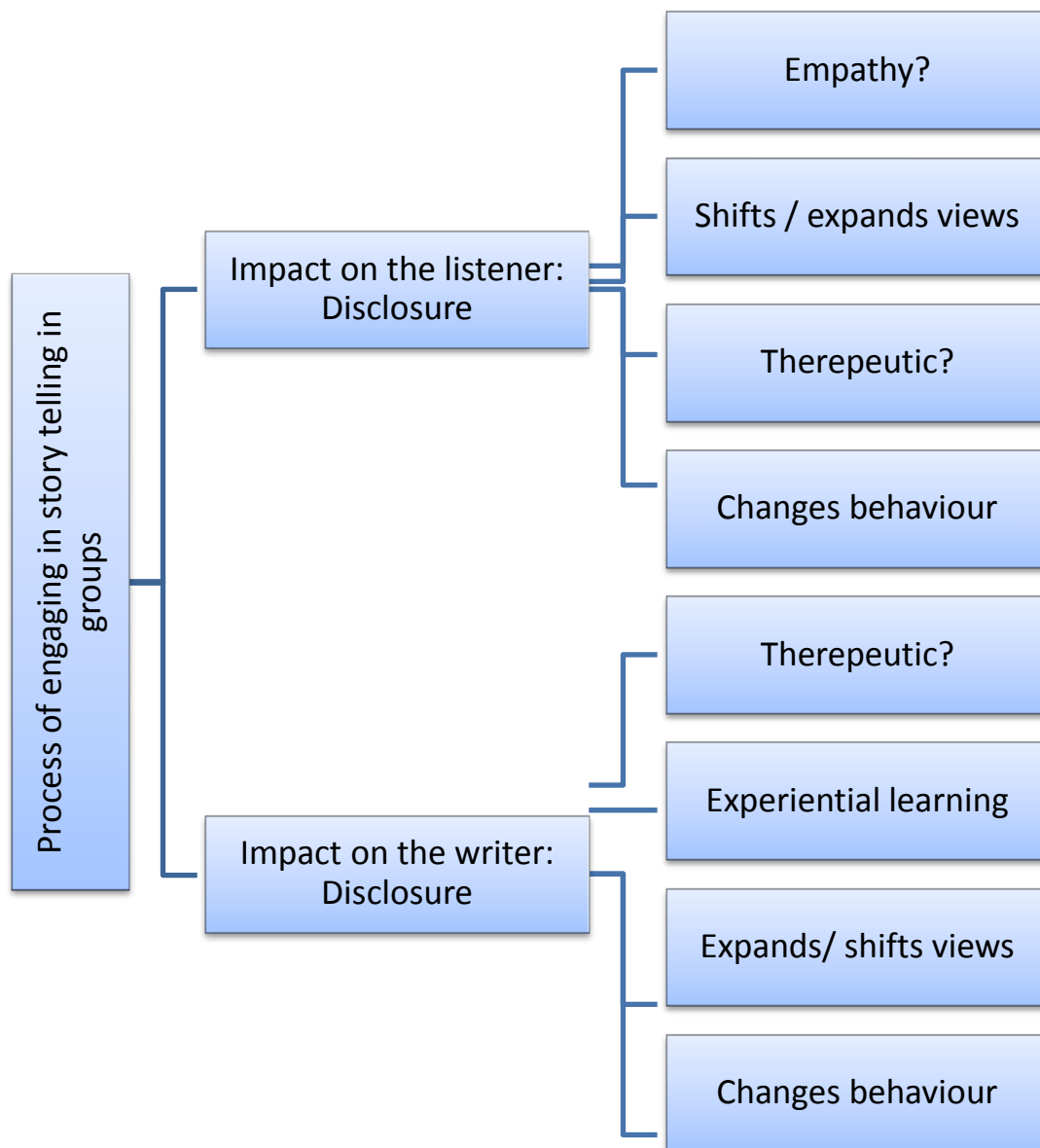
The experience of engaging in this project seemed to affect perspectives and in turn behaviour. Issues about possible dangers of disclosing personal stories in groups were raised. Conversely there were also positive aspects. These positive aspects for the listener will be discussed first.

Listeners commented upon being touched emotionally by one particular story and demonstrated empathy to this narrator. The impact of this story on individuals was revealed in the FG discussion and the DEs and led to themes around this story dominating discussion:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	Discussion	11-12.	I felt profoundly affected by your story. (3) (nods of agreement) Just an absolute wave of emotion, I can't describe it really,

Developing empathy is felt to be a key component in preventing bullying (Ofsted, 2012; Salmivalli, Poskipart, 2012; Wachs, 2012). Many anti-bullying interventions need empathy from young people to be successful, such as peer support programmes (Cowie et al., 2002). This research contributes to findings that story-telling activities, may be positive in developing empathy. Empathy is felt to be a difficult skill to teach (Joliffe et al., 2006).

Stories helped listeners expand upon their own personal experiences. This demonstrates how "attitudes, opinions, personality evolve from discursive culture" (Burr, 2003, p.66).

Joan had never been threatened with the cane but was able to imagine the process by engaging in Ann's story:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	DE (Diary Extract)	26-28.	"As all the storytellers, bar one, told personal stories, I found myself much more "attached" and "interested" in the personal accounts. When I said I felt profoundly affected by one storyteller's story, I think what I meant was that I felt their pain and suffering completely. I guess partly because I understood/could relate to the "terror" experienced by the threat of being hit by a cane (though it never happened to me)"

This extract demonstrates the power of imagination:

> *"It becomes the means by which a person's experience is broadened…...because he can conceptualise something from another person's narration and description of what he himself has never directly experienced. He is not limited to the narrow circle and narrow boundaries of his own experience."* (Vygotsky, 2004, p.17).

Participants seemed to like hearing the stories of others, possibly because it would help them negotiate around a similar problem if it arose in their life.

There seemed to be something that was comforting to the listener, that their experience was not as challenging as those of other narrators:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	DE	35-37	It does make you look at people in a different way giving increased empathy and understanding of who they are. The growing realisation that these competent and professional adults have experienced "similar" things (+ worse) to you as regards to bullying. In itself, this is strengthening.

This comparison of experiences suggests that what might be beneficial to one person is not beneficial to another.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	DE	18-20	However, when I heard how personal and honest the other stories were, then it put it into a "safe" place for me and in proportion. I very much felt for the others in their stories and wanted to go back in time and change it for them. Lots of honest conversations between us in the group.

Later some participants expressed frustration that Tom had not been as "honest" as them despite him commenting upon honesty. This may demonstrate how:

> "TA can be a method which works both to reflect reality, and to unpick or unravel the surface of reality." (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.9).

Another participant, described her difficult relationship with Ann, prior to the FG and how listening to her story had enabled her to gain some cognitive dissonance, understanding the cause of behaviour. Sarah commented upon the fact that prior to engaging in the process, she had viewed Ann's behaviour as often directed towards her in a negative way purposefully. Cameron, (2007) also found that other YP understanding difficulties of a child that appeared not to be conforming, supported empathy for pupils with ASD and prevented internalisation of the YP's behaviour, which in turn might lead to hostility/bullying.

This extract below demonstrates how this was also the case for this EP participant. Storytelling helped this EP listener to understand the function of behaviour and externalise it away from herself:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	DE	8-11	Listening to others' stories helped understand my feelings when I spend time with them, for example P, I have known since I started working as an EP. I always felt when in P's company like a "silly little girl", one who needs to do as she's told, grow up, not feel, behave! I have never felt comfortable with P and have **NEVER** understood why! This process shed light on something that happened to P that has really enabled me to make sense of how I feel when with P. I almost feel like I imagine this P felt at the time – for this reason alone this process was **REMARKABLE**. Some of the stories were heart-breaking – again it reminded me that we should never assume by what/who you met today how they came to be

			that way!

Listening to stories seemed to promote positive reflection about future behaviour for this listener, particularly in her role as EP.

This demonstrates how imagining experiences of others through listening to their stories impacted upon her professionally. If EPs had presented the information as short categorised themes, this may not have had as much impact as storytelling.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	DE	6-8.	This process helped me remember and think about others and their reasoning. It almost helped me in the day job to remember to suspend my judgement – you never know what someone else is going through! Listening to others' stories helped understand my feelings when I spend time with them.

Sarah's comments highlighted points made by Joliffe et al. (2006) who discuss the importance of trying to build "affective empathy" (p.548) in order to prevent bullying. They advocate that if interventions teaching empathy are used, they should focus upon understanding impact of our own behaviour on others' emotions. Sarah suggests that engaging in storytelling in a group supported her as she began to understand that her behaviour could affect others. Group activities, such as Circle Time and RP Circles in schools may have a similar impact as they allow for stories to be told.

Amy commented upon the positive outcomes of sharing in groups, but also demonstrates how she was imagining responses prior to telling the story. This might demonstrate concern around the "self" she wanted to present, (Harre, 2004) and the response of others and led to the negotiation of the story, a transitional phenomenon (Winnicott, 1971, as interpreted by Aitken & Herman, 1997; Kuhn, 2005 and Willock, 1992). Amy seemed to feel that she had been successful:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	DE	1,7-10.	Having anticipated the evening with some anxiety and apprehension I actually found it to be extremely stimulating, thought-provoking and rewarding. I felt rather uneasy about sharing my story as I did not know how I would feel recounting it in front of strangers and I worried that I might be judged or misunderstood or that my experience might be minimalized and considered trivial in comparison to more extreme examples. However, after the pleasantries and introductions I felt better about being there and once the participants started to recount their stories I became mesmerised, engaged and deeply moved by their experiences.

For some writers there seemed to be some therapeutic impact:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	58-59.	"I learnt something about **me** in that process. Far more than I actually knew I'd learnt, until I wrote it down, I thought "oh I learnt that""

This fits with Lysaght (2009):

> *"From a narrative perspective, we live our lives from the stories we tell. They fashion our lives, providing structure for our day to day existence and they have potential to propel us into the future that is shaped by our lived experiences of them."* (p.35).

However, it may be that just storytelling externally, in a written format without the need for group engagement, which enabled this.

This fits with Vygotsky (1934) who discusses how the medium of writing is far more detailed than inner or verbal speak, which is "abbreviated" as it is written with an audience in mind:

> *"It is addressed to an absent person who rarely has in mind the same subject as the writer. Therefore it must be fully deployed; syntactic differentiation is at a maximum; and expressions are used that would seem unnatural in conversation."* (p.142).

Thus, using a different medium forces us to extend inner speech resulting in greater clarification. I would argue that this is a safer method than engaging in a group process and this seems to have been demonstrated in the research:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Discussion	621-624	But writing it down, externalising it and I **did** and I, I and I did consider putting it in the third person err--.At one point. And I did, I, I felt a bit more sympathetic towards my younger self than I have done at other times thinking about it, you know, sort of externalising it and just. It is, quite a healing process isn't it? Thinking about it, putting it down on paper

This aligns with to White and Epston's (1990) Narrative Therapy views and approaches, where individuals are encouraged to externalise behaviours through storytelling. White and Epston use a structured approach. However this study suggests that for Jane, just engaging in the story writing process supported her.

Externalising behaviour away from self is demonstrated in the research:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	62-65.	"What I learnt from that is this person who's doing this is unhappy – They're unhappy not me. I'm ok – they're unhappy". And I wrote "Don't give me your unhappiness, you can show it to me but it's not mine and I'm going to give it straight back". I wrote that but then thought "Wonder why I've written that?"

Kelly's (1991a) Self-characterisation approach involves writing in the 3rd person, as mentioned by Jane. Fransella (2004) comments that often writing character sketches down can support individuals build relationships, but if the writer feels a:

> *"need to defend themselves against outside scrutiny, they will not agree to write."* (p.9).

Writing in the third person is deemed to be less intrusive. Ann also commented that she did not want to engage in the writing process, portraying some of the possible anticipated negative responses, or the feelings of shame, desire not to feel negative effects and thus avoidance (Nathanson (1992) figure 2). This raises an important point about engaging in the process of auto-biographical stories/character sketches with children. This emphasises the need for flexibility and understanding of the child in context, before encouraging pupils to write down stories. (I acknowledge that self-characterisations may be different to stories).

There seemed to be a different response to those that had told their story orally without writing it in advance, to those who read prepared written narratives. Notably, listeners seemed to align with the latter. Vygotsky (1934) discussed how written speech is an elaboration of inner speech for an audience. The data indicate that those EPs that had not planned and written their story appeared disjointed in their delivery, suggesting that they were using inner speech that had not been developed fully into written speech.

> *"Inner speech functions a draft not only in written but also oral speech."* (Vygotsky, 1934, p.144).

Entering into dialogue with an expectation of interaction is a different medium and, as a result, dialogue does not need to be as detailed (Vygotsky, 1934). The data illustrate that the experiential learning of not being interrupted seemed to enable EPs to reflect about how the expectation of being interrupted impacted upon their storytelling and meant that they left things out. Providing time and space to tell stories seemed to be important for EPs. This experiential learning may not have been as effective if narratives hadn't been delivered to a group:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	593-600	It's a very powerful thing, It is very freeing. And there's a boundary within it. And I've done it a few times, with a men's group and it's, it's very, it is very powerful actually, just listening and just knowing that you're being listened to and there's not going to be any comment. Because immediately you comment. As much as you don't want to, you. It's very easy to put an evaluation on it and an analysis. // And it can be misinterpreted by somebody else. You do it all the time

Through sharing stories and discussion, there seemed to be other evidence of shifting views which relate to Vygotsky's (1934) view that interaction is a tool which allows us to develop. By engaging in a different group to the one experienced as a child, EPs were able to challenge views that they had established, but not negotiated in an external arena. This fits with comments made by Webster, Mertova (2007) about how:

> *"Narrative illustrates the temporal notion of experience, recognising that one's understanding of people and events change"* (p.2).

EPs revealed how they had previously learned to accept caning as normal behaviour:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	128.	I got and interestingly, the cane was there at school, I got caned a couple of times but there wasn't any abuse around that

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	131.	That was, not my (2) that was done **in** a much more "safe/structured" in inverted commas, way.

Discussion and the ability to place situations in different contexts, demonstrate how perspectives can shift:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Discussion	144-146.	And again you know the discipline that was used which you do think of it as abuse now. But **then** it was just what they did. (spoke together) ((lots of chatting)) And it was only listening to you, that I did sort of de-contextualize it you know from the 60's and 70's and think well yeah that is what happened.

The importance of YP experiencing different groups and different mediums of communication (oral and written) in order to encourage them to shift views and understand that different perspectives exist is highlighted through these extracts. It was difficult to establish which had the greater impact, engaging in relaying the narrative or engaging in the FG.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	47-48.	I had not overtly considered such teachers that I have known, as a pupil, as bullies (though clearly they are) I had considered them in almost a Vygotskian way as products of a social/historical context/ time and system. I suppose doing so removes any blame from them for their choice in the behaviour. Writing this has made me consider the moral relativism of this position and think that such a position is surely dangerous?

The acceptability of violence, because it becomes the norm in the surrounding culture, raises implications about EPs being aware of negative behaviours if they stay too long in an institution. In EP training it may be important to be explicit about understanding the importance of shifting paradigms or groups and challenging ourselves over the acceptability of certain behaviours. Being in an LA or a school institution for too long might impose beliefs about what is acceptable, though this might not be "truth".

Disclosing through storytelling seemed to enable one narrator to evaluate her own previous behaviours. This fits with comments made by Webster, Mertova (2007):

> "People make sense of their lives according to narratives available to them. Stories are constantly being restructured in the light of new events" (p.2).

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	DE	48-51.	The unresolved traumas probably had weaved through them additional traumas from family relationships and these complexities made it harder for the individuals to resolve them. I am no fan of CBT but see us all as having one or two core beliefs about ourselves and the story-telling experience demonstrated this so well. I am beginning to see so clearly that in absolutely every interaction I have, I am asking the question: Am I acceptable?

Kelly (1991) discussed Slot Rattling. Ann suggests that she feels like an "unacceptable person" but then acts as if she is "acceptable" – thus her behaviour is at times at the opposite pole to her beliefs about herself.

Because Ann's behaviours are not compatible with her beliefs about herself, she seems to rattle between poles of "acceptable" and "unacceptable" and has to prepare in advance these acceptable behaviours:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	DE	52-57.	Having gone through our story-telling for this research I can see this with such clarity, and would go so far to say that it has been a turning point for me. All my pacifying, apologising and my essential avoidance of people comes down to this. I hate picking up the phone, just hate it – and this is the reason, this ever-present anxiety that I have to earn my acceptance almost every moment of the day. Will they find me out? I never felt like this with my own children when they were little and was aware of re-creating my emotional being. Except that when my two sons left home as young adults the feeling returned and I have the anxiety again when we meet

It is difficult to keep up this pretence and Ann hints at this:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	DE	55.	Will they find me out?

Ann after her reflections comments upon changing her behaviour, doing opposites, for example not preparing her phone calls in advance:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	DE	80-82	Above all I am using a novel no-nonsense self-talk: This has to stop. Strangely it is working; I can tune into the anxiety and say This has *to* stop*.* I picked up the phone to my sister in law and asked her to visit. Of course it went well.

She didn't start conversations with those that appear not to want reciprocity, no longer feeling that she has to do this to be "accepted". At present this process seems to have supported her therapeutically:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	DE	83.	Old habits won't go away but there has been a change, so much that I think this could be a therapeutic experience for me – and an exercise for any group.

She seems to have "revis[ed] or replac[ed]" her constructs/interpretations. Kelly (1991) might suggest that this demonstrates the organisation corollary and constructs evolving around this. These reflections highlight the process of learning through storytelling and listening and the process of how we make sense about what happens to us and thus our predictions about the world. Kvale (2000) suggests that this is an important element of Qualitative Research:

> "enhancing the level of understanding of participants and their ability to take action, empowering them to take increased control of their lives." (p.304).

However, Kelly (1991a) discusses researchers taking "what he sees and hears at face value" and urges caution against this.

I wonder the extent that this behaviour is sustainable and if being "acceptable" is a core construct how malleable and changeable this construct is?

Kelly might suggest that this current behaviour might be a "superficial movement" and that Ann, if she begins to feel that the behaviour is invalidated, may revert back to previous behaviour to feel validated and "accepted." The fact that she shows hostility, may suggest that she is finding it difficult to go against core constructs:

> "Hostility is the continued effort to exert validational evidence in favour of a type of social prediction which has already been recognised as a failure." (Kelly, 1991b, p.7).

Hostility is demonstrated towards another participant:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	DE	61-64	I feel angry about the two people [who emotionally disengaged] One person I had to work incredibly hard to win over when we met. Probably took more than two years, and I continued to be the one who made the opening comments in conversation. Now I believe that it was so hard because there was no depth there anyway.

Kelly (1955a) suggests:

"A person must occasionally decide what to do about remodelling his system…. How much can he tear down and still have a roof over his head? How disruptive will his set of ideas be?" (p.41).

This is difficult to establish from the research. The story and Ann's own further construal of events may change over time. This is a limitation of the research in the fact that:

"The second, stronger form of pragmatic validation concerns whether interventions based on the researcher's interpretations may instigate actual changes in behaviour." (Kvale, 2002, p.304).

The process of engaging in storytelling in groups was not positive for all. Ann's powerful story seemed to set a benchmark for others and an implicit rule of what was expected. This in turn seemed to affect narrators and listeners in different ways. Ann's story seemed to have been told in a canonical way. The importance of the approach is confirmed by Reissman, (2008, p.112) who discusses "dramatic narrative." She focuses upon the structure and presentation, suggesting that "scenes," if dramatized, gain rapport/ commonality. If they are more distant and factual, it is more difficult to align with them. Comparison between stories of individuals was not beneficial to those lower down in the perceived storytelling hierarchy.

Riessman (2008, p.112) comments that quoted speech from the time, such as "Oh I said….. He said "…" builds "credibility". This seemed evident in narratives that people associated with. I acknowledge that a limitation of the research is that I am not breaking down the micro levels of all speech, and focussing upon this aspect.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	32-36.	It was interesting how the prosodic features adopted by the storyteller influenced me as a listener. Ann's forceful delivery, emotive language (I think she ended with 'I wanted to die') added to the power of the story. The pauses added emotional intensity. Conversely, the upbeat delivery of Sarah's defused the immediate emotional intensity of the story and appeared to diminish the notion of her as a victim. However, the delivery made me as a listener work harder to elaborate the emotion of the experience by imagining myself in her position.

Where listeners could associate with the main protagonist, scenes were set and breaches appeared in the assumed format, the audience had more alignment.

Where canonical rules around storytelling structure were not followed, frustration seemed to occur. This might indicate the possible isolation from the group for some. Isolation is felt to be a variable for bullying (Smith, Polenik et al. 2012).

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	2-3.	Tom's narrative appeared ambiguous and disjointed. The narrative changed direction a couple of times and this had the effect of keeping me as a listener at something of a distance. It made it more difficult to engage with his experience at an emotional level.

Those that provided an obstacle and portrayed the main character as weak at the start of the story seemed to engage their audience:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	DE	131.	Conversely, hearing some of the accounts of the group members and seeing how they had survived and indeed become strong, wise and compassionate individuals was very inspirational.

This seemed to help EPs engage, in the desire that the weak character, that they associated with, would resolve the problem and come through it. Jane found it difficult to associate with Tom's story because he appeared focused upon positioning himself as hero rather than relaying his story:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	12.	I would have liked to have explored this idea. Did he mean inserting himself as a character/hero or did he mean he wanted to be an agent of change as he is as an EP. Did he want to change his own story?

The process demonstrated how narratives were used as transitional phenomena (Winnicott, 1971, as interpreted by Aitken & Herman, 1997; Kuhn, 2005 and Willock, 1992).

These transitional phenomena (narratives) helped to establish cohesion within the group and formulate expected norms of behaviour.

If behaviours and language used were negotiated well and accepted by the rest of the group this helped the individual to be accepted.

The implications are that YP using transitional objects, such as canonical storytelling may support them in fitting into groups at the expense of others who tell the more extreme stories or use less canonical approaches.

Engaging in canonical storytelling approaches may also help YP negotiate problems that they may face in future. This indicates the importance of teaching pupils the expected structure of storytelling.

I acknowledge, because the task was delivery of stories, that this feature may have been exaggerated in the research, but this demonstrates how when using transitional objects in groups, if there is social referencing, there is always someone who fails.

RP approaches may support YP to tell their stories in a structured canonical way. Prompts such as "What happened?" "Who was there?" (Scene setting) support. Prompts such as "Who was affected?" may lead to unexpected, as Nathanson (1992) suggests, "startle" moments that change perceptions enabling individuals to look to the future. This approach, if it becomes part of culture may support individuals in structuring and ordering stories. However, separating storytelling away from bullying themes that are emotional may also be a safer approach to support problem solving in groups.

Comparisons between stories was evident and there was a sense of frustration made by the person who went first because she was not able to be aware of the storytelling rules, as they had not yet been established. Modelling expected format seemed to be desired and Sarah appeared to have felt cheated:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	DE	23	I wonder now if I had gone after all the others would I have somehow changed what I said or how I said it?

Sarah was like the new student who didn't realise the rules of the game, so as a result, felt punished, possibly similar to pupils who transferred to a new school and are not aware of rules.

For some people who told their narrative there appeared to be a sense of frustration and a feeling of judgement by others, and rumination about getting the rules wrong. This rumination is described by Thornberg et al. (2013) after bullying incidents.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	DE	13-19.	"I thought it was interesting how people viewed others' stories – I think someone said mine was told almost "flippantly" – not seriously, with humour – laden in that comment felt judgement – absent but implicitly – this is serious stuff – there is no humour – This part of the process was difficult for me – it felt like I again was in a "school bus" where I wasn't serious enough! It felt uncomfortable – like I was WRONG to be this way?"

For those that moved away from rules established by the dominant story, there was a sense that they were being castigated. Sarah in fact commented that because of confusion about what was expected, she had somehow got it wrong and was being judged (returning to feelings from her childhood bullying scenario because of it.)

> *"Peer groups establish a social environment that influence how group members behave."* (Berger & Rodkin, 2011, p.397)

Rules about the content form also seemed to be established, for example, there was frustration when one EP told a professional story, as if they had not joined others in disclosure. Ann, who listeners had aligned with, felt frustrated with this EP:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	DE	30-34	Which felt like I was being negated and dismissed. She said she was using a professional example because she had never been bullied and nobody close to her ever had either, which I didn't find credible. She also took some notes so perhaps she had said this to Juliet and offered to be helpful in the exercise as she didn't have anything personal to offer. Her stance made me uncomfortable, as though there was some unspoken criticism in acknowledging one had experienced bullying, something to do with strong feelings not being acceptable

Ann felt judged. This made me reflect upon Kelly's (1991) individuality constructs and how each person's constructs differed and fired perhaps hostile reactions if their constructs felt challenged. The dangers of revealing personal stories in groups were highlighted.

This raises possible questions about the RP process as Ann had appeared positive at the end of the FG, similar to RP participants after engaging in a conference.

This study highlights the fact that further research around the impact of storytelling in RP forums may be needed. When EPs had time to reflect upon the experience away from the group, this became less positive. If feedback is provided directly after a RP conference, then participants may not have been provided time to reflect on the process away from the group, giving time for feelings to change.

A feeling of being judged was also demonstrated in the discussion by the construct "forgiveness" and the fact that one EP had forgiven their bully, but had never discussed it with them. Joan seemed to have difficulty finding commonality with this, though ruminated afterwards about comments she had made in the FG:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	DE	13-17	I guess the thing I'm replaying most is the commentary I gave to one of the storytellers about their current relationship with the bullies and how the storyteller interpreted my commentary as being somehow critical of them. I'm feeling a "bit bothered" by that. I think mostly because that was not my intent at all. I was just puzzled by how, without discussing/resolving the bullying event with the person/people involved, the storyteller could embrace a relationship with them.

If core values are felt to be challenged then the response might be bullying back. Other EPs aligning with each other suggested that groups were forming against individuals. Was this the beginning of bullying? Alignment between EPs were demonstrated by Jane and Ann.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	22-25	Sally was the only person in the group to choose to use a professional case. It set her apart from the group somewhat and did not appear to engage the group with the emotional intensity that some of the other stories had. Sally said that neither she, nor anyone close to her, had experienced bullying. I wondered if this was a choice made in order to maintain a professional demeanour in a setting with some people she does not know or that she may encounter on a professional basis.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	DE	70	I feel a connection with the other two people, a nurturance and protection towards them, plus a feeling of shared passion.

Reflecting upon the process, I also considered the pressure on the group to disclose stories and whether this was ethical and beneficial to some, but not others and the fact that this led to some ruminating:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	106.	That first one that I was going to read out, I put 4 down, and I wrote the title of it, but that was probably the one that was most painful and I just kept it empty (laughs). And I wrote all the notes down there to there. And then I thought, I don't even want to write it out really
Ann	Discussion	107.	But it's just taking a risk.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	108.	But then after listening to everyone else's personal story I just thought "Oh you're a bit pathetic Tom".

I wondered whether group norms had led to over-disclosure, which then led to frustration later at revealing too much. This was perhaps demonstrated by Ann's frustration with Sally for not disclosing.

This might be something that is easily done during Circle Time within a group of YP and those inner feelings of the child might not be observed easily by the adult involved. In the FG, comments had been initially positive, but reflections in diaries had involved negatives and rumination. My initial perceptions after the FG had been that the process had been therapeutic for all.

However, DEs challenged this judgement and made me reflect upon the fact that I had participated as a listener, become absorbed and as a result had not been successful in my observation. This made me reflect upon the fact that I may be doing this during consultations in my work as an EP.

This research emphasised that just because I felt positive about how a meeting may have gone, this might not be the case for the person who has disclosed and how I rely too much on my own personal experience to form judgement. Awareness and a need for caution around making judgements based on our own experiences have been highlighted through this research.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	DE	85.	We all got some much out of it we've arranged to meet again, but I'm not sure I want to do any more disclosing.

The desire to rank behaviour and compare it with what is perceived as acceptable, appears to have been negative for some EPs. The EPs that appeared not to have behaved at the perceived ends of a disclosure to non-disclosure continuum seemed to fair better.

Vygotsky (1934) discusses how a YP develops the ability to generalise, through initially comparing differences and then similarities, and it seems EPs were doing the same.

The study demonstrated examples of rumination by narrators around what they should have done, using critical inner voices against themselves. The response of the listener seemed to determine the level that these would continue or end. The research process highlighted the need for EPs to reflect upon how words used have a powerful impact and can lead to feelings of judgement. Words held different meanings to others:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	DE	18-20.	Maybe it was a criticism? Maybe it was a judgement? What is resonating here for me is that words matter sooo much, I try to be careful with the words I use.

These DEs might also reveal the unhelpful ruminating that occurs after group engagement, reviewing our behaviour and internalising it, self-bullying:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	DE	21-25.	Still a bit "hung up" on my "observations" of 3 storytellers' narratives. Maybe I was being judgemental? Referring to the story as "clean" was one observation/judgement. The remarks about the current relationship between one story teller and the bullies was a second observation/judgement And then I mentioned that I'd like to have had 1 storyteller as my friend was a third observation/judgement.

To promote empathy in groups, it may be more relevant for teachers to deliver example stories from other pupils, who are not known, rather than personal ones, despite personal stories being favoured by EP listeners.

This however, may impact upon the development of empathy for the listeners, demonstrating the complexity of interventions

In further research, it may be helpful to provide sessions for EPiTS to reflect, for example videoing consultations and analysing the extent that perceived judgemental statements are made.

Teachers have commented upon valuing the EP as a "critical friend" (Kelly, Gray, 2000). The way EPs achieve this would be helpful to be explored further.

To summarise this section, Ann's story made me reflect upon the impact that good storytelling might have upon influencing cultural change. Foucault (1989a) suggests a change in culture comes from literature. Literature impacts upon its audience. Ann's voice, that of the victim has been powerfully heard and may lead to an emotional response by the listener. However the voice of the bully has not been heard. One might suggest that if the bully's story was also told, this would change the listener's perspective further, perhaps moderating it.

This could be construed as a limitation in the research.

In this section, I hoped to discuss the impact of storytelling within a group on participants.

5.2: Themes that emerged about bullying experiences and their impact upon EPs' perceptions.

This section hopes to address how themes relate to existing research. It is hoped that this will support EPs in understanding bullying phenomena further.

The theme addresses confusion around definitions of bullying, causes of bullying and impact upon EPs. There will be a discussion on supportive factors for EPs and helpful interventions that were discussed.

Figure 9 illustrates some of the subthemes that will be discussed.

5.2: Figure 9: Theme about bullying

Theme about bullying

Confusion around Construct of bullying
- Definition different to other EPs
- Etymological changes
- Personal versus cannonical → Dismissal of incidents
- Child defintion versus adult definition
- Bullying on a continuum

Confusion about the causes of bullying
- Ruminating / self bullying
- Not understanding group rules / accepted behaviour → Being New Transition
- Being different → Physical attributes
- Difficult to categorise. Context differs
- Bullying is a Natural Phenomenon

Supportive factors and possible Interventions
- Supportive family
- Self efficacy
- Supportive other groups

Impact of bullying
- Personally → Contradictions between personal and professional
- Professionally

5.2.1 Confusion around the construct of bullying.

EPs expressed confusion around whether their narratives could be construed as bullying (also found to be true by Pikas, 2002). Vaillancourt et al. (2008) demonstrate how children's definitions of bullying are different to researchers. However, extracts such as Joan's demonstrate the difficulty in attributing personal stories to a rigid canonical definition:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	Vignette	1-4.	Okay, so I can't believe really, that the first thing I want to express is my **uncertainty** of whether my story constitutes bullying or not. It's a personal story, based on a number of separate episodes during my primary and secondary education. I guess part of me feels concerned that given my current age and stage of development and **professional experience** most importantly, that I'm still not **sure**.

The fact that Joan acknowledges confusion may impact upon how she might deal with incidents professionally and how EPs may feel a need to make comparisons with their direct experience because of this.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Vignette	1-2.	Hello, I've written mine down, bear with me. I did wonder actually whether this was more a vignette about transition.

More predominant aspects of the bullying event may mean that other themes such as transition are highlighted.

One EP in the discussion discussed "Banter" and another responded:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	361	Banter's changed in meaning

This demonstrates how:

> *"In the historical evolution of language the very structure of meaning and its psychological nature also change."* (Vygotsky, 1934, p.121).

EPs seemed to compare their incident with extreme bullying incidents from media and those that were more extreme stories from the group and as a result seemed to predict that their incident might be negated:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	32-36.	Yes I suppose when I was listening to yours (Ann) I was thinking, I think I when I was listening to yours thinking, "Oo – in some ways I was thinking was I bullied then?" Because if that's what bullying is then I certainly wasn't bullied really, I got called funny names and I was a bit frightened But actually, in some ways, for me, it was it was about the power, but definitely about the power. But an adult doing it to a child is such a massively, to me, feels so **massively** different to these children.

The prediction that their story might be dismissed seemed to impact upon the way the stories were told and the way the story was negotiated within the group.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	38-43.	I think also it's the way, it's the way people frame the narrative. Ha ha doesn't that sound good (smiles). Because I'm aware Joan of you saying "Oh well this is all low level stuff", you know. And you were saying "Well it wasn't. Oh actually it was bad". It's when people are expressing it; they're kind of dismissing it. Almost like "Oh I'm an adult, oh it's a load of silly stuff". But actually underneath it is the sheer pain of the child, the **terror** of the child.

The perception that bullying is on a continuum, low level incidents to high ones, may demonstrate why YP do not reveal their incidents, as they are felt not to be severe enough.

Sarah dismissed hers as not bullying but then recalls:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	48.	When I wrote it. I felt it "Oh, I felt, I felt, I felt that. What **was that**?!" Which was quite **bizarre**!

Joan was not able to move away from her position at the time as a child, despite being an adult, demonstrating a sense of being stuck in the incident. The fact that this was Joan's second vignette demonstrated despite engaging in the FG and written V2, she continued to remain stuck. It also helps to reveal why YP may not tell.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	V2	1-7.	Ok so …….. the assertive adult in me wants to assure the inner child that she did suffer at the hands of bullies for a substantial part of her school years and that the self-reliance the inner child felt was not the only option. Having to tolerate persistent, targeted unpleasantness was not the only option. However I know that as that little lonely girl, telling an adult someone, felt more likely to make things worse, not better, and what would I have said of any substance? "Please miss, they tutted at me, called me a name ……….." Not convinced the adults wouldn't have eventually thought me an annoyance. So, yes no resolution, but even with my adult and professional head combined, I'm not sure I would have taken any other course of action at that time.

Also the complexity of where the event happened, who initiated the abuse appeared relevant to the definition and led to confusion because it seemed to contradict previous canonical expectations of what bullying involved:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	DE	6-11.	What struck me most about the FG though was Anne's story. She described being bullied by a teacher at school. To me though it was a story of abuse. What's the difference between bullying and abuse? If a parent beats you up, they are abusing you; if a teacher beats you up I think that is also classed as abuse; but if another child beats you up, then that is bullying.

			Anne's story was about physical bullying but it was also about emotional bullying - the feeling of being singled out for unjust punishment. It reminded me to be vigilant about such issues within our schools.

Sally's comment reveals the constraints of constructs such as bullying. There also seemed to be a distinction between bullying and abuse at the end of the continuum involving greater violence. The use of her own experiences and the lense she looked through seemed to determine definitions.

The story seemed to influence Sally's perception of her role as an EP, being watchful in schools of teachers modelling negative behaviours and further demonstrated how views were shifted.

Looking at YP's bullying incidents through adult lenses may also impact upon our perceptions; not understanding the fear at the time for the child. (This relates to findings of Tanaka, 2001.)

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	Vignette	29-30.	And there were some comments about, that he always thought that other people were picking on him, and they had regarded it as being just general banter.

By writing about their own experiences, EPs commented upon the fact that they felt they were back in the incident as the child. This was helpful to EPs in understanding the need NOT to dismiss feelings like "sheer terror" as "silliness".

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	41-43.	It's when people are expressing it; they're kind of dismissing it. Almost like "Oh I'm an adult, oh it's a load of silly stuff". But actually underneath it is the sheer pain of the child, the **terror** of the child.

Clarification from other people around definitions seemed to be needed, even for Joan discussing an adult experience of bullying and as an adult, feeling confusion around this:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	V2	16-24.	At the time did I consider it bullying? – No, in all honesty I didn't. It was others' reflections, bystanders I guess you would call them, mentioned the word 'bullying'. I wasn't witness to anything directly; however they relayed instances of unpleasant targeted comments made to them about me. I feel cross I spent so much time trying to work on and understand what it was about our relationship that was so difficult, what part of that was my part and what I should do differently. This was some years ago though I do hold onto some anger, anger at myself for not walking away, for not recognising things for what they were, or investing time and effort in a relationship that could have better been spent with colleagues I valued and who valued me.

Joan reveals some of the internalisation and self-blame of ruminating that she went through and feels frustrated about wasted time doing this. This fits with Thornberg et al.'s (2013) findings.

5.2.2 Confusion around causes of bullying

Causes of bullying were attributed to not understanding or behaving to expected group norms, appearing different; culture of school being punitive; blaming self, (self-bullying) and natural survival processes.

Bullying causes were difficult to establish and were relevant to the context at the time – for example; not knowing times tables; a girl not wearing the right shoes; a boy being lead actor in drama productions; a girl not wanting to be in the group; a girl being popular with boys. This study supports Thornberg et al. (2013) who discuss the difficulty defining social norms within groups.

Some of the expected norms within different groups were contradictory, showing that contexts and rules of groups are complex and difficult to generalise. In one narrative, the bully was popular with staff and the victim wasn't:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	Vignette	22-23.	I wouldn't say he was nasty. And as I recall he was quite popular amongst peers and staff.

In another narrative, the victim was popular with staff:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Vignette	2.	C was supernaturally clever. She played the clarinet at grade 8 at the age of 12 and was held in high regard by the staff

This may demonstrate how the:

> *"Victim/bully binary operates to simplify and individualise complex social and cultural phenomena."* (Ringrose and Renold, 2012, p.574).

Amy demonstrates how confusion led to attempts to fill in gaps through imagination (See figure 3):

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	DE	45-49.	And they all appeared confused and bewildered at points in their tales when they attempted to give reasons for why they had received such treatment. The confusion of not knowing your offence **or** why you are in the 'out group'. And receiving the 'punishments' for not conforming to the 'standards' or expected behaviours of the established 'in-groups' or high-status individuals was clearly deeply wounding. This confusion never appears to be resolved.

This extract demonstrates how confusion around bullying causes leads to negative effects. This may help to explain why researchers have difficulty determining which is cause and which is effect:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Vignette	18.-20.	And from nowhere, Can't understand where it came from Erm **really** upset us and threw us.

Understanding group norms and rules appeared particularly difficult for those that transferred to a new place (Green et al, 2010):

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Vignette	61.	I could have landed from Mars to be honest because I didn't speak with – you have to learn to speak in a different way very quickly for survival really.

Ofsted's (2012) focus on vulnerable groups, based upon characteristics listed by Green et al. (2010), such as transition, gender, SEN, and ethnicity. The fact that EP participants could only be classed within the gender and transition areas of vulnerability may be a limitation of the research.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Vignette	71-72.	Erm we were new blood I think. Let's try new blood. Everyone else had negotiated and were familiar with them.

Other bullying causes were evident in the narratives and reflections. These relate to some of the themes evident in prior research discussed in the literature review; Themes such as being different:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Vignette	34-36	The ones that wore really short skirts, smoked fags, wore loads of makeup, which I did none of the above. I was very good and sat at the front and always wore perfect uniform.

Physical differences here evident:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	426-430	Either the stature, Wearing glasses, erm (2) Accent, erm (1.5) Not being hip and cool Being academic //

One vignette discussed the fact that expected gender norms weren't followed:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Vignette	44-46	Er Diane could be quite unpleasant to others, and she could say quite sharp, harsh things to me You know. I had very short hair and er I wore trousers. You know I was called a boy, That kind of thing, which I wasn't very happy with.

The narratives were less focused upon psychological causes and upon causes related to physical appearance. This contradicted Olweus's view:

"A widely held view is that students who are red haired, are fat, wear glasses …..are particularly likely to become victims of bullying. This hypothesis received no support from empirical data…. Though enjoys considerable popularity " (Olweus, 1996, p.267).

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Vignette	13.	The **main focus** of their attack were C's white, freckled skin, bright red curly hair after the style of Ronald McDonald, in a halo around her head and her bright blue plastic NHS glasses.
Name	**Location**	**Stanza No**	**Comment**
Jane	DE	55-57.	I was struck by the number of storytellers who referenced clothing and physical appearance. I have, over time, diminished the importance of such things. It has made me reflect upon just what a force this aspect of peer relationships is today.

I wonder, because individuals were revisiting childhood experiences and moving away from their role as psychologist/adult, whether physical attributes came to the fore.

As the person became the adult again in the FG, there seemed to be a change, in the analysis, for example reverting to psychological theory. An example of this was that an EP referred to Thorndike's "Halo Effect" in their discussions as a reason for not being bullied.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	Discussion	483-484	That's what sets us apart, because there is loads of research isn't there? Throughout life Like the really attractive children at school are the most popular.

This raises issues of adults researching children's experiences and perhaps placing their chosen constructs upon the child's perspective. What might be important to psychology researchers may be psychological traits but not for the child.

Jennifer and Cowie (2012) in their study of children's attributions of bullying scenarios acknowledged that their semi-structured interviews may have led to the children providing expected answers, as they were conducted by adults. This highlighted the importance of questioning whose lense we are looking through in professional practice. Examples of what the child focussed upon were apparent:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	V2	12-14.	If you didn't understand his laborious mathematical procedures, he screamed. If you spoke or made any noise in class he screamed. Mr M's classroom was square, with tiled walls and a very high ceiling which amplified his screams

In the content of the stories, there seemed to be group values that were dictated and individuals had to be perceived to desire to fit to these and show desire to be part of the group or be excluded. Where the individual failed to comply, punishment occurred. It is difficult to generalise what this punishment was, as this too depended upon context and temporality.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Vignette	14.	However, her greatest crime was to have been spotted on a Saturday, wearing her school uniform shoes and coat.

"Provocative victims" were discussed, where the victim's behaviour is used to establish cohesion in a group:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Vignette	47-50.	Short little chap, very intelligent chap, big glasses, erm not very sporty Erm probably, didn't help himself sometimes the way he reacted, When he overreacted, that was entertainment for everyone else, you know, And they would goad him a bit more.

Thornberg & Jungert (2013) discuss justification by bystanders for watching; attributing bullying behaviour, to the victim deserving it in order to "morally disengage." The abstract above and below demonstrates this:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Vignette	76-82.	And then the last bit was I remember watching, in the same school, another little guy who was a bit strange really, I have to say (2) Even the way he looked and he smelt and didn't dress himself. You know there was a lot of stuff going on there even some rumours as there always is around what he may have done to other children, to younger children Erm so he had this whole. And he used to get (1.5) erm beaten up at times or made fun of on the way out of school. And again, I sometimes, he used to come alongside us sometimes and I wished I'd done a bit more.

Notably only one of the narrators portrayed themselves a provocative victim. This narrator seemed to want to position herself favourably:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Vignette	56-60.	So they started calling me names, erm, saying, err "Shut it" err "Don't you laugh" Erm trying to silence which unfortunately is not a good thing for me, Because if somebody tries to do that, I tend to do it more, just to wind them up. Because it's like "ooh it's a challenge". So I started becoming a little bit more annoying probably (Laughs) to them.

Canonical expectations about story structure may influence the way that the main character is portrayed. This may explain why stories are therapeutic, forcing the narrator to portray themselves in a different positive light in order to engage the audience. The canonical structure encourages the main character to be likeable, so that listeners align themselves. Sarah's vignette; though unlike the more canonically accepted stories, portrays herself as having power and provoking peers at the start of the story. As a result, she did not appear to engage the audience, and later felt judged for not following expected rules.

Breaking expected rules of a group is felt to be another cause of bullying. Foucault (1984) argues that schooling is a society and it uses methods of control, by developing rules and expected behaviours:

> *"Power had to be able to gain access to the bodies of individuals, to their acts, attitudes and mode of everyday behaviour. Hence the significance of methods like school discipline, which succeeded in making children's bodies the object of highly complex systems of manipulation and conditioning."* (p.67).

EPs discussed the culture of school and the beliefs placed upon individuals by those in authority. If imposed rules were not followed, this led to punishment:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Vignette	12-20.	I was asked if I had known how to do the sum and I didn't know what to say, and to please him I said "yes". So he said, because I deliberately got the sum wrong, I had to be caned. The class did a collective "Ooooh" of **shock.**

The fact that the story also engaged pupils and other staff in colluding in the punishment, perhaps explains how the culture became more embedded and the labelling of the pupil easier. This led to the individual accepting this label.

Billington (2000) suggests:

> *"That it is only by engaging in speculation upon the apparent unreason evidenced by the pathologised individual, that we might come to know more of their reason and more of our own unreason."* (p.89).

The story above seems to intimate Foucault's view about systems having power over individuals and was commented upon in the FG discussion:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Discussion	139-143.	Children were seen and not heard. I was the youngest of 5. Um, you know I just did not expect it to, for anyone to react or or do anything about it really. So you know I didn't feel that I could have asked for adult support. And listening to yours Ann about Mr P. I was just thinking about a couple of teachers that I knew from Primary School, erm **very very** sort of austere and scary people.

And later on in DE's:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	13-15.	There are elements of the social context in which the bullying occurred that I would have liked to explore further; ideas about the ethos of the school and the social hierarchy that existed and the distinctions drawn by the teachers/nuns, how this may have facilitated the conditions in which the event took place.

Evidence that certain behaviours, unacceptable now, but normalised then was evident in discussion. This perhaps demonstrates Burr's (2003) point that we are "time and culture" bound.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	147.	The place I grew up in [name of place], there was the [name of place] Belt which is the town I grew up in. And they were made out of leather, and it was a particular, that was the time

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	149.	My first year of teaching was in [name of place] just outside [name of place], and it was a Primary School. And the teachers there sent off for their own leather belts.

However, the difficulty for pupils in understanding the societal rules was also discussed by Amy. There was evidence of punitive language being modelled by teachers, but then when used by the pupil, she was punished:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Discussion	409-410	That's what the nuns would say to us, you're behaving like Jezebels and using language like that, So I was using language that they'd used.

The importance of adults modelling positive behaviour and being mindful of the behaviour they use was highlighted:

> *"In the child's development, on the contrary, imitation and instruction play a major role. They bring out the specifically human qualities of the mind and lead the child to new developmental levels."* (Vygotsky, 1934, p.104).

Labelling of pupils by adults was discussed in the stories and FG:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Vignette	16.	By the way, I had been put in the bottom set "The Bone Drones" as he called us.

Foucault (1989a) comments that:

> *"Madness [the label] deals not so much with truth and the world, as with man and whatever truth about himself he is able to perceive."* (p.23).

Emerson and Frosh (2009) suggest that "what counts as knowledge is not neutral, but ideologically invested" (p.7). This truth seems to have been placed upon Ann, the individual, and believed by her and internalised.

The engagement of experts (teachers) and also pupils in labelling others, added to the pressure to accept labels:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Vignette	22-28.	I had to be caned by a female teacher So I was taken down the corridor with a girl called Eileen English carrying the cane. I was **utterly** terrified. I kept asking her not to take me. But just pretend that we had gone.

| | | | But she just kept leading me to the classroom of the year below. |
| | | | Here was a tiny, vicious little woman, called Miss Lewis |

This extract demonstrates Kelly's (1991) view that experts reinforce constructs, and then these are taken on by YP. This is elaborated upon in the discussion by Amy:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Discussion	217-222.	I developed this thing that I couldn't do maths, and the more I wouldn't do it, even if he asked me a question, I just wouldn't even listen to it. I'd be just standing there paralysed. They made you just stand up and do things. And I had this belief that I couldn't do **maths**. I ended up with a science **degree** and some would say well you've got **maths**! And I would say yes, but that's not maths and when you do it, but that's not maths. So if you're actually calculating titration point and stuff like that. That's not maths though, (1.5) that's chemistry. Mmm //

Reinforcement of a YP's deficits by adults and peers helps to demonstrate why ruminating and self-blaming might occur. This might also help to explain Jane's reflections:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	16.	I thought it was interesting how some of the group, myself included, appeared to cite the root of the problem in their own behaviour/choices.

Internalising the incident and ruminating about own behaviour to provide solutions evidently led to self-bullying.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	21.	Thinking about my own and Joan's narrative there appeared to be some element that we both felt we were complicit in the bullying by our own passivity/behaviour and perhaps character traits could be seen as an 'internal antagonist' that perhaps contributed to the situation and required resolution.

Thus, this extract provides an example of how cause and effect are intertwined.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	V2	45-46	I felt completely responsible for the situation. I had exercised poor judgement in choosing to hang out with the group.

Hence the victims are not questioning societal problems, externalising the problem away from themselves. The focus was upon what the victim is doing wrong and how they might re-adjust their behaviours (internalising the problem) as illustrated by Thornberg et al. (2013) in their research. Much of anti-bullying interventions involve working on victim's behaviour, such as Kidscape's Zap training. This may re-enforce this internalisation. The need to know context before determining interventions is important.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	V2	32-33.	I tried to get better at maths, spelling, poetry and taking dictation but did not realise that it was not my maths etc. that was the problem, but my fear that was preventing me from demonstrating my competence.

In a recent TV programme Educating Yorkshire (September 11th, 2013), the head teacher can be seen to punish the victim for reacting to bullying, though he acknowledges that he has been provoked. As a result, they provided the pupil with "Anger Management" strategies to cope, thus potentially reinforcing the fact that there may be something wrong with the YP.

The person of authority had provided a label of truth, as an expert (Foucault, 1989a) about Jack or Ann. In Ann's case this teacher is not labelling using a medicalised label that can help to explain behaviour and provide pretence of inclusion.

Because they have not accepted their label and were perceived as challenging, this has led to a more negative label.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Vignette	12-13.	There was something call the Dutton Rule for converting amounts of fractions into amounts of pounds, shillings and pence. And I had been off school, with tonsillitis when everybody else learnt the rule. So I kept getting these wrong.

Another narrative, discussed how a child Jack was labelled by professionals and this had been taken on board by EPs in the consultation process.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	Vignette	25-36.	He was described as odd, by two different teachers And for me I thought it was the magic word that means that they thought he was Autistic And they don't want to say so. I looked in in, through the file to see if there were any other signs regarding. And there were some comments about, that he always thought that other people were picking on him. And they had regarded it as being just general banter. You know, just what boys, kids do at school.

| | | | But he was just misunderstanding the situation. Erm. And also that he had very few friends. So there were signs then about some social um skills concerns. So he was, erm thinking others were picking on him, misunderstanding. |

As a result of the consultations with these professionals, EPs had begun to take what was said as truth. This story demonstrates the need for EPs to be cautious and check out hypothesis.

As experts, they could have reinforced the child's label.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	Vignette	52-55.	Recommendations had been made about how to improve his social skills. Erm, ideas for improving his concentration in class and getting him to work independently. Erm, and obviously, you know ideas for boosting his self-esteem

Later on, in attending high school "This fault or flaw" had led to the boy going to the Resource Base, leading to greater social exclusion.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	Vignette	71-72.	Erm he was spending his break and his lunch time in a Resource Base, in an Inclusion Centre. Where he would sit on his own

Interestingly, despite the rejection of labelling and DSMV criteria being criticised by EPs in discussion, there was some self-labelling, which might reveal the possible pervasiveness of culture upon our behaviour, despite a desire to reject it:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	14.	Its PTSD I worked out. It's a **boring** standing back from it, and terribly sort of **erm**, very, It's not processing stuff, and I you know erm I'm the oldest person here and it's only well into my sixties I realise that certain reactions of mine are actually PTSD.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	203-204.	And I go back to that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (said in unison with Tom) and it's it's not, it's boring psychology where I'm just being so nice, as being ordinary people, (said hurriedly) (2), Erm, it's because I didn't process, because things happened, and then it also happened at home as well, so you had a **long** phase of repeated trauma,

A discussion took place around bullying being about testing behaviour to survive and feel safe in comparison to others in a group. The theme "rather it be you that is isolated than me" instinct was discussed. Damasio (2010) discusses the fact that we turn to groups for survival, like the "nematode (worm)":

"If they detect threat…they will come in groups." (p.57).

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	Discussion	461-466	And it's kind of animalistic I think. Its erm (2) and it's about showing that you're worthy of attaching yourself to the group that you perceive will **survive** Not that that necessarily happens in the end but at the **time.** Some people wanting to have more of a sense of belonging. So they do that by spotting whatever the differences are that they perceive will enable them to move closer to the, fittest, of the species?

Jealousy was mentioned as a theme for why victims were bullied in Tom's DE:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	DE	8, 12	Jealousy, Popular with staff

Damasio (2010) comments - valuing and comparison with others is a component of survival. This was demonstrated in discussion. Damasio (2010) suggests that for survival, we tap into the popular cultures of groups in order to be accepted:

> *"Consciousness enabled humans to repeat the leitmotif of life regulation by means of collective cultural instruments – economic exchange, religious beliefs, social conventions and ethical rules."* (p.59).

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	470-473.	It's even interesting as an adult though isn't it? I even look at friends in school who I used to view you know, as the prettiest girl, the coolest, the one who - She had beautiful hair and she had a fringe that just naturally flicked.

			And she didn't have to do anything.
			And her nails were always white at the ends.
			And (1.5) Alison Smith, everybody wanted to be **Alison Smith**

Because this is survival behaviour it may mean that bullying is difficult to eliminate, though hints that if individuals feeling safe in an environment, so that they can explore individuality this may be an effective intervention.

Our liking of stories, where main weaker characters nearly perish but come through in the end, may relate to a need to survive, because through stories we learn about problems and then can navigate around these if they arise.

This may help to explain why Sarah's story was dismissed as she positioned herself as powerful at the beginning of her story. There also seemed to be a desire that Alison Smith, the powerful one in the FG story, would perish.

The importance of individuals having something of value to give to the group was discussed. If something was given by an individual and then a positive behaviour wasn't returned, then punishment might occur:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	V2	10-11.	Mr M liked to dictate lengthy pieces of text and if you didn't or couldn't keep up he screamed at you. If you couldn't remember or articulate your times tables, specified poems, prayers and spelling to be learned by rote he screamed.

Foucault (1984) discusses the fact that there is an expectation of reciprocity or contribution from individuals within the system or society. He talks about the emergence of control through:

> *"Social production and social service. It becomes a matter of obtaining productive service from individuals"* (p.66).

Using individuals to demonstrate disfavour for not doing so, through punishment, might be seen as a message to others over what may happen to them.

Kelly (1991b) refers to commonality corollaries, things others have in common with others. An individual not having things in common with others is another cause of bullying and led to isolation.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	Vignette	26-27	I felt very lonely during that year. With no real friends, social times lasted an age

EPs discussed the cause of bullying being about trying to become part of a group that doesn't want you:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Vignette	81-83.	But we tried to befriend him. But then again he wouldn't help himself sometimes either. As he then tried to become friends with the people who were. And not doing a very good job at it, and making it worse.

Bion (1961) suggests that we are naturally "herd animals" thus to be excluded from a group, might have negative impact. Moving away from a group can feel like it is "inalienable." This may in turn mean that we lose our personal feelings when in a group and help to explain why EP's opinions changed in their DE, when away from the group.

Desire to be part of a group is demonstrated in Attwood's (1988) novel, the main character stays in the group despite discomfort, or the beginning of the film, Anger Management (2003), where one boy is being beaten up, but he is perceived to be superior to the boy that is not part of the group.

However, some narratives were about trying to remove themselves from the group, demonstrating the complexity of bullying causes:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Vignette	48-51.	Erm and I came to the realisation that I **just** wanted to get away from this new group of friends, but it was **Diane** in particular who seemed. She was at the fore front of my memories. Erm, I started to avoid the group. But er my avoidance tactics didn't really work

EP narratives helped to demonstrate the complexities of bullying causes and why confusion around these causes and rumination might occur. The richness of the narratives enabled a greater understanding of this.

5.2.3 Supporting factors and possible interventions

The following sub themes emerged around supportive factors.

- Having character traits such as intelligence:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Vignette	62-63.	Erm and I was an intelligent person, so I knew when to keep my mouth shut and when to open it. And you know dodge all, and negotiate that, on the whole. Although there were a couple lads particularly, that got into my brother.

- Having supportive families. This enabled the EPs not to need affirmations from a group:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Vignette	8-10.	The girls at the back of the bus all needed to belong to something, someone. I don't feel I needed that so much because I already had that through my family. This fierce feeling of belonging and acceptance I am sure enabled me to "stand up" for myself.

- Knowing parents were there to problem solve, without judgement seemed to be important. This was felt to support a sense of self-efficacy:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	489-494	I think that yourself, despite your parents, your parents more supportive, our parents don't sound totally in on it, (laughs) Or even against it erm, I think that that's the difference, about whether you, you, you carry on in life I do, I agree with it. I think that the family, the family you come from, the home you come from, does instil in you a confidence that you don't know anything about, until you're actually out there. I really do. //
Tom	Discussion	495-509	There is, there is. It's really complicated. Because you've got the sporty types. You've got the arty types. You've got the intelligent types. You've got these few people who seem to have it all. A few of them, there's a real, real I wasn't very tall, I wasn't that sporty, but I got actor of the year award. I was able to communicate I was an intelligent person. I was personable. So I had some strengths // and you know what?
Ann	Discussion	516-517	Yeah but to be who you are. You've got something from somewhere. It must have been your parents.

Although personal strengths and physical attributes and a sense of "self-efficacy" were mentioned, the theme that seemed to dominate was the role of supportive parents. Hyperboles such as "doomed" supported this perspective. Listening to this part of the FG discussion, led me to evaluate the level that individuals dominated this part of the discussion, for example, Tom (above) was keen to discuss personal attributes.

However Ann interrupted – bringing the conversation back to parents, thus this may not represent the group's views. Bion (1961) suggests that the thoughts and beliefs of the group become the individuals and implies that it is a struggle, to resist this and to challenge the group. So although others in the group verbally agreed with the parent premise being an important feature, because of repetition and return to the theme by one member, it may have influenced the group perspective and not reflect true perceptions from individuals away from the group. This is difficult to determine.

Amy as well as Ann, also commented upon her friend having intelligence, but the lack of home support meant that she would not have survived this. This aligned with Eiden et al.'s view (2010).

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Discussion	80-82.	And the other thing was, I knew what her home situation was, and they didn't, and it was **dire**, it was **absolutely horrific**. They had no money, nothing, and there was violence and all there was all sorts going on at home. And that's why I did it and nobody would listen.
Amy	Discussion	101.	But she wasn't capable. And had I not done that I'd hate to think what would have happened to her.

- Defenders in school seem to have been a supportive factor, but knowledge of the background of her friend seemed to have promoted empathy. Amy was perhaps comparing her home circumstances to that of her friend that she defended. The ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes seems to be regarded by Amy as an important factor to support being a defender. This demonstrated how social referencing had been beneficial to the victim.

Other stories also revealed the role of defenders:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Vignette	106-111	Luckily for me there were the boys all around me. And they were sort of saying "What are you doing to her?" "Leave her alone" Which obviously didn't help. Because that was one of the reasons why I was being bullied in the first place, because the boys were all sticking up for me and not for her. And arrr it was just. Anyway, I then did something about it. Well I didn't do something about it, the boys did something about it. Not to her. They actually told the teachers and it all stopped.

The fact that bystanders, with social status became involved in supporting this participant, contributes to O'Connell et al. (1999) findings that social status is important to achieve success by defenders. However, the story demonstrates the complexity of the situation and the difficulty in generalising. Sarah discussed how when the boys were physically around they helped. By also telling a teacher, the boys helped. However, it was the fact that they were there supporting her, that had led to jealousy on the part of the bully and therefore had caused the bullying:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	30-31.	Again the boys were my saving grace – particularly her boyfriend Robert. If he was around I was alright – she was actually nice to me! Though I knew I'd get it both barrels next time – but it was a blessed reprieve

Amy also discussed the difficulty for bystanders and why they might not intervene as doing this had led to her being punished:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Discussion	446-452.	And if you see people being bullied, then you stand up for them. And then you do this and you do that and you're always nice. And actually when you do something, there is a big mismatch. So what could you have done? Actually what could you have done? And actually I proved the point (2) In reality what can you do? When you, even if you see somebody being bullied and you do something about it (2) There is no guarantee it'll go well.

The bystander having personal strengths were felt to contribute to a feeling of self-efficacy to intervene:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	31.	It was implicit in Amy's narrative that she was neither socially nor academically disadvantaged, protective factors in terms of emotional resilience; this is likely to have enabled her to feel sufficiently confident to take on the role of protector.

For victims supportive factors involved:

- Having friends other than that group as there was less desire to belong to the group:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Vignette	17.	But err, I just ended up being very friendly with lots of boys, erm, to the point where I'm not really sure how that occurs.
		25.-26	So erm, and I used spend a lot of my time (1) knocking about, laughing, joking. Being a bit of an idiot, really, with 3 or 4 girls.

- Not seeing the group as valuable to them:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	V2	27.	After this I began to feel that I had little in common with this new group of friends.

These stories also provided ideas around interventions, the need to provide victims with alternative groups to belong. This seemed to support Jane.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Vignette	80.	Went in to see staff and I was moved into another form, with er all my friends from primary school.

This was also eventually the solution to Attwood's (1988) character, who found another group of friends, so this group was no longer essential.

- Being placed in different situations/groups helped victims to be more able to challenge negative perceptions of self:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	542	Because in my head and maybe this is totally out of experience. People usually like me. People usually, I usually get on with people. This is how; do you know what I mean?

			If I'd come from a different place, thinking most people hate me.

- Being with other people who support in the construing of the situation differently seemed to benefit:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Discussion	647-648.	And I've asked several people about what happened at the skiing "Am I over reacting? Did you notice? // (laughter) So even as an adult I'm having to go and validate.

This also reveals the possible importance of Wassell and Brigid's (2002) secure place to go and friendships to support self-efficacy, in times of confrontation. This also fits with Thornberg et al.'s findings (2013) where those that later regarded the bullying as strengthening for them had been supported by others – parents and friends.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	V2	4-5.	I remember not feeling "afraid" as maybe I should have but feeling sad for them. I am sure they were lovely people who had no path – so found one together.

The fact that Sarah had other groups to go to supported resilience and was a protective factor, leading her to view the incident as supporting her in the future.

- Telling someone helped, though participants commented upon the fact that it did not occur to them to tell. Thornberg et al. (2013) found that victims seemed to accept the inevitability of the bullying cycle and believe nothing could be done. This fitted with some comments made by EPs. However, Jane seemed to relate the fact that she was not listened to due to the culture of the time. The fact that Thornberg et al. found similar in 2013 challenges this perception.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann Jane	Discussion Discussion	138. 139-142	Ann to Jane – Your mum had listened to you? Yes she did, I didn't expect her too because you know Children were seen and not heard, I was the youngest of 5. Um, you know I just did not expect it to, for anyone to react or or do anything about it really. So you know I didn't feel that I could have asked for adult support.

Salmivalli and Poskparta (2012) comment upon the fact that many pupils continue not tell parents or professionals in school.

When EPs had told known adults, there were some positive results. This finding fits with Green at al. (2010).

- Shame seemed to relate to not telling. Supporting YP in not feeling shame may be a positive intervention. RP approaches are felt to reduce feelings of shame as they encourage stories to be told and "the act is separated from the actor" (IIRP, 2007) resulting in less internalisation and therefore less shame.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Vignette	69-70.	Erm I felt really **really ashamed** by the whole incident. And I didn't tell anyone about it.

Amy commented upon the fact that times have changed and that YP are now being listened to, suggesting RP Approaches have supported this:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Discussion	414-416	But the point was there wasn't a sort of nowadays, there'd be this big Restorative Justice, sort of nice open conversation. And then it was just "no, you need to be seen to be punished"

Strategies like RP to encourage pupils to talk through concerns are important, together with communicating what adults have done to intervene. If pupils believe nothing has been done, this might result in them feeling that their concerns have been negated and thus potentially reinforcing the belief that this incident isn't important.

A prediction that telling, would lead to a minimisation of the incident seemed to be a perception. RP approaches that stick to scripts without judgement may support.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	329-333	I think it's the fact as well that when you do tell somebody and then they minimise it, Or trivialise it. And they'll say things like, yeah. Even as an adult and things have upset me and I've said to somebody that this happened. And they'll go "don't think you're blowing all that up?" Or I thought you were bigger than that or //
Ann	Discussion	334.	"Don't you think he's only saying that because"
Sarah	Discussion	335.	"Do you think maybe you took it the wrong way?"

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Discussion	399.	Whenever I've moaned about something, It's always been I think well, "Come on now Amy you're bigger than this and you can take it"

Not being listened to seemed to weaken self-efficacy:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	339-341	It makes you feel that you are in the wrong then. There's something wrong. Like, that confirms that there's something wrong about you, to be taking things the wrong way like this

Dismissal of incidents by teachers or parents was attributed to them having had their own personal experience of bullying, them having come through it and then thinking it's a natural part of growing up:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	391-392	And so it is that feeling of, and I wonder whether or not that's where these people , maybe many of the adults have been through very similar things and have minimised it (1.5) And so then when it's reported to them, as adults, they minimise it, because well haven't we all been through that though?

- Prince, Embury (2007) discuss the fact that experiencing copable levels of adversity, supports in building resilience. However, EP discussion suggested that an understanding of this may have led to teachers negating incidents reported to them and thus this was not helpful.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Discussion	608-611	But it's interesting though because if you think of things that have happened in the press recently, the Jimmy Savile stuff And people are saying "how did this happen" You know you could see exactly, how it happened, because people wouldn't have listened to you
Ann	Discussion	612.	And they would have minimised it. And they would have said "Oh well, it's your own fault."// "And you would have been a very naughty person for saying that."

Teachers, EPs and parents should understand that children may not easily discuss feelings or seek external help and may minimise the experience themselves.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	44-45	I think for mine, you see, when I wrote it, as I was writing it, remember I wrote, I did actually write it but didn't read it, because that's what I tend to do (said sheepishly) I remember I wrote here "I felt sick with panic" Which doesn't happen to me very often nowadays.

 It seems important that adults are aware that their experiences are not the same as the child's.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	336.	I'm thinking that well I've actually come to you now because **I'm fairly bruised**

- Some of the EPs comments fitted with Salmivalli and Poskiparta (2012) findings about KiVa which found that increased externalisation of the problem occurs through open discussion about bullying.

EPs predicting that their experiences would be minimised seems to have led to predictions of similar responses in adulthood. This seems to support Vygotsky's theories that language and responses of others influences behaviour in the future. YPs' perceptions should not be negated, as it may lead to them labelling themselves as "over-reacting" so not expressing views. The expressing of views as discussed can be therapeutic.

Verbalising incidents aloud also seemed to be off putting for those that had been bullied, because they could not predict how this might go:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	342.	When you hear your own words come out they do sometimes
Sarah	Discussion	343.	Whiney?
Tom	Discussion	344.	Whiney and actually why? It's not as if I had anything do with it and what's he going on about?

- The importance of teachers understanding that they may not be able to understand the full context was raised. Listening without judgement and allowing the story to be told is important, though the study demonstrated how this was difficult to achieve in this group:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	346-348	You had to be there. And it's a combination of stuff. It's over a period of time, It's about different people (1.5). Its (2) you know, you can't capture all of that in a conversation with someone.

- Strategies to support the victim, such as practising responses in advance were also discussed:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	66-67.	I considered my own experience and thought about whether having some training in the sort of skills that were discussed today would have made a difference to me. I think they would, some of the techniques, e.g. 'fogging' and 'creative responses' may have been helpful in dealing with the situation.

Amy commented upon the fact that preparation of scripts prior to confrontation supported her:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Discussion	645.	He did it in a really nice way because we scripted everything.

The possible importance of scripts that can be used at times where we may feel threatened was highlighted in supporting us in problem solving (IIRP, 2007).

- One narrator discussed the fact that they wished that they hadn't been listened to, wishing that adults had overrode her wishes:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Vignette	12-14.	So there was er you know, the local secondary was thought of as a er good place to go, now once it was turning comprehensive. My parents left the final decision as to whether or not to opt for the other school, to **me**. And I decided to go to the local comp.

She commented upon the fact that in hindsight, her decisions had been determined by superficial value systems.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	V2	21-22.	One of the girls, Diane, lived close to me; she seemed very 'grown up'. She swore and smoked and had trendy clothes and young, glamorous parents! I found this very attractive. At first.

Comparing herself to others was evident:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	V2	24.	Now, looking back, I can understand how important social referencing is at this time and why I may have been captivated by the 'glamour' of the new group of girls who exhibited a rebelliousness that I found attractive in my eldest brother.

This highlights the complexity of child decision making based upon Fraser guidelines. Although listening to pupils and making ourselves available to them is important, sometimes there may be a need to challenge perspectives. The study highlights difficulties in making decisions when embroiled in groups.

We may later look back on these, out of the group and feel that they are less important. Hence child advocates may need at times to go against what the child wants.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	479.	But appearance wise, I expected her to be the epitome of what female is. Because when she was in school, that's what I viewed her as.

- The importance of building relationships, in order to hear YP's concerns was highlighted. This is demonstrated by Sally's story, where a learning mentor had developed a positive relationship with Jack and only years later heard about the bullying and in turn was able to challenge pre-conceived perspectives.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	Vignette	87-88.	And Jack told the learning mentor that he was being bullied by a group of 3 girls from primary school and this had been going on since year 1
Sally	Vignette	94-102.	But when the learning mentor told me what Jack had **described.** Jack was actually giving a very good account of what **is** bullying. So he said the girls were very sly, and very devious, and they would call him names when, you know, other people couldn't hear. They were telling others not to talk to him. They told him things would happen to him and his family, if he didn't do what they wanted or if he told on them. So this had been going on, since Year 1. He is now in Year 7. Um I've just picked that one because that raised lots of questions for me. About why did he open up after so many years?

Notably another EP, listening to the story, commented in her DE that she felt Jack was probably Autistic, doubting this EP's judgement. This perhaps highlighted differences in opinion about stories within a group and rejection of constructs. Notably these perceptions were not expressed in the group.

- Sarah discussed how knowledge of the child and considering the readiness of a child to learn before determining interventions was important. If pressured to engage in something that was too difficult, it impacted upon learning further.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	233.	When I was in school I made it a lot harder than it actually was, (1.5) but then realising that, I just don't think I was ready //

This might also be in terms of being ready to understand social situations and reactions. Assertiveness training, in the ZAP training, may have less impact, if the child isn't ready, or doesn't see it as relevant.

Joan referred to readiness to learn in discussion, perhaps hinting at Piaget's (1969) influence upon her analysis.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	Discussion	486-488	Throughout life the beauty is within And the other stuff is what, you know cos we've got more evolved brains and so As we age and stage of development, I don't know I'm just making this up (said hurriedly)

She suggests that when older, physical appearance is less of importance to adults as to the YP.

5.2.4 Impact of bullying on EPs

Labov (1972) discusses end coda "(ending of the story and bringing action back to the present)" leading to resolution. Although there might be "an outcome of the plot" (Reissman, 2008, p.84) there was not perceived resolution for 2 EPs:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	21-25	I am just thinking about all the varieties of different levels we've been talking at. And erm, that for some people, it was a problem solving account. That they had **resolved** an issue. That yours, you had resolved yours. And you were saying things about yourselves that were. I was right. And I, and I felt the same sort of helplessness, with yours Joan, as I've got something inside me and the story, I think yours and mine, ended on a kind of "dot, dot, dot" This hasn't been resolved? (laughs)

Later, in the discussion Ann discussed being an "advocate" for children, leading to some "outcome" of the plot, though not from the narrative alone.

Short-term impact, such as feelings of shame was discussed:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Vignette	63-69.	And er Diane was with one of the other group and she actually slapped me across the face and grabbed me and we ended up sort of falling to the floor. Oh **dreadful**. I won't say it was a fight, it was just more of a **shocked**, tumble to the ground. But we were picked up by a teacher And erm (1.5) it was stopped. School didn't contact my parent. And I was just **mortified** by the whole experience. Erm I felt really **really ashamed** by the whole incident.

Ringrose and Renold (2012) might argue that this would be less shameful for a boy:

> *"Indeed, what gets called bullying is often that which violates heteronormative gender identities, such as the wife/girl-beater boy or the confrontational, 'non-feminine' girl."* (p.591).

"Rough and tumble" play fighting by boys they suggest would not be construed as bullying as it is an accepted norm, despite some boys not liking this. However, swearing and violence by girls would be construed as abnormal and therefore bullying behaviour:

> *"We explore how when girls violate the normative conditions of 'relational aggression' beyond secret/private rituals (for example, through physical violence or overt/public verbal confrontations), they risk being constituted as gender deviants."* (p. 587).

One might argue that research and media magnifies this possible stereotypical viewpoint and evokes more emotional feelings about straying from the expected norm.

EPs discussed the impact of experiencing bullying incidents leading to them being overly sensitive. They imagined that they were being laughed at, and this in turn affected their behaviour:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	384-390	I think that's probably most hurtful. You know those, you know sitting there and hearing them all sniggering. And you're thinking it must be me. It starts off where they are talking about you, and then it ends up where they're sniggering and they could not be talking about you, but it feels like they're talking about you because they **have** been talking about you before. And it was all very horrible, so they must be doing it again.

This experience and future predictions about it, seemed to have impact for EPs in adulthood:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Discussion	162-166.	I was thinking about the way I had an experience where I moved from one job to another. Where I'd been in the job for ages, and I moved to a job. And, writing this I thought "Oh my goodness, I can see these **same** constructs coming up" I felt the job I'd gone to, was utterly **meaningless** and pointless, which I was feeling about the school.

This demonstrates how adverse past experiences can be attributed to current experiences.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	167.	And you'd chosen it. (said jokingly). You'd chosen it.

Another participant also discussed the repeated feelings from the bullying incidents occurring in her job as an EP.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	171-174.	I've been thinking about this, I've got a head teacher who I work with, and I was only today talking about this head teacher and she clearly. (2) I don't know what it is about **her,** but as soon as I open my mouth (laughs) to speak to her. I said to, my tongue seems to get stuck in my mouth (laughs). And nothing comes out in the right order and I do, just think, "Ooh I can't converse with this woman at all"

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	194-195	And since then, but today I was talking and thinking about **this** and talking about **her** and I thought Oh! And it might. Oh! I think it's a Claire! It feels like it's a Claire! It's a Claire! I stand up to her, but I don't feel comfortable standing up to her. But it's a Claire! //

As I read this, I questioned the extent that this event was related to the prior bullying incident. Because she is focusing upon bullying incidents for the narrative task, she seems to relate the bullying incident to a memory that has come to the fore, because both are being reflected upon.

This might be considered a limitation of the research. However, it demonstrates how we attribute feelings to past events, which in turn influence other behaviour in professional practice.

Ann also discusses how her incident impacts upon her role as an EP:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	206-213.	It wasn't processed, hmmm so that situations. I'm feisty, I'll argue, I'm full of fight and all the rest of it. But actually when people tell me off, actually I can actually fold right? That's because I go back to being helpless like that. Having discovered that actually, I feel (laughs) stronger about it. But it does, these things, erm. Gosh talking as a psychologist though, erm. And going back to injustice, I, I know absolutely that I'm an Ed Psych because I'm not having these things happen to **children**.

This perhaps emphasises the complexity of events, the fact that her "trauma" is difficult to isolate from other events (at home) but the fact that they are repeated, leads to the more likelihood that they are anticipated and therefore behaviour is repeated.

The fact that Ann (above) will back down if confronted, suggests some lack of self-efficacy, raising the dilemma of being an EP and the fact that part of our role (Kelly, Gray, 1999) might be to challenge institutions. She also suggests that she is determined not to let something similar happen to other children. How might she cope if confronted around the rights of the child? This may lead to implications around her own wellbeing and conflict between her EP role. Joan's perspective below intimates that repeated experiences lead to more of a reflex response without conscious thought:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	Discussion	632-634.	Your experience of the universe is about learning lessons. And until you learn the lesson, the lesson keeps repeating itself. And that's, that is my complete, take, on, this. (low tone)

Effects of negative events being passed down to our own children was discussed. This was relevant to me, (Appendix 10).

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	225-227.	I felt like you about maths. Oh my God, so I watch my **daughter** and I think, "Oh my God it's happening to her." And I can see, when her dad is talking about percentages or fractions and he's going "**We've done this before**!" (Raised voice and slams down hard on table).

The research also demonstrated some long term positive impact:

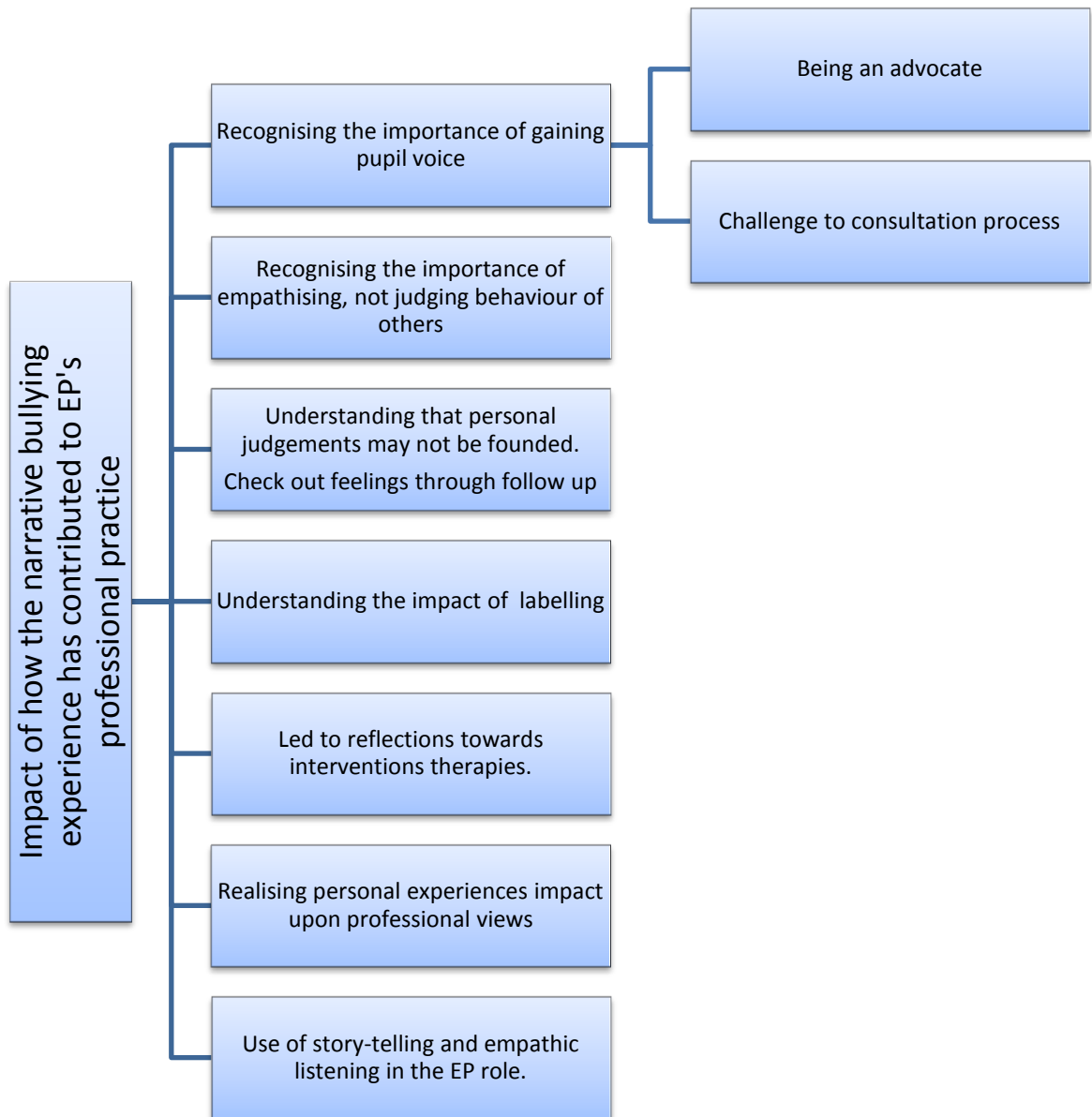| Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	687-689	So you know crap has happened, am I allowed to say that word? (laughter) -but bad stuff has happened hasn't it? But all the way, and I think it's my my again my perspective of all my, my, I would say I'm probably overly optimistic about everything So, but I, even the really crap stuff that's happened, I wouldn't not have had happened.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	693-695	If somebody now came up and said to me and said "Sarah you can start again and all of that would be gone" I would say " **No**". I, I want that to happen Because actually I am who I am, because of all of that. And **without all of that**, I wouldn't be who I am and I'm quite happy thanks
Ann		696.	I wouldn't because it's taken too long to get shut of a lot of stuff! What a waste of time".

5.3 - EPs engaging in the narrative and group experience has contributed to EPs professional practice.

The experience of participating in the research seemed to have impact upon professional practice.

The flow diagram, Figure 10 illustrates some of the subthemes that arose.

Figure 10: 5.3 - Impact of how the narrative bullying experience has contributed to EP's professional practice.

Impact of how the narrative bullying experience has contributed to EP's professional practice

- Recognising the importance of gaining pupil voice
  - Being an advocate
  - Challenge to consultation process
- Recognising the importance of empathising, not judging behaviour of others
- Understanding that personal judgements may not be founded.
  Check out feelings through follow up
- Understanding the impact of labelling
- Led to reflections towards interventions therapies.
- Realising personal experiences impact upon professional views
- Use of story-telling and empathic listening in the EP role.

Engaging in stories and discussion seemed to develop reflection around the EP role and future practice around the use of stories:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	576-584	I would love to do it. For others, I'd love, to do. I thought, ask people. I don't know why I don't do it, why don't I do that? Ask people to tell me a story about them. Just ask them to tell me a story rather than what I sometimes do do, which is when I am in work I mean, is go in and have the you know. I don't use that. And why don't I use that? I should use that shouldn't I? I'm talking, maybe I should go and say to people cos I've got something completely different probably than sitting here, listening to these. I could have done what I would have done in work.
Joan	Discussion	588-589	I found it really hard not to interrupt But not in that, I want to ask you a question, but just in an empathic way.

The process of storytelling enabled EPs to reflect upon their problem solving methods, used in their work. The disjointedness of the speech suggested a reflection upon changes that Sarah would make in future practice. Sarah discusses the fact that free listening, without planning responses at the same time, would support her in the listening process, rather than trying to provide expected solutions to a problem, like an expert:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	584-587	And because there was the constraints of you must listen for three minutes and not interrupt, it was quite freeing, quite liberating, not to have to think about, what am I going to say next? How am I going to ask a question, which will make sense to that person? Yeah, Yeah, I didn't have any of that. And yet I still got a lot from it. Why don't I do that? (laughter).

Gaining pupil voice was discussed. Sally commented upon not making judgements based upon professional views without listening to the pupil and checking hypotheses:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	Vignette	108-110	So just thinking about my initial interpretation, because the information was presented in a particular way. And had high school done the same thing. There was information that there were concerns, but if high school and myself interpreted them that way that fitted with what the primary school were saying (1.5) And it was only when we actually spoke to Jack, that we actually got a picture of what was actually happening to him.

The vignette highlighted the possible difficulties of an EP's consultation process which relies upon professional's viewpoints. The importance of checking out other alternative "truths" is highlighted by this vignette. Jane also recognised this in her DE:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	60-62.	Comments about 'getting alongside' the individual in our work as EPs have made me consider the role of consultation. I made an assumption that Tom was talking about getting alongside the YP that we deal with. However, if a consultation system is used the problem holder is the teacher/Senco. Can we 'get alongside' and empathise with the YP via consultation? Do we need to?

Sally's vignette also raises questions about EPs spending too much time in one institution and then beginning to trust perspectives, rather than to challenge.

Sally intimates that in order to question truth we use other people's judgements to justify or dismiss opinion. We select evidence to do this, but is this the right evidence?

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	Vignette	107	And so there was actually a failing in the school - a school that has recently been in special measures.

Being an advocate for the child was discussed. Personal experiences of not having a voice as a child seemed to make EPs more determined that it would not happen to others:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	DE	122.	It was suggested that the nature of our roles as EPs put us in a position to defend those who experienced bullying and injustice.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	822-827	I feel as though I'm going on here. I know that's there's, I love listening to kids. Because of uhhh, they're good company. Because they've got a valid point of view. Even just going into a school and you, a little thing like, "Just show Mrs (EP)." You'd be taking the kids across the hall and they'd be looking back and looking back and say "Miss I had 3 sausage rolls last night." **"Wow** that's massive." That's important erm. Its, it's that, you know. We're advocates for children, because, we work hard to listen to children.

Miller et al. (2007) discuss the movement away from "pathology of the child" and the movement towards "listening" to stakeholders. They question whether being "mere advocates" is enough for the EP role?

Participation in the research seemed to have led to some EPs trying to resist within child labelling. In one DE, the EP mentions that she had begun to reflect more upon environmental impact and bullying phenomena:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	DE	149-150	In the days following the group meeting, the themes which I have identified have come to the fore during my working days. When children have been presented to me with learning, social, emotional and behavioural issues I have recalled phrases and details shared by group participants whom has made me consider the possibility of bullying playing a part.

This may demonstrate that key personal experiences (the themes from the FG) influence perceptions in other contexts. The above provides an example of how personal experiences impact upon the EP role.

Sarah discusses her perception of the EP role and how personal experience has supported her in not being judgemental. She comments about her own behaviour being irrational under stress:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	831-844	Well the biggest lesson, I'd say, would be that, that I have behaved in ways that have surprised me. So I'm the person who is responsible for my own behaviour because I'm grown up so I should know what's right and what's wrong. And I have done things where I've thought, where it's I've watched me doing it and can't believe I'm doing it. It's almost out of body like What are you doing and why are you doing this? Because this is **ridiculous.** But I've persisted with that behaviour. And not been able to actually verbalise what that's been about at all. And then I've come to realise through that, that actually, whoever I talk to whether be it an adult or a child, **whoever** I talk to, they may be in that exact same space that I've been Where they don't know, why they're behaving the way they are. And I can't it's not my job to tell them why It's my job to help them come to their own understanding of why.

Sarah uses previous examples and discloses these to demonstrate how she has arrived at current beliefs. In addition, Tom seems to use the experience of the FG to support future work:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	738-743	There are certain things I suppose I totally get your point I **absolutely** have learned so much about all of us around this table. And about who you all are and all of the **pain.** I'm **absolutely** sure and I'm using that learning now in my work. The people I meet with, be, and I wouldn't be in a place of, authenticity. Or competence to do it if I hadn't been through some of the personal stuff.

EPs saw negative personal experience benefitting their practice:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	766-768	Even though it was **horrifically painful** and it was the **worst** time of my life I still would go through that because it taught me such a lot about other people. When they tell me they are anxious. Because before they'd say "I'm anxious" and I'd go "oh that's terrible" and think about my mild anxiety when you go for a job interview but not **really**, really.

This fits with Thornberg et al.'s (2013) findings that sometimes adversity supports those in a "caring profession".

Tom acknowledged difficulty when trying to support individuals that have had experiences that he hasn't:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	790-792	You can't really pin it down, but I think there's certain aspects of life that there's just something that I cannot. And I'm honest about that because I haven't been through it. I just, I haven't, you know I'll be honest, you know //

However, Sally commented upon the fact that not having had personal experiences supported her in not placing her experiences on others:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	DE	4-5.	Perhaps the other participants are therefore able to empathise more with young people they come across in their work who are being bullied. Alternatively, I might be more objective in such cases, as I don't have recollections of my own feelings of being bullied to cloud the picture.

Personal experiences in some ways appeared to dictate psychological conclusions and stances taken. Ann commented upon the bullying experience as having "traumatised" her. Emerson and Frosh (2009) comment upon this construct evolving from culture, which influences the way we might think, construe events and label:

> *"The way that people construe themselves allows a lot to influential psychological theories."* (p.6).

Ann's comments reveal how her own personal experiences and culture dictate her psychological stances or paradigms:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	DE	88-90	Professionally I have for some time now seen unresolved traumas as key to understanding people and children and this experience further convinces me. It's why therapies don't work, why every new fab approach in psychology works for only a small group then fades away. We are professionally simplistic with our single theories about how children function – all those new labels in DSM V – whereas, neurologically, repeated trauma is what it's all about.

Another subtheme that arose was how engaging in canonical storytelling where the expected story structure is that the perpetrator has a "downfall" in the end, contradicted the expected role of the EP.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	Vignette	42-45	C went on to Cambridge and is now an extremely highly paid banker living in Switzerland with her German banker husband and their two children. Most of the bullies sank without a trace. Apart from one who made headlines in the Manchester evening news when she was sent down for her part in an armed robbery. (laughter) (5)

This reminded me of a similar ending to the villain in a fairy story. It was difficult to determine whether she was truly pleased at their demise, or was providing an expected ending to the story following a canonical storytelling approach. The fact that others laughed also suggests others were on board. The work that EPs do with individuals who behave in ways that are not always acceptable deserves empathy and non-judgement, separating the behaviour from the person (IIRP, 2007).

As EPs our role is to support those that behave inappropriately, not celebrate their downfall. I wondered the extent that some personal experiences may conflict with the role of the EP. Unfortunately, this wasn't elaborated upon in the research and suggests further study might be needed.

5.4 – What the process revealed about perceptions of the EP role

EPs commented upon their role and the possible difficulties that they face. This study may support EPiTs in understanding complexities of the role.
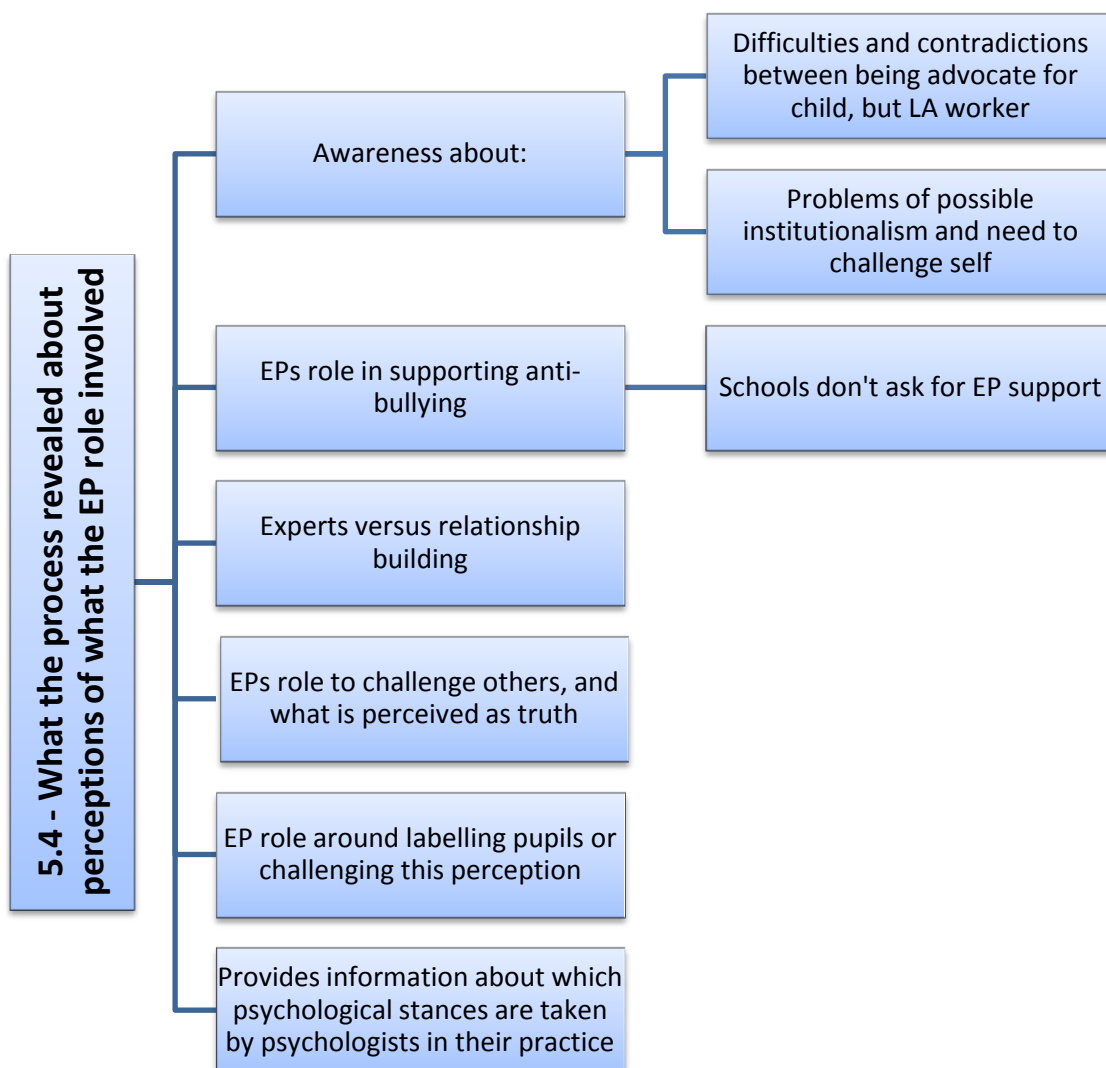
Figure 11 5.4 What the process revealed about perceptions of what the EP role involved

EPs perceived that they were expected to be experts, but EPs seemed to value relationship building to support an individual, over being an expert. EPs perceived the expert role as being imposed on them:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Discussion	793-796	I thought that's interesting that idea of being alongside people. Rather than cos sometimes we're put into an expert role aren't we? And but that, the idea of being, you're almost like you're the human. You're there, you've shared their experience.

Sarah and Tom also discussed the role as being a supporter:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	797-801	Absolutely. And the evidence is that the research evidence from anything is the most powerful bit of the job that we do.
Sarah	Discussion	802	Is er, the listening. The relational, being understood. Being valued and that sounds very, very woolly.

The comment "woolly" seems to be about us not trusting our impact as EPs and needing something to confirm it, a need for a visible end result. Tom discussed the need to "believe in ourselves," but this I consider to be difficult when it is difficult to see tangible results. It also seems to conflict with present government focus to show outcomes, (Allen, 2011).

Our role as listener was promoted by Tom. However, Sally seems to suggest that it was a failing of the Primary school, not the EP for not having gained pupil voice and seemed to regard herself more as supporter to the mentor around bullying methods, suggesting some difference in opinion.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	Vignette	105-107	Erm and the other point was erm, what if he had ever tried to tell er primary. Was he listened to? And so there was actually a failing in the school - a school that has recently been in special measures.

This extract perhaps reveals possible information about the role placed upon her, and the role that she would like to take on. Goffman (1983) intimates that during perceived difficult times, we might position ourselves to promote "desirable selves."

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	Vignette	89-90	Erm so, my role was er supporting the learning mentor in the work that he was doing, Exploring the bullying.

The fact that she did not elaborate upon this and its impact, made me consider the extent that this had been executed. However, perhaps, because this was not the main point of the vignette, she had omitted this. Riessman (2008) suggests that at endings of the story preferred self might be revealed.

Notably, there were not many professional bullying experiences to tell, therefore EPs had to tell personal ones, and this suggests bullying might not be a focus of school referrals:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	55-56.	I think and as I was writing it, the other thing that came out for me was – I phoned I spoke to Juliet and asked "Ooo was I meant to do one with me as a child, or one of me professionally?" Because actually professionally that sort of thing hasn't really happened

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	111-112	And I was racking my brain to come up with a professional story (laughs). Apart from the work place situations I couldn't think of enough of stuff that kind of not forced me, but put me into having to talk about something personal.

Wolke, (2013) suggests that there is a long term negative impact of bullying for victims, which raises questions about why EPs are not being referred to and may merit further research. Do schools feel capable in dealing with incidents, or don't they see the role of the EP as being supportive in this area? The fact that bullying is heavily part of the media and Government agenda (see literature review) suggests that EPs should be involved, but perhaps schools feel that bespoke interventions are the appropriate approach so there is no need to problem solve with EPs? Notably it appears to be psychologists that design bespoke interventions, but perhaps there is a need for them to be explicit about how important context is.

The fact that Sally had made assumptions about the role of the EP, in her case, to support diagnosis around ASD, suggests that schools and herself perceive us as supporting in labelling of individuals. In Sally's case, the school asked for EP support only when the school had a perception that the label did not fit. They were using Sally as an expert to challenge previous perceptions:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	Vignette	81	And I said about when I had looked at his file, They'd said about ASD and they said no he didn't seem ASD.

The report around the role of EPs (1999), comments upon an EP role to challenge:

> *"You don't commiserate with schools; you actually challenge them to do better."* (DFE, 1999, p.84).

A story in the FG discussion, although not about bullying provided an example of an EP doing this and getting into conflict:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	176-189	Apart from the fact, that when I first started, I did an observation of a child in her school, and (2) I'd written the record, and it said something like erm, "It was a quite a lively (1.5) science class. And they were all very very, talking very loudly. Not about the subject matter **at all**. Nobody was on task." So I'd written something, along those lines, but not as explicit as that. And she called me into her office as I was leaving, and said, "I'd just like to have a word with you Sarah about this report that you've written" (whispered). And I said "oh, right, okay."(quickly and in surprise) She said that "I feel your report is erm (1.5), is er, under-mining the parent's confidence in my school." And I was like "Ooh? (surprised) Why would

			you think that?"
213			Bearing in mind she had excluded him and had to have it rescinded because it was rescinded, her exclusion. Her exclusion, it was nothing to do with me. This came after. And I said "Oh, why's that then?" And erm, She said "Erm, because you've written here er that the lesson was very noisy I want that rewritten" (said forcefully). I said "What would like me to write?" And she said "I'd like you to say that they were talking about the subject matter animatedly" I said "But that would be a lie, wouldn't it?" And she went (1.5) "I'm sorry?" (questioningly) I said "When you've trained as an EP, you can tell me how to write a report, but until then, I'll let you be the head teacher of this school and I'll be the EP, is that alright?"

Interestingly, the EP did not explicitly challenge the Headteacher about the exclusion, but wrote a report considering social context which was perceived as a threat. This story made me reflect upon the changing times for EPs, where services are being commissioned by schools. In this present climate, would an EP challenge in this way? The context of the situation is not described here, but relationship forming in order to challenge is an aspect of the EP role and in my opinion an important one.

This story also highlights expectations by schools that EPs will collude with them in order to support exclusions. The note of surprise by the head teacher at Sarah's challenge, or refusal to change the report intimated this. It reveals the possible conflict that we face in our role, by trying to support both the child and the school.

To conclude the analysis chapter:

> "*The daunting task that remains now is to show in detail how, in particular instances, narrative organises the structure of human experience - how, in a word, "life" comes to imitate "art" and vice versa." (Bruner, 1990, p.21).*

The study provided examples of how storytelling shifted perceptions about the original incident and how perceptions affected behaviours.

These rich narratives demonstrate the complexities of the individuals' stories and the impact of trying to generalise themes in discussion.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Burr (2003) talks about distortion of views:

> *"As a culture of society, we construct our own versions of reality between us. Since we have to accept the historical and cultural relativism of all forms of knowledge, it follows that the notion of truth becomes problematic."* (p.6).

Despite promoting a critical realist and relativist stance throughout, I am aware that generalisations have been made by participants and myself and these impact upon the reader.

Bion (1961) suggests that in a working group, which has a structural purpose, emotions such as fight, flight, pairing and dependence might be lessened. However, he suggests that instead, there should be an awareness of being too logical or formulaic, taking:

> *"a scientific approach to a problem."* (p.99).

Evidence of categorisation can be found in DEs where bullying themes are listed:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	DE	8-14	Jealousy, perceived as different, new, academic, popular with staff not sporty, sexualised comments as biggest insult.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	DE	DE Sub-heading	Confusion and ignorance, role and status, injustice, redemption and forgiveness, outcomes.

EPs made generalised interpretations. Foucault (1989), warns against this suggesting this leads to a "truth":

"As a matter of fact, we must not be misled by what appears to be strict continuity in these themes, nor imagine more than is real by history itself." (Foucault, 1989, p.15).

An example of generalisations based upon one narrative is demonstrated below:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Amy	DE	126-128	And it was apparent that a number of behavioural responses such as "folding" in the face of aggression and being "told off" remained. Therefore, despite having rationalised their experiences and acknowledged the abusive nature of these, victim's had still not lost their conditioned responses to the bullying behaviour.

Riessman (1993) talks about "hypothetical narrative" (p.18) which depict events that did not happen. We may begin to impose our theories that we have read, or been influenced by, upon our narratives and as a result they change.

This extract appeared to use some form of "ventriloquism" (Brown, 1998), in the fact that psychological constructs such as "conditioned response" were used. This may not reflect perceptions, but have a purpose that is difficult to interpret. Was this to position herself as having "knowledge" or did it demonstrate cultural influences on her at the time, or was it a genuine perception? The difficulty determining this is a limitation of the research.

Like Thornberg et al. (2013) I acknowledge the difficulty in "transferability of the data" but like them, I advocate that:

"the reader, not the researcher judges the generalisability" (p.324).

I am aware that these categorisations and interpretations may become a form of truth, eliminating the voices of others, such as the bully.

The purpose of EP participants may also be to position themselves more positively and as a result, perceptions may not have been revealed. A limitation is that this may detract away from research question "What are the stories of EPs who have experienced bullying?" **or** the research question "How do personal experiences impact upon professional practice?"

DEs made comments about EPs wanting to position themselves favourably:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	DE	39.	It was as though this was a test, so that if he conveyed that he has resolved everything this demonstrated what an amazing professional he is.

Hence EPs made comments upon the authenticity of stories. Emerson & Frosh (2009) comment narratives have "intent/agency" (p.5), so cannot be taken as truth.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	12.	Did he mean inserting himself as a character/hero or did he mean he wanted to be an agent of change as he is as an EP.

Sevcikova et al. (2012) used on line interviews to gain pupil perceptions about cyberbullying. They suggest that because of confirmed anonymity, there is more likelihood of "increasing their willingness to talk about their experiences." This might be a limitation in my research, as the participants are known and are a small sample, so it was easier for others within the group to deduce who made what comments. Hence there may be reticence to disclose impact such as mental health difficulties as a result of the bullying incident.

In the initial recruitment of EPs, one EP who did not take part in the FG, disclosed that although she had probably been bullied as child, it was sexual abuse that overshadowed any other negative experiences. (See research diary).

She later commented:

> "I can talk to you here, but don't think I could discuss this with a group of other professionals. They might think – Oh look there's the girl that was abused as a child, not there's Amanda, the EP."

A limitation of my research may be a reticence to disclose or present a self that would lead to labelling in a negative sense. This was also evident by concerns expressed by Ann:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	49-50.	If we're putting our adult constructions on it. I was reading it going "Oh my god I'm going right down here." Erm they're going to think I'm hung up because I'm going right down here! (laughing).

Another EP in the recruitment stage commented upon the fact that it would not be the reactions of other EPs to disclosures in the FG that might have a negative impact in the future, but the fact that her own embarrassment about revealing how identity had been constructed, might lead to her removing herself from future EP interactions.[1] I had later arranged a "get together" for EPs in order to give some form or feedback (Appendix 11) as discussed in the research proposal and despite EPs being positive immediately after the FG, interestingly, 2 cancelled, despite it being arranged on 2 separate occasions (Sally and Sarah).

EPs also commented upon the choice by one EP who told a professional story being to avoid disclosure:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	25-26.	I wondered if this was a choice made in order to maintain a professional demeanour in a setting with some people she does not know or that she may encounter on a professional basis. I am not sure of Sally's status in the service that

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[1] Because these interactions took place prior to FG interviews, this may not be viewed as part of the research and has not been transcribed, though permission has been sought to use these comments. Names have been anonymised.

			she works for but wondered if her position in the hierarchy had an influence on her decision to avoid a personal vignette.

Comparison between story content might be construed as a limitation. EPs may have regarded Sally's position to be less of authoritative within the group due to lack of personal experience. She was not the same as those other EPs, who had disclosed personal stories. She became more isolated within the group and perhaps her voice wasn't heard.

The fact that DEs went some way to allow a personal voice and a different position to be taken out of the group reduced this limitation. However participants knew that it would be me reading these diaries and using them as data. As a result, they may have omitted certain information.

It was clear however, that EPs had feelings that people were holding back:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	1-6.	Interesting how some of the group appeared to put some distance between themselves and their stories. Tom's narrative appeared ambiguous and disjointed. The narrative changed direction a couple of times and this had the effect of keeping me as a listener at something of a distance. It made it more difficult to engage with his experience at an emotional level, as I found myself attempting to fill gaps in the narrative. I wanted to ask Tom what was in the poem that was written about him, it appeared to have left a lasting mark and was poignant to think the words had echoed down the years; I felt it would have been too intrusive to ask him about it. If he had wanted to share this he would have.

A limitation of the research is that this "gap filling" by participants and myself could not be clarified. I could not question interpretations because I kept silent during the FG.

Another limitation might be that I had recruited like-minded EPs. Hence this made it more difficult to suggest that these are perceptions of all EPs. Why did they engage in the research? What was in it for them? Maybe to join EPs who are interested in social phenomena such as bullying? Thornberg et al. (2013) found that some of their participants had reported being more interested in human behaviour and interaction because of being bullied and this had supported them in their choice of career. This was mentioned in the DE by an EP:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	DE	21.	Themes of powerlessness arose, but also justice. Fairness and how this has impacted on our lives – job choice as EPs.

The fact that one of my paradigms was around Constructivism, (Kelly, 1991) and a number of participants mentioned "construct" and "Vygotskian thought," also suggested that this might not represent the EP population, but EPs that associated with these paradigms. Although the DEs note some disagreements between EPs, the above limitations need to be considered.

This made me reflect upon possible slants towards constructivist paradigms during EP training courses and influences on EPs. This might be something that EP course co-ordinators may reflect upon; their influence on the EPs they train. This might be an area of research to be explored further.

There are some limitations in the choice of TA. Riessman (2008) suggests that the:

> *"analytical decision is important, for it shapes interpretation and illustrates once again how we participate in the construction of the narrative that we analyse."* (p.41).

TA breaks up sections of the story in order to focus on themes and causes disfluency. This has been discussed in the research method but I am aware that I found it difficult to restrict myself to theme headings, which affected the fluency of structure.

Lewis and Miller (2011) discuss the weakness of qualitative approaches that just base the analysis around "selected illustrative quotations." They considered the structure of the conversation, using conversational analysis approaches – in particular "leadership control, in relation to process and content" (p.209) and mechanisms used to gain this. This research did not consider this fully and might be regarded as a limitation.

I acknowledge that the data could have been analysed in a more micro analytical way. Analysis of the language used may have provided greater information about levels of positioning. Riessman (2008) suggests looking at use of pronouns and shifts from "I" to "you" in the narrative, as these junctures, might be a chance to either generalise beliefs to all or to engage the participant in joint beliefs, "shared identity shift" (p.123). Readers can do this by looking at the transcripts, but this was not analysed. NIs accept that much of the story cannot be captured. Even by transcribing all conversation, the situation, the context, non-verbal body language and tone are difficult to capture wholly and are open to the interpretation of the researcher (Riessman, 1993).

I could have used approaches that reported dialects and where parts of the words had been stressed. This micro transcription was not used, as when I read transcripts that had done this, I found them difficult to follow and they also appeared condescending to the participants, where colloquialisms appeared to negate the content. However, by missing out these stressed vowels etc., one might argue that I was not enabling the reader to make judgments. Riessman (1993) suggests that:

> *"forms of transcription that neglect features of speech miss important information."* (p.20)

However, as suggested by Miller et al. (2007) by focusing upon one angle, such as "discourse", there may be another area that is neglected. This seems to be a limitation of all research. However, Silverman (1993) might criticize the fact that I am trying to do a bit of everything:

> *"It is better to stay at one level of analysis and see what you can say about data at that level, without seeking to resolve philosophical or occasionally participant's questions about the essential character of reality."* (p.198).

It was difficult to determine whether it was telling the story that was supportive or being in a group. Perhaps this is a limitation of the research process because there was a range of communication mediums, so it is difficult to separate these aspects. However Robson (2002) would argue this is evidence of "real world research."

My research provides some reflection outside of the group on the process within the group, using different mediums:

> *"In vivo spoken discourse seldom resembles carefully crafted written prose."* (Lewis and Miller, 2011, p.204).

Kelly's (1991) social corollaries might come into force during group discussion, as participants, find things in common with others and emphasise them in order to align with the group, thus making certain themes appear more dominant than they actually are for individuals, for example the role of parents was discussed in detail. I was aware of interruptions when an EP tried to discuss something else. Interruptions also meant that sometimes what might have been elaborated upon was lost:

> *"The stop and start style of oral stories of personal experience, gets pasted into something different."* (Riessman, 1993, p.14).

This was commented upon in a DE:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	DE	25-26	Unsure if everyone said what they wanted to? Joan commented that she was "disconnected" from her story I wanted to follow this up but did not. Other conversations happened.

In reflections after the data collection, I became more aware of demographic limitations, where some EPs dominated the discussion:

"the ability to create rapport and maximize the scope and depth of FG discussion is heavily influenced by the gender composition of the group. This means that care must be exercised when mixing men and women, and the moderator needs to ensure an acceptable level of interaction in mixed-gender groups." (Stewart et al., 2007, p.22).

Tom, the only male in the group, hinted at some difficulties:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	DE	23-24.	Think most people had a chance to speak – perhaps not? Sarah, Ann – Spoke most possibly. Amy, Myself, had various bursts of talking and Jane, Joan + Sally – spoke the least amount.

I acknowledge that I could have, like Riessman (1993) suggests, considered who instigates the dominant themes and whether this was the same person. This might be regarded as a limitation of the research.

Age was also a factor that seemed to have an impact upon power relationships. This was demonstrated by Ann's comment:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Ann	Discussion	199.	I'm the oldest person here and it's only well into my sixties I realise that certain reactions of mine are actually PTSD.

Another limitation was the fact that some of the group knew each other and others did not.

"A frequent but rarely tested assumption about the FG interview is that better data are obtained when participants are strangers." (Stewart et al., 2007, p.34).

This may be a limitation of the research due to power imbalance and was cited by Tom:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	DE	22.	It was good for me that I knew all the other participants apart from one – I thought it was brave of her as she did not know many others.

In analysing the transcription, but not observed when I was in the group, I noted some alignment between EPs that may have impacted upon others involved in the group:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	Discussion	724-725	Sarah has a brilliant way of dealing with life, as you've probably gathered // (2) With a brilliant sense of humour.

Bion (1961) comments upon this pairing up and how it may impact upon group dynamics. Notably, in one interaction where Sarah perceived herself as challenged, she used a past relationship history with another EP to stop this challenge:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Discussion	714.	But actually it would come out quite jaunty Joan probably knows all about it.

It wasn't just a dominant member that may have caused themes to predominate, but a dominant emotional story that followed canonical structure. This seemed to impact upon others within the group, who made comparisons and were aware that their story was not similar and did not have as much impact on listeners. This may have enabled this EP to feel more empowered.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	Discussion	13.	I shouldn't have gone next actually. (laughs) Because I kept thinking about your story when I was reading mine. (2)

Positivists might argue that the sample was too small and did not reflect other bullying research. Prior research suggests that there is a gender difference in types of bullying and that there are more boys than girls involved in bullying experiences (Smith, Polenik, Nakasita, Jones, 2012; Jollife, Farrington, 2011). As the majority of participants in this case study research are female, the type of bullying described and the fact that most of these describe themselves as victims might not reflect a true picture of larger samples. However, there is a dearth of case study research and I would argue that if there was more case study research about bullying, findings of research using larger cohorts may be challenged. This research uses cases from EPs and there is a gender bias in the profession.

Smith et al. (2012) suggest that the reason for why there might be less female protagonists is because previous researchers have focused upon direct bullying (verbal and physical aggression) rather than indirect bullying, a feature more related to girls.

Another limitation was that the transcription was sometimes difficult to interpret due to interruptions during FG discussion and there was talking over others. Transcriptions were also based upon my interpretations, for example what was perceived as "whispered" by me, may be interpreted differently by someone else.

The canonical approach to storytelling, where there is usually an expectation of an end coda (resolution) may have encouraged EPs to find a positive resolution from their stories. The desire for resolution and expectation to problem solve through fixed storytelling structure affects truth (Bruner, 1991). Storytelling may relate to this need to survive and thus, a desire to adhere to these structures – Victim faces adversity, but survives and comes through positively. Joan intimates this in the discussion. Notably no EP told a story of them being the bully.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	Discussion	300-307	But your story is different, I thought, if I was to use a word about your story (said to Sarah) I would say clean.
			It had a lovely cleanness about it. Do you know what I mean?
			And I don't mean to degrade your suffering for 2 years. That was, that must have been **horrific**, **horrific. But**, you decided to confront it head on. You did it yourself it didn't work, so you told an adult. And like if every kid, if that happened to every kid wouldn't that be wonderful? You tell an adult it. It gets resolved, and then the perpetrator comes to you and says, at another point in time and goes "I'm really sorry" //
			That is such a kind of lovely happy ending.

Without this narrative approach, resolution may not have occurred. There is a possibility that the positive impact described may not reflect the true nature of EP experiences. This research did not always align with other research that bullying has a negative impact upon the victim cohort (Green et al., 2010; Sansone, 2013; Farrington et al., 2012; Delvaney et al., 2012).

Joan intimates that Sarah has adhered too much to the canonical storytelling structure and as a result, questions it. Bruner (1990) suggests that you use an expected mode, but breach expectation with content, in order to be more believable. It appears Joan had not followed this rule in her narrative and as result was challenged notably by her "ally" in other parts of the FG. Perhaps being Sarah's friend, made Joan more able to comment, but this demonstrated the impact of over familiarity in a group. Sarah was later upset by this challenge in her DE and Joan also ruminated about this.

There are also limitations of the research in terms of observations made. Stewart et al. (2007) discuss how non-verbal cues are important and advocate the use of videotaping as a method to analyse this. This was not engaged in as I felt that it may impact upon dynamics.

I acknowledge that observation was not as effective as I became caught up in the discussion and so was less focussed upon de-constructing non-verbals using observation. I had not anticipated the extent that I could remain detached thought to be a positive aspect in research. Perhaps the fact that I had been bullied impacted upon this?

However, I also believe that as Lysaght (2009) suggests:

> *"Emotional engagement …. led to a more detailed understanding of the emotional complexities involved."* (p.37).

> *"Listening to elements of stories in which I became an "emotional participant" enabled me to bring an added dimension to my analysis of these experiences."* (p.38).

Only after listening to the tape and reading the transcription did the dominance by one member of the group became more evident. This perhaps reveals some of the group influences on me as a researcher.

> *"If I alter the focus [of the microscope] very slightly I see another picture."* (Bion, 1961, p.48).

Bion (1961) also suggests that social interaction is multi layered, what appears to be striving to join the group and make it a success, if studied from a different angle shows apathy of members.

Riessman (2008) discusses a limitation of individuals taking on features and beliefs of the Group:

> *"A group identity is made and maintained then in the organisation through highly regulated storytelling practices."* (p.69).

The research revealed the potential of this, the way stories were told became more regulated and normalised as people took their turns. This seemed evident in Sarah's DE, which expressed frustration about being first to tell her vignette:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	DE	23.	I wonder now if I had gone after all the others would I have somehow changed what I said or how I said it?

This is also a theme promoted by Bion (1961), who suggests that individuals seek different types of groups to "seek security" and as a result becoming part of the group, rather than expressing individual views becomes a priority. The fact that participants came with prepared different stories helped to overcome this limitation, but not eliminate it.

Bion (1961) suggests that the "emotional state precedes basic assumption [fight flight, dependent, pairing groups]" It is not always possible to make rational judgements because of a desire to belong.

There was enthusiasm during the FG about the approach and therapeutic nature.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Joan	Discussion	603.	We should Just have an Issue Club, where you tell a story. Every month about an issue. We go round to each other's house.
Amy	Discussion	604.	But if we were to tell these to everyone it would be socially unacceptable. // of course it would. It would be awkward and people would be frightened. It would be so intense and there would be so many feelings there.

Stuart et al. (2007) discuss how FG often reveals initial enthusiasm, but this may not be a true reflection of feelings. There was some frustration towards others demonstrated towards the end of the FG, which made me wonder the extent that this group would stay/or was therapeutic.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	605.	I did want to go back into everyone's stories I think every single story and change it. Listening to it, I wanted, wanted to go back and change it.
Ann	Discussion	606.	You would have invalidated it (1.5).

When individuals made comments about being judged, it made me wonder the extent that this frustration would increase, if we met for further meetings in a similar format. This would be interesting for future research.

Bion (1961) suggests that most individuals seek "gratification" but end up feeling "frustration" (p.54). He feels that this frustration comes from a desire to express themselves anonymously but an inability to do so.

There seemed to be some backing down which seemed to prevent elaboration. Denying being judged made it appear that Tom really did feel judged.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Tom	Discussion	671.-674	No I wasn't saying you were judging me. It was just, just interesting that I had that response from myself when you said it cos I was just trying to work through that erm cos I'm I'm (4) very at peace you know about the relationship now (2).

Bion (1961) also discusses the fact that emotions are discussed in groups as poles/extremes - "good/bad", not on a continuum instead such as "feeling better". Examples from the transcripts include - "horrendous", "weird", "profoundly affected." Hence the levels of emotions may not be as extreme as narratives suggest.

The temporal aspect of the research may also be viewed as a limitation for readers. One might also argue that this research is less relevant, due to the fact that our world is so different now. It is up to the reader to determine relevance for them.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	68-70	Part of the discussion at the course focused on social media and the additional opportunities that this opens up for bullying; having discussed my own experience of bullying recently and heard those of others. It made me consider the complexity of the social world that our young people operate in and how these different avenues and the distance that they afford may impact upon them.

Caning is no longer predominant.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sally	DE	12.	The physical aspect is no longer condoned but there are teachers who emotionally bully children.

Thornberg et al. (2013) site limitations, the fact that their "data" were:

> *"retrospective, which means that later developmental processes and life experiences of the informants inevitably affected the ways in which they viewed their prior bullying experience."* (p.324).

This seemed to be the case and was acknowledged, for example Sarah commented:

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	Vignette	5.	Maybe I've rationalised that as I've got older.

In Jane and Sarah's DE they reflect upon the fact that they experienced feelings that they had felt as a child, although they may not be the truth.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Sarah	DE	2-3.	I was surprised how just being asked to think about a time previously allowed me/or my brain to recall events with what feels like clarity. I know the clarity is now with my lense of experiences and it has made me wonder how close to the real events this is.

The haziness of the recollection was discussed, but also the fact that parts can be remembered in such detail.

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	Vignette	35-38.	As I was always quite a compliant, er good girl and I remember it. It it does seem like a very long, well it is a long time ago, but it was a foggy damp, October day and really sort of seemed such a nerve wracking day.

Emotions are mentioned, but it is difficult to determine the extent that they have been exaggerated for the purpose of engaging the reader and gaining empathy.

This is just one snapshot of an interaction and this may be different in another group. Reissman (1993) comments:

"*Meaning also shifts in other ways because it is constructed at this second level of representation in a process of social interaction. The story is being told to particular people; it might take on a different form if someone else was the listener.*" (p11).

Name	Location	Stanza No	Comment
Jane	DE	32	It was interesting how the prosodic features adopted by the story teller influenced me as a listener.

Another limitation might be that this has become my voice, rather than the voice of the individuals. Within my research diary, I commented upon an incident where I had had a conversation with the duty officer from Social Care about child protection concerns. During the face to face conversation, she made notes of points that I had made. I asked her if she would prefer to make notes on the system together and she said no, she preferred to write it down first. After I had left, I then wondered what she had taken from my conversation, how she had selected the detail and edited it. These are all concerns of NI (Riessman, 1993). I have tried to make it explicit that this is my interpretation and this might not reflect truth.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

Having addressed research questions in Chapter 6, I will summarise here and also discuss a series of ideas for possible further investigation. The study highlighted the importance and value of engaging in storytelling in groups, but only in a well informed and well considered way. All of these points and the conclusions reached are addressed below.

- **What impact did the process of storytelling within a group have on participants and me as facilitator?**

The study provided examples of how narratives are "advanced, elaborated and negotiated in a social context," (Wilkinson, 2008, p.189). Involvement in telling stories in groups shifted perceptions and behaviour. The carefully constructed methodology where EPs were able to remove themselves from the group and reflect on an individual basis through DEs evidenced this.

EPs imagined possible responses to their stories prior to telling them in a group and this led to tentativeness in disclosure and concerns around the level of acceptability of their story. This study provides examples of how stories were told and how these were used as "transitional phenomena" (similar to approaches discussed by Winnicott, 1971, as interpreted by Aitken & Herman, 1997; Kuhn, 2005 and Willock, 1992) to negotiate a place in the group.

The ranking and comparison between selves and others on how the stories were told within the group was evident. Though EPs did not explicitly point out the flaws and weaknesses in others, they did evaluate who had performed well in the task of story delivery and showed frustration to those that didn't and this was evident in the DEs. This seemed to align with Damasio (2012) who comments that focus upon those who are weaker or different to the group seems to make individuals feel safer. Frustration at other individuals straying from expected norms led to alignment/pairing between EPs and even the possible beginnings of bullying, though this was difficult to establish in just one FG. Tremlow et al. (2006) suggest that teachers seemed to reflect that:

> *"Bullying is a hazard of teaching, and that all people bully at times and are victims and bystanders at times."* (p.194).

This research seems to align with this view for the EP group too.

For those that perceived that they had not executed the task well this led to negative impact. For one EP, who felt she was being challenged for under-disclosing in her narrative by the group, this led to an over-disclosure in an attempt to fit the group's expectation in the FG discussion and then later rumination around what she had done wrong in her DE.

Storytelling in groups raised ethical issues, as for some it raised the "shame" element about bullying. It was evident that some individuals felt threatened about over-disclosing to others. The research revealed that stories became more regulated and normalised over time as each EP took their turn to relate their story. Those that delivered stories later seemed to be at an advantage in being accepted by the group.

Where individuals demonstrated self-efficacy in terms of telling their story authentically, the group regarded them more positively.

> *"One cannot achieve an efficacious collectivity with members who approach life consumed by nagging self-doubts about their ability to succeed and their staying power in the face of difficulties."* (Bandura, 2001, p.16).

The amount of self-efficacy the group perceived the individual to possess seemed to result in greater acceptance of them, (also found by Peets et al., 2007 in terms of protective factors relating to not being bullied). Some EPs could admit weaknesses and "nagging self-doubts" because their stories were told in a canonical and entertaining way that encouraged the listener to enter their world; they were accepted as more plausible and the audience seemed to align with them. These stories involved the character overcoming adversity, demonstrating "positive agency" and were well received. (Bandura, 2001 comments upon agency being important for self-efficacy). This self-efficacy had to be demonstrated indirectly through their storytelling, rather than by being made verbally explicit.

When an EP was perceived as using the story to position themselves favourably, rather than focusing upon the task of relaying an authentic story, it led to group frustration. These EPs fared less well in being accepted by the group.

Those that executed the storytelling task well, demonstrating "self-reactiveness and self-reflectiveness" at the end of their stories or in the FG (Bandura, 2001), seemed to be accepted by the group. EPs seemed not to respond well to reactiveness or reflectiveness to stories other than their own as this was felt to be judgemental.

"Forethought" is felt to be important in achieving self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Those that had obviously prepared written stories in advance and read them seemed to gain greater empathy from the group. For EPs that had only jotted down notes, their stories appeared disjointed and frustrated listeners. This perhaps contributed to Vygotsky's (1934) theories of how "inner speech functions as a draft not only in written speech but also oral speech," (p.144), but that if it remains as a draft, it can appear confused and does not engage the listener:

> *"Compared with external speech, inner speech appears disconnected and incomplete… Quite frequently shortened sentences cause confusion."* (p.139).

Writing with an audience in mind in advance led to further explanation thus encouraged greater engagement by the listeners. These narratives seemed to elaborate upon "inner thought" which supported these narrators in developing alternative perspectives about their incident:

> *"It is addressed to an absent person who rarely has in mind the same subject as the writer. Therefore it must be fully deployed; syntactic differentiation is at a maximum; and expressions are used that would seem unnatural in conversation."* (Vygotsky, 1934, p.142).

It may have supported the narrator in establishing how much they wanted to disclose to their audience in advance and protected them ethically. This finding might support future researchers who use storytelling in groups.

Kvale (2000) suggests that an important element of qualitative research is that of:

> *"enhancing the level of understanding of participants and their ability to take action, empowering them to take increased control of their lives."* (p.304).

EPs commented upon the fact that engaging in the process had changed their perceptions about the event and in turn subsequent behaviour. Engaging in storytelling in groups for some appeared therapeutic. Some EPs seemed to have worked through the 9 "affects" as discussed by Nathanson, (1992) and seemed to have "startle moments" that shifted perspectives for the better, which possibly compensated for this initial feeling of pain.

> *"What I learnt from that is this person who's doing this is unhappy – They're unhappy not me. I'm ok – they're unhappy."* (Sarah)

Canonical storytelling structure, with the expectation of breaches, seemed to support the process of developing alternative stories. The canonical expectation to portray the main character as initially weak, but who succeeds in the end, seemed to enforce a shift in perception away from internal weaknesses and empowered some individuals, forcing them to find resolution:

> *"Having gone through our story-telling for this research I can see this with such clarity, and would go so far to say that it has been a turning point for me. All my pacifying, apologising and my essential avoidance of people comes down to this.*" (Ann).

This seemed to align with Seligman (2002):

> *"I believe that telling the stories of our lives, making sense of what otherwise seems chaotic, distilling and discovering a trajectory in our lives, and viewing our lives with a sense of agency rather than victimhood are all powerfully positive."* (p.7).

However, it is difficult to establish whether participation in the study truly had impact upon behaviour and whether this would be maintained.

Negatively, canonical expectations around structure with the expectation that the main protagonist should fail in the end perhaps contradicted the EP role of separating the "act from the actor" (IIRP, 2007) and not labelling the YP based upon their behaviour. The group laughed at the downfall of the bully in one narrative, seeming to rejoice at the punishment the bully received:

> *"Most of the bullies sank without a trace. Apart from one who made headlines in the Manchester evening news when she was sent down for her part in an armed robbery" (laughter).* (Amy).

The reaction to the story seemed to conflict with an EP role of supporting and not judging and not labelling an individual based upon specific behaviour.

The study demonstrated that if a participant in a group tells a story well it is difficult not to be influenced by it and generate group reaction. This clearly affected objectivity.

Some EPs liked to hear stories that described more challenging events than their own. Imagining other peoples' adversities appeared to provoke interest in case they faced similar obstacles in the future.

Seligman (2002) suggests that:

> *"Negative emotions and experiences may be more urgent and therefore override positive ones. This would make evolutionary sense because negative emotions often reflect immediate problems or objective dangers."* (p.7).

One participant described feeling "an absolute wave of emotion" after listening to one narrative. Those stories that were emotive seemed to provoke a more extreme response. Notably caning no longer exists and it is perhaps stories such as Ann's that have impacted upon the development of alternative disciplinary systems or reactions to negative behaviour, such as Restorative Practice approaches:

> *"It is suggested that "confidence" is needed, in order to resist dominant cultural narratives which might be contributing to the marginalisation of some."* (Fogg, 2013).

EPs commented upon how engaging in a group had shifted perceptions around what they had previously accepted as culturally "normal". Stories like these may have raised the profile of the 'pupil voice' and the need to listen to pupils. But exaggeration in stories may have resulted in a move too far along continuums, perhaps leading to slot rattling described by Kelly (1991):

> *"We may cite as an example of such internal change the processes of exaggeration and minimisation of individual elements of experience, which have enormous significance for imagination in general."*
> (Vygotsky, 2004, p.26)

The study raised ethical questions around storytelling in groups. EPs talked about themselves revisiting painful emotions whilst writing these stories. Some discussed the fact that it was as if they were back in the incident again. This was helpful in that it helped them to recognise that the "sheer terror of the child" may be different to adult perceptions of an event and this supported them in understanding the importance of listening to a child in their professional role.

However some EPs discussed how revisiting these experiences was too painful.

Despite EPs appearing positive during and immediately after the group session, rumination and lack of resolution continued for some:

> *"So, yes no resolution, but even with my adult and professional head combined, I'm not sure I would have taken any other course of action at that time."* (Joan).

To what extent do personal experiences impact upon professional practice?

The research went some way to demonstrating how personal experiences impact upon professional roles.

Childhood memories seemed to impact upon EP perceptions of their role, for example in the defence of children:

> *"I know absolutely that I'm an EP because I'm not having these things happen to **children**."* (Ann).

EPs regarded their role as being advocates and defending YP's rights. It was felt generally that having similar experiences led to a greater ability to empathise, support others and listen to YP. One EP discussed coming to the profession because of experiences of adversity, fitting with the findings of Thornberg et al.'s (2013). However, one EP felt that not having personal experiences around bullying made her more "objective."

There was evidence that these bullying experiences may have impacted negatively on EPs in their professional role. One EP discussed the fact that her bullying experience continued to make her feel "unacceptable." This affected her behaviour, for example "folding" if confronted. Part of our EP role is to challenge school professionals and other stakeholders (Kelly & Gray, 2000) and this may have impact upon her ability to do this.

Another EP described her confrontation with a head teacher and thinking that this person was similar to her bully. This may have impacted upon her behavioural response. *"It's a Claire! I stand up to her, but I don't feel comfortable standing up to her."* (Sarah).

Engaging in the actual study seemed to impact upon professional practice by raising the profile of bullying in EPs' minds. This was evident in EP work.

> *"In the days following the group meeting, the themes which I have identified have come to the fore during my working days."* (Amy).

It is difficult to determine how long or the extent that this had impact, but demonstrates how personal experience can affect focus:

> *"Anne's story was about physical bullying but it was also about emotional bullying - the feeling of being singled out for unjust punishment. It reminded me to be vigilant about such issues within our schools."* (Amy).

EPs also used personal experiences to justify or reject psychological stances. One EP discussed her "PTSD":

> *"We are professionally simplistic with our single theories about how children function – all those new labels in DSM V – whereas, neurologically, repeated trauma is what it's all about."* (Ann).

However, it was difficult to determine the extent that cultural or personal experiences dictated this viewpoint and impacted upon the EP role.

The experience of storytelling in groups without perceived judgement had an impact upon at least one EP. She asked why she didn't use this approach more often in her work:

> *"Just ask them to tell me a story rather than what I sometimes do, which is when I am in work I mean, is go in and have the you know……I'm talking, maybe I should go and say to people cos I've got something completely different probably than sitting here, listening to these."*

EPs commented upon feeling a sense of liberation as the storyteller, knowing that they would not be interrupted. They also spoke of feeling that they had to be a more disciplined listener. Not interrupting was perceived as difficult, but experiencing the liberation of knowing that they would not be interrupted made EPs reflect more upon the practice of listening:

> *"I found it really hard not to interrupt. But not in that, I want to ask you a question, but just in an empathic way."*

The response by the listener seemed to be important to the narrator, leading to reflections about how easy it is to make judgemental statements. This led to reflection about their own responses in their professional role:

> *"Maybe it was a criticism? Maybe it was a judgement? What is resonating here for me is that words matter sooo much."*

Reflections around the EP role in consultations and responses to stories if told in this forum were evident. Future research might be around levels of perceived judgemental statements in consultations or reflection about the ease of making these.

Sally's story, where a child was labelled by professionals and the voice of the child was dismissed, also had impact upon EPs. The importance of checking out other alternative "truths" or hypotheses using other means out of a group forum is highlighted by this vignette:

> *"If a consultation system is used the problem holder is the teacher/Senco. Can we 'get alongside' and empathise with the CYP."*

These findings have affected the way I approach my work. If engaging in group work, I am more aware of the possible impact of comments made upon others. The fact that I might be regarded as an "expert" may mean that my words may have even greater impact. I try to encourage elaboration, trying not to interrupt, so stories can be told. It has made me more aware of the importance of reflecting back information as a technique to make people feel listened to without judgement.

I try to follow up comments made in groups later on an individual basis with parent or pupil and am aware of the fact that dominant members may have had their voice heard over others or some comments may have had a negative impact that may have gone unnoticed.

How might this research be used to enhance EP understanding so as to improve future work practice?

The carefully structured methodology, using FG and reflections later away from the group raises issues around reliance upon data from groups alone. This supports Lewis and Miller's (2011) views that engaging in a mixed method approaches may be beneficial as this:

> *"enables the researcher to benefit from combining the strengths of both approaches, it can also allow each to compensate the weakness inherent in the other."* (p.198).

The research illustrated how group homogeneity affected individual stances and how dominant group members projected the view of the group without providing space for others to challenge and project their view. The study highlighted the need to provide space for participants to reflect upon experiences individually away from the group. This may provide ideas for further research particularly around RP conferences. EP work in schools is also often within a group. If we are perceived as experts, this might mean that our view becomes the dominant one. This is something EPs may need to reflect upon. Consultation evaluation may involve school and other professionals, parents and the EP immediately after engaging in that group, so may not reveal individual's perceptions when given space away from this forum.

The methodology also went some way to demonstrating how the influence of groups affects behaviour and reinforces the need for EPs to see individuals in context, not in isolated forums. This was particularly emphasised through Sally's vignette about professional practice.

EPs benefitting from developing their understanding of narrative therapy approaches were highlighted. This involved the ability to encourage the story to be told without judgemental response. The power of storytelling in shifting views by just listening without commentary was also emphasised. This seems to align with Thornberg et al. (2013) who suggest that the use of narratives which support the externalising process and enable victims to develop new more positive narratives is important. However, this study demonstrated that they should be conducted on a 1:1 by those that understand narrative processes. Fransella (2004) discusses how "resisting interpretation" is important. This experiential approach supported EPs in recognising this and might be something that is used for EPiTs.

EPs might be interested in the way storytelling could be used in helping to problem solve. Through education we are encouraged to categorise and theme in order to analyse situations and come to conclusions. In contrast, a better approach might be to use storytelling to understand contexts that are complex.

This research gives rise to reflection for EPs upon intervention strategies that support sequencing and language structure in communication. This builds on Gallas's (1994) research which found that encouraging a child to practise and model expected procedure in "Show and Tell" time (similar to canonical storytelling structures) enabled the child to be more accepted within the group. My research contributes to findings that canonical storytelling can lead to externalisation and improved problem solving strategies, but also strengthens relationships with others. Imagining responses through engaging in stories supports people in negotiating problems that they may face in future. Teaching pupils the expected structure of storytelling seems to be important, but this might best be away from sensitive subjects such as bullying.

Conversely, stories of bullying were found to promote empathy, which is felt to be difficult to teach (found by Joliffe et al., 2006) and empathy is felt to be an important component in terms of preventing bullying (found by Wachs, 2012). This research demonstrates how attitudes, opinions and personality evolve from "discursive culture" (Burr, 2003, p.66). Joan had never been threatened with the cane but was able to imagine the process by engaging in Ann's story. This demonstrates how empathy might be achieved if POWERFUL stories are used in schools with YP. Further research on the use of stories (possibly not personal stories) around bullying with YP is needed.

Vygotsky (1934) discusses the readiness of the child to engage and that writing depends upon language and processing ability:

> *"Even its minimal development requires a high level of abstraction."* (p.98).

Writing down stories may not have such a positive impact upon YP. As this study involved an adult cohort, this may merit further investigation. The fact that even some EPs struggled to follow storytelling expectations may be of interest to co-ordinators on EP training courses and may also need further exploration.

EPs might be interested in how stories affect change and can be used to change perceptions, thus avoiding confrontational approaches such as Sarah's with a head teacher. The impact of stories in changing perceptions about institutions was evident and is demonstrated:

> *"I had not overtly considered such teachers that I have known, as a pupil, as bullies …. I had considered them in almost a Vygotskian way as products of a social/historical context/ time and system……Writing this has made me consider the moral relativism of this position and think that such a position is surely dangerous."* (Jane).

This methodology provides ideas around approaches to changing systems within schools. Researchers discuss the role of management in influencing change in systems (Howard, 2009; Welden, 2008; Oliver & Bevan, 2007; Mirsky, 2011). If EPs spend time with behaviour leaders assertively putting forward their perspectives, perhaps relaying case studies in a narrative format, views and in turn behaviour in schools may shift. However, the research to some extent demonstrated the tentativity of EP behaviour, where getting alongside and building rapport with others was regarded a priority. However, if the aim is to influence perceptions, confident approaches to delivery would be needed.

Comments made about the acceptability of certain behaviours, such as the cane, may be important in demonstrating to EPs how we are influenced by Chronosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and how behaviours can become acceptable within institutions and make challenge around accepted norms difficult. This made me reflect upon how spending too much time in an institution, without the influence of other groups to challenge perspectives, may impact upon an EP's role and perception around what is "truth."

EPs might use this research to reflect upon how teachers can impact upon the learning, motivation and self-perception of pupils. One teacher labelled an EP as a child as *""The Bone Drones.""* The way words and non-verbal messages were directed at this EP had impact upon her self-perceptions. Another EP reinforced this view.

> *"I developed this thing that I couldn't do maths, and the more I wouldn't do it, even if he asked me a question, I just wouldn't even listen to it. I'd be just standing there paralysed."* (Amy).

Stories illustrated how behaviour was copied by YP and resulted in negative environments being established:

> *"That's what the nuns would say to us; you're behaving like Jezebels and using language like that, so I was using language that they'd used."* (Amy).

The professional story where Jack was labelled as autistic seems to reinforce the message that how people label a child can have a positive or negative impact upon a YP's life. An EP, who is perceived as an expert might challenge this perspective or collude with it. It is important that EPs are aware of the impact that they may have on a child's life through labelling.

The fact that EPs found it difficult to find professional cases where they were involved in supporting anti-bullying was of interest:

> *"I was racking my brain to come up with a professional story."* (Tom).

Bullying is felt to be complex and it is a priority to reduce it in schools, (Ofsted, 2012). The research showed that a "one size" intervention did not necessarily "fit all" contexts. It was found that one intervention might support one person but at the expense of another. Understanding the context of situations and being flexible and adaptive with interventions seemed to be important. Hence further research about why EPs are not being asked to give support in preventative systems would be of interest. It may be that EPs should be proactive in offering more broadly based strategic support.

What are the stories/narratives of EPs who have experienced bullying and to what extent do the themes relate to existing research?

The study has built on prior research around bullying, demonstrating perceptions of victims, supportive factors and ideas about interventions. EPs stories of bullying experiences involved them as victims, with only one participant telling a professional vignette. These stories revealed perceptions that might have been challenged by the bullying perpetrators.

Some themes supported findings from previous studies, whilst others contradicted them. Rumination and self-blame was evident and this contributes to Thornberg et al.'s (2013) findings. However EPs attributed causes to physical attributes and this contradicted Olweus (1993).

It was found that bullying is a complex phenomenon:

> *"You had to be there. And it's a combination of stuff. It's over a period of time, it's about different people. It's you know, you can't capture all of that in a conversation with someone."* (Tom).

It has already been acknowledged that YP have difficulty with the definition of bullying (Green et al, 2010). EPs also had difficulty, expressing uncertainty over whether their stories fulfilled criteria around canonical definitions and whether their stories would be perceived as extreme enough to meet this definition. As a result some EPs negated their story. One EP told a narrative involving the teacher being the perpetrator. Others questioned whether this was bullying, demonstrating how cultural definitions and personal experience impacted upon EPs' perceptions:

> *"[Ann] described being bullied by a teacher at school. To me though it was a story of abuse. What's the difference between bullying and abuse?"* (Sally).

Confusion over causes was also discussed. Causes seemed to need context to fully explain them. They related to individuals not adhering to rules formulated by the group at that time (Also found by Berger, 2008; Berger; Rodkin; 2011; Isaacs et al., 2013). These social rules appeared complex and seemed to be:

> *"a social construction produced in the peer group associated with its culture and social norms."* (Thornberg et al., 2013, p.210).

Confusion seemed to result in gap filling through imagination. Because it was impossible to confirm these attributed causes, this led to continued rumination for some, which impacted upon current perceptions and behaviour (Also found by Tanaka, 2001). The positive response by others to stories seemed to reinforce feelings that their gap-filling was correct:

> *"I've asked several people about what happened …."Am I over reacting? Did you notice?....... So even as an adult I'm having to go and validate."* (Amy).

It seems that having another group to transfer to in order to gain affirmations is important as an intervention. This may result in it being easier to reject the negative labels placed upon a YP by one group. Supporting YP in developing self-efficacy to challenge and to have the confidence to withdraw from groups was reinforced.

Separating causes from effects was difficult. One EP discussed how the event had led to her being over-sensitive and imagining bullying elsewhere, (also found by Pikas, 2002). EPs discussed not telling because of an expectation that telling would not have impact (also found by Thornberg et al, 2013) and may lead to dismissal. The belief that bullying is part of life, so victims should get on with it was also discussed, (also found by Bradshaw et al, 2007).

Supportive factors were discussed, such as the receptiveness of families, which in turn was felt to have led to self-efficacy. This aligns with Peets et al.'s (2011) view. Self-efficacy was also felt to have supported defender behaviour, aligning with the view of Jungert (2013); Poyhonen et al. (2012).

Interventions were discussed. Encouraging individuals to be explicit about values and rules seemed to be important so that individuals could be clear about how to respond to them. However because of social referencing and the development of a hierarchy over who has followed the established rules most successfully, the study demonstrated that there is always someone who fails. For those that could not conform to the rules there seemed to be a need to understand why this was so, in order to accept perceived flaws; Ann became more accepted because another EP could understand the cause of her perceived flaws, through her storytelling. Another EP came to the defence of a victim because she understood her home circumstances.

The process of engaging in storytelling in groups also contributed to bullying research. Those EPs that seemed to have the intent of "fitting in" or gaining a positive reaction from the group (over and above engaging in the storytelling task) seemed to ruminate more around their acceptability within the group after the event. Helping individuals gain intrinsic rewards from task achievement rather than social reinforcement seems to be important as a protective factor for victims.

Further Reflections

The study raised some ethical dilemmas around storytelling with sensitive topics. It demonstrates some of Mercer's (2007) findings, where what arose from research was not truly anticipated but was still important for contributing towards future EP practice. For example, comments made about group participation with other members was not expected but revealed how social referencing occurs in groups and impacts upon other members. It is important that EPs who work with groups reflect upon this and this research highlights this.

The research also raised dilemmas around providing feedback to participants about findings from research at the expense of personal privacy and confidentiality of others within the group. The delicate balance between the personal costs to individuals from disclosure as opposed to the benefits in supporting other EPs in reflecting around their role for the future was highlighted.

That EPs may not have felt safe within the group may also merit further investigation. The view could be taken that the sensitive topic of bullying itself led to a feeling of threat and a possible need to align with others, or that aligning with others is a natural group process as suggested by Bion (1961).

This methodological approach might be used for researchers to make comparisons between initial euphoria during and immediately after a group and to recognise the extent to which views change or shift away from that acknowledged in the group over time. Providing space for reflection away from the group is important. This gives rise to reflection around the use of FG methodology solely, as it may not portray the perceptions of all individuals but just the dominant members.

Stories are powerful and they may have positive effect in influencing change:

> *"When people provide accounts of personal experiences their stories become located in a space that is external to them. This external space is a powerful and dynamic arena."* (Lysaght, 2009, p.35).

The research demonstrated how those that are articulate in canonical approaches to storytelling are at an advantage in influencing others and having their perceptions accepted. Awareness that there may be alternative unheard stories from the less articulate is an important message.

From a personal perspective, teaching my own children about storytelling structure has become a priority.

Powerful stories can influence listeners. They may accept what is told as truth and act upon this perhaps in more exaggerated ways, because they have been affected emotionally by an emotive story. It is important that this is understood by EPs. Hyperboles and exaggerated language used in stories provoked a more extreme reaction from the listeners:

> *"The chimeras are transmitted from author to reader, but what was fantasy on one side becomes hallucination on the other; the writer's stratagem is quite naively accepted as an image of reality."* (Foucault, 1989a, p.25).

Research or knowledge becomes "time and culture bound and cannot be taken as once and for all descriptions of human nature." (Burr, 2003, p.7). The timing of this research is therefore only a snapshot relevant to current norms and understandings:

> *"It is partial both in the sense of being only one way of seeing the world among many potential ways and in the sense of reflecting vested interests"* (Burr, 2003, p.7).

An article published in the Week Magazine (Mikics, Jan., 11,2014) cited recent research advocating the importance of storytelling:

> *"Recent psychological studies suggest old fashioned reading – the kind which requires a full length book and rapt attention is vital to development. It gives us a private space in which to explore human complexity, practise empathy and broaden Horizons."* (p.19).

This caused me to further reflect upon the extent that media had influenced me as a researcher and the choice of approach and conclusions that I had found.

One EP discussed how listening to similar stories to the study supported him in empathising in his role as EP. The fact that he may be placing people's experiences onto others in his professional role seems to contradict findings in the research. It appeared that when others placed their experiences on another's story, this was felt to be judgemental and was received negatively:

> *"There are certain things I suppose I totally get your point I **absolutely** have learned so much about all of us around this table. And about who you all, are and all of the **pain**. I'm **absolutely** sure and I'm using that learning now in my work."* (Tom).

A key message that I have gained and had reinforced from this research was to listen without comment and to only privately reflect as words can appear inappropriately judgemental. Each personal story is unique to the individual and their circumstances.

The care in constructing and operating this methodology has yielded substantial information on the challenge around understanding bullying and the impact of group influences. Understanding the complex dynamics of groups is important for EPs when considering interventions around bullying and behaviour. There is evidence in this study that EPs are more often used in responding to individual events rather than engaging and supporting in the development of preventative policies and processes. The study also indicates that EPs themselves may not be ready or able to respond even where that wider preventative approach is identified.

Information sheet about proposed research for University of Sheffield Doctorate in Educational Psychology.

Researcher: Juliet Prescott, Educational Psychologist

Contact: Tel: 07775852077, **E-mail:** julietprescott1@btinternet.com.

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and discuss it with others or myself if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear please contact me.

Purpose of Research: To consider Educational Psychologist's retrospective stories about bullying, either personal or professional, though related to school.

Who will be participating? Educational Psychologists from the Northwest who have a personal or professional experience of bullying in school. Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. I will be approaching you and other Northwest Educational Psychologists.

What will you be asked to do?

- Prepare a 3 minute vignette (short narrative) about an experience of bullying, either professional or personal talking about your retrospective experiences of bullying in your school.
  There is no exact right or wrong format for this. It is expected that the narratives will be different and will be presented differently.
- We will then meet for a focus group. I will present ground rules and expected ethos. Each participant will deliver their vignette for 3 minutes, taking it in turns, without interruptions. We will then talk about these vignettes as a group. I anticipate that this meeting will last for an hour and a half and list the proposed date below.
  The aim is that we do not provide advice to participants, but consider how other people's narratives relate to us or help us to extend our own narratives.
- Each participant will keep a diary for a week reflecting on the process and any things that they felt that they could not bring up in group discussion. No EPs names should be mentioned in the diary, only pseudonyms.
- Each participant will write a short narrative (vignette) in their diary of a personal or professional experience of bullying relating to school. This will either be a revised version of the first one, or a new one. It might be revised because new thoughts have been developed from participating in the focus group.

- I will collect diaries and the written vignettes in after 7 days.
- In September / October 2013, I will then provide written analysis of the data in order to check that perceptions fit with your thoughts about what emerged and allow challenges to be made.

Proposed dates for the focus group are:

Thursday 20th June 7.00pm-9.00pm

What are the potential risks to participating?

All information will be kept anonymous and confidentiality will be asked for from members of the group. I will present ground rules and ask the group to contribute further ones and gain consensus.

Because we will be discussing past events, such as bullying, you may feel some discomfort and become upset, if these unhappy times come to the fore. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you can withdraw from the process; ask for a break or a change of subject.

In the group, there might be concerns about rapport. If you can all attempt at "unconditional positive regard for each other" and recognise that "we are the best experts on ourselves." Rogers (1951) pp487. It is about extending upon your own knowledge, not imposing your own criteria and expectations on others or adapting your stories to what you perceive might be the criteria or expectations of others.

What are the potential benefits to attending?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for you participating in this project, it is hoped that this research activity might help with understanding your story more. As it is felt that sometimes, discussion might help to clarify situations.

Engagement in the project may help to raise important themes around bullying and encourage reflection upon these, supporting EP practice in anti-bullying. Research may be used to promote current good practice.

What data will I collect? I will collect in diary comments, written vignettes within the diary and recordings of the focus group meeting and observation notes of the focus groups and also feedback from you about my written analysis.

What will I do with the data?

I will transcribe tape recordings of focus groups for analysis. Anonymised Data will be stored on a computer.

Will participation be confidential?

The data will be collected with no identifying information attached. The audio will be used only for transcription purposes. No EP's name will be mentioned within the thesis.

I will keep copies of the tape recordings until my thesis has been agreed and passed by Sheffield University and then I will destroy these

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of this study will be included in my thesis and perhaps in a journal or conference papers or presentations.

This project has been ethically reviewed by the University of Sheffield and has been overviewed by Professor Tom Billington, Professor of Educational and Child Psychology, Room 8.03, School of Education, Sheffield University

Educational Child Psychology Team
Floor 3
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
Cheshire WA7 3HL

Dear NAMED Educational Psychologist,

Re: Educational Psychologist's permission for your involvement in my research around retrospective stories about bullying in schools and information about the process.

I am writing to ask your permission for you to be involved in my research (see attached information sheet) for the University of Sheffield doctorate in Educational Psychology, investigating bullying in schools.

If you require further information, please contact me on 0151 5117355, julietprescott1@btinternet.com

If you have any concerns throughout the process, then please feel free to contact me, Juliet Prescott. You can withdraw from the process at any time.

Proposed dates for the focus group is:

Thursday 27[th] June, 7.00-9.00pm. It is hoped that this will take 1.5 hours.

Please sign the consent form below if you agree to participate. A stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed.

Yours sincerely

Juliet Prescott
Educational and Child Psychologist

APPENDIX 3

Intro to the group

Thank you for coming and agreeing to be part of this research. Welcome, do feel free to ask questions about the process as I describe it.

We need to ensure clear ground rules about confidentiality, the fact that any information discussed in this group will not be discussed outside the context of the group, protecting and preserving the confidentiality of others.

If anyone feels uncomfortable, you have a right to withdraw for a short time, express your discomfort or withdraw completely from the process.

You all have a shared purpose to talk about personal or professional bullying experiences. These might appear very different. There may be a feeling that you should conform and tell stories and thoughts in similar ways to others, but that is not an expectation of this group. White and Epton (1990) talk about telling narratives for ourselves and encourage us to "not be blinded" by criteria and expectations of others. P.61, particularly those that we might perceive to have greater knowledge than us. Being mindful about this may support the process.

In the group, it is important that there is a respectful ethos, not talking over others. The purpose of the group is about extending upon our own knowledge, not forcing views and placing our own criteria and expectations on others.

I will be writing notes about the process as they will support me in analysis of data. I won't contribute to discussion.

Thank you for putting out these stories.

So the aim is that you each present a 3 minute vignette about an experience of bullying, either professional or personal. You will take it in turns and if possible not interrupt whilst these are delivered. It is hoped that each vignette will take 3 minutes. Then you will talk freely about these narratives for an hour.

End: Thank you for engaging in this process. So now I would just like to talk about next steps. You have all been provided with a diary. This will be kept for a week and then collected in by me.

In this diary, I would like you to write a short narrative of the vignette that you have spoken about. This might now be revised in light of the shared experience and new reflections and perspectives that may have been established as part of the group process; Or you may want to write a completely new narrative. Either one must relate to personal or professional bullying experiences in school. These will be shared with me, but not the rest of the group.

APPENDIX 4

The University Of Sheffield.

The School Of Education.

Juliet Prescott
110206882

Head of School
Professor Cathy Nutbrown

School of Education
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield
S10 2JA

6th June 2013

Telephone: +44 (0)114 222 8180
Email: F.R.Gilligan@sheffield.ac.uk

Dear Juliet,

ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER

"Experiencing bullying in school: Educational Psychologists' narratives"

Thank you for submitting your ethics application. I am writing to confirm that your application has now been approved, and you can proceed with your research.

This letter is evidence that your application has been approved and should be included as an Appendix in your final submission.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Dan Goodley
Chair of the School of Education Ethics Review Panel

cc   Tom Billington
       Davy Heymann (RIS)

APPENDIX 5

Instruction letter to EPs about keeping DE

You have all been provided with a diary. This will be kept for a week and then collected by me.

In this diary, I would like you to write a short narrative of the vignette that you have spoken about. This might now be revised in the light of the shared experience and new reflections and perspectives that may have been established as part of the group process; or a completely new narrative, Either one must relate to personal or professional bullying experiences in school. These will be shared with me, but not the rest of the group.

I would also like you to keep a diary of thoughts or reflections about this process. However, only pseudonyms should be used in this process, if you are discussing comments made by other participants. A stamped addressed envelope is provided to post back to me in 7 days

APPENDIX 6

Juliet

Intro to the group

Right, thank you for coming and agreeing to be part of this research. Welcome, do feel free to ask questions about the process as I describe it.

We need to ensure clear ground rules about confidentiality, the fact that any information discussed in this group will not be discussed outside the context of the group, protecting and preserving the confidentiality of others.

If anyone feels uncomfortable, you have a right to withdraw for a short time, express your discomfort or withdraw completely from the process.

So, you all have a shared purpose, to talk about personal or professional bullying experiences. These might appear very different. There may be a feeling that you should conform and tell stories and thoughts in similar ways to others, but that is not an expectation of this group. White and Epton, (1990) they talk about telling narratives for ourselves and encourage us to "not to be blinded" by criteria and expectations of others, particularly those that we might perceive to have greater knowledge than us. Being mindful about this may support the process.

In the group, it is important that there is a respectful ethos, not talking over others. The purpose of the group is about extending upon our own knowledge, not forcing views and placing our own criteria and expectations on others.

Now I will be writing notes about the process as that will support me in analysis of data. I won't contribute to the discussion.

Thank you for putting out these stories.

The aim is that you all each present a 3 minute vignette about an experience of bullying, either professional or personal. We're going to take it in turns and if possible not interrupt whilst these are delivered. It is hoped that each vignette will be about 3 minutes and then we're going to talk freely about er these narratives for an hour. If that's ok – Alright?

So, who would like to go first?

Joan – Can I just ask a question, you said Val was coming?

Juliet – Oh no, she is poorly

Joan – Ok

Juliet – Right who's going first?

Sarah – I will

Juliet – Thank you Sarah

Sarah – Get it over and done with, what if it doesn't last 3 minutes

Juliet – It doesn't matter

Sarah – What if it goes to 25 – No!

Tom – Oh how we laughed

Sarah – that's bullying you know

((lots of laughter))

<u>Sarah</u>

1. I have chosen err to share a story about err bullying as a, when I was a child.
2. Erm I was in high school
3. I need to sort of explain the scenario behind the bullying, before I tell you about the bullying, cause it was
4. I think
5. Maybe I've rationalised that as I've got older
6. But this is how it happened
7. So erm, I started in high school
8. Erm, I used to get a bus
9. And er the bus was a school bus
10. And erm, they the split the two. It was a double decker
11. So that erm, girls had to be on the top and the boys had to be on the bottom
12. I don't know why, but that's what happened
13. So girls went up, Boys downstairs
14. And erm I'm also not sure how it happened
15. But a lot of my friends were boys,
16. Not, not like that
17. But err, I just ended up being very friendly with lots of boys, erm, to the point where I'm not really sure how that occurs
18. But it happened to me a lot anyway erm (1.5)
19. Anyway I'm upstairs on the top of the bus,
20. And there's some very, erm older girls at the back of the bus
21. So I'm at the top of the bus, at the **front** of the bus, which is not a cool place to be
22. No one wants to sit at the front, but
23. well apart from me,
24. Because I quite enjoy sitting at the front because you can see. You know, the big windows, I quite like that.
25. So erm, and I used spend a lot of my time (1) knocking about, laughing, joking
26. Being a bit of an idiot, really, with 3 or 4 girls,
27. But the boys were also downstairs on the bus,
28. But they'd often shout "**SARAH, SARAH**" up the stairwell
29. So because they could, you know go "**SARAH, SARAH**"
30. And I'd be chatting down the stairwell and they'd be talking so this went on for quite some time and over, maybe about (1)
31. A month, when it first started
32. It was all going quite well, until the girls at the back of the bus
33. That's the cool girls, that are at the back, of the bus,
34. The ones that wore really short skirts, smoked fags, wore loads of makeup,
35. Which I did none of the above.
36. I was very good and sat at the front and always wore perfect uniform
37. And if I'd have got a d-merit my whole life would have imploded,
38. And they were like, totting there's up at the back, you know
39. And I was so **completely** different to them
40. So you've got these at the back and me at the front
41. They're not very happy with this idea that (1.5)

42. The **boys** at the bottom of the bus would shout for me
43. They weren't shouting for them
44. Who were at the back of the bus,
45. They were shouting for me (lower tone)
46. So I hadn't really noticed that, I just thought (1.5)
47. They started sort of saying "oi, er, shut it"
48. there was a lot of girls at the back "shut it, shut it" "shut up"
49. "Stop laughing"
50. "What's so funny?"
51. Erm, it's interesting isn't it?
52. Because you think, hmmm I was having a great time
53. You're supposed to be having a brilliant time at the back of the bus, smoking fags and putting your make up on.
54. And I'm having a better time than you?
55. I couldn't help that. That's just what we were like.
56. So they started calling me names, erm, saying, err "Shut it" err "Don't you laugh"
57. Erm trying to silence which unfortunately is not a good thing for me,
58. Because if somebody tries to do that i tend to do it more, just to wind them up
59. Because it's like "ooh it's a challenge".
60. So I started becoming a little bit more annoying probably (Laughs) to them
61. Erm and this went on for quite some time erm (1)
62. So it, it started with just calling me names, "Shut up" "Stop it"
63. Then they started walking up the alley way of the bus
64. And sort of standing holding the
65. And saying did you not hear what I'm saying "Shut it". This sort of thing
66. And I, and I began to get quite **scared** of them
67. I was beginning to think "Oooh I don't really like this now. It's not very nice" (Lowers tone)
68. But I was pretty much ignoring them,
69. That's what I tended to do, just ignore, ignore, ignore
70. Erm but it didn't go away
71. In fact, it got **a lot** worse to the point where, it got to the point where, erm I got on the bus to go home and we had two split school sites,
72. So I got on the bus at Guilford Road, which is the second pick up, and I got on
73. And when I got upstairs, I was the last person on the bus.
74. And when I got upstairs, there was one seat available and it was at the back of the bus
75. So my seat at the front wasn't there (Laughs)
76. So erm, I had to go and sit at the back of the bus. So I thought, "**Oh god**"
77. And i remember feeling quite **panicky** about having to go and sit at the back of the bus.
78. So I sat, I went down sort, of like panicking on the inside
79. Sat at the back of the bus thinking oh my god. "I'm really in trouble here" (laughs)
80. Because they were quite not, they haven't hurt me but quite (1.5)
81. Erm threatening with the language they were using -
82. Things like "I know where you live" "I'm going to find your family when you're asleep". "I'm going to come in and kill you all". All that sort of stuff, which you know
83. I was pretty much ignoring, but was quite frightened by, as you might imagine.
84. Erm anyway, they were smoking at the back of the bus.
85. I'm sitting at the back of the bus
86. And I thought, I don't like this.
87. So I opened the window, which didn't go down very well (sarcastic)
88. So erm I got the girl called Claire at the back of the bus, who said shut the (1.5) window you little (1.5) calling me names.
89. And I turned. Normally I would have just shut the window and sat very quietly, but I think I'd got to the point where I'd had enough.

90. And I turned round and said "No, and what are you going to do about it?"
91. And she went "**WHAT**"
92. And I was like "oh my god" I've opened my mouth "**oh my god oh my god**" erm
93. She persisted in berating, really getting quite nasty with me
94. And I refused to shut the window and I sat and every time she would then come over and she would just slam the window and I was opening the window (laughs)
95. A bit like one of those comedy sketches. I'm sure it would have been very funny, if it hadn't been me, erm shutting it, opening it, shutting it, opening it
96. And she was really, I think a bit flummoxed about what to do (laughs) about the situation **AS WAS I** then
97. I couldn't give up then, because I had started opening the window all the time.
98. I got off the bus.
99. Erm, she followed me off the bus
100. And when I got off the bus, there was a group of the boys, who I was friends with at the bottom of the bus
101. And I was quite terrified by this point because she was **really** big, this girl and I was quite small. I know I don't look small, but I was small compared to her
102. Erm she was at year (1.5) I don't know, I don't know what it would be now, 5th year and I was 1st year. I don't know what that is now.
103. Erm and she just went off on me really
104. Completely screaming in my face. Oh it was utterly atrocious
105. In fact it still makes me feel quite nervous now just thinking about what she was like with me. (laughs)
106. Luckily for me there were the boys were all around me,
107. And they were sort of saying "What are you doing to her?"," Leave her alone" which obviously didn't help,
108. Because that was one of the reasons why I was being bullied in the first place, because the boys were all sticking up for me and not for her
109. And arrr it was just. Anyway, I then did something about it
110. Well I didn't do something about it, the boys did something about it
111. Not to her. They actually told the teachers and it all stopped
112. And that was the end of that. Until I saw her at a firework display 3 years later and she came over and I was like "Oooooooooh my god". "**She's going to hurt me**"
113. Until she said "I'm really really sorry I'm so sorry" and was really apologetic
114. And I was like "That's Ok". "What's that about?" So that was the story but it went on for a good (1.5)
115. about 2 years this went on for
116. So I'm telling you, that it was over a long time
117. It wasn't like just a – how I've done it, as quick as that
118. But it went on for a really long time, and was very erm slow and quite sly and not very pleasant, really
119. So home times and going to school, were pretty horr horrendous times for about 2 years (laughs)
120. And then it all got better because I told
121. Well I didn't tell somebody, the boys did.
122. And it stopped. So that's the story.

Juliet

123. Brilliant. Thank you. Who wants to go next

Jane

1. Hello, I've written mine down, bear with me
2. I did wonder actually whether this was more a vignette about transition,
3. But the bullying is built into the whole process of the transition, so I'll go with it
4. And err, I was really happy at primary school
5. It was a really magical creative place,
6. Thought it was brilliant,
7. Had a very very happy time there ,
8. And just before erm, moving to secondary school, there was some discussion at home,
9. I'm of the era, when there was still the 11 plus,
10. And it was the year that I started at secondary
11. And the secondary modern school was changed to comprehensive.
12. So there was er you know, the local secondary was thought of as a er good place to go, now once it was turning comprehensive.
13. My parents left the final decision as to whether or not to opt for the other school, to **me**
14. And I decided to go to the local comp
15. Erm were my primary school friends were going.
16. Er when I made the transition,
17. Er the friendships fragmented,
18. They broke up.
19. And err I wasn't placed in a form with my primary school friends
20. Er I didn't really enjoy the the school,
21. Looking back it was probably because I was split from my friends.
22. Er at that point, I I started to hang around with a girl I knew er from, through my brothers,
23. She was a sister of one of my brother's friends and she was in my form
24. Erm, she made friends with another group of girls, er from other primary schools
25. And I sort of, latched onto them through her
26. And one of the girls er called Diane. She lived close to me, just round the corner
27. And she seemed very grown up **and** she swore **and** she smoked **and** she wore trendy clothes and she had very young and glamorous um, parents as well.
28. And my parents were quite old.
29. I'm the youngest of my family and I thought they were ancient.
30. Erm, so we started mixing um with one another. She would call for me on the way to school
31. Or we would go out together after school.
32. And in the first year of secondary,
33. I truanted with Diane,
34. I've never done anything like this before,
35. As I was always quite a compliant, er good girl and I remember it.
36. It it does seem like a very long, well it is a long time ago,
37. But it was a foggy damp, October day
38. And really sort of seemed such a nerve wracking day.
39. The whole, the know 'getting from 9-3' without getting caught was just **awful**
40. There was nothing pleasurable about it at all
41. And after that experience, I began to feel I've got (1.5)not got really much in common with Diane or these others
42. And I think that whole experience put me off
43. Erm, other things, I began to feel uncomfortable about
44. Er Diane could be quite unpleasant to others, and she could say quite sharp, harsh things to me
45. You know. I had very short hair and er I wore trousers. You know I was called a boy,

46. That kind of thing, which I wasn't very happy with
47. And I began to feel quite intimidated by her, er. When she started calling for me, I'd ask my sister to tell her that you know, I'm not in
48. Erm and I came to the realisation that I **just** wanted to get away from this new group of friends
49. But it was **Diane** in particular who seemed. She was at the fore front of my memories.
50. Erm, I started to avoid the group
51. But er my avoidance tactics didn't really work,
52. And you know, a few more miserable weeks went by
53. And there was a morning I can remember it quite vividly, standing outside the science block,
54. ready to go into physics and I actually **blurted** out to her
55. And another girl, who was part of the group,
56. That I didn't want to hang out with them anymore.
57. Because I just felt so **pressured** by
58. Trying to get away from them, and it wasn't working out
59. Erm I went into physics
60. I felt really, really relieved
61. I remember feeling **relieved**
62. When I came out of the lesson, we crossed paths, erm outside the science block
63. And er Diane was with one of the other group and she actually slapped me across the face and grabbed me and we ended up sort of falling to the floor
64. Oh **dreadful**, I won't say it was a fight it was just more of a **shocked**, tumble to the ground
65. But we were picked up by a teacher
66. And erm (1.5) it was stopped.
67. School didn't contact my parents,
68. And I was just **mortified** by the whole experience
69. Erm I felt really **really ashamed** by the whole incident
70. And I didn't tell anyone about it
71. I didn't tell parents, or brothers or sisters
72. Err I became increasingly unhappy in school, and withdrawn at home
73. And eventually, I saw a way out
74. I thought I'm going to ask to take the **11 plus** and move schools,
75. You know I thought this was a way out of this
76. And I actually did ask my mum if there was any option of doing that, err
77. And that opened the door on a conversation about what was wrong with me -
78. And it all came flooding out.
79. Erm, my mum contacted the school
80. Went into see staff and I was moved into another form, with er all my friends from primary school.
81. And after a period of time, things did settle down.
82. But it was a period. Probably the first year of secondary was pretty miserable and dreadful.

Juliet
83. Thanks. Who wants to go next

Ann
84. I'll go next

Ann

1. When I was 10 (1.5)
2. I began to get bullied by my teacher, Mr Powell (1.5)
3. He had a volatile temper
4. And picked on the same boys every day
5. Only asking them the questions, criticising them
6. He would spit, as he shouted and he shook with rage (1.5)
7. And looking back, he was clearly out of control.
8. Simon O'Neil, and the lacy twins with James and John
9. Were his most frequent victims.
10. We were a class of 52 children
11. And every morning, we had mental arithmetic tests 1 -10 down the margin, 11-20 down the centre of the page in silence.
12. There was something call the Dutton Rule for converting amounts of fractions into amounts of pounds, shillings and pence. And I had been off school, with tonsillitis when everybody else learnt the rule.
13. So I kept getting these wrong.
14. And I was always too terrified to ask for an explanation
15. (1.5) This morning as the work was corrected he explained how to do the sums and then asked (Gosh, I have drops in my eyes I've lost my place (5) and asked who got the sums wrong and I was the only one.
16. By the way I had been put in the bottom set "The Bone Drones" as he called us.
17. I was asked if I had known how to do the sum and I didn't know what to say,
18. And to please him I said "yes".
19. So he said, because I deliberately got the sum wrong I had to be caned.
20. The class did a collective "Ooooh" of **shock**.
21. No girl had ever been caned in the class, nor would any girl ever be caned in the future other than me.
22. I had to be caned by a female teacher,
23. So I was taken down the corridor with a girl called Eileen English' carrying the cane.
24. I was **utterly** terrified.
25. I kept asking her not to take me,
26. But just pretend that we had gone,
27. But she just kept leading me to the classroom of the year below.
28. Here was a tiny, vicious little woman, called Miss Lewis
29. Also with a nasty temper
30. And sitting in the class was my younger brother peter.
31. I had to stretch out my hand in the front of the class, keep still and be caned (1.5)
32. It hurt. (1.5)
33. All the way home from school, I kept asking Peter not to tell our mother.
34. She too a user of vicious, physical punishment
35. But it was too easy for him to point at me and take any negative attention away from himself,
36. So he told.
37. I was then hit and snarled at for the remainder of the evening
38. And again, as I got ready for school the next the next day.
39. Mr Powell did this to me many times.
40. Only once can I remember it being for being naughty
41. And the rest of the class would be doing the same things anyway.
42. On another occasion was when we had to work in silence and I looked out of the window
43. Lovely white snowflakes floating down "It's snowing" I exclaimed in a loud whisper.
44. I was caned for talking.
45. I was probably caned on about 8 occasions,
46. The only girl ever caned. (1.5)

47. After the **8th time** I was sent to sit in the younger class where my brother was ,
48. I honestly **don't know** why
49. But in those days, nobody had a voice
50. Or answered **back**
51. Or did anything horrible in class,
52. We were all too terrified.
53. Then one playtime that week, I went to line up and my class wasn't there (1.5)
54. I had to line up with my old class.
55. They had all gone to visit the senior school for an afternoon out
56. And I'd been forgotten. (1.5)
57. I cried helplessly,
58. Standing as the only person of my class in line.
59. I thought that there was something about me that was wrong
60. That, he had found it out, and of course I would get caned.
61. I was profoundly ashamed.
62. I dreaded every day going to school.
63. He made me want to die (10)

Juliet
64. Okay, who wants to go next?

Joan

1. Okay, so I can't believe really, that the first thing I want to express is my **uncertainty** of whether my story constitutes bullying or not.
2. It's a personal story, based on a number of separate episodes during my primary and secondary education.
3. I guess part of me feels concerned that given my current age and stage of development
4. And **professional experience** most importantly, that I'm still not **sure**.
5. Anyhow, let me tell you my story. (1.5)
6. I guess the first episode started in primary, when I arrived to school
7. And became best friends with probably, the most attractive, most popular girl in the class called Alison
8. Thus displacing another friend called Deborah
9. So I became the subject of, as I recall, unpleasant remarks, from this friend Deborah.
10. I was 6ish at the time
11. I cannot remember specifics though but I have a feeling that this continued throughout a lot of my primary education.
12. I was **certain** she didn't like me, at the very least.
13. I started secondary school feeling I didn't belong.
14. Northern Irish Education System did and still does use the 11 plus, to decide who would go to grammar school.
15. I failed my 11 plus miserably,
16. Much to the surprise of my teachers,
17. Who asked for my papers to be remarked?
18. So that feeling of not belonging, certainly came from me in the beginning.
19. I was only in secondary school a year,
20. But in that year became the subject of some repeated teasing, stroke taunting
21. By one particular boy in my year.
22. I wouldn't say he was nasty
23. And as I recall he was quite popular amongst peers and staff.
24. He called me "door knob" rhyming slang for snob.
25. I think others just laughed or maybe sniggered.
26. I felt very lonely during that year.
27. With no real friends, social times lasted an age,
28. So I worked my way out of secondary school into grammar.

29. Things generally were much better.
30. I reconnected with some classmates from primary with whom I got along including Alison.
31. I can't quite remember the sequence of events. There is a lot I can't remember (laughs)
32. But somewhere along the line, we unfriended each other.
33. I then became the subject of bullying from her circle of friends,
34. It was fairly low level stuff, but it was persistent.
35. The looks, the tutts,
36. Almost every time I walked passed them
37. So many times I rehearsed in my head ways to confront them,
38. And what to say
39. And how to respond to anticipated retorts
40. But I could never muster the courage to carry this through.
41. After two years in grammar, my family relocated to here in the north west
42. And so until some way into my working life I became free from targeted unpleasantness that had seemed to follow me in childhood.

Juliet
43. Okay, who wants to go next

Amy

1. My friend c and I became friends, when we both entered first year at an all girls' convent school in the early 1980's.
2. C was supernaturally clever. She played the clarinet at grade 8 at the age of 12 and was held in high regard by the staff
3. For most lessons, we were placed in ability streams
4. But we were taught in mixed ability groups for RE
5. As a consequence, when we were in RE lessons, C and I were were with pupils we rarely met.
6. One day, when we were in our 3rd year (year 9), no teacher arrived to deliver our re lesson.
7. Usually, when a teacher failed to turn up for a lesson
8. It was a cause for celebration and a time to generally doss around.
9. However, on this particular day a group of girls took the opportunity to make really nasty comments about C,
10. Which quickly escalated into them standing around her desk,
11. Shouting abuse and laughing at her.
12. C visibly cowered, lowered her head and started to cry.
13. The **main focus** of their attack were C's white, freckled skin, bright red curly hair after the style of Ronald McDonald, in a halo around her head and her bright blue plastic NHS glasses.
14. However, her greatest crime was to have been spotted on a Saturday, wearing her school uniform shoes and coat.
15. Our school uniform was very strict and unflattering in every aspect.
16. It was also very expensive, as it involved hats, coats, shoes and gloves in addition to the usual items one might expect.
17. Knowing that c's father was an alcoholic,
18. Who did not work, resulting in there being not much spare cash for c and her sisters to have a great wardrobe,

19. I was outraged.
20. Furthermore, I regarded the girls who were abusing C as a rabble, who **I** had seen outside of school dressed in what I considered, to be ridiculous outfits (remember this was the **80's**!),
21. Thinking that they were the last word in what was fashionable and hip.
22. The **injustice** of the situation was too much for me
23. And I stood up and started on them,
24. Naming and describing in minute detail the features of their clothes that i thought were awful, ridiculous and downright tasteless.
25. Enjoying the shocked looks on their faces and those of the rest of the class,
26. I got into my **stride** and went on to describe them as whores, sluts and trollops, whose dress sense indicated that they were no better than they should be.
27. C even managed to raise her head and look at me with fear and awe.
28. As ever, my timing was perfect, as just as i was calling one of them a "jezebel"
29. Sister Mary Margaret came into the room and was not at all impressed.
30. I was immediately sent to the head teacher's office,
31. Where I was sentenced to a week's solitary confinement
32. Including isolation during lunchtimes and breaks.
33. My parents were informed and they were equally disapproving.
34. When I tried to plead my case,
35. I was told that my language had been completely unacceptable;
36. That two wrongs did not make a right.
37. And that I should not retaliate in the face of provocation.
38. Indeed, I should have turned the other cheek, as the lord would have done.
39. Following the incident,
40. Apart from some whispers and snide comments,
41. C and I were given a wide berth by the bullies.
42. C went on to Cambridge and is now an extremely highly paid banker living in Switzerland
43. With her German banker husband and their two children.
44. Most of the bullies sank without a trace
45. Apart from one who made headlines in the Manchester evening news when she was sent down for her part in an armed robbery. (laughter) (5)

Juliet
46. Okay (laughs) who's next

Tom

1. I don't mind going next
2. Some of you know, some of you don't know,
3. I've spent the first 15 years of my life in-between Scotland, Glasgow and fife and Asia, er Bangladesh and India,
4. And I guess er what I'm going to talk about now is an amalgamation of all of that.
5. We've spoken of our mini stories
6. Two of which, I was a victim of bullying
7. And two were more as a bystander watching things going on.
8. Erm (pause) the first one erm was erm when I was in India
9. In the boarding school that I was at
10. Erm, I had been going out with this girl
11. And then suddenly it all changed,
12. I opened my desk one morning in class and there was this **horrific** poem written to me by **her**,

13. Which came **completely** out of the blue,
14. And I still remember some of the lines to this day
15. Erm and that anyway, instigated, that that was a combination of the whole class,
16. Erm kind of, nearly the whole class,
17. turning against me and my brother (I've got a twin brother),
18. And from nowhere,
19. Can't understand where it came from
20. Erm **really** upset us and threw us.
21. We got on well with staff
22. We were popular with staff
23. We were doing well in our studies for most of it
24. And I think we had just been giving the acting part
25. So there was elements of jealousy there,
26. But I didn't really understand, because others were you know very able at sports and were getting lots of achievements at that.
27. So that was really hard.
28. It was hard because lots of people who were our friends weren't really doing much about it
29. We felt very disempowered
30. And it had been instigated by a group of girls, one of them whom
31. who had been my girlfriend –
32. That that was very, very difficult,
33. Because I was at boarding school
34. And it was about 2000 miles away from home,
35. And I didn't have my parents to talk to too
36. I actually talked it though with some members of staff
37. And a couple of lads in the class you know apologised
38. And were all upset and everything and eventually it sorted itself out.
39. Yes, it did actually,
40. But that took several weeks
41. Which compared to some of the other things people, have said around years,
42. But when you're in boarding school weeks is a long time. (laughs) (2)
43. So that was one. The other one erm I'll still stay with India is more of a bystander –
44. It was an international school, people from all over the world really, with all backgrounds (ethnic background)
45. But huge racism bullying going on to some of the people that were there
46. And erm one boy particularly, I think about,
47. Short little chap, very intelligent chap, big glasses, erm not very sporty
48. Erm probably, didn't help himself sometimes the way he reacted,
49. When he overreacted, that was entertainment for everyone else, you know,
50. And they would goad him a bit more.
51. Was tied up at one point I think,
52. And I befriended him as my brother did
53. But I still think to this day, is there was more that I could have done?
54. And I actually met him. We've had a few school reunions
55. And all of these people, I am mentioning are on my Facebook with me now (laughs) which is just
56. And you know it's just all, and my girlfriend, I went to her wedding, and you know we're still in touch which is surreal.
57. Those really intense periods still go on.
58. Erm, but I still think about, is there more that I could have done for this this lad in the school in India.
59. On return to Scotland, it was very difficult the last time I moved to Scotland, because it was the Scottish 4[th] year which is Scottish O grades – the equivalent of GCSE year
60. So I had to with my brother go to this Glasgow Comprehensive, from this international school in India, which was just, as you can imagine,

61. I could have landed from Mars too be honest because I didn't speak with – you have to learn to speak in a different way very quickly for survival really
62. Erm and I was an intelligent person, so I knew when to keep my mouth shut and when to open it
63. And you know dodge all, and negotiate that on the whole. Although there were a couple lads particularly that got into my brother
64. But also with me and called us poofs which was the old way, you know
65. And said i was gay, you know the way to get a bloke is to talk about their sexuality that's the, that's the you know, if you're going to do it, that's what you do.
66. A few hitting on the head, things going on
67. And just took a real dislike to us, because we were different
68. Again we hadn't grown up with the rest of the people in the school
69. Again we got on well with the staff. We kept our heads down and got on with our studies,
70. Some of these people couldn't cope with this.
71. Erm we were new blood I think.
72. Let's try new blood. Everyone else had negotiated and were familiar with them
73. Again friends, good friends stood by.
74. It was it was the disempowerment of everyone else in those situations that was was difficult and an on-going theme.
75. Erm (pause) so that was directed at me and my brother
76. And then the last bit was I remember watching, in the same school, another little guy who was a bit strange really I have to say (2)
77. Even the way he looked and he smelt and didn't dress himself.
78. You know there was a lot of stuff going on there even some rumours as there always is around what he may have done to other children, to younger children
79. Erm so he had this whole. And he used to get (1.5) erm beaten up at times or made fun of on the way out of school
80. And again, I sometimes, he used to come alongside us sometimes and I wished I'd done a bit more,
81. But we tried to befriend him. But then again he wouldn't help himself sometimes either
82. As he then tried to become friends with the people who were. And not doing a very good job at it
83. And making it worse and half the time I would always want to -
84. I think I was a psychologist from the age of about two; I would try to suss people out and think that's not very good and that's not very helpful. Let's try and do something about it
85. So watching, but feeling a bit disempowered myself and
86. Erm i guess the big themes that have come up for me just from those experiences being done to, and watching and the transition across two cultures is (pause)
87. Issues around jealousy
88. Issues around let's get some new blood
89. Issues around erm people's social skills, when to speak, when not to speak
90. The entertainment factor of it all. Erm and the sheer,
91. Even that first one that I talked about – I still don't know even to this day,
92. And these are people that I've met with, and would consider my friends now, and you know pretty regular on Facebook, and so on
93. I still to this this day don't understand where that came from. I I just (2)
94. Er half of me wants to really just get them, especially that group of girls and absolutely (laughs)
95. But this, we've all moved on i suppose.
96. It's one of these things in life that just sit with you and i suppose that's a real puzzle, really
97. Umm that's me (4)

Juliet

98. Thank you. Sally?

Sally

1. I've actually chosen a professional one
2. Because I count myself lucky or something, because
3. As far as I am aware, as far as I've regarded
4. I have never been a victim of bullying myself
5. And erm, I don't remember it happening to any of my friends or anything either or any members of my family.
6. So I've chosen jack, um jack is now 13 and he is a Year 8 pupil at high school
7. Erm he was referred to the Educational Psychology service in year 2
8. And again in years 4 and 6 at his primary school,
9. Because of concerns regarding his behaviour.
10. Erm and then I met him in year 7, when his school requested further involvement.
11. So looking back through, you know
12. Firstly you get the referral,
13. You get the file out to see what information we already had on him. As they said there had been some EP involvement
14. And from primary school they described jack as being inattentive and day dreaming
15. Um and so in his lessons, he was always getting singled out for not paying attention and so on
16. Erm they said he was always getting into minor scraps
17. Erm so there was always little little things happening,
18. He would have a fall out with somebody or there were little arguments going on –
19. But they said there was nothing major,
20. He wasn't a real trouble maker,
21. But he seemed to attract quite a bit of attention through these little behaviours.
22. Now things would improve for a while. And then he would slip back
23. And i think that's why there was a Year 2, Year 4, Year 6 pattern
24. Things were improving in between and then it seemed he was slipping back.
25. He was described as odd, by two different teachers
26. And for me I thought it was the magic word that means that they thought he was Autistic
27. And they don't want to say so.
28. I looked in in, through the file to see if there were any other signs regarding and
29. And there were some comments about, that he always thought that other people were picking on him
30. And they had regarded it as being just general banter
31. You know, just what boys, kids do at school
32. But he was just misunderstanding the situation.
33. Erm and also that he had very few friends
34. So there were signs then about some social um skills concerns
35. So he was, erm thinking others were picking on him
36. Misunderstanding,
37. And the few friends, he did have were all boys.
38. And then I picked out he didn't like sitting or working with girls
39. There was a comment being made by one teacher in particular back in primary school
40. That he would avoid sitting with girls
41. Sometimes they would do boy, girl, boy, girl
42. But always somehow managed to be at the end of the line
43. So if he **had** to be next to a girl, he would move away.
44. And erm all the teachers who had ever described him in primary school
45. Would say he had poor self-esteem

46. There wasn't a lot explained about what the meant about poor self-esteem (laughs)
47. But it just kept reoccurring. (3) CANT DISTINGUISH
48. So this had been going on in primary school.
49. I wasn't the EP who was involved in primary
50. He had 2 different EP's involved with him there.
51. And I said there had been improvements, and
52. Recommendations had been made about how to improve his social skills
53. Erm, ideas for improving his concentration in class
54. And getting him to work independently.
55. Erm, and obviously, you know ideas for boosting his self esteem
56. So there was lots of that in the advice from the EP and obviously things had been implemented
57. And there had been this improvement, and then the slip back again.
58. Further advice, improvement, slipped back again
59. So that seemed to be the pattern, I could pick out from the information from primary.
60. So Jack then goes to high school
61. And within a few weeks, he's not wanting to go to school
62. He's calling himself stupid
63. And a particular phrase was horrible boy //
64. They would hear him say I'm a horrible boy I'm a horrible boy //
65. He was by now **totally** refusing to work with girls
66. Erm, which was causing quite an issue in a lot of lessons
67. And because obviously going to high school, it wouldn't be the same group of girls
68. They'd all been mixed up er with kids from different schools
69. But he was not happy at all if he was er
70. They tried to make him go into a group with girls he would leave the room.
71. Erm he was spending his break and his lunch time in a Resource Base, in an Inclusion Centre
72. Where he would sit on his own
73. And they started saying, describing him as a Loner
74. He'd only been in there a couple of weeks and they described him as becoming increasingly disengaged.
75. They said he didn't like the hussle and bussle of the corridors
76. And er um, they had already put things in place for that (2)
77. Allowing him to leave early or making sure he was with an teaching assistant, being escorted.
78. **But the school were saying things that don't add up**
79. Because they they saw from the primary school that this query
80. And they said the description they got from primary didn't match up with the boy they were seeing
81. And I said about when I had looked at his file they'd said about ASD and they said no he didn't seem ASD
82. He was different.
83. They didn't see that, what was written on paper, what information they had been given from the school
84. Didn't match up
85. So they then said that they would arrange for him to have some sessions with a **male** learning mentor
86. To try and get a better relationship going with him
87. And jack told the learning mentor that he was being bullied by a group of 3 girls
88. from primary school and this had been going on since year 1
89. Erm so, my role was er supporting the learning mentor in the work that he was doing
90. Exploring the bullying,
91. Because there had been comments made in the past about him misinterpreting situations

92. And you know thinking it was bullying when it wasn't
93. When it was just banter.
94. But when the learning mentor told me what jack had **described**
95. Jack was actually giving a very good account of what **is** bullying.
96. So he said the girls were very sly
97. And very devious
98. And they would call him names, when you know other people couldn't hear,
99. They were telling others not to talk to him,
100. They told him things would happen to him and his family, if he didn't do what they wanted
101. Or if he told on them.
102. So this had been going on, since year 1. He is now in year 7 um I've just
103. I picked that one because that raised lots of questions for me
104. About why did he open up after so many years?
105. Erm and the other point was erm, what if he had ever tried to tell er primary
106. Was he listened to?
107. And so there was actually a failing in the school - a school that has recently been in special measures
108. So just thinking about my initial interpretation, because the information was presented in a particular way,
109. And had high school done the same thing. There was information that there were concerns, but if high school and myself interpreted them that way that fitted with what the primary school were saying (1.5)
110. And it was only when we actually spoke to jack, that we actually got a picture of what was actually happening to him

Juliet

111. Thanks ever so much everyone, does anyone want to get another drink before we go into a little chat
112. Brief chat/laughter – break before discussion

Juliet

1. So, we'll just wait for Sarah to get back, does anybody want anything else?
2. I am not going to comment during this process as it might lead you
3. So really, it's up to you all now to open up discussion er in the way that you would like it to go er to talk about these stories

Discussion

Amy –
1. Well the first thing I would say is I didn't get caned but other girls did in my primary school
2. There were two blokes like that, one was in the second year and one was in the 4th year
3. And my job in the second year was to take the register back to the office, (nods confirmation)
4. And I used to think I was the luckiest girl in the class because I had that time out the classroom to take the register back.
5. And I remember watching a boy standing in front of me, wet himself with fear when this guy was shouting – (2)
6. Just completely out of control **every day**, I used to think
7. And I used to think if I got to Thursday night that means there is only Friday to go,
8. I was 8 at the time
9. Thinking that means the weekend hasn't gone. The weekend is still to come, so Fridays were good
10. But it meant the weekend was nearly over and it was nearly Monday again, to go back into his class. It was horrific

Joan –
11. I felt profoundly affected by your story. (3) (nods of agreement)
12. Just an absolute wave of emotion, I can't describe, which really,
13. I shouldn't have gone next actually. (laughs) Because I kept thinking about your story when I was reading mine. (2)
14. I'm just trying to like rationalise what that's about. In some ways (2)
15. Connected with what Amy said, that my head teacher in primary school used to carry his cane up his sleeve,
16. So you could just see the hook
17. And it never happened to me but it was that my teacher at the end of primary school, that was a bit like that
18. But he preferred those things, dust, that you wipe the board with. He'd throw them at the boys (attempts to clarify and support in word finding)
19. But he was very gender specific, so I don't remember any girls getting, the duster board or erasers lobbed at them.
20. I don't know, I can, I just felt profoundly affected by your story

Ann –
21. I am just thinking about all the varieties of different levels we've been talking at
22. And erm, that for some people, it was a problem solving account

23. That they had **resolved** an issue,
24. That yours, you had resolved yours. And you were saying things about yourselves that were, I was right and I
25. And I felt the same sort of helplessness, with yours Joan as I've got something inside me and the story, I think yours and mine, ended on a kind of "dot, dot, dot" This hasn't been resolved? (laughs)

Sally –
26. I, so you see, personally I wouldn't say. You weren't bullied. I would say you were abused.
27. To me, that was a different level. That was a personal authority abusing a child // yeah
28. He was abusing his position and his power (agreement nods)
29. And there was a element of singling out somebody – To me that would be abuse.
30. And you know, there is that thing about why, if it's within a family its abuse, but if it's within children or within you know other relationships, it's called bullying (um, reflection)
31. And I'm never clear on that distinction // yes

Sarah –
32. Yes I suppose when I was listening to yours (Ann) I was thinking, I think I when I was listening to yours thinking, "Oo – in some ways I was was thinking was I bullied then?"
33. Because if that's what bullying is then I certainly wasn't bullied really,
34. I got called funny names and I was a bit frightened
35. But actually, in some ways, for me, it was it was about the power, but definitely about the power
36. But an adult doing it to a child is such a massively, to me, feels so **massively** different to these children.
37. Yet in some ways maybe that's why, I felt more empowered to solve it, because it was children with children, I don't know (2)

Ann –
38. I think also it's the way, it's the way people frame the narrative. Ha ha doesn't that sound good (smiles)
39. Because I'm aware Joan of you saying "oh well this is all low level stuff" you know
40. And you were saying "well it wasn't, oh actually it was bad"
41. It's when people are expressing it; they're kind of dismissing it. Almost
42. Like "Oh I'm an adult oh it's a load of silly stuff"
43. But actually underneath it is is the sheer pain of the child, the **terror** of the child

Sarah –
44. I think for mine, you see, when I wrote it, as I was writing it, remember I wrote, I did actually write it but didn't read it, because that's what I tend to do (said sheepishly) I remember I wrote here "I felt sick with panic"
45. Which doesn't happen to me very often nowadays.
46. I don't really do much in the way of panic
47. Erm, but erm when I wrote that I actually **felt** it

48. When I wrote it. I felt it "Oh, I felt, I felt, I felt that. What **was that**?!" Which was quite **bizarre**!

Ann –
49. If we're putting our adult constructions on it I was reading it going "Oh my god I'm going right down here"
50. Erm they're going to think I'm hung up because I'm going right down here! (laughing)
51. But I'm aware also of the people round the table describing things and **laughing** making jokes out of it, sort of, which I, we're not a growth group
52. But it's a way of standing back from, - saying "Oh yes I'm still an adult I'm ok about this, it's all low level stuff".
53. Even saying "it was a long time ago"

Jane –
54. Like you were saying (to Sarah), even when I was writing it I could feel physically feel **those** feelings of shame again after, you know, being slapped in the face, not telling anybody

Sarah –
55. I think and as I was writing it, the other thing that came out for me was – I phoned I spoke to Juliet and asked "Ooo was I meant to do one with me as a child, or one of me professionally?"
56. Because actually professionally that sort of thing hasn't really happened
57. In fact that hasn't really happened since that, since that really.
58. That was the – so for me, learning I learnt something about **me** in that process.
59. Far more than I actually knew I'd learnt, until I wrote it down, I thought "oh I learnt that"
60. But you just do don't you? Just learn it and then move on sort of thing, (laughs) I suppose
61. I didn't, I wrote, I wrote it erm " I don't think this has happened to me professionally" and then I put,
62. "What I learnt from that is this person who's doing this is unhappy – they're unhappy not me.
63. I'm ok – they're unhappy"
64. And I wrote "Don't give me your unhappiness, you can show it to me but it's not mine and I'm going to give it straight back".
65. I wrote that but then thought "Wonder why I've written that?"
66. But I think that was the learning I had from that period of time which I've carried, which I learnt //

Ann –
67. But I was struck by yours Amy, first of all you put the extra bit on the end and yours had been about again, I suppose about being abused by the system
68. Because you were **incensed** that your friend, who you were putting on a pedestal but you adore her (laughs)
69. We're not talking about jealousy
70. But that you're standing up for her (1.5) erm (4)
71. I I can see the kind of, er, like um, that I would expect within you, a sort of sympathy for people who are being abused in that way and its wrong //

Amy –
72. I think for me when I was reading it, and it is actually a very significant thing.
73. We don't see each other much, every now and then, I will nip off to Switzerland to see her and she always reminds me of it.
74. And she, the thing that I felt was, we never discuss it, but she just reminds me of it,
75. I remember what you said – Was that we were meant to carry the can for these others.
76. It was almost like, well you should know better? Because **these** are urchins. These are girls who aren't going anywhere but **YOU** should know better
77. And that's why I was punished
78. And it was a whole **week** of being **put** in a room and **even** my lunch times, I wasn't allowed to eat my lunch
79. And I kept trying to say "But look what they were doing",
80. And the other thing was, I knew what her home situation was, and they didn't, and it was **dire**, it was **absolutely horrific**.
81. They had no money, nothing, and there was violence and all there was all sorts going on at home
82. And that's why I did it and nobody would listen.
83. It was like "But, but that isn't how you behave is it?"

Ann –
84. Behave! The burning injustice you felt here //

Amy –
85. That's them and they're like that and that injustice still **burns**.
86. As I then got a **name** for it you know, "You've been in the sin bin really"

Sarah –
87. Do you think that's lived with you then? I mean the erm justice and fairness thing?
88. I would say that that is one of my core constructs of life. I can't **stand** it , it's unfair
89. I want everything to be a fair even though in life it's not
90. But I don't know where that's come from but it sounds like

Amy –
91. Absolutely it is

Jane –
92. How old were you Amy

Amy –
93. Well the 3^rd year so Year 9 I suppose; that age
94. It was an age when, they had "**the**" outfits, you know
95. And they were the ones that were dictating our school.
96. And in fact they were dressed like tramps.
97. But it wasn't right you know – **IT WASN'T FAIR**.
98. And nobody would listen and nobody said anything to them.
99. And I think it was this idea of the greater good um you know

100.   You shouldn't behave. You should just turn the other cheek and get on with it

101.   But she wasn't capable. And had I not done that I'd hate to think what would have happened to her

Jane –

102.   It almost like, you're using the set of skills that you've brought with you to your **being**! (laughs)

Amy –

103.   They say don't they that things happen to you to teach you lessons ,

Tom –

104.   I've been really humbled by listening to everyone's stories – all of the stories really.

105.   You know, I wasn't sure I have to say, not guilty or shame

106.   That first one that I was going to read out, I put 4 down, and I wrote the title of it, but that was probably the one that was most painful and I just kept it empty (laughs). And I wrote all the notes down there to there. And then I thought, I don't even want to write it out really.

Ann –

107.   But it's just taking a risk

Tom –

108.   But then after listening to everyone else's personal story I just thought "Oh you're a bit pathetic Tom"

109.   Everyone has been a lot braver and done it, so I can, I can er share all of that mine really

110.   And the professional, but I was eagerly// I didn't really want to talk about personal things too be honest erm

111.   And I was racking my brain to come up with a professional story (laughs)

112.   Apart from the work place situations I couldn't think of enough of stuff that kind of not forced me but put me into having to talk about something personal,

113.   Which is really interesting, mapping this out just the couple of days, that I did this.

114.   I only spent a few little moments doing it, but what flew out, what flowed out, and the themes that flowed out erm (1) yeah

Sally –

115.   Can I ask? I just wanted to ask Tom and Joan in a minute,

116.   First Sarah and Jane you both talk about that you actually told somebody, you told, you told the teachers and the bullying stopped erm

117.   And Ann and Amy you both told but then you were punished again um for telling. Ann you told your mum

Ann –
   118.   **No my brother told on me** (sounds cross she got the story wrong)

Sally –
   119.   And that should really have been the opportunity to talk, but you got punished again

Ann –
   120.   Yes that's right, you'd get it at home

Sally-
   121.   And you didn't tell her. You had been in trouble in school because you would get in more trouble.
   122.   Exactly, whereas Joan and Tom I wasn't sure, did you, whether you actually told anyone about what was happening in your situation

Tom –
   123.   Well, the main one, all girls and the whole class against, where we'd got us to such a point where both me and my brother went and spoke to people who were our god parents at the time
   124.   Who took it very seriously actually. And they had a meeting with me.
   125.   And we were all crying and all very upset erm
   126.   Um and I don't know what was done with the girls. That was with the boys aspect of it.
   127.   But yeah, so they did, they did take it
   128.   I got and interestingly, the cane was there at school, I got caned a couple of times but there wasn't any abuse around that
   129.   I don't think I should have happened anyway which is really interesting
   130.   So it was really interesting hearing about the abuse of adults with the cane
   131.   That was, not my (2) that was done **in** a much more "safe/structured" in inverted commas, way.
   132.   So it was really interesting hearing the other cane stories.
   133.   Er yeah but with the other one, coming back to Glasgow. It was a physics class as well, Science when you (Jane) started talking about science I couldn't believe it it was really outside the classes as it was the lining up outside the classes and stuff, and this became part of the culture. We didn't speak to the teachers. We were quite new. Who we were going to talk too?
   134.   That's what those guys were like. They'd got better the next year because I became a prefect
   135.   And a lot of those guys were no longer there anyway. And much better second year erm so anyway

Ann –
   136.   What you said there though Sally, there is a thing about you, said say like in mine and in yours Amy, parents support the school.
   137.   There's no way you would have a voice, you're in trouble in school you're **dead**!
   138.   Ann to Jane – Your mum had listened to you?

Jane –

139.   Yes she did, I didn't expect her too because you know
140.   Children were seen and not heard,
141.   I was the youngest of 5. Um, you know I just did not expect it to, for anyone to react or or do anything about it really.
142.   So you know I didn't feel that I could have asked for adult support
143.   And listening to yours Ann about Mr Powell, I was just thinking about a couple of teachers that I knew from Primary School, erm **very very** sort of austere and scary people
144.   And again you know the discipline that was used which you do think of it as abuse now,
145.   But **then** it was just what they did. (spoke together) ((lots of chatting))
146.   And it was only listening to you, that I did sort of de-contextualize it you know from the 60's and 70's and think well yeah that is what happened

Tom –
147.   The place I grew up in Fife, there was the Loch Gellin Belt which is the town I grew up in. And they were made out of leather, and it was a particular, that was the time
148.   And everyone talked about it and that was particularly made for hitting children

Ann –
149.   My first year of teaching was in Baliston just outside Glasgow, and it was a Primary School. And the teachers there sent off for their own leather belts.

Tom –
150.   Yeah, Yeah (laughs)

Ann -
151.   I taught 8 to 9 year olds and the woman who taught 7 to 8 years olds made sure she had hers, and she **used it**

Sarah –
152.   You know when, just a query really, and this from my own experience of doing this,
153.   Because I didn't actually write this down until today,
154.   But because I knew it was coming
155.   But it's been on my mind. **Not** all the time. Not like where I've be **"Uh oh my god"**
156.   Nothing like that. And it would pop in at the most weird moments, where I would be thinking of something **completely** different, **completely** not even related and suddenly, there it would be!
157.   And I would be like "Wwwhy is that there now?" I'm cooking meatballs. What am I suddenly doing thinking of this? You know, "wwwwhy has that **occurred**!"
158.   Not horrible, not in any way, but it was just remarkable, because it just kept popping in (laughs) and hadn't thought of it for **such** a long time
159.   It's not like I think about it all the time because I don't

Jane-

157.   Yeah, I had **exactly** the same experience though,
158.   Er, thinking about this writing it and (1.5), what I did
159.   And I felt I felt it was sort of eerie, really (1.5)
160.   Because it was a transition. You know, losing friends
161.   It almost felt like losing family. You know losing primary school friends (1.5)
162.   I was I was thinking about the way I had an experience where I moved from one job to another,
163.   Where I'd been in the job for ages, and I moved to a job
164.   And, writing this
165.   I thought "Oh my goodness, I can see these **same** constructs coming up"
166.   I felt the job I'd gone to, was utterly **meaningless** and pointless, which I was feeling about the school.

Ann –

167.   And and you'd chosen it (said jokingly) you'd chosen it.

Jane-

168.   Yes, yes. And I'd chosen to leave this job and and the friendships had gone.
169.   You know, so there wasn't that security there and I thought
170.   I'd **carried** this across 40 years, you know, these same sort of (2) belief systems.

Sarah –

171.   I've been thinking about this, I've got a head teacher who I work with, and I was only today talking about this head teacher
172.   And she clearly, (2) I don't know what it is about **her**, but as soon as I open my mouth (laughs) to speak to her I said to, my tongue seems to get stuck in my mouth (laughs)
173.   And nothing comes out in the right order
174.   And I do, just think ,"Ooh I can't converse with this woman at all"
175.   And I really don't know why that is.
176.   Apart from the fact, that when I first started, I did an observation of a child in her school, and (2) I'd written the record, and it said something like erm,
177.   "It was a quite a lively (1.5) science class. And they were all very very, talking very loudly. Not about the subject matter **at all**. Nobody was on task
178.   So I'd written something, along those lines but not as explicit as that.
179.   And she called me into her office as I was leaving, and said,
180.   "I'd just like to have a word with you Sarah about this report that you've written" (whispered).
181.   And I said "oh, right, okay."(quickly and in surprise) She said that "I feel your report is erm (1.5), is er, under-mining the parents' confidence in my school."
182.   And I was like "Ooh? (surprised) Why would you think that?"

183.   Bearing in mind she had excluded him and had to have it rescinded because it was rescinded, her exclusion. Her exclusion, it was nothing to do with me. This came after.
184.   And I said "Oh, why's that then?" And erm, She said "Erm, because you've written here er that the lesson was very noisy I want that rewritten" (said forcefully).
185.   I said "What would you like me to write?"
186.   And she said "I'd like you to say that they were talking about the subject matter animatedly"
187.   I said "But that would be a lie, wouldn't it?"
188.   And she went (1.5) "I'm sorry". (questioningly)
189.   I said "When you've trained as an educational psychologist, you can tell me how to write a report, but until then, I'll let you be the head teacher of this school and I'll be the educational psychologist, is that alright?"
190.   And she just went (1.5) "**Well, I'll see** about that, **you can leave**" (laughter in background)
191.   And, and I came out, and I was like "Oh my God!"
192.   I phoned my new boss, bearing in mind I'd only been in the job about three months (laughs) And I phoned up and went (said hurriedly)
193.   "I'm really sorry but you're going to get a complaint and it's all my fault"
194.   And since then, but today I was talking and thinking about **this** and talking about **her** and I thought
195.   Oh! And it might, oh! I think it's a Claire! It feels like it's a Claire! It's a Claire! I stand up to her, but I don't feel comfortable standing up to her. But it's a Claire! //

Ann –

196.   Its PTSD I worked out
197.   It's a **boring** standing back from it, and terribly sort of **erm**, very
198.   It's not processing stuff, and I you know erm
199.   I'm the oldest person here and it's only well into my sixties I realise that certain reactions of mine are actually PTSD.
200.   Going back, to a phase in my life, so that if I'm told off, until fairly recently, I felt, I,I folded.
201.   Mmm, mmm (others in agreement in background).
202.   Erm, and I realised, I've only just realised (laughs), (whispers) about 2 years ago that it's actually, it's a PTSD loop.
203.   And I go back to that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (said in unison with Tom) and it's it's not , it's boring psychology where I'm just being so nice, as being ordinary people ,(said hurriedly) (2),
204.   Erm, it's because I didn't process, because things happened, and then it also happened at home as well, so you had a **long** phase of repeated trauma,
205.   A sort of **a**, very traumatic, traumatising kind of existence
206.   It wasn't processed, hmmm so that situations,
207.   I'm I'm feisty, I'll argue, I'm full of fight and all the rest of it,
208.   But actually when people tell me off, actually I can actually fold right?
209.   That's because I go back to being helpless like that.
210.   Having discovered that actually, I feel (laughs) stronger about it,

211.   But it does, these things, erm.
212.   Gosh talking as a psychologist though, erm, and going back to injustice,
213.   I, I know absolutely that I'm an Ed Psych because I'm not having these things happen to **children**.

Amy –

214.   **Absolutely**, but it's interesting what you said about the um maths. The mental maths thing.
215.   We had to do that as well. And when you said that, it was exactly what we had to do. //

Ann -
216.   I can't do mental maths

Amy -
217.   I developed this thing that I couldn't do maths, and the more I wouldn't do it, even if he asked me a question, I just wouldn't even listen to it.
218.   I'd be just standing there paralysed.
219.   They made you just stand up and do things. And I had this belief that I couldn't do **maths**.
220.   I ended up with a science **degree** and some would say well you've got **maths**!
221.   And I would say yes, but that's not maths and when you do it, but that's not maths
222.   So if you're actually calculating titration point and stuff like that. That's not maths though, (1.5) that's chemistry. Mmm //

Sarah –

223.   It's weird, It's really bizarre, isn't that weird?
224.   (background chatter over each other for 2 seconds)
225.   I felt like you about maths
226.   Oh my God, so I watch my **daughter** and I think, "Oh my God it's happening to her"
227.   And I can see, when her dad is talking about percentages or fractions and he's going "**We've done this before**!" (Raised voice and slams down hard on table)
228.   And she's like" wha wha wha" and I'm like, " Err, I don't think that's really helping Gaz. I think we should just leave it there".
229.   But she will utterly go into frightened rabbit mode, can't think and just plucks numbers out of the air.
230.   **Random numbers**, pick a number any number, (hurriedly) just to get something out.
231.   And I used to feel like that,
232.   But when I did my (1.5) PGCE, I remember, revisiting the maths and thinking, (1.5) I think I've over-thunk it. (1.5)
233.   When I was in school I made it a lot harder than it actually was, (1.5) but then realising that, I just don't think I was ready //

Amy –

234.   That's the point, when you've got a psycho screaming at you as well. Yeah, you just don't even listen,

235.   And It was really funny one day because he'd had been having a real go and we had a trip to the museum

236.   And we had to go off and draw something we liked at the **museum**

237.   And I drew a picture of a polar bear, a stuffed polar bear (1.5)

238.   And the people at the museum said they really liked my picture. And that they were going to take it and put it in this exhibition thing (1.5)

239.   And I felt. And he came up and went, "Just shows what a day out of school does for you". (Sarcastically).

240.   And I just found it, he couldn't even say "Well done, you know

241.   This is something to celebrate. One of our class has had their picture taken and put in",

242.   He just said, "It just shows what you can do when you go out of school." Or something like that.

243.   And now looking back I think "Yeah, because you weren't there screaming and balling at me."

244.   I was just sitting quietly drawing pictures of polar bears, not being shouted at.

245.   But how they got away with it I don't know?

Ann -

246.   This guy he just kind of used to go, used to go **red** in the face,

247.   And the three lads, the three boys, **every** single day being caned.

248.   And Jimmy Lacey was the funniest kid.

249.   He used to draw this little cartoon of

250.   Jimmy and John Lacey and Simon O'Neill were **caned** every single day. And he'd

251.   At lunch, at every break time, every play time, he sent somebody out to buy himself a bar of chocolate, and we'd have to work in silence from 11 o'clock until 20 past and he'd start sharing it. (difficult to decipher)

Tom –

252.   I'm just thinking about, I'm just thinking about people that I've taught,

253.   And everything I've seen on Facebook still how I get to see their photos.

254.   I often think about what they thought about that

255.   Obviously it's significant for me (1.5) How much of it have they forgotten? (3)

256.   What's the importance of it to them? You know what I mean?

257.   And I just think is that because they weren't the victims and they were the perpetrators?

258.   Or was that because of their personality?

259.   And (2) I've often thought (2)about how they'd be in the future you know when when they've grown into adults, you know some of them //

Ann-

260.   I don't think they do, I don't think they do.

Joan –

261.   I found your situation really intriguing, that you're friends with these people and yet you've never had a conversation with them about it?

Tom-

262.   But I think, a few long term friends, several years ago, we had er (2.5)
263.   As close as you could to have like er (1.5)
264.   But they're all over the world,
265.   I mean literally they're all over the world now erm (1.5), (interrupted by listener)
266.   (Louder voice) I guess, I think distance, I think distance, I think distance comes.
267.   You know. When you're adults and you've got your own children you know you're going out to the museum and getting on very well you know
268.   And really relaxed. It's all very genuine
269.   It's like well, how do you, how do you introduce it?
270.   Do you know what I mean (hmm)?
271.   You're at a museum with them playing and their children are running around,
272.   What am I going to say "By the way"
273.   "You know when they wrote that poem on my desk" (laughter).

Joan-

274.   I suppose, if I were standing in your shoes I would struggle with the authenticity of that
275.   How would I have addressed it?
276.   I would struggle with this person //

Ann–

277.   I would be thinking "do I really like this person?"

Joan-

278.   I would struggle. "Is this authentic given the way that these people treated me?"
279.   Did they request to be your? Was it through Facebook they contacted you?

Tom-

280.   Ah well because Facebook's more recent, I've kept in touch for years before then.

281. It wasn't through Facebook suddenly they popped up
282. Some of them were but no, most of them have kept in touch.
283. We've been each other's homes (2) and I mean you know generally //
284. I think, because, because (louder voice to stop interruption) we've had other experiences outside of this

Joan -

285. So did that repair in situ? In the school, after the event?

Tom –

286. Yes it did. It did. Yes it did.
287. We all, we all, we all go all over the world and we'd left, so by that time it had,
288. It had erm I suppose repaired itself in inverted commas really (1.5) umm I don't know

Sarah –

289. See I was thinking about that,
290. You see I've written here (1.5) she asked could I forgive her when I met her at the fireworks display.
291. And, And I was left feeling quite sorry for her
292. For the girl that had done it to me.
293. But but I suppose from the experiences of (1.5) what had happened to me as an adult, I've come to realise that forgiveness isn't something that you give to somebody else.
294. Forgiveness is something that you give to yourself.
295. So I can continue not to forgive other people for hurting me.
296. And it's a bit like taking poison and expecting them to die isn't it?
297. You know I, the only person whose going to be hurt by that is me
298. So I deserve to forgive for me, not for them. And maybe that's how?

Tom-

299. No I agree

Joan-

300. But your story is different, I thought, if I was to use a word about your story (said to Sarah)
301. I would say clean.
302. It had a lovely cleanness about it. Do you know what I mean?
303. And I don't mean to degrade your suffering for 2 years. That was, that must have been **horrific**, **horrific**
304. **But**, you decided to confront it head on. You did it yourself it didn't work, so you told an adult.
305. And like if every kid, if that happened to every kid wouldn't that be wonderful?

306.   You tell an adult it gets resolved, and then the perpetrator comes to you and says, at another point in time and goes "I'm really sorry" //

307.   That is such a kind of lovely happy ending.

308.   I don't mean that horrible. Do you know what I mean?

Sarah –

309.   No, no you're right it is.

Joan –

310.   Because if, if everything happened like that, it would be brilliant, yeah, yeah.

311.   If human beings behaved like that, behaved badly. And then realised they behaved badly and some,

312.   And an adult told them and they changed

313.   And then they thought actually do you know what? I'm going go to the person that I've been saying these things too

Sarah –

314.   I don't know if she realised there and then when you know the adult said "drop it"

315.   I don't know if she thought "right I've been really bad cos it was a long time" mmm

Joan –

316.   But it stopped?

Sarah –

317.   Yeah, it did stop You know it did stop

318.   But we saw each other every day. And she never came up to me in 2 or 3 years, that she was still in school saying "I'm really sorry"

319.   It was only at a fireworks display, when we were big pretty much,

320.   I was driving, so I was 17. She must have been 20

Ann –

321.   You were still young, though, you see. I'm kind of aware of the historical thing here,

322.   That erm, (2) erm, it, the powerlessness of, well of being bullied

323.   It's about feeling powerless and feeling helpless. And you can't do anything about it.

Tom-

324.   And not understanding it, I think that's part of my personality,

325.   Like I said I want to, "I want to know why" (said hurriedly)
326.   Make connections you know?

Ann-

327.   I think if you're feeling a victim you're totally helpless. To be a victim and to not know how, how to make it better

Tom –

328.   Yeahhhh,

Sarah -

329.   I think it's the fact as well that when you do tell somebody and then they minimise it,
330.   Or trivialise it
331.   And they'll say things like, yeah. Even as an adult and things have upset me and I've said to somebody that this happened.
332.   And they'll go "don't think you're blowing all that up?"
333.   Or I thought you were bigger than that or //

Ann –

334.   "Don't you think he's only saying that because"

Sarah –

335.   "Do you think maybe you took it the wrong way?"
336.   I'm thinking that well I've actually come to you now because **I'm fairly bruised**
337.   And I really need somebody to see this
338.   And people have a tendency to do that.

Ann–

339.   It makes you feel that you are in the wrong then. There's something wrong
340.   Like, that confirms that there's something wrong about you,
341.   To be taking things the wrong way like this.

Tom-

342.   When you hear your own words come out they do sometimes sound

Sarah –

343. Whiney?

Tom –

344. Whiney and actually why? It's not as if I had anything do with it and what's he going on about

Sarah –

345. But you had to be there,

Tom-

346. You had to be there. And it's a combination of stuff
347. It's over a period of time
348. It's about different people (1.5). Its (2) you know, you can't capture all of that in a conversation with someone.

Ann-

349. Sally, your young Jack had no voice did he, all those years?

Sally –

350. No.

Ann –

351. And he didn't know how (1.5). This pair, I can't I can't hear this pair. It takes, put it, taking steps to put it right, as the adults deciding

Sally –

352. That was the way it was presented that there was something wrong with Jack
353. And so obviously everybody, takes that and tries to deal with Jack,
354. And skill Jack up because there's something wrong with him

Tom –

355. But they said they would have killed him or something and his family

Sally-

356. They were threatening him

Tom –

357.   But that's not banter, I'm just saying if he
358.   I don't know, if he'd said that to anyone in primary school,
359.   Because if he'd said that to anyone in primary school
360.   Any of the adults around would be able to discriminate what is banter

Ann-

361.   Banter's changed in meaning.

Tom -
362.   I don't know

Sally –

363.   But now he's told the learning mentor, that these things were happening
364.   When there were definitely no adults around
365.   These were obviously quite sophisticated young girls who could, who knew from an early age that you had to do it, when nobody, when they wouldn't get caught.

Ann –

366.   So he didn't have this ASC thing. It was about girls. It was reality based

Tom –

367.   Speaking as a bloke, The only bloke but was resonates
368.   Well some of you know my issues around gender stereotyping
369.   But but I have to say when people go an about how caring and compassionate women are
370.   And how empathic they are
371.   I just like (Laughter over talking)

Amy –

372.   Having gone to an all-girls convent school I,
373.   There were some vicious people and although I've made quite light of it here
374.   This brigade were **absolutely poisonous**
375.   If you encountered them on a stair well, you wouldn't have wanted to go down the stairs.
376.   They were evil you know. We've all met them. They're all vile.

Ann-

377.   It's what we again call, the subtlety of life
378.   What you were talking about Joan. You can play it down

379.	Like the subtle things, like again, walking past someone, a touch, or a little snigger or a little whisper

Joan –

380.	Nothing in itself,

Ann-

381.	No that is actually a big thing,

Sally –

382.	In isolation. That one little thing wouldn't be anything, but it's a big thing.

Ann

383.	"Clear non-verbal stuff", Mind wrecking

Sarah –

384.	I think that's probably most hurtful. You know those
385.	You know sitting there and hearing them all sniggering
386.	And you're thinking, it must be me.
387.	It starts off where they are talking about you,
388.	And then it ends up where they're sniggering and they could not be talking about you
389.	But it feels like they're talking about you because they **have** been talking about you before
390.	And it was all very horrible, so they must be doing it again.
391.	And so it is that feeling of, and I wonder whether or not that's where these people , maybe many of the adults have been through very similar things and have minimised it (1.5)
392.	And so then when it's reported to them, as adults, they minimise it, because well haven't we all been through that though?
393.	Haven't we all experienced, some sort of crappy, behaviours from others you know?
394.	Whether or not that's why people minimise things like that.

Ann –

395.	Well in your case Amy the school kind of shared the opinion really //

Amy –

396.	Well they did and it was the culture and the idea was well
397.	You know, you two you're going somewhere so, you should be bigger than that
398.	You know, there have always been people like that.

399.   Whenever I've moaned about something, It's always been I think well, "come on now Amy you're bigger than this and you can take it"
400.   And at the time it was almost like, well you were seen saying these things and therefore you have to take the punishment
401.   And you should have been more responsible, because you know better.
402.   And I was thinking you know, looking back, why should I have known better?
403.   I was the same age as them.

Ann –

404.   When is it my turn?

Joan –

405.   Ann Marie I wish you were my friend in school.

Jane –

406.   It's almost as if you **deserve** such a level of empathy that they defined you as somebody who stands (1.5) you know beyond that behaviour doesn't it?

Joan –

407.   Maybe it's because you were a Jezebel, as you make out. (Laughter/Diffusion)

Amy –

408.   Thanks for that!
409.   That's what the nuns would say to us, you're behaving like Jezebels and using language like that,
410.   So I was using language that they'd used and,
411.   Well I did add a few more things (laughter)

Joan-

412.   You missed out the F from Jezebel

Amy –

413.   I wasn't blameless, so all of that blame was
414.   But the point was there wasn't a sort of nowadays, there'd be this big Restorative Justice,
415.   Sort of nice open conversation
416.   And then it was just "no, you need to be seen to be punished"

417. And of course and at home it was like "well, you just need to (1.5) not behave like that"
418. "You know have the Lord in your heart. What would Jesus have done?"
419. "He got crucified and he didn't argue" and that's what you'd get **all the time.**
420. What would they? What would Jesus have done? //
421. And actually they are supernatural beings. (laughter) they are divine. I'm a 14 year old

Tom –

422. Jesus would have done a lot of other stuff, apart from ahem, ahem.

Amy—

423. I'm flattered that you compare me to Jesus

Tom –

424. I often think that some people I was thinking about here and (4)
425. They were different. They were different and what is it about difference that is threatening to everyone else. Do you know what I mean?
426. Either the stature,
427. Wearing glasses, erm (2)
428. Accent, erm (1.5)
429. Not being hip and cool
430. Being academic //
431. I Know, I think about those people now and I think (2) I didn't, I didn't bully them,
432. But I befriended them
433. But I'd look at other people, really picking out the differences and using it against them, erm ,)
434. I think they'd still stick with that, cos that was who they are.
435. So I mean err, my, erm. I respect them now for it, thinking that they actually still hold on to their beliefs. They didn't change their hair colour
436. They didn't erm dumb themselves down, erm,
437. Do you know what I mean?

Sarah-

438. They didn't become someone they weren't (lowtone)

Tom-

439. They didn't become someone they weren't but they suffered because of that
440. And I've still got a real sadness about that actually.
441. Erm a sadness in that I didn't do more about it
442. But also a sadness in the people that were doing the bullying

443.   Because I was so disappointed and there's no reason. Why do they feel so threatened? I suppose that's why //

Amy –

444.   But there's also a big mis mis mismatch between what's expected of you
445.   So you're all told you've got to be kind to people
446.   And if you see people being bullied, then you stand up for them,
447.   And then you do this and you do that and your always nice
448.   And actually when you do something there is a big mismatch,
449.   So what could you have done? Actually what could you have done?
450.   And actually I proved the point (2)
451.   In reality what can you do, when you, even if you see somebody being bullied and you do something about it (2)
452.   There is no guarantee it'll go well

Joan –

453.   Isn't it, isn't it the same thing, isn't everyone behaving to a common norm for survival? (2)
454.   So weren't your nuns behaving to the code of how they had to discipline
455.   And do, they signed up to a, erm, a, religious faith. And
456.   And aren't bullies (2) Isn't it like back to evolutionary terms
457.   You know anything about me(1.5) I like to go back to the beginning (1.5)
458.   As survival of the species and (1.5) isn't that what it's about?
459.   Anybody that's different, you look at any animal groups. Anyone that has a perceived weakness gets cast out from the rest (1.5)
460.   From the lions, and the whatever, and the whatever (2)
461.   And it's kind of animalistic I think
462.   Its erm (2)and it's about showing that you're worthy of attaching yourself to the group that you perceive will **survive**
463.   Not that that necessarily happens in the end
464.   But at the **time**
465.   Some people wanting to have more of a sense of belonging
466.   So they do that by spotting whatever the differences are that they perceive will enable them to move closer to the, fittest, of the species?

Amy –

467.   But the tragedy is that what is the perception of what is the fittest?
468.   Whereas an age group is so skewed
469.   And it's totally, totally skewed, but they're the ones with all the power aren't they?

Sarah-

470.   It's even interesting as an adult though isn't it?

471.   I even look at friends in school who I used to view you know, as the prettiest girl, the coolest, the one who

472.   She had beautiful hair and she had a fringe that just naturally flicked. And she didn't have to do anything and her nails were always white at the ends. And (1.5)

473.   Alison Smith, everybody wanted to be **Alison Smith**

474.   Cos she was **gorgeous**

475.   And she's now my friend on Facebook, as an adult. And I look and I think what was that about?

476.   Cos I look at her and I think "oh" (laughter), "something's happened

477.   I don't know what it is but it's not great" (laughter)

478.   I would never say it to her? But what I mean is, I expected her to grow into the most **glamorous**, amazing. Appealing, appearance wise, never mind person wise

479.   But appearance wise, I expected her to be the epitome of what female is. Because when she was in school, that's what I viewed her as.

480.   As did all the other girls, it wasn't just me. Everybody was like "ohhh, worship at the feet of Alison Smith and now she's not what I thought she was going to be.

Joan –

481.   Maybe it's like us versus the lions, maybe that's what sets us apart

Sarah-

482.   Maybe

Joan –

483.   That's what sets us apart, because there is loads of research isn't there? Throughout life

484.   Like the really attractive children at school are the most popular,

Sarah-

485.   Yeah yeah. That's what it is, The Halo Effect. Yeah, it's the halo effect isn't it?

Joan –

486.   Throughout life the beauty is within

487.   And the other stuff is what, you know cos we've got more evolved brains and so

488.   As we age and stage of development, I don't know I'm just making this up (said hurriedly)

Ann –

489.   Maybe not I've got a thing about the **parent** thing too. That's

490.   I don't hear about parents in in in your thing Sarah

491.	But you have a sort of strength of your own who you are, even at
492.	The young age that you were, yeah that I can see it as a threat that carries on
493.	I think that yourself, despite your parents , your parents more supportive, our parents don't sound totally in on it, (laughs) Or even against it erm,
494.	I think that that's the difference, about whether you, you, you carry on in life sort of believing a label that's been put on you, or whether you //

Tom-

495.	I do, I agree with it. I think that the family, the family you come from, the home you come from, does in still in you a confidence that you don't know anything about, until you're actually out there.
496.	I really do. //
497.	There is, there is, It's really complicated
498.	Because you've got the sporty types
499.	You've got the arty types
500.	 You've got the intelligent types
501.	You've got these few people who seem to have it all
502.	A few of them
503.	There's a real, real I wasn't very tall
504.	I wasn't that sporty
505.	But I got actor of the year award
506.	I was able to communicate
507.	I was an intelligent person
508.	I was personable
509.	So I had some strengths // and you know what?
510.	I, I guess what I'm saying now is is where
511.	Where are you in the hierarchy?
512.	What, what erm credits do you have to survive (laughs)
513.	I don't know I don't know what I'm saying but I'm just //

Ann –

514.	Yeah but your parents must have said
515.	Because you throw around a load of negatives in terms of macho male kind of thing ,
516.	 Yeah but to be who you are. You've got something from somewhere.
517.	It must have been your parents.

Sarah –

518.	I do think that I've had experience of that through
519.	When Gareth and I went to **RELATE** to
520.	And we had our first session at relate
521.	And I remember the relate councillor sat with us, both and he said "Erm right, I'd like to know what your family motto is?"
522.	And Gareth at the time just went "What? What? What is he on?" To me
523.	And I'm like" just do as your told" (laughs)

524.	And he's like "What's this got to do with anything? What's this got to do with anything?"

525.	"I'm not doing it" and I'm like "Gareth, (calmly) just just answer the question. There's got to be a reason why this Relate Counsellor is asking us for our family motto.

526.	There's got to be a reason. He wouldn't just come out with it you know. It's got to be for some reason.

527.	So, I'm sitting there thinking "What's my family motto? What is my family motto?"

528.	And I said "oh (1.5) I know what my family motto is" and the bloke said "okay"

529.	And so I said "It is, say what you think"

530.	And, and then Gareth erm (Laughter) and then the man turned to Gareth and says "so Gareth do you have a family motto?"

531.	 And Gareth looked at me, and his jaw nearly hit the floor

532.	And he went "Don't rock the boat" (in a hushed voice) (Laughter from everyone).

533.	//That's quite a large difference. Don't you find?

534.	And you know where you think, I remember even this, I said what I thought, whether or not it was appropriate. And whether or not it had got my face smacked in, it wouldn't have mattered.

535.	It came out that's what I thought is what I said.

Ann-

536.	That's who you are

Sarah -

537.	"That's the family motto"

Tom -

538.	I think there a self-confidence there isn't there?

Sarah -

539.	In me, from my family. Whereas Gareth's was so completely?

540.	But you know like, it's a great question to ask.

541.	I don't know why I don't ask it more often.

Tom –

542.	Because in my head and maybe this is totally out of my experience

543.	People usually like me. People usually,

544.	I usually get on with people. This is how, do you know what I mean?

545.	If I'd come for a difference place, thinking most people hate me

546.	I don't have any friends, and then if that had happened it probably wouldn't have had such a,

547.	Maybe I would have assumed that was just the norm. That's how

548.	But I think if something's come out in your own construct of yourself is kind of sight, is from a body swerve or whatever, you think,

549.	"Woa, Woa, Woa, whats happened?"

Sally –

550.   Several people mention a thing about this separation
551.   This feeling that you did not fit in and somebody said it was because you were moving around quite a lot
552.   And you'd always been popular but you went to a new situation,
553.   For somebody and that sense of feeling not not fitting in,
554.   I don't know your high school, but you felt that you didn't belong in that group,
555.   You know because with that movement you didn't feel you belonged and that sort of thing.

Tom –

556.   Yeah

Sally -

557.   Yeah and how you've come to it, With that perception of maybe you you saying what you think,
558.   But you go into an environment, where everybody else is saying,
559.   So it's not that its inherently bad or wrong or anything else,
560.   It's just **different**
561.   It doesn't have to be different in a weak sense though, it can be different in a positive sense can't it?

Sarah –

562.   Yeah, I suppose it's how you view it.
563.   I think that's what I came about with at the end of that.
564.   I hadn't written it. It was my perspective. It's my perspective on it. It's not
565.   And I, And I suppose each person, would have their own perspective, about what
566.   And I suppose that's why sometimes I think people minimalize, because of their perspective.
567.   It's not necessarily that they are doing it to dumb it down, to make it seem, but it's because of their world view, because of their truth, of how it feels for them you know //

Tom –

568.   But I felt very connected when when everyone when everyone said their story,
569.   I was really on an emotional level
570.   I was just (2) upset for every single person. And just
571.   So my perspective hearing it from everyone's was, and it was all new, and it was, they were all new stories to me obviously
572.   I was you know from that empathic alongside the **pain** and yet obviously I wasn't reliving your pain, because I wasn't there and all of that but erm (2)

573. Yeah, In a **way**, it was emotionally more challenging listening to everyone else's stories as opposed to, me

574. I thought I was actually going to get upset, more emotional. Actually it was less so than I thought.

575. It was more listening to other people's stories, that had that more emotional, erm upset for me inside I guess.

Sarah–

576. I would love to do it. For other, I'd love, to do, I thought ask people

577. I don't know why I don't do it why don't I do that?

578. Ask people to tell me a story about them.

579. Just ask them to tell me a story rather than what I sometimes do do,

580. Which is when I am in work I mean, is go in and have the you know I don't use that.

581. And why don't I use that? I should use that shouldn't I? I'm talking

582. Maybe I should go and say to people cos I've got something completely different probably than sitting here listening to these

583. I could have done what I would have done in work and , I

584. And because there was the constraints of you must listen for three minutes and not interrupt

585. It was quite freeing, quite liberating, not to have to think about, what am I going to say next?

586. How am I going to ask a question, that will make sense to that person,

587. Yeah, Yeah, I didn't have any of that. And yet I still got a lot from it. Why don't I do that? (laughter)

Joan –

588. I found it really hard not to interrupt

589. But not in that, I want to ask you a question way, but just in an empathic

590. There were times when I wanted to laugh? Because obviously I know some people and er

591. Because Amy told me little bits of her story and so I was waiting for Jezebel to arrive , as we had spoken about it yesterday (laughing as speaks)

592. And just, you know, I just **really struggled** (laughs)

Tom –

593. It's a very powerful thing, It is very freeing

594. And there's a boundary within it

595. And I've done it a few times, with a men's group and it's it's very, it is very powerful actually, just listening

596. And just knowing that you're being listened to

597. And there's not going to be any comment

598. Because immediately you comment. As much as you don't want to, you

599. It's very easy to put an evaluation on it and an analysis //

600.   And it can be misinterpreted by somebody else. You do it all the time.

Ann –

601.   I was thinking exactly the same about half an hour ago

Tom-

602.   Isn't it nice to just sit around the table for half an hour just doing this?

(Laughter/agreement)

Joan –

603.   We should Just have an Issue Club, where you tell a story. Every month about an issue. We go round to each other's house

Amy –

604.   But if we were to tell these to everyone it would be socially unacceptable. // of course it would. It would be awkward and people would be frightened. It would be so intense and there would be so many feelings there.

(laughter)

Tom –

605.   I did want to go back into everyone's stories I think every single story and change it. Listening to it, I wanted, wanted to go back and change it

Ann –

606.   You would have invalidated it (1.5)

Tom –

607.   // Changing the experience. No, I didn't want you to have that experience. I didn't want anyone to have that experience, do you know what I mean?

Amy –

608.   But it's interesting though because if you think of things that have happened in the press recently, the Jimmy Saville stuff
609.   And people are saying "how did this happen"

610.   You know you could see exactly, how it happened, because people wouldn't have listened to you

611.   And they would have minimised it. And they would have said "Oh well, it's your own fault."//

Ann –

612.   "And you would have been a very naughty person for saying that."

Joan –

613.   And because clearly there was a culture of many many men in the media (1.5) who did those things // (agreement)

(Lots of noise – difficult to translate)

Jane –

614.   I think what you were saying before and about the different perspectives as well,

615.   I mean I don't know, I've felt like I've (2) **blamed** myself you know, by being attracted to this glamorous girl who smoked cigarettes you know?

616.   I knew they were **wrong** but **boy** did I want some of **that** you know

617.   So I was the arbiter of my own downfall, you know, within that story.

618.   So the **truth** of it, of that sort of narrative, was that (2) I bought into it.

Ann –

619.   That was your construction on it though. I'm hearing your construction on it. – I made the choice so it's Oh my fault.

620.   So I'm not buying your construction.

Jane –

621.   But writing it down externalising it and I **did** ,**I** did consider putting it in the third person err, at one point

622.   And I did, I, I felt a bit more sympathetic towards my younger self than I have done at other times thinking about it, you know

623.   Sort of externalising it and just. It is, quite a healing process isn't it?

624.   Thinking about it, putting it down on paper

 Sarah –

625.   That's the first time I've ever written it down, **ever**, I've never written anything that like that. Is it you?

//

Ann-

626.   I was like you. I didn't want to do it and I kept thinking, Oh, oh I'll do it this weekend. And so I did it on Tuesday in one go (laughs)

Jane –

627.   And what you've just said there, though about erm me thinking I've made bad choices
628.   That's exactly what happened to me years later,
629.   Left one job, went to another absolutely - it was just a different cast of characters really

Joan –

630.   I think my erm, take on what's happened, with me over time
631.   Is that you know that whole thing about the universe
632.   Your experience of the universe is about learning lessons
633.   And until you learn the lesson, the lesson keeps repeating itself.
634.   And that's, that is my complete, take, on, this. (lowtone)

Amy –

635.   I think

Tom –

636.   You said // sorry //

Amy –

637.   I think that the idea about learning lessons
638.   Interestingly a situation has arisen as an adult where, er a friend, was very very, bullying on a recent skiing holiday
639.   And normally I would have gone into this very defensive and then like you said inauthentic trying to smooth over it
640.   And this guy who is **physically** very very big. And essentially (1.5) bullied me into a place on the skiing which I **couldn't do**
641.   And he knew I didn't want to do it, And then shouted at me when I couldn't
642.   And then he went and spent the whole rest of the week not speaking to me and all sorts of stuff.
643.   Anyway he wanted us to go away for his wife's' **birthday**
644.   And this very day, my husband rang him up and said "Erm that celebration is about her birthday. We shouldn't detract from it. And there is an issue and I don't think we can resolve it, really because time has passed. And nothing has been said. And, we, can't carry on like this" And he just hung up on him and I thought how interesting? // (difficult to decipher)
645.   He did it in a really nice way because we scripted everything.
646.   We'd known these people for quite a while but he really was ferocious

647. And I've asked several people about what happened at the skiing "Am I over reacting? Did you notice? // (laughter)

648. So even as an adult I'm having to go and validate,

649. And everybody is looking at, this weekend I was with some very good friends and I told them the story and they were going "**What are you doing with this guy**?"

650. "Why do you have him in your life?"

651. When you think about it he actually endangered my life?

652. And you think to yourself, "Well why do I need somebody like that?"

653. And it's interesting that he put the phone down, and so that business about you learning the lesson

654. I actually don't have any anger towards him. I just think, we just can't resolve it.

655. I don't feel any, **but in the past**, I think I would have carried this "Ooh why can't I resolve it and ooh why can't I?"

Tom -

656. But there's people you have to, I mean I've got an extended family member, and that's been going on for years and years

657. And you have, because you can get sucked in. It will never change

658. That whole, that whole, so there's a side of that whole evaluation

659. Things, just as I guess, a reflection

660. You know when you said about me erm, because I'm was, still friends with these people on Facebook, and you said, you weren't questioning

661. But you were just saying about being authentic or genuine

662. That was really interesting when you hear, you say

663. Oh my gosh, does Joan think I'm not a genuine authentic person? (Laughs)

664. So quite an interesting response to that because actually. I'm Like?

Joan – //

665. I suppose you know it was me thinking

666. Could I have a relationship with somebody that behaved in that way towards me?

667. And it be an authentic relationship?

668. Sorry not **at all** a judgement on you

669. I'm just standing in your shoes going, "how would I feel about that?"

670. And I think I would just struggle a bit //

Tom –

671. No I wasn't saying you were judging me

672. It was just , just interesting that I had that response from myself when you said it

673. Cos I was just trying to work through that erm cos

674. I'm I'm (4) very at peace you know about the relationship now (2)

675. But erm but yeah I don't know, it's an it's an interesting one.

676. I think the reason I mentioned that because of, I think it's been a really really interesting couple of hours as well

677.   That's one adjective for it (laughs)
678.   Erm what it generates do you know what I mean? And that whole difference of just listening without commenting.
679.   Once you comment and put your own (1.5) how that can alter (2)
680.   Your thoughts and thinking about what you've just said

Ann-

681.   Mmm, we all want to make it better for them.

Tom-

682.   Yes I think so, I think that's right yeah

Ann-

683.   Yes I feel that as well,

Sarah –

684.   I'm just still shocked about how the story that I wrote ended up like you said, clean
685.   But I'm not sure, I'm not sure it was clean at the time
686.   Because obviously this is me thinking about it, having happened? But actually, also yeah, but, the, because when I've re read it and thought about it, it's almost it's like my life on paper
687.   So you know crap has happened, am I allowed to say that word? (laughter) -but bad stuff has happened hasn't it,
688.   But all the way, and I think it's my my again my perspective of all my, my, I would say I'm probably overly optimistic about everything
689.   So, but I, even the really crap stuff that's happened, I wouldn't not have had happened
690.   If somebody turned round and said you know "you could not have this happen to you, this Claire thing"
691.   Or "you could not have, you know you nearly getting divorced"
692.   Or you could not have all the really **horrible** stuff that's happened to me.
693.   If somebody now came up and said to me and said "Sarah you can start again and all of that would be gone" I would say " **No**". I, I want that to happen
694.   Because actually I am who I am, because of all of that
695.   And **without all of that**, I wouldn't be who I am and I'm quite happy thanks

Laughter // undecipherable

Ann-

696.   "I wouldn't because it's taken too long to get shut of a lot of stuff! What a waste of time"

Jane –

697.   What you were saying about these events being almost post-traumatic stress,

Ann-

698.   Yeah

Jane-

699.   You know a reaction, they talk about post traumatic growth don't they?
700.   Mmm, I can't remember who the guy is who wrote on that
701.   But I do think **you** know that, that wisdom that can come out of it at this point

Sarah-

702.   The growth with it

Jane –

703.   But Your story, when you were telling us your story I sort of found like
704.   Almost a disconnect really, between the **jauntiness**
705.   And the liveliness of which you told it
706.   And then positioning of the young girl that you **were** with this older girl in that **bus**
707.   The buses in Liverpool were far more horrible, than the buses where you where (laughs)
708.   But it was just, it was just you're, the way you delivered the narrative almost sort of ameliorated the effects of the content. Does that make sense?

Sarah –

709.   Yeah I suppose it is because to **me** ultimately, I, I'm at the other end of the lesson
710.   So if you'd have asked me at the time, you would probably would have got a very non disjointed, non-jaunty type of (1.5)
711.   But because I value, I think I value the entire episode, really
712.   And I think, that if I was sitting here, talking to you about my horrible near divorce
713.   You'd probably sit here and go "That only happens in soaps"
714.   But actually it would come out quite jaunty Joan probably knows all about it and say, "How does she describe it that way?"
715.   But that's because actually I value it for the lessons it's taught me I, would be like
716.   I've been **really** lucky. I know that sounds **bizarre**

Jane –

    717.   No it doesn't, it doesn't at all.

Sarah –

    718.   And like think that's weird. Why would you say you're lucky to have that happen because it was **horrible**
    719.   And it was **horrible**
    720.   But I wouldn't not have it happen again.
    721.   I wouldn't. I'd say" okay just do it exactly as it has been
    722.   "Cos it's all been worth it."

Joan –

// Indecipherable, some interruption (4)

    723.   I don't think we'd actually dare to be judgemental
    724.   Sarah has a brilliant way of dealing with life, as you've probably gathered // (2)
    725.   With a brilliant sense of humour
    726.   Her thick skin and her resilience (Laughing and chatter)
    727.   She's a fabulous story teller (Chatter) (2.5)
    728.   I've broken a rule that I signed up to No Laughter (difficult to transcribe)

Jane –

    729.   Those sort of core constructs, that you have are able to use those experiences in that way

Sarah –

    730.   Yeah but I think that's, I think that's why the story is, how it was,
    731.   Is how it is,
    732.   It's not because necessarily it was the **exact**
    733.   At the time, if you know what I mean because I can't really undo the lesson,
    734.   I can't undo it.

Jane-

    735.   It makes sense. It makes perfect sense, yeah

Tom –

    736.   I don't think, I think there's lots of stuff I would want to, I don't have huge amount regrets
    737.   Stuff I wouldn't like to live through again. And I can **learn**
    738.   There's certain things I suppose I totally get your point
    739.   I **absolutely** have learned so much about all of us around this table

740.   And about who you all, are and all of the **pain**
741.   I'm **absolutely** sure and I'm using that learning now in my work
742.   The people I meet with, be, and I wouldn't be in a place of, authenticity
743.   Or competence to do it if I hadn't been through some of the personal stuff.
744.   I guess what I, if I was honest I'd say
745.   "Can I just learn those lessons but not actually have to go through stuff?"
746.   Do you know what I mean? I know that sounds a bit flippant but

// (interruption difficult to decipher) (4)

Tom-

747.   I don't negate those lessons at all, in fact
748.   If we didn't have those lessons, what use would we be to anyone?
749.   Do you know what I mean? But I suppose
750.   I guess the pain, some stuffs so painful

// (interruption difficult to decipher) (4)

Ann-

751.   There is pain, Emotional pain, there are things you can learn from yeah,
752.   But emotional pain can be like physical pain,
753.   There's absolutely no point in it. Nothing you can learn from
754.   It's you, don't learn anything from physical pain, right. It's pain

Sarah -

755.   I don't know because I was I had, I would say severe, anxiety
756.   During, this isn't really about this story now
757.   It's about the ,the divorce
758.   But I had, I had severe anxiety to the point where I had to take diazepam
759.   And drink lots of red wine (2)
760.   And smoke a million fags actually. Even though I don't smoke
761.   But I thought you know, it was, **it was not** a great time
762.   But the anxiety that I felt , I would wake up at 4 o'clock in the morning with anxiety and not **know** what to do because I've never been
763.   Like I said, I don't really suffer with anxiety.
764.   I think I used it all up, at that time (laughs) because you can only be so anxious in your life can't you?
765.   But erm, I think the anxiety that I experienced, then taught me such a **massive**
766.   Even though it was **horrifically painful** and it was the **worst** time of my life
767.   I still would go through that because it taught me such a lot about other people. When they tell me they are anxious

768. Because before they'd say "I'm anxious" and I'd go "oh that's terrible" and think about my mild anxiety when you go for a job interview but not **really**, really

Tom-

769. No I agree

Sarah-

770. Really get it and now I think I **really** get it and think "God"

Ann –

771. G,g, going back to why are we Ed Psychs? Mmm

Sarah -

772. Yeah, yeah

Joan –

773. That could be next month (laughter)

Juliet,-

774. Why don't, don't, don't we finish off on that? Why are we Ed Psychs?

(Laughter)

Tom-

775. Bit of closure there

Juliet –

776. No really no maybe that as a final, there's a need to finish (lots of laughter, difficult to decipher) – we could go on all night, because I think that what you said is a relevant.

Jane -

777. I was gonna ask about , Ask Tim to tell us a bit more about that
778. How you know, you use it in your work? Yeah

Tom-

779. I know about what you've just said I really, I really, I really I really do that connecting
780. If people really sense that you really do genuinely alongside them, because,

781.   But none of us can go through anything exactly the same as anyone else

782.   Even for ourselves compared to last month, but I think people do. And I think there's a confidence

783.   I think there's a confidence that comes through in reflection

784.   Even after you've had a conversation even in the stuff I'm involved with the church and mental health stuff that I'm involved in, trying to support

785.   Setting up this stuff, you, you know. Because there's a place I, I think,

786.   I think you generate a sense of safety and confidence in **you**

787.   Because of that by the people you're talking to whether, its children or parents or colleagues or wherever it is

788.   People have reflected that to me and I'm sure to all of us, as well

789.   I'm sure of that.

790.   You can't really pin it down, but I think there's certain aspects of life that there's just something that I cannot

791.   And I'm honest about that because I haven't been through it

792.   I just, I haven't, you know I'll be honest, you know //

Jane -

793.   I thought that's interesting that idea of being alongside people,

794.   Rather than cos sometimes we're put into an expert role aren't we?

795.   And but that, the idea of being, you're almost like you're the human

796.   You're there, you've shared their experience

Tom-

797.   Absolutely. And the evidence is that the research evidence from anything is the most powerful bit of the job that we do

798.   Is er, the listening

799.   The relational

800.   Being understood

801.   Being valued and that sounds very very

Sarah-

802.   Woolly

Tom –

803.   **Woolly**. Absolutely

Ann-

804.   Not at all

Tom –

805.   But I think it's so, I think it's just a really good I don't know,
806.   Believe in ourselves
807.   Where all the stories that we've said, have made us who we are now
808.   Not in a big headed arrogant - the opposite actually
809.   But people really see, and especially teenagers that we work with, and younger kids but they will sniff out inauthenticity a mile off. You know?
810.   I think that makes a big. You can't really train for that, in a way
811.   I think it's all through layers of life experiences, that we've got the privilege of that being put into our professional role as well.

Ann -

812.   What if everyone can was, was able to remember if yours was a professional one erm Sarah
813.   What people can remember was **exactly** especially when they went into it, how it felt to be a child.
814.   I was aware as a child (2) of **what** I thought and felt.
815.   How I thought adults were bullies
816.   They were **wrong** erm
817.   Ummm I remember being **deeply** angry about it er
818.   Ummm and I knew they had double standards
819.   That we had to behave one way and they behaved another
820.   And I knew that children felt things and that they were victims erm

Tom-

821.   Mmm

Ann –

822.   I feel as though I'm going on here.
823.   I know that's there's, I love listening to kids
824.   Because of uhhh, they're good company because they've got a valid point of view,
825.   Even just going into a school and you, a little thing like, just show Mrs Lewis you'd be taking the kids across the hall and they'd be looking back and looking back and say "Miss I had 3 sausage rolls last night **Wow** that's massive, That's important erm
826.   Its, it's that, you know
827.   We're advocates for children, because, we work hard to listen to children
828.   And we listen, we listen to , we, we, we listen to and take it in and try to
829.   And try to put it out there in a different way

Sarah –

830.   I think for me my life experiences in general (1.5) have taught me (1.5)

831.   Well the biggest lesson, I'd say, would be that, that I have behaved in ways that have surprised me.

832.   So I'm the person who is responsible for my own behaviour

833.   Because I'm grown up so I should know what's right and what's wrong

834.   And I have done things where I've thought, where its I've watched me doing it and can't believe I'm doing it

835.   It's almost out of body like

836.   What are you doing and why are you doing this?

837.   Because this is **ridiculous**

838.   But I've persisted with that behaviour. And not been able to actually verbalise what that's been about at all

839.   And then I've come to realise through that, that actually, whoever I talk whether be it an adult or a child, **whoever** I talk to

840.   They may be in that exact same space that I've been

841.   Where they don't know, why they're behaving the way they are

842.   And I can't it's not my job to tell them why

843.   It's my job to help them come to their own understanding of why, that

844.   I think it's probably been the reason why I'm an EP

845.   Or, not necessarily why I'm an EP, but I think it's been a lesson I've learned b, becoming one. Does that make sense?

846.   It's been like the lesson on the way. That's what I, that's why I think why what's happened to me? Bizarrely.

Juliet-

847.   Thank you so much everybody. We have over- run (laughter)

848.   Well, I am aware that you probably want something to eat! Can I just finish this off?

849.   Thank you all for engaging in this process, so now I just want to talk about the next steps. You've all been provided with a diary which I'll give you in a minute (laughter) and this will be kept for a week and then collected in by me, okay?

850.   Now when you do it I'd like you to write a short narrative about the vignette that you've already spoken about and this can be now **revised** in the light of the shared experience if you want to and new reflections and perspectives that may have been established as part of the group process **or** you might want to write a completely new one.

851.   Either one must relate to a personal/ professional bullying experience in school and these will only be ummm shared by, with me. You, nobody else will see them. Erm, and also just if again, just scribble in your diary any thoughts or reflections about the process as well.

852.   Erm, but, but if you do it, could you just use pseudonyms because obviously erm, this is confidential.

853.   Okay, er and now, a stamped addressed envelope is going to be given to you, which can then be posted back in 7 days. Is that okay?

Sarah-

854.   Is it a daily thing we've got to do or just a one off.

Juliet-

855.   No, whenever you just think.

Sarah-

856.   If it's daily we're in trouble.

Tom-

857.   Do you want these vignettes? No? Or a revised one

Juliet-

858.   It might be slightly revised because you might reflect on it differently.

Tom-

859.   You don't need this because I'd have to re write it, you can't read that
hand writing.

Juliet-

860.   No, no. Okay, is that alright?

Thanks so much. Bye, bye.

APPENDIX 8

Sarah

1. Thoughts/reflections about the process

2. I was surprised how just being asked to think about a time previously allowed me/or my brain to recall events with what feels like clarity

3. I know the clarity is now with my lens of experiences and it has made me wonder how close to the real events this is

4. I remember the feelings clearly and have identified them throughout my life.

5. It was weird because I felt these feelings and made links to them happening when younger, more because I think I was calling to consciousness something that has become an unconscious response

6. This process helped me remember and think about others and their reasoning.

7. It almost helped me in the day job remember to suspend my judgement – you never know what someone else is going through!

8. Listening to others stories helped understand my feelings when I spend time with them

9. For example P I have known since I started working as an EP. I always felt when in P's company like a "silly little girl" one who needs to do as she's told, grow up, not feel, behave! I have never felt comfortable with the P and have NEVER understood why!

10. This process shed light on something that happened to P that has really enabled me to make sense of how I feel when with P.

11. I almost feel like I imagine this P felt at the time – for this reason alone this process was REMARKABLE

12. Some of the stories were heart-breaking – again it reminded me that we should never assume by what/who you met today how they come to be that way!

13. I thought it was interesting how people viewed others stories –

14. I think someone said mine was told almost "flippantly" –

15. Not seriously, with humour – laden in that comment felt judgement –

16. Absent but implicitly – this is serious stuff – there is no humour –

17. This part of the process was difficult for me –

18. It felt like I again was in a "school bus" where I wasn't serious enough!

19. It felt uncomfortable – like I was WRONG to be this way?

20. I think I felt strongly at this point that no one should have to justify how they told their story or why –

21. But I felt I had to,

22. Even though it was said right at the beginning that each individual sharing should be able to say how they felt, share their story, in their way – no right or wrong?

23. I wonder now if I had gone after all the others would I have somehow changed what I said or how I said it?

24. This process has made me think

Jane

Thoughts/reflections

Friday 28th June

1. Interesting how some of the group appeared to put some distance between themselves and their stories.

2. Tom's narrative appeared ambiguous and disjointed the narrative changed direction a couple of times and this had the effect of keeping me as a listener at something of a distance,

3. It made it more difficult to engage with his experience at an emotional level

4. As I found myself attempting to fill gaps in the narrative .

5. I wanted to ask Tom what was in the poem that was written about him, it appeared to have left a lasting mark and was poignant to think the words had echoed down the years;

6. I felt it would have been too intrusive to ask him about it. If he had wanted to share this he would have.

7. Tom's reference to some of the victims who looked different and did not conform , them 'not helping themselves' was of interest and could have been explored further.

8. What was it they did/didn't do to help themselves?

9. Did Tom consider that he did/didn't help himself?

10. The reference to himself being an EP since he was very small was interesting; although he retrospectively perceives himself as having had insight into human behaviour from a young age, he encountered a bullying experience that appears to have left an emotional mark.

11. He said that he would like to change the stories of some people present.

12. I would have liked to have explored this idea. Did he mean inserting himself as a character/hero or did he mean he wanted to be an agent of change as he is as an EP. Did he want to change his own story?

13. Reflection has raised some questions about Amy's narrative that I would have liked to have explored.

14. She identified social/intellectual inequalities between herself, the victim and the protagonists.

15. There are elements of the social context in which the bullying occurred that I would have liked to explore further; ideas about the ethos of the school and the social hierarchy that existed and the distinctions drawn by the teachers/nuns, how this may have facilitated the conditions in which the event took place.

Saturday 29th June

16. I thought it was interesting how some of the group, myself included, appeared to cite the root of the problem in their own behaviour/choices.

17. I found this somewhat reassuring to see this bias (?) Occur in the stories of others.

18. I thought it was interesting how a number of the vignettes took on the narrative structure that is found in most stories.

19. Tom's story did not have a unified structure and I found it harder to follow.

20. Some narratives (Sarah and Amy) had what could be described as a hero who resolved the difficulties with the bullies /antagonists.

21. Thinking about my own and Joan's narrative there appeared to be some element that we both felt we were complicit in the bullying by our own passivity/behaviour and perhaps character traits could be seen as an 'internal antagonist' that perhaps contributed to the situation and required resolution.

22. Sally was the only person in the group to choose to use a professional case.

23. It set her apart from the group somewhat and did not appear to engage the group with the emotional intensity that some of the other stories had.

24. Sally said that neither she, nor anyone close to her, had experienced bullying.

25. I wondered if this was a choice made in order to maintain a professional demeanour in a setting with some people she does not know or that she may encounter on a professional basis.

26. I am not sure of Sally's status in the service that she works for but wondered if her position in the hierarchy had an influence on her decision to avoid a personal vignette.

Sunday 29th June

27. I wonder if Amy has ever (retrospectively) considered her behaviour towards the protagonists as bullying.

28. Her narrative (via the teachers/nuns) identified the protagonists as socially and intellectually disadvantaged.

29. The victim was academically able but socially disadvantaged;

30. There appear to be a range of vulnerabilities, or risk factors, across the scenario.

31. It was implicit in Amy's narrative that she was neither socially nor academically disadvantaged, protective factors in terms of emotional resilience; this is likely to have enabled her to feel sufficiently confident to take on the role the role of protector.

32. It was interesting how the prosodic features adopted by the story teller influenced me as a listener.

33. Ann's forceful delivery, emotive language (I think she ended with 'I wanted to die') added to the power of the story.

34. The pauses added emotional intensity.

35. Conversely, the upbeat delivery of Sarah defused the immediate emotional intensity of the story and appeared to diminish the notion of her as a victim.

36. However, the delivery made me as a listener work harder to elaborate the emotion of the experience by imagining myself in her position.

37. I found that having to fill in some of the narrative and re-interpret the story by imagining myself in her position, made the narrative more powerful after I had some time to reflect upon it. I did not have to re-imagine the stories of others to the same extent. The delivery appeared to reveal something of R's emotional resilience.

38. I felt Joan's story was powerful but appeared to leave much unsaid,

39. Again what was unsaid provided a narrative gap that made me imagine how she must have felt;

40. For example about not passing the 11+ and going to a different school to her friends.

41. The theme of transition permeated a number of the vignettes and has reinforced how influential such an event can be on the trajectory of a pupil's school experience.   There were a number of transitions and dislocations within her story when she moved from one place to another.

42. The idea of her living with bullying over an extended period of time had an emotional effect.

43. In the following discussion Joan commented to Tom that she would find it difficult to maintain a relationship (as he has) with someone who had hurt her in the way that the bully hurt him without acknowledgement of the harm done and open reconciliation.

44. I agree with her; however Tom appeared a little defensive when Joan said this.

45. I felt a connection with the situation Ann described

46. As when young I had known very austere, quite frightening staff; though the sadistic treatment meted out by Ann's teacher was far more extreme.

47. I had not overtly considered such teachers that I have known, as a pupil, as bullies (though clearly they are) I had considered them in almost a Vygotskian way as products of a social/historical context/ time and system. I suppose doing so removes any blame from them for their choice in the behaviour.

48. Writing this has made me consider the moral relativism of this position and think that such a position is surely dangerous?

49. As a teacher I have professionally encountered teachers whose relationships with pupils who they have found challenging and broken down and have 'managed' the situation in a restorative form.

Monday 1st July

50. My own story is strongly connected to transition.

51. Thinking about the age of the victims, a number of stories appeared to involve Year 7.

52. I don't think any of the people around the table would have been considered vulnerable as pupils and this has reinforced what a key point, particularly for vulnerable pupils, this is.

53. The importance of managing unstructured time, going to and from school, lunchtime, transitions came through some of the stories.

54. There were a number of points related to the importance of social referencing that increases around this age.

55. I was struck by the number of story tellers who referenced clothing and physical appearance.

56. I have, over time, diminished the importance of such things.

57. It has made me reflect upon just what a force this aspect of peer relationships is today.

58. Thinking about the Sarah talking about the effect on her practice of having shared an experience, the example given was anxiety.

59. I wondered does this matter? Does it improve practice?

60. Comments about 'getting alongside' the individual in our work as eps has made me consider the role of consultation.

61. I made an assumption that Tom was talking about getting alongside the CYP that we deal with, however, if a consultation system is used the problem holder is the teacher/Senco.

62. Can we 'get alongside' and empathise with the CYP via consultation? Do we need to?

63. I would have liked to have explored Sally's narrative of the boy who was bullied via the prism of her use of consultation and any strengths and limitations she felt about this form of service delivery in this instance.

64.

65. Had some anti-bullying/assertiveness training today and this has made me reflect on the vignette's in the light of the training.

66. Sarah and Amy's stories explicitly revealed how they were assertive when faced with bullying.

67. I considered my own experience and thought about whether having some training in the sort of skills that were discussed today would have made a difference to me.

68. I think they would, some of the techniques, eg. 'fogging' and 'creative responses' may have been helpful in dealing with the situation.

69. Part of the discussion at the course focused on social media and the additional opportunities that this opens up for bullying; having discussed my own experience of bullying recently, and heard those of others.

70. It made me consider the complexity of the social world that our young people operate in

71. And how these different avenues and the distance that they afford may impact upon them.

72. The course also provoked thoughts about the importance of working to promote emotional literacy skills at individual, group and systems level,

73. As these are the skills that may help to both prevent and deal with bullying.

74. The importance of the role of the bystander was raised in the course.

75. This made me consider the role of bystanders in the vignette's and the difference that some pro-active bystanders may have had.

Ann

Next Day

1. A sense of exhilaration at having got through the session the previous night as I was so aware of taking a big risk, a sense of relief.

2. It was an emotionally charged experience and I had a lot to drink to dull the intensity. I was very struck by how the group of EP's divided into three distinct groups:

1) three people with unresolved trauma

2) two people with resolved trauma

3) two people emotionally disengaged.

3. How the stories ended was crucial,

4. As was how the EP's construed their experiences.

5. Two of us in 1) told stories that did not have a resolution at the end and were accounts of pain left unresolved.

6. Neither of us had a sense of recovery

7. And still expressed shame, anxiety and uncertainty.

8. The stories had no ending

9. And I could see that the unresolved questions had an impact of group 2),

10. And people I have put in this group also talked about the experiences resonating emotionally with them too.

11. They took the stories seriously and could connect with them.

12. I suddenly became aware that I am still putting my unresolved question in front of people all the time,

13. Despite the passage of the years, and looked afresh at a former colleague and understood how she too keeps asking her question.

14. The third person had some degree of resolution but her story had an unresolved self-critical thread,

15. And she seemed to take this unquestioned 'shortcoming' as a permanent part of who she is,

16. And was surprised when I challenged this, as though I ought to understand that she really does have this personal defect.

17. My story threw out painful issues but the outcome was that the responses from people in 1) and 2)

18. Made me feel validated.

19. I was very aware on the night that my former colleague is so taunted by feelings of unreality

20. That she had to introduce her account in a completely apologetic way

21. And later on as we debriefed she took the stance that of course other people's stories were more important than hers.

22. The two EPS in 2) talked about how they fought back and made sense of their issues and also about a sense of benefitting from their experiences.

23. But I saw them as already having the strong sense of themselves beforehand, so that they already had the resilience to cope.

24. They were already who they were, they did not be

25. Come fighters after the incidents,

26. Their capacity to deal with it was already formed.

27. They were able to talk confidently and loudly and at length.

28. My feeling for each of these two people was that they are ok, and have been ok from childhood. Yes they experienced pain, but they had a resilient anger which safeguarded them.

29. One of the EPs in 3) said to me 'That wasn't bullying that was abuse' –

30. Which felt like I was being negated and dismissed.

31. She said she was using a professional example because she had never been bullied and nobody close to her ever had either, which I didn't find credible.

32. She also took some notes so perhaps she had said this to Juliet and offered to be helpful in the exercise as she didn't have anything personal to offer.

33. Her stance made me uncomfortable,

34. As though there was some unspoken criticism in acknowledging one had experienced bullying, something to do with strong feelings not being acceptable.

35. I also think that this makes her a very poor listener as there has to be somebody close to her who has been bullied,

36. And in fact we have all been bullied come to think of it.

37. I thought the professional case too was missing the point and the particular child probably has an ASC, which made the explanation of bullying as the cause of his anxiety facile.

38. The remaining EP talked about something which was 'out there' – something he was detached from and looking at from the distance with curiosity.

39. It was as though this was a test, so that if he conveyed that he has resolved everything this demonstrated what an amazing professional he is.

40. He gave a second example of bullying as though to convince us he had all this additional stuff which made him better at talking about bullying than the rest of us,

41. Only for this to demonstrate further that surface appearances takes the place of a value system.

42. There was something about the two people in 3) that was to do with appearances being far more important than connecting with people.

At the end of the week

43. There were themes in some of our stories that were not picked up,

44. Dangerous themes to do with parents, mothers in particular.

45. Probably it would be inappropriate and too heavy to go into these issues –

46. I certainly would not want to take the risk.

47. Religion too was there as an oppressive force.

48. The unresolved traumas probably had weaved through them additional traumas from family relationships and these complexities made it harder for the individuals to resolve them.

49. I am no fan of CBT but see us all as having one or two core beliefs about ourselves and the story telling experience demonstrated this so well.

50. I am beginning to see so clearly that in absolutely every interaction I have I am asking the question:

51. Am I acceptable?

52. Having gone through our story telling for this research I can see this with such clarity, and would go so far to say that it has been a turning point for me.

53. All my pacifying, apologising and my essential avoidance of people comes down to this.

54. I hate picking up the phone, just *hate* it – and this is the reason, this ever-present anxiety that I have to earn my acceptance almost every moment of the day.

55. Will they find me out?

56. I never felt like this with my own children when they were little and was aware of re-creating my emotional being.

57. Except that when my two sons left home as young adults the feeling returned and I have the anxiety again when we meet.

58. This is ludicrous! Every time I am going to see someone socially I have to prepare a list of conversation topics …

59. Because I am this artificial person who has to pretend to talk naturally.

60. Alcohol makes me feel so different, it quietens the critical voice completely.

61. I feel angry about the two people in 3).

62. One person I had to work incredibly hard to win over when we met,

63. Probably took more than two years, and I continued to be the one who made the opening comments in any conversation.

64. Now I believe that it was so hard because there is no depth there anyway.

65. The other person I see now as superficial, concerned only with how he appears and not concerned with how he connects.

66. That's why I don't deeply connect with either of these two, it's not me after all.

67. It's making me revise my psychological view as I always thought people must be heavily defended and were keeping some deep pain hidden inside.

68. Now I think no, what you see is what you get,

69. Nobody is that clever at hiding bad pain, it would show through in some way. These two people don't have it.

70. I feel a connection with the other two people I put in 1), a nurturance and protection towards them, plus a feeling of shared passion.

71. One of the people in 2) said she wouldn't have been without her experiences for the world because they had made her who she is,

72. But I see 2) and 3) as being who they were anyway.

73. The three of us in1) have wasted years by not understanding why we are as we are.

74. But – I'm glad of the passion that comes from the pain, it makes me a better EP,

75. More connected not just with children but the adults who are with them too,

76. So in this sense I'm glad to have experienced my earlier life.

Thoughts a few week on

77. Still see the group in the same way.

78. It feels strange to see a couple of people as not who I want to be interested in,

79. Especially as I work with one of them, so I'll be experimenting with this new stance.

80. Above all I am using a novel no-nonsense self-talk: *This has to stop.*

81. Strangely it is working, I can tune into the anxiety and say *This has to stop.*

82. I picked up the phone to my sister in law and asked her to visit. Of course it went well.

83. Old habits won't go away but there has been a change, so much that I think this could be a therapeutic experience for me – and an exercise for any group.

84. It's so simple, so easy to get your head around, it tells you so much about yourself and you can move on so positively. I mean this seriously.

85. We all got so much out of it that we've arranged to meet again, but I'm not sure I want to do any more disclosing

86. Because not all the group members feel safe.

87. There again if it was such a growth experience then surely I can cope?

88. Professionally I have for some time now seen unresolved traumas as key to understanding people and children and this experiences further convinces me.

89. It's why therapies don't work, why every new fab approach in psychology works for only a small group then fades away.

90. We are professionally simplistic with our single theories about how children function – all hose new labels in DSM V – whereas, neurologically, repeated trauma is what it's all about.

<u>Joan</u>

1. I guess my reflections <u>so far</u> are this:

2. Themes for me emerging (from my own and others reflections)

3. A sense that in my narrative, I was on my own – self-reliance/self-dependency

4. Because of doubts about what was happening at the time. No thoughts about asking anyone for help a disconnect with my story

<u>What I noticed about others stories</u>

5. 2 storytellers in particular (whom I knew) told their stories with some element of humour – I love that, that ability to laugh in the face of adversity.

6. Because I know all but 1 of the group it helped me "get" them and understand where they're coming from

7. It felt very safe as a place to explore this material

8. I feel disconcerted that I don't remember the details in the way others do –

9. However that had struck me at the time & I understand in the context of my generally poor memory

28.06.13

8. Courage – now there's a word.

10. I was struck by the amazing courage 3 of the storytellers reported.

11. By comparison, there was a absence of courage in my story,

12. In terms of tackling my situation head on – probably more a "paralysis" of fear

30.06.13

13. I guess the thing I'm replaying most is the commentary I gave to one of the story tellers about their current relationship with the bullies

14. And how the story teller interpreted my commentary as being somehow critical of them.

15. I'm feeling a "bit bothered" by that.

16. I think mostly because that was not my intent at all.

17. I was just puzzled by how, without discussing/resolving the bullying event with the person/people involved, the story teller could embrace a relationship with them.

18. Maybe it was a criticism? Maybe it was a judgement?

19. What is resonating here for me is that words matter sooo much,

20. I try to be careful with the words I use.

21. Still a bit "hung up" on my "observations" of 3 story tellers narratives.

22. Maybe I was being judgemental?

23. Referring to the story as "clean" was one observation/judgement.

24. The remarks about the current relationship between one story teller and the bullies was a second observation/judgement

25. And then I mentioned that I'd like to have had 1 storyteller as my friend was a third observation/judgement.

26. As all the storytellers bar one, told personal stories, I found myself much more "attached" and "interested" in the personal accounts.

27. When I said I felt profoundly affected by one story tellers story, I think what I meant was that I felt their pain and suffering completely.

28. I guess partly because I understood/could relate to the "terror" experienced by the threat of being hit by a cane (though it never happened to me)

29. My participation in the discussion was very much "not" in my professional skin (if you can possibly separate that out) I think I responded very much at a feelings level

30. I'm still not really sure about my story. Maybe that's because it isn't clearly defined by an event, but more about (a) relationship (s) over time, persistence

31. I found one story tellers observation on my story interesting – why didn't I seek adult support?

32. If it occurred to me, I'm not sure whether it did,

33. I'm certain I'd have thought it would only serve to make matters worse and that it would somehow be self-constructed as a weakness

Amy

28.06.13

Last night. What a night!

1. Having anticipated the evening with some anxiety and apprehension I actually found it to be extremely stimulating, thought-provoking and rewarding.

2. Prior to going to the discussion I was aware that I only really knew two other people there and that nearly everyone else knew each other.

3. This alone made me feel apprehensive.

4. When considering the vignette I was to present there was no hesitation in finding a suitable tale to tell.

5. My story was about an incident that had immediate, medium and I now believe long-term consequences in my development and view of the world.

6. In some ways it was rather comical but it had more subtle and important elements which I was helped to reconsider.

7. I felt rather uneasy about sharing my story as I did not know how I would feel recounting it in front of strangers,

8. And I worried that I might be judged or misunderstood

9. Or that my experience might be minimalized and considered trivial in comparison to more extreme examples.

10. However, after the pleasantries and introductions I felt better about being there and once the participants started to recount their stories I became mesmerised, engaged and deeply moved by their experiences.

11. It was as if a protective coating or skin had been removed from us all to reveal much softer, more authentic and accessible versions of ourselves.

12. Where someone had initially appeared to be confident and self-assured, they suddenly became vulnerable and unsure.

13. I saw perhaps the origins of some of the traits of those I knew

14. And how their attitudes and behaviours might have been influenced and conditioned by the incidents they described.

15. The details of the accounts were startling

16. And indicated the emotional loading that these events contained.

17. It was most apparent that feelings of anger, shame, sadness and fear still persisted in all of the participants to greater or lesser degrees, despite the passage of time.

18. The stories of my fellow participants greatly moved and saddened me and made me feel reflective about each one.

19. My emotions shifted from empathy to outrage, shock

20. And feeling emotionally shaken by one account where the participant had clearly been systematically abused by those who she should have turned to for help and support.

21. I identified strongly with some stories more than others

22. And indeed, one story in particular made me re-consider one particular episode in my primary school years

23. That I may choose as my second vignette.

24. Why had I not thought of adults bullying children? Now that is something I know about from personal experience.

25. The discussion that followed helped to tease out some themes from the narratives.

26. For me these included:

27. Betrayal,

28. Misuse of power,

29. Issues around status,

30. In-groups and out-groups,

31. Developmental stages,

32. Negligence and/or by those in authority,

33. Confusion of the victim,

34. Identity,

35. Cruelty and abuse,

36. And redemption and forgiveness.

37. It also concluded that these experiences can play a vital role in influencing career choices and approaches to interpersonal relationships throughout life.

38. What could have been a very challenging and uncomfortable evening turned out to be very rewarding and enjoyable.

39. This was very much helped by the nurturing atmosphere provided by the researcher where everything possible to make the participants feels welcome, comfortable and safe was done, including lovely food and drink to end the evening. Thank you.

40. I also think that the other participants showed care and support for each other and me and made the experience feel safe for me at least.

29.06.13

Confusion and ignorance

41. I recall from the discussion how I thought that although the incidents described ranged from being extremely subtle and even covert,

42. To being overtly abusive the effects were experienced profoundly by the Victims.

43. Even where the incidents were less obvious and/or intense the effects of them had affected the victim's at a deep and lasting level.

44. During the group discussion I observed the faces of my fellow participants as they recounted their stories

45. And they all appeared confused and bewildered at points in their tales when they attempted to give reasons for why they had received such treatment.

46. The confusion of not knowing your offence

47. Or why you are in the 'out group'

48. And receiving the 'punishments' for not conforming to the 'standards' or expected behaviours of the established 'in-groups' or high-status individuals was clearly deeply wounding.

49. This confusion never appears to be resolved

50. And adds to the lasting damage to the victim.

51. By not being able to understand or identify what they did wrong

52. The victim seems to be forever bound to the perpetrator turning the problem over and over in their minds again and again looking for a solution or a reason.

53. Even where the reason is known or understood, the injustice of the situation persists and wounds.

54. Whether consciously or unconsciously used, withholding the reasons for why an individual is punished or excluded is a very effective technique and the effects are lasting – sometimes for a lifetime.

30.06.13

Roles and status

55. During the discussion a number of key roles emerged from the accounts. These included:

56. Perpetrator(s),

57. Victim(s)

58. And bystanders who were viewed as either 'saviours' or 'henchmen' of the perpetrators adding further to the difficulties of the victim(s).

59. Several accounts also involved the collusion of figures in authority which greatly added to the distress of the victim's,

60. Especially when these figures were parents or adults in a position of trust and where the victim depended on them emotionally and/or materially.

61. During the discussion there was general agreement between the participants in the group in the identification of these roles and I wonder if these are 'universal archetypes' or stereotypes in the 'bullying world'.

62. There appeared to be a mutual understanding within the group of each situation presented by the different participants.

63. In every case the victim's perspective was appreciated even when participants had not experienced a similar situation.

64. My reflections on the discussion made me consider how victims were persecuted for their actual roles or status,

65. Or for their perceived roles or status as judged by the perpetrator(s).

66. Such roles or perceived positions of status could relate to hierarchies, relationships, material status

67. Or other perceived attributes or failings.

68. Furthermore, historical elements such as feuds and vendettas between individuals related to or associated with the victim's in some way are all potential reasons for bullies to being their campaigns against individuals.

69. I also considered other triggers such as the unconscious factors which remain unknown to the perpetrator as well as the victim.

70. Therefore, simply being who you are in a particular time and place could seal your fate as a victim of bullying.

71. This could explain some of the confusion felt by victim's who do not know why they are the target of a bully.

72. It may also account for why some perpetrators never face up to their actions or why they minimise or dismiss complaints against them.

73. Perhaps the underlying reasons why perpetrators bully a particular individual evoke so much shame, guilt, fear or threats that they cannot even bring them to consciousness

74. And instead expend energy constructing excuses, reasons and versions of events where they are the victim's and the real victims are the perpetrators.

75. In this way the victim's plight is never resolved

76. And the perpetrator spends a lifetime defending their version of events or carrying on as though nothing had happened.

77. This latter situation was true of at least one of the accounts shared where the victim and perpetrators had maintained a friendship over the years without any reference to the incidents of bullying which had been intense and significant at the time,

78. But never properly resolved.

1.07.13

Injustice

79. A strong theme of injustice became evident,

80. Especially where perpetrators went unpunished

81. Or those who tried to defend the victims were punished.

82. The collusion of figures in authority was a particularly painful feature,

83. Especially where these were trusted adults and where the victim was made to feel they were responsible for resolving the problem although they were socially, emotionally or developmentally unable to do so.

84. In several accounts that were shared the group clearly identified the injustices

85. And how people in positions of power and trust had misused their power.

86. Terrifyingly, one account of prolonged and sustained bullying that went unnoticed for a number of years was within a school context where the suspicion was that the victim had social and communication difficulties.

87. This view was never challenged and demonstrated how 'invisible' and subtle bullying can be.

88. The victim sounded so disempowered and conditioned

89. That it was likely that he did not realise that there could be any other way to be,

90. Especially as it was apparently supported and left unchallenged by the figures of authority.

91. Where victims' had attempted to elicit help and support from those in authority, in some cases (including my own) the bullies adopted or were given the 'victim' role.

92. One account of extreme physical and psychological abuse experienced by one group member when she was a child highlighted the power differentials between adults and children

93. And how other children can be drawn in by perpetrators to facilitate and intensify their actions.

94. I wonder how those children who allied themselves with the perpetrators feel about the situation as they have grown up?

95. Do they reflect on the events that happened at all?

96. Do they feel guilt and/or anxiety or sense the injustice that was meted out and to which they contributed,

97. Or do they minimise them, excuse them or even put them out of their minds?

98. Have they become bullies or do they now endeavour to prevent such behaviours when they see it?

99. I also wondered about the effects of those who take the part of the 'virtuous bystander'.

100.　　It was interesting that group members reached individual and collective agreement about where perpetrators had been unjust

101.　　And all of the perceptions of the victims were reinforced rather than challenged.

102.　　Perhaps for some group members this was the first time that their version of events had been supported and their experiences had been validated?

103.　　Maybe this helped some victim's to redefine themselves, as being the survivors of controlling and damaged people rather than as being weak, gutless losers who either deserved what they got or were being 'over-sensitive'.

Redemption and forgiveness

104.   Towards the end of the discussion the possibility of redemption for both victims and perpetrators was discussed.

105.   Furthermore, the possibility of forgiveness was put forward.

106.   In a number of accounts where perpetrators had approached victim's to apologise,

107.   The victim had been released from the crippling confusion and bewilderment of believing that they had done something or 'been' something wrong.

108.   Where this had not happened, the victim's still felt an unease and discomfort around why they had received such treatment even after some considerable time.

109.   During the discussion there was a clear division in experience between those who had received an apology and/or an explanation for the bullying incident(s)

110.   And felt able to move on,

111.   And those who received no such apology and were 'stuck' in a relentless confusion of not knowing.

112.   In the discussion, a difference of opinions and attitudes of participants

113.   To one participant being able to maintain a relationship with a former perpetrator who had never apologised or explained their behaviour was evident.

114.   For some, including myself, there was a question around authenticity.

115.   How could it be that where the bullying situation had never been aired and/or resolved the victim, although clearly still affected by the experience was able to maintain a friendship with the perpetrator and engage in activities requiring close social interaction.

116.   I wonder if individuals get their resolution to an unresolved bullying experience for themselves by defending others from bullying or by standing up to the bullies?

117.   I wonder if the perpetrators experience any lasting damage from the experiences of being bullies?

118.   What do they need for their own redemption?

119.   I wonder if victim's can 'forgive' themselves for being diminished by another(s) and so gain resolution and closure on the experience?

Outcomes

120.   When discussing the outcomes of experiencing bullying in the group a number of the questions I asked myself yesterday were answered in part.

121.   It was suggested that individuals can get their own resolution to an unresolved bullying experience for themselves by defending others from bullying or by standing up to the bullies.

122.   It was suggested that the nature of our roles as Educational Psychologists put us in a position to defend those who experienced bullying and injustice.

123.   The question whether we consciously or sub-consciously had chosen such a career path as a result of being the victim of bullying was raised.

124.   The question of victims' gaining resolution and closure on their experiences as a victim of bullying though self 'forgiveness' for being diminished by another was not considered directly.

125.   However, several group members described their responses to individuals who reminded them of the bullies

126.   And it was apparent that a number of behavioural responses such as "folding" in the face of aggression and being "told off" remained.

127.   Therefore, despite having rationalised their experiences and acknowledged the abusive nature of these,

128.   Victim's had still not lost their conditioned responses to the bullying behaviour.

129.   I wonder if perpetrators also experience any lasting damage from the experiences of being bullies?

130.   What do they need for their own redemption?

131.   Conversely, hearing some of the accounts of the group members and seeing how they had survived and indeed become strong, wise and compassionate individuals was very inspirational.

132.   It raised a question for me around vulnerability versus resilience –

133.   Although the victims' had been vulnerable to cruelty and/or aggression, they had learned to defend themselves

134.   And in some cases, recognise bullying traits or the effects of bullying in others through their difficult experiences.

135.   Although victims' had ongoing vulnerabilities they also had heightened sensitivity and awareness to those who may be being bullied.

The experience of being in the group

136.   As I have completed this diary, I have been made aware that my memories have faded over time.

137.   When I began considering the experience of being in the group in the days immediately after the meeting, I believe I drew on clear memories of the conversations and accounts that were shared.

138.   However, as I have moved further away from the group meeting I have drawn more on my own reflections and analysis than on details from the group meeting.

139.   From the start of keeping the diary, my recollections took the form of themes which emerged spontaneously.

140.   Each of these themes is shown at the start of each entry and each theme naturally led on to the subsequent themes.

141.   I have also become aware that in analysing my responses to the group and the accounts shared I may have obscured some of my actual memories of the group with my own analyses and reflections of the accounts and discussions.

142.   As certain accounts and topics had subjectively greater personal emotional weighting for me than others,

143.   I am aware that I have concentrated on some topics and details more than others.

144.   It was apparent whilst taking part in the group that individual members of the group responded to different aspects of the discussion depending on their own vulnerabilities and experiences.

145.   During the group it seemed that the relationships of group members changed whilst sharing their accounts.

146.   A greater intimacy appeared to develop between group members

147.   And it seemed that when group members' exposed their vulnerabilities and dropped their defensive facades the group immediately responded with respect, support and empathy.

148.   Furthermore, by hearing others' stories, those who were reluctant to share their experiences gained courage to share.

149.   In the days following the group meeting, the themes which I have identified have come to the fore during my working days.

150.   When children have been presented to me with learning, social, emotional and behavioural issues I have recalled phrases and details shared by group participants which has made me consider the possibility of bullying playing a part.

Tom

1. My reflection of vignette

2. Themes of Anti-Bullying Skills:

3. Keep head down

4. Social Skills

5. Use your brain and mouth wisely

6. Be nice and popular/ kind with others in the year group

7. Avoid certain situations

Themes of being bullied/victims

8. Jealousy

9. Perceived as different

10. New

11. Academic

12. Popular with staff

13. Not sporty

14. Sexualised comments as biggest insult

Reflections of focus evening

15. Humbled by others stories

16. Initially had been reluctant to tell personal story and wanted to think of a professional one but couldn't.

17. Aware how the whole class of girls/boys against me. Vignette had the most impact/clearest memory for me and did not really want to talk about it.

18. However when I heard how personal and honest the other stories were, then it put it into a "safe" place for me and in proportion.

19. I very much felt for the others in their stories and wanted to go back in time and change it for them

20. Lots of honest conversations between us in the group.

21. Themes of powerlessness arose, but also justice. Fairness and how this has impacted on our lives – job choice as EP's.

22. It was good for me that I knew all the other participants apart from one – I thought it was brave of her as she did not know many others.

23. I think most people had a chance to speak – perhaps not?

24. Sarah, Ann – Spoke most possibly. Amy, Myself, had various bursts of talking and Jane, Joan + Sally – spoke the least amount

25. Unsure if everyone said what they wanted to?

26. Joan commented that she was "disconnected" from her story I wanted to follow this up but did not. Other conversations happened

27. Sally asked Joan and myself if we had told teachers etc I was unable to answer that – then the conversation moved on.

28. Joan did not overtly answer it – wanted to bring her back in with that.

29. It had been a "special" and worthwhile experience for everyone I think

30. It was interesting that Sally said she could not think of a personal bullying story and that she was able to be honest about that to everyone.

31. I am pleased that she doesn't remember experiencing anything to the level of bullying that perhaps the others have.

32. I have been thinking often through this process about all the different types of bullying that have happened in my life as an adult –

33. Within families, workplace, other organisations, schools etc. Either observed or towards me personally

34. At different points during the week, considered the personal stories again of those who were present at the group.

35. It does make you look at people in a different way, increased empathy and understanding of who they are.

36. The growing realisation that these competent and professional adults have experienced "similar" things (+ worse) to yourself as regards to bullying.

37. In itself this is strengthening

38. I have also thought about Sally case of boy bullied by girls all those years. It is disturbing to know how much someone's whole childhood can be affected by that –

39. It will determine parts of his narrative. My hope he will become stronger from it.

<u>**Sally**</u>

<u>**Diary of thoughts and reflections**</u>

1. What first struck me during the focus group was how open people were, how willing to share their stories.

2. The other participants had all chosen personal experiences of being bullied whilst growing up.

3. Whilst I was subject to name calling and got in to fights, I don't consider myself to have ever been bullied.

4. Perhaps the other participants are therefore able to empathise more with young people they come across in their work who are being bullied.

5. Alternatively, I might be more objective in such cases, as I don't have recollections of my own feelings of being bullied to cloud the picture.

6. What struck me most about the focus group though was Ann's story. She described being bullied by a teacher at school.

7. To me though it was a story of abuse.

8. What's the difference between bullying and abuse?

9. If a parent beats you up, they are abusing you; if a teacher beats you up I think that is also classed as abuse; but if another child beats you up, then that is bullying.

10. A's story was about physical bullying but it was also about emotional bullying - the feeling of being singled out for unjust punishment.

11. It reminded me to be vigilant about such issues within our schools –

12. The physical aspect is no longer condoned but there are teachers who emotionally bully children.

13. I met one of the other participants at a meeting a few days after the focus group and we both commented on A's story.

14. It had been difficult to listen to and we both felt a sense of admiration for A and how she had come through such an ordeal.

15. From the stories shared at the focus group, I wondered about whether telling a trusted person and then the bullying stopping had brought about an element of empowerment.

16. In contrast, some had told someone who had not believed them or had blamed them and the situation got worse.

17. Several people spoke of bullying occurring during times of transition (e.g. From primary to secondary school).

18. Some participants spoke about feeling ashamed that they were being bullied.

19. Participant T spoke about several experiences of bullying at schools in various countries. This suggests that bullying crosses cultures.

20. It's always useful to have time to sit and share experiences and reflect on
    them

<u>Sarah</u>

1. This was one of many experiences that have happened in my life that have changed my view of me and of others.

2. Being on the school bus daily and refusing to join in with the "way" the cooler, older girls behaved taught me about my own values and I am suborn.

3. They called me names and threatened me, I think now because I was different.

4. I remember not feeling "afraid" as maybe I should have but feeling sad for them.

5. I am sure they were lovely people who had no path – so found one together.

6. Maybe these musings are in hindsight and with the benefits of age –

7. maybe even with the benefit of talking about the bullying experience I shared with the group.

8. The girls at the back of the bus all needed to belong to something, someone.

9. I don't feel I needed that so much because I already had that through my family.

10. This fierce feeling of belonging and acceptance I am sure enabled me to "stand up" for myself.

11. It sure has been instrumental in the development of my care constructs of justice and fairness.

12. The girls didn't really like me from the start (I don't think – though I don't know that – I never asked them)

13. I was loud and silly, often laughing unsurely about some daftness I had just done or someone else had done.

14. I didn't really take things too seriously, still don't now (even then anxiety from me was in short supply) don't get me wrong I felt scared.

15. I felt intimidated,

16. I felt sad,

17. I am sure I felt anxious – but it never really stopped me from doing or being –

18. I recognised it thought about and often thought "oh that's interesting". I am doing this anyway!!

19. Not sure that is a good thing but it is me – was then and is now.

20. Anyhow I think the most challenging part for those girls (and others) is my not taking life too seriously –

21. that's has always been my way but I think that annoys people –

22. I grew up with the mantras - it will all come out in the wash , what will be will be and where there is a will there is a way!

23. These formed the basis of "the girl on the bus" the annoying one who sat on at the front, laughed all the way to school – didn't wear makeup

24. AND who the lads from the bottom of the bus would shout up to.

25. All in all an intolerable situation I suppose for those at the back trying so hard to have it be their names shouted!

26. That's when it started really, being told to shut up (how could you enjoy yourself more than us smokers, drinkers, risk takers at the back)

27. being called names, to the point doing it I remember hoping the boys wouldn't shout me – as it just made things worse.

28. I remember Nicole Carole – red hair – heavy girl – leader of the pack.

29. She was the one who struggled to stomach "my way" the most.

30. Again the boys were my saving grass – particularly her boyfriend Robert.

31. If he was around I was alright – she was actually nice to me! Though I knew id get it both barrels next time – but it was a blessed reprieve.

32. This taunting, name calling and threatening went on for what felt like an eternity.

33. One of Roberts friends asked me out – a big NO NO! But it did give me breathing space even though I never said yes!

34. And so to the ending where I got on the bus – went to sit down to find the only available seat was at the back.

35. I still remember their faces – like a lamb to the slaughter

36. I sat still even though I was scared I could not and would not appear to be intimidated. (I was completely inside of course)

37. I opened the window! They closed it. I opened it again. They closed it. I opened it, they told me to close it I said "NO" they closed, this went on…….

38. Eventually I said "no" and said I'm not and never will be your puppet on a string! I want the window open and that's how it is! (god I was shaking)

39. I got off the bus to be told – I know where your family live – I am going to come round and kill them all whilst you sleep. (Weird how writing that now – it seems ridiculously silly – I mean as if. But at the time it seemed so real)

40. Luckily for me – I was upset enough this time to tell my mum –

41. I think probably the very thing that had given me the sense of belief was how under threat – that was it – it was no longer just about me and the desire to protect them was first keenly felt. T

42. his made me tell my mum.

43. The boys had been with me at the time and they too had heard and seen it and they told significant adults. It Stopped!!

44. Overnight – I was off limits.

45. Of course we were never friends – why would we be?

46. But years later at a fireworks display I saw her again – she head towards me and I remember feeling my stomach lurch!

47. She opened her mouth and said I am so sorry for what I did…

48. just goes to show you never really know what is going on for any person, whether their behaviour towards you is acceptable or not.

49. She was deeply unhappy and tried to give it to me….unfortunately for her but fortunately for me I gave it straight back.

Jane

1. I remember my primary school as a magical, creative place where I felt very happy.

2. Transferring to secondary school was, looking back, a big event.

3. Prior to transferring to secondary school there had been some discussion between my parents as to whether I should take the 11+ and try and get into the local grammar school (two of my brothers attended the boys grammar)

4. or go to the local school that had recently changed from secondary modern status to a new comprehensive school.

5. My eldest brother had attended the secondary modern school and he was considered a bit of a rebel.

6. He was/is quite a character who has always challenged convention in many ways.

7. I looked up to him, he was a funny, charismatic youth and as the youngest in the family, I was to some extent his 'pet'.

8. He was kind to me in a way that he wasn't to our other siblings who were a little scared of him.

9. I think the fact that he had attended the school may have influenced my final decision.

10. My parents left the decision with me but made it clear that the grammar school would be their choice.

11. I chose the local comprehensive where all my primary school friends were going.

12. Looking back I can see how important my friendships were and this negated the idea of attending a school that was more prestigious.

13. In the first few weeks after transition, the friendships I had in primary school fragmented;

14. I was not in the same form or classes as my primary friends.

15. I didn't enjoy being at the school, the lessons seemed pointless and I missed my primary teachers.

16. At primary school I had been regarded as 'bright', I had taken part in lots of extra curricula activities sports teams and drama productions.

17. I felt valued and school seemed purposeful. Looking back I can see that I had valued being regarded in this way.

18. Shortly after starting at the school, I started to 'hang out' with a girl that I had known for a long time who was in my form.

19. She was the sister of one of my brother's friends.

20. She had made friends with some girls who did not go to our primary school and I became friendly with them too.

21. One of the girls, Diane, lived close to me; she seemed very 'grown up'.

22. She swore and smoked and had trendy clothes and young, glamorous parents! I found this very attractive…at first.

23. As we lived near to one another, Diane and I would call for each other on the way to school and after school.

24. Now, looking back, I can understand how important social referencing is at this time and why I may have been captivated by the 'glamour' of the new group of girls who exhibited a rebelliousness that I found attractive in my eldest brother.

25. In the first term I truanted with Diane. It was a foggy, damp and nerve wracking October day.

26. I hated the experience.

27. After this I began to feel that I had little in common with this new group of friends.

28. I felt under pressure to do things that I felt uncomfortable about but didn't voice my concerns to anyone.

29. On occasions Diane would say unpleasant things about others (usually judgements about appearance) me included, and I felt increasingly uncomfortable around her and intimidated by her.

30. I too was judging her and I judged her as behaving badly.

31. Diane would call for me after school and I would tell my sister to tell her I was out,

32. she would challenge this the next time I saw her but I could not tell her the truth;

33. I wanted to avoid a conflict.

34. Ultimately I came to a realisation that I wanted to separate myself from the group as a whole

35. But Diane in particular and I started to avoid the group in school.

36. My avoidance tactics did not work with Diane.

37. After a further few miserable weeks, one morning before Physics, I blurted out that I didn't want to hang out with her or the others anymore.

38. I felt very relieved as I went into the lesson.

39. However, when I came out of the Physics lesson I crossed paths with Diane and one of the others in the group.

40. Diane slapped my face, grabbed me and we both fell to the floor.

41. The 'fight' was stopped by a teacher. The school did not contact my parents.

42. I felt very ashamed after the incident.

43. I did not tell anyone about it for a number of weeks.

44. I became increasingly unhappy in school and withdrawn at home.

45. I felt completely responsible for the situation.

46. I had exercised poor judgement in choosing to hang out with the group,

47. I had truanted and been complicit, if only via association with bad behaviour towards others.

48. Eventually I asked my parents if it would be possible to apply to take the 11+ and go to the grammar school.

49. Asking this prompted questions as to why I wanted to leave and presented an opportunity to explain what had happened.

50. My mum contacted the school and after a meeting with school staff I was transferred into a new form that contained a couple of my old primary school friends.

51. I stayed at the school and I was fine but school was no longer the magical place it had once been and I had changed as a result of this experience

Joan

1. Ok so …….. the assertive adult in me wants to assure the inner child that she did suffer at the hands fo bullies for a substantial part of her school years and that the self reliance the inner child felt was not the only option.

2. Having to tolerate persistent, targeted unpleasantness was not the only option.

3. However I know that as that little lonely girl, telling an adult someone, felt more likely to make things worse, not better,

4. and what would I have said of any substance ?

5. "Please miss, they tutted at me, called me a name ……….."

6. not convinced the adults wouldn't have eventually thought me an annoyance.

7. So, yes no resolution, but even with my adult and professional head combined, I'm not sure I would have taken any other course of action at that time.

8. So in my adult life, when I've signed up to the belief that the universe sends / gives us lessons to learn,

9. And we keep revisiting the lesson until the lesson's learnt,

10. I decided to take a different course of action when faced with bullying in the workplace.

11. Due to events which superseded a grievance procedure I had initiated,

12. The perpetrator and I parted company, which achieved the outcome I was looking for.

13. So, when given the option to pick up the grievance again, I withdrew.

14. However, back to the universe and lessons, so some time on, faced with another 'situation' with a colleague in the workplace,

15. I didn't run away from it but attempted to address things through trying to work with the individual and improve our relationship.

16. At the time did I consider it bullying? – no, in all honesty I didn't.

17. It was others' reflections, bystanders I guess you would call them, mentioned the word 'bullying'.

18. I wasn't witness to anything directly, however they relayed instances of unpleasant targeted comments made to them about me.

19. I feel cross I spent so much time trying to work on and understand what it was about our relationship that was so difficult,

20. what part of that was my part and what I should do differently.

21. This was some years ago though I do hold onto some anger,

22. anger at myself for not walking away,

23. for not recognising things for what they were,

24. Or investing time and effort in a relationship that could have better been spent with colleagues I valued and who valued me.

Amy

1. When I was eight years old and in Junior Two at a co-ed Catholic primary school I entered the class of Mr M.

2. Everyone in the school was aware of Mr M as his raging and bawling could be heard all day,

3. Every day all around the school.

4. When I was in Junior One I would look at the children in his class during playtimes and lunchtimes and wonder how it was that they looked so 'normal' and untroubled when they had to return to his classroom.

5. I dreaded going up into Junior Two.

6. When I made the inevitable move into Mr M's classes it was as I had feared.

7. Each day began with a tense and terrifying assessment of his mood.

8. Even on days when he appeared to be in a relatively 'good' mood it would not be long before he would erupt into a furious temper,

9. Triggered by some minor misdemeanour such as someone talking or getting something wrong.

10. Mr M liked to dictate lengthy pieces of text and if you didn't or couldn't keep up he screamed at you.

11. If you couldn't remember or articulate your times tables, specified poems, prayers and spelling to be learned by rote he screamed.

12. If you didn't understand his laborious mathematical procedures, he screamed.

13. If you spoke or made any noise in class he screamed.

14. Mr M's classroom was square, with tiled walls and a very high ceiling which amplified his screams.

15. I had the job of collecting and returning the register to and from the school office and believed myself to be the luckiest child in the class.

16. I at least got that time out of the room away from him.

17. The lessons I feared the most were mental arithmetic sessions

18. Where the whole class had to stand behind our desks and answer maths problems that he fired at us whilst waving a metre rule in our faces.

19. We were only allowed to sit down when we answered our questions correctly

20. and often we were so afraid of him we could not even process the questions let alone calculate the answers.

21. This meant that a number of us regularly found ourselves standing frozen with fear,

22. unable to move as he stood waiting for answers that never came.

23. On one occasion I watched as the trousers of the boy who sat in front of me darken as he literally wet himself with fear.

24. Mr M also liked to send pupils to get 'the strap' from Mr B the Deputy Head Teacher.

25. Mr B was a small, smelly, balding inadequate man,

26. who got his 'kicks' from belting primary school children across the palms with a leather belt.

27. Mr B taught Junior Four, a joy still to come!

28. I particularly loved Thursdays because it was near the end of yet another week I had managed to survive and I only had one more day before the weekend which remained untouched.

29. Conversely, I hated Sundays as it was the day before my return to Mr M.

30. This continued for a whole year.

31. I frequently cried about Mr M at home and was told not to be 'soft' and that he was 'only one man'.

32. I tried to get better at maths, spelling, poetry and taking dictation but did not realise that it was not my maths etc. that was the problem,

33. but my fear that was preventing me from demonstrating my competence.

34. When I left Mr M's class to go into Miss G's Junior Three class,

35. I enjoyed a year of kindness, quiet and encouragement.

36. I won prizes for art, composition and poetry, and I started to understand maths.

37. However, the experience was overshadowed by the anticipation of going into Mr B's class

38. And the sounds of Mr M screaming from his classroom, in the hall, on the playground and on the corridors.

Tom

1. I grew up between Scotland (Glasgow and fife) and Asia (India and Bangladesh) from birth to 15 years old.

2. My bullying reflections are related to my time in school in both cultures – some are related to me as "the victim" and some as a bystander/what I observed

3. During last few months of my time at boarding school in India there was a huge change in attitude from my "girlfriend" and a group of other girls in the class.

4. Wrote a horrible poem about me and stuck on my desk.

5. All ganged up against me and my brother (twin).

6. This isolation, exclusion, name calling spread around class including boys.

7. Others who are friends felt powerless it would appear to do anything about it.

8. We eventually spoke to staff who met with me, my brother and a couple of boys – to try and get it sorted.

9. They took it seriously and realised how upset we were –

10. It went on for several weeks. I think some jealousy of getting role in the drama festival and being popular with staff.

11. This puzzled me as some of the instigators were popular and successful in other areas of life.

12. I have met up with several of them since been friendly amicable

13. And still in contact on facebook etc but still not sure what the trigger was –

14. Seemed to come from no where

15. Also as this school aware of bullying/name calling that went on with another lad –

16. Racist comments,

17. Stealing his glasses and other things

18. Even tying him up at one point.

19. He would react strongly to this and create "more entertainment" as a result –

20. Not always helpful to him.

21. I befriended him, but wished I had said more

22. although I think he saw me in alliance with _____ because I happened to be their friends too.

23. I am glad h remained strong to himself

24. (short, a little overweight & not sporty – and very academic)

25. I think this had a bearing on him being bullied. He's a Doctor now ☺

26. On returning to Glasgow from India my brother and I had to re-enter @ GCSE (Scottish equivalent) year.

27. This was not easy.

28. New faces in the school, new accent, again got on with our work and pleasant to staff etc

29. Made friends as we always did wherever we went,

30. but a couple of lads took a real dislike to us.

31. Used to call us names and push us around at times –

32. often calling us "poof"

33. This went on for most of the year on and off.

34. Again much of it out of ear shot of staff –

35. or ignores by staff or people thought this is how boys are.

36. Again our other friends were powerful it would seem.

37. The second year was better, they did not stay on at school and my brother and I became prefects

38. At the same school there was a lad who used to get called names and pushed around –

39. he was short,

40. did smell

41. and looked "different".

42. There were rumours about what he may have done to younger children which was inappropriate.

43. I think he may have some generalised learning needs, Again I would sometimes walk and talk with him but then he would sometimes try and become "liked" by the "gang" who would hassle him – this didn't usually work. He was a loner really and I sometimes wonder how he is now

<u>Sally</u>

<u>Jack's story</u>

1. Jack is now 13 years old and a Year 8 pupil at Made Up High School.

2. He was referred to an EP in Year 2 and again in Years 4 and 6

3. because of concerns regarding his behaviour.

4. I met him in Year 7 when his school requested further involvement.

5. In Primary school:

6. Inattentive

7. Day dreaming

8. Always getting into minor scraps

9. Things improve for a while and then slip back

10. He's "odd" - the magic word ?ASD

11. Always thinks others are picking on him

12. Misunderstands social situations

13. Has a few friends, all boys

14. Doesn't like sitting or working with girls

15. Poor self-esteem

16. In High School:

17. Not wanting to go to school

18. Calls himself stupid and "horrible boy"

19. Refusing to work with girls

20. Spends break and lunch in the resource base, sits on his own

21. A loner

22. Increasingly disengaged

23. Doesn't like the hustle and bustle of corridors

24. Things "don't add up", he doesn't seem ASD, he isn't how we expected from primary school's information

25. High school arranged for Jack to have sessions with a male Learning Mentor

26. And Jack told him that he was being bullied by a group of 3 girls from primary school.

27. When we explored what bullying meant to him, Jack gave a very good account –

28. He described them as being very sly and devious,

29. They would call him names,

30. Tell others not to talk to him,

31. Told him that things would happen to him and his family if he didn't do what they wanted or if he told on them, etc.

32. Why did he open up after so many years?

33. Was he listened to at primary - a failing school and recently in special measures?

APPENDIX 10

I remember being about 13. My mother had died when I was about 9 and this was one of the things that made me feel different from others. They had their mothers backing them up looking out for them. I remember feeling different because I was tall and gangly and standing out from the others. I also didn't always have the right clothes. My blazer was the wrong colour.

I had friends, some of them quite trendy and cool, so why me? One day in registration, a boy Peter started picking on me. I remember him asking "put your hand up if you would ever go out with Juliet". Of course no boy did put their hands up. Peter was scary in hindsight, if they had, they too would have been ridiculed.

The room went silent for a bit and then Peter spat "see, that's how ugly you are, nobody would even think of going out with you". Later in French I started to cry. One of my cool friends who had witnessed the whole thing asked me what was the matter. It was as if she couldn't understand why I was upset. Why hadn't my friends stuck up for me and told him to shut up. He had actually fancied one of them and if she had commented about his behaviour, he may have shut up. Instead, people in the room had laughed. I felt embarrassed, different and let down by my friends.

Peter didn't let up with his comments, this became a regular occurrence. I was quite naïve about sexual things and he took great pleasure in asking me the meaning of words like "what does pimp mean". When I couldn't answer, he would burst into laughter and engage in his group of friends. In hindsight, they probably didn't know either. I remember the humiliation, the red face, the silence, the inability to speak.

Peter eventually got expelled and things got better for me. But even now I feel anger and disgust to him. Why go to such extremes to make someone feel humiliated and unhappy?

Now I am careful that my daughters have the right clothes, know about things – having open discussions and talk to them about possible responses. The fact that one daughter is tall is upsetting, especially when she comes home telling me that a boy has called her a "giant". I want her to see her height as a positive thing and not a weakness, affecting her confidence

Joanne was a 13 year old girl in a nice school. She was tall, quite gangly for her age and very aware that she wasn't in the right clothes, but always striving to be part of the group. Her school shoes weren't the ones all the other girls were wearing so she wore a pair that were the wrong colour but very trendy. She got into trouble for wearing them, but didn't care. It was better to wear those than not be part of the group. Joanne was aware of the struggle of being in the group.

One day, in the form room, she was waiting with the others for registration. It was at this time that the bullying happened. Peter was a short, fat boy who everyone was a it scared of. He misbehaved in class a lot, was very loud and told people what he thought of them. In front of everyone in the class he said to the boys "put your hand up if any of you would ever consider going out with Joanne Smith".

No one put up their hand. He burst out laughing and turned to me. No one said a thing, not a girl, not a boy, but Joanne can remember the boys smirking. Later on sitting in French, Joanne started crying. She was sitting next to a girl seen as quite "cool" in the year. She had been in registration. "What's the matter she asked?" "nothing" Joanne said. It was as if she hadn't noticed anything. This wasn't the only time Peter had a go at Joanne, it seemed to be whenever he could "Joanne doesn't know what a pimp is". He would find thngs to torment her with in order to make her feel different and out of the group. It was as if he was very aware of the things that would get to her and torture her inside. Joanne never seemed to know how to retort and certainly never mentioned it to anyone. To relay a story of being stupid and different to others was inconceivable. She didn't even mention it to her friends.

The relief when Peter was expelled and Joannes friends grew to a similar height was indescribable.

APPENDIX 11

Written Feedback – Summary of themes

The following themes emerged:-

- Themes around engaging in group story telling process

- ✓ Stories of others impacted upon listeners, sometimes these stories shifted and expended views.
- ✓ Sometimes they increased empathy for those that told the stories and listeners felt closer to the story teller
- ✓ Sometimes it felt therapeutic as people felt others had similar or worse experiences to themselves
- ✓ Sometimes listening to stories helped listeners consider their own behaviour and change it towards others and also question fixed views that they had perhaps accepted because of the culture of the time such as caning and challenge these perspectives
- ✓ It felt that experiencing other peoples stories allowed listeners to feel that they would be better able to negotiate around similar problems even if they hadn't experienced them yet
- ✓ It also helped listener to consider the impact of their own behaviour on others – such as suspending judgement around behaviour of others during times of emotion.

For those that told their stories, there seemed to be some therapeutic impact, though it was not clear whether the group process or the process of telling the story had more positive impact. Writing a story using a format of setting the scene, describing weakness and over-coming adversity seemed to support individuals in seeing the story in a different light and led to reduced confusion and possible ruminating around events, externalising the behaviour to others, and the bully's weaknesses rather than reflecting on what they could have or should have to prevent it.

Those that told their story in a canonical way – setting the scene, describing weak characters overcoming adversity seemed to gain empathy from listeners. Clear breaches in the story – which were surprising to the listener and the writer helped the audience engage.

I wondered the extent that the desire to survive and learn from stories told to negotiate problems that may arise in the future (Damasio (2012)) may influence this engagement.

Some individuals did not find the story telling process as positive. This was only revealed in the diary extracts. After the focus group, I had been under the impression that most people had found the experience positive. This challenged me around making judgements after being involved in groups. I reflected upon how engaging in consultation processes and making personal judgements about whether these had been successful at the times may be in effective. Hence follow up away from the group was needed.

I also reflected upon restorative practice conferences and the extent that evaluations immediately after the conference were reliable, without providing time to be away from the group and reflect. Bion (1971) discusses us being like a herd and following the group. There seemed to be a need to be cautious around telling stories in groups because of this. Developing empathy by listening to stories seems to be important, but perhaps not personal stories.

After the focus group, there was evidence of Ep's reflecting upon comments made about stories and hoping that these did not have a negative impact upon others. This made me reflect upon the fact that we all hold difference construct and this difference can separate individuals from others. It made me reflect upon this during consultation and strategies that support in maintaining rapport.

- Theme around bullying emerged

In the literature review young people have confusion around the definition of bullying. The fact that EP's also had confusion and were conscious of this demonstrates the complexity of this phenomena and how sometimes, it is difficult to relate fixed definitions to specific contexts. EP's seemed to compare their incident with extreme bullying incidents and sometimes appeared to negate their experience.

Individuals commented that writing stories made them feel as if they were back in the event feeling it like the child were. Confusions around causes was expressed though these causes could not be generalised and needed context. There seemed to be a focus around

- ✓ Difference – physical difference
- ✓ Not understanding group rules
- ✓ Transition
- ✓ Expected gender norms

The strength of the story telling enabled themes to be revisited through the child's eye and later in the focus group returning to an adult and reflecting upon these perceptions, enabled shifts in perspectives. This made me reflect upon the lens that I focus on when problem solving the child's, mother's, psychologist. Am I placing my constructs upon others? E.g. adult-psychology constructs

Group rules/beliefs were reflected upon and how if these are not followed, this ensues with punishment. I wondered the extent that pupils were modelling school discipline systems in bullying scenarios. Sometimes there was confusion around what rules the group you were expected to follow weren't clear or explicit. The power of the group in reinforcing mistakes made by the victim seemed to reinforce the fact that it was the victims fault and lead to self-bullying.

Dominant people's stories in our EP role sometimes lead us to reinforce truth, for example searching for evidence to reinforce this. Listening to a child's story was important in challenging us as EP's against this. One EP discussed the fact that she hadn't been listened leading to her being an advocate for children.

- EP's discussed protective factors and strategies that might support

  - ✓ Having intelligence
  - ✓ Supportive families
  - ✓ Friends who would defend
  - ✓ Another group to go to
  - ✓ Listening to the victim & allowing their story to be told.
  - ✓ Providing stories to promote empathy

- Impact was also discussed.

  - ✓ Some positive impact. EP's commented that they were more able to empathise and not judge others behaviour in difficult circumstances
  - ✓ Some negative impacts were discussed, for example predicting that individuals behaviour as adults may be negative towards them, as it was in the bullying incident
  - ✓ Difficulty being objective around experiences personally experienced.

Notably it is assumed EP's will be asked for advice and support around behaviours. However, only one EP told a story of a professional case and EP's commented that they weren't asked for advice around bullying.

Theme	Codes	Taken From	Name & Stanza No
Story Telling	**Disclosure** **Positive for the listener**		
	Code 62: Empathy: Understanding others, may reason differently	**DE**	Sarah 6
	Code 63: Changes behaviour: Suspend own judgement as EP	**DE**	Sarah 7, 12
	Code 64: Helped to process own feelings	**DE**	Sarah 8, Ann 12, Joan 22, Amy 5 Amy 22-24
	Code 65: Changes behaviour: Internalising others behaviour until you hear their story and begin to externalise their behaviour	**DE**	Sarah 8-11
	Code 66: Empathy: Better understanding of the individual	**DE**	Sarah 11, Jane 39, Ann 13
	Code 71: Empathy: Type of delivery enhanced the connection between individuals	**DE**	Jane 32-43, Amy 21, 131, Tom 18-20, Sally 13-14, Ann 70
	Code 139: Influenced by how the story was delivered/canonical story telling & expected canonical content	**DE**	Jane 32-34
	Code 127: Vygotsky; imagination - Listening to other stories helped people negotiate problems that they haven't experienced	**DE**	Joan 26-28, Amy 22-24
	Code 128: Therapeutic: Find it comforting listening to other stories that are worse than mine	**DE**	Tom 35-37
	Code 129: Changes behaviour: Storytelling, useful process	**DE** **Disc**	Sarah 6-8 Sarah 576-583, 584-587
	Code 138: Therapeutic: A positive outcome engaged the listener	**DE**	Amy 131
	Code 158: Remembering as adults, to see problems from the Childs perspective – What adults focus upon a child might not be important to the child	**V2**	Amy 12-14

Story Telling	Disclosure Negative for the listener		
	Code 126: Emotional Listening to stories	**Disc** **DE**	Joan 11-12 Amy 18-20
	Code 156: Revisiting incident as the child, brought experience more to the fore	**Disc**	Sarah 44-45
	Code 67: Not following an expected canonical structure made listening difficult	**DE**	Sarah 14, Jane 2-3, 19 Ann 30-34
	Code 70: Telling a professional story had an effect on connecting	**DE**	Jane 22-25
	Code 73: Changed opinions of EP's in a negative way	**DE**	Ann 33, 39
	Code 76: Authenticity of story questioned/content not personal	**DE**	Amy 113, 114, Ann 31-32, Jane 22-25
	Code 140: Felt positioning was more important. This alienated listeners	**DE** **V**	Jane 12 Sarah 56-60
	Disclosure Positive for the Writer		
	Code 72: Therapeutic: Taking a risk and it paying off	**DE**	Ann 17, 18, Amy 10
	Code 130: Therapeutic Impact. Externalising behaviour	**Disc** **DE**	Sarah 58-59, 62-65, Ann 83-84
	Code 131: Expands/shifts views: Greater clarification of feelings through writing it down. Shifts perception	**Disc**	Jane 621-624, Sarah 58-59
	Code 132: Expands/shifts views: Telling a story without interruption enabled story teller to reflect more easily	**Disc**	Tom 593-600, Sarah 584-587
	Code 185: Story Telling without interruption prevents judgemental comments	**Disc**	Tom 593-600

	Code 88: Externalising of story helped individual	DE	Ann 66
	Code 29: Accepted by the group	DE	Sally 13-14
	Disclosure **Negative for the writer**		
	Code 68: Even though there was no right or wrong, delivery did matter?	DE	Sarah 13-20
	Code 69: Feeling the position in the group that you told the story, affected how the story was told and received	DE	Sarah 23-24
	Code 74: Feeling "out of the group" for choosing a story different to others	DE	Ann 37, Joan 26
	Code 77: Apprehensive about own story and how it would be received and feeling you may be judged	DE	Amy 1, 7-10, Tom 106,108, Ann 107
	Code 142: Experience had a negative impact on Storyteller	DE	Ann 85, Sarah 13-19, Ann 30-34
	Code 137: Resentment/frustration at being judged by listeners	DE	Ann 61-64, Sarah 13-19

Appendix 13

Code	Name	Stanza No & Quote
Code 1: Having supportive friends	Sarah	V 106. Luckily for me there were the boys were all around me, V 107. And they were sort of saying "What are you doing to her?"," Leave her alone" which obviously didn't help, V 108. Because that was one of the reasons why I was being bullied in the first place, because the boys were all sticking up for me and not for her V 109. And arrr it was just. Anyway, I then did something about it V 110. Well I didn't do something about it, the boys did something about it V 111. Not to her. They actually told the teachers and it all stopped
Code 2: Having someone else to do something about it	Sarah Sally Amy	V 110: Well I didn't do something about it, the boys did something about it V 94: But when the Learning Mentor told what Jack had **described** Disc 645. He did it in a really nice way because we scripted everything.
Code 3: Feeling able to tell teachers	Sarah Tom Amy	V 111: Not to her. They actually told the teachers and it all stopped V 36: I actually talked it through with some members of staff Disc 414. But the point was there wasn't a sort of nowadays, there'd be this big Restorative Justice, Disc 415. Sort of nice open conversation Disc 416. And then it was just "no, you need to be seen to be punished"
Code 4: Being able to tell Parent	Jane	V 77: And that opened the door on a conversation about what was wrong with me
Code 5: Not being able to be honest with adults	Ann Tom	V 18: And to please him I said yes V 34: And I didn't have parents to talk too

Code 6: Talking to someone who doesn't want to help	Ann	V 25. I kept asking her not to take me V 26. But just to pretend we had gone V 27. But she just kept leading me to the classroom of the year below
Code 7: Scared to tell Adults	Ann	V 33. All the way home from school I kept asking Peter not to tell our Mother
Code 8: Feeling like no one would listen even if they told	Ann	V 49. But in those days no one had a voice
Code 9: Dismissed even when trying to plead case	Amy Sally Sarah	V 34. When I tried to plead my case V 35. I was told that my language had been completely unacceptable V 36. That two wrongs don't make a right V 29. And there were some comments about, that he always thought people were picking on him V 30. And they had regarded it as being just generally banter Disc 336. I'm thinking that well I've actually come to you now because **I'm fairly bruised**

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