

# **Teacher Narratives of Domestic Violence**

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In Memory of Adam James Dawson and Margaret Mary Ives.

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## **Abstract**

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

*Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting  
a hard battle - Ian Maclaren*

[www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ian\\_Maclaren](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ian_Maclaren)  
[www.quoteinvestigator.com/2010/06/29/be-kind/](http://www.quoteinvestigator.com/2010/06/29/be-kind/)

# **1 - Introduction**

## **1.1 - Rationale and Background**

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

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

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

challenge and change me, and this research. Social constructionism has provided a means of analysis which I utilise in this thesis.

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

perceive she had been sent away from the family at a time when she would need reassurance, comfort and support from her family - to reaffirm the concept of the family as a safe haven. I was acutely aware she would require the staff to be aware of her experience in order to effectively provide appropriate emotional support. It wasn't that she required specialist support, just a shared understanding to enable staff to respond appropriately should she choose to discuss her experiences. Consequently my experiences have profoundly affected my positionality.

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

### 1.1.1 - Domestic Violence

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

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

This is the definition of domestic violence applied to this research project. The terms domestic violence and domestic abuse, interpersonal violence or family violence are used, sometimes interchangeably, within the literature to describe violence between two people in an intimate relationship. Within this thesis the term domestic violence, according to The Home Office (2012) definition will be used in the main, however it is

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

In considering children's experiences of domestic violence the term 'exposure' will be used as, according to Holden (2003), 'it is more inclusive of different types of experiences and does not assume the child actually observed the violence' (p.151). The Adoption and Children Act 2002 added a new category 'impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another' (p.71), recognising the impact of domestic violence on children. Prior to this the impact of domestic violence on children was not specifically recognised in the Children Act 1989. Baldry (2007) describes domestic violence as 'indirect abuse' of children due to the extensive negative impact of exposure to domestic violence (p.29). UNICEF (2006) estimate up to one million children in the UK have been exposed to domestic violence.

Domestic violence can take many forms other than physical violence and can occur as male on female abuse, female on male abuse, between marital couples, non-married couples – cohabiting or otherwise, same sex couples; regardless of race, socioeconomic status, age and disability (Cho, 2012; Barber, 2008; Dewar, 2008; Casique and Furegato, 2006; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Home Office, 2003; Lawrence, 2003; Peckover, 2003a; Moffitt and Caspi, 1998; Walker, 1979).

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

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



- Women are at greater risk of domestic violence during pregnancy. 30% of women first experience domestic violence during pregnancy; or the violence may increase in frequency or severity (Women's Aid, 2009; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Daniel, 2003; Home Office, 2003; Department of Health, 2002).
- Violence to be more common in teenage relationships than it was previously believed (Barter, McCarry, Berridge and Evans, 2009) with young people at increased risk of violence (Lewis O'Connor, 2004).
- Those under thirty are at much greater risk than those over forty (British Crime Survey, 2004).
- 32% of victims report their attacker had been drinking (Home Office, 2003).
- Drugs are less likely to be an issue but when they are reported it is more likely to be in cases of chronic victimisation (three or more assaults) (Home Office, 2003).

## 1.2 - Structure of the Research

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

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

Chapter three presents the methodology associated with this research project. Ontological and epistemological assumptions of the research are presented and

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

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

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

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

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

are then discussed. The limitations of this research project are then considered before finally presenting the application of the outcomes of this research project.

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

## **2 - Literature Review**

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

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

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

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

being significant in meeting the aims of education and making a positive contribution to society.

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

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

## **2.1 - Education**

### 2.1.1 - Education in History

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

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

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

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

“...they also sought to promote the children's physical well-being and to offer opportunities for their moral and social training and to provide some elementary

instruction in the 3Rs, so that the children could make more rapid progress when they entered the monitorial school.” (no page).

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

During the nineteenth century a class-determined education system developed which virtually excluded the lower classes from higher education. In 1835 the average length of school attendance was one year, rising to two in 1851. Compulsory education was first established in England and Wales with the introduction of The Elementary Education Act 1870 (commonly known as Forster's Education Act 1870) when schooling became compulsory between age five and ten. This was the first piece of legislation relating specifically to the provision of Education in Britain. At this time education was considered by industrialists as vital to the nation’s ability to maintain its lead in manufacturing (UK Parliament, 2013). It was hoped that compulsory education would end child labour, however many children continued to work outside school hours. Truancy rates were high as many families relied on the income provided by children. It is apparent children at this time were perceived as requiring protection from the physical and emotional demands of child labour. The 1918 Education Act (The Fisher Act) raised the school leaving age from twelve to fourteen and gave all young workers the right to day release to access education; although the leaving age was not implemented until the 1921 Education

Act. The 1921 Education Act raised the school leaving age to fourteen and consolidated previous laws regarding education and employment of children and young people. Subsequent acts continued to raise the leaving age and the 1936 Education Act raised the school leaving age to fifteen, with exceptions to allow fourteen year olds to work in certain circumstances (Gillard, 2011). The Education Act 1944 saw the compulsory leaving age rise to age fifteen and then in 1972 to age sixteen. It was recommended that the compulsory leaving age rise to sixteen in the Education Act 1944 but this change was not implemented until 1972 due to the onset of the Second World War between 1939 and 1945. In an attempt to address NEET (not in education, employment or training) statistics the compulsory school leaving age rises to seventeen from the academic year 2013-2014. This does not mean young people must remain in school instead they must be in full-time education, an apprenticeship or full-time employment (over 20 hours a week) with part-time education until the end of the academic year they turn seventeen (Gov.UK, 2013a).

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

The Education Reform Act 1988 is the most significant piece of educational legislation since the 1944 Education Act, as it saw the introduction of the National Curriculum. The introduction of the National Curriculum provided the ability to directly compare the attainment of individual schools. This ability to compare



schools was intended to offer parents a greater degree of choice when choosing schools. In reality this has not happened and there is greater accountability placed on schools and individual teachers. During the 1980's and 1990's attainment and testing was of particular importance within society and SATs (standardised assessment tasks) were introduced in the first half of the 1990's. SATs results continue to be used by the Department for Education (DfE) to produce national attainment tables for primary schools. Similarly GCSE, BTEC and NVQ results are used to compile secondary league tables. The government use league tables to compare schools and identify failing schools.

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

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

### 2.1.2 - Approaches to Education

Paulo Freire is one of the most influential educational philosophers of the late twentieth century. Freire (1970) argued that what is taught and how it is taught is politically determined. He referred to this as the 'banking concept of education' describing how the continuation of democratic society is perpetuated through the teaching or indoctrination of political values (Freire, 1970; p.53). The area of debate to be considered here is in relation to the way in which political and cultural interests are served. Epistemologically there are two main approaches to education, what and who to teach, and how to teach. In considering what to teach I propose there are two contrasting perspectives, the development of academia versus social and emotional development.

Since the inception of mass schooling, education has become a core component of childhood and a key area of political debate and policy. As we have seen throughout history the purpose of education has been interwoven with the visions or requirements of the government at that particular point in time. Throughout history the overall aim of education has been to serve society and for individuals to be able to contribute to democratic society. Given the importance of education in the future of society, great debate continues to take place as to the priorities of education – academia or a more holistic approach which includes social and emotional development. This debate considers what to teach, e.g. the content of the curriculum and how to teach, e.g. progressive or traditional methods. Psychology has been influential in education from its inception, particularly when considering how to teach.

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

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

According to James (1899) education 'consists in the organizing of *resources* in the human being, of powers of conduct which shall fit him to his social and physical world' (p.29). For James the purpose of education is therefore preparation for life, with the teacher providing a role model for the child's behaviour, which James described as 'emotional, social, bodily, vocal, technical, or what not' (p.31). James (1899) described teachers as role models who should supervise 'native reactions', which are instinctive and spontaneous, such as fear, love, curiosity and imitation (p.38). According to James the teacher's role is the development of 'acquired reactions', which are desired behaviours (p.38). James views the teacher as central to development; supervising and shaping behaviour. According to James (1899) it is our native reactions which predispose us to learn and the teacher's role is to

stimulate and shape behaviour which will then determine future conduct. James (1899) views native reactions as essential to the learning process, without these a teacher cannot interact. James sees education as preparation for adulthood and as such views the purpose of education as shaping behaviour.

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

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

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

Dewey took a constructivist view of education believing knowledge is constructed from previous experiences. According to Dewey (1902) development was not possible without the teacher engaging the child's interest. The teacher therefore has to keep in mind the 'double aspect of subject matter'; teaching the subject whilst at the same time making the subject meaningful (p.30). Dewey (1902) describes three

evils which can result from failure to keep the double aspect in mind. The first is 'a lack of any organic connection' which, for the child, results in material being purely formal and symbolic (p.31). Secondly there is 'a lack of motivation' which is necessary to drive the child's sense of accomplishment (p.32).

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

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

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

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

Dewey (1902) sees the curriculum as obstructive rather than aiding development. As a constructionist Dewey (1902) places great emphasis on the experiences of the child and argues these are central to development, which he argues is in complete contrast the curriculum.

Similarly to Dewey, Piaget took a constructivist view of education believing learning is based on experience and interaction with the physical environment. According to Piaget learning was problem based and this facilitated the assimilation of knowledge to develop schemata. Piaget described himself as a genetic epistemologist, concerned with the origins of knowledge. He placed great importance on education and was the Director of the International Bureau of Education from 1929 to 1968 (Munari, 1994).

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

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

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

Similarly to Dewey and Piaget, Vygotsky took a constructivist view of education believing knowledge is influenced by prior experience. According to Vygotsky (1986) learning does not take place in a social vacuum. In contrast to Piaget, Vygotsky

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

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

According to Takaya (2008) Bruner was critical of Dewey. Takaya (2008) considered Bruner's critique of Dewey and states Bruner felt there is an intrinsic attraction to learning therefore it is not necessary for teachers to make subjects more interesting, nor do they need to be related to children's experiences. According to Takaya (2008) Bruner's theory of meta-cognition requires reflection on classroom practices, 'the language of accountability holds a view of education as a matter of how faithfully individual students acquire or copy prescribed contents' (p.14). According to Takaya (2008) this dictates the existence of prescribed content and that prescribing content is desirable. She further supposes many teachers would not find this ideal or an accurate representation of reality. According to Takaya (2008) the contention here is that teachers are judged on their ability to pass on the prescribed content. Takaya (2008) critically reflects that Bruner's early views 'had very little that would challenge this notion of learning' (p.14). According to Takaya (2008) Bruner places importance on creating a sense of self in relation to learning and this is particularly important in school, as the creation of selfhood is central to the ability to construct meaning from experiences. Similarly to Dewey (1902), who stated lessons for the sake of learning material have no apparent aim, Takaya (2008) believes 'drills

and memorizations are imposed on students in such a way that students cannot understand the context or significance of these activities' (p.15). Both Dewey and Bruner place importance on the child's ability to perceive the relevance of the lesson content, and whilst Bruner feels the content does not necessarily need to be interesting or related to experience it must be perceived as relevant. Takaya (2008) states imposing a large scale curriculum and holding teachers' accountable, based upon Bruner's theories, 'makes less sense' (p.16). Instead Takaya (2008) argues 'individual teachers or teams of teachers should create their own local curricula by using such things as a state or district- wide curriculum as a reference' (p.16). This would not support Gove's reforms of the National Curriculum which appear to prescribe more of what Takaya (2008) described as 'drills' and 'memorizations' and additional assessment, which will, by association, lead to greater accountability for teacher (p.15). The importance placed upon assessment and accountability by the government is particularly evident in the title of the Government's consultation document in relation to the new National Curriculum and primary level assessment: 'Reforming assessment and accountability for primary schools: Government response to consultation on primary school assessment and accountability' (DfE, 2014).

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

Freire was an advocate of critical pedagogy and saw education as a potential instrument for social change. Freire (1970) is critical of the current education system and, as I previously mentioned, described the banking concept of education stating 'knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing' (p.53). According to Freire (1970) the scope of students' actions are limited to 'receiving, filing, and storing the deposits' and the projection of ignorance 'negates education and knowledge as a process of enquiry' (p.53). According to Freire (1970) it is through acceptance of the teacher as knowledgeable and the student as ignorant that both teacher and student

justify the existence of the teacher. Freire (1970) states knowledge, under certain circumstances, can become sterile and as this becomes the norm critical thought is suppressed which perpetuates prevailing values within society. Therefore it is through mere acceptance of knowledge that a passive approach to knowledge develops and creative thought is oppressed. Freire views the oppressors as those who perpetuate this situation and seek to integrate others into their structure of society. Freire (1970) claims the poor and uneducated, who are typically seen as oppressed, are those who are capable of critical thought. He believes they are better positioned to critically assess the structure of society and the value, or purpose, of education. Those who are educated, in Freire's (1970) opinion, are those who are oppressed as ironically they no longer have critical or creative thought. This is 'the very negation of their ontological vocation to be more fully human' (Freire, 1970, p.55). Freire views education as oppressive and serving the needs of the powerful. He claims the irony of their ontological perspective of becoming more human through education actually results in a form of ignorance.

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

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

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

“It should enable all young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve



- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
  - responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.”
- (Department for Education, 2011, p.2).

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

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

In contrast to today, during the 1960's the philosophy of education was a prominent feature of teacher education as teachers at every level of education 'were *instruments* of policy' (White, 2012; p.504). This is in stark contrast to education post 1988 where teachers have become the implementers, rather than instruments, of policy. In 1985 the Thatcher government abolished central government funds which had previously covered the fees of in-service courses for teachers making it clear the Government focus changed (White, 2012). It is my opinion that whilst the Government retain power and control in relation to policy, curriculum and implementation a political climate supportive of addressing educational policy across the areas presented by McLaughlin (2000) cannot be achieved.

White (2012) looks forward to teachers once again having 'more freedom and power to help shape what their schools offer' (p.507). He believes teachers and schools would then become involved in improving their practices through consideration of theories and concepts such as education, teaching, learning, indoctrination and socialisation. This would encompass questions such as 'what is the purpose of education?' and result in individual schools and teachers considering the content of the curriculum and its aims. As a consequence there would be renewed interest in the area of educational philosophy from individual schools and teachers. Importantly this would mean schools and teachers would be in a position to respond more directly to the experiences, needs and lives of the children. In addition current pressures on the role of the teacher in relation to assessment and accountability would be alleviated which would allow teachers the flexibility to respond to the social and emotional needs of individual children. However the introduction of a new National Curriculum in September 2014 demonstrates this is not the Government's vision for the future of education. Policy changes reinforce the Government's perspective of academia as important for success in society. Further evidence is provided from the Government focus on NEET (not in employment, education or training) statistics, and associated plans to raise the school leaving age. As a consequence education is required, from a Government perspective, to be conducive to economic growth (de Botton, 2013; Hardarson, 2012; White, 2012). As I have already discussed, throughout history educational legislation and policy reform has shown that a positive contribution to society is evaluated in relation to employability and being able to contribute to the prosperity of society through employment. There is a drive from the Coalition Government to improve standards within education and to strengthen democratic society through the attainment of knowledge (de Botton, 2013; White, 2012). This is illustrated by the minimum standards for schools which were introduced by the Coalition Government:

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

Piagetian theory in particular does not support the Government's approach to assessment and progress. Hopkins (2011) describes an interview in the 1970's with Piaget which refers to 'readiness for education' (no page). Hopkins (2011) recounts Piaget theorised children will learn when they are developmentally ready and

therefore attempting to accelerate this process, according to Piaget, 'is completely useless' (no page). Yet the Coalition Government place importance on academia; with the success, or quality, of secondary schools being measured based on levels of academic attainment.

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

According to White (2012) when looking at an aims-based curriculum it is apparent more than knowledge, or facts, is required. White (2012) asserts the need for an aims based curriculum which equips 'students for a life of personal flourishing' (p.514) prioritising big ideas, such as human rights and personal well-being will encompass environmentally important ideas such as evolution and urbanisation. In contrast Hardarson (2012) argues against an aims based curriculum claiming the aims of education are open ended and there is no justification of 'any definitive or exhaustive description of its purpose' (p.225). According to Hardarson (2012) this is, in part, because intellectual or moral virtues cannot be analysed or defined in terms of behaviour. He argues that equating learning and education is not enough and it is necessary 'to determine what is truly educative' (p.231) as not all learning is socially desirable. Furthermore the aims of education differ according to who it serves, for example economic growth might underpin government policy (Hardarson, 2012)

whereas parental aims might be in relation to the childcare on offer. Hardarson (2012) argues that education should enable students to critically evaluate and be intellectually independent. Similarly to Freire (1970), Hardarson (2012) warns against passive acceptance arguing that students who accept, without question, values imparted will always be the 'epistemic inferior' (p.233).

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

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

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

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

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

A contrasting epistemological perspective constructs the role of teachers as much broader, encompassing social and emotional development and preparation for life beyond school. There is a lack of consensus regarding the role of the teacher, which is currently very broad and has wide ranging expectations. It would therefore be unsurprising for teachers to experience confusion and subsequent moral dilemmas regarding their role when considering how to respond to the social and emotional needs of children in their care. Interestingly in the late nineteenth century James (1899) made an observation which would not be out of place today, when considering the scope of the role of the teacher he stated 'Our teachers are overworked already. A bad conscience increases the weight of every other burden.' (p.13).

It is apparent the epistemological perspective of the Government leaves little scope for individual differences. Each child is shoe-horned into a top-down one size fits all education system with prescriptive aims and curriculum, and expectations imposed on them. In addition schools and teachers are the implementers of government policy (White, 2012) and are therefore limited in relation to how they can respond to the needs of individual children.

### 2.1.3 - Education and The Child

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

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

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

As discussed earlier social and moral development was indicated to be valued in the early nineteenth Century in infant schools as it was seen to be important in later

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

The concept of teaching the whole child and acknowledging social, emotional, physical and intellectual development, as advocated by progressive education, is not new. Its roots can be found in the educational theories of Montessori, Piaget, Dewey and Vygotsky (Ashton, 1992). Dewey (1902) in particular was a strong advocate for teaching the whole child and acknowledging their psychological needs. A child-centred approach to education advocates the natural development of children; they are considered innately curious, with a desire to learn and actively make sense of the world (Darling, 1994). In addition progressive education views social reform as the aim of education (Institute of Education 2009). Child-centred education is also considered to encompass constructivist teaching methods. The constructivist perspective views learners as constructing knowledge based upon their experiences as opposed to passive absorption (Ashton, 1992). Interest in progressive education arose as a contrast to traditional education methods. The new education movement, influenced by Froebel and Montessori, saw the first progressive British schools in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (Institute of Education Archives, 2009). Post-war cultural conservatism of the 1950's combined with political backlash, and unfavourable press coverage, saw the demise of progressive education (Institute of Education Archives, 2009). The decline of progressive education was further influenced, and enforced, by the government introduction of the National Curriculum. In addition the DES (1992) report 'Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools' actively discouraged progressive education methods. According to Ashton (1992) the failure of educational theorists, such as Piaget, Montessori, Dewey and Vygotsky, to influence educational reform is testimony to the difficulties which arise in translating constructivist theory into educational practice.

Despite the demise of progressive education, the principles of child-centred education continue to influence pedagogic practice, and the influence of child-centred approaches to learning persist in the delivery of a curriculum based upon traditional methods. In contrast to the National Curriculum, which lends itself to traditional methods, recent changes to the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) promote active learning. The principles associated with the EYFS correspond with the Montessori Method of self-directed learning through multisensory, active and hands on activities within a child-centred environment (Montessori Society AMI UK). The aim of the Montessori Method is for children to reach their full potential in all areas of life. Piaget was strongly influenced by Montessori and Piagetian theory remains influential in relation to the provision of a developmentally appropriate curriculum and environment which is advocated within the EYFS. In addition Piagetian theory postulates all children follow the same sequence of development but progress at different rates. It can be argued this has educational implications in terms of the requirement for differentiation within the classroom, and an acceptance that all students are different, and have differing strengths and weaknesses. In addition Piaget placed importance on having a structure which promotes engagement in learning.

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

According to Rogers (1951) a student will only thoroughly learn what is perceived relevant to the structure of self. Similarly to other educational theorists Rogers places importance on engagement in learning, or self-motivation. Progressive education promotes active engagement in learning and educational theorists argue the perceived relevance of the subject matter directly impacts upon engagement in learning (Rogers, 1951, Dewey, 1902).

Despite active discouragement from the Government and the challenges of applying progressive methods to educational practice, progressive approaches remain influential within education. With planned changes to the curriculum and examination systems under the Coalition Government only time will tell how progressive methods will stand up to increased challenge in the face of a return to a more traditional approach to education. The subsequent impact upon the individual needs of the child and recognition of individuality therefore presents a cause for concern with a return to more traditional methods. It could be argued the general principles of progressive education contrast to the measures of austerity imposed by the Coalition Government's to achieve its wider goals of economic recovery and debt reduction (Reeves *et al*, 2013). Kochhar-Bryant (2010) argues there is little economic incentive for schools to promote individualisation.

As I described earlier, education in the last decade has promoted a holistic approach to children and as a consequence concerns arose that contemporary 'education has become therapeutic' (Mintz, 2009, p.634). In the last fifty years therapy has become part of general culture (Mintz, 2009) and the introduction of programmes such as SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) in 2005, which all primary schools were advised to deliver to all pupils, would support this argument. Indeed Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) argue therapeutic education was driven by New Labour's approach to social justice. Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) argue therapeutic education promotes a deficit model which assumes all children have emotional problems; and therapeutic education creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. Their argument is that children perceive vulnerability and anxiety which consequently requires therapeutic intervention furthermore those who are not able to see their weaknesses have repressed problems and are perceived to be in greater need of therapeutic intervention. Mintz (2009) considers the intrusion of therapy into education and discusses Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) book '*The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education*'. In the consideration of critical education Mintz (2009) suggests that Philosophy for Children addresses the 'most pernicious aspects' of therapeutic education identified by Ecclestone and Hayes, such as 'everyone should feel good about themselves' and 'everyone should be protected from other people who might damage their fragile self-esteem', as children are encouraged to challenge other students' statements and to find fault with their arguments (p.637).



Mintz (2009) therefore proposes the principles advocated by Ecclestone and Hayes are paradoxically central to the type of education they deem 'dangerous' (p.640). Mintz (2009) argues schools should be a place where future citizens can learn how to disagree. Mintz (2009) tentatively suggests the fault may lie with teachers who are side-tracked from developing 'deliberative citizens necessary for democratic countries' (p.637) by a therapeutic ethos which leads them to be too protective.

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

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

Based on Hardarson's (2012) perspective the provision of an arena for epistemological debate, unconstrained by aims, will facilitate the development of epistemological thought. Philosophical education cannot, as Hardarson (2012) argues, be constrained by aims as this would place limits on the scope of its educational purpose and realm. Where this type of education becomes therapeutic may be epistemologically defined by considering who is taught and how. For example those who are not meeting expected developmental milestones, measured according to traditional methods of prescribed aims and a curriculum, require an intervention to address unmet aims and attainment objectives. It is then not such a

great leap to suggest interventions addressing social and emotional development could be considered therapeutic due to the identification of a delay and attempts to address the delay. The provision of a platform for discussion and debate is intrinsically different to a specific intervention which aims to develop, or modify, a particular skill set.

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

#### 2.1.4 - Emotionality and Learning

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

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

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

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

According to Monahan (1993) 'the memory of trauma is persistent for children' (p.3) and in contrast to adults they rarely erase the conscious memory of a trauma:

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

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

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

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

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

physiological change, readiness to behave, conscious experience and a cognitive, or meaning, component.

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

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

Within psychology it has long been accepted that emotions and memory impact upon one another (Uttl, Siegenthaler and Ohta, 2006). Of particular interest in relation to this research is the impact of negative moods or emotions on memory as this has a direct impact on learning. Bower (1981) outlined two phenomena; mood-congruity effect and mood-state-dependent retention. The mood-congruity effect suggests we attend to and learn more about events which match our emotional state. The mood-state-dependent retention suggests recall is improved if we are experiencing the same emotion as we experienced during learning. Ellis and Ashbrook (1988) outlined the resource allocation model which proposes disrupted mood states reduce the capacity which is allocated to other tasks; and this effect will be greater when the task is more difficult or demanding. Mood states directly affect learning, additionally

the emotional reaction aroused by an event can affect the memory of the event, 'events with strong emotional reactions tend to be well learned and usually more so (within limits) the stronger the reaction' (Bower, 1992; p.15). As Bower acknowledges there appear to be limits to the part emotions play in remembering events. In contrast traumatic events, which are by their nature very significant, can be remembered with very little emotion, indeed descriptions such as 'emotionally flat or numb' may be applied (Horowitz and Reidbord, 1992). The interaction between emotion and memory has implications for learning, according to Sylwester (1994) 'emotionally stressful school environments are counterproductive because they can reduce students' ability to learn' (p.65).

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

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

acknowledge that when the intensity and duration of the emotions become distressing professional intervention may be appropriate.

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

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

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

In contrast to IQ, Goleman (2004) argues emotional competencies 'can indeed be learned and improved upon by children' (p.34). It is immediately apparent how these characteristics could also be termed resilience, when describing an individual who has experienced emotional trauma. In addition given that the characteristics of emotional intelligence constitute resilience it could be argued teaching emotional intelligence will be of therapeutic benefit in managing emotional trauma.

Goleman (2004) describes how emotional intelligence can be taught to children and he believes it is important to intervene in childhood before problems in adulthood such as aggression, violent crime, depression, eating disorders, social ostracism, and substance abuse develop. According to Goleman (2004) the likelihood of experiencing these problems decreases by teaching emotional literacy (e.g. impulse control, managing anger and finding creative solutions to predicaments). He also states developmental psychologists have been able to identify which lessons are most appropriate at each age in accordance with the growth of emotion and emotional intelligence. In addition researchers have been able to identify interventions for those who are unable to develop the expected competencies at the expected time.

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

In contrast to Goleman (2004), MacLure *et al.* (2008) recommends practitioners and educators consider 'reducing the emotional quotient of classroom experience' (no page). According to MacLure *et al.* (2008) the developmental maps which underlie early years practice generate deficit views of children, parents and families; which

otherwise would not exist. The resulting developmental discourse then pathologises differences, which in turn leaves parents and teachers open to blame and scrutiny. MacLure *et al.* (2008) also recognise there are some children who will 'have life skills and experiences that exceed those encompassed in the simulacrum of the proper child' (no page), such as exposure to domestic violence; consequently these children may be unlikely to engage in the 'economy of happiness, sharing and kindness that is promoted in the reception classroom'. Finally MacLure *et al.* (2008) describe the complex social rules within the classroom environment and state some children may find the resulting mixed messages difficult to manage.

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

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

However in considering Billington's (2013) call to be critical is important to apply critical practice and recognise that the characteristics of emotional intelligence can be considered culturally dependent and specific. Additionally Goleman's theories of emotional intelligence pathologise and imply all children exposed to domestic violence will develop problems in adulthood. The assumption problems in adulthood can be avoided by teaching emotional literacy overlooks the role of social structures such as unemployment and poverty. Reeves *et al.* (2013) outline the negative effects of austerity on health in the UK, stating job loss will lead to increased rates of depression, suicide, numbers of people living in poverty and marked rises in homelessness. Hall and Perry (2013) found current austerity measures are adversely affecting families with financial fragility triggering stress and anxiety. According to Hall and Perry (2013) a lack of control over finances can adversely affect psychological well-being.



It is evident domestic violence is a complex social phenomena which cannot be addressed purely through the teaching of emotional literacy. However, regardless of the cause, domestic violence affects the functioning of families and therefore directly impacts upon children. Domestic violence also presents a strain on society (Casique and Furegato, 2006; Home Office, 2003; Golding, 1999; American Psychological Association, 1996) and as such it can be argued domestic violence does not have a positive impact upon democratic society. As discussed earlier, making a positive contribution to democratic society constitutes a core function of education. Therefore domestic violence negatively impacts upon the aims of education. As stated by Vygotsky, schools are a context for development, and therefore significant in their own right in relation to child development. Similarly Dewey (1987) argues school is a representation of life. Given the significance of education in children's lives and for the future of society, it can be argued schools should do what is reasonably possible to minimise the impact of exposure to domestic violence. In considering the role education can play there are two main areas, prevention and support. Schools are well placed to play a preventative role in relation to educating children about social structures, healthy future relationships and providing a supportive role for children and families exposed to domestic violence.

## **2.2 - Domestic Violence**

### 2.2.1 - Defining Domestic Violence

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

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

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

Domestic violence is a particularly interesting phenomenon, as in contrast to other forms of violence it is inherently paradoxical because there is the presumption of a

loving relationship between those involved (Godbout *et al.* 2009; Tolan *et al.* 2006). Additionally the home is held as a dependable, safe and positive developmental influence, which provides comfort, solace and protection from harm (Tolan, Gorman-Smith and Henry, 2006; American Psychological Association, 1996). According to Wolfe (2006), children are 'torn between a sense of loyalty towards their family and a sense of fear and apprehension; they want the violence to stop, but they do not want their parents to separate' (p.45).

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

embarrassment, ridicule and lack of support services (Barber, 2008; Dewar, 2008; Du Plat-Jones (2006); Lawrence, 2003). Sadly the current government focus is likely to perpetuate the subject of men as victims of domestic violence as a taboo. According to Barber (2008) societal awareness of domestic violence against men needs to be increased to improve service provision and encourage men to seek support and report domestic violence. The Home Office (2003) recognised that accurate figures relating to domestic violence will not exist until 'all victims of domestic violence feel safe in revealing the violence they have experienced' (p.11).

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

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

Dutton's (2008) review of domestic violence research which suggests in 70% of unilateral cases of domestic violence the perpetrators were female. Godbout *et al.* (2009) suggest reports which indicate women are more violent than men may be misrepresentative due to reporting bias. They suggest women may be more likely to take responsibility for relationship difficulties and violence, whereas men could be more reluctant to disclose violence due to social disapproval.

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

### 2.2.2 - Domestic Violence Policy and Practice

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

Over the past thirty years there has been extensive research into domestic violence and significant developments in the national policy and narrative of domestic violence (McKee *et al.* 2012; Matczak, Hatzidimitriadou and Lindsay, 2011; Home Office, 2003; Jaffe, Crooks and Wolfe, 2003; Peckover, 2003a; Featherstone and Trinder, 1997). Governments and non-government institutions have commissioned research into domestic violence which has informed policy recommendations. New Labour taking power in the UK in 1997 saw a commitment to policy development to combat domestic violence (Rivett and Kelly, 2006) and there had been significant focus at a high level on domestic violence policy (Matczak, Hatzidimitriadou and Lindsay, 2011; Hunter *et al.* 2010). As previously stated the Coalition Government taking power in 2010 has seen a broader focus on a feminist informed gender-based

agenda with publications such as 'Call to End Violence against Women and Girls' by HM Government (2010). Despite research evidence highlighting domestic violence is not a gender-based issue there is no reference to male victims of domestic violence with Coalition Government policy. However Peckover (2003a) states feminist work has made the health and welfare consequences for women and children visible. It is therefore unsurprising this paradigm has been adopted in relation to policy development given work to raise awareness of domestic violence has been conducted from a feminist perspective

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

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

services within the UK are often voluntary services, some are specialist, and the majority of these do not work directly with children (Rivet and Kelly, 2006).

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

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

Jones (2014) describes domestic violence as a 'pandemic' and states the Government should treat it accordingly (no page). Yet he states the £347m local welfare assistance fund which is devolved to local authorities to fund local initiatives, such as domestic violence services, will be scrapped in 2015. According to Jones

(2014) 'in the first two financial years of [the coalition] government, there was a 31% cut in funding to the domestic violence and sexual abuse sector' (no page). Prior to the loss of the local welfare assistance fund Jones (2014) reports 35 support services for children have been shut across England since the coalition government came to power. Thus, not only might this mean decreasing support but also increasing stress on families, possibly contributing to violence in the home.

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

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

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

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

It is necessary for each service to acknowledge and proactively respond to domestic violence.

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

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

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

The Department for Children, Schools and Families publication *Violence Against Women and Girls* (2010) recommended statutory guidance for schools relating to



domestic violence and additional training for school staff in relation to identification and signposting. Yet there is no specific guidance relating to school based interventions, e.g. good practice for teachers in supporting children and adolescents who have witnessed domestic violence. The report focuses mainly on support for girls who are the victims of domestic violence and boys as the perpetrators of violence.

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

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

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

care and education) which come into contact with domestic violence and more specifically all of these criticisms of domestic violence practice can equally be applied to education.

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

There are national charities such as Refuge and Women's Aid which provide a frontline service to victims of domestic violence in addition to engaging in systemic work aimed at protection and prevention. There are also locally based charities providing similar services. Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) is a national charity supporting a strong multi-agency response to domestic abuse. They provide support to MARACs which are regular local meetings where information about high risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared. These conferences will include discussions about children in the family. MARACs are not a statutory provision and are run by individual police forces. There are currently over 260 MARACs operating across England, Wales and Northern Ireland managing over 57,000 cases a year (CAADA, 2013).

There have been significant policy developments in the last thirty years; despite this practice being criticised (Rhodes *et al.* 2007; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Culross, 1999) and there is little policy which relates directly to children and the impact of exposure to domestic violence on children. According to NICE (2014) 'there needs to be a wider understanding in health and social care, as well as in society as a whole, about how we can help people experiencing [domestic violence]' (no page). Currently feminist epistemology unpins domestic violence policy and practice; however there are many alternative theories to explain the occurrence and impact of domestic violence.

### 2.2.3 - Theories of Domestic Violence

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

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

- Theories to explain the occurrence of domestic violence

#### Cognitive-Behavioural Theories

Early explanations in the 1970's looked towards the psychopathology of abusers and assumed the behaviour was caused by mental illness. Moffit and Caspi (1999) found male perpetrators of domestic violence were 13 times more likely to have a diagnosable mental health condition e.g. anxiety disorders, depression, alcohol and drug dependence, antisocial personality disorder, and schizophrenia. According to Dutton (2008) personality disorders have been found to be more prevalent in men in court-mandated treatment groups, in addition men convicted of wife- assault had significantly lower emotional intelligence than the general population. According to Gibbons, Collins and Reid

(2011) 'personality pathology has consistently been found in a substantial proportion of domestically violent men, usually on the order of more than 50%' (p.165). In addition they found a wide range of personality pathologies exist among domestically violent men. Gibbons, Collins and Reid (2011) argue this requires interventions to be individually tailored to personality pathologies to ensure optimal outcomes.

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

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

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

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

become perpetrators, or victims, of violence (Maker, Kemmelmeier and Peterson, 1998).

### Feminist Paradigm

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

In spite of criticisms of feminist theory, it is the basis of many support services provided to women and children affected by domestic violence, which in turn provides an empirical evidence base for feminist theory (Peckover, 2003a).

### Social Theories

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

### Psychoanalytic Theories

Similarly to social learning theory, psychodynamic theorists argue exposure to domestic violence affects interpersonal development. Some psychoanalytic theories point to childhood trauma as the precursor to domestic violence. According to Herman (1992) a traumatic event 'overwhelm[s] the ordinary human

adaptations to life,' (p.33). Suleiman (2008) reviewed Judith Herman's contemporary trauma theory and according to Suleiman (2008) there is strong debate regarding trauma and memory. Firstly there are proponents, such as Herman and van der Kolk, arguing in favour of the theory of dissociation - 'the more horrific and prolonged the trauma, the more the subject has a tendency to dissociate and therefore have no conscious memory of the traumatic event' (Suleiman, 2008; p.277). Suleiman (2008) sees trauma theory as linked to the works of Freud and she states Herman's theory regarding repressed memories is dependent upon the Freudian concept of unconsciousness, however Freud abandoned his seduction theory and claimed memories may be representative of a patient's desires and fantasies rather than actual events. In contrast proponents of the theory of dissociation argue mastery of a trauma is dependent upon full recall of the traumatic incident. According to Suleiman (2008) Herman and other proponents of the theory of dissociation are critical of Freud for not believing his patients.

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

In conclusion Suleiman (2008) makes reference to Lifton's works which illustrate trauma can have a positive or negative impact on an individual. In contrast Terr (1991) argues childhood trauma can manifest as a wide range of clinical presentations in childhood such as conduct disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity and phobic disorder. Terr (1991) argues there is 'even more diagnostic leeway' when the traumatised child reaches adulthood (p.10).

According to trauma theory adverse childhood experiences, such as exposure to domestic violence, negatively impact on healthy ways of relating which may lead to repetition of the traumatic experiences in an attempt to master the feelings of terror and helplessness experienced during childhood (Maker, Kemmelmeier and Peterson, 1998). Psychodynamic theorists also consider domestic violence in relation to interactional patterns, focusing on analysis of the interactions which result in violence at a given moment. According to psychodynamic theorists violence may occur due to 'parataxic distortions' or 'transference reactions', where a situation is re-lived provoking intense rage which erupts into physical violence (Lundberg, 1990; p.245). Bowlby (1988) theorised that thoughts, feelings and behaviour in relation to emotionally significant events and situations have been shut away from conscious processing. This leads to emotions, such as anger, relating to the event or situation, being directed to inappropriate targets. According to Bowlby (1988) it is necessary to identify the cause of the emotions to effectively address the thoughts, feelings and behaviour associated with the event or situation. Psychodynamic theorists would support an individualised approach to intervention and argue treatment is required for each case of domestic violence.

Insecure attachment relationships in early childhood and adult life have been linked to domestic violence (McKee *et al.* 2012; Godbout *et al.* 2009; Dutton, 2008; Bowlby, 1988). According to Godbout *et al.* (2009) early exposure to violence is one of the most consistent predictors of domestic violence. According to Bowlby (1988) the attachment relationship provides an internal working model for future relationships and expectations are developed of a role in future relationships. According to Buck *et al.* (2012) research evidence supports Bowlby's theory that perpetrators of domestic violence are insecurely attached. They state 'the relationship between insecure attachment and domestic violence can be explained by separation anxiety and partner distrust' (p.3150). Dutton (2008) claims fears of abandonment lead to jealousy, anger and anxiety. According to Godbout *et al.* (2009) the feelings of anger displayed immediately in response to the unavailability of an attachment figure can be both a source and consequence of domestic violence. Godbout *et al.* (2009) state 'anger can be a protest strategy aimed at preventing future separations and



related anxiety, it can also be destructive and provoke an escalation of violence or disengagement from the other' (p.369). However, it cannot be assumed all individuals who are insecurely attached become violent. Worley, Walsh and Lewis (2004) state aggressive behaviour patterns in adulthood due to insecure early attachment experiences are only present in boys. They suggest this may be due to differences in socialisation, although little is known about early socialisation patterns of male perpetrators of violence. Despite this most children who experience domestic violence do not go on to become perpetrators of domestic violence (Godbout et al. 2009).

### Family Systems Theories

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

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

child relationship) (Krishnakumar and Buehler, 2000; Erel and Burman,1995; Holden and Ritchie, 1991).

### The Cognitive Paradigm

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

- Theories to explain the impact of domestic violence

Similarly to the breadth of theories developed to explain the occurrence of domestic violence, there are a range of theories to account for the range, and severity, of impact reported as a result of exposure to domestic violence. Theories relating to the impact of domestic violence can offer an explanation in relation to why some children are more resilient than others.

## Cognitive-Behavioural Theories

A developmental psychopathology framework is particularly prevalent in explanations considering the impact of domestic violence on children. According to Howell (2011) a developmental psychopathology framework is particularly useful to explain the impact of domestic violence on pre-school children. Howell (2011) argues exposure to domestic violence has a negative impact on early development, specifically emotion regulation and prosocial skills. 'Children learn emotional regulation naturally through the emotional expressions and explanations given by their caregivers' (Sternberg *et al.* 2006; p.90). Howell (2011) further proposes the severity of the impact is dependent upon the availability and responsiveness of the caregiver. According to Howell (2011) 'family life may impede the completion of major, age-appropriate milestones' (p.564). Furthermore according to Wolfe *et al.* (2003) attempts to accommodate, or adapt to, violent events negatively affect social and emotional development. The sensitisation hypothesis suggests frequent exposure to violence presents a greater adaptational challenge and children's reactions to conflict are consequently heightened, which increases the impact of the interactions (Grych *et al.* 2000; Cummings, Davies and Simpson, 1994).

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

Grych and Fincham (1990) present the cognitive-contextual model in an attempt to explain the impact of marital conflict on children. They propose both 'cognition

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

### Psychoanalytic Theories

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

The emotional security hypothesis proposed by Davies and Cummings (1994) develops the cognitive-contextual model and places greater significance on emotionality. They propose children's responses to marital conflict are regulated

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

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

Grych and Fincham (1990) identify marital conflict as a potential stressor which may lead to reliance on coping strategies which could be adaptive or maladaptive. The stress of exposure to conflict in adult relationships can be considered in relation to trauma theories. According to McCloskey and Walker (2000) violence within the family is a source of trauma for children. Margolin (2005) presents trauma theory as an explanation of the impact of exposure to domestic violence, 'the personal loss and threat associated with violence exposure create a highly stressful environment for youngsters' (p.74). Children's exposure to domestic violence is now recognised to be a potential precursor to the development of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Margolin and Vickerman, 2007; Chemtob and Carlson, 2004). PTSD was introduced in late

1970's and appeared in DSM-III for the first time in 1980. According to Johnson and Zlotnick (2009) PTSD is the most prevalent disorder associated with domestic violence. Lehmann (1997) found more than half of the children, in his sample, exposed to mother assault could be diagnosed with PTSD. However there has been extensive criticism of the DSM-IV criterion for PTSD as it failed to recognise the repetitive and ongoing nature of domestic violence (van der Kolk *et al.* 2009; Walker, 2009; Graham-Bermann and Levendosky, 1998). According to Graham-Bermann and Levendosky (1998) 'most children exposed to the emotional and physical abuse of their mothers exhibit symptoms of posttraumatic stress, although few qualify for a full PTSD diagnosis' (p.125). In addition PTSD has been criticised for failing to account for the symptoms of children who experience domestic violence. According to van der Kolk *et al.* (2009) this led to children exposed to domestic violence being diagnosed with unrelated co-morbid disorders such as bipolar disorder, ADHD, conduct disorder, phobic anxiety, reactive attachment disorder and separation anxiety. There have been significant changes to the PTSD criterion in the DSM-V published in May 2013. In response to criticism of the applicability of PTSD criteria to children the DSM-V includes a separate set of diagnostic criteria for children. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2013) the DSM-V is now developmentally sensitive as diagnostic thresholds for children and adolescents have been lowered and separate criteria have been included for children aged six or younger (for PTSD diagnostic criteria refer to appendix three, page iv).

### Family Systems Theories

According to Margolin (2005) family systems theory considers the paradox of the family as the safe haven and the source of violence, potentially leaving the parents less available for caretaking. Within family systems theories the interaction of the interpersonal, family and societal context are considered to explain the impact of domestic violence in the context of the family system becoming overwhelmed.

Levendosky *et al.* (2003) and Levendosky and Graham-Bermann (2001) applied Belsky's ecological model to explain the effects of domestic violence on children's functioning. Levendosky and Graham-Bermann (2001) theorised the trauma of domestic violence alone was not a reliable predictor of the functioning of women and children; instead the trauma of domestic violence needed to be considered in the context of an ecological model. They found the effects of domestic violence on parenting are mediated by psychological functioning, which is directly affected by the availability of social support. Levendosky *et al.* (2003) found some support for the importance of the mother-child relationship, as described within attachment theory, in the development of social and emotional functioning. According to Levendosky *et al.* (2003) the attachment relationship is a potential mediating factor in relation to the impact of exposure to domestic violence.

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

say children from violent relationships demonstrate a range of behaviour problems.

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

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

#### 2.2.4 - Impact and Effects of Domestic Violence

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



incarceration. Additionally children may also be the victims of murder by a violent parent.

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

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

Domestic violence is often described as traumatic for victims and witnesses; it has a wide range of physical and psychological effects upon victims (Levendosky and

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

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

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

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

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

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

Briere and Scott (2013) list domestic violence as one of the major types of traumatic event along with natural disasters, rape and sexual assault and sex trafficking for example. In addition Briere and Scott (2013) highlight victims of interpersonal trauma are at greater statistical risk of experiencing further interpersonal trauma.

Terr (1990) found the peers of children who were involved in the 1976 Chowchilla bus kidnap later displayed traumatic symptoms as a result of the incident. This shows traumatic events can have a wide reaching impact and even those who are not directly involved can become traumatised. This is particularly important when considering the support network surrounding a child who has experienced trauma. Parents for example may be traumatised by supporting a child who has been abused. This is also true of professionals supporting a child who has experienced trauma. It is for this reason great importance is placed upon the need for clinical supervision. According to the Quality Care Commission (2013) clinical supervision allows practitioners to explore their own personal and emotional reactions to their work. It also ensures service users receive high quality care as practitioners are able to manage the personal and emotional impacts of their practice. Whilst social workers and psychologists have clinical supervision on a regular basis the same is not true of teachers who provide day to day support to children in their care. The Department for Education (2013) outlines the requirements for teachers' appraisal under the new regulations 'The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012' and there is no reference to supervision for teachers.

Children are the hidden victims of domestic violence (Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Home Office, 2003; Holden and Ritchie, 1991; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989); yet over the last thirty years there is a wealth of research indicating domestic violence has an extensive impact upon children (Thornton, 2014; Thompson and Trice-Black, 2012; Baldry, 2007; Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Margolin, 2005; Kitzmann *et al.* 2003; Saunders, 2003; Smith and Landreth, 2003; Wolfe *et al.* 2003; Tyndall-Lind, Landreth and Giordano (2001); Carlson, 2000; Mohr *et al.* 2000; Kolbo, Blakely and Engleman, 1996; McCloskey, Figueredo and Koss, 1995). It affects emotional development (Lamers-Winkelman, Willemen and Vissera, 2012; World Health Organisation, 2012; Howell, 2011; Bogat *et al.* 2006; Kitzmann *et al.* 2003; Wolfe *et al.* 2003; Davies and Cummings, 1994; Fantuzzo *et al.* 1991), social skills (Lamers-Winkelman, Willemen and Vissera, 2012; Thompson and Trice-Black, 2012; World Health Organisation, 2012; Howell, 2011; Carlson, 2000; Fantuzzo *et al.* 1991), self-esteem (Du Plat-Jones, 2006; Carlson, 2000), social competence (Thompson and Trice-Black, 2012; Graham-Bermann *et al.* 2006; Fantuzzo *et al.* 1991), behaviour (Lamers-Winkelman, Willemen and Vissera, 2012; Renner, 2012; World Health Organisation,

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

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

According to Thornton (2014) children exposed to domestic violence experience repeated emotional distress and continued disruption to family dynamics. Thornton (2014) states 'living with domestic violence is emotionally overwhelming for young children' (p.98). This results in inadequate coping strategies which can lead to children being emotionally overwhelmed, whilst others manage to distance themselves. Thornton (2014) found children exposed to domestic violence depicted themselves as being endlessly forgiving, working hard to gain praise and making themselves as easy as possible to love. In addition the children in Thornton's (2014) study perceived violence as part of family life, did not expect adults to come to their aid and some children perceived themselves as to blame for the violence.

Domestic violence can have a long lasting and life-long impact (Thompson and Trice-Black, 2012; Devaney, 2008; Wolfe, 2006; Worley *et al.* 2004; Home Office, 2003; Dube *et al.* 2001). Given that children and young people exposed to domestic violence go on to experience difficulties in later life, besides lower academic attainment, inevitably their ability to contribute to society will be adversely affected. The impact of domestic violence on children has a significant social cost. There is role for education in addressing the impact of domestic violence. As Dewey (1897) stated, school is a representation of society. As such it should therefore be preparation for life beyond school, according to de Botton (2013):

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

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

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

- Psychopathology

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

- Age Differences

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

mothers suffering from depression and stress are unable to provide intellectually stimulating experiences for their children which indirectly impacts upon intellectual development. In contrast to research indicating maternal mental health affects parenting and parent-child relationships, Bogat *et al.* (2006) found maternal depressive symptoms were unrelated to infant trauma symptoms.

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

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

younger children due to reduced dependence on the family unit (Renner and Boel-Studt, 2013).

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

- Gender Differences

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

Bogat *et al.* (2006) suggest gender differences in infant trauma symptoms may be due to the mother's behaviour towards their child due to its sex, e.g. making negative attributions about a son's behaviour and Graham-Bermann and Brescoll (2000) found boys had more stereotyped beliefs around male power than girls. Fergusson and Horwood (1998) conducted a longitudinal study of



children exposed to domestic violence and found those exposed to male initiated violence developed anxiety, conduct disorder and criminal behaviour, whereas those exposed to female initiated violence developed substance misuse. Fergusson and Horwood (1998) suggest this implies male violence has a more harmful effect on children due to male assaults having more harmful consequences. Whereas Henning *et al.* (1997) found more psychological distress was reported from those who witnessed the same sex parent being a victim of domestic violence.

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

- Cultural Differences

Graham-Bermann *et al.* (2006) found Caucasian children were more likely to meet diagnostic criteria for PTSD than ethnic minority children exposed to domestic violence. The mother's mental health was the greatest predictor of traumatic stress for Caucasian children. Graham-Bermann *et al.* (2006) suggest self-blame may be related to depression and therefore Caucasian children may be more dependent upon their mothers and more affected by their distress. In contrast, the traumatic stress of ethnic minority children was most predicted by the level of exposure to violence and low income. Graham-Bermann *et al.* (2006) suggest the ethnic minority children's exposure to additional traumatic events, such as community violence, arrests, and racism, heightened the effects of domestic violence. Social support and religion for the mother enhances coping and reduces their distress, in turn this was a protective element for child traumatic stress. Graham-Bermann *et al.* (2006) suggest the ethnic minority mothers had learned to cope with socially imposed hardships and were therefore less likely to engage in self-blame allowing them to be more responsive to social support structures. 'Thus, the cultural context may be relevant to understanding

contributions to both dysfunction and pathways to resilience for mothers and children in different cultural groups' (Graham-Bermann *et al.* 2006; p.685). Finally Graham-Bermann and Brescoll (2000) found children from ethnic minority groups had more extreme beliefs in relation to the appropriateness and necessity of physical violence within the family. However these studies are conducted in the USA and may therefore reflect the cultural assumptions of the DSM criteria.

- Situational/Contextual Differences

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

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

- Differences in Exposure to Violence

Bogat *et al.* (2006) report children exposed to more severe domestic violence have more severe symptoms. According to Fantuzzo *et al.* (1991) the extent and type of violence relates to the impact upon children's behaviour, in addition to whether or not the child witnessed the violence first hand. If it were the case

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

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

- Differences in Adverse Childhood Experiences

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

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

- Differences in Parenting

There is extensive research exploring parenting in relation to the effects of domestic violence on children. Evidence suggests conflict in interpersonal relationships affects parenting capacity. The effects can be in relation to the emotional availability of the mother due to stress, negative interactions between the couple leading to negative parent-child interactions (the spillover hypothesis) and inconsistent discipline (Thornton, 2014; Holden and Ritchie, 1991).

Children can be affected by domestic violence as early as pregnancy. Levendosky *et al.* (2011) highlight violence during pregnancy as being of particular concern due to the impact upon the attachment relationship. They also suggest the infant's distress acts as a 'posttraumatic trigger which makes it difficult for the emotionally dysregulated mother to respond with appropriate parenting behaviour' (p.516). Bowlby (1969) outlined the attachment relationship as particularly important for child development and mental health. According to Bowlby disruption in the attachment relationship can lead to anger and anxiety, and also impact upon relationships in later life. This is of concern as research has shown the parent-child relationship is affected by domestic violence due to the impact on the mental health of the victim which indirectly affects their parenting capacity (Levendosky *et al.* 2012, Levendosky *et al.* 2006; Krishnakumar and Buehler, 2000; Erel and Burman, 1995; Holden and Ritchie, 1991).

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

- Individual Differences and Mediating Factors

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

consequently children's behaviour needs to be considered in this context rather than in isolation.

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

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

The impact of exposure to domestic violence and mediating factors is a continuing area of debate. The complexity of the issue is highlighted by the range of factors, e.g. age, gender, severity and duration of violence, that have been identified when attempting to explain the impact and effect of domestic violence on children. In addition there is no consensus regarding the impact of each of these factors. Some researchers have suggested the severity of the impact is related to the severity of the violence, or range of violence, to which the child is exposed (Renner, 2012; Lamers-Winkleman, Willeman and Vissera, 2012; Bogat *et al.* 2009), whereas, others claim there are mediating factors, such as parenting, individual characteristics

and maternal stress, which promote resilience in the face of adversity (Renner and Boel-Studt, 2013; Graham-Bermann *et al.* 2009; Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007; Skopp *et al.* 2005). Wolfe *et al.* (2003) infer experiencing violence in childhood has a negative impact on development and behaviour over and above other confounding factors whereas Ghate (2000) states the thresholds for harm are, as yet, unknown.

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

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

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

Domestic violence is a significant social problem which can have a substantial negative impact upon children. According to the Department of Health (2002) at least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence. According to Laming (2009) 200,000 (1.8%) children live in households where there is a known high risk case of domestic violence. Brandon *et al.* (2012) found evidence of past, or present,

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

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

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



to play, firstly in relation to supporting children and young people who experience trauma, such as domestic violence; and secondly in the provision of preventative measures to address violent relationships in the future.

#### 2.2.5 - Domestic Violence and Education

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

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

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

Currently there is no statutory requirement for schools to tackle domestic violence through lessons which raise awareness. PSHE remains a non-statutory subject in the new 2014 National Curriculum (Gov.UK, 2013b). The Sex Education Forum

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

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

Gove's priorities for the future of education, as identified earlier, were related to the quality of education which in his opinion is demarcated by attainment, qualifications and standards. I find his view that providing a better quality education will reduce risky behaviour an interesting approach. Gove believes poor quality education is to blame for statistics on domestic violence, teenage pregnancy and other behaviours he describes in his argument. Many would suggest a direct preventative approach by teaching about these topics, however Gove (2012) argues for an education in a 'particular range of subjects' as the answer (no page). The view of poor education

as a cause of risky behaviour also fails to acknowledge the complexities of domestic violence and the impact it has upon children and families. Gove also fails to acknowledge the psychological trauma caused by exposure to domestic violence is so significant that this alone could be argued to impact upon an individual's education (Lamers-Winkelmann, Willemsen and Vissera, 2012). To assume a high quality education can eradicate all effects of exposure to domestic violence, and is an acceptable preventative whole school approach, is naive and undoubtedly offensive to those who have been exposed to domestic violence and suffered psychological trauma as a result.

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

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

domestic violence are currently not a focus. Previously the government has produced an information pack 'Teenage Relationship Abuse: A Teacher's guide to violence and abuse in teenage relationships' (Home Office, 2010). Whilst this document raised staff awareness of relationship abuse and detailed good practice it did not extend to lessons to raise awareness of relationship abuse.

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

### **2.3 - Conclusion**

There is a wealth of research indicating witnessing domestic violence has an extensive impact upon children. It affects learning, emotional development, social skills and behaviour. The effects can be long lasting and have a life-long impact. The majority of research has been conducted using self-report from mothers who have been victims of domestic violence, or from perpetrators of domestic violence (usually the mother's partner) and direct work / observations of children, adolescents and adults who have witnessed domestic violence. As a result the research relates to the context of the home and family. There is little research conducted in relation to education as a context for development.

Within domestic violence research there are recommendations regarding appropriate therapeutic interventions for children who have witnessed domestic violence. Teachers are front line practitioners supporting these children and there is little or no research from a teacher perspective, or to indicate what type of support is needed or beneficial for these children on a day to day basis.

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

### 2.3.1 - Research Questions

1. What are teacher narratives of support mechanisms for children and their families who have been exposed to domestic violence?
2. What are the teacher narratives of the impact of exposure to domestic violence on learning and functioning within the classroom and wider school environment?
3. What are the implications for the role of Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate day to day support for children and families who have been exposed to domestic violence?

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



### **3 - Methodology**

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

#### **Research Questions**

1. What are teacher narratives of support mechanisms for children and their families who have been exposed to domestic violence?
2. What are the teacher narratives of the impact of exposure to domestic violence on learning and functioning within the classroom and wider school environment?
3. What are the implications for the role of Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate day to day support for children and families who have been exposed to domestic violence?

This chapter discusses the methodological decisions which underpin this research project. Within the first section the choice of research perspective is discussed, the section begins with a description of ontology and epistemology; the ontological and epistemological assumptions applied within research are then discussed. The following section presents a methodological critique of domestic violence research followed by implications for this research. The third section of this chapter presents the ethical issues associated with domestic violence and educational research, and

these are discussed in relation to this research project. The last three sections of this chapter discuss social constructionism, a narrative approach, and thematic analysis. The implications of these methodological paradigms and approaches, which are applied to this research, are also discussed.

### **3.1 - Choosing a Research Paradigm**

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

#### **3.1.1 - Ontology**

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

There are two main ontological approaches, objectivist and constructionist, which can alternatively be described as realist and relativist (Willig, 2008). Objectivists argue reality is facts waiting to be discovered, it exists independent of our beliefs and understanding and can be directly observed and measured (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Willig, 2008; Crotty, 1998; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In contrast constructionists argue reality is constructed, it is subjective and meaning is produced



through social interaction (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Willig, 2008; Crotty, 1998). Crotty (1998) states 'meaning is not discovered but constructed' (p.42).

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

### 3.1.2 - Epistemology

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

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

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) state 'Comte's position was to lead to a general doctrine of positivism which held that all genuine knowledge is based on sense experience and can only be advanced by means of observation and experiment'

(p.7). Positivist epistemology assumes truth can be known and knowledge is objective (Mack, 2010) and positivist researchers perceive themselves to be separate from the research. According to Chioncel, Van Der Veen, Wildemeersch and Jarvis (2003) positivists argue 'what is knowledgeable is directly observable, measurable and quantifiable and that data are objective and independent of researchers' perceptions' (p.501). In contrast to positivism, interpretivist epistemology assumes knowledge is subjective. According to Goodley and Smailes (2011) 'the social world [is] an emergent social process, created by individuals and their shared subjective understandings' (p.49). Consequently interpretivist researchers view themselves as influential in the research and as co-creating meaning, 'behaviour can only be understood by the researcher sharing their frame of reference' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; p.15).

### 3.1.3 - Implications for this research

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

Domestic violence is a complex social phenomenon which is relatively un-researched in education and I would therefore argue an interpretivist epistemological approach is most appropriate. In addition according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) interpretive approaches 'fit naturally to the kind of concentrated action found

in classrooms and schools' (p.20). The education system is complex and multi-faceted. It would therefore be extremely difficult to collect reliable, objective and quantifiable data. In addition there is very little research into domestic violence conducted from an educational perspective. Therefore in this instance a relatively under-researched area is to be considered and to quantify would require assumptions and judgements to be made without any directly relevant research to support, or even justify, those assumptions.

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

*Reflexive Box*

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

## 3.2 - Research Methodologies

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

### 3.2.1 - Definitions of Domestic Violence

Definitions of domestic violence often fail to take into account the severity or frequency of exposure to domestic violence a child has experienced (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008; Wolfe *et al.* 2003; Mohr *et al.*, 2000; Edleson, 1999; Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1999; Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989). Within domestic violence research data is often presented as representative of children who have only witnessed violence, however children included in these samples are also often targets of violence therefore making the data unrepresentative (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008; Edleson, 1999). Consequently problems with definition mean studies cannot be considered to be representative of all children exposed to domestic violence due to a number of factors such variability in exposure, frequency, and individual and collective resilience (Saunders, 2003; Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1999).

As stated by Jouriles *et al.* (1998), domestic violence is not a 'homogeneous, unidimensional phenomenon' (p. 178). Despite this domestic violence has become accepted as a definition which is 'worn smooth' by use (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008; p.798). According to Lewis-O'Connor (2004) the prevalence of domestic violence is difficult to quantify as there is no common definition. The difference in the use of the terms 'abuse' and 'violence' is particularly important as the use of different terminology has been shown to produce differing statistics in relation to the prevalence of domestic violence.

### 3.2.2 - Sampling

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

### 3.2.3 - Sources of Information

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

### 3.2.4 - Measures of Impact

Meta analyses and literature claims suggest that methods used for assessing the effects of children's exposure to domestic violence are mainly quantitative, e.g. Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CIPC), the Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) and the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) (Wolfe *et al.* 2003; Edleson,

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

### 3.2.5 - Research Designs

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

Edleson's (1999) final criticism of domestic violence research is that the majority of studies are correlational yet there are no conclusive findings regarding cause and effect only reported associations, e.g. witnessing violence and behaviour problems are associated, but there is not conclusion regarding the causal relationships. In contrast Kolbo, Blakely and Engleman (1996) state literature reviews have generally supported a 'positive correlation between children's witnessing domestic

violence and impaired development' (p.281). According to Fantuzzo and Mohr (1999) there is a lack of longitudinal research to track children's functioning across time. Baldry (2007) recommends 'multiple sources such as parents, teachers and social workers should be used in further studies to corroborate findings' (p.34).

### 3.2.6 - Implications for this research

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

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

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

Finally a balanced approach to qualitative analysis is sought by remaining mindful of the six analytic shortcomings described by Antaki *et al.* (2001): (1) under-analysis through summary; (2) under-analysis through taking sides; (3) under-analysis through over-quotation or through isolated quotation; (4) the circular identification of

discourses and mental constructs; (5) false survey; and (6) analysis that consists in simply spotting features (no page). According to Antaki *et al.* (2001) acknowledgement of these principles will encourage the development of more rigorous qualitative analysis.

### **3.3 - Ethical Issues**

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

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

Whilst there are specific ethical concerns relating directly to children exposed to domestic violence all of the typical ethical issues to be considered when working with children are also applicable when considering research around children exposed to domestic violence (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The main issues relating to direct contact with children would include the age of participants, and their ability to give informed consent, need for anonymity, in addition to more specific concerns such as



the risk of an abusive partner posing a threat to the safety of the children and/or the researcher and finally, due to trauma experienced, there is a risk of retraumatisation. This would necessitate a need to ensure follow up comprehensive psychological support to be available for those involved in the research; which in this instance cannot be provided.

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

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

Parker (2005) argues there are political ethics to consider in qualitative research and many of his arguments are particularly pertinent when considering a sensitive topic, such as domestic violence. Parker (2005) argues researchers need to be able to make a clear political assessment of their research, for example he argues it is

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

Parker (2005) warns against pathologising participants. This links directly to the previous assumption relating to the nature of human beings; as it would be easy to assume there is something abnormal about both the perpetrator and the victim. For example a perpetrator can be perceived abnormal because they are violent towards their partner, which, as we have already established, contravenes political norms. The victim is also considered abnormal because they allow the cycle of violence to continue. However, as we have seen from the literature review, there are a number of other assumptions within these statements that can be challenged demonstrating the complexity of these ethical and political issues.

Parker (2005) argues there is no such thing as confidentiality within research as the aim is 'always to discover something new and to show it to others' (p.17). Whilst Parker (2005) states anonymity is achievable, he warns this can deny the very voice the researcher is seeking to present. Parker (2005) states this conflict represents the image of psychology research participants 'as fragile beings needing to be protected' (p.17). It would be very difficult to adequately address this issue when

working with young children, who by their nature, should be protected by adults. In this instance a voice for these children can be facilitated by adults who have a relationship with them. Teachers are well placed to present an educational perspective and to compare and contrast these children to their peers; something their parents would, perhaps, be less able to do. In addition, as has already been acknowledged within the methodological criticisms of domestic violence research, parents (mothers) do not always give an accurate representation of their child.

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

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

Given the complexities of exposure to domestic violence, such as the scope and variation in severity of impact and the influence of social interactions from both home and school, a social constructionist paradigm is particularly relevant when considering exposure to domestic violence. Key adults within a child's life would include parents and teachers, who may offer contradictory messages about violence, managing emotions, solving social problems and healthy relationships.

Given the methodological and ethical criticisms of domestic violence research I feel there is a clear rationale for approaching teachers and once again I stress the paucity of domestic violence research in education and with teachers as the participants.

### **3.4 - Social Constructionism**

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

#### *1. A critical stance toward taken for granted knowledge*

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

#### *2. Historical and cultural specificity*

The categories we use to understand the world are culturally and historically specific. Views about what is appropriate for children have changed considerably. Social

constructionism does not assume one way of understanding is more truthful than another. Psychological theories can also be considered in the same way and only representative of the culture and era in which they were developed. This has particular implications for psychological research according to Gergen (1985) 'as it begins to outline the possible constraints over what psychological research can say' (p.268).

### *3. Knowledge is sustained by social processes*

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

### *4. Knowledge and social action go together*

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

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

#### *Anti-essentialism*

According to social constructionism there is no determined nature as the social world is constructed through social interaction. People are not considered to have definable or discoverable features, such as personality.

### *Questioning realism*

Social constructionism rejects the idea of objective facts and argues all knowledge is from one perspective or another, 'as a culture or society we construct our own versions of reality between us' (Burr, 2003; p.6).

### *Historical and cultural specificity of knowledge*

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

### *Language as a pre-condition for thought*

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

### *Language as a form of social action*

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

### *A focus on interaction and social practices*

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

### *A focus on processes*

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

#### 3.4.1 - Implications for this research

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

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

As I have already highlighted Parker (2005) warns of the ethical difficulties posed by pathologising, or socially constructing, participants according to one category or another. This is particularly pertinent in relation to domestic violence when

considering social constructions of gender, victims and perpetrators. A social constructionist perspective will facilitate a deeper exploration of domestic violence, how it occurs and how it is understood and therefore provides an appropriate way to explore constructs identified within the literature, such as men tend to be the perpetrators, which continue to be areas of debate as there is contradictory research evidence. A social constructionist approach also accounts for historical changes in constructions of domestic violence which have changed considerably in the last thirty years.

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

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

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



over an academic year and many teachers have knowledge of children across the school and how their development has progressed.

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

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

### **3.5 - Narrative Approach**

Parker (2005) argues anonymity can serve to protect the researcher from challenge regarding interpretations which have been made within the research. Narrative research, in contrast, openly seeks to share interpretations with the participants to check for validity and truth. Parker (2005) argues 'empirical truth is constructed from a certain position' (p.17). Research is, by its nature, socially constructed and,

according to Parker (2005), the researcher should make their part clear to enable the reader to critically evaluate the research. Narrative research is readily able to accommodate these particular ethical concerns raised by Parker (2005) and they are central to the narrative paradigm and social constructionism. The narrative paradigm embraces the co-construction of the research and therefore there are no hidden agendas within narrative research and no concerns in relation to deception, or alternate research questions to those shared with the participants. Researchers applying a narrative paradigm would therefore argue their research aims and questions are transparent to the participants. However, similarly to other research methods, narrative approaches have their critiques. Atkinson (2010) argues qualitative researchers are quick to present narratives without consideration of the context. He argues for 'systematic ethnographic fieldwork' followed by a 'sustained, systematic and disciplined analysis' (no page). According to Trahar (2009) narrative research is often criticised for presenting narratives as authentic; however Atkinson and Delamont (2006) argue methodological clarity regarding the positionality of the narratives and the positionality of the researcher is what gives narratives their authenticity.

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

“Narrative research is a multi-level, interdisciplinary field and any attempt to simplify its complexity would not do justice to the richness of approaches, theoretical understanding and unexpected finding that it has offered.” (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2011; p.12)

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

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

by the teachers and the researcher?). Narrative epistemology therefore provides a means by which the research questions can be considered and data collected which can be analysed to answer these questions. However Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2011) argue there is no clarity around what epistemological significance should be attached to narratives.

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

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

Finally Spector-Mersel (2010) argues the narrative paradigm, methodologically, is clear in respect of its data – stories. These stories are shaped and influenced by the presence of the researcher. The interpretation of stories is a crucial part of narrative

methodology as they are examined. A holistic approach is taken which requires a 'multidimensional and interdisciplinary lens', 'a holistic analysis', 'regard for form and content' and 'attention to context' (p.214).

### 3.5.1 - Implications for this research

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

The principles of a narrative approach are appealing to this thesis due to it being a relatively unexplored area of research. According to Josselson (2011) the aim of narrative research is to 'explore nuances and interrelationships among aspects of

experience' (p.239) in order to 'bring forth new understanding that will benefit our wider scholarly fields' (p.240).

### **3.6 - Thematic Analysis**

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

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

Firstly Braun and Clarke (2006) state it is important for the researcher to know what type of analysis they wish to complete, for example a rich description of the data set or a detailed account of one particular aspect. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest a

rich description may be particularly useful when investigating and under-researched area, or when working with participants whose views are unknown.

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

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

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

### 3.6.1 - Implications for this research

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

Themes will be identified using a latent analysis, in attempt to identify meaning in the data.

### **3.7 - Conclusion**

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

The following chapter will describe the methods applied within this thesis, a three session narrative approach, group interviews and reflective logs. The procedures used for the data collection and data analysis will then be described.



## **4 - Methods**

Within this thesis group interviews and reflective logs were utilised as part of a three session narrative approach (Billington, 2012). Three teachers from two primary schools participated in the thesis. Data was collected from three group interviews and three reflective logs. Group interviews were used to elicit teacher narratives and this was supplemented by a reflective log completed by each teacher. The participants were known to the researcher prior to the thesis.

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

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

### **4.1 - Three Session Narrative Approach**

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

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

consideration of professional's social constructions of children (i.e. teachers in nurture groups).

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

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

- How do we speak of children?
- How do we speak with children?
- How do we write of children?
- How do we listen to children?
- How do we listen to ourselves [when working with children]?

(Billington, 2006, p.8).

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

In addition Billington (2012) espouses the role of the researcher as an agent of change and therefore the research having value as an intervention in its own right. He argues the researcher is 'part of the process and is influential in its outcomes' (p.323). In agreement with Billington's (2012) approach the participants were encouraged to engage in reflexive practice and this was similarly facilitated through the use of reflective logs. The aim was to facilitate professional development and ultimately in the final session develop recommendations for future practice. Whilst

Billington (2012) introduced his participants to narrative principles and concepts applied in narrative therapy. I was not confident in my own experience and understandings of narrative therapy to directly apply this to my own research; however the participants were informed the aim was to create a narrative of domestic violence and the value of their story was made clear.

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

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

## **4.2 - Group Interviews**

Interviews are a popular method of data collection in qualitative research (Runswick-Cole, 2011). Interviews appear to be an infinitely adaptable research tool (Breakwell, 2000) and they can be used concurrently with other data collection techniques. According to Burman (1994) 'interviews can permit exploration of issues

that may be too complex to investigate through quantitative means' (p.50). According to Runswick-Cole (2011) the popularity of interviews is due to the increasing focus on phenomenology in social sciences, and interviews allow researchers to give a voice to their participants.

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

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

In addition I am not an experienced researcher, therefore to enable the research to be effective, and in the interests of obtaining data which would address the research questions, semi-structured interviews were considered appropriate in this instance.

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

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) warn of the potential for 'group think' to occur (p.432). This is also acknowledged by Bion (1948). Individuals may not speak out against the group and opinions shared within the group are also attributed to be opinions of the group as a whole. Given narrative approaches value the story of the individual and one of the key principles of the narrative approach is the provision of an arena which allows the individual to tell their story I feel these concerns are addressed by the wider principles of social constructionism and a narrative approach. The dialogue in a group interview is co-constructed and it is a representation of the group as a whole, not each individual within the group. Within this research teacher narratives of domestic violence are being sought rather than the narratives of the teacher. In my opinion it is the subtlety of this difference which makes a group interview more appropriate than individual interviews. Furthermore the narrative approach is concerned with the story that is created, not a search for truth. As such group think is not considered to be problematic in relation to this thesis. However this is not to be confused with truth value which is sought and, as stated earlier, it is hoped this is facilitated by the use of a three session approach which incorporates opportunities for reflection. In addition the reflective logs provide an opportunity for the participants to comment on the sessions and their content independently of the group.

Runswick-Cole (2011) states it is important for a researcher to recognise how their positionality, such as knowledge, values, beliefs, gender, race and class will influence the interview. In this instance the key aspect of positionality is my profession as an educational and child psychologist as this creates assumptions regarding knowledge, values and beliefs. The same can be said of the participants who are all teachers. Both of these aspects of positionality were disclosed when the participants were recruited. Positionality is not considered to be a weakness in this research, instead it is acknowledged as a component of the ethnographic framework of the research.

#### *Reflexive Box*

*Given I have stressed the importance of positionality in relation to narrative research it is relevant to reflect on my positionality at the time of data collection.*

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

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter the participants were known to me prior to completing the thesis. My knowledge of the participants is purely professional and may, or may not, have influenced the participants to participate in the research. Runswick-Cole (2011) discusses the issue of rapport and participant willingness to disclose information on the basis of fake friendship. I am not aware of whether having prior knowledge of the participants had any identifiable positive or negative impact on this research. Two of the participants had prior knowledge of one another

and worked in the same school. At times this was perceived to influence their interactions and led to them dominating discussion. However this was also impacted by the other participant missing the second session. It is therefore unclear to what extent their prior knowledge of one another affected the group dynamics; although this is true of any type of interview.

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

### **4.3 - Reflective Logs**

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

There are a number of advantages to a diary approach. Diary methods allow data to be collected without the researcher being present (Breakwell and Wood, 2000) and information is temporally ordered giving a profile of actions, thoughts and feelings

over time (Willig, 2008; Breakwell and Wood, 2000). Breakwell and Wood (2000) suggest diary methods will encourage self-revelation and honesty and similarly Willig (2008) argues diary methods facilitate the sharing of personal or more intimate information. There are also disadvantages to diary methods. According to Breakwell and Wood (2000) there is limited control over the data provided and material is therefore self-selected. In addition participants may drop-out or not continue with the initial level of commitment (Willig, 2008; Breakwell and Wood, 2000). It may also be difficult to establish whether the content of the reflective log is true (Breakwell and Wood, 2000). The very nature of having to complete a reflective log may alter the behaviour thoughts and feelings which are recorded (Willig, 2008; Breakwell and Wood, 2000). Finally Willig (2008) identifies ethical concerns associated with diary methods as they may encourage participants to reflect on aspects of their lives which may cause distress and the commitment of keeping a diary may cause increased stress.

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

#### **4.4 - Procedures**

##### **4.4.1 - Resources**

Table 1, on the following page, details the resources used to complete this research project.



Table 1 - Table of resources used during the period of participant selection and data collection

Participant selection process	Session One	Session Two	Session Three
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial letter to Headteachers / SENCos (appendix four, page xi)</li> <li>• Initial letter to participants (appendix four, page xi)</li> <li>• Letter to selected participants (appendix four, page xi)</li> <li>• Letter to unselected participants (appendix four, page xi)</li> <li>• Information gathering sheet (appendix Five, page xvii)</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Social Media (Facebook)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant information sheet (appendix six, page xviii)</li> <li>• Participant consent form (appendix seven, page xxii)</li> <li>• Pens</li> <li>• Group interview introduction and themes/ questions (appendix eight, page xxiii)</li> <li>• Definition of Domestic Violence (appendix two, page iii)</li> <li>• Reflective logs (instructions for the reflective log can be found in appendix sixteen, page cxxii)</li> <li>• Reading for next session: Howell (2011), Resilience and psychopathology in children exposed to family violence, <i>Aggression and Violent Behavior</i>, 16(6): 562–569.</li> <li>• Hyden (2011) Chapter 7 Narrating sensitive topics in Andrews, M., Squire, C. and Tamboukou, M. (2011), <i>Doing Narrative Research</i>, London: Sage.</li> <li>• Dictaphone</li> <li>• Mobile phone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group interview introduction and themes/ questions (appendix eight, page xxiii)</li> <li>• Dictaphone</li> <li>• Mobile phone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group interview introduction and themes/ questions (appendix eight, page xxiii)</li> <li>• Definition of child abuse (appendix nine, page xxxii)</li> <li>• Definition of Domestic Violence (appendix two, page iii)</li> <li>• Summary of discussion from session one and session two (appendix ten, page xxxiii)</li> <li>• Illustration of an interconnected theme identified in session two (appendix eleven, page xxxv)</li> <li>• Post it notes (four different colours)</li> <li>• Sheets of A3 paper with pre-prepared headings in the centre of the paper (appendix twenty-two, page cxxxvi)</li> <li>• Dictaphone</li> <li>• Mobile phone</li> </ul>

#### 4.4.2 - Participants

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

- **Teacher One**

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

- **Teacher Two**

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

- **Teacher Three**

Teacher two is female and over forty years old. She is a mother. Teacher three is an experienced teacher (with at least five years teaching experience) and

currently teaches year six (10 – 11 year olds), in addition she is the deputy head teacher and SENCo. Due to additional responsibilities she teaches her class for half of the week on a job share basis. Teacher three works at the same mixed gender community primary school as teacher two (described above).

#### 4.4.3 - Procedure

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

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

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

I initially discussed my research informally with schools I was covering as a local authority (LA) Educational Psychologist. To begin with participants were invited from only this area of the city, however due to difficulties recruiting participants the population was later widened to include all primary settings in the city. In follow up to

the informal discussions I emailed the Head teacher and SENCo at the fourteen primary schools within the cluster. If the Head teacher or SENCo decided their school was able to participate a letter and information gathering sheet was forwarded, by the Head teacher / SENCo, to all teaching staff in the setting.

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

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

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

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

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

The sessions took place at the schools participating in the research due to the school staff offering to host the sessions.

At the first session the participants were read the information sheet and asked to sign consent forms. The sessions then followed pre-prepared introduction and themes/ questions (see appendix eight, page xxiii).

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

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

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

#### **4.5 - Data Analysis**

A thematic analysis was carried out (Braun and Clarke, 2006) employing the following steps. Familiarisation of the data took place through the transcription of the group interviews, according to the conventions described by Edwards and Mercer (1987) (appendix twelve, page xxxvi). The transcripts were completed immediately

after each session, so that each transcript was complete prior to the next session taking place. The transcripts were checked against the audio recordings for accuracy. The notes created in session three did not add anything additional to the transcript of the session and therefore were excluded from the data analysis (appendix twenty-two, page cxxxvi). The transcript of each group interview was read in preparation for the next group interview with summary notes (a recap) prepared for the next group interview (appendix eight, page xxiii). This formed an initial list of ideas about what is in the data. After all the group interviews were completed each transcript was read and re-read (the transcripts can be found in appendix thirteen to fifteen). Summary notes were made on the transcripts.

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

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

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

codes were considered in relation to each theme to check for validity and overlap within the codes was identified.

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

#### **4.6 - Conclusion**

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

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

## **5 - Personal Reflection**

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

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

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

### **5.1 - Adam's story**

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

*On reaching the MLU I was given gas and air. Following examination the midwife had difficulty finding the baby's heartbeat. She explained she thought the baby may be experiencing decelerations or she may be finding my heartbeat. We were told it*



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

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

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

'Did you know what you were having?'

We shook our heads.

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

We held him for around an hour before placing him in the crib. I was emotionally empty. The morphine made me fall asleep and I was physically sick. I felt cheated of this time with my son due to the effects of the morphine – which was never in my birth plan, but neither was the death of my baby. I was scared to hold him and he wasn't the baby I knew. The baby I knew was alive. He had long purple feet.

*Purple was wrong. I tucked them back up in the towel he was wrapped in and gave him back to his Daddy. We couldn't dress him; the hospital bag was still in the car because of the emergency transfer; another lasting regret.*

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

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

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

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

*It wasn't fair.*

*How would we tell our family and friends?*

*It hurt so much.*

*How would we cope?*

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

*Shit had happened.*

## 5.2 - Professional Empathy

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

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

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

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

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

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

ways I had previously never considered. I do not feel this previously made me a 'bad practitioner', instead I have a humility and empathy I didn't in the past.

### **5.3 - Conclusion**

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

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

## **6 - Findings**

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

### **6.1 - Pen-Portrait of the Participants**

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

#### **6.1.1 - Teacher One**

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

Teacher one presented as confident in her practice but wanted to do more for the children who have been exposed to domestic violence. She presented as having

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

#### 6.1.2 - Teacher Two

Teacher two attended all three sessions.

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

Teacher two presented as a confident classroom practitioner but found suggestions of speaking to parents and directly addressing issues at home very uncomfortable due to concerns parents would worry other agencies, such as Social Care, would become involved. As a consequence she seemed to reflect on her role within the

constraints of the classroom. She appeared to find policy and practice took up an inordinate amount of time, which negatively impacted her ability to teach.

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

### 6.1.3 - Teacher Three

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

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

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

## **6.2 - Reflection on the Sessions**

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

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

### 6.2.1 - Session One

In the first session the participants seemed nervous but spoke openly. It quickly became apparent the approaches used in the classroom were good practice

behaviour management strategies. It was apparent any external professional support had been from a family support perspective and aimed at parenting. The teachers did not appear to have received any school based support to address children's emotional and social difficulties.

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

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

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

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

### 6.2.2 - Session Two

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

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

Despite providing a definition of domestic violence I feel there is still confusion understanding the differences between child abuse and domestic violence. I felt it was necessary to revisit the definition of domestic violence and define child abuse in the next session. I was now quite worried that I had underestimated their



understanding and knowledge of domestic violence. I was not confident we would be able to develop a set of resources or strategies for other teachers within the third session without me heavily leading and facilitating the session. The strategies so far had been related to general behaviour management and were not used with evidence of a theoretical basis.

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

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

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

### 6.2.3 - Session Three

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

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

It was difficult to stimulate discussion despite a comprehensive recap and I felt teacher one had less to contribute.

As I had feared the discussion did continue to focus on problems more than solutions. However future ideas and strategies were suggested. The session focused more on how I can directly and indirectly support teachers in the future, e.g. through the provision of resources and further training.

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

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

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

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

### 6.3 - Analysis of the Themes

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

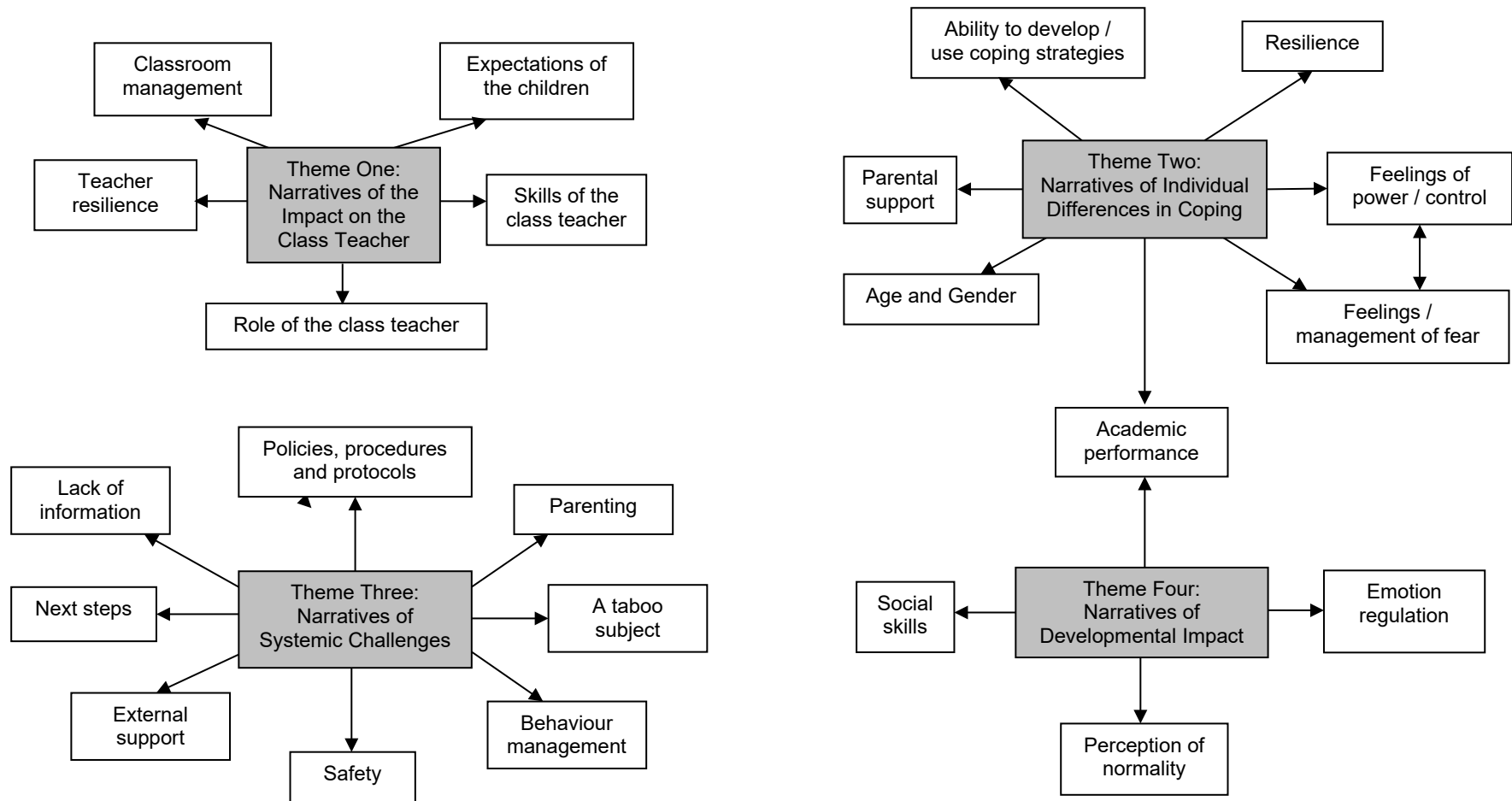
Below is an extract from table 3. This extract shows how the final code ‘expectations of the children’ was developed from six initial codes (expectations of the children, aspirations for the children, impact of trauma, learned behaviour, resilience, uncertainty). The code ‘expectations of the children’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

Extract from table 3:

Initial codes	Final codes	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations of the children</li> <li>• Aspirations for the children</li> <li>• Impact of trauma</li> <li>• Learned behaviour</li> <li>• Resilience</li> <li>• Uncertainty</li> </ul> <p><i>(See appendix twenty for a full list of the initial codes)</i></p>	<p>Expectations of the children</p> <p><i>(See appendix twenty-one for a full list of the final codes)</i></p>	<p>Narratives of the impact on the class teacher (theme one)</p> <p><i>(See figure 1 for an overview of all the themes and corresponding codes)</i></p>

The final thematic map is presented on the next page (figure 1):

Figure 1 – Thematic Map



The thematic map (figure 1) illustrates the themes (in the grey boxes) with the corresponding codes surrounding each theme (in white boxes). The thematic map (figure 1) illustrates one code 'academic performance' is applicable to both 'theme two – narratives of individual differences in coping' and 'theme four – narratives of developmental impact'.

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

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

This theme represents the factors influencing the class teacher's ability to support children who have experienced trauma.

Table 3 - Development of theme one: narratives of the Impact on the class teacher, illustrated by initial codes forming final codes

Initial codes	Final codes	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations of the children</li> <li>• Aspirations for the children</li> <li>• Impact of trauma</li> <li>• Learned behaviour</li> <li>• Resilience</li> <li>• Uncertainty</li> </ul>	Expectations of the children	Narratives of the impact on the class teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good practice</li> <li>• Effective strategies</li> <li>• Fear of the class teacher</li> <li>• Ineffective support</li> <li>• Fear of other staff members</li> <li>• Basic behaviour management strategies</li> <li>• Skills of the class teacher</li> </ul>	Skills of the class teacher	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class teacher responsibility</li> <li>• Social and emotional development</li> <li>• Security / nurturing</li> <li>• Development and maintenance of rapport</li> <li>• Teacher's job is to teach</li> </ul>	Role of the class teacher	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher's sense of defeat</li> <li>• Coping ability</li> <li>• Resilience of teachers</li> <li>• Resilience of other staff</li> </ul>	Teacher resilience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge to class teacher to manage whole class</li> <li>• Impact on class</li> </ul>	Classroom management	

- Expectations of the children

All of the teachers were keen for the children in their care to do well. One of the teachers felt it was particularly important to maintain high expectations and saw education as having the potential to break the cycle of learned violent behaviour:

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

F: *mmm*

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

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

(1: 783-788)

Teacher three begins by implying children have a choice about how they are affected by domestic violence. I feel this demonstrates a lack of understanding of the impact of traumatic experiences. Whilst she recognises agency here rather than pathologising all children choice can also be used to pathologise. There is an acknowledgement of the trauma which has been experienced and recognition that this is difficult to understand or comprehend but the primary focus is on providing an education with a suggestion those who are educated are better equipped to choose how life experiences affect them. She suggests there is empathy for their experience but again it is not an excuse for children not to engage. Based on my own reflections it is like watching the world happen around you and feeling very disconnected. I remember feeling frustrated my friends were talking about mundane everyday things and wanted them to talk about my trauma, even though I didn't really want to talk about it. As a result I felt like an observer and couldn't participate as my thoughts were elsewhere. I am fortunate to be able to understand my friends had the best of intentions in trying to create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. I can imagine it would be very difficult for a child to process these feelings and recognise their need to engage, or disengage. It would have been very easy for me to express my frustrations rather than be passive. Perhaps children display undesirable behaviour as a consequence of trauma due to frustration and feelings they are unable to articulate or understand. I feel this extract therefore suggests the teacher lacks theoretical knowledge of the impact of trauma and its impact.

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

T2: *Although he still hasn't seen the worst of Dad.*  
T3: *No he hasn't seen the worst of Dad,  
[or he can't remember seeing the worst of Dad.*  
T2: *[or mum/ no, no*

T2: *Or you know.*  
T3: *He can't have seen the worst of Dad can he as he wasn't consciously old enough.*  
T2: *no.*

(1: 579-586)

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

(2: 938-948)

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

(2: 1126-1127)

- Skills of the class teacher

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

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

(1: 608-610)

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



The teachers were frustrated with the support from classroom staff and the wider school staff:

- T1: *because he got my full attention or he got the TAs and you got to a point where the TAs were like 'right I don't want to handle this anymore' and*  
F: *Mmm and how does that make you feel, and if you're nodding as well, when you've got your support staff saying to you I, I don't want to, how do you feel?*  
T1: *It makes you feel, it made me feel like I wasn't doing the right thing in a sense cos I'm like if they don't want to do it then there's going to be me with this child*  
T2: *yeah*  
(1: 230-239)
- T1: *Well we got to a point, sorry [to T2], we got to a point where we were taking him to the headteacher and she was a bit like, she just took him somewhere else, to somebody else, cos I think, she got to a point where she was like well I don't really know what else to do with him*  
F: *mmm*  
T1: *in a sense. And then you've got calmed down and brought back to you within minutes*  
(1: 266-273)
- T2: *well cos ours was sent to the headteacher sometimes he'd trash the headteacher's classroom erm but and, and she [laughs], she used to do things to calm him down like sit him on her knee and read a book which, so in the end he used to want*  
F: *mmm-hmm*  
T2: *to go to her room cos it wasn't punishment and, and then you've lost control haven't you?*  
F: *mmm*  
T2: *He's, he's, you've got no sanctions because they're kind of... calling all the shots.*  
(1: 288-297)

The first quote demonstrates the reliance on support staff and that class teachers feel unable to manage without the support of these extra adults. The lack of engagement and fear of support staff described by the teachers implies the children are labelled as 'naughty' by support staff and the fact this behaviour continues leads them to perceive the behaviour is not being taken seriously and managed properly. With more empathy and understanding of the children's behaviour it is my feeling support staff may approach and respond to the children very differently, therefore providing more effective classroom based support.

The second two quotes indicate the teachers would like to have more input into a coordinated response to supporting and managing the behaviour of these children; and at the very least have a discussion to make a plan for these children.

- Role of the class teacher

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

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

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

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

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

*T2: mmm*

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

(1: 792-806)

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

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

The pressure of accountability felt by teachers is demonstrated as teacher three speaks of not giving excuses and teacher two highlights the responsibility to the

whole class. Teacher three is also sure there is more than just academic responsibility in her role:

T3: *well I think we've got a role as teachers to build resilience* (2: 1292)

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

T3: *Thinking about what was discussed – I need to give more time to PSE – as a job share I spend a lot of time focussed on the teaching and PSE isn't in my half of the week – do I know what is happening in some children's lives?  
Time!* (R3: 09-19)

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

T3: *and I've concentrated on that loads this year but I think at the expensive sometimes of giving space to children to just / talk*  
F: *mmm-hmm.*  
T2: *mmm.*  
T3: *you know I've been so focussed on  
[ getting them*  
T2: *[ yeah*  
T3: *moving forward academically. I know with this class, although I've got a reasonably good relationship with them I don't, maybe know as much about them as maybe with other classes because I know for a fact I, I just don't, I'm just like next thing, next thing, next.* (2: 105-115)

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

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

- Teacher resilience

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

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

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

T1: *well why is there nothing else going in place to support this child and we're putting everything into him but what else do you need to make sure that you have that something there for him?*

T2: *yeah.*

F: *Yeah. Does that make you feel less able to cope, if people are then saying I don't want to be a part of that?*

T1: *In a way it does cos then you're left by yourself to cope with this child.* (1: 240-247)

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

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

T2: *and I felt, you know, that, maybe yeah I could have done more*

F: *Ok.*

T2: *Or a bit, a bit, like I failed him really.* (1: 26-28)

Teacher three reflects on the same child:

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

Teacher one reflects on having to exclude a child from the class:

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

(1: 223-226)

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

- Classroom management

The teachers found classroom management very challenging:

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

*F: Mmm*

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

(1: 203-206)

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

### 6.3.2 - Theme Two: Narratives of Individual Differences in Coping

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

Table 4 - Development of theme two: narratives of Individual differences in coping, illustrated by initial codes forming final codes

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

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

- Feelings / Management of fear

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

*T1: deep down he is probably genuinely scared and just knows that way of acting cos he's seen it.*  
(1: 135-136)

*T2: yeah, that made Steven really erm unsettled and a little bit unsure because things were out of control.*  
(1: 144-145)

*T2: (&) to talk about that and when you got close to it. He, you could see he, he became really uncomfortable.*  
(2: 124-125)

*T1: Refused to go home with mums partner one day. Then told SENCo it was because she was scared.*  
(R1: 29-31)

The children referred to in these narratives are expressing fear and their levels of anxiety and ability to manage the feelings of fear are linked to the circumstances of the situation.

Teacher two suggests there may be a time when it is more appropriate to talk and feels a child needs time before they are ready to talk.

T2: *you wouldn't have got anything about his home life really out*

F: *mmm*

T2: *I don't think he was ready  
[ to (&)*

T3: *[ no*

T2: *(&) to talk about that*

(2: 121-124)

- Feelings of power / control

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

T2: *If you, if he, got his control taken away he would*

F: *mmm*

T2: *really get violent towards us. The other one towards the other children  
and that was, it was almost like a power thing really.*

(1: 111-115)

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

T2: *but it was all about control with him and*

F: *Mmm*

T2: *he needed to have control so if it was free choice play he wasn't a  
problem.*

(1: 181-184)

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

T2: *Well power in a way*

T1: *Mmm*

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

F: *mmm-hmm*

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

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

(1: 286-297)

- Resilience

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

T3: *Cos I think whether you like it or not // and / you try to say it's not your fault you'd certainly feel // maybe some way responsible wouldn't you?*

T2: *mmm.*

T3: *I don't know. You might.*  
*/*

T2: *mmm*

T3: *Perhaps.*

(2: 685-692)

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

T3: *I think they're very resilient.*

T2: *[laughs] I was just going to say exactly the same really.*

T3: *[laughs]*

T2: *Yeah. They sometimes do good despite all that don't they?*

T3: *yeah.*

(2: 881-885)

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

F: *yeah and do they have the resilience to engage in that?*  
*/*

T2: *hmm. I'm not sure*

(2: 1384-1386)



- Parental support

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

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

T2: *His mum had to virtually shove him through the door and right from the beginning you know it was just a really bad start to the day because she couldn't get them up and she couldn't get them in*  
 T2: *[and then,*  
 F: *[Mmm*  
 T2: *you know, it just had a knock on effect didn't it [looks to T3].* (1: 325-331)

T3: *And also, I mean if you're going back to just generally about domestic abuse and if that's happening, then that's taking the / emphasis away from the child isn't it? So in terms of support for homework, reading*  
 T3: *and then general school stuff (&)*  
 T2: *mmm.*  
 F: *mmm*  
 T3: *(&) then they're not getting that either are they? so that becomes a bit of a // a, a barrier, or you know, it's a*  
 F: *mmm.*  
 T3: *a problem they have to*  
 T2: *mmm*  
 T3: *then overcome that other children don't necessarily have to.* (2: 799-811)

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

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

T3: *or made to feel good about themselves. Cos if you, Cos it's hard*  
*[to do (&)]*  
 T2: *[mmm.*  
 T3: *(&) that if you're not feeling good about yourself as an adult isn't it? It's very hard to pass that on*  
*[to the child.]* (2: 819-825)

- Age and Gender

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

T3: *I'm thinking of two girls and they seemed more able to cope* (1: 369)

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

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

T2: *mmm.*

T1: *mmm.*

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

T2: *yeah.*

(3: 264-271)

T3: *[ that self-esteem one yeah*

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

T2: *mmm*

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

T2: *yeah*

T3: *it's the same but with girls I do think it's*

T1: *emotional*

T3: *emotional yeah their self-esteem's even*

(3: 970-978)

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

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

(2: 116-117)

- Ability to develop / use coping strategies

Narratives relating to the children seeking positive affirmation through praise and the social approval of their peers were constructed.

T2: *Sometimes he just comes up for hugs. Both, both the boys that have been in that class and if I think of [another family] they were quite loving kids*  
(2: 618-620)

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

T3: *if violence is directed generally, is a norm in the family or whatever you'd minimise the risk to yourself wouldn't you, I would imagine. Erm so in that case you would be trying to do things right wouldn't you?*  
(2: 1442-1445)

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

T3: *saying that's not right, that's a big issue isn't it?*  
T2: *yeah.*  
T3: *[and I think I do that to my class, no*  
T2: *[cos it's not a pleasant feeling is it?*  
(2: 1453-1456)

T3: *you take the safe option every time, because like you said. Someone tell me what to do and I'll just do it like that every time.*  
T3: *[laughs]*  
T2: *yeah, mmm, yeah or I'll copy it, or I'll just not do it.*  
T3: *yeah, yeah, or I'll copy it because I know the person next to me is probably going to get it right*  
(2: 1487-1493)

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

A narrative around trust was constructed in relation to conflicting messages coming from significant adults about violence which may lead to confusion and impact upon a child's ability to cope.

T3: *the conflict between the messages that you're getting (&)*  
 T2: *yeah.*  
 /  
 T3: *(&) and that's if the messages that I'm getting there are conflicting you know, what else, who else is telling*  
*[ me the (&)*  
 T2: *[ mmm.*  
 T3: *(&) truth, or not.*

(2: 741-749)

The lack of trust presents a potential barrier to the teacher and child developing rapport which will also impact upon the skills of the class teacher in relation to their ability to support the child.

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

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

T2: *I think he*  
*[ just see's himself as not being (&)*  
 T3: *[ Cognitive ability*  
 T2: *(&) quite as good as everybody else, because he's*  
*[ kind of*  
 T3: *[ but that*  
 T3: *yeah but that's low self-esteem isn't it?*

(2: 711-717)

T3: *I do think for some of them, I do think that is it. That it's easier to not do it*  
*[ or to give up*  
 T2: *[ yeah to give up*  
 T3: *than to tackle it*

(2: 1327-1331)

### 6.3.3 - Theme Three: Narratives of Systemic Challenges

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

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

Initial codes	Final codes	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy</li> <li>• Procedure</li> <li>• Role of the school</li> <li>• School systems</li> <li>• Child Protection</li> <li>• Social Care</li> </ul>	Policies, procedures and protocols	Narratives of systemic challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment theory</li> <li>• Family background</li> <li>• Role model</li> <li>• Fear of parents</li> <li>• School role</li> <li>• Perpetrators</li> <li>• Victims</li> </ul>	Parenting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not talked about</li> <li>• Time to talk</li> <li>• Stereotypes</li> </ul>	A taboo subject	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme behaviour</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Impact on class/ learning/ teaching</li> <li>• Staff ratio</li> </ul>	Behaviour management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Role of the school</li> </ul>	Safety	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External support</li> <li>• Social Care</li> <li>• Educational Psychologist</li> <li>• Family Support</li> <li>• Local Area Support Team</li> </ul>	External support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent question</li> <li>• Policy development</li> <li>• Teacher role</li> <li>• Teacher confidence</li> </ul>	Next steps	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of information</li> <li>• Difficult to recognise</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Information sharing</li> </ul>	Lack of Information	

- Policies, procedures and protocols

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

T3: *Erm if we need to we keep a record, although we're only keeping a record of what the child's, or if, you know if somebody turns up that shouldn't,*  
(1: 725-737)

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

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

T2: *Yeah everyday*

All: *[laughing]*

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

(1: 488-495)

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

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

T2: *mmm*

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

F: *mmm*

T2: *you need to know what the process has to be  
[ when (&)*

T3: *[ yeah*

T2: *(&) somebody*

*[ discloses something (&)*

F: *[ you're probably*

T3: *(&) that you have to tell somebody about.*

T3: *yeah, yeah.*

(3: 595-607)

The narrative demonstrated the teachers clearly believed it was important to follow policies and procedures but this had no perceived beneficial impact within the classroom.

- Parenting

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

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

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

(1: 20-21).

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

T3: *I don't necessarily think just because it, they're in a home where this is domestic violence they don't get that [either. Because, yeah, because they get it off (&]*

T2: *[yeah. Steven's mum is very loving towards him.*

T3: *(&) you know, even if they don't get it off both parents*

T2: *yeah.*

T3: *they might be getting it off one*

T2: *[yeah.*

T3: *so I don't necessarily think that it's because they're not getting that.*

(2: 623-631)

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

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

(2: 1042-1043)

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

The trauma faced by parents was acknowledged:

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

(3: 901-912)

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

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

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

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

- A taboo subject

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

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

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

T3: *cos you can't ever be specific about a family in those sort of situations can you?*  
 (2: 1827-1828)



This teacher was positive in considering discussing domestic violence but provided a caveat which would permit the topic not being raised for fear of making assumptions about a family.

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

- Behaviour management

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

*T1: Yeah. They're, they are a lot more difficult to handle in the sense of behaviour.*  
(1: 96)

*T2: and that had a bad effect on the rest of the children, because all our time was taken with managing his behaviour and that took, that was three of us on a morning.*  
(1: 199-201)

*T2: It made me cross that, you know at first I was saying, you know this is happening it's not acceptable in my class and no, none of the rest of the teaching staff seemed that bothered cos it didn't affect them.*  
(1: 254-257)

*T3: With him he was an extreme case in terms his behaviour*  
(1: 496)

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

- Safety

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

*T1: It was the same really. You had the two people trying to get them out and everything*

*F: right*

*T1: cos you've got to think of the other children but you've got to think of your safety as well and when you did take them out you, I felt awful when I came back to class.*

(1: 220-225)

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

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

(1: 382-383)

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

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

(1: 231-232)

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

(1: 406-410)

- External support

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

*F: and who has that been from?*

*T2: I'm not sure.*

*T3: well it's the family support team*

*T2: oh right.*

T3: *it's linked with the [area based external support] wasn't it and [the cluster].*  
(1: 648-653)

In the instance above teacher three is able to clarify in her role as SENCo.

F: *ok, and the educational psychologist, you said you had group meetings?*  
T2: *To be honest that was more with Nathan and he left us*  
F: *Right, yeah.*  
T2: *so I couldn't really say but erm/ she is, she's really good.*  
(1: 678-682)

T3: *It started at nursery for Steven*  
*[because of the history of the family*  
T2: *[Yeah. It was all set up*  
*so I'm not sure what they did you know with mum and the family but it did*  
*seem to*  
T3: *well they did, they did a lot around mum's parenting role/ and*  
(1: 706-711)

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

T2: *Yeah there's difficulty sometimes if that child comes into your setting in the*  
*time that it takes*  
F: *mmm*  
T2: *to kind of get some, some extra help.*  
F: *mmm.*  
T2: *You know all the red tape that you have to jump through and I suppose*  
*you have to don't you but*  
T3: *Yep.*  
T2: *It does make things difficult*  
T3: *You do nowadays cos there's a lot less support there.*  
T2: *Exactly.*  
(1: 810-820)

- Next steps

This code arose mainly within the third session as discussion focused on future steps. The teachers were able to identify areas for development and their own lack of knowledge and information was seen as an area to be addressed. Teachers wanted to know more to facilitate more effective classroom based behaviour management. In addition they wanted to respond, as human beings, to the suffering of children exposed to domestic violence. This leads to teachers being torn between the demands of their role and a human response:

T2: *I quite like to know more about the cause and effect*  
 F: *mmm-hmm*  
 T2: *and what makes them behave how they do* (3: 1025-1027)  
 T3: *and things like that / how to handle that but within the confines of the*  
*behaviour management. cos I think that's what we've*  
 T2: *mmm*  
 T3: *well I **know** I've struggled with* (3: 1041-1044)

Parental involvement was a major consideration in relation to next steps and relates directly to the perception of domestic violence as a taboo subject. The teachers recognised domestic violence needed to be acknowledged and talked around what would them to work more effectively with parents. Much of the discussion then focused on the types of questions that could be asked of parents, building rapport with parents and how information could be shared more effectively:

T2: *do you ever feel unsafe in your own home*  
*[ maybe kind of thing?]* (3: 729-730)  
 T3: *[laughs] I was going to be a bit more open ended and like are there any*  
*factors that might affect your child settling in at school* (3: 733-734)  
 T1: *You'd probably start by asking about the actual child. What they perceive*  
*of them like how they've got on what they think about how they get on at*  
*school and then go on to the factors that might be / like, what's the word,*  
*erm affecting it* (3: 742-745)  
 T2: *And that communication includes / the parents especially I think cos once*  
*you've, like, lost them you've/*  
*[ you've kind of had it.*  
 T3: *[ It's working I'd say*  
*more than communication. Working with the parents*  
*[ isn't it or a parent.*  
 T2: *[ yeah getting*  
*them on side really so they feel (&)*  
 /  
 T3: *that they can*  
*[ trust you.*  
 T2: *[ (&) safe.* (3: 454-465)

The teachers recognise the sensitivity of the topic and how important it is to build an effective relationship with the parents. From my perspective this appeared to be uncharted territory with the teachers not having considered these factors and/or applying them to previous relationships and interactions; despite perhaps having the knowledge already.

- Lack of Information

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

T3: *I don't think we don't know half of it actually.*

T2: *I don't either.*

T3: *I think you find out about the extreme cases or the cases where it's got worse.*

T2: *Yeah*

T3: *and it's escalated into, you know,*

T2: *mmm*

T3: *into that they've got a court order,*

(1: 419-426)

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

T3: *and we expect them to come to school on time [laughs]*

T2: *mmm*

T3: *with the right stuff and having [laughs] done their homework / and we're putting pressure on them to do that and then learn [laughs]*

T2: *mmm.*

T3: *while they're here and, and you know, they are dealing with and coping with all that and then maybe going home and we don't really know to what and that's what I say you know. You're thinking about some children and you know there's something that's not necessarily quite right*

(2: 900-909)

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

(2: 1701-1703)

The teachers perceived more information would allow them to more effectively support children.

T2: *I agree about the information cos with Steven we could do some really good transition with him because we had the information from nursery.*  
(2: 1634-1636)

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

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

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

T2: *And that communication includes / the parents especially I think cos once you've, like, lost them you've/*  
*[ you've kind of had it.*  
T3: *[ It's working I'd say*  
*more than communication. Working with the parents*  
*[ isn't it or a parent.*  
T2: *[ yeah getting*  
*them on side really so they feel (&)*  
*/*  
T3: *that they can*  
*[ trust you.*  
T2: *[ (&) safe.*  
(3: 454-465)

This particular narrative, relating to lack of information, highlighted to me that teachers and schools do not have knowledge of families where domestic violence is taking place. In addition there is a systemic failure as class teachers are not knowledgeable regarding the contribution they make to recordkeeping, which facilitates access to external support (e.g. meeting criteria for involvement) nor are they aware of the support provided by external services, which would motivate record keeping.

*T2: so and he'd taken all that [laughs] in his stride really.*

*F: mmm*

*T2: But you wouldn't have ever known that had happened.*

(1: 446-448)

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

*T3: Surprised more people didn't take part.*

(R3: 03-04)

### 6.3.4 - Theme Four: Narratives of Developmental Impact

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

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

Initial codes	Final codes	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer relationships</li> <li>• Social skills</li> <li>• Behaviour</li> <li>• Morals</li> <li>• Rules</li> <li>• Impulsive</li> <li>• Negative role model</li> <li>• Peer perceptions</li> </ul>	Social skills	Narratives of developmental impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme behaviour</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• Emotion regulation</li> </ul>	Emotion regulation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norm</li> <li>• Conflicting messages</li> </ul>	Perception of normality	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic performance</li> </ul>	Academic performance*	

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

- Social skills

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

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

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

*F: Mmm*

*T2: at school. So if they’ve seen it, or had it done to them, they will either act it out to us, other children or to the staff.*

(1: 72-77)



The teachers constructed the children's exposure to violence at home as having a negative impact on their behaviour in school and children constructing violence as an appropriate form of social interaction.

The teachers considered how violence starts:

T2: *Which I suppose is where is where the cycle starts with a vulnerable person who needs lots of loving and*

T3: *yeah.*

T2: *gets taken advantage of, I don't know.*

(2: 613-616)

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

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

T2: *I think they'd find it very scary having him*

T3: *mmm*

T2: *without an adult supervising because it, it, he, he just manages to*

(2: 194-196)

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

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

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

(2: 236-237)

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

The narrative of social skills included moral reasoning. Teachers described the superficial understanding children had of solving social problems; using physical violence and being unable to empathise with the emotional pain caused by their

intimidation. The children knew hurting others was wrong and their understanding of this was very black and white. Coercive behaviour was identified by the teachers; however the children were only able to consider their behaviour in terms of physically hurting others. The children therefore developed a behavioural coping strategy of not hurting others and this was impacting on their peer relationships:

- T2: *he's kind of understands that he doesn't hurt people and he's kind of erm / not in a clever way but he will intimidate without actually hurting*
- F: *mmm.*
- T2: *but you can see him, like/ getting up to the other children and like in their face and he, he will be very intimidating in how he / approaches them*  
(2: 142-148)
- T3: *That's the first thing that comes out of his mouth. I agree. Mmm. When you go and see him 'but I didn't hurt them'.*  
(2: 174-175)
- T3: *all he could say was 'well why is the new Kyle saying that, because I haven't hurt him'.*
- F: *mmm*
- T2: *yeah*
- T3: *Erm and he couldn't, he wouldn't, 'well no everybody's saying it Alfie cos they don't like your general behaviour*  
*[ and the (&)*
- T2: *[ mmm*
- T3: *(&) way you / try and control or bully or', and I use it in the loosest term, but you know try and intimidate or coerce, and 'Kyle, even though he's only been in a school a couple of weeks*  
*[ can (&)*
- T2: *[ mmm*
- T3: *(&) feel that aswell'*  
*[ erm*
- T2: *[ yeah*
- T3: *and the, but Alfie's 'well I haven't hurt him so why is he saying anything' can't pick up on the general /*  
*[ but this is the message that (&)*
- F: *[ social cues and interpersonal, yeah.*
- T3: *(&) everybody's giving you.*  
(2:1226-1246)

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

- Emotion regulation

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

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

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

*T3: Crashing and banging.*

(1: 592-594)

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

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

(R1: 22-23)

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

(R2: 11-12)

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

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

*F: mmm*

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

*F: Mmm*

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

(1: 783-788)

It is evident the teachers have the best of intentions for the children and want the children to succeed, however life experiences cannot be ignored. I have coped by being involved in decision making and being able to articulate the challenges certain

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

- Perception of normality

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

*T2: he just said, as part of the news, 'oh and my dad used to hit, hit my dog so we had to send the dog away and then he used to hit me and my mum so we had to send Daddy away'*  
(1: 441-444)

*T1: Once spoke about two black eyes her mum had when I was marking her work. Mum denied everything.*  
(R1: 55-57)

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

Teachers believed that some of the children's perceptions of normality in relation to their family dynamics are naïve, or innocent. Other children are aware of the differences between their family and other families and this is likely to directly impact upon the effectiveness of their coping strategies, such as the development and application of moral reasoning, and lead them to question their trust of adults who

are delivering conflicting messages. All of these factors have been discussed earlier.

- Academic performance (also represented in theme two - narratives of individual differences in coping)

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

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

*T1: Very tired often / dazed.* (R1: 24)

*T1: Struggled to make friendships  
Would often seem like she was thinking of something else* (R1: 36-38)

*T1: very quiet.  
Mind often elsewhere* (R1: 40-41)

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

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

## **6.4 - Conclusion**

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

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

## **7 - Discussion**

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

### **7.1 - Reflections on the Research Questions**

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

1. What are teacher narratives of support mechanisms for children and their families who have been exposed to domestic violence?
2. What are the teacher narratives of the impact of exposure to domestic violence on learning and functioning within the classroom and wider school environment?
3. What are the implications for the role of Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate day to day support for children and families who have been exposed to domestic violence?

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

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

The narratives constructed in relation to support mechanisms were not overly positive; with teachers describing how they felt overwhelmed and under supported.



The narrative constructed around support mechanisms described behaviour management, and extrinsic behaviours in particular. The narrative of behaviour management described managing physical violence, social interactions and non-compliance within the classroom on a day to day basis. The behaviour was constructed as affecting the other children in the class, the teachers and other staff members, both within the classroom and beyond. The children were constructed as presenting a challenge to the school system as a whole; and this narrative influenced the teachers' construction of their own coping ability. The teacher narrative described a requirement for more effective support staff in the classroom and more effective systemic school support structures. The teachers constructed improved, and more open, communication with parents as necessary to provide more effective support for children exposed to domestic violence.

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

Initial analysis indicates the following themes address research question one:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Overall a narrative was constructed about the impact on class teachers. A causal relationship was constructed by the teachers describing the needs of the child then the greater the demands placed upon the class teacher and the school system. This narrative described how demands on the teacher, and other staff, indirectly impacts upon the class as a whole, yet there is limited reflection on the impact on the child themselves.

Initial analysis indicates the following themes address research question two:

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

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

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

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

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

Initial analysis indicates all four themes address research question three:

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

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

## **7.2 - Discussion of the Research Outcomes**

This section provides a detailed discussion of the themes identified in chapter six. The following themes were identified as a result of the data analysis (figure 1 – thematic map, page 143):

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

Each theme will now be discussed in turn; and reviewed in relation to the literature review (presented in chapter one) and the methodology (presented in chapter two). Within this section the research questions will be answered indirectly through the themes identified from the data analysis. The research questions will therefore be revisited in the following section.

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

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

- Expectations of the children

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

T3: *He can't have seen the worst of Dad can he as he wasn't consciously old enough.*

(1: 584-585)

This was quickly rejected returning to the original, safer and more palatable narrative of these children being too young to understand.

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

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

(1: 794-795)

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

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

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

The acknowledgement of the impact of my own traumatic experiences, particularly when at work, firstly relieved some of the pressure I felt as my difficulties and anxieties were acknowledged and supported. Secondly this offer of support then facilitated me in articulating situations which were difficult and being allowed, or supported, to find ways to manage these difficulties facilitated my coping. As I described earlier, recognising my own feelings, such as anxiety and triggers, e.g. groups of people, parties, busy public places, facilitated the

development of coping strategies. According to Goleman (2004) these are qualities of emotional intelligence and I would construct a narrative of myself as emotionally intelligent. However this is in contrast to young children whose development may have been affected by traumatic experiences therefore they are unable to develop, and apply, coping strategies independently. I would also argue I did not independently cope at work and I wouldn't underestimate the support, formally and informally, provided by my colleagues. I can readily create a narrative of returning to work without the support systems in place and the ultimate impact this would have had upon my coping and the service (which we can liken to the impact on the teacher of class).

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

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

*F: mmm*

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

*F: Mmm*

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

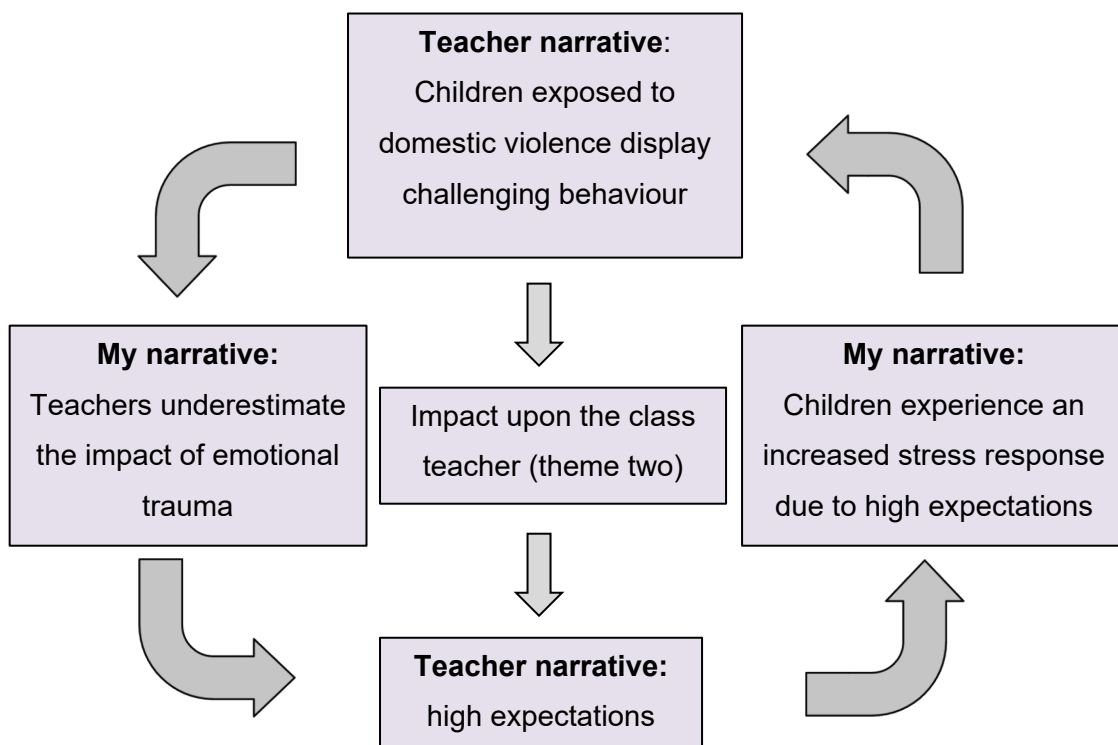
(1: 783-788)

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

Within this narrative the influence of a politically constructed, ethnographic, stereotype emerges – intelligent people don't have violent relationships. However domestic violence is not predictable according to characteristics such as intelligence and can affect anyone (Cho, 2012).

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

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



As a result of the teachers' narrative for high expectations despite adversity (reinforced by the educational and political ethnographic demands of accountability) and my narrative which constructs teachers as underestimating the impact of emotional trauma, a cyclical effect occurs. As shown in figure 2 teacher expectations and limited understandings of trauma together increase the

pressure experienced by traumatised children in school; this is then likely to lead to a stress response (Sylwester, 1994), which further contributes to the challenging behaviours exhibited in response to emotional trauma. These behaviours then significantly impact upon the teachers within the classroom and the cycle continues with teachers continuing to have high expectations of the children. This is not to say teachers should not have high expectations of the children, however a greater understanding of emotional trauma may lead to teachers adjusting their expectations and responding differently to the challenging behaviour. The alternative narrative of the challenging behaviour may then have a positive impact upon the children's behaviour due to the stresses associated with the high expectations being reduced.

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

- Skills of the class teacher

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

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

(1: 608-610)

Behaviourist approaches can be critiqued for not addressing the causes of behaviour and in this instance, as I have already outlined, my narrative focuses on trauma theories and therefore involves acknowledging the cause of



behaviour. Based on a trauma theory perspective my narrative constructs the generalised good practice behaviour management techniques used by the teachers as ineffective for addressing the challenging behaviour. Monahon (1993) advises against behaviourist approaches to managing challenging behaviour arising as a result of trauma.

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

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

- Role of the class teacher

The construction of a narrative describing teacher role was the source of greatest conflict. The literature review highlights social constructions of the role of the teacher as varied and the subject of significant debate. The conflict experienced in constructing a narrative directly relates to the wider ethnographic political debate regarding the purpose of education as discussed in the literature review. The teachers constructed the teacher role as teaching the curriculum.

The role of the teacher was also constructed as facilitating the development of social and emotional skills, and building resilience. The conflict arose in the construction of a narrative to describe the significance and hierarchy of these roles:

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

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

(1: 792-797)

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

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

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

(1: 801-805)

Teacher three is clearly not wanting to make allowances, or excuses, for trauma, but acknowledges allowances can and should be made, but with careful consideration. The conflict within this narrative relates to what constitutes an appropriate allowance and on what basis consideration should be made. Teacher constructs of behaviour are influenced by (social) constructions of the role of the teacher and the decision to make allowances is undoubtedly influenced by existing ethnographic constructions which value standards and attainment. Additionally my narrative constructs the teachers as responding to (social) constructions of challenging behaviour and having a limited understanding of domestic violence and its impact. It is my opinion challenging the teachers' constructs of the children and the impact of domestic violence would facilitate the application of more appropriate strategies and approaches.

Additionally increased theoretical knowledge would inform decision making when considering how a child can be supported to learn having experienced trauma. The extent to which it is the teacher's role to facilitate learning returns to the debate regarding the purpose of education. Aside from this debate my narrative constructs the teachers' lack of theoretical understanding as preventing their narrative from exploring reasons why expectations of a traumatised child could be differentiated; without being able to answer why the teacher constructs any form of differentiation as inappropriate.

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

- Teacher resilience

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

day to day basis. If this is the case perhaps supervision, or more informal emotional support structures, are required to contribute to the well-being and resilience of teachers.

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

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

(1: 223-226)

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

construct myself as having empathy and recognise my coping difficulties highlight my own, or other peoples, maladaptive coping strategies.

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

- Classroom management

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

### 7.2.2 - Theme Two: Narratives of Individual Differences in Coping

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

Overall the teachers constructed a strong narrative of individual differences in children's coping ability. A range of individual differences contributed to the narrative

and the teacher narrative constructed coping strategies as having a mediating effect which can be either adaptive or maladaptive.

- Feelings / Management of fear

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

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

- Power and control

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

- Resilience

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

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

The teachers constructed a narrative of schools as actively working to build resilience. However consideration of the vulnerability of children exposed to domestic violence led the teachers to question whether children were resilient enough to engage with activities, or tasks, which are targeted at building resilience. Problem solving tasks which are beyond the resilience of traumatised

children will further deplete their levels of resilience by increasing the stress response (Sylwester, 1994). The group interviews, by providing an opportunity for reflection, enabled the teachers to create a narrative describing the impact of problem solving, or resilience building activities on children with low levels of resilience. The teacher narrative acknowledged these activities, aimed at supporting these children may in fact have a negative impact. Trauma theorists would argue these types of activity may re-create feelings associated with the trauma response therefore re-traumatising the child.

- Parental support

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

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



- Age and Gender

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

- Ability to develop / use coping strategies

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

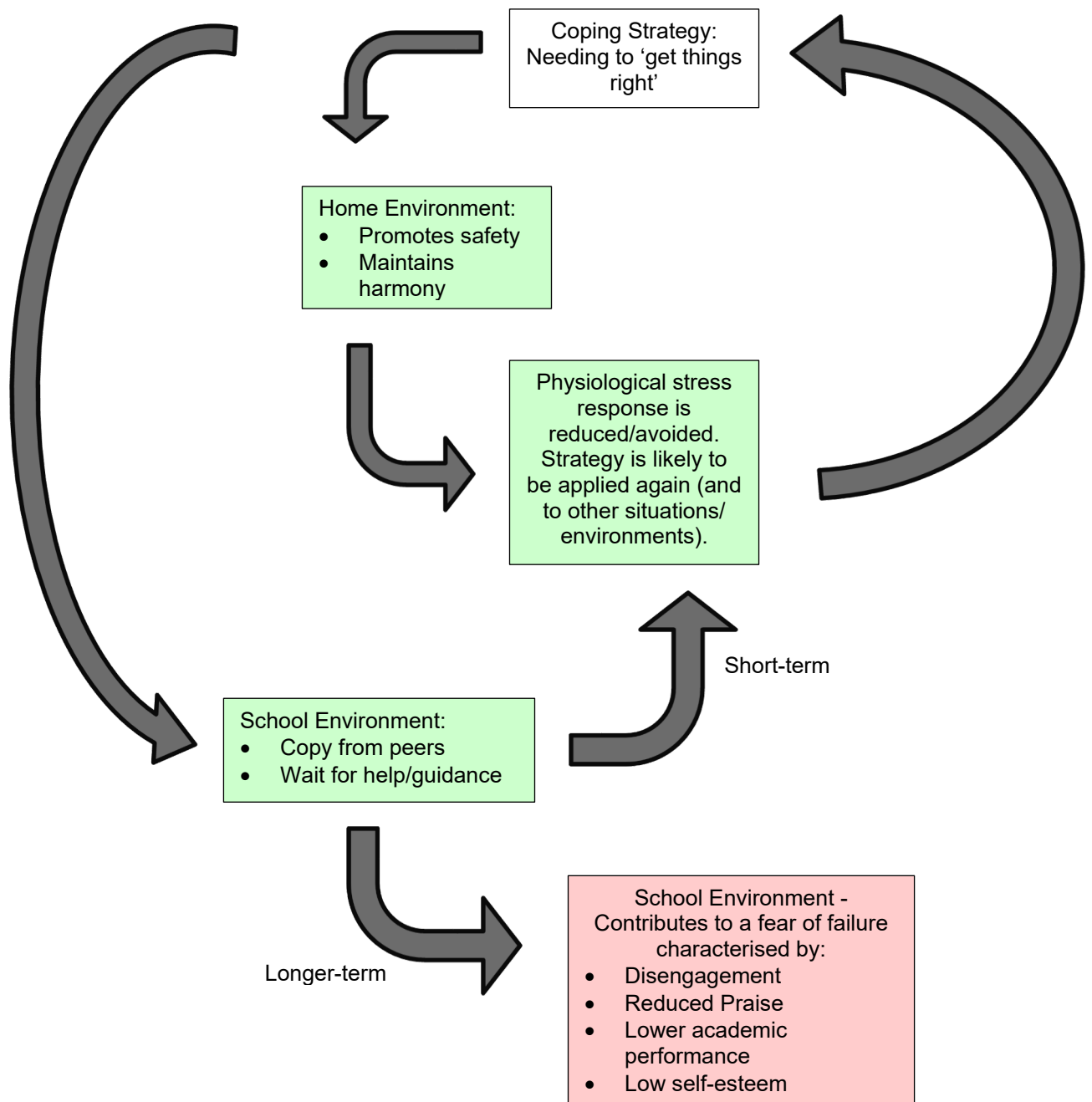
Interestingly the teacher narrative recognises and labels effective coping strategies whereas ineffective coping is identified but is not constructed as such; instead it is constructed as challenging behaviour. According to Gergen (1985) negotiated understanding informs social action, for this reason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

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

school environment. The variability in the effectiveness of coping strategies could provide significant challenge to school staff, particularly when a coping strategy which is adaptive in one environment is maladaptive in another (especially when the maladaptive environment is school).

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

Figure 3 - A coping strategy which is both adaptive and maladaptive



Key:

Adaptive Outcomes

Maladaptive Outcomes

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

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

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

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

- Academic performance

The teachers constructed a narrative of academic performance acting as a mediating factor for the impact of exposure to domestic violence. Academic performance was considered to have an indirect impact on coping as those who are higher achieving will receive more positive affirmation and have a greater experience of success which positively impacts upon their self-esteem. The teacher narrative constructed academic success as increasing resilience as

these children naturally received more positive affirmation within the school system. In contrast those who experienced failure were constructed as likely to disengage (Buckley, Holt and Whelan, 2007).

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

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

### 7.2.3 - Theme Three: Narratives of Systemic Challenges

This theme represents factors within the wider school system which affect teachers' ability to support children who have experienced emotional trauma, such as domestic violence. The teacher narratives in relation to theme three demonstrate the influence of school systems on effective day to day support for children exposed

to domestic violence. A detailed narrative was created about systemic support and its impact upon day to day classroom management.

- Policies, procedures and protocols

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

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

- Parenting

There was a strong narrative constructed around parenting which arose in all three sessions.

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

Teachers constructed victims of domestic violence as distracted and fearful. Victims were perceived to consciously choose to stay in a violent relationship; as a result parents were constructed as choosing to expose their children to domestic violence. This narrative assumes control on the part of the victim and fails to acknowledge the complex nature of domestic violence. Victims are (socially) constructed as vulnerable, yet within the teachers' narrative there is recognition of free-will and ability to make decisions regarding the continuity of the relationship. This leads me to create an alternative narrative suggesting there is a limited understanding regarding the impact of the emotional trauma associated with experiencing domestic violence, and the impact on making decisions and initiating change. In my own experience there is an emotional numbness, and detachment in addition to preoccupied thoughts which adversely affect decision making, and initiation of any activity. These experiences are similar to the symptoms of emotional trauma identified in the literature review (Horowitz and Reidbord, 1992; Ellis and Ashbrook, 1988), additionally they are described as symptoms of derealisation in PTSD diagnostic criteria (refer to appendix three, page iv). I feel the teachers' narrative of emotional trauma was thin and indicates a limited understanding of how deeply trauma can affect an individual. This is particularly important from an educational perspective as the literature review demonstrates emotional trauma can have a significant impact on learning (Sylwester, 1994; Ellis and Ashbrook, 1988). Therefore my own narrative is one of concern; as without an understanding of trauma, emotions,

and the link to learning, teachers and school systems are not going to be providing effective support to children who have experienced emotional trauma.

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

The teachers constructed the children as modelling violence they have seen at home. This narrative constructs children exposed to domestic violence as violent and predisposed to becoming violent adults. This construct impacts on the narrative of the parents as not fulfilling expectations e.g. provision of a good role model for managing emotions, solving social problems and healthy relationships. The construction of children exposed to violence as being violent and becoming perpetrators of violence as adults is consistent with the modelling hypothesis, intergenerational transmission theory and social learning theory (Weldon and Gilchrist, 2012; Dutton, 2008; Tyndall-Lind, Landreth and Giordano, 2001; Moffitt and Caspi, 1998). As has already been highlighted an overall narrative constructed within the research is of challenging externalising behaviour, which includes physical violence. The teacher narrative constructs externalising behaviour, such as violence, to be very demanding of the teachers'



time and more easily observed than fear and anxiety. In addition a strong narrative of not knowing what goes on at home was constructed; yet parents are constructed as ineffective, or inferior, by continuing to expose their children to violence; and by exposing their children to violence they are constructed as responsible for their children's behaviour. The parents are therefore constructed as 'other' and different to other parents. Perhaps it is easy for teachers, when they are aware violence occurs in the home, to theorise a simple cause and effect relationship can explain children's violent behaviour. Similarly the criticisms of social learning theory are directed at its simplicity; including an inability to account for children exposed to violence who do not go on to display violent behaviour (Babcock *et al*, 1993; Maker, Kemmelmeier and Peterson, 1998).

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

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

- A taboo subject

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

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

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

- Behaviour management

One of the strongest narratives was in relation to the severity of the negative behaviour displayed by children exposed to domestic violence. Research identifies children exposed to domestic violence as displaying challenging behaviour (Lamers-Winkelmann, Willemsen and Vissera, 2012; Renner, 2012; World Health Organisation, 2012; Kitzmann *et al.*, 2003; Davies and Cummings,

1994; Fantuzzo *et al.* 1991). This narrative was constructed particularly in session one and then underpinned many of the other narratives presented across the three sessions. The teachers' narrative described the demands on staffing to manage the behaviour, and apathy from staff that are not directly affected. The narrative of the severity of the children's behaviour constructed the children as being inappropriately placed in a mainstream setting. The teachers constructed this narrative on the basis of their own difficulties, and of school systems, in meeting the needs of these children. As a result of the severity of these difficulties the children's behaviour is constructed as unmanageable. It is evident (social) constructions of severe behaviour and its implications have influenced the teacher narrative; a social constructionist perspective advocates consideration of how we speak of children (Billington, 2006) and (social) constructions of severe behaviour. The teacher narrative constructed challenging behaviour as learned, as described by social learning theory. This narrative also constructs the children's behaviour as learned without acknowledging the influence of emotions. In contrast I constructed my narrative on the basis of trauma theory (Suleiman, 2008; Monahon, 1993; Herman, 1992; Terr, 1990) and therefore my narrative describes the children's emotional needs being unmet, as evidenced by the children's behavioural presentation.

- Safety

Within the teacher narrative other children in the class are central to the concerns of the staff, in accordance with legislation to '[safeguard] and [promote] the welfare of children and young people' under the Education Act 2002 (p.114). This legislation can be applied in respect of physical and emotional welfare. As discussed earlier, in regard of other children, such legislation can be very influential when making decisions to remove a child from a class. The teacher narrative of safety constructs schools as able to provide safety and security through consistency and routine, which the teachers construct as missing, or inconsistent, for children who are exposed to domestic violence. The need for consistency and routine is supported by trauma theory (Monahon, 1993).

The narrative constructed of safety identified a fine line between the responsibility of the staff and school to maintain safety and when it is no longer their role. Teaching assistants were cited as deciding they no longer wanted to support particular children; similarly schools' need to make decisions in relation to requesting external support, such as the police, to intervene and maintain the safety of children and staff. Social constructions of the school's response have implications for children and their families:

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

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

- External support

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

- Next steps

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

*T2: she was scared of losing the kids*

(2: 1042-1043)

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

*Reflexive Box*

*As I stated earlier my narrative is strongly influenced by my positionality, therefore my narrative was strongly focused on emotional trauma, a factor which the participants were unaware. Consequently my narrative was very critical and constructs professionals as unable to empathise with emotional trauma. However the participants were not asked to reflect on emotional trauma in relation to this research therefore the initial positionality of their narrative is different from mine.*

The narratives developed in relation to the code next steps are further developed in section '7.4 - Implications for future research' as they directly contribute to this area of the research.

- Information and communication

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

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

Similarly to the narrative of classroom management described in theme one (impact on the class teacher) the teacher narrative of information and communication also places responsibility as lying beyond the teacher. My

narrative regarding teacher's use of generalised good practice strategies without theoretical application is challenged by the teachers' narrative describing a lack of information and communication. Whilst the teachers construct themselves as using background information my narrative constructs the teachers as applying behaviourist theories without considering the causes for unwanted behaviour. Therefore the application of information may make little difference in choosing whether or not to apply behaviourist methods and the use of alternative methods is not specifically articulated in the teacher narrative.

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

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

#### 7.2.4 - Theme Four: Narratives of Developmental Impact

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

- Social skills

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

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



- Emotion regulation

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

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

- Perceptions of normality

The teacher narrative of children's perceptions of normality constructs children exposed to domestic violence as having differing perceptions of normality from their peers in relation to the acceptability of violence. Interestingly, as MacLure *et al.* (2008) warn, children exposed to domestic violence are constructed as beyond the norm on the basis of constructs resulting from their life experiences. This was evident from the narrative teachers constructed of the children's

openness about violence at home. The narrative described the children as very matter of fact in their descriptions of violence which occurred at home. The following quote provided a good example:

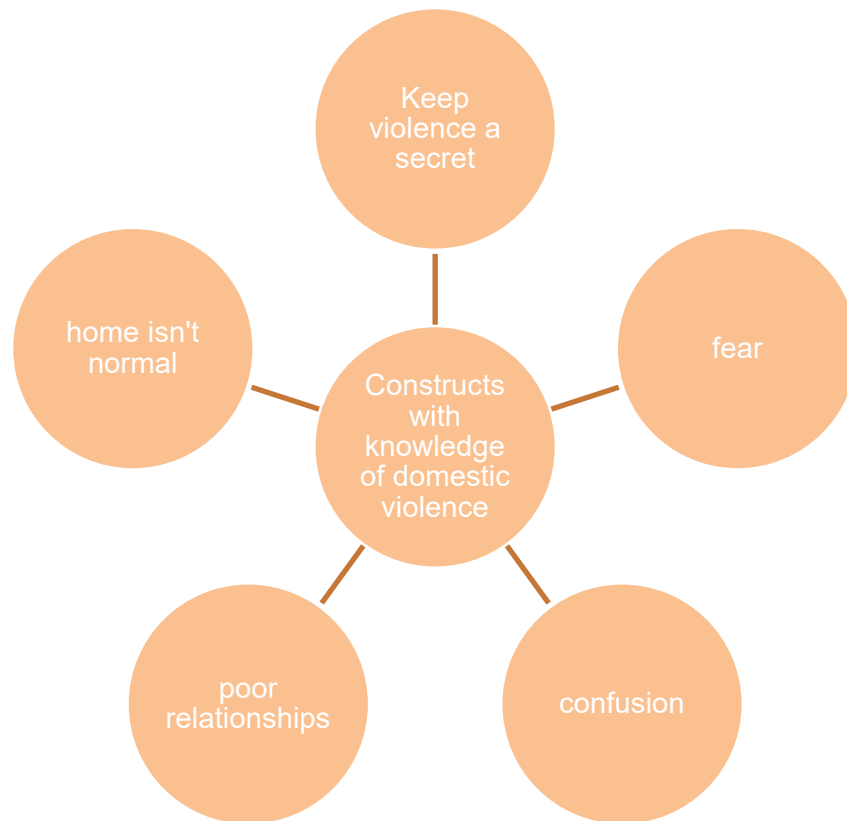
T2: *he just said, as part of the news, 'oh and my dad used to hit, hit my dog so we had to send the dog away and then he used to hit me and my mum so we had to send Daddy away'*  
(1: 441-444)

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

Figure 4 – Constructs of children exposed to domestic violence prior to developing knowledge of domestic violence through social processes



Figure 5 – Constructs of children exposed to domestic violence after developing knowledge of domestic violence through social processes



- Academic performance

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

are symptomatic of emotional trauma. Additionally I am personally able to identify with these behaviours as a result of my own experiences. These symptoms will have an adverse impact on learning and teachers are well-placed to identify these difficulties and implement strategies to support children's learning.

### **7.3 - Conclusion**

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

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

### *Reflexive Box*

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

The research questions will now be considered for a final time in relation to the discussion of the outcomes from the research project.

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

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

- Knowledge and understanding of emotional trauma

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

Consequently strategies tended to be based on behaviourist principles and were based upon good practice classroom strategies.

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

- Realistic expectations

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

- Teacher role

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

education presented in the literature review, the teachers disagreed regarding the epistemological priorities of education.

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

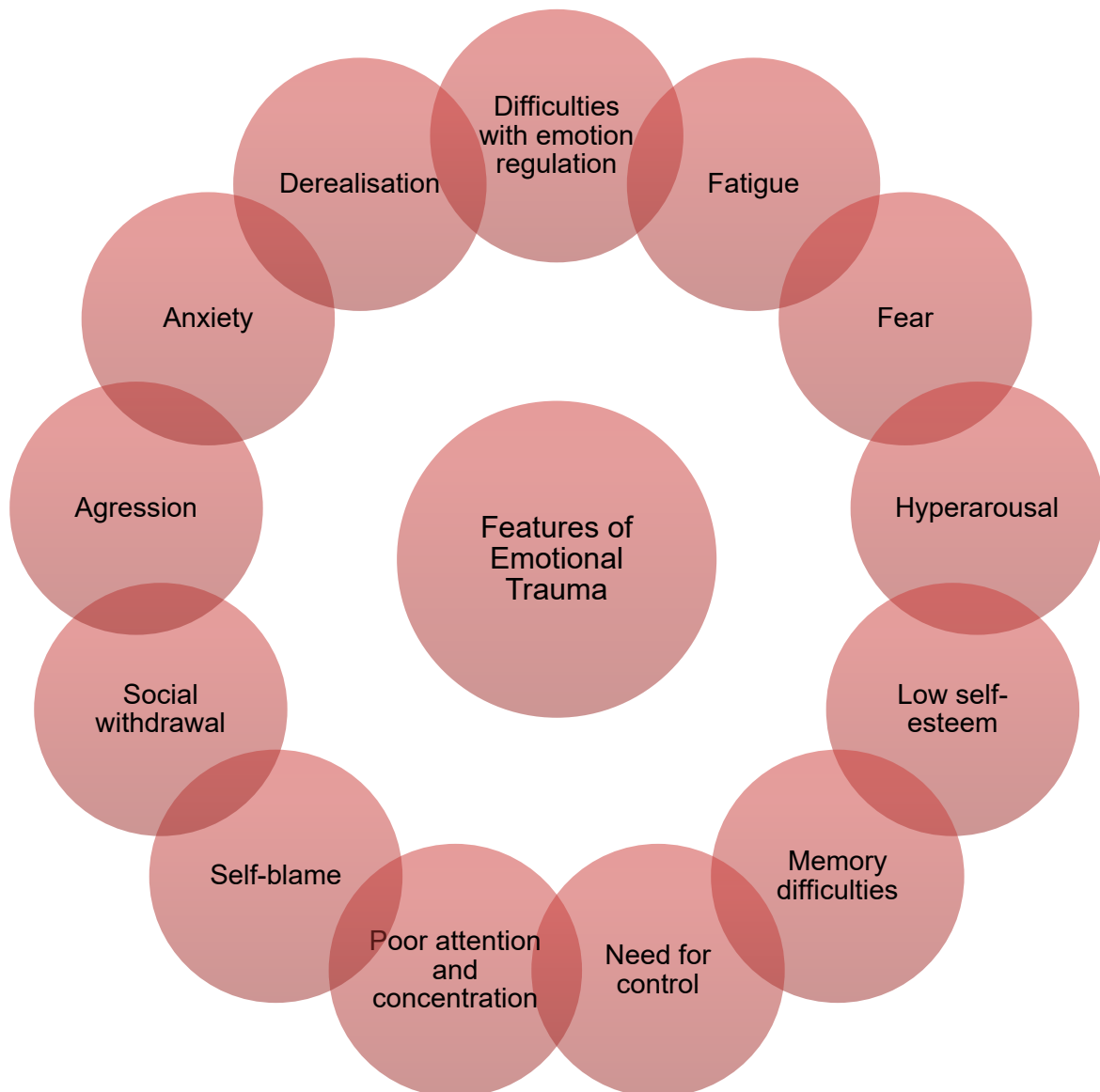
The teacher narratives of support mechanisms do not construct teachers as directly responsible for supporting children exposed to domestic violence beyond the usual support structures provided for all children within the class. The teacher narrative highlights their lack of awareness of the impact they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

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

This thesis has identified a number of features associated with emotional trauma, such as exposure to domestic violence (N.B. not all features would be present):



Figure 6 – Features of emotional trauma



The impact of emotional trauma on learning and functioning is extensive, perhaps due to the variability of symptoms (see figure 6). The following aspects of the classroom and wider school environment were identified as being affected by exposure to domestic violence or emotional trauma in general:

- Parenting capacity

Similarly to children, adults who are or have been in a violent relationship may experience emotional trauma as a result. This construct is undoubtedly

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

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

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

- Demands on staff time and resources

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

- Teacher resilience

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

- Systemic impact

Maintaining the day to day safety of staff and pupils is identified as placing a strain on the class teacher and the school systems. As I described earlier the

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

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

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

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

- Understanding of emotional trauma and its impact

This research has highlighted teachers' knowledge and understanding of the impact of emotional trauma affects the success of strategies, approaches and interventions used within the classroom and the wider school context. Educational Psychologists are well placed to facilitate the development of teachers', support staff, and other professionals' theoretical knowledge and understanding of the impact of exposure to domestic violence, and emotional

trauma more generally, on children and families. This can be done through the provision of training courses, information packs and school based work such as involvement in consultations and the development of interventions.

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

- Social constructions of domestic violence

This research has highlighted how social constructions of domestic violence can adversely affect support mechanisms, relationships and decision making. Educational Psychologists are in a good position to challenge social constructions of domestic violence and present an alternative perspective. The

provision of training and information packs, as already identified, will also facilitate the development of alternative perspectives through increased knowledge. Educational Psychologists are well placed to provide challenge to schools through their day to day work and this should involve raising awareness of social constructions such as 'victim' and 'domestic violence' and how this then affects relationships and interactions.

- Support systems for teachers

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

- Systemic support

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

have skills in mediation and supportive questioning. Educational psychologists promote joined up working and the engagement of all stakeholders, e.g. parents, teachers, support staff, other professionals and the child. These skills can be used in building rapport with families and gathering relevant background information.

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

## **7.4 – Implications for Future Research and Practice**

### 7.4.1 - Implications for schools

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

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

Epistemological debate regarding what to teach has been of significant political interest throughout the history of education. I would argue the impact of emotional trauma as an adverse life experience and the importance of emotions in learning and

development demonstrate the relevance and significance of domestic violence within the field of education. This is highlighted by figure 7 below.

Figure 7 – Emotions and the role of education

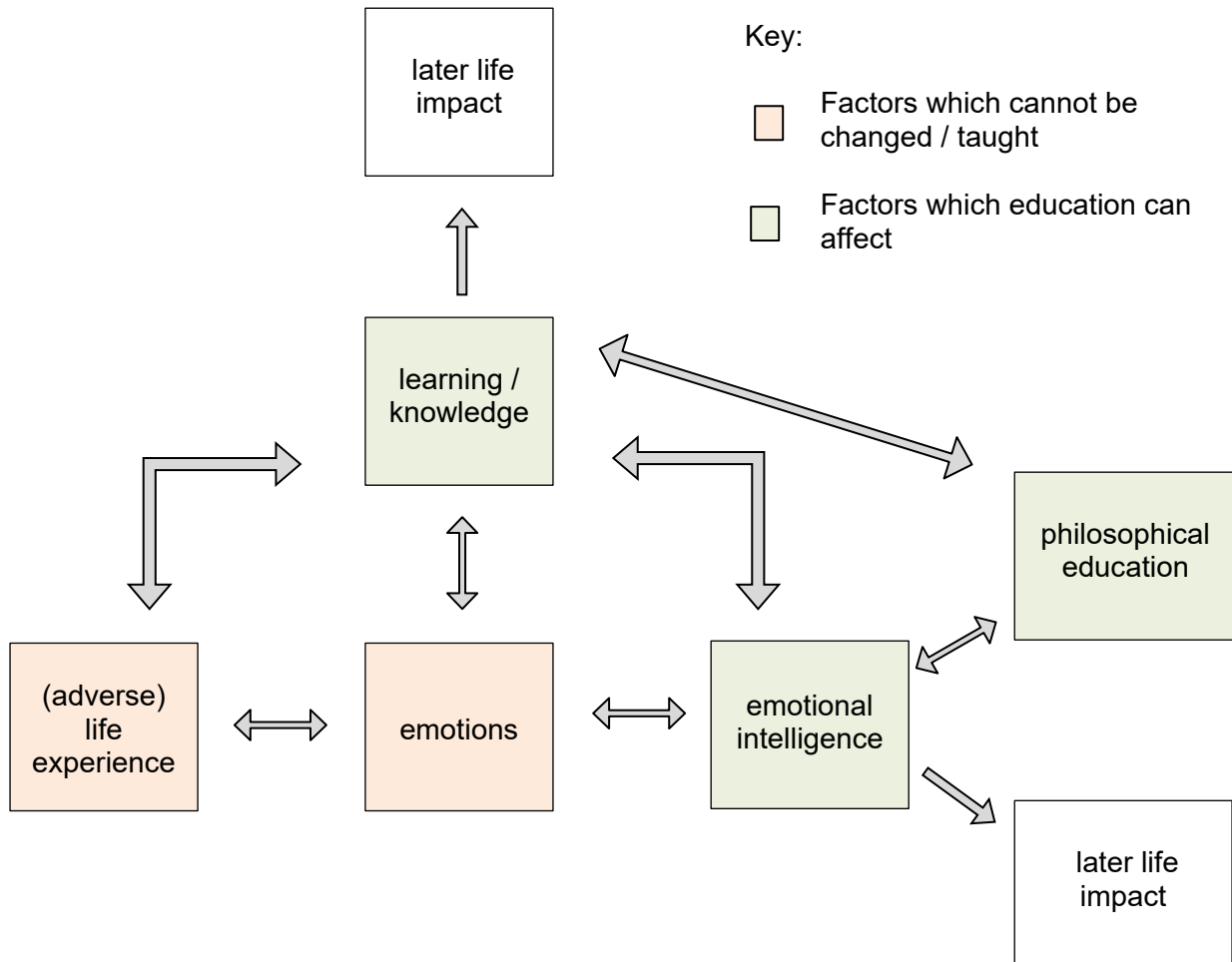


Figure 7 demonstrates the influence of life experiences on knowledge based on constructivist views (Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner). Constructionists argue education facilitates the construction of meaning. Education will therefore influence those constructions, e.g. constructions of domestic violence. Emotions affect functioning and adverse life experiences in particular which result in emotional trauma will cause strong emotional reactions and according to Sylwester (1994) emotional reactions trigger a stress response and influence our behaviour. Within the literature it is accepted emotions affect functioning such as memory and learning (Billington, 2013; Uttl, Siegenthaler and Ohta, 2006; Bower, 1981; Sylwester, 1994). Whilst emotions exist it is not easy to change or learn emotions (Sylwester, 1994), Goleman (2004) however argues emotional intelligence can be taught. Goleman



(2004) describes teaching emotional literacy (impulse control, anger management and social problem solving) promotes emotional intelligence. I perceive philosophical education (which promotes and includes the factors Goleman (2004) described as central to emotional literacy) is therefore of significant epistemological importance as it presents an arena for the construction of meaning and consideration of life experiences. Mintz (2009) describes philosophical education as allowing children to challenge experiences. Smeyers, Smith and Standish (2007) argue education, therapy and philosophy should help individuals cope with the feelings of uncertainty. Philosophical education therefore promotes the development of emotional intelligence which will have an impact on learning and the construction of knowledge and meaning. The construction of meaning will also influence the emotional response and finally as Goleman (2004) argues, success in life appears to be dependent upon emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is indicative of resilience and effective coping strategies influencing knowledge construction which, in my experience is essential for coming to terms with emotional trauma and managing the associated emotions.

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

Whilst statistics show domestic violence can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity or educational background, research evidence indicates emotional intelligence may be related to difficulties in adulthood

(Goleman, 2004) including domestic violence (Dutton, 2008). Given the teacher narrative constructs children exposed to domestic violence as having difficulties with social problem solving and emotion regulation added support is provided to the argument for teaching critical skills, or emotional literacy, and further highlighting the importance of considering domestic violence in the field of educational research.

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

- Recognise and respond to the symptoms of emotional trauma as indicated in figure 6.
- Daily planning should provide opportunities to teach, and practice, skills associated with emotional intelligence (impulse control, managing anger and finding creative solutions to predicaments). These skills will benefit all children but in particular will support children who have experienced emotional trauma.
- The use of good practice techniques such as the provision of a calm safe environment, social approval, routines, consistency, rewards and praise will aid feelings of comfort, reassurance and security and address the need for a stable routine and consistency. Changes of routine should be discussed with the child in advance and planned for with the child.
- Policies should be written and reviewed to take account of the needs of emotionally traumatised children. Trauma theories recommend against behaviourist approaches to managing challenging behaviour (such as the implementation of consequences) as this may lead to the child seeking the punishment they feel they deserve leading to a continuing (downward) cycle of undesirable behaviour.
- Consider introducing, or reviewing, PSHE policies. The purpose of policy review should be to consider whole school approaches to discrete teaching of social and emotional skills and day to day cross-curricular teaching of social and emotional skills. Schools should consider long-term planning around the development of

social and emotional skills. This could be in relation to PSHE plans or as a discrete subject such as 'emotional literacy'.

- Consideration should be given to the provision of supervision, or informal emotional support, for class teachers supporting children who have experienced emotional trauma. Schools should recognise the emotional stresses and strains placed upon a class teacher to provide day to day support for traumatised children. Supervision techniques should focus on creating a narrative of success and analyse the benefits of decisions, strategies or approaches applied within the classroom, particularly in relation to the traumatised child.
- Teachers should draw on the existing emotional intelligence of the child to facilitate them in articulating their own coping strategies and identification of areas of difficulty. This will help promote feelings of control and emotion regulation through the recognition and management of their own feelings and emotions.
- Ensure children who have experienced emotional trauma (or display symptoms of emotional trauma as indicated in figure 6) are emotionally supported when completing tasks which they may be unable to successfully complete.
- Ensure regular opportunities for children to achieve success.
- Recognise the needs of emotionally traumatised children will change over time, particularly when the trauma is no longer ongoing, or was a one-off experience.
- Adult-child relationships should be characterised by a trusting relationship and good rapport; this will positively affect feelings of containment and safety.
- Adults should provide time for a child to talk, if and when they want to talk.
- Recognise times of distress and provide reassurance, comfort and safety to manage the source of distress and remove the child from the source of distress if required or appropriate.

- Consider specific teaching around healthy relationships including raising awareness of domestic violence.
- Be able to signpost families to agencies who can provide support to those affected by domestic violence e.g. Women's Aid.

#### 7.4.2 - Implications for Educational Psychologists

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

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

- Raise awareness of the impact of emotional trauma and help schools to recognise the symptoms (see figure 6) and respond appropriately, e.g. provision of training courses, information packs and school based work such as involvement in consultations and the development of interventions.
- Provide factual information relating to domestic violence to address historically and culturally specific constructions associated with domestic violence, such as intelligent people don't have violent relationships and it doesn't affect young children.
- Challenge social constructions of domestic violence and present an alternative perspective. The provision of training and information packs, as already

identified, will also facilitate the development of alternative perspectives through increased knowledge.

- Provide challenge to schools through day to day interactions; this should involve raising awareness of social constructions such as 'victim' and 'domestic violence' and how this then affects relationships and interactions.
- Provide support systems for teachers e.g. the development of peer supervision and narrative approaches to enable teachers to story their experiences and construct narratives of benefits rather than blame, the development of problem solving groups to provide emotional support for staff and generate solutions or the provision of professional supervision to support adults who require more a formal support structure.
- Provide consultation and support in relation to emotional trauma and domestic violence to meet the needs of individual children and families.
- Provide systemic support to develop and review policies and practice relating to emotional trauma including domestic violence.
- Facilitate the development of rapport between all stakeholders through mediation and supportive questioning.
- Provide targeted interventions to address the symptoms of emotional trauma (identified in figure 6).
- Provide consultation and support to families affected by emotional trauma and domestic violence.
- Promote, and engage in, multi-agency consultations involving all stakeholders.

#### 7.4.3 - Limitations

It is acknowledged there are a number of limitations to this research study. The narratives of three teachers, in one area of an outer-city suburb/township consisting mainly of council estate housing, covering an extensive area, were obtained. It is

accepted these views may not be shared by other teachers, or representative of other areas of the city, or local authorities. In addition the participants were self-selecting and their motivations for participating may suggest they have differing views to other teachers who did not volunteer.

It is recognised that, due to the research being static in its nature, there is no information about the children's functioning prior to the experience of domestic violence. Additionally Grych and Fincham (1990) report teachers are more reliable raters of externalising behaviour than internalising behaviour. Therefore the insights into the behavioural presentation of the children cannot be considered as representative of the children generally.

Many of the methodological concerns raised in chapter two (methodology) relating to definitions of domestic violence and determining exposure and severity of domestic violence are not addressed within this study (Holt *et al.* 2008; Holden, 2003; Prinz and Feerick, 2003). Consequently the narratives are not generalisable, however given this research is conducted from a social constructionist perspective the narratives are only considered to be representative of that particular interaction.

#### 7.4.4 - Application of outcomes

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, direct work to raise awareness and develop understanding of the impact of emotional trauma and domestic violence is required. I remain of the opinion this would be necessary prior to work at a multi-agency level as these understandings are, in my opinion, pre-requisites to engaging in multi-agency work.

All of the theories presented in the literature review indicate potential deficits in social and emotional skills, and without these deficits being addressed, directly or indirectly, they are likely to persist into adulthood. The teaching of grammar rules and mathematical principles will not address these deficits, however I do accept the approach to teaching, and the skills modelled and used in relation to learning grammar rules, for example, may have an impact. I would however argue that if these skills are not specifically considered in the planning and delivery of lessons

this is more likely to be consequential learning rather than a targeted area of learning, as such skill deficits are unlikely to be adequately addressed. I have already identified good practice alone is not enough to address the needs of emotionally traumatised children.

Education which raises awareness of domestic violence is important in preventing domestic violence in future generations given there is potential for those who have been exposed to domestic violence to become involved in violent relationships in later life (Brown and Bzostek, 2003; Maker, Kemmelmeier and Peterson, 1998). However the reasons for this continuing cycle are not addressed within education policy, either through preventative strategies or interventions aimed at developing social and emotional skills. Further discussion of the teaching of critical skills, and specific domestic violence education is required.

This research has presented professional narratives of emotional trauma through reflection on domestic violence and is also intended to promote the development of the reader's own professional narratives around emotional trauma through reflections on domestic violence. Finally in conclusion I feel the constructs of emotional trauma which have been developed through reflection on domestic violence, as an example of emotional trauma, are applicable to other examples of emotional trauma.

## **8 - Epilogue**

*It seems only fair to finish my story. The post-mortem results found a problem with the placenta. According to the consultant we were unlucky, a rare complication had occurred but we were at no greater risk of experiencing the same outcome. It could happen to anyone and unfortunately it had happened to us. We had become a statistic. Although medically we were at no greater risk than anyone else we were terrified of losing another baby. Neither of us felt we had the emotional capacity to go through the pain of stillbirth again, however I knew I couldn't let the experience affect the rest of my life. I needed to try again and my partner buried his head in the sand.*

*Five months after Adam died I was lucky to fall pregnant again. It was a long and bumpy journey which consisted mainly of denial as all other options were emotionally draining and far too painful to consider.*

*Fourteen months after giving birth to Adam, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014 we had a little girl, Olivia Charlotte Rose. Our whole family was delighted. She is extremely special to us and represents what I can only describe as a therapeutic addition to the family. We lived life in limbo for fourteen months but now we are moving on and enjoying the next chapter in life. I have learned we can be resilient to emotional trauma and whilst it is particularly hard in the time immediately after and, although the emotional pain remains with us for the rest of our lives, we can learn to manage it, find happiness and move forwards.*



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## **Appendices**

## Appendix One - Ethical Approval



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

The  
School  
Of  
Education.

Helen Dixon  
EdD Educational Psychology

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25 March 2013

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Dear Helen

### **ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER**

*Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the early years (aged 0 - 8 years).*

Thank you for submitting your ethics application. I am writing to confirm that your application has now been approved.

We recommend you refer to the reviewers' additional comments (please see attached). You should discuss how you are going to respond to these comments with your supervisor BEFORE you proceed with your research.

This letter is evidence that your application has been approved and should be included as an Appendix in your final submission.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Dan Goodley  
Chair of the School of Education Ethics Review Panel

cc Professor Tom Billington

Enc Ethical Review Feedback Sheet(s)

## ETHICS REVIEWER'S COMMENTS FORM

<b>1. Name of Ethics Reviewer:</b>	Dr David Hyatt
------------------------------------	----------------

<b>2. Research Project Title:</b>	Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the early years (aged 0 - 8 years).
<b>3. Principal Investigator (and name of Tutor/Supervisor in the case of student applications):</b>	Supervisor – Tom Billington Student – Helen Dixon
<b>4. Academic Department / School:</b>	Education

**5. I confirm that I do not have a conflict of interest with the project application**

<b>6. I confirm that, in my judgment, the application should:</b>			
Be approved:	Be approved with <i>suggested</i> amendments in '7' below:	Be approved providing <i>requirements</i> specified in '8' below are met:	NOT be approved for the reason(s) given in '9' below:
	<b>X</b>		

**7. Approved with the following suggested, optional amendments (i.e. it is left to the discretion of the applicant whether or not to accept the amendments and, if accepted, the ethics reviewers do not need to see the amendments):**

- Letter to Unselected Participants needs proof-reading
- Tick box in A4 indicating anonymity of data

**8. Approved providing the following, compulsory requirements are met (i.e. the ethics reviewers need to see the required changes):**

**9. Not approved for the following reason(s):**

**10. Date of Ethics Review:** 22/3/2013



## **Appendix Two - Home Office Definition of Domestic Violence**

Effective from March 2013

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

\* This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.  
(The Home Office, 2012).

## **Appendix Three - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Diagnostic Criteria**

### **DSM-IV criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

1. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present-:
  - The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others
  - The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror
2. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways-:
  - Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, and perceptions
  - Recurrent distressing dreams of the event
  - Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring
  - Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event
  - Physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event
3. Avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following-:
  - Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma
  - Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma
  - Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma
  - Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities
  - Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others
  - Restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings)
  - Sense of foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children or a normal life span)
4. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma) as indicated by two (or more) of the following-:
  - Difficulty falling or staying asleep
  - Irritability or outbursts of anger
  - Difficulty concentrating

- Hypervigilance
- Exaggerated startle response

5. Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in criteria 2, 3 and 4) is more than 1 month.

6. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Amended June 2008

Taken from [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk). Available online at: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/specialist-guides/medical-conditions/a-z-of-medical-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/dsm-iv-ptsd.shtml> [Accessed 24/04/13].

### DSM-V criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

The following criteria apply to adults, adolescents, and children older than six. Pre-school criteria is listed below.

- A. Exposure to actual or threatened a) death, b) serious injury, or c) sexual violation, in one or more of the following ways:
1. directly experiencing the traumatic event(s)
  2. witnessing, in person, the traumatic event(s) as they occurred to others
  3. learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend; cases of actual or threatened death must have been violent or accidental
  4. experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s) (e.g., first responders collecting human remains; police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse); this does not apply to exposure through electronic media, television, movies, or pictures, unless this exposure is work-related.
- B. Presence of one or more of the following intrusion symptoms associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning after the traumatic event(s) occurred:
1. spontaneous or cued recurrent, involuntary, and intrusive distressing memories of the traumatic event(s) (Note: In children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the traumatic event(s) are expressed.)
  2. recurrent distressing dreams in which the content or affect of the dream is related to the event(s) (Note: In children, there may be frightening dreams without recognizable content. )
  3. dissociative reactions (e.g., flashbacks) in which the individual feels or acts as if the traumatic event(s) are recurring (such reactions may occur on a continuum, with the most extreme expression being a complete loss of awareness of present surroundings. (Note: In children, trauma-specific reenactment may occur in play.)

4. intense or prolonged psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event(s)
  5. marked physiological reactions to reminders of the traumatic event(s)
- C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning after the traumatic event(s) occurred, as evidenced by avoidance or efforts to avoid one or more of the following:
1. distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings about or closely associated with the traumatic event(s)
  2. external reminders (i.e., people, places, conversations, activities, objects, situations) that arouse distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings about, or that are closely associated with, the traumatic event(s)
- D. Negative alterations in cognitions and mood associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning or worsening after the traumatic event(s) occurred, as evidenced by two or more of the following:
1. inability to remember an important aspect of the traumatic event(s) (typically due to dissociative amnesia that is not due to head injury, alcohol, or drugs)
  2. persistent and exaggerated negative beliefs or expectations about oneself, others, or the world (e.g., "I am bad," "No one can be trusted," "The world is completely dangerous"). (Alternatively, this might be expressed as, e.g., "I've lost my soul forever," or "My whole nervous system is permanently ruined").
  3. persistent, distorted blame of self or others about the cause or consequences of the traumatic event(s)
  4. persistent negative emotional state (e.g., fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame)
  5. markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities
  6. feelings of detachment or estrangement from others
  7. persistent inability to experience positive emotions (e.g., unable to have loving feelings, psychic numbing)
- E. Marked alterations in arousal and reactivity associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning or worsening after the traumatic event(s) occurred, as evidenced by two or more of the following:
1. irritable or aggressive behaviour
  2. reckless or self-destructive behaviour
  3. hypervigilance
  4. exaggerated startle response
  5. problems with concentration
  6. sleep disturbance (e.g., difficulty falling or staying asleep or restless sleep)
- F. Duration of the disturbance (Criteria B, C, D, and E) is more than 1 month.
- G. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

- H. The disturbance is not attributed to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e.g., medication, drugs, or alcohol) or another medical condition (e.g. traumatic brain injury).

Specify if:

With Delayed Expression: if the diagnostic threshold is not exceeded until at least 6 months after the event (although the onset and expression of some symptoms may be immediate).

**Subtype: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Preschool Children**

- A. In children (less than age 6 years), exposure to one or more of the following events: death or threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violation, in one or more of the following ways:
1. directly experiencing the event(s)
  2. witnessing, in person, the event(s) as they occurred to others, especially primary caregivers (Note: Witnessing does not include events that are witnessed only in electronic media, television, movies or pictures.)
  3. learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a parent or caregiving figure;

- B. Presence of one or more intrusion symptoms associated with the traumatic event(s) , beginning after the traumatic event(s) occurred:
1. spontaneous or cued recurrent, involuntary, and intrusive distressing memories of the traumatic event(s) (Note: spontaneous and intrusive memories may not necessarily appear distressing and may be expressed as play re-enactment.)
  2. recurrent distressing dreams in which the content and/or affect of the dream is related to the traumatic event(s) (Note: it may not be possible to ascertain that the frightening content is related to the traumatic event.)
  3. dissociative reactions in which the child feels or acts as if the traumatic event(s) were recurring, (such reactions may occur on a continuum with the most extreme expression being a complete loss of awareness of present surroundings). Such trauma-specific re-enactment may occur in play.
  4. intense or prolonged psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event(s)
  5. marked physiological reactions to reminders of the traumatic event(s)

One item from criterion C or D below:

- C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic event, beginning after the traumatic event occurred, as evidenced by avoidance or efforts to avoid:
1. activities, places, or physical reminders that arouse recollections of the traumatic event
  2. people, conversations, or interpersonal situations that arouse recollections of the traumatic event.

- D. Negative alterations in cognitions and mood associated with the traumatic event, beginning or worsening after the traumatic event occurred, as evidenced by one or more of the following:
1. markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities, including constriction of play
  2. socially withdrawn behaviour
  3. persistent reduction in expression of positive emotions
- E. Alterations in arousal and reactivity associated with the traumatic event, beginning or worsening after the traumatic event occurred, as evidenced by two or more of the following:
1. irritable, angry, or aggressive behavior, including extreme temper tantrums
  2. hypervigilance
  3. exaggerated startle response
  4. problems with concentration
  5. sleep disturbance (e.g., difficulty falling or staying asleep or restless sleep)
- F. Duration of the disturbance (Criteria B, C, D and E) is more than 1 month.
- G. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in relationships with parents, siblings, peers, or other caregivers or with school behavior.
- H. The disturbance is not attributable to another medical condition.

**Note:** An individual can be diagnosed with both the Preschool and Dissociative Subtypes if criteria for both are met.

**Subtype: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder – With Prominent Dissociative (Depersonalization/Derealization) Symptoms**

The individual meets the diagnostic criteria for PTSD and in addition experiences persistent or recurrent symptoms of A1, A2, or both:

- A1. Depersonalization: Experiences of feeling detached from, and as if one is an outside observer of, one's mental processes or body (e.g., feeling as though one is in a dream, sense of unreality of self or body, or time moving slowly).
- A2. Derealization: Experiences of unreality of one's surroundings (e.g., world around the person is experienced as unreal, dreamlike, distant, or distorted)
- B. The disturbance is not due to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e.g., blackouts, or behavior during alcohol intoxication), or another medical condition (e.g., complex partial seizures).

**Note:** The Dissociative and Preschool Subtypes are not mutually exclusive.

Available online at: <https://www.myptsd.com/c/threads/wow-the-apa-really-got-the-new-ptsd-diagnosis-right.27151/> [Accessed 08/01/14]

## ICD-10 criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

### **F43.1 Post-traumatic stress disorder**

This arises as a delayed and/or protracted response to a stressful event or situation (either short- or long-lasting) of an exceptionally threatening or catastrophic nature, which is likely to cause pervasive distress in almost anyone (e.g. natural or man-made disaster, combat, serious accident, witnessing the violent death of others, or being the victim of torture, terrorism, rape, or other crime).

Predisposing factors such as personality traits (e.g. compulsive, asthenic) or previous history of neurotic illness may lower the threshold for the development of the syndrome or aggravate its course, but they are neither necessary nor sufficient to explain its occurrence.

Typical symptoms include episodes of repeated reliving of the trauma in intrusive memories ("flashbacks") or dreams, occurring against the persisting background of a sense of "numbness" and emotional blunting, detachment from other people, unresponsiveness to surroundings, anhedonia, and avoidance of activities and situations reminiscent of the trauma. Commonly there is fear and avoidance of cues that remind the sufferer of the original trauma. Rarely, there may be dramatic, acute bursts of fear, panic or aggression, triggered by stimuli arousing a sudden recollection and/or re-enactment of the trauma or of the original reaction to it.

There is usually a state of autonomic hyperarousal with hypervigilance, an enhanced startle reaction, and insomnia. Anxiety and depression are commonly associated with the above symptoms and signs, and suicidal ideation is not infrequent. Excessive use of alcohol or drugs may be a complicating factor.

The onset follows the trauma with a latency period which may range from a few weeks to months (but rarely exceeds 6 months). The course is fluctuating but recovery can be expected in the majority of cases. In a small proportion of patients the condition may show a chronic course over many years and a transition to an enduring personality change (see F62.0).

### ***Diagnostic guidelines***

This disorder should not generally be diagnosed unless there is evidence that it arose within 6 months of a traumatic event of exceptional severity. A "probable" diagnosis might still be possible if the delay between the event and the onset was longer than 6 months, provided that the clinical manifestations are typical and no alternative identification of the disorder (e.g. as an anxiety or obsessive-compulsive disorder or depressive episode) is plausible. In addition to evidence of trauma, there must be a repetitive, intrusive recollection or re-enactment of the event in memories, daytime imagery, or dreams. Conspicuous emotional detachment, numbing of feeling, and avoidance of stimuli that might arouse recollection of the trauma are often present but are not essential for the

diagnosis. The autonomic disturbances, mood disorder, and behavioural abnormalities all contribute to the diagnosis but are not of prime importance.

The late chronic sequelae of devastating stress, i.e. those manifest decades after the stressful experience, should be classified under F62.0.

*Includes:* traumatic neurosis

Available online at: <http://www.who.int/classifications/icd/en/bluebook.pdf> [Accessed on 24/04/13]



## **Appendix Four - Letters**

### **Initial Letter to Headteachers/ SENCOs**

*Date*

Dear *Contact*,

#### **Re: Domestic Violence Research**

I am writing to you with an outline of my proposed research project in the hope teaching staff in your setting may agree to participate.

I am an Educational Psychologist working for the local authority and studying for an Educational Psychology Doctorate at the University of Sheffield. This research project will form the thesis for my doctoral studies.

The title of the research project is 'Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the primary years (aged 0 - 11 years)'. The aim of this research is to explore teacher narratives of the impact of domestic violence on young children and effective day to day support mechanisms within the classroom and wider school environment.

There is very little research exploring teacher perceptions of domestic violence and I am keen to contribute the knowledge and experience of teachers and their good practice to this field of research with a view to further developing good practice and sharing the knowledge and experience of teachers. It is hoped this will further develop the skills and practice of staff who participate which will in turn benefit the whole school.

To research teacher narratives I would like to conduct a series of group interviews, over a period of three to four weeks with teachers who, in the last three years, have taught a child, aged 0 - 11 years old, who has experienced domestic violence. Participants would need to attend all three group interviews.

The first group interview will involve information sharing regarding narrative methods and be an initial scoping session to discuss the issues of domestic violence. The agenda of the second session will be developed from initial analysis of the content of the first session. It is likely to involve presentation of some narratives outlined in the first session. Participants will be expected to bring some ideas for classroom practice and intervention which will then be discussed. The third session is hoped to lead to a more detailed narrative of domestic violence, discussion of further reading and practices/interventions that have been implemented. Participants will be encouraged to keep written notes, such as a diary, which details their thoughts and experiences over the period of the research.

I am then planning to analyse and compare responses to address the research objectives:

- i. To outline teacher narratives of effective day to day support mechanisms for children and their families who have experienced domestic violence.
- ii. To identify the day to day impact of witnessing domestic violence on learning and functioning within the classroom and wider school environment
- iii. To consider implications for the role of Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate day to day support for children and families who have experienced domestic violence.

Should you or any other members of staff be interested in participating I would be happy to share the findings from my research with you when it is completed.

Due to my project being intervention research I aim to provide an opportunity for continuing professional development. Participants would develop their understanding of narrative approaches, domestic violence and strategies to support the needs of children who have experienced domestic violence.

The timing of the group interviews is likely to be 4 – 5pm and involve 6 - 8 teachers from a range of schools. A central location will therefore be chosen for the group interviews. Each group interview will take around an hour.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. It will not be possible to identify individual responses, or schools, nor will participants be named.

If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me by telephone on *telephone number* or by email at *address*.

If you would be interested in participating in the project please could you circulate the attached letter and questionnaire to teaching staff in your setting.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Dixon  
Educational Psychologist

## Initial Letter to Participants

*Date*

Dear *Contact*,

### **Re: Domestic Violence Research**

I am writing to you with an outline of my proposed research project in the hope you may agree to participate.

I am an Educational Psychologist working for the local authority and studying for an Educational Psychology Doctorate at the University of Sheffield. This research project will form the thesis for my doctoral studies.

The title of the research project is 'Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the primary years (aged 0 - 11 years)'. The aim of this research is to explore teacher narratives of the impact of domestic violence on young children and effective day to day support mechanisms within the classroom and wider school environment.

There is very little research exploring teacher perceptions of domestic violence and I am keen to contribute the knowledge and experience of teachers and their good practice to this field of research with a view to further developing good practice and sharing the knowledge and experience of teachers. It is hoped this will further develop the skills and practice of staff who participate which will in turn benefit the whole school.

To research teacher narratives I would like to conduct a series of three group interviews, over a period of three to four weeks with teachers who, in the last three years, have taught a child, aged 3 - 11 years old, who has experienced domestic violence. Participants would need to attend all three group interviews.

The first group interview will involve information sharing regarding narrative methods and be an initial scoping session to discuss the issues of domestic violence. The agenda of the second session will be developed from initial analysis of the content of the first session. It is likely to involve presentation of some narratives outlined in the first session. Participants will be expected to bring some ideas for classroom practice and intervention which will then be discussed. The third session is hoped to lead to a more detailed narrative of domestic violence, discussion of further reading and practices/interventions that have been implemented. Participants will be encouraged to keep written notes, such as a diary, which details their thoughts and experiences over the period of the research.

I am then planning to analyse and compare responses to:

- iv. outline teacher narratives of effective day to day support mechanisms for children and their families who have experienced domestic violence.
- v. identify the day to day impact of witnessing domestic violence on learning and functioning within the classroom and wider school environment

- vi. consider implications for the role of Educational Psychologists when working with schools to facilitate day to day support for children and families who have experienced domestic violence.

Should you be interested in participating I would be happy to share the findings from my research with you when it is completed.

Due to my project being intervention research I aim to provide an opportunity for continuing professional development. Participants would develop their understanding of narrative approaches, domestic violence and strategies to support the needs of children who have experienced domestic violence.

The timing of the group interviews is likely to be 4 - 5 pm and involve 6 - 8 teachers from a range of schools. A central location will therefore be chosen for the group interviews. Each group interviews will take around an hour.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. It will not be possible to identify individual responses, or schools, nor will participants be named.

If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me by telephone on *telephone number* or by email at *address*.

If you would be interested in participating in the project please could you complete the attached questionnaire and post it to *address*, alternatively you can email it to *email address*.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Dixon  
Educational Psychologist

Letter to Unselected Participants

*Date*

Dear *Participant*,

**Re: Domestic Violence Research**

I would like to thank you for completing the information gathering sheet. I am writing to inform you I will not be inviting you to participate in a group interview due to *having already obtained a sufficient number of participants*.

If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me by telephone on *telephone number* or by email at *address*.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Dixon  
Educational Psychologist

Letter to Participants

*Date*

Dear *Participant*,

**Re: Domestic Violence Research**

Thank you for completing the information gathering sheet. I would like to invite you to participate in group interviews on:

**Session One: Date, Location, 4pm – 5pm**

**Session Two: Date, Location, 4pm – 5pm**

**Session Three: Date, Location, 4pm – 5pm**

If you are unable to participate in any of the groups please could you notify me as soon as possible so I can invite another person to ensure a suitable group size. Unfortunately inability to attend any of the sessions would end your involvement in the project.

If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me by telephone on *telephone number* or by email at *address*.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Dixon  
Educational Psychologist

## Appendix Five - Information Gathering Sheet

**Title of Project:** Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the early years (aged 0 - 8 years).

**Name of Researcher:** Helen Dixon

**Please mark the applicable boxes**

1. I would be interested in participating in the group interviews

2. a) I currently teach a child (aged 3 – 11) who is/has experienced domestic violence.

or

b) In the last three years I have taught a child (aged 3 – 11) who has experienced domestic violence.

3. Please indicate the age of the child you teach/taught

4. In the last three years I have not taught a child who has experienced domestic violence.

5. I am available to participate in a group interviews between 4 and 5 pm on:  
Mondays

Tuesdays

Wednesdays

Thursdays

Fridays

6. I would be unavailable on the following dates (e.g. prior commitments, parents evenings): \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please provide an email address for further correspondence; including the date and time of group interviews: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation.  
Please return your completed questionnaire to *email address* or *postal address*

## **Appendix Six - Participant Information Sheet**

### **1. Research Project Title**

Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the primary years (aged 0 - 11 years).

### **2. Invitation paragraph**

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

### **3. What is the project's purpose?**

The aim of this research is to explore teachers narratives of the impact of experiencing domestic violence on children in the primary years (3 – 11 years old).

There has been extensive research into the impact of domestic violence and appropriate therapeutic interventions. However there is very limited research exploring teacher's narratives. In particular I am interested in perceptions of necessary day to day support mechanisms with the classroom and wider school environment.

The research project will take approximately two years to complete (your involvement will be three to four weeks in total).

### **4. Why have I been chosen?**

A letter and initial questionnaire was sent to primary schools in pre-selected clusters in the city asking for volunteers to take part in this project. You have been selected to participate in this research on the basis of the information you provided on the information gathering sheet, the main purpose being to have a representative group of individuals. There will be three group interviews. All participants will be required to attend all three group interviews.

### **5. Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

### **6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be involved in three group interviews which will take up to one hour each. The research project will take approximately two years to complete.



The group interviews will take place in a school considered to be central for all participants. The group interviews will take place outside of school time (e.g. 4pm-5pm). You will be required to participate in a group discussion around the topic outlined above. Questions or themes will be presented to stimulate discussion.

The discussion will be tape-recorded for the purpose of interpretation and analysis.

The content of the group interviews will be analysed and themes identified in order to address the research aims.

## **7. What do I have to do?**

You will be required to participate in a group discussion with other teachers lasting approximately one hour around the topic outlined above.

The first group interviews will involve information sharing regarding narrative methods and be an initial scoping session to discuss the issues of domestic violence. The agenda of the second session will be developed from initial analysis of the content of the first session. It is likely to involve presentation of some narratives outlined in the first session. Participants will be expected to bring some ideas for classroom practice and intervention which will then be discussed. The third session is hoped to lead to a more detailed narrative of domestic violence, discussion of further reading and practices/interventions that have been implemented. Participants will be encouraged to keep written notes, such as a diary, which details their thoughts and experiences over the period of the research.

## **8. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?**

The audio recordings of the group interviews discussions made during this research will be used only for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

## **9. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

There are no identifiable disadvantages or risks to taking part. All data will be confidential.

## **10. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Due to my project being intervention research I aim to provide an opportunity for continuing professional development. Participants would develop their understanding of narrative approaches, domestic violence and strategies to support the needs of children who have experienced domestic violence.

Following completion of the research it is hoped that this work will inform future strategies, training and recommendations for teachers to support children and their families who have experienced domestic violence.

## **11. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?**

If the research is discontinued due to unforeseen circumstances you will be notified as soon as practically possible and informed of the reasons for the research ending.

## **12. What if something goes wrong?**

If you wish to raise a complaint in relation to the content or procedures used in this research please contact the research supervisor:

*Research Supervisor,*  
School of Education  
University of Sheffield  
Email: *email address*  
Telephone: *telephone number*

If you feel your complaint has not been handled to a satisfactory level you can contact the University's Registrar and Secretary:

*Contact Name*  
Office of the Registrar and Secretary  
University of Sheffield  
Firth Court  
Western Bank  
Sheffield  
S10 2TN  
Email: *email address*  
Telephone: *telephone number*  
Fax: *fax number*

[www.shef.ac.uk/registrar](http://www.shef.ac.uk/registrar)

## **13. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

Personally identifiable information such as full names and places of work will not be audio recorded. All names in transcripts will be pseudonyms. Consent forms will be kept in a locked draw and destroyed once the research is completed.

## **14. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The results of the research will form a doctoral thesis for Educational Psychology at the University of Sheffield. The research project will be available at the University and may be submitted for publication in a relevant journal when the research is complete. Individuals will not be identified in any report or publication.

### **15. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is self-funded by the researcher. The research is organised by the researcher and supervised by the research supervisor Professor Tom Billington in relation to doctoral studies in Educational Psychology.

### **16. Who has ethically reviewed the project?**

This research has been ethically reviewed by The School of Education Ethical Review Committee, University of Sheffield.

### **17. Contact for further information**

Helen Dixon

Email: *email address*

Telephone: *telephone number*

Tom Billington

Email: *email address*

Telephone: *telephone number*

You will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep and a copy of a signed consent form if you agree to participate in the group interviews.

Thank you for reading and participating in this research.

## Appendix Seven - Participant Consent Form

**Title of Project:** Teacher narratives of domestic violence and its impact on the learning and functioning of children in the primary years (aged 0 - 11 years).

**Name of Researcher:** Helen Dixon

**Participant Identification Number for this project:**

**Please initial box**

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated July 2013 for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. Contact number: <i>telephone number</i>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis.<br>I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I agree to take part in the above research project.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name of Participant ( <i>or legal representative</i> )	Date	Signature
---	------	-----------

N/A	Date	Signature
<i>To be signed and dated in presence of the participant</i>		

Helen Dixon	Date	Signature
<i>To be signed and dated in presence of the participant</i>		

**Copies:**  
Participant  
Researcher

*You will also have a copy of the information sheet and any other written information provided to participants. A copy of this signed and dated consent form will be placed in the project's main record (e.g. site file), which is kept in a secure location.*

## **Appendix Eight - Group Interview Introduction and Themes/ Questions**

### Session One

*First could I introduce myself and then ask you just to go round and say who you are and your role or job title. (Introductions). This is a discussion on the impact of DV on children. I will introduce a number of broad questions for discussion. I hope you don't mind that I am tape-recording this session. We have some ground rules. They are that only one person speaks at a time, there are no right or wrong answers, and the purpose of this research is to hear your perspectives, views and experiences. Could I emphasize again that there are no right or wrong answers? I am interested in your experiences and the sense that you have made of them; we are not looking for group consensus. I will not lead or guide the discussion, though I may try to steer it back if I feel it has gone too much off course. I will be introducing the questions or themes, and some possible follow-up questions. The discussion is confidential in the sense that I will not attribute any remarks to identifiable individuals or schools. If I do use any verbatim quotes in my write-ups, they will be attributed to 'a teacher'.*

Why did you say yes to participating in this research?

What is it that you are doing?

*I am not looking to teach you about domestic violence. I want to use your ideas and allow us to listen to each others ideas.*

*As I have already stated the aim of this research is to explore teachers narratives of the impact of experiencing domestic violence on children in the primary years (3 – 11 years old).*

*There has been extensive research into the impact of domestic violence and appropriate therapeutic interventions. However there is very limited research exploring teacher's narratives. In particular I am interested in perceptions of necessary day to day support mechanisms with the classroom and wider school environment.*

*Using a narrative approach I would like us to explore DV and the impact upon children. Narrative practice assumes we create a story to interpret and explain all experiences. I am interested in the narratives around DV and education from the perspective of teachers.*

*By participation in this group a narrative of DV will be created and developed. This will then enable us to consider future directions and possibly develop a set of resources within the final session. What these will look like entirely depends upon the contents of the discussion that takes place.*

*Initially we will consider issues more generally relating to DV and education. At the end of the session I will give you a couple of articles to read in preparation for the next session when we will consider personal experiences in more depth. To aid your*

*reflections I will provide you with a notebook to enable you to keep a reflective log over the next two weeks. I will discuss this further towards the end of the session.*

*I would like to share the Home Office Definition of domestic violence with you.*

Why is DV of importance to you?

Do the children you have taught who have experienced DV present differently?

How do children exposed to DV present?

What is their impact upon the class?

Are you able to cope?

Is the child able to cope?

Are there problems at the gate?

Are there problems in the community?

Do the parents/couples meet?

Do you go through child protection procedures?

Are you supposed to know?

School perspective

Child perspective

Parent perspective

How is the violence talked about, and by who?

Strategies used and their impact.

Sources of support and their impact.

Social Care involvement and their impact.

How do you view your role as the child's teacher?

What is the school's role in relation to DV and education?

### Prompts

To encourage more discussion / check that it is ok to move on to the next question.

*Does anybody want to follow on from that?*

*Would anybody like to agree or disagree with that?*

*Is there anything anybody would like to add to that?*

General prompts to show interest and keep discussing flowing:

*ok,*

*mmm,*

*uh-huh,*

*yeah,*

*[nods],*

*[eye contact],*

## Session Two

Welcome and reminder of ground rules:

- i. only one person speaks at a time
- ii. there are no right or wrong answers
- iii. and I am particularly interested in your own perspectives, views and experiences of these issues

Recap of previous session:

- extremely violent behaviour
- challenge to manage
- TAs who are not necessarily wanting to handle the children
- head teachers attempting to support but often ineffective
- violent behaviour being copied from home and being the norm within a family,
- children as covering for adults and wanting to share information but not doing so.
- Other children copy the behaviour displayed by the children who've experienced domestic violence.
- children seek control or feel out of control.
- Strategies included sticker charts, rewards or treats and verbal reminders not to hurt other children.
- difficult to teach properly
- concerns for safety within the classroom,
- left alone to cope
- difficult to access support in school and outside school.
- formal procedures such as child protection and police involvement have been needed to manage problems at the gate.
- time's taken up talking about incidents and writing them up.
- different messages these children receive - observing violence in the home then being told in school not to hurt people.
- play being very rough with lots of crashing and banging
- experiences of external support were focused on parenting
- role as a teacher:

- educate them in order to prevent a cycle of violent behaviour continuing
- offer support and stability to talk if they needed to
- giving clear guidelines.
- school's role
  - minimise the impact
  - have systems in place
  - keep records
  - maintain their safety
  - good communication
  - smooth transitions.
- personal, social skills were important but that expectations should be high and their experiences shouldn't be used as an excuse.

Questions framed around:

- How do we think of children exposed to DV?
- How do we speak of children exposed to DV?
- How do we speak to children exposed to DV?
- How do we listen to children exposed to DV?
- (Billington, 2006, p.8)

What has stuck in your mind this week, what is your key thought or reflection?

How would you describe the children who you have taught (that have experienced DV)?

- Peer relationships
- Problem solving

How would their peers describe them?

How would they describe themselves?

What difficulties do you feel these children have?

What are their strengths?

How would you describe your relationship with their parents/carers?

- Is there a power relationship?
- Sensitive topic?

How do the children speak about their parents, or the adults at home?

- To adults or peers?
- Recognition of difference?
- Is there a need to talk?

How would you describe their play?

Do you think all children who have experienced DV present with the same difficulties?

What do you identify as key areas of need/ deficit/ difficulty for these children?

How do you teach children about appropriate behaviour?



What classroom strategies have been effective in supporting the children you've taught?

What would be your ideal scenario within the classroom to support them?

What doesn't work?

The article that I gave you last week talked about emotion regulation and the development of prosocial skills I was wondering what your reflections were on those areas of development:

- parental attachment helps to develop emotion regulation
- pro-social skills:
  - the success of a person in meeting societal expectations
  - attend to social cues
  - solve interpersonal problems

The family is discussed in relation to resilience. What role is there for teachers and schools, and how important is school in relation to the development of resilience?

What would have helped you?

What would have helped them?

Diaries

Persistent recollections

E.g. key events in shaping your views, reasons for participating

Observations

Feelings evoked

Your response – reflections/reasons for your response

(Billington, 2006. p.17)

Prompts

To encourage more discussion / check that it is ok to move on to the next question.

*Does anybody want to follow on from that?*

*Would anybody like to agree or disagree with that?*

*Is there anything anybody would like to add to that?*

General prompts to show interest and keep discussing flowing:

*ok,*

*mmm,*

*uh-huh,*

*yeah,*

*[nods],*

*[eye contact],*

### Session Three

#### Ground Rules:

- only one person speaks at a time
- no right or wrong answers (purpose of this research is to hear your perspectives, views and experiences).

#### Recap:

- Definition of D.V.
- Definition of Child Abuse

Overlap between D.V. and child abuse.

#### Department of Health (2002)

Nearly three quarters of children on the “at risk” register live in households where domestic violence occurs.

#### Sternberg et al. (2006)

Completed a ‘mega-analysis’ of family violence and within their sample 58% (1870 participants) of the children were victims of child abuse and witnesses of family violence.

#### Recap of last session:

We didn’t always know and then giving the children that / that space to talk – focus is often on academic attainment

Know not to hurt and intimidate without hurting. Not able to recognise why this behaviour is wrong. (Coercive)

In your experience children who have experienced DV are of lower academic ability. Reasons included lack of parental input e.g. reading and homework.

Social skills are not as developed.

Tend to get frustrated (violent)

Poor attention and concentration.

Not sure how DV, academic ability, attention and concentration, behaviour and social skills are linked and which influences another. 'Switching off' could be a coping strategy. 'Vicious circle as one triggers the other'.

You felt that their peers generally view them as likeable.

You felt they were loving and cry out for nurturing – although they experience DV this doesn't mean they are not loved.

Have low self-esteem

Perhaps due to feeling, in some way, responsible for the violence.

Difficulties making sense of everything

Conflicting messages

Realisation it is not the norm at home.

Trust

I understood that you were saying these factors impact on the development of their morals – is that correct?

Concerned with safety whether their own, parents or siblings

Described them as resilient – feel they have developed coping strategies

As teachers you know something is wrong but can't put your finger on it – to all intents and purposes the child is coping.

No key themes relating to relationships with parents, some are needy, some are aggressive. No pattern re those who are abused and those who abuse or in relation to gender and their presentation.

Re emotion regulation

Lash out

Can't wait

Re social cues

Not able to see how their behaviour affects others (coercive)

- Not true of all the children

Is this because they were older or because they were girls?

Parents don't take responsibility for the behaviour of their children – make excuses

Parents don't make/keep appointments

Teachers role – to build resilience

Promote challenge as good – not sure if these children have the resilience to engage.

Tendency not to try or give up

Coping strategies include avoidance and/or seeking very clear instructions or guidance

Find failure difficult to manage if it is something they expect to succeed in e.g. if are good at sports it is difficult to manage sporting failures.

Change of mindset re what is difficult and re giving praise (e.g. praising areas they don't have difficulty with)

Want more background information about the children from parents and professionals (recognise the challenge of gaining information from parents and children)

Need to consider opportunities for teaching and talking in P.S.E.

Not teacher's role to say 'sit down and tell me everything'

you just have to stay one step ahead all the time

Similar symptoms to attachment disorder (need for control or that getting really frantic when something doesn't go their way)

Topics which arose to discuss or explore further were:

Items for me to work on:

- General information e.g. stats
- Involvement of Social Care
- Teaching Resources
- Websites/ Resources for support for victims

Discussion areas for this session:

- Q's for parents
- Classroom strategies
- Resilience
- Self-esteem
- Behaviour management
- How to talk to children

What have you been doing differently?

What has changed in your classroom?

How have the children changed?

What have you reflected on this week?

What has been the biggest change in your thinking or perceptions?

What have you learnt?

What would you like to know more about?

### Collect diaries and thank participants

### Prompts

To encourage more discussion / check that it is ok to move on to the next question.

*Does anybody want to follow on from that?*

*Would anybody like to agree or disagree with that?*

*Is there anything anybody would like to add to that?*

General prompts to show interest and keep discussing flowing:

*ok,*

*mmm,*

*uh-huh,*

*yeah,*

*[nods],*

*[eye contact],*

## **Appendix Nine - NSPCC Definition of Child Abuse**

In civil law, child welfare is the responsibility of local authorities and family courts. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, local authorities are charged with the “duty to investigate ... if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm”.

Harm, under section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989 is defined as "ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development". Section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 added to this definition: "... including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another". To decide whether harm is significant, the health and development of the child is "compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child" (Children Act 1989).

In criminal law it is the police and the criminal courts who prosecute offenders and protect the public, including children. Home Office Circular 16/2005 lists criminal offences against children. It includes the offence of cruelty to children, which was first established in section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933:

“If any person who has attained the age of sixteen years and has the custody, charge, or care of any child or young person under that age, wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons, or exposes him, or causes or procures him to be assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, abandoned, or exposed, in a manner likely to cause him unnecessary suffering or injury to health...that person shall be guilty of a misdemeanour...”.

NSPCC factsheet September 2012

Available online at

[http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/questions/prosecuting\\_child\\_abuse\\_wda70195.html#What\\_is\\_the\\_definition\\_of\\_child\\_abuse?](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/questions/prosecuting_child_abuse_wda70195.html#What_is_the_definition_of_child_abuse?) [Accessed 18/07/2013]

## **Appendix Ten - Summary of Discussion from Session One and Session Two**

- Presentation of the children
  - Cognitive
    - Lower ability
    - Poor attention and concentration
    - Fear of failure
    - Avoidance strategies
    - Tendency not to try or give up
    - Seek clear guidance/ instructions / coaxing / adult support
  - Behaviour
    - Violent / get frustrated
    - learned behaviour - from home and modelled in school
    - play is rough (crashing and banging)  
*N.B. Rough play was clarified in session three by participants to be more typical of boys.*
  - Social/emotional
    - coercive (unaware)
    - poor social skills (for some)
    - loving and seek loving
    - seek control / feel out of control
    - peers tend to perceive them as likeable
    - low self-esteem
    - Difficulties making sense of their experiences
    - Resilient
    - Lash out
    - Can't wait
    - Difficulties managing failure when it is not expected
    - conflicting messages re behaviour from home and school

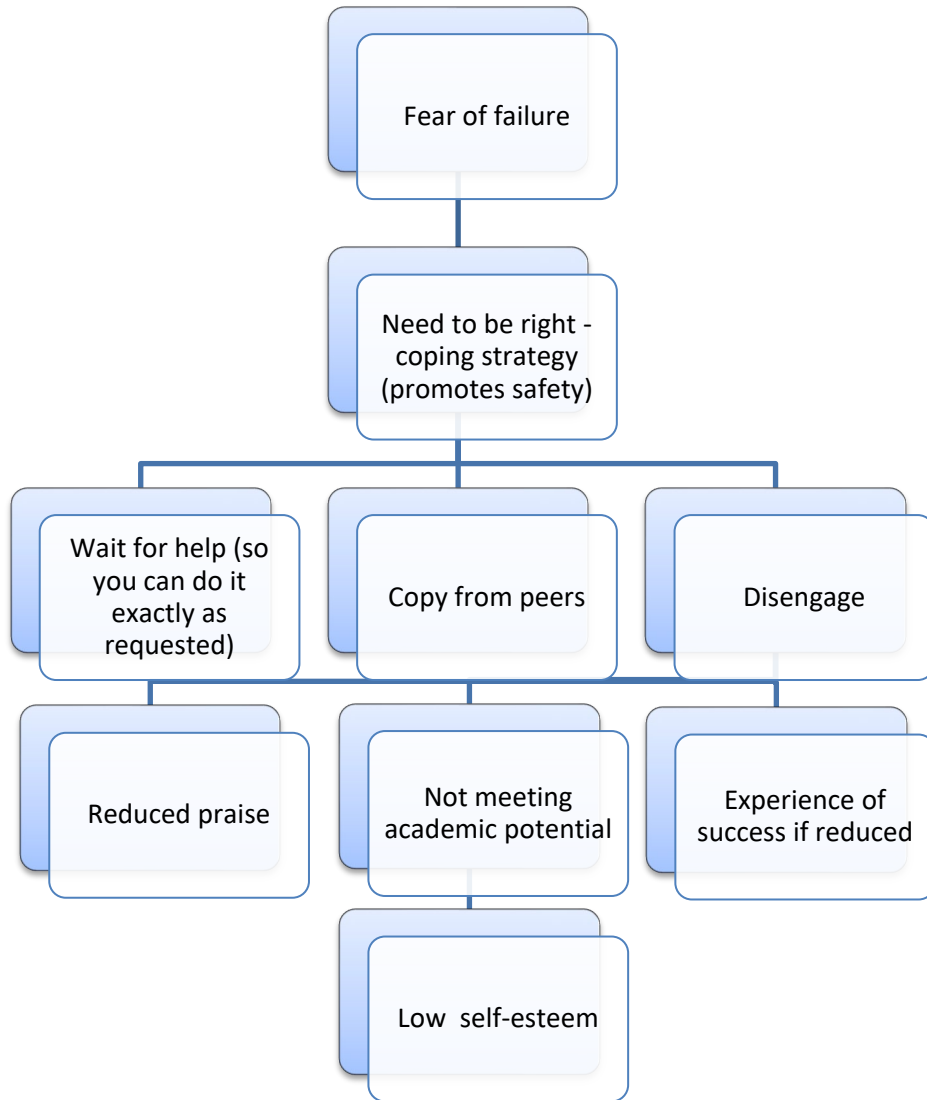
*These factors were not true of all children (may have some or none of the above)*

- Needs of the children
  - Development of personal and social skills
  - Change of mindset
- Strategies
  - Within class – sticker charts, rewards, treats, verbal reminders, distraction (i.e. removal from known difficult times such as tidying up)
  - External support – Family support: focused on parenting strategies and targeted daily routine
- Issues for teachers
  - difficult to teach the class as a whole
  - unintentional lack of support/ misguided support (HTs/ TAs)
  - safety
  - time taken recording incidents
  - lack of background information

- focus on academic attainment - difficulty providing space/time to talk
- often know something is not right but difficulties pin-pointing what or why
- change of mindset e.g. praise
  
- Class teacher's role
  - Educate to prevent cycle of learned behaviour continuing
  - Offer support and stability
  - Clear expectations
  - Build resilience
  
- School's role
  - Minimise impact
  - To have systems in place
  - Keep records
  - Maintain the child's safety
  - Good communication
  - Smooth transitions
  
- Parents
  - No common presentation – some are needy whilst others are aggressive
  - Tendency not to make or keep appointments
  - May struggle with supporting school work e.g. homework, reading
  - Difficult to hear about their child's negative behaviour, make excuses or gloss over it.



**Appendix Eleven - Illustration of a coping strategy 'needing to be right'**



The need for things to be right was identified as an effective coping strategy within the home as it helps to maintain harmony. However within the school environment this is ineffective and negatively impacts upon academic achievement and attainment within the school environment.

## Appendix Twelve - Transcript Information

### Transcript Conventions

Edwards and Mercer (1987)

(...)	Words undeciphered
.	Omitted conversation
.	irrelevant to the issue
.	being discussed
. . .	Sequence starts or ends within a speaker's turn
/	Pause of less than two seconds
//	Pause of greater than two seconds
<b>Bold type</b>	Emphatic speech
[	Simultaneous or interrupted speech

Example:

SPEAKER 1: ...that's very [ interesting isn't it?  
SPEAKER 2: [ say if the string's...

(&) Continuing speech, separated in the transcript by an interrupting speaker.

Example: speaker 1 continues without a pause, despite interruption:

SPEAKER 1: You think if you stuck a ton on  
[ it would make any difference a ton?  
[ (&  
SPEAKER 2: [ No/ no/ not even a ton.  
SPEAKER 1: (&) it would still be about ten seconds...

### Confidentiality

All names in the transcripts are pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

1

## Appendix Thirteen - Transcript of Group Interview One

2

3 4pm on 02/07/13 33 minutes 05 seconds

4

5 Facilitator (F) and three teachers (T) (T3 arrived late and T1 had to leave  
6 early)

7

8 F: Right ok, erm, so firstly I just wanted to ask why you said yes to  
9 participating in the research?

10 T1 & T2: [Nervous laughter]

11 T1: Er, sorry. I said yes because I'm really interested in learning about,  
12 more about, domestic violence myself and having children that  
13 come into my class that have it I'd like to know how to help and  
14 support them.

15 F: Ok.

16 T2: Mmm, me too really. Erm/ I've taught for quite a long time, but this  
17 year there was one particular child, well two children, that have,  
18 erm, their behaviour's very difficult.

19 F: Mmm-hmm.

20 T2: Erm, and they come from families, that, er, have had lot's of  
21 problems. There are other children in there that actually are  
22 probably suffering as well but those two are really extreme and,  
23 erm, as a staff we've found it really difficult to manage them, and I,  
24 and one of them left

25 F: Mmm

26 T2: and I felt, you know, that, maybe yeah I could have done more

27 F: Ok.

28 T2: Or a bit, a bit, like I failed him really.

29 F: Right.

30 T2: The one that stayed behaviour has improved a lot, erm, 'cos they  
31 kind of bounced off each other.

32 F: Mmm

33 T2: but when [T3] said you were doing this group, so if there's anything  
34 I could get out of it as well as you then

35 F: Mmm

36 T2: I thought it would be a good idea really.

37 F: Ok. Excellent, erm, so as I said I'm not looking to teach you,  
38 necessarily, about domestic violence. I want to use your ideas and  
39 then it will allow us to listen to each other's ideas. Erm, and as I  
40 said there's been extensive research already into the impact of  
41 domestic violence. But there's very limited, erm, research into  
42 teacher narratives and I'm interested in the perceptions of  
43 necessary day to day support mechanisms within the classroom  
44 and then, sort of, within the wider school environment so it's that  
45 'what do we do day to day?'

46 It might be that there's therapeutic intervention that happens once a  
47 week for an hour?  
48 But actually what happens the rest of the time when they're with  
49 you [laugh] that's the bit that I'm really interested in! Erm so we're  
50 going to use a narrative approach to that and I'd like us to sort of  
51 explore, erm, domestic violence and it's impact upon the children,  
52 and narrative practice assumes that we create a story to interpret  
53 and explain all experiences, erm, and I'm interested in the  
54 narratives that we have around domestic violence and education,  
55 from the perspectives of teachers, so, what, how you how see it.  
56 Erm, and by participation in the group we're going to create our  
57 own narrative of domestic violence and that will hopefully help us to  
58 consider what the future directions will be, possibly develop a set of  
59 resources within the final session. Erm, as I say, that kind of  
60 depends on where the scope of the discussion takes us, err. So  
61 this, this session, we're going do, sort of, the initial erm questions,  
62 themes around domestic violence and then, as I said, I've given  
63 you the articles to think about and the diaries. And then next week  
64 we'll sort of think more about personal experiences and you'll have  
65 had time to think about that a bit more as well. Erm, and we can  
66 think, obviously you've got your log as well, erm and then the final  
67 session we'll see where we go with that one - where we get to.

68 T1: Mmm-hmm

69 F: Ok, so, erm, I think you might have already answered this one but  
70 incase there's anything else you want to add why is domestic  
71 violence of importance to you?

72 T2: Well, I think mainly the children's, it's kind of modelled for them,  
73 that's set and then they act it out in my experience they act it out in  
74 some way

75 F: Mmm

76 T2: at school. So if they've seen it, or had it done to them, they will  
77 either act it out to us, other children or to the staff.

78 F: Mmm

79 T2: in that, in the one's we've had this year.

80 F: Ok. So behaviourally I think  
81 [you're saying aren't you?

82 T2: [yeah behaviourally,  
83 violent behaviour

84 F: Yeah.

85 T2: Yeah.

86 F: Anything you want to add or would you say different or...?

87 T1: No it's mainly same. The behaviour and providing those coping  
88 strategies for them really, so no...

89 F: Ok. So would you say that the children who, who you've taught,  
90 erm who've experienced domestic violence present differently to  
91 the other children that you've taught?

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

94 F: Mmm  
95 T1: I mean the child that I had last year he lied a lot to cover for his  
96 parents.  
97 F: Right.  
98 T1: Erm, his sister's in year 1 now but she's in the other class and she's  
99 exactly the same. She did a lot of the covering.  
100 F: Mmm  
101 T1: she's not here a day and I'll say why were you not here and she'll,  
102 you can tell she get's nervous when she wants to tell you why.  
103 F: Mmm  
104 T1: But, erm yeah but the other one that I had was mainly behaviour.  
105 F: Mmm, ok.  
106 T2: Yeah I'd say that as well.  
107 F: Yeah.  
108 T2: Yeah, one of ours to the staff, wasn't violent to the other children  
109 but to the staff  
110 F: Mmm  
111 T2: almost like a control thing. If you, if he, got his control taken away  
112 he would  
113 F: mmm  
114 T2: really get violent towards us. The other one towards the other  
115 children and that was, it was almost like a power thing really.  
116 F: Yeah  
117 T2: Err asserting himself but in the past we've had children that just get,  
118 really, really, they haven't shown/ erm aggressive behaviour to  
119 other children but when it's home time they just start getting really  
120 fearful and agitated and  
121 F: Mmm  
122 T2: scared I suppose, about going home.  
123 F: mmm, ok  
124 T2: But that was mainly to, when it was directed at them  
125 F: Yeah  
126 T2: rather than another person in the family.  
127 F: yeah. Ok. Erm what would you say was the impact of that child, or  
128 children, on the other children in the class?  
129 T1: They see it as being ok them acting that way.  
130 F: Mmm.  
131 T1: They think that what they're doing is ok and then they/ like bounce  
132 off him,  
133 F: mmm.  
134 T1: well they're doing that so I can do that. They don't understand that  
135 deep down he is probably genuinely scared and just knows that  
136 way of acting cos he's seen it.  
137 F: Mmm.  
138 T2: Yeah the child, the child that left our, our setting erm, whose  
139 behaviour was extreme, the other child within the setting, I think  
140 when he kicked out of control that made/  
141 .

142 .  
143 .  
144 T2: yeah, that made Steven really erm unsettled and a little bit unsure  
145 because things were out of control. So they just bounced off each  
146 other, like you say. The effect on the rest of the children they were  
147 really protective of me  
148 F: mmm  
149 T2: so if he was throwing things at me or, or showing aggression  
150 towards me they got really upset about it and it gelled them all  
151 together so that when he went they're actually a really close knit  
152 class now but they used to say things like '[intake of breath] that  
153 could've hit you in the eye [Teacher's name]'  
154 F: mmm  
155 T2: and they were really worried about me  
156 F: Mmm  
157 T2: Erm which was really sweet, but that, his aggression was directed  
158 at the staff whereas Steven tends to, at, his is to err, other children  
159 if he can't express himself  
160 F: Mmm  
161 T2: or he wants something and he can't have it, he'll just you know  
162 F: Mmm  
163 T2: kick and kick out at other children.  
164 F: Ok. Erm, do you feel that you're able to cope within the classroom?  
165 T2: We found it really difficult to cope with Nathan because erm even  
166 though we'd had safe handling he was just [laughs] so extreme that  
167 you needed two people  
168 F: mmm  
169 T2: to remove him once he kicked off and we tried every way to stop  
170 him  
171 F: Mmm  
172 T2: but you know, so we'd get tidying up type - directing him to do  
173 something when it was kind of tidy up time and things like that  
174 F: Mmm-hmm  
175 T2: seemed to be where he had to take that control so he just refused  
176 F: Mmm  
177 T2: or kicked off, erm... err/, he, he'd just have a massive wobbler so  
178 we'd try to do things a little bit before we started tidying up and, and  
179 move him out of the class, kind of cajole him out of the class and  
180 we did like a little time, you know a visual timetable and things like  
181 that but it was all about control with him and  
182 F: Mmm  
183 T2: he needed to have control so if it was free choice play he wasn't a  
184 problem.  
185 F: Mmm  
186 T2: And it was just certain times when he, he felt like he somebody else  
187 was taking control off him, that he, he, he would get really violent.  
188 F: And those were the times that were difficult for you then?

189 T2: Yeah. Yeah and the rest of the staff. You could see the, the  
190 teaching assistants, I mean I've, I had three teaching assistants on  
191 a morning and two on an afternoon. One for Steven, who was the  
192 other child, erm but he absolutely ground us down.  
193 F: mmm  
194 T2: He was there from October half term till erm/ was it February half  
195 term?  
196 And for that term, even though, you know he had a lovely side to  
197 him, we were absolutely wrecked [laughs]  
198 F: Mmm  
199 T2: and that had a bad effect on the rest of the children, because all  
200 our time was taken with managing his behaviour and that took, that  
201 was three of us on a morning.  
202 F: Mmm  
203 T2: and sometimes you just, sometimes he'd just crowd surfed onto the  
204 rest of the children in the class and you couldn't, you couldn't  
205 possibly teach. You know he'd swipe things off the tables and, you  
206 couldn't possibly teach properly  
207 F: Mmm  
208 T2: because he took all your time to kind of/ all your energy was in  
209 managing, his, his behaviour really, erm so yeah massive, he a  
210 massive effect on the class and because the other child was  
211 difficult too and together it was, it made things really awkward.  
212 F: yeah.  
213 T2: Since he's gone Steven conforms much more because there's no-  
214 one to kick off with him  
215 F: mmm  
216 T2: so he likes to be like everybody else really,  
217 F: Yeah.  
218 T2: so he's been much easier to handle.  
219 F: and what about for you?  
220 T1: It was the same really. You had the two people trying to get them  
221 out and everything  
222 F: right  
223 T1: cos you've got to think of the other children but you've got to think  
224 of your safety as well and when you did take them out you, I felt  
225 awful when I came back to class. It was an awful feeling, I've had  
226 to just remove a child from my class and he's five years old.  
227 F: Mmm  
228 T1: erm but the other class like you say they just ignored half the time  
229 F: Mmm  
230 T1: because he got my full attention or he got the TAs and you got to a  
231 point where the TAs were like 'right I don't want to handle this  
232 anymore' and  
233 F: Mmm and how does that make you feel, and if you're nodding as  
234 well, when you've got your support staff saying to you I, I don't want  
235 to, how do you feel?

236 T1: It makes you feel, it made me feel like I wasn't doing the right thing  
237 in a sense cos I'm like if they don't want to do it then there's going  
238 to be me with this child  
239 T2: yeah  
240 T1: well why is there nothing else going in place to support this child  
241 and we're putting everything into him but what else do you need to  
242 make sure that you have that something there for him?  
243 T2: yeah.  
244 F: Yeah. Does that make you feel less able to cope, if people are  
245 then saying I don't want to be a part of that?  
246 T1: In a way it does cos then you're left by yourself to cope with this  
247 child.  
248 T2: mmm.  
249 F: Mmm.  
250 T2: I felt sorry for them a little bit  
251 T1: mmm  
252 T2: cos I knew how hard it was, erm and how little they get paid.  
253 F: mmm  
254 T2: It made me cross that, you know at first I was saying, you know this  
255 is happening it's not acceptable in my class and no, none of the  
256 rest of the teaching staff seemed that bothered cos it didn't affect  
257 them.  
258 F: [Mmm  
259 T1: [mmm  
260 T2: erm and then, and then when serious things start happening and  
261 you actually spell it out that, you know, if somebody doesn't do  
262 something then/ then things do start happening and you, you feel a  
263 little, a little bit more heard don't you.  
264 F: mmm. yeah. And do you think the school is then able to cope at  
265 that point or/ was it still challenging would you say?  
266 T1: Well we got to a point, sorry [to T2], we got to a point where we  
267 were taking him to the headteacher and she was a bit like, she just  
268 took him somewhere else, to somebody else, cos I think, she got to  
269 a point where she was like well I don't really know what else to do  
270 with him  
271 F: mmm  
272 T1: in a sense. And then you've got calmed down and brought back to  
273 you within minutes  
274 F: [Mmm  
275 T2: [mmm  
276 T1: or they'd go to another teacher and they can't and then it'd be the  
277 same. It was like a really vicious circle  
278 F: Mmm  
279 T1: that just kept going cos then like an hour later they'd kick off again  
280 and you'd to get them out again go to the headteacher and they'd  
281 be come brought to you again two minutes or so  
282 [and it is hard.  
283 F: [And what impact



284 do you see on the child through that cycle, sort of as they go  
285 through the day would you, what would you see?  
286 T2: Well power in a way  
287 T1: Mmm  
288 T2: well cos ours was sent to the headteacher sometimes he'd trash  
289 the headteacher's classroom erm but and, and she [laughs], she  
290 used to do things to calm him down like sit him on her knee and  
291 read a book which, so in the end he used to want  
292 F: mmm-hmm  
293 T2: to go to her room cos it wasn't punishment and, and then you've  
294 lost control haven't you?  
295 F: mmm  
296 T2: He's, he's, you've got no sanctions because they're kind of...  
297 calling all the shots.  
298 F: Mmm  
299 T2: so  
300 [T3 arrives]  
301 .  
302 .  
303 .  
304 F: I've just been through some sort of general questions about why is  
305 domestic violence of importance to you, erm, do the children who  
306 you taught, erm, present differently, erm and how do they impact on  
307 the class and basically I think we're hearing that there behaviour is  
308 obviously quite challenging it's difficult to manage in the classroom,  
309 difficult for the adults. They get sent out, cycle round the school  
310 perhaps and then move back again and that becomes something,  
311 children that you were saying [looking towards T2] children enjoy.  
312 T3: Mmm  
313 F: and I'm just going to move on to a sort of different little area in a  
314 way so you've probably picked a good point to join us [laughs].  
315 T1: [laughs]  
316 F: So I was then going to say, and we've asked whether you feel able  
317 to cope as well and you're both saying that it's very challenging erm  
318 in that sense. Are there problems at the school gate, cos obviously  
319 we're talking about domestic violence and then, sort of – obviously,  
320 that will likely be between two partners, so does, is that something  
321 you see an impact of at the school gate, and you're nodding  
322 T2: yes  
323 F: so I'm going to go to you.  
324 T2: Yes. We had problems at the school gate just getting, because/ he  
325 was, Nathan was late coming into school so that impacted. His  
326 mum had to virtually shove him through the door and right from the  
327 beginning you know it was just a really bad start to the day because  
328 she couldn't get them up and she couldn't get them in  
329 T2: [and then,  
330 F: [Mmm  
331 T2: you know, it just had a knock on effect didn't it [looks to T3].

332 T3: It did with him. I mean it depends cos there's different children cos,  
333 the girl that I'm thinking of [laughs] less problem in terms of  
334 behaviour as well and less problem at the gate but more problem  
335 like between dad and mum so  
336 F: yeah and that's the same  
337 [same kind of question  
338 T3: [you know so  
339 not the child being a problem but the but the potential of the conflict  
340 in terms of/ them meeting.  
341 F: Mmm  
342 T3: or dad turning up, most of the  
343 F: mmm  
344 T3: cos you know, cos dad wasn't supposed to see them and blah, b-  
345 blah and turning up and or you know/ school being phoned and  
346 saying keep them here we don't want them  
347 F: [mmm  
348 T2: [mmm  
349 T3: to go with the other partner.  
350 F: [to T1] yeah and do you, did you?  
351 T1: That's what ours was like. It was no problem getting him into  
352 school.  
353 F: mmm  
354 T1: He, like, relished the thought of coming to school but it was the 'you  
355 can't send them home with this parent  
356 T3: mmm  
357 T1: and they'd turn up and you've got to as school protect the child cos  
358 they're not supposed to go with that parent  
359 F: mmm  
360 T1: and then the mum would turn up and there'd just be an almighty  
361 row  
362 F: mmm  
363 T1: that type of thing.  
364 F: Ok. Would, would you say that the child was able to cope// or the  
365 children?  
366 T3: I suppose they do don't they?  
367 T2: Mmm  
368 (...)  
369 T3: I'm thinking of two girls and they seemed more able to cope than  
370 maybe well/ with Nathan he certainly didn't seem able to cope.  
371 T2: No, but he'd seen violence towards his brother so erm I think he  
372 wanted to stay with mum. That was her problem getting him in,  
373 because he'd and plus she disappeared off and he didn't know  
374 whether she was always going to be there  
375 T3: yes.  
376 T2: for him.  
377 T1: [no that's definitely true  
378 T2: [so I think that's

379 definitely why she couldn't get him in through the door. I think with  
380 Steven he probably/ quite likes it when he gets there  
381 F: mmm  
382 T2: because it's stable for him and you know, it's always the same and  
383 it's something kind of steady.  
384 T3: The same with the girl I'm thinking of. Being in school isn't an issue  
385 is it?  
386 Er, it, it was more  
387 T2: Mmm.  
388 F: Mmm, and was she older, when you?  
389 T3: Older than the other one.  
390 F: Yeah.  
391 T3: Yeah  
392 F: Yeah. Ok erm, so when we're saying, we've answered this a little  
393 bit, that there are problems in the community and there can be  
394 problems when, when parents or couples meet, erm, so you, you  
395 were alluding to this a little bit, so what do you have to do at that  
396 point, do you go through child protection procedures or erm is it  
397 more informal processes within school, when you, you have these  
398 difficulties, what do you have to do?  
399 T1: We go through the child protection. We'll go see [designated  
400 teacher for CP]  
401 All: Mmm.  
402 T1: and [designated teacher for CP] will go through everything with the  
403 child protection and sort it all that way. Yeah.  
404 F: [to T2 and T3] Same?  
405 T2: Well in the past I'm not really sure about our school cos I haven't  
406 really experienced that. But in my old school we had fisticuffs in the  
407 playground and we've had to call the police to sort that out and  
408 they've been, they had like a court order that [laughs] they're not  
409 allowed in the playground so they, they had to stay a certain  
410 distance away from the school.  
411 F: Yeah.  
412 T3: Mmm we had.  
413 F: So it's very much formal procedures then isn't it?  
414 T3: Yeah  
415 F: Yeah. Ok erm then the other question, erm, thinking about all the  
416 children, I suppose, that you have worked with who've experienced  
417 domestic violence, would you, are you supposed to know that  
418 they're victims of domestic violence?  
419 T3: I don't think we don't know half of it actually.  
420 T2: I don't either.  
421 T3: I think you find out about the extreme cases or the cases where it's  
422 got worse.  
423 T2: Yeah  
424 T3: and it's escalated into, you know,  
425 T2: mmm  
426 T3: into that they've got a court order, or, you know, it's so bad that

427 [And, and I// but  
428 F: [and you are supposed to know because it's a legal matter.  
429 T3: But I think there's a lot, the girl who I'm thinking about who's now  
430 left, but it was two years ago and I didn't know until mum just  
431 happened to just mention at a parents evening it had been going on  
432 for ages.  
433 F: Right/ But you wouldn't say there are families that you know about  
434 who don't think you know for example?  
435 /  
436 T2: Erm I think  
437 F: Cos sometimes you find things out don't you.  
438 All: Yeah, yeah.  
439 T2: With younger children they just say it as a matter of course so lots  
440 of, well not lots of children but the new child came into our class in  
441 the last term and he just said, as part of the news, 'oh and my dad  
442 used to hit, hit my dog so we had to send the dog away and then  
443 he used to hit me and my mum so we had to send Daddy away'  
444 and that's you know what had happened between his mum and dad  
445 F: mmm  
446 T2: so and he'd taken all that [laughs] in his stride really.  
447 F: mmm  
448 T2: But you wouldn't have ever known that had happened.  
449 F: so on the whole you are expected to know when you do know?  
450 T2: Mmm  
451 F: Erm, ok. Do the children know that you know?// [laughs] sounds a  
452 bit cryptic doesn't it?  
453 T1: Don't think so. Cos I had a little girl, that was, I was marking her  
454 book a couple of months ago and she went 'my dad punched my  
455 mum last night'  
456 F: Mmm.  
457 T1: and I had no idea looking at this child and knowing the child you  
458 would not think it  
459 F: Mmm  
460 T2: so then I was a bit shocked [laughs] she just came out with that, so  
461 no I don't think so.  
462 F: Mmm. [to T2 and T3] And would you say that the children you've  
463 worked with know that you know?  
464 T2: I think some of them would want to tell you and some of them  
465 wouldn't want tell you  
466 F: mmm  
467 T2: and we probably, like you say, don't know some of the ones that do  
468 have stuff at home.  
469 All: Mmm  
470 T3: that do, because sometimes as well that's just what happens in  
471 your family so it's not out of the ordinary so you don't bother saying  
472 anything  
473 F: yeah.

474 T3: erm/ and er you're right some would want you to know and then,  
475 then they say don't they?  
476 All: Mmm  
477 T2: mmm.  
478 .  
479 .  
480 . [T1 leaves]  
481 F: Erm so how would you say erm that the violence is talked about  
482 and by who?  
483 //  
484 T2: Erm/ I don't think in Nathan's family it was talked about.  
485 (...)  
486 T3: not very often with the children.  
487 F: And what about within school among staff members or/ [To T2] I  
488 mean you were saying you have support staff was it something that  
489 you talked about?  
490 T2: Yeah everyday  
491 All: [laughing]  
492 T2: was taken up because we were spending so long having to write all  
493 the incidents up and so we talked about it a lot and then you know  
494 we talked to [T3] and [the headteacher] about it.  
495 T3: With him he was an extreme case in terms his behaviour  
496 T2: yeah  
497 T3: as well though wasn't he? with a lot of other children that don't  
498 present quite so  
499 T2: Hmm,  
500 T3: I mean he really  
501 T2: yeah.  
502 T3: I don't know whether there's other issues with him as well but he  
503 presented in a really  
504 T2: yeah  
505 T3: challenging  
506 [way.  
507 T2: [He  
508 didn't talk about it. His brother used to talk about it in his school  
509 cos I think was kind of offloaded stuff  
510 F: Mmm  
511 T2: With Steven we more, we talked to him more about his behaviour  
512 kind of reminded him he'd not to hurt other people  
513 T3: Mmm  
514 T2: cos it's kind of a target of his  
515 F: mmm  
516 T2: but his understanding isn't really at, at  
517 F: So would that be something that you talked about in terms of the  
518 violence, would you, did you talk about his violence and then  
519 T2: yeah  
520 F: just sort of the physicalness of that?  
521 T2: yeah, yeah.

522 F: yeah, ok.  
523 T3: but not the violence he'd experienced  
524 T2: no  
525 [not the violence he'd experienced  
526 F: [no, no.  
527 T3: just, just the way he expresses himself.  
528 T2: yeah  
529 F: mmm. and I guess that was possibly, as you were saying, was  
530 something that you reflected on as adults then what he'd  
531 experienced, and then that, that?  
532 T2: yeah, although actually coming to think of it, he has said, cos I  
533 thought it must seem really strange that we keep saying Steven you  
534 don't hurt people  
535 F: mmm  
536 T2: and he said 'oh my brother', he's, he's commented that his brother  
537 has almost hurt, almost hurt him as an excuse you know  
538 F: Mmm  
539 T2: He's said  
540 .  
541 .  
542 .  
543 T2: You know, well it must seem really strange to him that Elliot does  
544 that [laughs] but we're saying  
545 [you don't hurt people  
546 T3: [I think, I think  
547 T3: that's it because that's where the difference is maybe if the children  
548 are slightly older  
549 T2: Yeah.  
550 T3: or, girls. Cos I do, I do think it makes a difference. With Steven  
551 that's his, been his life hasn't it? [to T2]  
552 T2: Mmm.  
553 T3: so-and-so hurt so-and-so, so so-and-so hurt so-and-so  
554 T2: Yes definitely.  
555 T3: and it just, it went down the line. Dad hurt mum  
556 T2: yeah  
557 T3: and older brother hurts mum  
558 T2: sister hurts mum [laughs]  
559 T3: sister hurts mum  
560 T2: [laughs]  
561 T3: [laughs] and, and sister hurts the younger brother [laughs]  
562 T2: yeah, knock on effect.  
563 [younger brother hurts Steven  
564 T3: [and it's an ongoing effect  
565 younger brother hurts Steven so Steven would probably kick the  
566 dog if they had one, you know what I mean. It goes down  
567 T2: yeah  
568 T3: but with him that's all but with some other children that's not quite  
569 that pronounced is it?

570 T2: Mmm  
 571 F: mmm. Was he the youngest?  
 572 T2: Yes.  
 573 T3: Mmm.  
 574 F: Mmm.  
 575 T3: I mean he's lived with it/ through  
 576 T2: Mmm.  
 577 F: Mmm.  
 578 T2: Although he still hasn't seen the worst of Dad.  
 579 T3: No he hasn't seen the worst of Dad,  
 580 [or he can't remember seeing the worst of Dad.  
 581 T2: [or mum/ no, no  
 582 T2: Or you know.  
 583 T3: He can't have seen the worst of Dad can he as he wasn't  
 584 consciously old enough.  
 585 T2: no.  
 586 T3: But with, but with some of the others/ it's, they know, not, maybe  
 587 not how everybody behaves. It's how my Dad's behaving, cos it  
 588 has a tendency to be Dad's.  
 589 T2: Yeah.  
 590 T3: Even if  
 591 T2: His play is very rough. Even if he's not speaking it's all smashing  
 592 things together, really noisy, you know  
 593 T3: Crashing and banging.  
 594 T2: Yeah.  
 595 T3: Yeah.  
 596 F: So what strategies have been used to support the children and  
 597 what sort of impact have they had?  
 598 //  
 599 T2: Erm, well with Steven, kind of he's got a personal target with, with  
 600 rewards for it so  
 601 F: Mmm.  
 602 T3: and he's got a very, he's got somebody who works with him almost  
 603 [one to one.  
 604 T2: [and he has got  
 605 a one to one. Yeah, so  
 606 T3: And that's working well.  
 607 T2: Yeah, and he, he, he loves his treat so if he doesn't get it - it's just  
 608 worked that you know, he tends to, like Pavlov's dogs I suppose, he  
 609 wants it so he tries to remember not to hurt people.  
 610 F: Mmm, mmm.  
 611 T2: Erm and he knows when he's, when he has - and why he's done it.  
 612 F: mmm.  
 613 T2: He knows what's right and what's wrong now. He just really can't  
 614 stop himself sometimes.  
 615 F: Mmm  
 616 T2: you know it's almost like a/  
 617 [knee-jerk reaction.

618 T3: [He's loads better.  
619 T2: He is loads better since Nathan's gone.  
620 F: Yeah.  
621 T3: and since Nathan's gone, with the two of them together it was  
622 T2: Yeah, yeah.  
623 T3: Erm, with Nathan it was one step forward and two steps back a lot  
624 of the time and I think him and Steven together was just like  
625 F: mmm.  
626 T2: It was power. It's a lot, all power really wasn't it?  
627 T3: Yeah.  
628 F: Mmm and were there any other sources of support other than  
629 things, perhaps that you offered in school/ any external support.  
630 T2: Well the educational psychologist was great when she came and  
631 there was like group meetings about them  
632 F: mmm-hmm.  
633 T3: yeah.  
634 T2: Because it was quite like erm [pause] dangerous situation I  
635 suppose at, at the time.  
636 T3: Mmm.  
637 T2: so erm...  
638 T3: and somebody in my class who it's not strictly domestic violence at  
639 the moment but it's more dad, hits mum, erm well it's alcohol  
640 syndrome, alcohol abuse then he's been taken away and there's  
641 Alfie looked after by his Auntie and her husband, erm but we're  
642 accessing [area based external support] for them.  
643 F: Mmm.  
644 T3: so some counselling.  
645 F: Mmm. Right.  
646 T2: and Steven has had kind of family support.  
647 T3: family support yeah.  
648 (...)  
649 F: and who has that been from?  
650 T2: I'm not sure.  
651 T3: well it's the family support team  
652 T2: oh right.  
653 T3: it's linked with the [area based external support] wasn't it and [the  
654 cluster].  
655 F: and what, what's that involved – the family support?  
656 T2: Well I think they worked with the family  
657 T3: They did, yeah.  
658 T2: about well just getting them up in the morning.  
659 T3: well they've gone round everyday.  
660 T2: yeah  
661 T3: going round everyday to help  
662 F: so parenting support?  
663 T3: yeah to help mum get them out.  
664 F: right.  
665 T3: to school.



666 T2: cos they were all not attending school really.  
667 F: And what sort of impact have these strategies had, you mentioned  
668 the educational psychologist and obviously you've had the [area  
669 based external support] so how effective would you say those  
670 things  
671 [have been?  
672 T2: [Well they've  
673 been, attendance improved and...  
674 T3: For Steven it's certainly having an effect.  
675 T2: Yeah, yeah.  
676 /  
677 F: ok, and the educational psychologist, you said you had group  
678 meetings?  
679 T2: To be honest that was more with Nathan and he left us  
680 F: Right, yeah.  
681 T2: so I couldn't really say but erm/ she is, she's really good.  
682 .  
683 .  
684 .  
685 F: Mmm  
686 T2: so for Nathan it's more difficult to say  
687 T3: for Nathan it's much more a containment at that point wasn't it?  
688 T2: yeah  
689 T3: cos he was, well he did abscond once and it was just like – [sighs]  
690 and then he's at [another local mainstream school] now,  
691 F: mmm.  
692 T3: erm because they have more of a unit there anyway  
693 F: mmm  
694 T3: and also better. We've changed our entry system now, but better//  
695 He just legged it didn't he?  
696 T2: [Well yeah.  
697 F: [oh right  
698 T2: Well at the meeting they were discussing, all the parties were  
699 discussing what role they were/ going to be playing  
700 F: mmm  
701 T2: and that, it sounded really good. For Steven I'm not sure what  
702 other things apart from  
703 T3: that'd all happened before we got Steven.  
704 T2: yeah  
705 T3: It started at nursery for Steven  
706 [because of the history of the family  
707 T2: [Yeah. It was all set up  
708 so I'm not sure what they did you know with mum and the family but  
709 it did seem to  
710 T3: well they did, they did a lot around mum's parenting role/ and  
711 F: Ok. So how do you view your role as these children's teachers?  
712 T2: [laughs]

713 T3: for those where it's less, of the impact on their behaviour, or  
714 whatever, it's more support and stability isn't it  
715 T2: Mmm.  
716 T3: and keeping things the same and if they want to talk you're there to  
717 talk and things like that  
718 F: Mmm-hmm  
719 /  
720 T2: Yeah somebody they can trust and giving them stability I think.  
721 F: Mmm  
722 T2: Yeah. And clear guidelines.  
723 T3: Yeah.  
724 T2: And Steven likes to know exactly what happens if you do that and  
725 he's fairly treated and  
726 F: Mmm.  
727 T2: mmm just  
728 F: And what would you say that the school's role is?  
729 //  
730 T3: I think it's/ in terms of, well trying to minimise the impact for a start  
731 and then making sure the systems are in place for if then they need  
732 to access to all of the other things.  
733 F: Mmm  
734 T3: Erm if we need to we keep a record, although we're only keeping a  
735 record of what the child's, or if, you know if somebody turns up that  
736 shouldn't,  
737 F: mmm.  
738 T3: but it's making sure those things and the child's safe I suppose  
739 T2: yeah  
740 T3: and you know who they leave with or  
741 T2: Good communication and smooth transition as they're moving  
742 through school I suppose.  
743 F: mmm  
744 T2: and that everybody/ is aware of their needs and/  
745 [stuff like that  
746 F: [Ok. Is there anything  
747 else that possibly you feel you want to mention at this point or that  
748 links to anything else that we've said?  
749 //  
750 T3: I don't know where you're up to so  
751 T2: [laughs]  
752 T3: [laughs]  
753 F: Just based on what we've talked about that's all. So/ just anything  
754 that's you know come to mind and you haven't had chance to say it/  
755 no?  
756 T2: No.  
757 T3: What, are you looking at the impact on school, you know their?  
758 F: Erm I'm interested in the impact on children, but on, from the  
759 teacher's perspective. Cos what I'm, sort of, interested in is what  
760 you see as the necessary sort of day to day support cos obviously

761 we're saying we've got things like the [area based external support]  
762 or weekly interventions but I'm, sort of, interested in what happens  
763 in the classroom, what do you have to do as teachers and the  
764 school to support that child the rest of the time alongside the  
765 professionals or other interventions that day to day,  
766 T3: [mmm  
767 T2: [mmm yeah  
768 F: you know getting from the morning to the end of school what is it  
769 that you need and what does it feel like, how does it work, how  
770 does it feel for the child, what do you think need, how do you think  
771 they feel  
772 T3: mmm  
773 F: and you know, that really! The story around that [laughs].  
774 T3: I suppose at the end of the day our role is there, is to teach the  
775 child so and, and by teaching them you're giving them the best  
776 chance to not  
777 F: mmm  
778 //  
779 T3: I don't know how to phrase this without being judgemental, but to  
780 get out of the situation that you know they're,  
781 F: mmm  
782 T3: so they don't perpetuate it if you like. So it's, so it's/ around giving  
783 them the best, for a start, education.  
784 F: Mmm  
785 T3: erm and although they might have seen things and you know, that  
786 we don't know the half of, erm, it's not that giving that an excuse  
787 then for them to behave like that, but to try and break that cycle.  
788 F: Mmm  
789 T2: [Yes.  
790 T3: [Erm, I think.  
791 T2: Our role is not necessarily academic is it? It's kind of coping  
792 strategies, so the personal and social.  
793 T3: Yeah, no, both isn't it? Cos you still want, you don't want to say  
794 well they've been subjected to that so they've got that excuse. You  
795 want to say that but we still need to// teach them, I don't know that's  
796 - well that's our role at the end of the day isn't it?  
797 T2: yeah, but you've got a responsibility to the rest of the class as well.  
798 T3: oh yeah, yeah, yeah. No absolutely. That's what I'm saying so not  
799 giving them, you can maybe understand or empathise with it but not  
800 giving them the excuse that  
801 T2: mmm  
802 T3: oh well they've seen that terrible thing so they don't have to do that  
803 work today or they can behave like this today. Which, I don't know/  
804 I do think there was some of that maybe, or that, you know that  
805 there can be a tendency for that if you're not careful.  
806 T2: Yeah.  
807 T3: I find myself doing it sometimes with Alfie [laughs] but  
808 F: mmm

809 T2: Yeah there's difficulty sometimes if that child comes into your  
810 setting in the time that it takes  
811 F: mmm  
812 T2: to kind of get some, some extra help.  
813 F: mmm.  
814 T2: You know all the red tape that you have to jump through and I  
815 suppose you have to don't you but  
816 T3: Yep.  
817 T2: It does make things difficult  
818 T3: You do nowadays cos there's a lot less support there.  
819 T2: Exactly.  
820 F: Mmm.  
821 .  
822 .  
823 .

## Appendix Fourteen - Transcript of Group interview Two

1

2

3 4pm on 10/07/13 1 hour 9 minutes 37 seconds

4

5 Facilitator (F) and two teachers (T) (T1 was unable to attend this session)

6

7 .

8 .

9 .

10

11 F: Ok, so I wanted to start with erm sharing with you the erm  
12 definition, which The Home Office introduced in March 2013. You  
13 probably saw in the news that they were introducing a new  
14 definition of domestic violence and I thought just given that we / sort  
15 of were / er very vague and and left it open for us to sort of talk  
16 about what we wanted last week I thought well I'll give us a  
17 definition this week just so that I have presented that to you,

18 T3: mmm

19 F: erm so the definition that was introduced in March 2013 was any  
20 incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or  
21 threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or  
22 over who are or have been intimate partners or family members  
23 regardless of gender or sexuality. Which, er, this can encompass,  
24 but is not limited to, / the following types of abuse: psychological,  
25 physical, sexual, financial and emotional. / Erm and they clarify  
26 saying controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a  
27 person subordinate and or dependent by isolating them from  
28 sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for  
29 personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for  
30 independence, resistance and escape and regulating their  
31 everyday behaviour. And coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern  
32 // of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other  
33 abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. / Erm  
34 and this definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called  
35 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced  
36 marriage, and is clear / and is clear that victims are not confined to  
37 one gender or ethnic group and that was / devised by The Home  
38 Office in 2012. // Ok?

39 T2: mmm-hmm.

40 F: So / in terms of then what we talked about last week and to give us  
41 a brief recap erm / in summary this is what I feel you were telling  
42 me so if you think I'm not reflecting it accurately let me know, so  
43 that's fine erm we talked about there being extremely violent  
44 behaviour which is a challenge to manage and you've got TAs who  
45 are not necessarily wanting to handle the children, head teachers  
46 attempting to, to support but that often can be ineffective erm you

47 talked about the violent behaviour being copied from home and  
48 being the norm within a family, you described the children as  
49 covering for adults and perhaps wanting to share information but  
50 not doing so. Other children in the class copy the behaviour  
51 displayed by the children who've experienced domestic violence.  
52 There was some suggestion that these children seek control or feel  
53 out of control. Strategies included sticker charts, rewards or treats  
54 and verbal reminders not to hurt other children. Erm, it's difficult to  
55 teach properly, you've got concerns for safety within the classroom,  
56 you feel left alone to cope and it's difficult to access support in  
57 school and outside school. In your experiences formal procedures  
58 such as child protection and police involvement have been needed  
59 to manage problems at the gate. Within school a lot of time's taken  
60 up talking about incidents and writing them up. You commented on  
61 the different  
62 T2: that's true!  
63 F & T3: [laughter]  
64 F: you commented on the different messages these children receive,  
65 so for example observing violence in the home then being told in  
66 school not to hurt people. Er, there was a description of play being  
67 very rough with lots of crashing and banging and your experiences  
68 of external support were focused on parenting so/ daily routing,  
69 coming to school, getting up, that kind of thing. Erm, you describe  
70 the role as a teacher as being to educate them in order to prevent a  
71 cycle of violent behaviour continuing to offer support and stability to  
72 talk if they needed to giving clear guidelines. You felt that the  
73 school's role is to minimise the impact, to have systems in place,  
74 keep records, maintain their safety, good communication and  
75 smooth transitions. Erm, and you felt that personal, social skills  
76 were important but that expectations should be high and their  
77 experiences shouldn't be used as an excuse. / Does that sound  
78 ok?  
79 T3: yep  
80 T2: yep  
81 .  
82 .  
83 .  
84  
85 F: Erm, ok so erm what has stuck in your mind this week, so what's  
86 your key thought or reflection been?  
87 T3: I know what mine is but that's because it's older children  
88 T2: mmm  
89 T3: so I'll talk from that point of view. It's, it's going back to thinking  
90 about us saying about we didn't always know and then giving the  
91 children that / that space to talk. That's what I've put down in that  
92 book [refers to reflective log].  
93 F: [laughs]

94 T3: and I was thinking that we don't as part of PSHE we talk a lot  
95 about, you know, and, and they've got a right to say no and all this  
96 sort of thing and that they shouldn't and all the messages about  
97 violence and everything. But you don't always leave the way open  
98 for the children to be able to talk about something and, and its  
99 going back to saying about if that's the norm and it's only maybe  
100 as they get older they realise that it's not the norm. Where's the,  
101 gap, where's the opportunity to talk about it. I'm, I'm really, I really  
102 went back and had a think about me in my classroom thinking you  
103 know, I know that I'm moving them on [laughs] academically  
104 T2: mmm  
105 T3: and I've concentrated on that loads this year but I think at the  
106 expensive sometimes of giving space to children to just / talk  
107 F: mmm-hmm.  
108 T2: mmm.  
109 T3: you know I've been so focussed on  
110 [ getting them  
111 T2: [ yeah  
112 T3: moving forward academically. I know with this class, although I've  
113 got a reasonably good relationship with them I don't, maybe know  
114 as much about them as maybe with other classes because I know  
115 for a fact I, I just don't, I'm just like next thing, next thing, next.  
116 T2: [laughs] That's easier in reception because they're so open about it  
117 although the little boy that left us wasn't  
118 F: mmm  
119 T2: you wouldn't have got anything about his home life really out  
120 F: mmm  
121 T2: I don't think he was ready  
122 [ to (&)  
123 T3: [ no  
124 T2: (&) to talk about that and when you got close to it. He, you could  
125 see he, he became really uncomfortable.  
126 F: mmm  
127 T2: but erm, but with the one that's in there at the moment he would,  
128 he'll just tell  
129 [ you everything (&)  
130 T3: [ anything  
131 T2: (&) about it. In fact sometimes you have to, kind of curb what he  
132 says if it's in a new situation because you don't really want the  
133 other children to hear/ the things that he's saying. You kind of feel  
134 as if you're protecting the other children because it's not something  
135 you would want them to know about  
136 F: mmm.  
137 T2: erm but yeah. They tend to be really open don't they?  
138 T3: yeah.  
139 T2: sometimes in reception.  
140 F: So what would be your key thoughts and reflections?

141 T2: Erm well my key thoughts at the moment with the little boy that's in  
142 there is that he's kind of understands that he doesn't hurt people  
143 and he's kind of erm / not in a clever way but he will intimidate  
144 without actually hurting

145 F: mmm.

146 T2: but you can see him, like/ getting up to the other children and like in  
147 their face and he, he will be very intimidating in how he /  
148 approaches them

149 T3: mmm.

150 T2: [ but he's not hurting them (&)

151 T3: [ I agree with you, I agree with you

152 T2: (&) so he's learnt how to do that, you know but get round, get round  
153 the  
154 [ target (&)

155 F: [ yeah.

156 T2: (&) that we've set him if you know what I mean

157 F: mmm.

158 T2: so we've just got to stay one step ahead of him [laughs] really.

159 F: Does that, I suppose reflecting a little bit on the definition we just  
160 said about coercive behaviour  
161 [ do (&)

162 T2: [ mmm.

163 F: (&) do you think he's behaving coercively, even though he's so  
164 young would you describe it a bit, like that?

165 T3: Maybe not knowingly,  
166 [ although I don't know actually. Mmm. Could be.

167 T2: [ mmm. / I don't know. It is almost actually that

168 T2: Yeah.

169 T3: yeah.

170 T2: because he's either, he's even said  
171 [ 'but I've not hurt anybody'.  
172 [ 'oh I've not hurt anybody'

173 T2: Yeah

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

176 T2: Yeah.

177 F: mmm.

178 T3: No but they're cowering [laughs].

179 T2: yeah. And the kids are really, kids just go like that [demonstrates  
180 leaning away]. They kind of don't give him eye contact and he's  
181 like muscling up to them.  
182 [ They'll (&)

183 F: [ mmm.

184 T2: (&) they'll get more and more wide eyed, like this [ [leans away  
185 again with wide eyes]

186 F: [laughs]

187 T2: until you step in, you know and you see it



188 but erm, but yeah, cos there was a thought that he would come  
189 back independently I think, erm, the teacher next year said 'oh and  
190 can I send him through' and I said 'don't send him without a person'  
191 because out of all the children that need to come back he's very  
192 intimidating to smaller children.

193 F: mmm.

194 T2: I think they'd find it very scary having him

195 T3: mmm

196 T2: without an adult supervising because it, it, he, he just manages to

197 T3: Although we don't know what he's like with smaller children do we?  
198 cos

199 T2: no.

200 T3: I'm just thinking of

201 .

202 .

203 .

204

205 T3: because Alfie, for example, although I don't know whether he's  
206 experienced domestic violence where he is now

207 T2: yeah.

208 T3: but his mum erm, I think I mentioned a little bit last week actually  
209 that he, his mum, he was taken away, erm from his mum because  
210 of her abuse of alcohol and

211 T2: mmm.

212 T3: his sister suffers from foetal alcohol syndrome although he doesn't  
213 externally, he hasn't got any of the features of it, but he's certainly  
214 been affected by what's gone on

215 F: mmm

216 T3: when he was very, very small and he now lives with his Auntie

217 F: mmm-hmm.

218 T3: but he's very intimidating to other children

219 T2: mmm.

220 T3: incredibly, when you say they turn away  
221 [ and (&)

222 T2: [ yeah, yeah [laughs]

223 T3: (&) and they're like this [leans in] and he says that,  
224 [ that's his thing 'but I haven't hurt them, I haven't hurt them  
225 T2: [ it's like a dog being submissive isn't it.

226 T3: (&) I've leaned over them but I haven't hurt them

227 T2: yeah.

228 T3: but with younger children, and when we send him round to  
229 reception, he's absolutely lovely isn't he?

230 T2: yeah.

231 T3: so we don't know what Steven's gonna be like with/  
232 T2: no,  
233 [ we don't  
234 T3: [ his peer group (&)  
235 T2: but

236 T3: (&) he's hideous Steven, I mean he's really violent and can be  
 237 anyway, erm but with younger children  
 238 [ he's (&)  
 239 T2: [ mmm.  
 240 T3: (&) he's really caring,  
 241 T2: Yeah, I don't think there's enough distance between those age  
 242 groups yet.  
 243 (...)  
 244 T3: no, yeah.  
 245 [ But maybe when  
 246 T2: [ for him  
 247 to be kind of you know  
 248 T3: play that nurturing role.  
 249 T2: yeah.  
 250 F: I suppose it's kind of  
 251 [ it's like  
 252 T2: [ I would  
 253 be interesting  
 254 T3: it would be to see him in that  
 255 F: [ yeah, it's  
 256 T2: [ mmm  
 257 F: like you say is it conscious or unconscious  
 258 [ is it coercive (&)  
 259 T3: [ mmm. Yeah.  
 260 F: (&) and intimidating, is it power, or is it purely / just it's black and  
 261 white you know  
 262 a bit of a  
 263 T2: yeah.  
 264 F: I didn't touch them  
 265 T2: yeah, yeah.  
 266 F: and that's what you told me not to  
 267 [ do (&)  
 268 T3: [ yeah.  
 269 F: (&) not in a, ummm, you know particularly / intentional, I don't know  
 270 T2: [ yeah  
 271 T3: [ but is it,  
 272 but when Steven does it // what's the context, cos then you know  
 273 whether he's being deliberately coercive. He often does it around  
 274 football doesn't he?  
 275 T2: yeah  
 276 T3: [ and if someone's got.  
 277 T2: [ he just, mmm.  
 278 T3: That's when I saw him doing it the other day. In the playground  
 279 when I was on playground duty.  
 280 T2: yeah. Even just lining up it's almost for a reaction.  
 281 [ He'll do it. (&)  
 282 F: [ mmm.

283 T2: (&) like lining up and they don't, they're really good at not reacting  
284 that class. And maybe that makes him do it even more because he  
285 wants them either to talk to him or / but thinking about new ones  
286 coming in he will be on the same development band  
287 [ or even lower still (&)  
288 T3: [ yeah he will.  
289 T2: (&) than some of them won't he so / it'd be interesting to see how  
290 he interacts with them  
291 [ really.  
292 F: [ mmm.  
293 T2: Actually when you read that description I did think about a little boy  
294 that we had who was, I suppose you'd call it stopped from growing  
295 up, you know, the little boy that went to lots of different schools  
296 [ and (&)  
297 T3: [ yes  
298 T2: she never let him play out or you know  
299 T3: yes  
300 T2: she kept him inside or didn't let him really // do anything  
301 [ she (&)  
302 T3: [ yes.  
303 T2: (&) she basically stopped him from growing up to the point that it  
304 was really quite cruel.  
305 F: mmm.  
306 T2: erm but I don't know where, but that's not really domestic violence.  
307 F: no.  
308 T3: no.  
309 T2: but you know / I suppose it's kind of abuse though  
310 F: yes.  
311 T2: in a way  
312 T3: mmm.  
313 .  
314 .  
315 .  
316  
317 But, but it might be linked with that because we don't know what  
318 history that family had  
319 [ really (&)  
320 T2: [ mmm  
321 T3: (&) but we do know  
322 [ that what (&)  
323 T2: [ previously, yeah  
324 T3: (&) Grandma had done to mum was the same thing and then it  
325 was, it was being then passed on down but we don't know what  
326 went on in terms of the partners  
327 [ as far as we (&)  
328 T2: [ No that's true  
329 (&) know it's only grandma and mum, we don't know what had  
330 happened

331 T2: yeah  
 332 T3: previously to that do we?  
 333 T2: no, no.  
 334 F: ok. So, how would you describe the children that you've taught that  
 335 have experienced domestic violence, as in their / skills if you like, I  
 336 suppose?  
 337 //  
 338 T2: err  
 339 //  
 340 F: If you were to describe them, to me, as a professional, how would  
 341 you talk about them?  
 342 T3: I think the one's that I absolutely know  
 343 [ have been less (&)  
 344 F: [ yeah  
 345 T3: (&) have been in the // lower  
 346 T2: ability band  
 347 T3: half of the academic ability band  
 348 [ than the rest  
 349 T2: [ yeah I'd agree with that  
 350 T3: [ the one's that I actually know  
 351 F: [ academically or cognitively say the  
 352 T3: yeah  
 353 T2: mmm  
 354 T3: but that doesn't mean every child that experiences  
 355 F: no, no.  
 356 T3: that is, that's the problem but the one's  
 357 [ that I'm thinking of that's come into my head (&)  
 358 F: [ but that's what I'm saying The children that you work with  
 359 T3: (&) tended to be the ones that are academically lower  
 360 [ for a start.  
 361 T2: [ I agree.  
 362 T2: Definitely,  
 363 and their social skills are probably  
 364 [ not as developed  
 365 T3: [ although there was a couple where  
 366 T2: yeah  
 367 T3: that have been  
 368 T2: Oliver, he's alright, I know he did like, there was a bit of fisticuffs but  
 369 he blended in alright with kids didn't they?  
 370 T3: yeah and Holly  
 371 T2: yeah.  
 372 F: mmm  
 373 T3: but / just trying to think.  
 374 F: How did they get on with their peers then?  
 375 /  
 376 T2: It varied really Steven's a bit different because he's like on a, he's  
 377 got global delay so he's almost like having a younger,  
 378 F: mmm

379 T2: much younger child in the classroom and I don't know whether, you  
380 know, I don't know whether that's to do with // just like / mental  
381 ability anyway or whether that's connected  
382 F: mmm.  
383 T2: with what we're talking about so he's, he's a little bit of a funny one  
384 but I've one's that have been fine. Erm Nathan / wasn't that he  
385 didn't interact he almost, the ones that were better at social skills  
386 were very subtle at involving him and letting him think that he was  
387 actually controlling the play but they subtly controlled it,  
388 F: mmm  
389 T2: almost like, treating him like a younger child as well  
390 F: mmm.  
391 T2: erm / but yeah sometimes they get really frustrated if they can't /  
392 T3: mmm.  
393 T2: get what they want like Steven. / But you don't know whether  
394 because that's how it's dealt with at home  
395 F: mmm.  
396 T2: or because he is  
397 [ kind of (&  
398 F: [ mmm-hmm.  
399 T2: (&) developmentally  
400 [ much / further behind or are, or are (&  
401 T3: [ Yeah it's difficult  
402 to separate.  
403 T2: (&) is one a reaction to  
404 [ the other (&  
405 T3: [ yes, yes.  
406 T2: (&) I don't know.  
407 F: mmm.  
408 T2: erm  
409 F: What about their problem solving skills?  
410 T2: Well his are fairly low down I would say / because he, yeah.  
411 T3: and Alfie's are.  
412 F: How would, how would they generally go about solving problems  
413 would you say?  
414 T2: I think Steven would get really  
415 [ frustrated (&  
416 T3: [ frustrated.  
417 T2: (&) or he'd come and ask you to help him.  
418 F: mmm.  
419 T2: but he would get frustrated  
420 [ yeah and Nathan (&  
421 T3: [ mmm Alfie as well.  
422 T2: (&) would have kicked of massively / I think.  
423 F: and what  
424 T3: Depends what it was  
425 T2: actually yeah if it was something he personally was trying  
426 [ to do he might not / yeah

427 T3: [ yeah because he would sit for a while  
 428 doing like / when, when he wasn't going out on a lunchtime he  
 429 came round on a lunchtime he can round and we were doing  
 430 games and stuff. He was  
 431 T2: yeah  
 432 T3: he'd sit and do that.  
 433 T2: was it problem solving? I can't think of an example of problem  
 434 solving other than. He did flit around quite a bit. He looked. He liked  
 435 books but he wasn't really / and he loved drawing.  
 436 T3: yeah and he liked /  
 437 [ he liked 1:1 so it's (&)  
 438 T2: [ looking at, working out how to get.  
 439 T3: (&) difficult to to say  
 440 [ with some of them because (&)  
 441 T2: [ Yeah. He was good at working out a route  
 442 T3: (&) Steven is the same after school. well yeah Steven is the same  
 443 because he's got a lot of 1:1  
 444 [ or 1 to very small groups so // (&)  
 445 T2: [ yeah // mmm  
 446 T3: (&) it's stepping back /  
 447 [ isn't it? (&)  
 448 T2: [ yeah  
 449 F: mmm  
 450 T3: (&) and erm maybe looking at them.  
 451 T2: he works at, you know like P.E. schemes  
 452 T3: mmm  
 453 T2: if he wants to play football  
 454 [ he'd (&)  
 455 F: [ mmm  
 456 T2: (&) he'd work and stick at that, to do/ to do something so yeah  
 457 F: and what would you say about attention, concentration skills?  
 458 T3: |  
 459 [ think that's, that's poorer (&)  
 460 T2: [ I think that's yeah  
 461 F: [ yeah  
 462 T3: (&) and I'm thinking about  
 463 [ you know (&)  
 464 T2: [ yeah  
 465 T3: (&) about a few different children and  
 466 [ I think that's definitely true.  
 467 T2: [ I'd agree, yeah  
 468 F: mmm.  
 469 T3: definitely yeah.  
 470 T2: Switches off a lot more quickly, yeah.  
 471 T3: or go into a  
 472 [ you know (&)  
 473 T2: [ yeah  
 474 T3: (&) a bit of a zone, or

475 F: would you  
476 T3: lacking the focus.  
477 F: It's probably a big question, but where would you feel that that  
478 possibly stems from, is it more to do with the cognitive ability or  
479 perhaps more to do with the emotional needs or a bit of a mixture of  
480 both?  
481 T2: It's hard to say that isn't it?  
482 F: Yeah.  
483 T3: It's ever so hard to answer a question like that isn't it. Because it,  
484 because not only that it could be that because of the situation at  
485 home they don't have the same  
486 [ input (&)  
487 F: [ yeah  
488 T2: [ mmm.  
489 T3: (&) the other children of  
490 [ of, (&)  
491 F: [ True  
492 T3: (&) that their peer group gets though it could be like a whole  
493 triangulation  
494 [ of stuff (&)  
495 T2: [ yeah  
496 F: absolutely.  
497 T3: (&) couldn't it, because it's their own cognitive ability plus, you  
498 know,  
499 F: mmm  
500 T3: what's, that they've learnt to cope with by switching  
501 [ off (&)  
502 T2: [ yeah  
503 F: [ mmm.  
504 T3: (&) getting themselves out of it. Plus they haven't got the attention.  
505 T2: I think it's probably a bit of both  
506 F: mmm.  
507 T2: yeah.  
508 F: mmm.  
509 T2: yeah. // Vicious circle.  
510 T3: well yeah.  
511 T2: yeah.  
512 T3: well yeah, because one triggers the other, triggers the other,  
513 [ triggers the other  
514 T2: [ yeah  
515 F: [ mmm.  
516 T3: but  
517 T2: yeah.  
518 F: ok. Erm, how would their peers describe them?  
519 //  
520 T2: Do you know that'd be really interesting wouldn't it. Well I'll tell you  
521 what was really interesting in our class, and it's never happened

522 before. We had to, we had / to vote for who was going to be the  
523 school counsellors and nearly everybody'd voted for Steven.  
524 T3: really!  
525 T2: Yeah!  
526 T3: Really?  
527 T2: Yeah. And we've never had that. We didn't pick him [laughs] there  
528 just wouldn't have been any point so I'm sorry we didn't but we just  
529 pretended we'd put them in a hat and but nearly everybody voted  
530 for him / which I thought was really strange.  
531 F: mmm? Why do you think that was?  
532 T2: I don't know. They do, they do kind of // know he's different but they  
533 do Abbie but they don't baby her as much.  
534 [ Abbie's more / sociable.  
535 T3: [ Abbie's much bigger  
536 though isn't she.  
537 T2: She's much bigger and // I think socially he's more fun to be with  
538 than her, you know she's got and set thing and she kind of goes  
539 T3: yeah  
540 T2: she does play with other children but I think he, he interacts better  
541 probably, erm, and he, and / they enjoy being with him. I think  
542 they're quite fond of him really.  
543 F: so did he nominate himself then, is that how they /  
544 [ or do they just vote?  
545 T2: [ no, he didn't.  
546 T2: No they all had a vote. We kind of just go round and we have like a  
547 tally chart so everybody just chooses somebody in the class and  
548 we just kind of add up the tally charts.  
549 F: right.  
550 T2: but we kind of did it on a board, but erm yeah he got by far the most  
551 votes  
552 T3: did other, did other people hear  
553 his name  
554 T2: yeah they did.  
555 T3: then copied? So  
556 [ it could be that as well? because one person said Steven and  
557 then the next person  
558 T2: [ I don't know. yeah. It's funny though. because we talked, we  
559 yeah. we always talked to them about who would be good at  
560 speaking so if you're really shy it probably wouldn't, or if your  
561 friend's really shy and not to just pick your friend because, you  
562 know, that might not be the best person so think about somebody  
563 who's quite confident and who can / you know say, they're brave  
564 enough to say things  
565 [ and they'll listen.  
566 T3: [ well he'd certainly  
567 be brave enough to say things.  
568 T2: yeah that's true! [laughs]  
569 T3: so then going on that definition!



570 T2: so yeah.  
 571 F: so what do you think they would say about him then?  
 572 T2: I don't know, I might ask some of them! I might ask some of them  
 573 next time I'm in class.  
 574 F: mmm.  
 575 T2: Erm. // Do you know I really don't know!  
 576 F: mmm.  
 577 T2: I think it'd be different depending on who it was. I think some of  
 578 them would say  
 579 T3: I think they would say 'he likes playing football'  
 580 T2: yeah. Yeah  
 581 F: mmm  
 582 T2: erm and I think they might say he's sometimes naughty.  
 583 T3: yeah. I, I agree.  
 584 T2: er  
 585 [ and he, and he, but they might say that of a few people! [laughs]  
 586 T3: [ and I think that's true of the person I'm thinking of in mine.  
 587 T3: that's what I say, I think that's true of the person in mine.  
 588 F: mmm.  
 589 T2: erm.  
 590 T3: they'd probably say, the people I'm thinking of, that they liked them.  
 591 F: mmm.  
 592 T2: mmm.  
 593 //  
 594 T2: Yeah  
 595 [ I think they'd probably say that, they'd probably say that about  
 596 Steven as well. Yeah. Mmm.  
 597 T3: [ well enough liked, , even though we've said about can be  
 598 intimidating and can be this and can be that.  
 599 T2: Yeah.  
 600 T3: Never short of people  
 601 T2: Yeah. I think they wouldn't not want him in the class.  
 602 T3: Mmm.  
 603 F: yeah. So on the whole they're quite likeable children as far as the  
 604 other children are concerned.  
 605 T3: All the people I'm thinking of have been. Yeah.  
 606 T2: Yeah. Because of the one's I can think of they're really quite loving  
 607 as well  
 608 T3: Yes.  
 609 T2: they've got a side to them, even thought they might hurt people,  
 610 they've got a lovely side under it that's crying out to be loved and  
 611 nurtured really.  
 612 F: mmm.  
 613 T2: Which I suppose is where is where the cycle starts with a  
 614 vulnerable person who needs lots of loving and  
 615 T3: yeah.  
 616 T2: gets taken advantage of, I don't know. But.  
 617 F: Do they, where do they seek that loving then do you think then?

618 T2: Sometimes he just comes up for hugs. Both, both the boys that  
619 have been in that class and if I think of [another family] they were  
620 quite loving kids

621 T3: mmm

622 T2: weren't they? And

623 T3: I don't necessarily think just because it, they're in a home where  
624 there is domestic violence they don't get that  
625 [ either. Because, yeah, because they get it off (&)

626 T2: [ yeah. Steven's mum is very loving towards him.

627 T3: (&) you know, even if they don't get it off both parents

628 T2: yeah.

629 T3: they might be getting it off one

630 T2: [ yeah.

631 T3: so I don't necessarily think that it's because they're not getting that.

632 T2: Mmm, and it's not always violence directed at them is it?  
633 [ It's (&)

634 T3: [ No.

635 T2: (&) violence that they've seen directed at somebody else so

636 T3: yeah.

637 T2: mmm.

638 F: Yeah, I mean that's the irony of domestic violence is that it happens  
639 within a context or the framework of the family who's supposed to  
640 have a loving relationship  
641 [ between (&)

642 T2: [ mmm.

643 F: (&) two partners  
644 [ who are (&)

645 T3: [ mmm.

646 F: (&) supposed to have and intimate loving relationship so it's very  
647 ironic in  
648 [ that sense (&)

649 T2: [ yeah

650 F: (&) erm, which, so yeah you can quite easily see the contrast within  
651 the family

652 T2: yeah.

653 F: so they may well have two very loving parents, or adults  
654 [ whether (&)

655 T3: [ yeah.

656 F: (&) they're a parent or not

657 T3: Yes, yes, cos it's not necessarily one of  
658 F: yeah  
659 T3: their parents is it?

660 T2: mmm. Yeah.

661 F: Ok. How would they describe themselves?  
662 //

663 T2: Oh gosh.

664 T3: They'd say 'I like football'. [laughs] 'I like where's Wally'. [laughs] 'I  
665 like playing'. He would say the things he likes.

666 T2: But I don't think he'd rate himself very highly.  
667 T3: No. I don't either.  
668 T2: And I don't think Nathan would either.  
669 T3: No. I don't think Alfie would either.  
670 T2: No.  
671 F: They maybe don't like themselves  
672 T3: Self-esteem wise I think the children and Holly had very low self-  
673 esteem that was one of the barriers  
674 T2: yeah  
675 T3: till we sort of / solved it for her.  
676 T2: mmm.  
677 T3: Erm // I don't think, I think that was maybe where / you can see a  
678 pattern.  
679 T2: Yeah.  
680 F: mmm.  
681 //  
682 T2: mmm.  
683 //  
684 F: mmm.  
685 T3: Cos I think whether you like it or not // and / you try to say it's not  
686 your fault you'd certainly feel // maybe some way responsible  
687 wouldn't you?  
688 T2: mmm.  
689 T3: I don't know. You might.  
690 /  
691 T2: mmm  
692 T3: Perhaps.  
693 F: So that'd be your suggestion of why they don't like themselves  
694 perhaps then?  
695 T3: It might have something to do with it, yeah.  
696 T2: mmm.  
697 T3: I don't know, I mean I'm no // I haven't got any answers here  
698 [laughs] but it's just / I imagine if, and I'm just thinking of  
699 T2: I think Alfie you might be right  
700 T3: yeah.  
701 T2: yeah.  
702 T3: it's my fault.  
703 T2: blames himself / yeah. Not  
704 [ I wasn't good enough or I was, yeah, yeah but (&)  
705 T3: [ Not, not necessarily consciously but certainly  
706 T2: (&) what was wrong with me kind of thing  
707 F: mmm  
708 T2: yeah. I'm not sure Steven would think like that. Cos I don't know  
709 whether he's got the  
710 F: Mmm.  
711 T2: I think he  
712 [ just see's himself as not being (&)  
713 T3: [ Cognitive ability

714 T2: (&) quite as good as everybody else, because he's  
715 [ kind of  
716 T3: [ but that  
717 T3: yeah but that's low self-esteem isn't it?  
718 T2: yeah  
719 T3: that he's  
720 T2: yeah // although maybe not for football but kind of in an academic  
721 way he knows that he can't write as well as the others. Well I think  
722 he does// and he, he must, he must do by now. I think as the years  
723 gone on he can see that he's, he's kind of different work wise to  
724 what they can do and what he does.  
725 T3: do you think?  
726 T2: mmm. I think he is, can probably get that by now yeah.  
727 F: mmm. / ok. So what difficulties do you feel that these children  
728 have?  
729 //  
730 T3: Well I think then if we've just talked about self-esteem that's gotta  
731 be one of them hasn't it really?  
732 T2: yeah.  
733 T3: and like I say all the children at various time, not necessarily in the  
734 last ten years, but just various times I think that's definitely got to be  
735 one.  
736 T2: and making sense of everything I think [laughs]  
737 T3: mmm.  
738 T2: and especially once they start school and they realise that isn't the  
739 norm for everybody else.  
740 T3: mmm. And, and what you picked up on earlier, earlier when you  
741 said about the conflict between the messages that you're getting  
742 (&)  
743 T2: yeah.  
744 /  
745 T3: (&) and that's if the messages that I'm getting there are conflicting  
746 you know, what else, who else is telling  
747 [ me the (&)  
748 T2: [ mmm.  
749 T3: (&) truth, or not. You know what I mean, so then school / you've got  
750 to trust haven't you basically  
751 [ to (&)  
752 F: [ yeah  
753 T2: [ mmm.  
754 T3: (&) and if you haven't got that for whatever reason that's going to  
755 be hard.  
756 F: so is that, do we think, something we were talking about, narratives  
757 and story telling and so on aren't we. And they're making their  
758 narratives and their stories around, possibly what's right and wrong,  
759 and moral behaviour maybe?  
760 T2: mmm

761 F: Do you think that's possibly what they're starting to create their  
762 narratives around as to what is right and what is wrong  
763 [ and then (&)  
764 T2: [ I think so  
765 definitely, in their  
766 F: (&) the, the conflicting information that they have // to put together  
767 and like if you've got parents who love each other but yet at the  
768 same time they hurt each other and how they make sense  
769 [ of all this.  
770 T3: [ yeah  
771 T3: I mean that must be, that conflicting thing, must be.  
772 T2: yeah. And older brothers that you know, you know you love your  
773 older brother and your sister but they still you know, knock seven  
774 bells [laughs] out of you when you get home  
775 [ or if you (&)  
776 T3: [ yeah  
777 T2: (&) touch their stuff. And I think, I think Steven has found that hard  
778 [ cos (&)  
779 T3: [ Yes  
780 T2: (&) he's sometimes  
781 [ said (&)  
782 T3: [ yeah  
783 F: [ mmm  
784 T2: (&) but you know my brother does so-and-so (&)  
785 T3: yeah.  
786 F: mmm.  
787 T2: (&) and, so we've even said sometimes 'well you know you tell  
788 Elliot that he shouldn't do that and hurt you' [laughs]  
789 T3: yeah  
790 F: mmm. Cos obviously you've got, you know, an influential adult  
791 saying one particular thing and someone else who's possibly  
792 equally influential  
793 [ saying (&)  
794 T2: [ mmm.  
795 F: (&) or doing  
796 [ something very different.  
797 T3: [ or doing, yeah, yeah  
798 T2: Yeah.  
799 T3: And also, I mean if you're going back to just generally about  
800 domestic abuse and if that's happening, then that's taking the /  
801 emphasis away from the child isn't it? So in terms of support for  
802 homework, reading  
803 T3: and then general school stuff (&)  
804 T2: mmm.  
805 F: mmm  
806 T3: (&) then they're not getting that either are they? so that becomes a  
807 bit of a // a, a barrier, or you know, it's a  
808 F: mmm.

809 T3: a problem they have to  
810 T2: mmm  
811 T3: then overcome that other children don't necessarily have to.  
812 F: Mmm. So how do you think that would impact on them then?  
813 T3: Well in terms of support, I mean, well, we can actually prove that  
814 [laughs] it's the children who get more support from home, are the  
815 one's that do better. Cos they have a better start don't they?  
816 T2: yeah.  
817 T3: and they build on that and build on that and build on that and the  
818 one's that are getting somewhere quiet to do their homework or  
819 getting support with their homework, or made to feel good about  
820 themselves. Cos if you, Cos it's hard  
821 [ to do (&)  
822 T2: [ mmm.  
823 T3: (&) that if you're not feeling good about yourself as an adult isn't it?  
824 It's very hard to pass that on  
825 [ to the child.  
826 F: [ and you've  
827 already suggested that you feel that these children are not  
828 performing academically as well.  
829 T3: yes.  
830 //  
831 T2: yeah  
832 F: so  
833 T3: and then the low self-esteem because, nobody's bigging you up  
834 because they haven't got time in themselves, I don't know. I mean  
835 this all sort of position now cos we're not a fly on the wall but  
836 F: absolutely  
837 T3: It becomes a  
838 T2: or they're tied up in their own problems  
839 [ so much that they're just  
840 T3: [ yeah, that's what I mean it's hard to  
841 F: They're not attending,  
842 [ you know, (&)  
843 T2: [ yeah, yeah  
844 F: (&) attention, concentration, yeah, hmm.  
845 T3: Yeah so I've got some homework or I've got this to do well  
846 //  
847 F: How easy is it  
848 [ to do that yeah.  
849 T3: [ how easy is it to do that  
850 F: Do they feel safe? I don't know. // You know, if they do, do they /  
851 worry that their parent isn't safe?  
852 T3: mmm. exactly  
853 T2: Well that is exactly the case, not, not the parent but that his brother  
854 wasn't safe, cos he saw horrible things going on but and he never  
855 knew whether, that if he was naughty that he was going to get  
856 [laughs] shipped off to Africa.

857 [ / well that was the threat (&  
858 T3: [ That was the threat all the time wasn't it  
859 T2: (&) So his behaviour was definitely due to not feeling safe  
860 T3: oh yeah,  
861 [ it was, it was, it was.  
862 T2: [ and that was why he didn't want to come to school (&  
863 (&) he didn't want to come to school on a morning. Because he  
864 didn't, I think he was scared his mum wasn't going to be there, or  
865 not pick him up / so I think, yeah  
866 /  
867 F: mmm.  
868 T2: mmm and then  
869 F: So do you think they are concerned for the safety of their parent  
870 who is being abused?  
871 T2: Yeah and in his case it was mum who was abusing brother so he's,  
872 he saw that. I mean I don't think he was bothered about his own  
873 safety but I think it made him feel unsafe because he didn't know //  
874 his life was so unstable  
875 T3: yeah  
876 T2: and so emotionally up and down  
877 F: mmm.  
878 T2: so  
879 F: Ok. So what do you think the strengths of these children are?  
880 //  
881 T3: I think they're very resilient.  
882 T2: [laughs] I was just going to say exactly the same really.  
883 T3: [laughs]  
884 T2: Yeah. They sometimes do good despite all that don't they?  
885 T3: yeah.  
886 F: mmm.  
887 T2: yeah.  
888 //  
889 F: What do you think makes them resilient / what are those qualities,  
890 what is, what is that?  
891 /  
892 T2: [sighs] coping strategies I suppose  
893 T3: yeah, yeah.  
894 T2: they find coping strategies don't they? And overcoming the  
895 difficulties that they've got I suppose.  
896 T3: and there's, in a, like we said, like we were talking about last week  
897 really, even, we probably don't know half of what's going on in  
898 some children's lives  
899 T2: mmm.  
900 T3: and we expect them to come to school on time [laughs]  
901 T2: mmm  
902 T3: with the right stuff and having [laughs] done their homework / and  
903 we're putting pressure on them to do that and then learn [laughs]  
904 T2: mmm.

905 T3: while they're here and, and you know, they are dealing with and  
 906 coping with all that and then maybe going home and we don't really  
 907 know to what and that's what I say you know. You're thinking about  
 908 some children and you know there's something that's not  
 909 necessarily quite right  
 910 T2: [ yeah  
 911 F: [ yeah  
 912 T3: but till they tell you or until there's evidence coming from elsewhere  
 913 or it's directed at them or their family and, you know, in terms of  
 914 domestic violence and you can, you can say I know  
 915 T2: yeah  
 916 T3: I know there's soemthing  
 917 T2: something strange is going on  
 918 T3: and yet they're coming into school, and to all intents and purposes  
 919 they're coping aren't they?  
 920 F: mmm-hmm.  
 921 T3: and then they're growing up like Holly, and her mum's got a new  
 922 partner and everything you know, it all blew up and then you know  
 923 mum sort of said right, enough's enough I'm not having it and got a  
 924 new partner and a new baby and everything and it's all / completely  
 925 lovely and Holly did really well  
 926 T2: mmm.  
 927 T3: in Key Stage 2 SATs and at high school  
 928 F: mmm  
 929 T3: and that's all / so she's got through that  
 930 [ and (&)  
 931 T2: [ mmm  
 932 T3: (&) so she's got through that and she had the back up of her mum  
 933 and her sister and everything  
 934 T2: mmm, mmm.  
 935 T3: but that's, and, and so there's that there that it doesn't  
 936 damage you  
 937 T2: mmm  
 938 is maybe the word I'm looking for, that you don't necessarily have  
 939 to be damaged by what  
 940 F: mmm  
 941 T3: has gone on.  
 942 T2: Although,  
 943 T3: Although,  
 944 [ which  
 945 T2: [ you can  
 946 T2: get the cycle  
 947 [ repeating itself  
 948 T3: [ well I know  
 949 T3: I know and that's what I'm just thinking about, and yet then I'm  
 950 going on to clarify that and yet some children you feel that, that  
 951 could happen.  
 952 T2: yeah, yeah



953 /

954 F: mmm

955 /

956 T3: unless something's done to help them and then that's fine isn't it.

957 F: How would you describe your relationships with the parents or  
958 carers of these children?

959 T2: mmm. I think it depends on who it is really we've had mum's with  
960 who the relationship isn't brilliant, and then with Steven's mum  
961 she's very needy so you know she would she'll tell you everything

962 F: mmm

963 T2: but almost make it like an excuse. She knows that / it's her  
964 problem.

965 T3: yeah

966 T2: but almost she won't take responsibility for it  
967 [ you know what I mean?

968 T3: [ it's hard isn't it?  
969 She's a real case

970 T2: yeah, erm and you can just see that cycle because the children, her  
971 older children don't have respect

972 F: mmm.

973 T2: for her. erm so Steven gets mixed messages  
974 about things

975 T3: he does. He loves his mum

976 T2: yeah

977 F: mmm.

978 T2: yeah, but his older, his older siblings kind of don't have respect for  
979 her, so / you've got lots of people telling him what to do and I don't  
980 think he, he kind of has one of them that is the set person who  
981 controls the household. But then erm,

982 T3: But we have got a dialogue with her haven't we?

983 T2: yeah.

984 T3: It's not that we

985 T2: yeah

986 T3: and she

987 T2: [staff member] goes out to see her everyday and tells her how he's  
988 been and everything, no. so I'd say generally we've got quite a  
989 good relationship

990 T3: [ yeah

991 F: [ mmm.

992 T2: with her she wouldn't, I don't think I'd believe everything she said

993 T3: no [laughs]

994 T2: but erm and I think, a lot of the time, it's, it's about her problems  
995 [ so (&

996 T3: [ yes

997 T2: (&) she wants to make you feel sorry for her.

998 T3: yeah

999 T2: erm but in a lot, a lot of times you do, don't you. Because some of  
1000 these parents have got such massive problems. Steven's mum

1001 had got, you just felt so sorry for her trying to cope with no family  
1002 and I could see, you know, how she'd get really frustrated and you  
1003 do want to help. It's just sometimes so difficult isn't it to get  
1004 F: mmm.  
1005 T2: Cos your main focus when you're a teacher is the child that's  
1006 coming in and the problem's that you've got with it. So / it's  
1007 T3: yes some of the parents are quite needy.  
1008 T2: mmm  
1009 T3: I'm just thinking  
1010 T2: mmm  
1011 T3: generally.  
1012 T2: yes, although the Wilkinsons, he just was very aggressive, wasn't  
1013 he?  
1014 T3: [ he was very aggressive. yeah  
1015 T2: [ once he kicked off, yeah  
1016 F: mmm  
1017 T2: He was very controlled, very // but then you know if you crossed  
1018 him you'd, he'd get quite stroppy  
1019 F: so is that perhaps, one way or the other do you think? And is that a  
1020 gender difference there, in that the women erm perhaps, or if they  
1021 are the partner that's being abused, the one that is more needy and  
1022 they see you as a source of support and the men, if they are the  
1023 abuser, are they the one's that are more controlling? I don't know.  
1024 T2: Maybe. // mmm. You see I suppose in the situation we've got, one  
1025 of the mum's was the abuser, one of the mum's was the abused  
1026 and then the dad was the abuser wasn't he?  
1027 T3: mmm  
1028 T2: so it's difficult I suppose it depends on that particular family and  
1029 those particular dynamics doesn't it.  
1030 F: mmm so do you think they see you as somebody to be supportive  
1031 or somebody to // who  
1032 [ is the opposite?  
1033 T2: [ I think  
1034 T2: it depends how you handle it really. I think, I think in Steven's case  
1035 she's probably willing to accept help from anybody that would give  
1036 it wouldn't she?  
1037 T3: yes, yes.  
1038 T2: cos she's very needy. With Nathan's mum she pretended that  
1039 everything was fine and it was only when we, kind of, gained her  
1040 trust that she / she opened up to, to being needy  
1041 T3: yeah, yeah  
1042 T2: needy of help. She was, kind of, trying to cover it up cos she was  
1043 scared of losing the kids, but then [laughs] wanted to didn't she a  
1044 bit of space.  
1045 T3: yes it was difficult wasn't it.  
1046 T2: erm  
1047 F: so a bit of mix then really  
1048 T2: yeah

1049 T3: mmm.  
 1050 T2: with the Wilkinsons I don't know, cos you know I don't know  
 1051 whether he actually wanted them or not it was hard to tell wasn't it.  
 1052 T3: yeah it was. Very difficult. / and then Lucy we've got haven't we  
 1053 who dad and mum aren't together  
 1054 T2: I don't (...)  
 1055 T3: but then she, it was a family that came to, well last year, no two  
 1056 years ago, from [another local school] erm and they, the dad of one  
 1057 family of girls and the mum of another family of girls had got  
 1058 together and then they had a son together and then at Christmas it  
 1059 all blew up and he went mad  
 1060 .  
 1061 .  
 1062 .  
 1063 And the mum moved out, didn't she  
 1064 T2: after she put all the pictures on Facebook of being beaten up.  
 1065 T3: yeah, but the girls from his family are still living with him  
 1066 F: mmm.  
 1067 //  
 1068 T2: yeah  
 1069 /  
 1070 T3: and he's a strange mix. He's got custody of the girls  
 1071 [ but the mum turned up at sports day.  
 1072 T2: [ but she's not a needy mum is she  
 1073 T2: but she's not a needy mum is she? I wouldn't say she's a needy  
 1074 mum.  
 1075 .  
 1076 .  
 1077 .  
 1078  
 1079 T3: No.  
 1080 T2: No.  
 1081 F: mmm  
 1082 T2: No.  
 1083 T3: and she left straight away as well actually.  
 1084 T2: [ Yeah  
 1085 F: [ mmm  
 1086 T3: so he did it once  
 1087 F: [ mmm.  
 1088 T2: [ mmm.  
 1089 T3: and I think that was it. Although I don't know what history he'd had  
 1090 before because  
 1091 T2: yeah  
 1092 T3: Lucy's mum had left hadn't she?  
 1093 T2: mmm. Yeah.  
 1094 T3: so I don't know, but he's / he's not needy is as much as he hardly  
 1095 comes to school but when he does come to school he's needy.  
 1096 F: [ Right

1097 T2: [ That's interesting, yeah.  
1098 T3: [ Like at parents evenings and things.  
1099 F: Ok.  
1100 T3: We're not being very helpful!  
1101 .  
1102 .  
1103 .  
1104 F: Erm the article that I gave you last week erm talked about emotion  
1105 regulation and the development of prosocial skills  
1106 T3: yeah, I did read that.  
1107 F: [laughs] so I was just wondering what your reflections were on  
1108 those areas of development so just to remind you, erm they were  
1109 saying parental attachment helps to develop emotion regulation  
1110 and you were just talking about parenting relationships then so  
1111 what, what were your thoughts around the emotion regulation, just  
1112 from reading that?  
1113 T3: well in terms of Alfie I mean he hasn't got any regulation has he?  
1114 T2: mmm.  
1115 T3: He just completely, and I'd say the same is almost true of Steven  
1116 aswell.  
1117 T2: yeah.  
1118 T3: You know it's a 'I want it and I want it now' or (&  
1119 T2: yeah  
1120 F: yeah  
1121 T3: you've upset me and I'm going to lash out at you.  
1122 T2: yeah he can't control it can he and wait. He can't  
1123 T3: no  
1124 F: did it fit with them as you were reading it?  
1125 T3: with Alfie yes but I'm not sure you see with Alfie it's difficult isn't it  
1126 because it was when he was so small that he's not, as far as we  
1127 know, suffered anything  
1128 F: mmm.  
1129 [ And it was (&  
1130 T3: [ subsequently  
1131 F: (&) interesting because actually they were talking about pre-school  
1132 children as well weren't they  
1133 [ and the (&  
1134 T3: [ Yeah, very young.  
1135 F: (&) erm the impact it has.  
1136 T2: mmm  
1137 T3: but with Alfie he got taken  
1138 T2: [whispers] Sorry, I haven't read it. I left it in the car but I will, I will.  
1139 T3: [laugh]  
1140 F: That's ok. I mean any thoughts that you've got as we're talking  
1141 about it, that's that absolutely is fine. Erm then the other thing they  
1142 talked about was pro-social skills so they're saying the success of a  
1143 person in meeting societal expectations, so to attend to social cues

1144 and to solve social problems, and they were saying that's an area  
1145 of difficulty erm/ Any thoughts on that?  
1146 /

1147 T3: It wasn't true of Holly.  
1148 F: mmm  
1149 T3: then again, like I say, she was older  
1150 F: mmm  
1151 T3: and she was, very, I suppose it depends a little bit doesn't it on  
1152 personality type as well.  
1153 [ It's so hard isn't it this type of thing  
1154 F: [ yeah and they weren't saying  
1155 F: They weren't saying all kids suffer either were they?  
1156 T3: No.  
1157 F: and I think what they were saying is that from those that do these  
1158 are perhaps key things  
1159 [ that they picked out.  
1160 T3: [ Yes, True.  
1161 T3: because it depends, doesn't it on so many other factors and how //  
1162 how it's / cos everybody is an individual anyway and it's, how you  
1163 handle it isn't it?  
1164 [ One of  
1165 T2: [ so what's,  
1166 what kind of things were you saying?  
1167 F: They were talking about erm, emotion regulation, so for example  
1168 managing their anger  
1169 [ and they (&)  
1170 T2: [ yeah, yeah  
1171 F: (&) were saying that is something that very much develops from the  
1172 attachment in a parent relationship.  
1173 T2: Right  
1174 F: so through that parenting relationship you help your children to  
1175 regulate their emotions  
1176 T2: Right, mmm  
1177 F: Through your general parenting techniques. So if that relationship  
1178 as a parent isn't there with the children  
1179 T2: yeah  
1180 F: then they won't develop  
1181 T3: mmm  
1182 T2: mmm  
1183 F: the emotion regulation skills and the same with pro-social skills,  
1184 they're saying that, that is measured if you like, in a person meeting  
1185 societal expectations, so being able to attend to social cues and  
1186 solve  
1187 T2: yeah  
1188 F: interpersonal problems  
1189 T2: well I'd say with both of those mums they don't make appointments  
1190 and things like, you know they miss things that they're supposed to  
1191 take their children to.

1192 T3: No but  
 1193 T2: what?  
 1194 T3: Yeah but in terms of the children  
 1195 F: yeah  
 1196 T3: they don't pick up cues as much  
 1197 [ do they?  
 1198 T2: [ no  
 1199 T2: No they don't.  
 1200 T3: Because I know Alfie says 'what have I done?'  
 1201 T2: mmm.  
 1202 .  
 1203 .  
 1204 .  
 1205  
 1206 T3: and Steven is similar  
 1207 T2: mmm.  
 1208 F: mmm.  
 1209 T3: He'll cry when you take the ball off him '[imitates a moan] my ball'  
 1210 T2: yeah  
 1211 T3: well what have you done Steven? 'Nothing  
 1212 [ I didn't do anything' (&)  
 1213 T2: [ [laughs]  
 1214 T3: (&) well no actually you did. But very quick to  
 1215 T2: yeah  
 1216 T3: and Alfie is the same.  
 1217 T2: yeah  
 1218 T3: you know very quick to not  
 1219 T2: mmm  
 1220 T3: or not // I know Alfie the other day, he'd really upset lots of children  
 1221 and erm / they had, at lunch time they had a discussion about how  
 1222 they didn't want him to be doing that anymore  
 1223 T2: mmm-hmm.  
 1224 //  
 1225 T3: and all he could say, I wasn't there but [the adult] told me  
 1226 afterwards, and all he could say was 'well why is the new Kyle  
 1227 saying that, because I haven't hurt him'.  
 1228 F: mmm  
 1229 T2: yeah  
 1230 T3: Erm and he couldn't, he wouldn't, 'well no everybody's saying it  
 1231 Alfie cos they don't like your general behaviour  
 1232 [ and the (&)  
 1233 T2: [ mmm  
 1234 T3: (&) way you / try and control or bully or', and I use it in the loosest  
 1235 term, but you know try and intimidate or coerce, and 'Kyle, even  
 1236 though he's only been in a school a couple of weeks  
 1237 [ can (&)  
 1238 T2: [ mmm  
 1239 T3: (&) feel that aswell'

1240 [ erm  
1241 T2: [ yeah  
1242 T3: and the, but Alfie's 'well I haven't hurt him so why is he saying  
1243 anything' can't pick up on the general /  
1244 [ but this is the message that (&  
1245 F: [ social cues and interpersonal, yeah.  
1246 T3: (&) everybody's giving you.  
1247 F: Yeah, yeah  
1248 T3: But you won't take that advice,  
1249 [ or accept (&  
1250 T2: [ yeah  
1251 T3: (&) that, you'll just say 'oh but not him'.  
1252 T2: yeah. Mmm.  
1253 T3: which we thought was quite  
1254 F: yeah  
1255 T2: the parents don't take responsibility  
1256 T3: no  
1257 T2: either though do they?  
1258 T3: a lot.  
1259 T2: so you know if Steven has had a bad day mum's, you know, quite,  
1260 can be quite protective, well you knew, you knew he had a problem  
1261 when he came here, that's why he's got one to one, well we're not  
1262 saying that but you know  
1263 [so it's all uh-uh (&  
1264 T3: [ yes, yes  
1265 T2: (&) and then  
1266 [ and Nathan's was exactly. Yeah. Nathan's was the same.  
1267 Yeah.and he's not, yeah  
1268 T3: [ And that's with Alfie's auntie even, and you know he's got a  
1269 problem but, yeah, that doesn't mean he can hit other children  
1270 T2: and it's not that nice to hear things about  
1271 [ your (&  
1272 F: [ no  
1273 T2: (&) own kids is it?  
1274 F: no.  
1275 T2: but yeah almost like a responsibility though and then you wonder  
1276 why they won't take responsibility either [laughs]  
1277 T3: Yeah.  
1278 F: And I think they were saying weren't they that those were key  
1279 components of resilience in the children so, in the, in the article  
1280 they're saying the family is discussed in relation to resilience so I  
1281 was wondering what role you felt there was for teachers in schools,  
1282 and how important is school in relation to the development of  
1283 resilience, cos obviously I'm looking as I said about us in the  
1284 classroom as educators, teachers and a lot of the research is  
1285 around families and parenting and I want to take that  
1286 T3: take it back out

1287 F: into schools, cos clearly they spend a lot of time in school and it is  
1288 an issue within the classroom I think that it clear given how much  
1289 discussion we've already had so I'm sort of wondering whether, you  
1290 know, whether resilience is one of the key things, what role do you  
1291 feel you have as teachers?  
1292 T3: well I think we've got a role as teachers to build resilience anyway.  
1293 Cos I think that's / generally, just moving away from the domestic  
1294 violence thing, is children, we put that down if they have got  
1295 resilience to tackle things in a different way or come at it from a  
1296 different point of view or take that responsibility and move on cos a  
1297 lot of children they get really stuck don't they if they can't do  
1298 something. 'I can't do the first one' well / and, and then Alfie's very  
1299 like that  
1300 F: mmm  
1301 T3: I couldn't do that one so I'm not  
1302 T2: yeah  
1303 T3: And that he's one  
1304 F: mmm and does that  
1305 T3: and I think that's true of some but other children as well you know  
1306 building that resilience to say well I couldn't do that but I maybe  
1307 could do the next one or I could look at it in a different way and I  
1308 could go for help somewhere else or so I think it's our. I think  
1309 there's a lot to look at it generally about building that,  
1310 T2: [mmm  
1311 F: [mmm  
1312 T3: not just for them but for  
1313 F: Do you think that  
1314 T3: everybody  
1315 F: Do you think that links then to the academic success  
1316 T3: mmm.  
1317 F: and then if we're saying that these children, perhaps,  
1318 [ have not  
1319 T3: [ I think  
1320 you definitely could, yeah  
1321 F: erm achieving their potential perhaps if we put it that way,  
1322 T2: yeah  
1323 F: is resilience the first barrier  
1324 T3: mmm  
1325 F: to not achieving their academic potential  
1326 T2: [intake of breath] ooh hmm.  
1327 T3: I do think for some of them, I do think that is it. That it's easier to  
1328 not do it  
1329 [ or to give up  
1330 T2: [ yeah to give up  
1331 T3: than to tackle it  
1332 T2: yeah



1333 T3: and I think that's, of the children that I'm thinking of, that we're  
1334 talking about, that's definitely a trait. But I think it's true of a lot of  
1335 other children  
1336 [ as well  
1337 T2: [ yes, I agree  
1338 T3: so it's not  
1339 [ only a (&  
1340 F: [ no absolutely.  
1341 T3: (&) trait for those children and I do think it is a barrier because if  
1342 you, immediately your first reaction if you can't do something is to  
1343 do this [lies down on table] [laughs] 'I'm not doing it'  
1344 T2: yeah  
1345 T3: erm then you don't move on do you?  
1346 [ cos  
1347 F: [ no  
1348 T2: [ no  
1349 F: and I'm not saying that,  
1350 [absolutely, you know, it is specifically linked,  
1351 T3: [ I don't think it'd solve every problem  
1352 F: no.  
1353 T3: and I'm not saying it's specifically linked. But I think  
1354 [ it's something (&  
1355 F: [ but is it  
1356 T3: (&) we could do better  
1357 F: yeah  
1358 T2: yeah  
1359 T3: you know  
1360 F: and is that perhaps something we could focus on then as teachers  
1361 or within education to look at building resilience, which if, as you  
1362 say if it's not purely them, is it going to benefit others as well?  
1363 Maybe it is.  
1364 T3: Certainly it will.  
1365 F: But I don't know. Is that something that we see where time could  
1366 be directed or erm, in the sense of our professional abilities, our  
1367 skills, is that something we should focus on?  
1368 T2: What kind of things would you, are you thinking you'd focus on?  
1369 F: I don't know, in the sense of looking at resilience and thinking this is  
1370 what we think is an issue and their social skills and their emotion  
1371 regulation those sorts of things, we're thinking about,  
1372 T2: yeah  
1373 F: is that a key thing?  
1374 T2: It's massive, it's huge isn't it really, but I suppose we do quite, we  
1375 do try and foster like a, that a challenge is good,  
1376 T3: yeah  
1377 T2: and to work  
1378 F: mmm  
1379 T2: you know at something you learn more by getting it wrong and by  
1380 persevering than by, you know, giving up straight away, but

1381 T3: mmm and that's all liked with mindset stuff  
1382 F: yeah, yeah  
1383 T2: it's almost like  
1384 F: yeah and do they have the resilience to engage in that?  
1385 /  
1386 T2: hmm. I'm not sure.  
1387 T3: I think it's certainly a message we could think of generally for  
1388 school anyway.  
1389 T2: yeah  
1390 T3: I think, I mean it's something we were talking about anyway about  
1391 mindset and about changing the way you look at failing  
1392 T2: yeah and that's  
1393 T3: because if you  
1394 T2: important for us aswell I think.  
1395 T3: yeah, no I agree. In fact I think that's exactly what  
1396 T2: In fact I think we need to do it with us  
1397 T3: yeah  
1398 T2: before we do it with the kids!  
1399 T3: yeah  
1400 T2: Honestly I think you just want to get things right don't you  
1401 T3: yeah  
1402 T2: and you don't want  
1403 [criticism  
1404 T3: [and failing's ok  
1405 yeah  
1406 T2: and I think we need to have it.  
1407 F: Is, is that a societal or cultural kind of thing  
1408 [ that we  
1409 T3: [ I think it is yeah  
1410 T2: yeah and I think / women in particular don't like that  
1411 F: mmm  
1412 T2: cos they want to do it right and they want to be told how to do it a  
1413 lot of the time don't they.  
1414 T3: yeah  
1415 T2: They want somebody to say just how you do it and I'll do it like that,  
1416 cos we're quite biddable yeah  
1417 T3: that's right yeah, yeah  
1418 T2: and we just want / to, to do it the right way and we're not very good  
1419 at taking criticism  
1420 T3: [laughs] no  
1421 T2: and I'm not!  
1422 T3: no, no I agree I'm not either!  
1423 T2: I'll beat myself up cos I want to get it right  
1424 F: mmm  
1425 T2: but really I should be thinking well actually  
1426 T3: If I get it wrong  
1427 T2: yeah  
1428 T3: I can get it right next time

1429 T2: or  
1430 T3: this is what we need to be saying to the kids don't we  
1431 T2: yeah or cos when you do get that / criticism, even if it's not always  
1432 constructive you might go home and boo [laughs] about it for a  
1433 while but actually you do learn loads more from that, than just  
1434 getting it right all the time don't you? And thinking you're doing  
1435 everything great, when actually there might be little things that you  
1436 could do that would improve it hugely.  
1437 T3: I mean that links back to children  
1438 T2: mmm  
1439 T3: that are maybe in that situation cos you're minimising / the risk  
1440 aren't you almost, or I imagine  
1441 T2: mmm  
1442 T3: that is one of the things you could do so if violence is directed  
1443 generally, is a norm in the family or whatever you'd minimise the  
1444 risk to yourself wouldn't you, I would imagine. Erm so in that case  
1445 you would be trying to do things right wouldn't you?  
1446 T2: yeah  
1447 T3: And that would be the way  
1448 [ so when somebody  
1449 T2: [ as a coping strategy  
1450 T3: as a coping strategy  
1451 [ so when somebody's  
1452 T2: [ yeah, mmm  
1453 T3: saying that's not right, that's a big issue isn't it?  
1454 T2: yeah.  
1455 T3: [ and I think I do that to my class, no  
1456 T2: [cos it's not a pleasant feeling is it?  
1457 T3: no.  
1458 T3: and I think I do that to my class 'and that's not right' [laughs]  
1459 T2: [laughs]  
1460 F: mmm  
1461 T3: I don't use those terms, I say 'you need to try, let's think' but, erm  
1462 [laughs]  
1463 F: but there are many things I suppose when you're in school that, I  
1464 mean mathematically, it's either right or it's wrong there's no  
1465 shades of grey when you're doing maths, and things like lining up  
1466 for example, I mean I've often come into schools as an observer  
1467 and lining up – generally it's either right or it's wrong!  
1468 T3: yes, yeah [laughs]  
1469 T2: mmm. yeah  
1470 F: and we can think of the times where we've said 'no I want you to do  
1471 that again' and the implication is clear that there was a problem  
1472 T3: yes  
1473 T2: mmm  
1474 F: with the line  
1475 T3: yes  
1476 F: in the first place,

1477 T2: yeah  
1478 F: so yeah, like you say, if that's if, if doing something wrong is a  
1479 trigger for violence then perhaps there is a need to do things right  
1480 and get things right  
1481 T3: yeah  
1482 T2: mmm  
1483 F: and then if they get in wrong do you just not do it in the first place  
1484 [ and then you don't get it wrong, I don't know  
1485 T3: [ exactly, exactly that's my point  
1486 T2: mmm.  
1487 T3: and then, or you take the safe option every time, because like you  
1488 said. Someone tell me what to do and I'll just do it like that every  
1489 time.  
1490 T3: [laughs]  
1491 T2: yeah, mmm, yeah or I'll copy it, or I'll just not do it.  
1492 T3: yeah, yeah, or I'll copy it because I know the person next to me is  
1493 probably going to get it right  
1494 T2: yeah  
1495 T3: so that's your other thing isn't it  
1496 F: so based on that would you say that erm the children that you work  
1497 with perhaps seek more direction from you or wait until there's  
1498 further direction or they like very clear instructions or, do they copy?  
1499 T3: with Holly it was definitely I'm not going to do it unless I know I'm  
1500 going to get it right.  
1501 T2: yeah.  
1502 T3: That was definitely true, I mean I don't know whether that was  
1503 linked with that, or her personality or whatever  
1504 [ but  
1505 T2: [ yeah  
1506 mine would just tend to avoid. The one's I'm thinking of just tend to  
1507 avoid it completely  
1508 T3: yeah  
1509 T2: and not even try  
1510 T3: and Alfie's the same  
1511 T2: mmm  
1512 F: and do you think that in itself is a coping strategy then?  
1513 T2: yeah, yeah I do // because then you tend to leave that, those till the  
1514 last and then give them 1:1 to do it and coax them  
1515 T3: yeah exactly and coax them, how many times  
1516 T2: yeah. [Sighs]  
1517 F: mmm. And how do they, how do they respond to getting things  
1518 right?  
1519 //  
1520 T2: Erm, mmm  
1521 T3: well most children like it don't they, same as most children, whether  
1522 or not it's linked to  
1523 T2: mmm.  
1524 F: but I suppose, I suppose it's

1525 T2: Steven didn't like praise when he first came  
 1526 F: right.  
 1527 T2: he didn't like being praised,  
 1528 T3: Didn't he?  
 1529 T2: no. He quite does now, he, he likes it if he if I go and really praise  
 1530 him, yeah I think he quite enjoys if he's achieving something  
 1531 T3: [ I think intrinsically most people do.  
 1532 F: [ Are they surprised  
 1533 to get things right?  
 1534 //  
 1535 T2: hmm. I think we're more surprised!  
 1536 [laughter]  
 1537 .  
 1538 .  
 1539 .  
 1540  
 1541 T3: [ I don't know. I don't know.  
 1542 F: [ I just wondered what is their  
 1543 experience of success and failure?  
 1544 F: I don't know, whether they do seem surprised or are they used to  
 1545 failing?  
 1546 T3: I suppose again, I suppose it would depend what it is  
 1547 F: mmm  
 1548 T2: yeah  
 1549 T3: like Alfie he wouldn't, he's very erm / gifted physically so in terms of  
 1550 football and running things like that so he'd be annoyed with  
 1551 himself or shocked, or you know, he, he gets things right a lot of the  
 1552 time in that, in P.E.  
 1553 F: so he'd find failure difficult?  
 1554 T3: so he'd find failure there difficult. In fact he does find failure there  
 1555 very difficult because erm he, he erm, he doesn't like being beaten  
 1556 or you know that's a major trigger for him in terms of behaviour isn't  
 1557 it?  
 1558 T2: mmm.  
 1559 T3: At lunchtime  
 1560 T2: mmm. So he's quite competitive in that way?  
 1561 T3: oh God yeah. But then in terms of his maths or whatever he, he's  
 1562 used to getting it wrong a lot.  
 1563 F: right. so it's not that he has an issue with failure as a whole  
 1564 [ just  
 1565 T3: [ but then  
 1566 he doesn't necessarily. He, he doesn't necessarily like it, he just  
 1567 avoids, or he'll say I can't do it.  
 1568 F: Right.  
 1569 F: so would you say he does have a problem with failure then or  
 1570 getting things wrong?  
 1571 T3: I think probably, yes because of his maths he likes when he gets it  
 1572 right

1573 T2: mmm yeah.  
 1574 T3: erm  
 1575 T2: he does like it when he get's it right  
 1576 T3: when you (...) him and praise him and things like that but if he can't  
 1577 do it or he's decided he can't do it, even if he can, like he wrote in  
 1578 his book the other day, I found this easy once I started doing it, well  
 1579 yes so why didn't you start doing it half an hour ago?  
 1580 T2: [laughs]  
 1581 T3: instead of at [laughs] five to twelve.  
 1582 [laughter]  
 1583 T3: but yes, so yes he does find  
 1584 T2: yeah  
 1585 T3: but is that  
 1586 T2: yeah I suppose really as teachers you tend to praise them for the  
 1587 things they do, do right and I suppose then  
 1588 T3: yeah  
 1589 T2: they really, really excel more at those things  
 1590 T3: yeah  
 1591 T2: Rather than the things they're not doing  
 1592 T3: and that's sort of changing the mindset isn't it  
 1593 T2: yeah  
 1594 T3: cos we should be praising the things  
 1595 T2: that they don't  
 1596 T3: that they don't have any challenge with  
 1597 [ because then that's the things that's the things they want to  
 1598 T2: [ like writing their name. and stuff like that. yeah.  
 1599 T3: keep wanting to do cos they're getting praise, so that's all changing  
 1600 mindsets.  
 1601 T2: mmm.  
 1602 T3: And that is building up resilience isn't it. And that's where I think as  
 1603 a school // is that mindset thing.  
 1604 F: I'd like to ask two more questions, I think before we finish, and I'm  
 1605 wondering overall and thinking about domestic violence again, cos  
 1606 we are talking generally as well erm what would have helped you  
 1607 do you think, if you're sort of reflecting back  
 1608 T3: mmm  
 1609 F: on this year or previous experiences what would have helped you  
 1610 with this year/ or in the past  
 1611 T3: mmm.  
 1612 //  
 1613 T3: I think having the information more, in terms of the older ones.  
 1614 becuase it sort of came, you know like with Lucy and with Holly it's  
 1615 slipped out by accident sort of thing.  
 1616 T2: mmm.  
 1617 T3: and knowing how you can help, erm  
 1618 /  
 1619 F: what do you mean by how you can help?

1620 T3: well coming back to this isn't it and thinking of ways, cos you don't  
1621 want to sit down and tell me everything and you can get it off your  
1622 chest  
1623 F: mmm  
1624 T3: that's not our role is it really  
1625 F: no.  
1626 T3: if they want to and like you say in reception they just say it anyway  
1627 don't they?  
1628 T2: mmm.  
1629 T3: so it's not that role, but it's more like you say so this has been, so  
1630 how has it affected you and what can we do to overcome that so I  
1631 don't really know what I'm saying in a way  
1632 F: [laughs]  
1633 T3: because  
1634 T2: I agree about the information cos with Steven we could do some  
1635 really good transition with him because we had the information from  
1636 nursery. Nathan just appeared and we didn't know anything about  
1637 him  
1638 [ we  
1639 T3: [ until  
1640 T2: didn't know there were problems until social services contacted us  
1641 at Christmas  
1642 T3: and that, by then it was too late because  
1643 [ everything  
1644 T2: [ he  
1645 T3: had kicked off hadn't it?  
1646 T2: yeah, yeah.  
1647 T3: we were dealing with, with this / behaviour  
1648 T2: mmm  
1649 T3: that we didn't know where it was coming from  
1650 T2: yeah.  
1651 T3: we thought it was a reaction to school, or well we didn't know did  
1652 we. We put all sorts in place.  
1653 F: which can be the case can't it  
1654 T2: yeah  
1655 F: but I suppose if there's information to be had  
1656 T2: [ so yeah better communication really and that includes mum as  
1657 well.  
1658 T3: [ so with Steven we were ready weren't we  
1659 T2: yeah  
1660 T3: and we couldn't have prepared  
1661 T2: we couldn't have prepared any better for Steven  
1662 T3: no.  
1663 T2: in a way.  
1664 [ We knew his eating habits  
1665 T3: [ Steven was a  
1666 T2: we'd spoken to the nursery. We'd made allowances for him to come  
1667 and he didn't come to all of them but he did come to one

1668 T3: yeah and then I went to see him in his nursery  
 1669 T2: yeah  
 1670 T3: didn't I and then  
 1671 T2: and I did erm  
 1672 T3: and also  
 1673 [ and we met the woman who  
 1674 T2: [ and we met mum we did a  
 1675 home visit.  
 1676 T3: the woman who'd been helping the family came didn't she?  
 1677 T2: yep  
 1678 T3: and did two transition visits  
 1679 T2: from the nursery  
 1680 T3: one to talk to you and then one to observe him  
 1681 T2: yeah / yeah  
 1682 T3: erm  
 1683 T2: but with Nathan we didn't even, he just appeared. The school that  
 1684 he'd been at didn't give us any information really apart from 'oh  
 1685 god, poor you' kind of thing and you know and mum wasn't very  
 1686 forthcoming either so.  
 1687 F: and how do you think we can get that information?  
 1688 /  
 1689 T2: erm / I don't know cos we didn't even know he'd been to school  
 1690 until I met them on a course and they realised who he was and  
 1691 F: so it might be thinking about however you meet with that parent  
 1692 mightn't it?  
 1693 T2: mmm  
 1694 F: and the questions that are asked of a parent  
 1695 T3: yeah  
 1696 F: and to provide arena for them to share  
 1697 T3: yep that's definitely to  
 1698 T3: and I think as a general thing having domestic abuse talked about  
 1699 more because it's something that's very, very hidden isn't it.  
 1700 F: yeah.  
 1701 T3: like I say a lot of the children you know there's something and but  
 1702 you just don't know what it is cos it's very much a taboo isn't it  
 1703 subject erm  
 1704 T2: yeah  
 1705 F: so we could think about couldn't we, what sort of questions might  
 1706 be asked to parents  
 1707 T3: what I said to you at the very beginning as well that opening / that's  
 1708 something around P.S.E. and opening that  
 1709 F: yeah what questions we ask the children  
 1710 T3: you know what, how we make, how we do it without labelling or you  
 1711 know or pointing fingers, you know it is  
 1712 [ something around that  
 1713 T2: [ yeah you know what's  
 1714 tricky about that though



1715 T2: the Jones, that Dad admitted to like smacking the kids and they got  
1716 put on the child protection register  
1717 T3: yeah  
1718 T2: and you know, that's why there's a taboo cos parents don't want  
1719 that  
1720 F: yeah  
1721 T2: when they're discipling their kids how they see's fit do they.  
1722 F: and that's the difficulty of asking children  
1723 T3: yes  
1724 F: direct questions  
1725 T3: yes exactly  
1726 F: but in talking to parents that's a different issue isn't it something we  
1727 could maybe give some thought to in terms of erm you know,  
1728 visiting parents  
1729 [ in a home visiting scenario and what that interview  
1730 T3: [ and at that stage cos the earlier you know  
1731 F: looks like,  
1732 T3: certainly  
1733 [ cos the earlier you know  
1734 F: [ and the types of questions we can ask  
1735 T2: yeah  
1736 F: and even then in the role of when you do have a role of meeting in  
1737 school about issues, again what that general information gathering  
1738 process might look like,  
1739 T3: yeah  
1740 T2: yeah  
1741 F: and questions that might be asked  
1742 T2: yeah, it's a delicate thing though  
1743 [ asking parents about how they discipline their children though isn't  
1744 it.  
1745 F: [ absolutely, absolutely yeah  
1746 F: and that maybe that's something we could think about within the  
1747 next session what could we ask, how could we ask and what  
1748 questions will allow us to uncover some of the answers  
1749 [ that perhaps  
1750 T2: [ yeah  
1751 T3: [ yeah  
1752 F: we want to be more supportive way, would that be helpful?  
1753 T2: I think it would  
1754 [ because (&)  
1755 T3: [ yeah, I do. I do  
1756 F: yeah?  
1757 T2: (&) we've even had, we had, now who was it I spoke to on the  
1758 phone who said as soon as a child says, discloses that they were  
1759 smacked by a parent you should phone social services, well I'm  
1760 sorry but if we did that every time a child said they'd been smacked  
1761 we'd be on the phone / five times a week, ten times a week. If you  
1762 said that every time a child said they'd been disciplined or my dad'll

1763 smack me if I've done this or cos nearly all of them are. / so I don't  
 1764 know / I'm a bit unclear about that really.  
 1765 .  
 1766 .  
 1767 .  
 1768 T2: I think most parents would chastise their kids to get them to do you  
 1769 know what they want.  
 1770 .  
 1771 .  
 1772 .  
 1773 T3: around questions around, you see I don't know whether people  
 1774 would open up.  
 1775 F: mmm  
 1776 T2: I'm not sure they would knowing what they know  
 1777 F: yeah  
 1778 T2: about Social Services  
 1779 F: yeah  
 1780 T2: coming round  
 1781 F: and it's providing them with that forum I suppose isn't it and how  
 1782 you do it perhaps.  
 1783 T2: yeah.  
 1784 F: [ and it's something we could think about isn't it?  
 1785 T3: [ it's definitely something to,  
 1786 yeah  
 1787 T2: [ mmm.  
 1788 F: [ erm  
 1789 T3: [and then  
 1790 how to support the children if you do know.  
 1791 F: yeah  
 1792 T3: Like I say you're not there as their shoulder to cry on, you're their  
 1793 teacher and if they want to open up to you that's fine you give them  
 1794 some space to do that  
 1795 [ but it's  
 1796 F: [so is  
 1797 that something you feel would have helped you then? How to help  
 1798 them?  
 1799 T3: yeah  
 1800 F: How to, so I'm thinking in terms of the next session so if we want to  
 1801 put something together as a group to  
 1802 T2: mmm  
 1803 F: to share and what that's going to look like. I think we talked a little  
 1804 bit about information gathering, possibly resilience building,  
 1805 T3: mmm-hmm  
 1806 F: how to talk to children. / What else do you think might have helped,  
 1807 you were saying almost knowing, I don't know whether you were  
 1808 saying knowing facts perhaps about the children and the families or  
 1809 is it about knowing the facts about domestic violence or information

1810 about domestic violence / so, I mean I have some of that  
1811 information in terms of, I don't know what does it look like or  
1812 T3: yeah I think that would generally  
1813 T2: yeah I think that would be useful as well.  
1814 F: yeah almost general information  
1815 T3: yeah  
1816 F: so cos we could look at doing that couldn't we, what are the key  
1817 facts about domestic violence, you know the common statistics and  
1818 some of the common themes or common issues that come out as a  
1819 general factsheet  
1820 [ almost  
1821 T3: [ factsheet yeah  
1822 F: erm cos  
1823 T3: with the sort of caveat that this is general  
1824 [ and not (&)  
1825 F: [ yeah absolutely  
1826 T2: [ mmm.  
1827 T3: (&) cos you can't ever be specific about a family in those sort of  
1828 situations can you?  
1829 [ Yes but something like that  
1830 F: [ but does it make you more  
1831 confident having some knowledge?  
1832 T3: yes  
1833 T2: yeah  
1834 T3: it's got to hasn't it?  
1835 T2: yeah and I think what would have been helpful with Nathan would  
1836 have been to find help for mum quicker,  
1837 T3: yeah  
1838 T2: finding a way of getting her some help more quickly.  
1839 F: yes.  
1840 T2: and I know some places do like a parent group, don't they, to  
1841 discuss  
1842 [ like behaviour and stuff.  
1843 T3: [ well we can access that  
1844 through the [area based external support] but  
1845 F: yeah and  
1846 T3: then again it's knowing isn't it  
1847 F: but / yeah and again that's knowing isn't it. Intervention isn't outside  
1848 the classroom but maybe what we could look at having is a list of  
1849 websites or resources or erm support agencies that you as staff  
1850 could have  
1851 T3: [ mmm-hmm  
1852 T2: [ mmm  
1853 F: so you've got somewhere to gain further information and also then  
1854 as here you are this is where you can go and you can get support  
1855 or information.  
1856 T2: mmm  
1857 T3: yeah, yeah.

1858 F: would that be?  
1859 T2: yeah that would be good, yeah.  
1860 T3: yeah  
1861 F: ok, is there anything else you think that might be / cos obviously I  
1862 can start to bring things  
1863 T3: mmm  
1864 F: and we can start to have more of a discussion next session and we  
1865 can start to pull together  
1866 T2: mmm.  
1867 F: some of these ideas and things and I'll pull together obviously what  
1868 we've talked about as well and try and pick out any common  
1869 themes and ideas  
1870 T2: the only thing we could have done with, and no you couldn't put it in  
1871 a policy, is, is a space to put somebody away from everybody else.  
1872 We found that really difficult didn't we?  
1873 T3: having a room, yeah  
1874 T2: a room that's not got anything in it where you can just contain  
1875 [ until they calm down  
1876 T3: [I think that's generally  
1877 in school we need that somehow  
1878 F: mmm  
1879 T2: mmm  
1880 T3: I don't know how // but yeah  
1881 T2: yeah containing somebody in the cloakroom [laughs], or they're  
1882 trashing the cloakroom and you're holding the door shut like this  
1883 [mimes holding a door closed]  
1884 F: [laughs]  
1885 T2: not ideal really [laughs]  
1886 F: [ and that's  
1887 T3: [ but that was a specific child  
1888 T2: yeah  
1889 T3: it is true as well of other children, you know like Alfie that a calm  
1890 T2: yeah a calming down place they do have that at [another local  
1891 mainstream school]  
1892 F: we can come back to some of that can't we and thinking about well  
1893 is that the general behaviour management that applies to all of  
1894 these children and if you're thinking of calming and how you  
1895 manage them are there particular classroom based strategies that  
1896 work better than others, like when we're talking about their success  
1897 or failure,  
1898 T2: mmm  
1899 F: how you manage that in a classroom so that then avoids, what we  
1900 were saying about the emotion regulation [ cos if that's (&)  
1901 T2: [ mmm  
1902 T3: [ yes  
1903 F: (&) the trigger and we're perhaps identifying that that's the trigger  
1904 by knowing that that's the trigger does that help us to stop them  
1905 getting to that point,

1906 T3: yeah  
 1907 F: you know as in thinking about yourself before you've done what  
 1908 you've done now  
 1909 T2: mmm  
 1910 F: and the work that you've done would it have helped to have known  
 1911 that?  
 1912 T3: and I know, I know that and I don't always handle it right  
 1913 T2: no, well you just have to stay one step ahead all the time. Well we  
 1914 used to take Nathan out before everybody started tidying up  
 1915 because he couldn't cope but you still, it was over any directions so  
 1916 you just couldn't always  
 1917 F: and that might be particular to him  
 1918 T2: yeah, you see Steven is not like that is he really?  
 1919 T3: No.  
 1920 F: No. I suppose it's  
 1921 [ thinking around (&)  
 1922 T3: [ but then  
 1923 F: if we've got more general ideas around resilience and if we know  
 1924 what that looks like and thinking about how  
 1925 T2: mmm  
 1926 F: how does that present within the classroom suggest more  
 1927 generalised ways of supporting that is that something that's then  
 1928 useful for another teacher  
 1929 T2: mmm  
 1930 F: so here you are these  
 1931 T3: mmm  
 1932 F: are some of the general ideas  
 1933 T3: mmm  
 1934 F: or principles that you might want to work on that will help them?  
 1935 T2: mmm  
 1936 T3: I mean there's that / thing about attachment disorder isn't there  
 1937 F: mm-hmm  
 1938 T3: and talking like we've been talking and you're thinking actually a lot  
 1939 of it, there's similar symptoms isn't it, that need for control or that  
 1940 getting really frantic when something doesn't go their way  
 1941 F: mmm  
 1942 T3: but then you think well it might be something to do with that cos  
 1943 F: mmm  
 1944 T3: they are detached from one or the other parent  
 1945 [ aren't they  
 1946 F: [ as it suggests  
 1947 in saying that if that parent isn't there to provide parenting  
 1948 relationship and yeah there's a lot of attachment theory linked in  
 1949 T3: yeah  
 1950 F: to domestic violence, cos if that parent then hasn't got the mental  
 1951 capacity to engage  
 1952 T3: mmm  
 1953 F: and to parent and it affects their parenting

1954 [ ability that has effects (&)  
1955 T3: [ whether it's the abuse  
1956 or the abuser either way round  
1957 F: (&) yeah that effects the attachment relationship  
1958 T2: mmm  
1959 F: hence you would, the child would present with attachment  
1960 difficulties, yeah  
1961 T3: yeah  
1962 F: so yes it does, yeah they do fit together, absolutely / so yeah those  
1963 ideas and principles would, would be applicable wouldn't they  
1964 T3: mmm  
1965 F: if that's what we're suggesting is a, you know, a consequence for  
1966 these children, there is difficulties, if you like, that present in them,  
1967 then having that relationship with the parent, which impacts on all  
1968 the things  
1969 [ that we've already mentioned  
1970 T3: [ yeah all the other things  
1971 T2: yeah  
1972 F: erm I mean, we have haven't we, we mentioned their academic  
1973 skills so is there something there that we'd think about in terms of  
1974 well how do we look at that. I mean well we were suggesting  
1975 weren't we that possibly there's opportunities at home that are  
1976 missed, how can we counterbalance that but also if we're saying  
1977 that well actually it likes to resilience and the ability to fail, how do  
1978 we tap into that as well  
1979 T2: mmm  
1980 F: so I think there's possibly lots that we can talk about  
1981 T3: yeah, no I agree  
1982 F: even if we don't have any specific answers there's certainly  
1983 thoughts  
1984 T3: to raise, to pass on  
1985 F: yeah to have discussion around.  
1986 .  
1987 .  
1988 .  
1989 F: is that ok if we stop there then  
1990 T3: yeah  
1991 T2: mmm, yeah  
1992 F: and I'm sure that gives us lots to reflect on before the next session  
1993 doesn't it.

1

## Appendix Fifteen - Transcript of Group interview Three

2

3 4pm on 18/07/13 51 minutes 49 seconds

4

5 Facilitator (F) and three teachers (T)

6

7

8 F: Ok so I'm just going to do a quick reminder of the ground rules. So  
9 we said that if we could try and have one person speaking at a time  
10 so that [laughs] it helps me with the transcribing afterwards. Erm  
11 there's no right or wrong answers so it's purely so I can hear your  
12 perspectives, your views and experiences. So anything at all that  
13 you say or want to say is absolutely is valid and I'm interested in all  
14 of it. Erm so just to recap, erm, one of the things I shared last week  
15 was the definition of domestic violence// [hard copies of the Home  
16 Office (2013) definition of domestic violence distributed, appendix  
17 2] which I **think** stimulated some of our discussion last week as  
18 well didn't it?

19 T2: [ mmm.

20 T3: [ mmm.

21 F: so erm just briefly it was saying 'Any incident or pattern of incidents  
22 of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse  
23 between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate  
24 partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This  
25 can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:  
26 psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional. Controlling  
27 behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person  
28 subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of  
29 support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain,  
30 depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance  
31 and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive  
32 behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats,  
33 humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm,  
34 punish, or frighten their victim'. And that was the Home Office  
35 definition which is effective from March 2013. Ok.

36 T3: mmm-hmm.

37 F: One of the other things which overlapped a little, er, [hard copies of  
38 the NSPCC definition of child abuse distributed, appendix 9] was  
39 child abuse, er, and I thought I'd share this with you, erm, so that,  
40 cos there's quite a lot of overlap and also so that we can be clear,  
41 in some ways, of the difference. So the paragraph at the bottom,  
42 erm and this is taken from an NSPCC factsheet, erm, September  
43 2012 'If a person who has attained the age of sixteen years and  
44 has the custody, charge, or care of any child or young person under  
45 that age, wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons, or exposes  
46 him, or causes or procures him to be assaulted, ill-treated,

47 neglected, abandoned, or exposed, in a manner likely to cause him  
48 unnecessary suffering or injury to health...that person shall be  
49 guilty of a misdemeanour...'. So the children possibly you could  
50 say are victims of child abuse perhaps under that definition but  
51 what we're thinking about is the domestic violence which would  
52 occur generally between adults. We wouldn't be thinking of adults  
53 abusing children, we're thinking of adults abusing other adults but  
54 there is some overlap/ erm, so for example The Department of  
55 Health Department of Health in 2002 said nearly three quarters of  
56 children on the 'at risk' register, erm, live in households where  
57 domestic violence occurs. So that was three quarters of those on  
58 the 'at risk' register would live in a household where domestic  
59 violence occurs. Sternberg *et al.* in 2006, got a slightly different  
60 figure. They completed a mega-analysis of family violence and  
61 within their sample 58% of the children were victims of child abuse  
62 and witnesses of family violence. Ok?

63 T2: yeah I was going to say you can have a lot of family violence with  
64 people who are younger than sixteen  
65 [ can't you if (&)  
66 F: [ mmm yeah, yes  
67 T2: (&) that's, the definition is you have to be sixteen  
68 then  
69 F: yeah  
70 T2: it cut's a few people out doesn't it?  
71 F: [laughs] I mean, I think they're thinking I suppose, and I'm thinking,  
72 within my research, of between people who've been intimate  
73 partners so you can have children who abuse their parents, which  
74 is also classed as family violence

75 T2: mmm  
76 F: but I'm thinking more of the interpersonal violence or domestic  
77 violence  
78 [ in the sense of between partners, mmm  
79 T3: [ mmm  
80 T2: [ yeah I'm thinking of older brothers (&  
81 T2: (&) and sisters, which is in my case  
82 [ and (&)  
83 F: [ yeah, yeah.  
84 T2: (&) they're not sixteen  
85 F: So / Ok so in terms of then, erm a brief recap of how far we've got,  
86 erm, so last session, and again as I said last time, if there's  
87 anything that I say, erm, that doesn't reflect the discussion then let  
88 me know.

89 T2: mmm.  
90 F: [to T1] and obviously this'll help you  
91 T1: mmm-hmm.  
92 F: because you weren't able to join us. So last session we said we  
93 didn't always know and then giving the children, erm, that space,  
94 and, and that we wanted to give children that space to talk but often



95 the focus is often on academic attainment so that's not always  
96 possible. Erm, the children know not to hurt and they can  
97 intimidate without hurting, but they weren't able to recognise why  
98 that behaviour is wrong and we talked about that behaviour being  
99 coercive

100 T3: mmm.

101 F: in terms of the definition we'd looked at. Erm in your experience  
102 children who have experienced DV, sorry domestic violence, are of  
103 lower academic ability, erm and you felt that reasons for this could  
104 include a lack of parental input such as helping with their reading or  
105 their homework. You felt their social skills were not as developed.  
106 They can tend, they have a tendency to get frustrated or violent.  
107 They have poor attention and concentration. Erm we're not sure  
108 how domestic violence, academic ability, attention and  
109 concentration and behaviour and social skills are linked. And which  
110 influences another. Switching off could be a coping strategy and it's  
111 a vicious circle as one triggers the other./ Erm, you felt that their  
112 peers generally view them as likeable. You felt they were loving  
113 and crying out for nurturing. Although they experience domestic  
114 violence this doesn't mean they are not loved at home. They have  
115 low self-esteem, perhaps, in some way, due to feeling responsible  
116 for the violence. Difficulties making sense of everything, so for  
117 example conflicting messages, realisation that what happens at  
118 home isn't the norm. Difficulties with trust. Erm, and I understood  
119 that you were saying these factors impact on the development of  
120 their morals and I just wondered whether that was correct or not.  
121 Yeah?

122 T2: I think so.

123 F: Yeah?

124 T2: Yeah, in my experience.

125 F: Ok. Erm you felt they might be concerned with safety whether that  
126 was their own, their parents or siblings. You described them as  
127 being resilient and feel that they have developed coping strategies,  
128 although they might not necessarily be effective ones [laughs]. Erm  
129 as teachers you might know that there's something wrong but you  
130 can't put your finger on it. To all intents and purposes you're saying  
131 the child is coping. Erm, there weren't really any themes relating to  
132 relationships that you have with the parents, some of them are  
133 needy, some of them are aggressive. There wasn't necessarily a  
134 pattern either between those who are abused or those who abuse  
135 in relation to gender or their presentation. Ok. / Erm, in terms of  
136 emotion regulation we talked about the fact that they can lash out,  
137 they struggle to wait. Erm with social cues they're not necessarily  
138 able to see how their behaviour affects others in terms when we're  
139 talking about them being coercive. **And** this is not necessarily true  
140 of all the children! [laughs]

141 T3: mmm.

142 F: A huge caveat there.

143 T3: yes, absolutely.  
144 F: and I wondered as well, that was another question, if you felt, that,  
145 that not necessarily being true of all the children might be because  
146 they were older or some of them were girls?  
147 T3: Yeah, we said that didn't we.  
148 F: Yeah. And I wondered if that was something you feel does make a  
149 difference overall whether they're older or whether they're female in  
150 terms of how they cope  
151 [ or how they present?  
152 T2: [ I don't know.  
153 F: mmm  
154 T1: Both probably.  
155 F: I'm not going to ask you how and why. It's a big field. We might  
156 come back to that. Erm parents, you said, don't necessarily take  
157 responsibility for the behaviour of their children and can make  
158 excuses, erm, or gloss over it. So they'll say things like 'well you  
159 knew that they were,  
160 T3: mmm,  
161 F: that they struggled'.  
162 T3: mmm.  
163 F: Erm, the parents don't necessarily make or keep appointments.  
164 Erm, you felt the teachers role was to build resilience, to promote,  
165 you promote challenge as good but you weren't sure if these  
166 children have the resilience to engage in that. They sometimes  
167 have a tendency not to try or to give up. Coping strategies included  
168 avoidance and or seeking very clear instructions, or guidance.  
169 They find failure difficult to manage **if** it is something they expect to  
170 succeed in, so for example if they were good at sports it's difficult to  
171 manage a sporting failure. Erm we talked about change of mindset.  
172 So for example what is, regarding what is difficult and, perhaps,  
173 giving praise. So you talked about the idea of giving praise, erm, in  
174 areas where they don't have a difficulty. Erm you said that you  
175 wanted more background information about the children from  
176 parents and professionals but you recognise the challenge of  
177 gaining that information [laughs] from parents and the children.  
178 Erm we talked about considering opportunities for teaching and  
179 talking in P.S.E. Erm, you felt it wasn't the teacher's role to say 'sit  
180 down and tell me everything'. Erm you felt you have to stay one  
181 step ahead all the time all the time. There's similar symptoms to  
182 attachment disorder, so for example a need to control or getting  
183 really frantic when something doesn't go their way. And topics  
184 which arose to discuss or explore further erm, were in terms of  
185 things for me, general information, so statistics, erm the  
186 involvement of Social Care, when, where, how. Teaching  
187 resources and then websites or resources as support for support  
188 for victims so you could point people to that. And then discussion  
189 areas that we possibly thought about, for this session, were  
190 questions we could ask parents so for example if you're home

191 visiting or in meetings. Erm, classroom strategies, resilience, self-  
192 esteem, behaviour management and how to talk to children. / And  
193 we'll leave that bit there for now and I've put together // [hard copies  
194 of the general themes discussed in session one and two  
195 distributed, appendix 10] an overview of some of the themes based  
196 on the discussion from / session one and session two. And the  
197 other thing that I've done, or tried to do, [hard copies of an  
198 illustration of an interconnected theme identified in session two  
199 distributed, appendix 11] to help us a little bit with some of this, is to  
200 highlight, for example some of the discussion that we were saying  
201 these things link together and we weren't sure which influenced  
202 another

203 T3: mmm

204 F: was in terms of the fear of failure so in terms of, at the bottom I've  
205 said erm, we talked about domestic violence and a coping strategy  
206 erm, of needing to be right / and we felt that this, while this can be a  
207 good coping strategy, or needing to do things right, for example,  
208 which could work very well in the home because it doesn't  
209 necessarily get you into trouble  
210 [ and (&)

211 T3: [ [laughs]

212 T2: [ mmm

213 F: (&) keeps things, erm, calm. It impacts quite strongly on academic  
214 achievement and attainment within the school environment. So for  
215 example at the top you've got the fear of failure, erm, which leads  
216 them to needing to be right. Which then, erm, from that they will  
217 wait for help so that they can do it exactly as requested, they may  
218 copy from their peers or they may disengage, which could be that  
219 they don't try or they stop trying, at some point - they opt out. The  
220 consequences of those things is that they don't get as much praise  
221 because they're not doing the work  
222 [ or they're not engaging (&)

223 T3: [ yeah (...)

224 F: (&) they also don't meet their academic potential because they're  
225 not challenging themselves so hence their attainment suffers and  
226 then their experience of success...

227 .

228 .

229 .

230 F: ...is reduced because, obviously they're not engaging and they're  
231 not trying. Erm and all of those together then would impact and lead  
232 to lower self-esteem and also (&)  
233 [ within the cycle keep lowering

234 T3: [ yeah, that makes sense.

235 F: (&) that  
236 [ self-esteem. (&)

237 T2: [ mmm.

238 T1: [ mmm.

239 F: (&) Does that make sense?  
240 T2: [ yeah.  
241 T1: [ yeah.  
242 T3: [ yeah  
243 that makes sense.  
244 F: Yeah? Ok, so that was part of the discussion, I think, that came out  
245 so that was what I put together.  
246 T3: Yeah it looks good.  
247 .  
248 .  
249 .  
250 F: Erm then the other sheet then [referring to the hard copies of the  
251 general themes discussed in session one and two distributed  
252 earlier, appendix 10], then, so in terms of what's come out. This is  
253 how I've, kind of, put it together. I'm this will help us then to reflect  
254 on the next stage of our erm activity and discussion. So in terms of  
255 presentation of the children again feel free to add, disagree, erm, or  
256 agree, as we go along that's fine. So in terms of how they present  
257 cognitively erm, we said they possibly will be lower ability, have  
258 poor attention and concentration, have a fear of failure, fear of  
259 failure, erm engage in avoidance strategies, have a tendency not to  
260 try, or give up, and seek clear guidance, instructions, coaxing or  
261 adult support. In terms of their behaviour they might be violent in  
262 terms of getting frustrated. We see learned behaviour - from home,  
263 which is then modelled in school and other children then copy that  
264 as well, you were talking about that [to T?]. Their play is quite  
265 rough, they can be crashing and banging.  
266 T3: I think that tends to be more boys doesn't it?  
267 T2: mmm.  
268 T1: mmm.  
269 T3: When we were talking about that it was the boys we were thinking  
270 about.  
271 T2: yeah.  
272 F: That's fine I'll add that in. In terms of social – emotional, we talked  
273 about the fact that they can be coercive but that, that they were  
274 unaware that this was what they were doing and that, that was a  
275 [ negative (&)  
276 T1: [ mmm-hmm.  
277 F: (&) behaviour. Some of them have poor social skills. They can be  
278 very loving and seek loving. Erm we perceive that they may seek  
279 control or feel out of control. We suggest that their peers tend to  
280 perceive them as likeable. They have low self-esteem, difficulties  
281 making sense of their experiences, erm, so for example/ the ideas  
282 of trust and like we said before that what happens at home isn't  
283 necessarily the norm. Erm we described them as, they are actually  
284 quite resilient – some of them. They can lash out. They can't wait,  
285 They have difficulties managing failure when it's not expected and

286 they'll get conflicting messages re behaviour from home and  
287 school. And also as we said [laughs] (&  
288 T3: [laughs]  
289 F: (&) the huge caveat there - These factors are not true of all  
290 children, they may have some or none of the above...  
291 .  
292 .  
293 .  
294 F: ...then the needs of the children that you identified. They need to  
295 develop of personal and emotional, sorry personal and social skills  
296 and have a change of mindset, you talked about. Erm strategies  
297 that you'd suggested that you use, erm within the class were sticker  
298 charts, rewards, treats, verbal reminders, distraction – so things like  
299 removing them from difficult times such as tidy up time. External  
300 support – we had family support that was mentioned and that  
301 generally focused on parenting strategies which were targeted at  
302 daily routine, so it was about getting up and coming to school.  
303 T3: mmm.  
304 F: Erm, the issues that you identified for yourselves as teachers were,  
305 that it's, it's difficult to teach the class as a whole. Erm, there can be  
306 a lack of support/ erm from head teachers, so not necessarily that  
307 they don't want to support just perhaps using strategies that you felt  
308 weren't helpful. TAs, then, feeling, erm, that they don't want to help  
309 with the handling and managing so you felt very much on your own  
310 in that sense. Erm safety was an issue for yourselves, your staff  
311 and the other children. It takes a lot of time to record all the  
312 incidents. You have a lack of background information about the  
313 children. You've got a focus on academic attainment which then is  
314 a difficulty providing space and time to talk. You often know  
315 something is not right but difficult pinpointing what or why. Erm,  
316 and you talked about change of mindset, so again when you praise  
317 the children. In terms of your role you felt it was to educate and  
318 prevent the cycle of learned behaviour continuing, offer support and  
319 stability, erm give clear expectations and build resilience. You felt  
320 the school's role was to minimise the impact, to have systems in  
321 place, to keep records, to maintain the child's safety, have good  
322 communication and smooth transitions. In terms of parents we  
323 talked about there being no common presentation. Some are  
324 needy whilst others are aggressive. There's a tendency to make,  
325 not to make or keep appointments. They may struggle with  
326 supporting school work so for example homework and reading.  
327 And it's difficult to hear about their child's negative behaviour and  
328 they make excuses or gloss over it. And again that wouldn't  
329 necessarily apply to everybody would it?  
330 T3: No.  
331 T1: mmm-hmm.  
332 F: Ok so those are the things that we picked out, so what I thought  
333 that we would try and do now [laughs]/ is to have a look, cos we're

334 obviously, have a think about developing, er, some ideas of what  
335 we can recommend that people do within the classroom. So  
336 thinking of themselves as the class teacher in the classroom. So  
337 I've picked out, I hope, some of the themes, and we'll start with  
338 these few, so I've jotted some of the key things that I think you  
339 mentioned onto these pieces of paper...  
340 .  
341 .  
342 .  
343 F: ...So what I've written down is resilience, er the role of the teacher  
344 or classroom staff, self-esteem and behaviour management  
345 [appendix 22]. And I'm going to give you some yellow ones, you  
346 some green ones and I'll give you some orange ones. So, and I will  
347 write some things as well, as your discussing if you mention  
348 something I might write down the key word or phrase you've used  
349 and stick it on and also you can do the same. So what we're going  
350 to try and do is thinking about these things [reference to the sheets  
351 of paper on the table] and this is where I'm hoping that our bullet  
352 pointed list [appendix 10] might help us to prompt us with some  
353 ideas. If we're thinking about for example, let's start with this one  
354 'the role of the teacher or classroom staff', if you've got any ideas or  
355 recommendations or factors so it doesn't have to be a thing, it could  
356 be a, you know an idea, like you for example you mentioned  
357 attachment didn't you [to T3].  
358 [ so (&)  
359 T3: mmm  
360 F: (&) it might be that you say some knowledge in that area might be  
361 useful so you might want to add that on there, or you might think  
362 actually that goes with resilience. I don't know. So you could put  
363 that down as a phrase, or you might say as your role as the  
364 classroom teacher might be, something like/ I don't know looking at  
365 the timetable cos you were saying about  
366 [ the, sort of (&)  
367 T2: [ visual timetable oh, mmm  
368 F: (&) distraction  
369 [ and (&)  
370 T2: [ yeah  
371 F: (&) taking them out before the activity happens, but yeah again that  
372 could be something that we would use, or self-esteem and we were  
373 talking about praise for example. That might fit down mightn't it,  
374 when you were saying we'll praise them for the things that we know  
375 that they get right. Yeah?  
376 T3: [ mmm.  
377 T2: [ mmm.  
378 F: so it can be anything like that and we're just going to start adding  
379 them on and I will make sense of it all afterwards [laughs] so don't  
380 worry about it having to make sense. erm, and I don't, I think I don't  
381 necessarily want to say let's do this one, then this one, then this

382 one and then this one. I think if you just generally talk your ideas  
383 and then they can bounce off each other and we can add bits as  
384 we go. I know that sounds a bit scary.  
385 All: [laughter]  
386 F: but I think we'll be ok. So does anyone want to follow on from any  
387 of the examples perhaps that I've just given, think about, perhaps, if  
388 you're thinking of telling other teachers, so your children are moving  
389 on now aren't they  
390 T2: [ mmm  
391 T3: [ mmm  
392 F: it's summer. What are they key messages, perhaps, that you might  
393 pass on to the next teacher and where, which heading might they  
394 go under perhaps. / That might be a good way to start.  
395 T3: yeah.  
396 T2: I think these two.  
397 F: Ok.  
398 T2: Just how to manage those children  
399 F: mmm.  
400 T2: really and little things that set them off  
401 or  
402 F: mmm.  
403 T2: little things to help  
404 /  
405 F: mmm  
406 T2: manage their behaviour and to  
407 [ maintain (&)  
408 F: [ ok  
409 T2: (&) a calm environment.  
410 .  
411 .  
412 .  
413 T3: so it's communication.  
414 F: I'm going to write down visual timetable cos you mentioned that.  
415 .  
416 .  
417 .  
418 T1: For behaviour management would you give them something that  
419 they're interested in? Like at the minute I've got that, a little boy  
420 and he has a chart that's Toy Story  
421 F: mmm-hmm yeah.  
422 T1: cos he's really into Toy Story [laughs]  
423 F: ok // ok.  
424 .  
425 .  
426 .  
427 //  
428 T1: safety of

429 F: yeah so that safety would go on there wouldn't it // so if we're  
430 thinking about safety then erm / how are we going to do that, what  
431 would you need to promote their safety?  
432 T2: Good control I'd say.  
433 T1: mmm. Routines  
434 T2: Yeah.  
435 F: mmm-hmm.  
436 T2: Clear routines  
437 F: so control, you said routines [to T1]. One of the other things I was  
438 thinking about was if / you're thinking about particular training,  
439 handling that sort of thing.  
440 T1: [ mmm. yeah  
441 T3: [ we've had safe handling  
442 T2: [ mmm. Yeah.  
443 F: Yeah?  
444 T2: Yeah.  
445 F: Do you think that's something that's important?  
446 T2: Yes. It was with one of  
447 [ two of ours  
448 T3: [ with, yeah, yeah  
449 T2: Yes definitely.  
450 F: Just given what you were saying about TAs and such as well  
451 T2: yeah, yeah.  
452 F: Ok // [writing]  
453 T3: ok  
454 T2: And that communication includes / the parents especially I think cos  
455 once you've, like, lost them you've/  
456 [ you've kind of had it.  
457 T3: [ It's working I'd say  
458 more than communication. Working with the parents  
459 [ isn't it or a parent.  
460 T2: [ yeah getting  
461 them on side really so they feel (&  
462 /  
463 T3: that they can  
464 [ trust you.  
465 T2: [ (&) safe.  
466 //  
467 T1: For behaviour management would you focus more on the positives  
468 rather than the negatives. But they still need to know then that  
469 there is a consequence for their actions.  
470 //  
471 F: Ok. / If we think back to self-esteem as well. I'm just looking at that  
472 one purely because we've not stuck anything on it yet. What things  
473 would you say that you do within the classroom that help promote  
474 self-esteem. I'm thinking particularly of the lovely little cycle that  
475 I've put together for us.  
476 T1: [laughs]



477 F: or some things that you might think well actually we can combat  
478 that by – any thoughts on that one?  
479 T2: personal and social targets and team points.  
480 F: Is that something you do have already?  
481 T2: yep.  
482 F: yeah.  
483 T2: yeah.  
484 //  
485 T3: It's coming back to that resilience I suppose in a way, or self-  
486 esteem, I don't know, whichever but it's that not necessarily getting  
487 it right but  
488 F: ok.  
489 T3: trying to get it right./ Praising them for trying rather than just  
490 praising them for getting it right.  
491 F: ok  
492 T2: Being responsible for their actions. Like you said before really.  
493 T3: mmm.  
494 //  
495 T2: And that's the parents as well  
496 T3: yeah.  
497 F: ok. // I mean I think they do, absolutely they link together don't they.  
498 T2: mmm.  
499 F: that's why I put these four out [referring to the headings self-  
500 esteem, resilience, behaviour management, role of the class  
501 teacher/ classroom staff]. In that they kind of, it's complicated, like  
502 this [referring to Illustration of an interconnected theme - appendix  
503 11] but there are links between all these four themes, erm / and I  
504 think it's / we're starting to understand perhaps how they link aren't  
505 we  
506 T2: yeah  
507 F: we're thinking about it  
508 T2: I think these two / it's kind of feeling safe to get things wrong isn't it  
509 which  
510 F: mmm.  
511 T2: is kind of why we're praising them for trying,  
512 [ we're trying to add (&)  
513 T3: [ yes, yeah  
514 T2: (&) isn't it. But so that, you know, they're not laughed at or, it's good  
515 that they'll  
516 T3: learn from their mistakes  
517 T2: yeah.  
518 T3: [laughs]  
519 F: |  
520 [ think (&)  
521 T3: [ but  
522 F: (&) that's a huge one isn't it. And that (...) is feeling safe  
523 [ and (&)  
524 T2: [ yeah

525 F: (&) being able to get things wrong.  
526 T3: and it's working with the peer group as well isn't it, to sort of /  
527 T2: boost them  
528 T3: yeah / so that / they, they feed off each other don't they so if, if one  
529 child, and it can quite often happen with children, you know sort of  
530 domestic problems, whether or not it's actual violence but just the  
531 whole neglect thing they often as a child, that you know / is  
532 ostracised a little bit, you know, not always but it can do can't it you  
533 know the one who aren't clean or / there's other things going on at  
534 home isn't there  
535 F: mmm  
536 T3: so it's that sort of trying to get that, the peer group working  
537 together.  
538 T2: mmm  
539 F: Do you think that would then fit on here  
540 [ as well?  
541 T3: [ yeah I do  
542 //  
543 T3: and that comes back to P.S.E. doesn't it?  
544 T2: yeah and circle time and stuff,  
545 T3: yeah  
546 T2: we do lots of work in circle time don't we.  
547 T3: yeah  
548 T2: I suppose we do it for behaviour management as well  
549 T3: [laughs]  
550 (...)  
551 T3: and P.S.E. it doesn't have to be circle time does it, it can just be  
552 P.S.E. generally.  
553 T2: yeah.  
554 //  
555 T3: erm  
556 T2: what about communication (....) it's with the children as well just  
557 talking to them about what  
558 [ they don't like about behaviour  
559 T3: [ you see what, cos I was wondering  
560 that around what you've, what we said last week about how much  
561 should we be thinking about making it something you can talk  
562 about.  
563 F: mmm // we're going to come to that I've got  
564 [ something that talks about questions for children  
565 T3: [ do you know what I mean it cos we have things about like you  
566 know  
567 T3: we do things on you know, death and /  
568 F: mmm  
569 T3: divorce and things like that. I've never seen anywhere about. I  
570 mean we always say if you've got any issues you can talk to me  
571 after but we? But we don't actually name it /  
572 F: no

573 T3: whereas we can quite / often name other things  
574 [ but (&  
575 F: [ yeah  
576 T3: (&) we don't name any form of  
577 [ sexual abuse, do we, we don't name any (&  
578 F: [ I think there are, yeah// no  
579 T3: (&) form of violence I mean I'm not necessarily saying we should  
580 [ but it's something to think about.  
581 F: [ No, I think there are some teaching resources.  
582 And that'll be one of the things I'm going to try and find as well so I  
583 can send you any links to that kind of thing there's definitely some  
584 for secondary but I imagine that, that starts to be developed in key  
585 stage two as well at primary.  
586 T3: well I suppose I'm thinking a bit more at that end aren't I cos  
587 F: Yeah. Yeah that's one of the things on my list to, to look into.  
588 T3: Cos I mean it might not be appropriate but then it might give  
589 children that might never have said it the opportunity to say  
590 something.  
591 F: mmm.  
592 T3: cos once you start talking about death they'll talk very openly  
593 T3: [ about death (&  
594 T2: [ yeah they will  
595 T3: (&) and about you know, because they do and, and is it appropriate  
596 then to talk about domestic violence  
597 T2: mmm  
598 T3: and give them that opportunity to then say  
599 F: mmm  
600 T2: you need to know what the process has to be  
601 [ when (&  
602 T3: [ yeah  
603 T2: (&) somebody  
604 [ discloses something (&  
605 F: [ you're probably  
606 T3: (&) that you have to tell somebody about.  
607 T3: yeah, yeah.  
608 F: you're probably starting with things about relationships and  
609 friendships and  
610 T3: mmm  
611 F: what a respectful relationship looks like aren't you.  
612 T1: mmm  
613 F: You might not necessarily be saying  
614 [ or it might be (&  
615 T3: [ No, yeah.  
616 F: (&) that you have those conversations and then when somebody  
617 mentions it you can give it that label  
618 and  
619 T3: yeah  
620 F: say well that's what this would be known as.

621 T2: mmm.  
622 F: so, yeah.  
623 T2: I keep thinking of teachers where that's concerned [points to  
624 resilience]  
625 F: mmm  
626 T2: cos sometimes  
627 F: yeah  
628 T2: you have to kind of / build yourself up  
629 T3: yes, yes.  
630 T2: like when somebody's worn you down and  
631 [ no today (&)  
632 F: [ yeah  
633 T2: (&) is a new day [laughs] and it might not be that bad  
634 F: no, yeah.  
635 T2: they might not kick me today. [laughs]  
636 F: so what, what would help there to build the resilience of teachers?  
637 T2: Oh god! [laughs]  
638 F: [laughs]  
639 T2: erm support from higher up in a way  
640 T1: yeah other teachers.  
641 //  
642 T2: support and then it goes back to this stuff doesn't it?  
643 T3: yeah  
644 T2: communication and team work really  
645 T1: mmm  
646 //  
647 T3: so I suppose that, coming back to it that knowledge of resources  
648 goes there doesn't it  
649 T2: [ Yeah  
650 F: [ yep  
651 T3: cos it's knowing how you can support if there's anything  
652 T2: mmm  
653 T1: mmm  
654 //  
655 T3: I suppose here it's just / following school, or child, you know what I  
656 mean  
657 [ so that they build up their  
658 T2: [ There is a policy isn't there on around  
659 behaviour management. We have like a set thing on behaviour  
660 don't we?  
661 T3: Yes but it's what you said as well it's the routines and if it comes  
662 back to that  
663 T1: mmm,  
664 T3: what you're saying  
665 T1: Mmm, especially if it changes  
666 T3: yes

667 T1: cos then you'll need to explain to them cos everything will just, and  
668 then you're trying to explain to them the change in the routine  
669 otherwise  
670 F: mmm  
671 T1: that could kick up a fuss [laughs]  
672 //  
673 F: ok.  
674 //  
675 T2: and working with the whole (...) it has in the two cases we've had  
676 this year  
677 T3: mmm that's true  
678 T2: (...) that class didn't even scratch the surface// not as bad as that  
679 but.  
680 F: ok.  
681 T3: that could go into that as well couldn't it [laughs] [discussing overlap  
682 of themes placed on sheets]  
683 T2: mmm  
684 T3: or should I have put it roles of teachers [questioning placement of a  
685 post-it]  
686 //  
687 F: Now one of the things we talked about erm / was that idea of  
688 gathering more background information wasn't it and we talked a  
689 little bit about how we might ask the parents  
690 T3: yeah  
691 F: or what questions we might ask parents, which were just touching  
692 on then as well / erm and then as you also said, how to talk to or  
693 support the children. Now I did do two. I think it's quite possible  
694 that they would overlap but I thought there might be differences for  
695 reception and key stage one and key stage two  
696 T3: mmm  
697 F: so I've put those on two sheets just in case there were differences,  
698 and then the other one that I've put down was the questions for the  
699 professionals, simply because you were also talking about  
700 handover information and transition. So I don't know that we might  
701 necessarily have, lots to put on there but these one some of the  
702 other ones that I thought this is more the talking, sort of themes  
703 isn't it  
704 T2: mmm  
705 T1: mmm  
706 F: on these. Erm, so cos yeah we talked about this didn't we. We  
707 were saying it might be really difficult to get somebody to open up  
708 and we saying perhaps it's about providing that supportive,  
709 environment to give them the opportunity to ask the questions and  
710 actually a lot of research focuses in this area, quite interestingly,  
711 particularly within the health care services, erm in terms of there  
712 are actually standard questions sometimes, particularly in maternity  
713 care and erm health visitor sort of care that parents are asked as a

714 matter of course if there are any difficulties or violent relationships  
715 perhaps going on and they provide that arena, or they try  
716 T1: mmm  
717 T3: mmm  
718 F: to give people that opportunity to open up so they ask quite direct  
719 questions whereas obviously you can ask things that perhaps are  
720 more general so I suppose it's perhaps you know we can almost  
721 imagine the other side, can't we? If somebody asked us that  
722 question, how we might feel about it, and whether that would be  
723 problematic or wouldn't be problematic so / if we think of a question  
724 / or you have a question or how you might want to phrase it to a  
725 parent write it down and stick it on. It doesn't necessarily mean  
726 we'd ask it and we can certainly then think about the wording of it  
727 but it's a prompt for developing something further isn't it. And as I  
728 say there's no right or wrong answers at all.  
729 T2: Like do you ever feel unsafe in your own home  
730 [ maybe kind of thing?  
731 F: [ yeah.  
732 F: yeah. I'll write that one down.  
733 T3: [laughs] I was going to be a bit more open ended and like are there  
734 any factors that might affect your child settling in at school  
735 [and if you're (&  
736 F: [ yeah  
737 T1: [ mmm  
738 T3: (&) doing it cos you're obviously doing home visits [to T2]  
739 T2: Mmm  
740 T3: are you doing home visits? [to T1]  
741 T1: No, no.  
742 T1: You'd probably start by asking about the actual child. What they  
743 perceive of them like how they've got on what they think about how  
744 they get on at school and then go on to the factors that might be /  
745 like, what's the word, erm affecting it  
746 T3: mmm  
747 T1: in a way.  
748 //  
749 .  
750 .  
751 .  
752 T3: I suppose if they're, if they were older or you know and you weren't  
753 doing the home visits / it would be if there was an issue wouldn't it?  
754 F: mmm  
755 T3: that you'd be seeing the parents  
756 T2: mmm  
757 T3: or at parents evening  
758 F: mmm  
759 T3: but you'd be raising things like this if you  
760 F: mmm,  
761 T3: thought there was an issue.

762 F: mmm  
763 T3: so then you'd probably  
764 F: and that probably would still be  
765 [ yeah an applicable type of question wouldn't it mmm.  
766 T3: [ phrase it in terms of that any factors that are  
767 stopping you know affecting the way your child's behaving which  
768 you **do** ask actually don't you, you know. Are there any things that  
769 you know of, but then that's not necessarily drilling down enough to  
770 sort of  
771 T1: mmm  
772 F: so what might you ask as a follow up then, or examples might you  
773 give?  
774 F: I mean you mentioned death didn't you  
775 T3: yeah  
776 F: so that could be one, like you say, then that possibly is a big thing  
777 to ask but actually it's generally something that people have  
778 experienced you know people, parents or grandparents or you  
779 know  
780 T2: your pet  
781 F: family pet yeah absolutely  
782 T2: mmm, yeah.  
783 T3: It is. It's a big  
784 F: so, you could say e.g. we might have a list mightn't we?  
785 T3: yeah  
786 T1: mmm  
787 F: and then people will just say no  
788 T2: yeah  
789 F: or they'll say yes.  
790 T3: yeah / and could you, would you include then / some sort of feeling  
791 unsafe or / cos unsafe  
792 F: could do yeah  
793 T3: doesn't necessarily mean partner spats would it. Bit like a child the  
794 other day of ours who's came in and burnt their shed and turned  
795 the garden over  
796 T2: oh nice  
797 F: so you could say traumatic experiences couldn't you  
798 T3: yeah  
799 T2: yeah  
800 //  
801 F: and something else you might ask, like we've said death, safety  
802 concerns, traumatic experiences, you might say erm, breakdown of  
803 relationships  
804 T3: mmm  
805 F: which could be divorce  
806 T3: mmm  
807 F: or you know separations  
808 T3: mmm  
809 //

810 T3: you've pretty much covered the whole gamut there [laughs]  
811 F: yeah  
812 [ and it's up to (&)  
813 T3: [ but I suppose  
814 F: (&) you've provided that arena perhaps and it's up to people how  
815 much  
816 T3: yeah  
817 F: they do or don't say.  
818 T2: [ yeah  
819 T1: [ yeah  
820 F: so would that feel comfortable do you think?  
821 T3: I think it would if like you say you  
822 T2: mmm  
823 T3: were starting like you say with the child.  
824 T1: mmm  
825 I think that's a good point.  
826 T1: mmm  
827 //  
828 F: Yeah? ok //  
829 T3: and if they did say yes there was, it's what you then do  
830 [ isn't it  
831 F: [ mmm  
832 T2: [ mmm  
833 T3: cos then the next question if you like almost, cos it's then do you  
834 want to talk about it [laughs] I suppose is / I don't know  
835 F: ok well, you might say what support have you had around that  
836 T3: yeah  
837 F: or who's involved in that, then you can go ahhh [laughs] when they  
838 say oh well Social Services have been involved  
839 [ or (&)  
840 T3: [ yeah  
841 F: (&) you know err  
842 T3: [ but then if they have (&)  
843 T2: [ or they might lie  
844 T3: (&) they might want Social Workers get in touch with us or would  
845 they I mean that's /  
846 F: If they're going to lie would them answer the question in the first  
847 place?  
848 T2: ummm  
849 T3: No  
850 T2: well if it's really,  
851 F: they might just say no mightn't they?  
852 T2: yeah, yeah. With Nathan they've got a social worker, they said no  
853 and they obviously have had one, but I suppose that wasn't a lie  
854 was it? she hadn't got one at the time!  
855 T3: but that means she was taking you completely literally  
856 //  
857 .



858 .  
859 .  
860 F: It's fine isn't it? we can acknowledge that can't we?  
861 T3: yeah, yeah.  
862 T1: They'd probably get defensive as well  
863 T3: maybe  
864 F: yeah.  
865 //  
866 F: How might you manage it if they are defensive then?  
867 //  
868 T2: I think sometimes if you talk about them and ask them about, take it  
869 from helping them. You see it from like their point of view they  
870 sometimes  
871 [ cos is all about them that/ yeah, yeah (&)  
872 T3: [ What you say like it must be  
873 really difficult for you  
874 T2: (&) kind of empathise with  
875 T3: mmm  
876 F: so supportive ethos put there. Cos absolutely you're there about  
877 the child aren't you  
878 T1: mmm-hmm  
879 F: and supporting them  
880 T3: yeah you could put it like that then couldn't you  
881 T2: yeah  
882 T3: you could say you know that must be really difficult but, but we're  
883 here as a school to try and help your child and that we think you  
884 know doing something like that blah-blah-blah  
885 T2: mmm. I think so yes.  
886 //  
887 T2: (...) on board. I think she was trying to cover up the fact she was  
888 struggling but actually when she realised there was some help to  
889 be had  
890 F: mmm  
891 T3: mmm  
892 T2: she was more open to it. // Cos I think automatically some people  
893 think that their kids might be taken away don't they.  
894 T3: I think that's true actually I do think that's true.  
895 T2: there's a lot of scary stories about / you know people  
896 T3: well yeah  
897 [ well absolutely  
898 T2: [ it happens doesn't it  
899 to people who are put on the child protection register for smacking /  
900 their kids.  
901 T1: I think for some parents though just admitting to themselves  
902 T3: yeah  
903 T1: that they're in a domestic relationship or have been  
904 T3: Because, because the breakdown of any sort of relationship's hard  
905 isn't it

906 T1: [ mmm, mmm you don't want to admit that, yeah  
907 T3: [ so it's not like that's going to change  
908 T2: I mean they might not want to be out of the relationship might they  
909 T1: mmm  
910 T3: Well that's true too.  
911 T2: They might / want to stay in it [laughs]  
912 T3: yes.  
913 //  
914 F: Ok. I thought we'd have lots on this one.  
915 //  
916 .  
917 .  
918 .  
919 T3: I think the questions for professionals is if they have got a Social  
920 Worker isn't it. So you'd almost want to ask the parents if they said  
921 yes to that to get in touch, could we get in touch with them  
922 T1: mmm  
923 F: yep  
924 T3: or could you ask them to get in touch with us and then you'd have  
925 to have the // discussion around that really and mean there's no  
926 direct questions is there  
927 F: mmm-hmm  
928 T3: I mean there's just having a dialogue with them / how do they see  
929 it.  
930 //  
931 F: ok  
932 //  
933 T3: erm  
934 T2: [referring to questions for professionals] you're back to  
935 communication with them then aren't you. All the different people  
936 involved and  
937 T3: yeah  
938 //  
939 T3: [Referring to supporting KS2 children in comparison to KS1  
940 children] For this it'd be stories as well wouldn't it really  
941 T2: yeah.  
942 T3: This one you start off with what a good one looks like. Like what a  
943 good relationship looks like I think  
944 F: mmm-hmm  
945 T3: and then  
946 T2: circle time as well I suppose  
947 T3: yeah  
948 //  
949 T1: and just giving that time out really  
950 T3: mmm  
951 T1: Cos I have a little boy at the minute that just likes time out to be  
952 with me and then he will talk, start talking  
953 T2: 1:1?

954 T1: yeah.  
955 //  
956 F: [referring to post-it '1:1 time attention'] does that apply to both?  
957 T2: yeah  
958 T1: yeah cos I think all children crave the attention of  
959 //  
960 F: ok. Let's just have a quick look back at the other ones [referring to  
961 first four themes presented]  
962 //  
963 F: Is there anything else we want to add to these or any more  
964 thoughts that we've got?  
965 //  
966 T3: I think in terms of the child themselves, that's, it is quite often, the  
967 one's I'm thinking of that is a massive deal [points to self-esteem].  
968 T2: yeah.  
969 [ And handling what they say  
970 T3: [ that self-esteem one yeah  
971 T3: I'm just thinking about, particularly girls that I've had. That is, that's  
972 a huge/ part of their problems.  
973 T2: mmm  
974 T3: Maybe the boys, we were talking last week weren't we  
975 T2: yeah  
976 T3: it's the same but with girls I do think it's  
977 T1: emotional  
978 T3: emotional yeah their self-esteem's even  
979 T2: sometimes you need to over compensate for that because if you  
980 model being really / nice and praising them the kids kind of  
981 T3: yes  
982 T2: look after them almost. Don't they as well?  
983 T3: yeah, yeah.  
984 //  
985 T2: But you don't want them to take advantage of that either do you?  
986 T3: which some will yeah it's hard isn't it.  
987 T2: mmm  
988 F: ok  
989 T3: the better that [points to self-esteem] is then the better that [points  
990 to resilience] becomes  
991 T2: mmm  
992 //  
993 F: ok I'm going to ask you, a last few questions then // so if I can just  
994 have some brief answers I think to these erm // mmm, what do you  
995 think has been the biggest change in your thinking or perceptions  
996 since the first session that we've done?  
997 //  
998 T2: Mine's making me reflect when I, how I react to things  
999 T3: mmm / I agree  
1000 T1: me too  
1001 T3: and the time thing, that you were saying, I really think I don't

1002 F: taking time?  
 1003 T3: take enough time to see  
 1004 F: ok erm and what do you think you've learnt?  
 1005 T2: They probably need more time  
 1006 [ than the (&)  
 1007 T3: [ yeah  
 1008 T2: (&) than the other children in the class. Who, you need to over  
 1009 compensate what they lacked.  
 1010 F: mmm //  
 1011 [ what  
 1012 T3: [ and  
 1013 just a bit more aware about it from what you've brought really  
 1014 F: mmm  
 1015 T3: partly that and partly talking about it and things  
 1016 F: what would you like to know more about? / or what would you like  
 1017 to do more of?  
 1018 //  
 1019 T3: I suppose a bit more about the questioning and the resources and  
 1020 the  
 1021 T1: yeah it's resources for me  
 1022 F: mmm. In terms of teaching or in terms of resources / for yourself?  
 1023 T3: A bit of both really  
 1024 T1: yeah  
 1025 T2: I quite like to know more about the cause and effect  
 1026 F: mmm-hmm  
 1027 T2: and what makes them behave how they do  
 1028 F: so the diagram that I did  
 1029 T2: yeah  
 1030 F: and the sort of relationships, that kind of yeah  
 1031 T2: yeah  
 1032 F: Ok / it's a bit of everything really then isn't it!  
 1033 T3: yeah [laughs].  
 1034 F: just more! More! [laughs] ok.  
 1035 //  
 1036 T3: yeah more but I dunno it's got to be more sort of specific as well  
 1037 doesn't it.  
 1038 F: mmm  
 1039 T3: so when we started talking about attachment disorder  
 1040 F: yeah  
 1041 T3: and things like that / how to handle that but within the confines of  
 1042 the behaviour management. cos I think that's what we've  
 1043 T2: mmm  
 1044 T3: well I **know** I've struggled with  
 1045 T2: Yeah  
 1046 F: mmm  
 1047 T3: that you're trying to do this over compensating [laughs] and trying  
 1048 T2: yeah  
 1049 T3: to and then that affects the behaviour management

1050 T1: mmm  
 1051 T3: because then it becomes and unfair system because you're sort of /  
 1052 so and then, then, and I dunno and then that becomes the role of  
 1053 the teacher doesn't it and then knowing how to handle it better and  
 1054 F: mmm  
 1055 T3: what things are directly impacting on it.  
 1056 F: mmm  
 1057 T2: and when you've got more than one in a class then all  
 1058 T3: mmm  
 1059 T2: (...) up  
 1060 F: so I need to think more about these things link together then so we  
 1061 can explore that a bit more  
 1062 T3: mmm  
 1063 F: mmm  
 1064 F: ok  
 1065 T3: it's chicken and egg  
 1066 F: it's keeping this tight [points to behaviour management] but then  
 1067 being able to do this [points to self-esteem and resilience]  
 1068 T3: yes keeping this tight but then giving  
 1069 F: yeah  
 1070 T1: yeah  
 1071 /  
 1072 F: yeah  
 1073 T2: but I think they like that really clear boundaries they don't like it  
 1074 when it's woolly.  
 1075 F: mmm  
 1076 T2: They need like really  
 1077 T3: mmm  
 1078 F: mmm  
 1079 T2: clear boundaries for behaviour // Otherwise they feel a bit unsafe.  
 1080 F: erm  
 1081 .  
 1082 .  
 1083 .  
 1084 F: Erm what have you been doing differently do you think since we  
 1085 started this?  
 1086 T3: nothing cos it's just been a nightmare term [laughs]  
 1087 F: that's fine. There's no wrong answer! What would you like to do  
 1088 differently?  
 1089 T3: I think I'm repeating myself here but the time thing and the finding  
 1090 out more and the  
 1091 F: mmm-hmm  
 1092 T3: maybe asking the questions of parents a bit more where  
 1093 F: ok  
 1094 T3: cos obviously we're getting our new classes aren't we and you  
 1095 know  
 1096 F: mmm  
 1097 T2: I think I've praised him more than

1098 T1: yeah  
 1099 T2: I would of for just / doing really basic things that the others are  
 1100 doing but because he's changed so much  
 1101 F: mmm  
 1102 T2: I've kind of forgotten  
 1103 F: mmm  
 1104 T2: to keep praising him for it and does react so much better to praise  
 1105 he didn't used to like it  
 1106 F: mmm  
 1107 T2: if you praised something he'd done a picture or something he just  
 1108 used to tear it up but now he does like it.  
 1109 F: mmm  
 1110 T2: so, doing that more I think.  
 1111 F: and how has he changed in response to that?  
 1112 T2: erm he wants to fit in  
 1113 [ so he wants to conform (&)  
 1114 T3: [ Mmm he does definitely  
 1115 T2: (&) with and be like the rest  
 1116 [ of the class (&)  
 1117 T3: [ mmm he does  
 1118 T2: (&) so whereas he didn't before  
 1119 F: so even in a short space of time would you say you've seen a  
 1120 change?  
 1121 T2: I think the / most change was when we lost the other child  
 1122 F: yeah  
 1123 T2: we had because I think he feels much safer in the environment  
 1124 [ (...)  
 1125 T3: [ I agree he has done  
 1126 I mean he's changed over the year hasn't he?  
 1127 T2: yeah. Yeah he's grown up a little bit  
 1128 T3: mmm but there's definitely the praise  
 1129 F: yeah  
 1130 T3: like you say. That's  
 1131 F: and what about for you?  
 1132 T1: well ours have moved up already so I've got a new child for the  
 1133 past two weeks I've had him now. But I just try and focus more on  
 1134 positives than just and try not to focus on negatives cos you do get  
 1135 to a point that it's consistent  
 1136 T3: [ yeah  
 1137 T2: [ yeah  
 1138 T1: focus on the negatives but erm it used to be everyday in foundation  
 1139 there was something you could always see him being restrained  
 1140 but we've only had one in two weeks  
 1141 F: mmm.  
 1142 T1: so that's a massive improvement for him  
 1143 F: yeah, yeah.  
 1144 T1: cos he is beginning to / settle down a lot more  
 1145 F: right

1146 T1: and he wants to be like the other children  
1147 F: mmm  
1148 T1: so yeah.  
1149 T2: and he's had to and he's changed classes?  
1150 T1: yeah  
1151 T2: that's really good then isn't it.  
1152 T3: do you have a two week transition then?  
1153 T1: yeah we've been trialling it. But I think as well like they get to a  
1154 point where/ like you get, and I don't know you get irritated in a  
1155 sense by the children you've got they're ready to move up. I think  
1156 he was ready to move up and get more of a structure in year one  
1157 and I think the relationship with his teacher then got strained so  
1158 he's got a new teacher  
1159 F: I think we said that didn't we the resilience of the teacher  
1160 T3: mmm  
1161 F: or the staff  
1162 T3: mmm  
1163 F: we put that on here [points to resilience]  
1164 T2: yeah, yeah  
1165 T3: and you do get into a negative cycle  
1166 T2: yeah can do  
1167 T1: mmm yeah  
1168 T2: you start to dread it don't you  
1169 T3: mmm  
1170 T1: but now it's just trying to get the other teachers in the year group to  
1171 try not to be as negative  
1172 F: mmm  
1173 T2: mmm  
1174 T1: cos you obviously hear things about what they've been like  
1175 F: mmm  
1176 T1: so it's trying to make sure they've not got that perception of him.  
1177 T1: yeah.  
1178 .  
1179 .  
1180 .  
1181 F: ok well I think we'll stop there if that's ok.  
1182 T2: mmm  
1183 F: so thank you very much for participating it's been really, really  
1184 interesting and can I take your diaries from you?

## **Appendix Sixteen - Reflective Log Instructions**

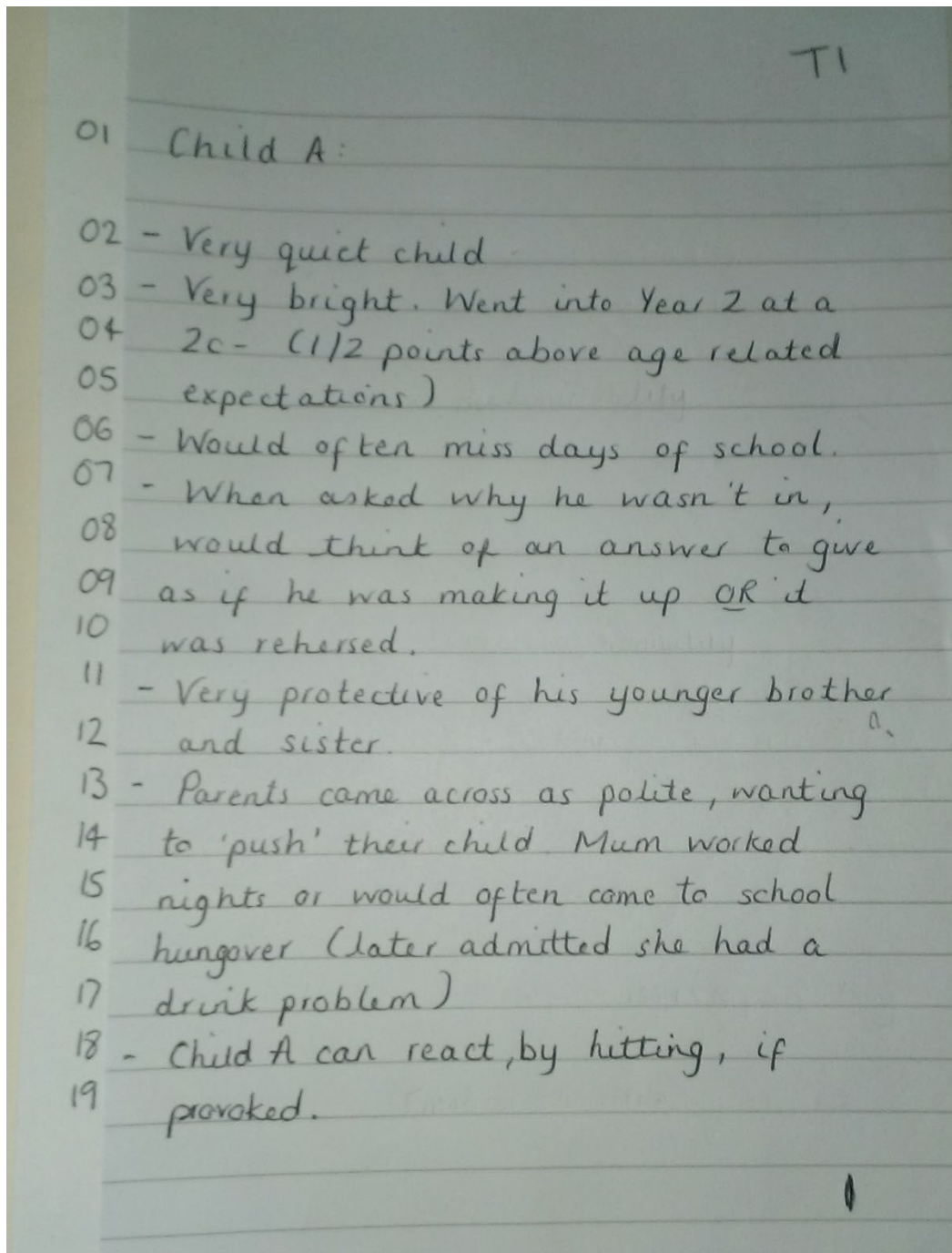
Note down any:

- Persistent recollections (e.g. key events in shaping your views, reasons for participating)
- Observations
- Feelings evoked
- Your response(s)
- Reflections (e.g. further thoughts, reasons for your response)

You can write as much or as little as you like, as regularly as you feel is appropriate, have something to add, or perhaps why you don't!  
Thank you for participating.



Appendix Seventeen - Teacher One Reflective Log (R1)



20 Child B:

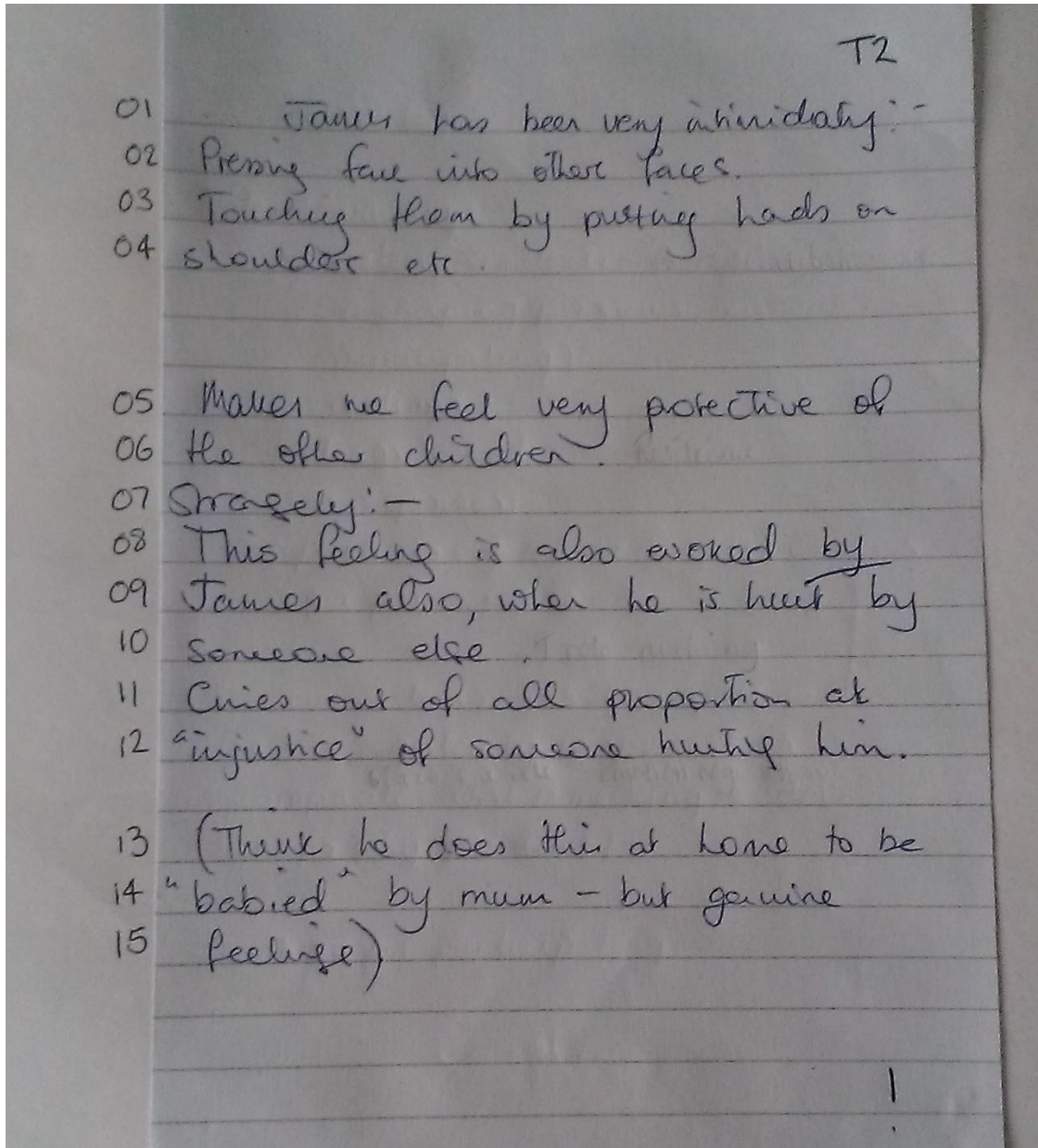
- 21 - Sister to child A
- 22 - Very emotional. Would often cry for
- 23 periods of time.
- 24 - Very tired often / dazed
- 25 - Reached expected levels (1a-)
- 26 - Became very quiet during mums
- 27 turbulent relationship.
- 28 - Witnessed violence
- 29 - Refused to go home with mums partner
- 30 one day. Then told SENCO it was
- 31 because she was scared.
- 32 - Made teachers feel upset for her.
- 33 1st reaction is to protect the child
- 34 and follow up on her accusation / what
- 35 she is entrusting in you.
- 36 - Struggled to make friendships
- 37 - Would often seem like she was
- 38 thinking about something else.

39 Child C:

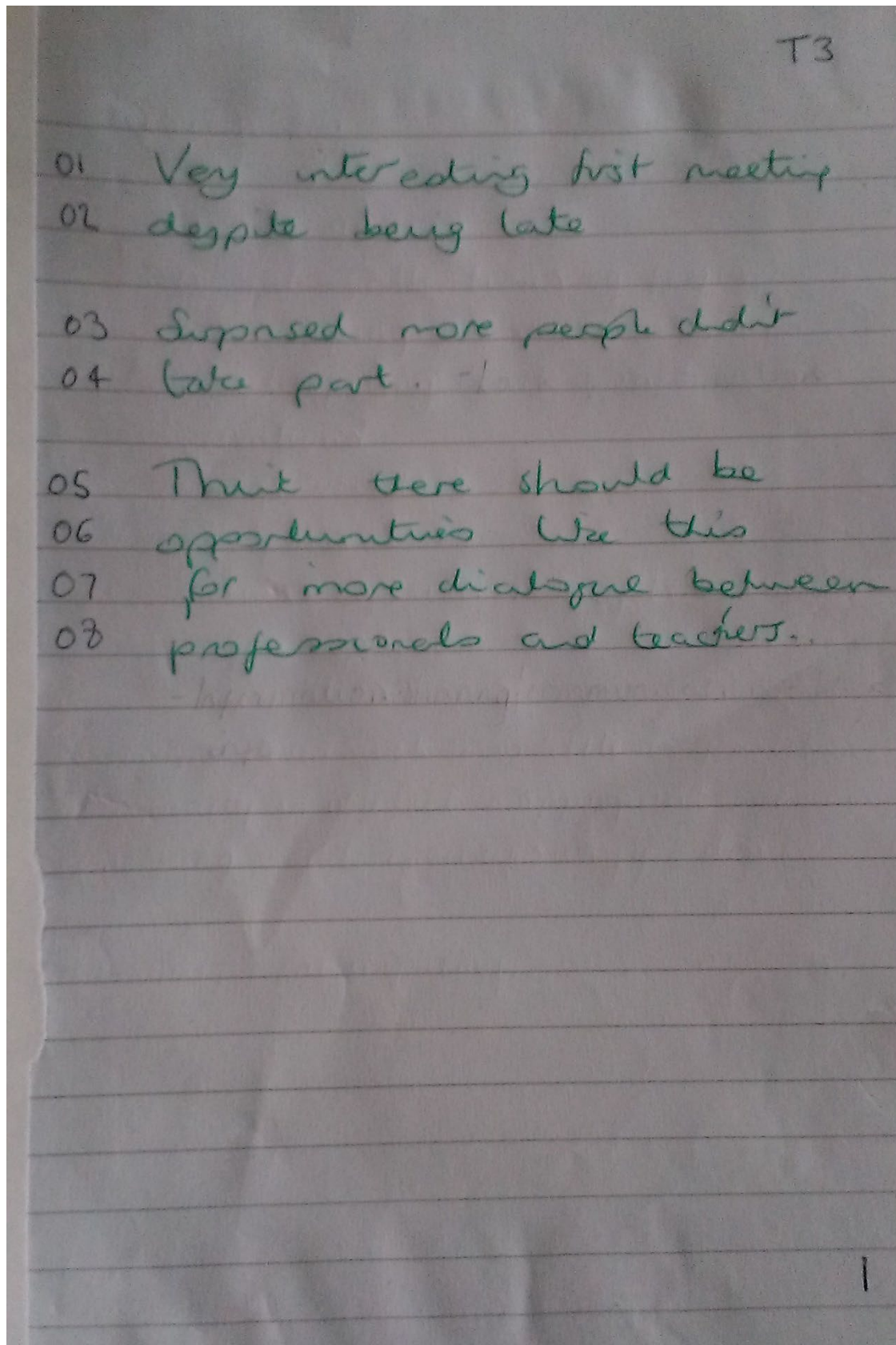
- 40 - Very quiet
- 41 - Mind often elsewhere
- 42 - Above age related expectations (2c/13)
- 43 - Dad went to prison in Reception and
- 44 she struggled to gain a relationship
- 45 with him when he returned home in
- 46 May.
- 47 - Seemed unhappy when dad picked her
- 48 up from school.
- 49 - Couldn't accept praise - didn't know
- 50 how to react.
- 51 - Very sly
- 52 - Would hurt children for a reaction,
- 53 like a slight ripping.
- 54 - Would steal things.
- 55 - Once spoke about the two black
- 56 eyes her mum had when I was
- 57 marking her work. Mum denied everything.



Appendix Eighteen - Teacher Two Reflective Log (R2)



Appendix Nineteen - Teacher Three Reflective Log (R3)



09 Thinking about what  
10 was discussed - I need  
11 to give more time to  
12 PSE - as a job share  
13 I spend a lot of time  
14 focussed on the teaching  
15 and PSE, isn't in my  
16 half of week - do I  
17 know what is happening  
18 in some children's lives?

19 Time!

CT



20 I feel alot of children are  
21 probably in a household  
22 where some domestic abuse-  
23 according to the criteria is  
24 taking place.  
25 There are children who  
26 demonstrate an attitude to  
27 women staff that could be  
28 a role model at home.

29 Sometimes feel I would need  
30 to look at my own attitudes  
31 and delve further in terms of  
32 understanding the effect adult  
33 relationships have on children  
34 - respect is lacking in  
35 domestic abuse so lack of  
36 respect for others could be  
37 a consequence.

+



38 Would be a useful model  
39 for other issues - has been  
40 good to meet and explore  
41 responses.

## **Appendix Twenty - Alphabetical List of Initial Codes**

<b>Initial codes</b>	
1	Academic performance
2	Age
3	Aspirations for the children
4	Attachment theory
5	Basic behaviour management strategies
6	Behaviour
7	Challenge to class teacher to manage whole class
8	Child Protection
9	Class teacher responsibility
10	Communication
11	Conflicting messages
12	Coping ability
13	Coping strategies
14	Desire to be liked / praised
15	Development and maintenance of rapport
16	Difficult to recognise
17	Educational Psychologist
18	Effective strategies
19	Emotion regulation
20	Expectations of the children
21	External support
22	Extreme behaviour
23	Family background
24	Family Support
25	Fear
26	Fear of engaging
27	Fear of other staff members
28	Fear of parents
29	Fear of the class teacher
30	Gender
31	Good practice
32	Impact of trauma
33	Impact on class
34	Impact on class/ learning/ teaching
35	Impulsive
36	Ineffective parenting
37	Ineffective support
38	Information sharing

39	Lack of information
40	Learned behaviour
41	Local Area Support Team
42	Low self-esteem
43	Moral reasoning
44	Morality
45	Morals
46	Negative role model
47	Norm
48	Not talked about
49	Parent question
50	Parental academic ability
51	Parental support
52	Peer perceptions
53	Peer relationships
54	Perpetrators
55	Policy
56	Policy development
57	Procedure
58	Social skills
59	Resilience
60	Resilience of other staff
61	Resilience of teachers
62	Role model
63	Role of the school
64	Rules
65	Safety
66	Safety
67	School role
68	School systems
69	Security / nurturing
70	Seeking control
71	Seeking power
72	Skills of the class teacher
73	Social and emotional development
74	Social Care
75	Staff ratio
76	Stereotypes
77	Teacher confidence
78	Teacher role

79	Teacher's job is to teach
80	Teacher's sense of defeat
81	Time to talk
82	Uncertainty
83	Victims

## **Appendix Twenty-One - Alphabetical List of Final Codes**

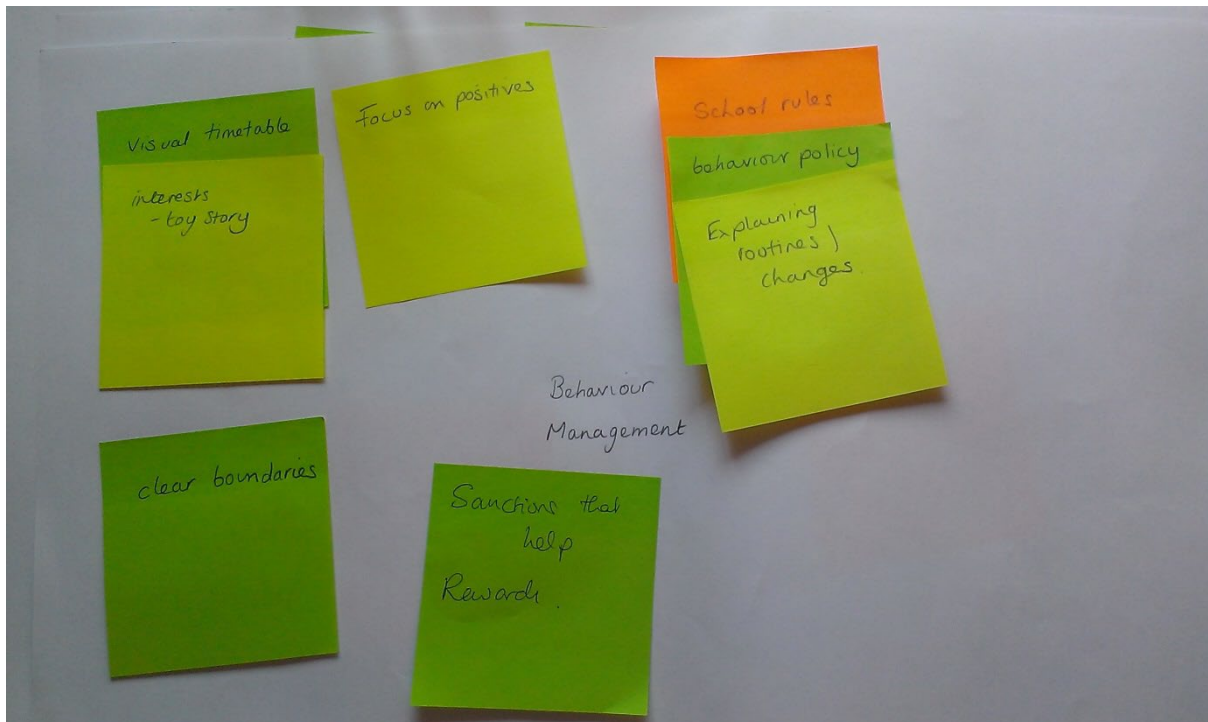
<b>Final codes</b>	
1	Ability to develop / use coping strategies
2	Academic performance
3	Age and Gender
4	Behaviour management
5	Classroom management
6	Emotion regulation
7	Expectations of the children
8	External support
9	Feelings / Management of fear
10	Feelings of power / control
11	Lack of Information
12	Next steps
13	Parental support
14	Parenting
15	Perception of normality
16	Policies, procedures and protocols
17	Resilience
18	Role of the class teacher
19	Safety
20	Skills of the class teacher
21	Social skills
22	Taboo subject
23	Teacher resilience

## Appendix Twenty-Two - Visual Representations Created in Group Interview

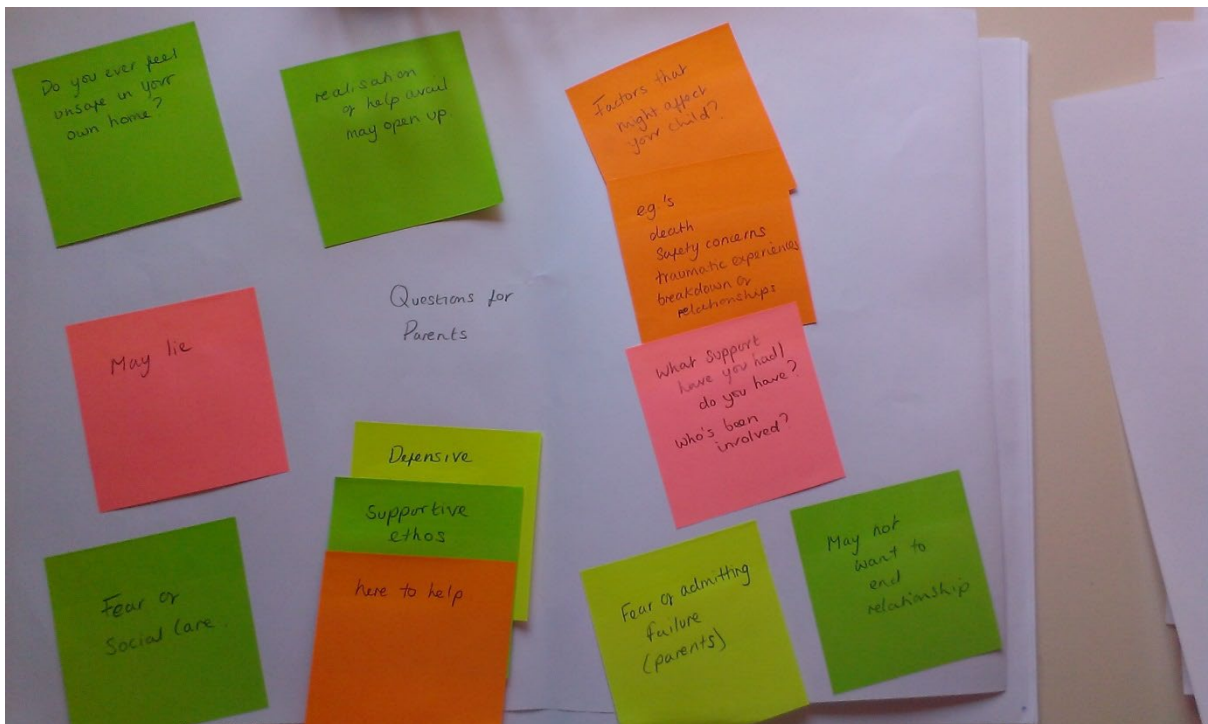
### Three

Teacher one	Yellow
Teacher two	Green
Teacher three	Orange
All/ general/ facilitator	Pink

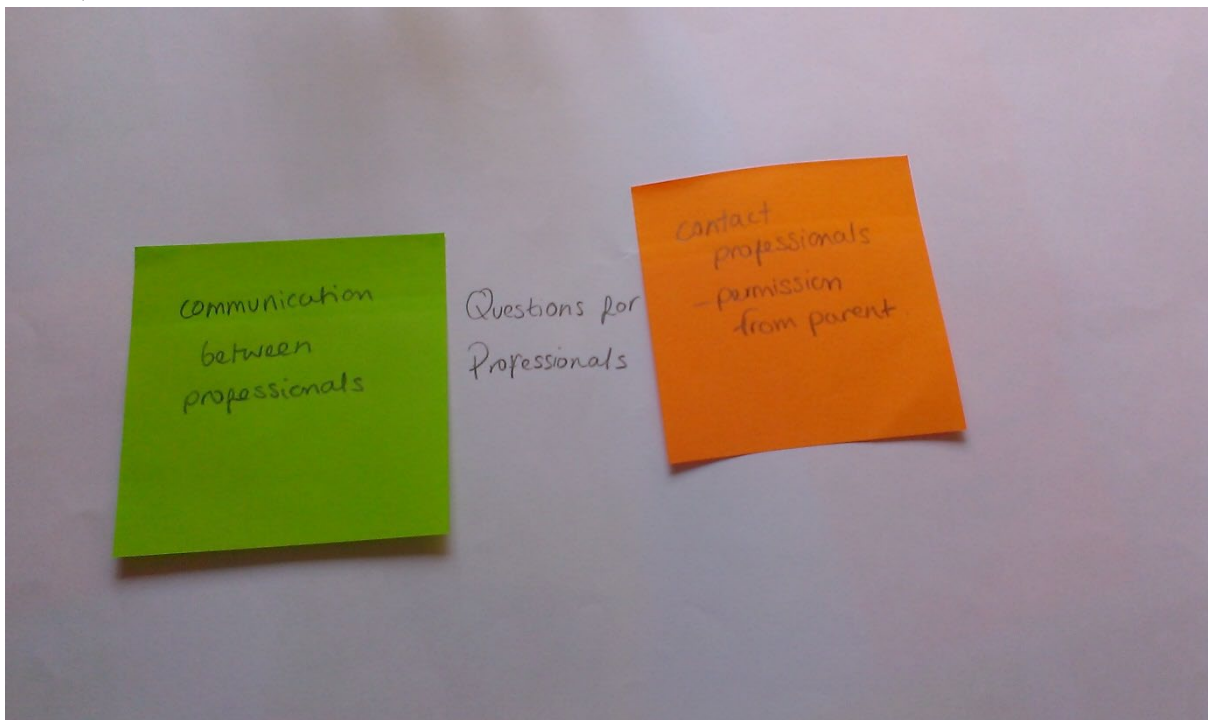
### **Behaviour Management**



## Questions for Parents

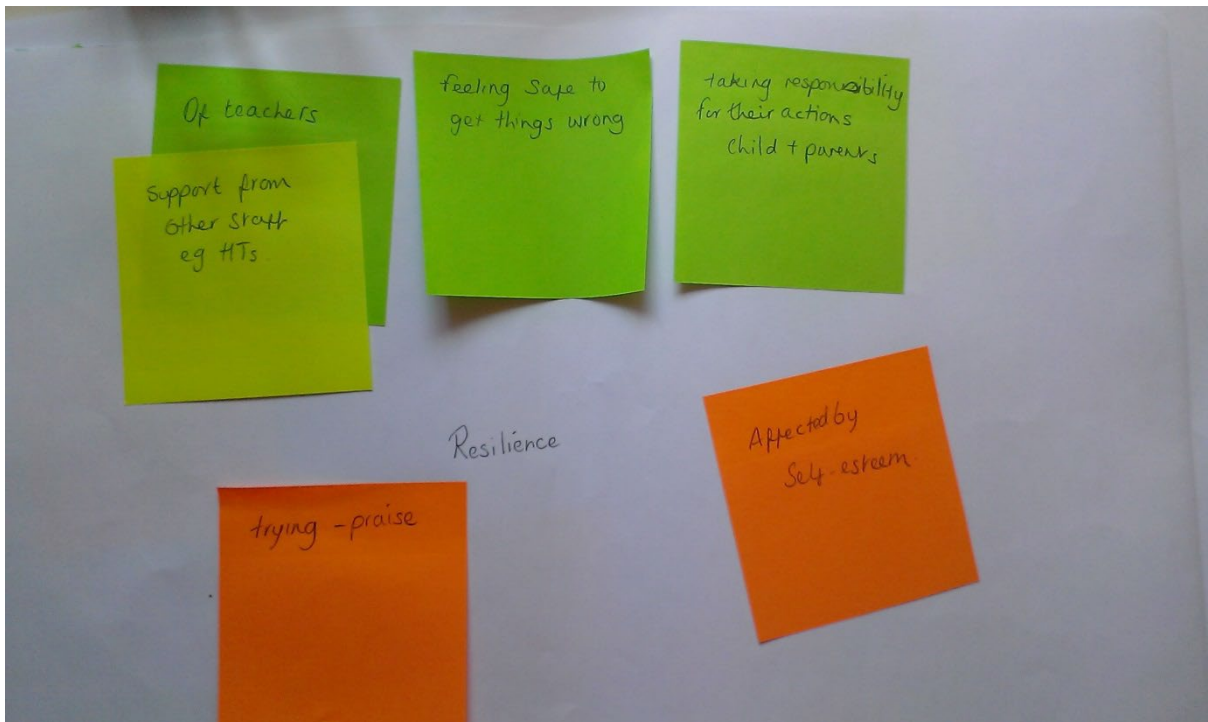


## Questions for Professionals

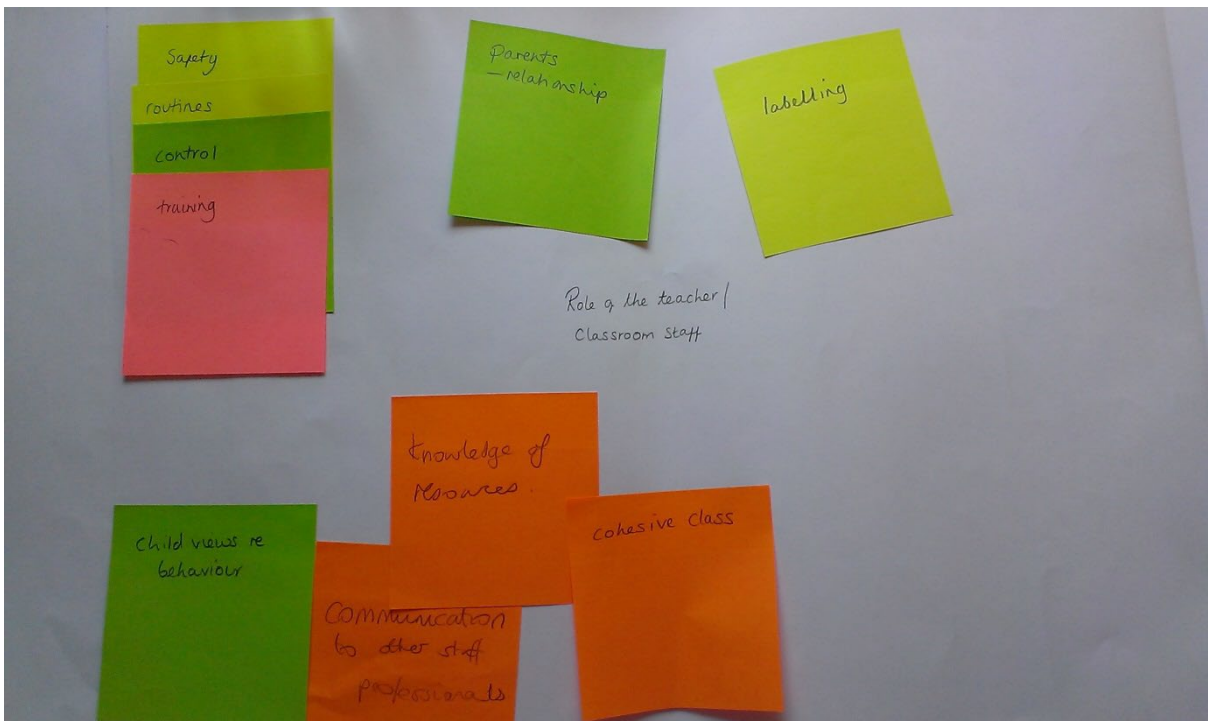




## Resilience

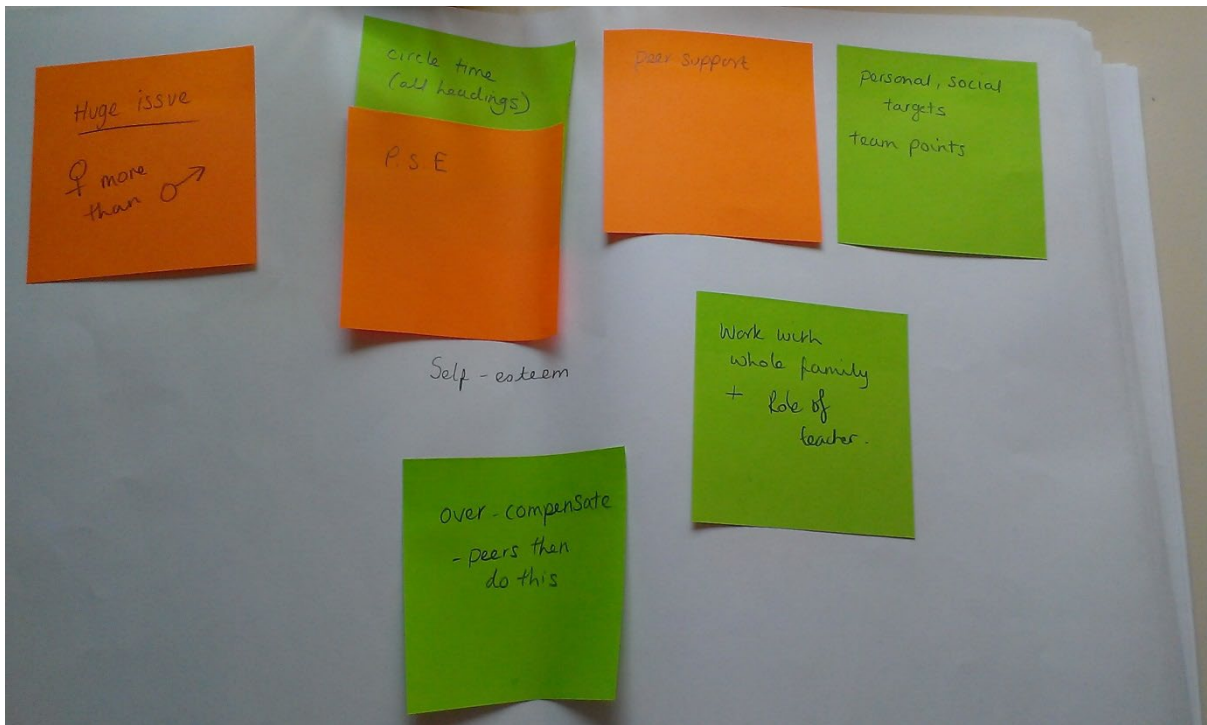


## Role of the Teacher / Classroom Staff

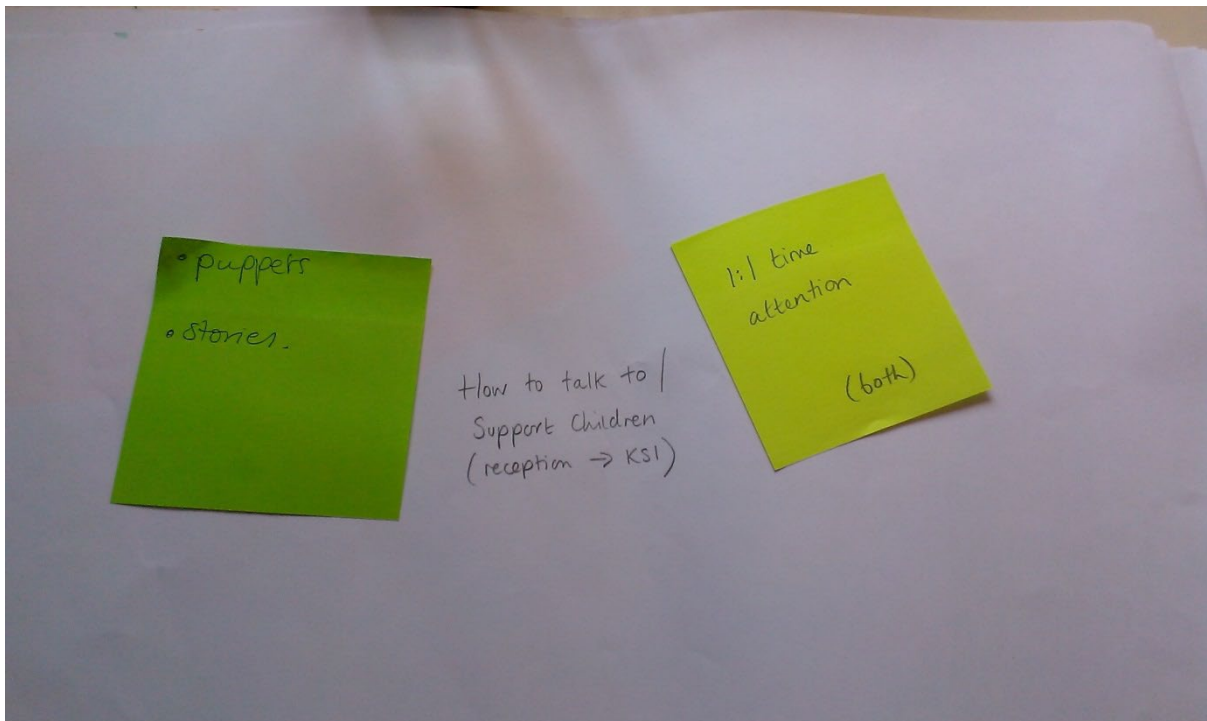




## Self-esteem



## How to talk to / support children (Reception – Key Stage One)



## How to talk to / support children (Key Stage Two)

