Second Chance Stories: Children and Families' Journey from School Exclusion to Therapeutic Alternative Provision

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of East London for the Professional Doctorate Degree in Clinical Psychology

August 2019

Word count: 34,040

ABSTRACT

A child is a 'relational' being, formed through their relationships with significant others: parents, siblings, teachers and peers. A child's behaviour in school is correspondingly influenced by multiple factors, some of which are external to the school environment. This is illustrated in the demographics of children and young people (CYP) most likely to be excluded from school, who often have multiple vulnerability factors in their home life (Gill, 2017). Despite the acknowledgment of systemic factors within numerous government policies, much of the research on therapeutic interventions for excluded children in Alternative Provision (AP) focuses on behavioural and psychodynamic interventions. Alternatively, this qualitative study is based on a systemic multi-family therapeutic Alternative Provision (AP) exploring children and families' perspectives of school exclusion and integration into this AP.

A process relational ontological approach (Brown & Stenner, 2009) and critical realist epistemology underpin this study. CYP and families undertook semi-structured interviews and CYP also completed a drawing exercise. A thematic analysis of the data identified four themes characterising the journey from school exclusion to AP: 'System Breakdown', 'System Integration', 'System Transformation' and 'Cracks in the System'. It is argued that school exclusion affects the whole of the child's world, leading also to the exclusion of other family members from many different systems. Furthermore, this study argues that the model of the school, which seeks to include and work with all excluded parts of the child's system, is positively transformative.

The findings of this study suggest that systemic approaches for CYP excluded from school provide an important and valuable contribution to clinical practice, highlighting the need for clinical psychologists to develop clinical and theoretical frameworks that engage more fully with school exclusion as a systemic issue. It is further argued that future research should explore how interventions can attend to broader macro systemic factors at play in school exclusion for example, the family's economic and employment circumstances.

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank all the children, young people and families who made this thesis possible. Thank you for kindly welcoming me into the school and generously sharing your story with me. I have learnt so much from meeting and listening to you all and will endeavour to hold on to the lessons you have taught me in all my future work and family life! I deeply value your openness and vulnerability whilst sharing your experiences with me. All your encouraging words and investment in this piece of work kept me motivated throughout! My hope is that your words here will help other families in similar situations.

My field supervisor Neil Dawson, thank you for your support, enthusiasm and openness to this research from the beginning; I was very grateful to have your insight and feedback throughout this process.

To all the staff at the school thank you for being so welcoming and helping me carry out all the data collection. I have learnt so much from your courage and perseverance to practice in this way and embrace the whole family in your work.

My supervisor Laura McGrath thanks for your constant support, encouragement and wise feedback throughout.

Finally, to my own family thank you so much for all your support and encouragement throughout this whole journey!

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Alternative Provision

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

CYP – Child and/or Young Person

DfE – Department for Education

DfH- Department of Health

EHC Plan - Educational Health and Care Plan

FSM – Free School Meals

LAC- Looked after Child

NHS- National Health Service

PRU- Pupil Referral Unit

SEMH – Social Emotional and Mental Health needs

SEN – Special Educational Needs

TA - Thematic Analysis

LIST OF APPENDICES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction to the Research

> Teacher*: I think exclusions may be symptomatic of a system, which isn't working properly… I guess a lot of the people getting excluded from school are trying to communicate something …*
>
> Tommy (pupil): *That's what I was saying when a kid kicks off in school…it is a call for help… it may not be for no reason…. like is his parents may be arguing or drinking, he is showing the school something is going wrong… please help*
>
> Teacher: *I think a lot more care and attention needs to go into the holistic needs of the young people*
>
> (BBC Radio Four Programme, 'My Name Is…' 2019)

The above extract is taken from the Radio Four Programme 'My Name Is…' (2019). The programme tells the story of Tommy, a nineteen-year-old teenager who, since the age of five, has faced multiple exclusions from school. In the programme Tommy visits one of his old teachers to have a frank discussion about the reasoning behind the exclusions and how schools could help to prevent them. The extract encapsulates a key argument of this thesis; namely, that a child's behaviour which leads to exclusion is both influenced by and communicative of the broader relational contexts in which they exist. That is, the problem of exclusion should not be understood as simply intrinsic to the behaviour of an individual child but located within the broader context of their familial and social environment. Interventions to

support these children, therefore, as I argue, need to consider the child's relational context and support their 'holistic needs'.

The argument within this thesis is underpinned by the core concept of the excluded child as a child in context (Dowling & Osbourne, 2003). A child's behaviour is significantly impacted by the contexts that are most significant in the child's upbringing, most notably the school and the family (Dishion, Patterson & Reid, 1992). Conversely, school exclusion[1] also affects the external contexts that the child is attached to, especially their family (Ford, Gwernan-Jones, Paget & Parker, 2016).

Thus, in this thesis I will argue that school exclusion is a systemic issue, with both systemic causal factors and consequences. Therefore, interventions for children who are excluded need to attend to all these systemic factors at play. Mental health difficulties and family background are often identified as key determining factors in school exclusion (Gill, 2017). The research site of this study is a therapeutic Alternative Provision (AP)[2] for children and young people (CYP) excluded from mainstream provision. Essential to the practice of the AP is the attempt to consider the child as a relational self (Burkitt, 1994) and the school as part of a broader system, attending to the different systems that contribute to exclusion and have been impacted by exclusion in turn. This approach importantly shifts the focus of 'problem behaviour' from the individual child to a consideration of the systemic factors that influence and determine such behaviour.

In this introduction, I outline the current prevailing frameworks for understanding the child's behaviour and the school system. These contexts as I argue, are dominated by an ideology of individualism, which has significant consequences for how the child's behaviour and learning is understood and how school systems are structured as a separate and distinct

[1] Appendix A contains definitions on the different types of school exclusion: 'Fixed period exclusion' and 'Permanent exclusion'.
[2] Appendix A contains a definition of the terms 'Therapeutic Alternative Provision' and 'Alternative Provision'.

system to the family. I present evidence that shows how such an individualist approach is problematic for CYP and fails to provide a comprehensive framework to understand school exclusion, and consequently misses important opportunities for providing effective support.

An exploration of Systems Theory (Bateson, 1972) will be presented in order to offer a more comprehensive view of school exclusion. I consider a practical example of a Systems Theory approach, examining the research of a multi-family therapeutic AP set up to support excluded CYP and their families. Finally, I provide a critical review of the literature around therapeutic interventions in AP settings, concluding the introduction with an explanation of the rationale behind this thesis.

1.2. The Context

1.2.1. Individualism in Understanding the Child's Behaviour

Individualism is a political ideology which rose in popularity in the nineteenth century. It emphasises individual characteristics which have grown to be valued in the Western industrialised world, such as self-reliance, independence, and freedom to not be regulated by others (Swart, 1962). An individualistic approach to understanding a child's behaviour locates causality of their behaviour and pathology within the child rather than in interactions within the child's relational context (Carrington, 1999). This framework individualises 'problem behaviour' by excluding broader social and interpersonal factors and locating the problem as intrinsic to the individual child. The impact of this individualisation is illustrated in studies exploring the experiences of CYP excluded. In such studies, CYP described themselves as being very 'naughty' and 'bad inside', indicating the internalisation of the problem behaviour which led to exclusion (Eastman, 2011; Satory, 2014). This reductionist, individualistic approach to understanding a CYP's behaviour can be further elaborated by considering research on the parental perspective of school exclusion. Several studies found parents noted a tendency for school staff to locate all the blame for their children's behaviour within the

child and failed to attempt to understand children's behaviour in light of other contextual issues (Eastman, 2011; Loizidou, 2009 & Michael & Frederickson, 2013).

This individualistic understanding of the child as separate from its broader social context also extends to the understanding of the different aspects of the child as separate from one another rather than interdependent. For example, in 2017 the Department for Education (DfE) policy document 'Creating a culture: How school leaders can optimise better behaviour' there is an absence of understanding behaviour in terms of emotional states.

This disconnection of feelings from behaviour within the education setting has in turn led to a limitation of emotional expression within the classroom (Bimler, Evans, Harvey, Kirkland & Pechtel, 2012). Emotions, as non-cognitive processes, are constructed as a barrier to the child functioning rationally and objectively in the classroom. Loinaz (2019) argues that there is a recent move within political agenda notably within the Government's Social and Emotional aspects of Learning (SEAL) Programme to limit emotional affects which derive from anger, frustration, fear, indignation, humour, excitement, with their attendant behaviours safely contained. Expression of such emotion within the communal context of the classroom have been factors cited to lead to exclusion. The place of the classroom is constructed as space in which emotions must be suppressed or purged, with the failure to adhere to such rules leading to the individual's exclusion (Gillies, 2011). The implication of this again is the personal self-management of emotions in an individual context, which excludes consideration of the classroom as communal and interpersonal space.

1.2.2. Individualism in Understanding Learning

Furthermore, individualism is also prevalent in the conceptualization of the child's learning within the classroom as consisting of an individual process (Epstein, 1987). The child's learning is positioned as involving the acquisition of a formal body of knowledge from the teacher in a dyadic relationship

(Hughes, Jewson & Unwin, 2013). Learning is focused on the individual and thus the social space of the classroom with its relational context and opportunities is viewed as extraneous for the child's learning. The implication of this is that the learning of the child is seen as an isolated process separate from the child's context.

1.2.3. Individualism in the School System

The ideology of individualism also underpins thinking around school systems. Schools are marked as a separate sphere disconnected from the spheres of home, family and work (Epstein, 1990). These spheres are distinctly marked in terms of time and space. This clear demarcation in turn has an influence on how the child is viewed in each sphere. This separation leads to the construction of a dual identity for the child in each sphere. In the sphere of the school, children are identified as 'students' and 'learners', whereas at home they are viewed as 'children' or 'teenagers' (Epstein, 1990).

Furthermore, within the spheres of home and school different etiquette is often expected. Loinaz (2019) research into teacher's perceptions and practice of emotional expression in the classroom has documented that home life is a sphere where teachers reported that students felt that they could be more oneself and emotionally expressive. Whereas in the school environment more professional and formal relationships operate between the teacher and the student (Loinaz, 2019). The view of the child as the 'learner' it has been argued creates a dynamic where by the role of the teacher is to fill up the young person with knowledge and concentrates on the academic success of the child (Hughes et al., 2013). The dynamic between pupil and instructor is characterised as a serious one in the classroom where there are clear professional boundaries in place (Lin, McMorris & Torok, 2004). Whereas home relationships are marked by more personal intimacy, closeness and care directed towards the overall welfare of the child (Epstein, 1990).

This demarcation has led to the construction of a clear distinction of contributions that are seen as specific to each sphere. The domain of the

family is viewed as a sphere for child rearing and the school for education (Epstein, 1992). Within this separation there is the assumption that the two spheres are most efficient and effective when they maintain independent goals, standards, and activities from each other (Weber, 1947). This division of responsibility of the two spheres is reflected in a study which found that 57 per cent of the UK teachers in the questionnaire did not agree that their students had consistent behaviour goals between home and school (Loinaz, 2019). This lack of coherence and communication is also reflected in the literature around parents' experiences of school exclusion. In 2019, Coram a UK children's charity published a report on pupils and parent views of school exclusion which found that 38 per cent of parents felt that the school's communication with them during the exclusion process was very poor and 47 per cent of parents said that they had received an unclear explanation for their child's exclusion (Coram, 2019). As Lightfoot (1978) observes, these two spheres are often 'worlds apart'.

In sum, the prevalent discourse of individualism in the school system and the construction of the child in education creates a vulnerable position for the CYP demonstrating behavioural difficulties at school. This individualism creates a disintegrated landscape for understanding the child's behaviour as influenced by home and school and different parts of the child. This context of individualism is problematic for understanding the child's behaviour as determined by other factors and contexts, and in turn fails to mobilise an effective systemic support for the child and their family. In the next section I argue the importance of considering the child as a relational being, whose behaviour and learning is shaped by multiple social contexts and systems.

1. 3. Exclusion

The principle of individualism, as I will argue below, is also prevalent in school exclusion. In examining the systemic causal factors and impact of school exclusion, I contend that approaches to exclusion present an individualistic response to a complex problem. The individual 'exclusion of the child' from school does not attend to the complexity of factors that contribute to the

child's disruptive behaviour, and therefore fails to provide adequate support. Rather than view such problems as an individual issue, then, this thesis proposes to consider the broader systems and contexts that the child is embedded within and connected to.

The DfE rationale for permanent exclusion outlined in the 2017 document, 'Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' states:

> *"Permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school"* (DfE p. 6*)*

During the year 2016/17, 0.1 per cent of the 8 million children in schools in England were permanently excluded; an average of 40 every day (DfE, 2018). Furthermore, 2,000 pupils are excluded for a fixed period each day (DfE, 2018). Persistent disruptive behaviour is the most prominent factor within permanent school exclusion in state funded primary, secondary and special schools accounting for 2,755 (35.7 per cent) of all permanent exclusions in 2016/17 (DfE, 2018). It can be argued therefore, that the act of exclusion positions the child's individual behaviour as the sole source of the problem and, therefore, sees the solution as one of simply removing the child from this system.

This individualistic approach is also prevalent in the use of exclusion from the classroom for fixed periods of time in mainstream settings. CYP excluded from mainstream schools report frequent reliance on isolation rooms or units to cope, with the lead up to more permanent exclusion (Alldred, Barker, Dodman & Watts, 2010). This response is underpinned by an assumption that the behaviour of the child is a problem to be removed rather than addressed. In research by Barker et al. (2010) these spaces are often described as

punitive in nature and compared to ‘prisons’ (p.384). The location and design of these spaces clearly marks them as very different from the rest of the school environment, where the pupils are often not visible to the rest of the school population. Thus Barker et al. (2010) argues “seclusion is not a highly visible spatial strategy of punishment, but one based on absence, physical isolation and separation from the rest of the school” (p. 380). The implication of this spatial exclusion of the child further affirms their separation from their context and views problematic behaviour as stemming from within the child. The logical solution, therefore, is to remove the child from the social context. This decision by schools to exclude children from social and communal spaces leaves them feeling marginalised, left out and rejected (Loizidou, 2009; Mainwaring, 2009).

This individualisation of the problem as originating from within the individual child shapes what kind of intervention is considered appropriate. The Campbell Systematic Review (2018) of interventions for CYP at risk of exclusion identified 37 studies. The highest number of studies identified were individual skills training for students; with the goal of enhancing the individual’s cognitive, emotional and behavioural skills to regulate maladaptive conducts (Eisner, Farrington, Sutherland, Ttofi, & Valdebenito, 2018).

1.3.1. Systemic Factors in Exclusion

A prominent area of concern for considering these issues within a broader relational context is studies conducted into social inequality. Studies that have focused on the demographics of excluded CYP reveal a strong correlation between exclusion, mental health and family background (Coram, 2019). CYP on a Child in Need Plan, a Child Protection Plan, a Looked after Child (LAC) and those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)[3], as such studies show, all have a higher likelihood of mental health difficulties and being excluded (DfE, 2018). For example, a child on a Child in Need Plan is four times more likely

[3] Appendix A contains a definition of the term ‘Child in Need Plan’, ‘Child Protection Plan’, ‘Look after Child’, ‘Free School Meals’, ‘Special Educational Needs’ and ‘Social and emotional mental health needs’.

to be permanently excluded (DfE, 2018). Furthermore, a study of the outcomes of young teenagers who were part of a high-risk unit and had complex psychological needs found that Adverse Childhood Experiences such as early childhood trauma are predictive of poorer outcomes and increased rates of school exclusion (Dyer & Gregory, 2014).

The learning and emotional needs of those excluded is also another striking statistic. Pupils with identified Special Education Needs (SEN) accounted for 46 per cent of all permanent exclusions and 44 per cent of fixed period exclusions during the year 2016-2017 (DfE, 2018). Moreover, in AP settings for children excluded, one in two pupils had an identified social and emotional mental health need (SEMH) (DfE, 2018).

Ethnicity, age and gender are also other important factors. Travellers of Irish heritage and Black Caribbean pupils have a higher likelihood of being educated within a pupil referral unit (PRU) (Gill, 2017). Black Caribbean pupils are educated in PRUs at 3.9 times the rate one would expect, given their proportional representation of the national pupil population (DfE, 2017). Furthermore, mixed ethnicity Black Caribbean and white pupils are educated at PRUs at 2.5 times the rate one would expect given their proportional representation of the national pupil population. Gypsy Roma heritage pupils appear in PRU populations at 3.2 times the expected rate and Irish traveller heritage pupils at 16.5 times the rate (DfE, 2017).

Within the literature on school exclusion a considerable proportion examines the ethnicity of those excluded and attempts to explore the link between the two. The topic of racism was a feature of this literature. It has been argued that schools and the education system are constructed as Anderson (2014) terms ‘white spaces’ (p. 10) which embed a white, ethnocentric, curriculum and practice. The culture which flows from these ‘white spaces’ may lead to misunderstandings in behavioural presentations influenced by one’s culture

and in turn their behaviour may labelled as difficult and problematic (Hamilton 2018).

Furthermore, Wright's (2010) ethnographic study exploring the views of black children, parents and teaching staff on behaviour management in mainstream schools outlined incidences where teachers appeared to stereotype black pupils and view them as problematic. This prejudice in turn shaped the teacher's behaviour towards the child, engendering often relationships of conflict. As a result these pupils were more likely to be excluded from the mainstream classroom (Wright, 2010). Other research has also found that racist stereotypes have been shown to unconsciously bias teachers' perceptions of behaviour and pupils' personalities, in particular with black students (Okonofua & Eberhardt 2015).

Furthermore, research highlights that race is not an independent but interactive factor in a child's vulnerability to exclusion (Gill, 2017). For example, black pupils are most likely to live in poverty – with more than one in four children eligible for FSM (Allen, Baars, Bernardes, Menzies, Nye & Shaw, 2016). As previously outlined children eligible for FSM have a higher likelihood of school exclusion (DfE, 2018).

In terms of gender DfE (2018) statistics outline that the permanent exclusion rate for boys (0.15 per cent) was over three times higher than that for girls (0.04 per cent). Furthermore, the fixed period exclusion rate was almost three times higher for boys (6.91 per cent) compared with that of girls (2.53 per cent) in 2016/2017(DfE, 2018). A rationale behind this statistic is that boys tend to externalise mental distress through their behaviour and demonstrate, aggressive, and challenging behaviour. Whereas, it is argued that young women tend to internalise difficult emotions, for example withdrawing or self-harming (Bask, 2015). Age also plays a role in school exclusion. Permanent exclusions peak during ages 13 to 14 with 60 per cent of all permanent exclusions occurring at this age or above (DfE, 2018).

Research into the experiences of those excluded also highlights systemic factors in terms of relationships with staff in the school environment as key in the lead up to exclusion. Both parents and children expressed a relationship with school staff characterised by misunderstanding and a lack of care, which they felt was key to not supporting the child to remain in school **(**Loizidou, 2009, O'Connor, 2011; Sartory, 2014).

Research into the experiences of those excluded also highlights the systemic impact of school exclusion on the other systems that the child is attached to. For instance, research conducted with family members of those excluded highlighted that the child's exclusion led to heightened stress in the family and moreover, financial stress within families due to the parent or guardian's inability to work (Briggs, 2010; Loizidou, 2009; McDonald & Thomas, 2003).

While the above studies show that children with the most complex mental health and social care problems are the most vulnerable to exclusion, they also reveal how such children and their families find services difficult to access. It is estimated that just 25 per cent of CYP with a mental health problem access treatment (Health Committee, 2014). For these families engaging with clinical services and different professionals is challenging. There is stigma associated with engaging with mental health services and professionals are often viewed with mistrust (Bevington, Cracknell, Fonagy & Fuggle, 2017). The inflexibility of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision for this demographic has been noted in the Health Committee Report (2014) document, 'Children's and adolescents' mental health and CAMHS', which noted that there are "serious and deeply ingrained problems with the commissioning and provision of CAMHS services…for the most vulnerable young people" (p. 3).

In sum, these social inequalities highlight that the excluded child is part of a wider system of different vulnerability factors. A child's behaviour, which may lead to school exclusion, is influenced significantly by their family background and social context and the impact this has on their mental health. Exclusion,

moreover, will in turn have significant impacts on the child's family context. The complexity of this issue therefore spotlights the need and challenge for services to provide effective, accessible and integrated support, working holistically with the many different contexts at play.

1.4. Systems Theory

In order to examine the complex causal factors of school exclusion, as well as its impact across different systems, this study draws upon Systems Theory. Systems Theory is the study of systems, whether natural or man-made. Gregory Bateson, a key theorist of Systems Theory, defines a system as a unit structured on feedback made up of interactive and interdependent parts (Bateson, 1972). Systems Theory thus seeks to understand the organisation and functioning of phenomenon as an interactive system which is dependent on other entities (Von Bertalanffy, 1968). This theoretical framework, when applied to the human mind, proposes to view the mind as interactive and part of living systems (Von Bertalanffy, 1968), such as the family and school. The application of Systems Theory to school exclusion thus departs from the view that the child's behaviour can be treated as an isolated issue, as if its origins were simply intrinsic to the child. Instead it offers a more nuanced understanding of 'exclusion', studying the child as an interdependent self and their behaviour as relational, interactive and affected by feedback from the various structures they are connected to.

1.4.1. Open and Closed Systems

A key concept within Systems Theory is open and closed systems (Katz & Kahn, 1969). Living systems (biological organisms or social organisations) are dependent upon their external environment. They operate through the constant interaction with their environment through permeable boundaries and are therefore open systems (Katz & Kahn, 1969). The child, the school, the family are conceived of as open systems; their being is maintained through interaction with their environment. According to this theory, the child cannot be considered outside their relationships with the environment in which they

exist: their family, school, peers etc. In addition, individual behaviour and emotions are understood as modulated via continual feedback with the environment (Gillham, 2018). Family, moreover, should not be conceived as a closed system, but as embedded within the community it exists (Holstein & Gubrium, 1990).

Alternatively, a closed system is defined as system that is assumed to be independent, isolated, and self-contained (Katz & Kahn, 1969). The process of school exclusion, it could be argued, can be seen to enact the concept of a closed system. The child is removed from the system of the classroom and the school, cutting off their interactions with these environments. A closed system undermines the natural ecology of an individual and their dependence on other systems (Bateson, 1972). Systems theorists would argue that this leads towards a type of 'static equilibrium' or lack of growth in the systems and its members (Katz & Kahn, 1969). This resonated throughout literature on those excluded which emphasise the importance of relationships within the system of family and school for child's development and growth (Loizidou, 2009).

1.4.2. Recursive Phenomena

Within open systems there is continual multi-directional feedback from all the different interactions that comprise the system (Asen, Dawson & McHugh, 2001). An outcome of multi-directional feedback is recursive phenomena: relationships viewed as interactions of communication will have a mutual and circular influence on each other (Bateson, 1972). This multi-directional feedback leads systems and individuals to grow in a recursive rather than linear manner (Asen et al., 2011). This recursivity, in turn, allows feedback to have a mutuality of influence. Depending on the nature of the recursive pattern the system around the child can become mobilised or stuck. For example, a key feature of exclusion literature reported by parents is constant poor communication and negative feedback from mainstream school staff about their child (McDonald & Thomas, 2003); this communicative feedback in turn generates a negative recursive pattern and immobilises the network around the child. The activation of a positive recursive phenomena is key in

activating change within the system around the child (Cooklin, Dawson, McHugh, & Oakley, 2003).

1.4.3. Human Person as a 'Social Self' (Burkitt, 1994)

A systems perspective views the human person in the context of a system where the behaviour of one component of the system is seen as affecting and being affected by the behaviour of others (Plas, 1985). This departs from a mainstream view of people as self-contained individuals (as 'closed systems') and instead proposes to understand the individual as open and interactive (Burkitt, 1994). As outlined above, the enactment of a closed system where the individual cannot interact with others is prevalent in the nature of school exclusion, where the child is excluded from the different systems, they are part of (the class, the school). This exclusion from an external system, and thus life sustaining interaction, can become internalised within the child leaving the child feeling excluded not only from external systems but different parts of their own self, for example their spatial or emotional self (Burkitt, 1994).

In sum, Systems Theory presents a valuable framework for understanding the systemic nature of school exclusion. It also contributes to the notion of the child as a social self and part of a system impacted by different interactive contexts structured on feedback. The usefulness of this theory has influenced many educationalists and therapists working with the demographic discussed above.

1.5. Systemic Therapeutic Approaches

Since the 1960s, Systems Theory has formed the foundations for systemic approaches in education and therapy (Dowling & Osbourne, 2003). The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines have also marked systemic practice as a key psychological intervention for CYP with antisocial behaviour and conduct difficulties and at risk of school exclusion

(NICE, 2013). The AP research site is a space of systemic practice in this area.

1.5.1 The Research Site

The research site is a systemic and multi-family AP in a large British city, specifically set up to support CYP (and their families) who have been excluded from mainstream provision. The school works exclusively with pupils who have been permanently excluded in Key Stages 2 and 3 on short-term placements with the aim of reintegration into mainstream school. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and the school accepts pupils from several local authorities. There are number of children in care at the school and the majority of pupils who attend the school have an Education and Health Care Plan[4]. School staff consist of consultant psychotherapists, a family therapist, teachers and teaching assistants. Key parts of the school's multi-family programme are 'Family Class' and 'Parent learning' which are both outlined in the Glossary (Appendix A).

The understanding of the child and the structure of the school system in the AP are underpinned by three main psychological theories - systemic therapy, mentalization, and epistemic trust – which I will now outline below.

1.5.2. Understanding a Child's and Families' Behaviour in Context

Systemic therapy adopts an interactional view of behaviour. As Bateson's theory of recursion highlighted, interactions are circular and structured on feedback (Batson, 1972). Therefore, problem behaviour exhibited by the child is not located intrinsically within the child but is embedded in circular and repetitive patterns of interaction (Carr, 2018). As with Systems Theory, systemic therapy advocates that the potential solution to individual problems can only be found by locating them within their systemic context. The system is further understood to hold the resources with which to solve such problems (Dallos & Darper, 2010). These resources and potential solutions may,

[4] Appendix A contains a definition of the term 'Education and Health Care Plan'

however, have been shut down by unhelpful patterns of behaviour and interactions, or isolation from systems of support (as highlighted in the process of school exclusion). The assumption underpinning systemic approaches is that by changing the pattern of interaction, the problem behaviour of the child can be changed (Carr, 2018). According to such an approach, 'feedback loops' are crucial to how the problem is viewed, understanding the meaning of the problem in terms of how it is communicated through the interactions of the system (Carr, 2012).

Another key theory to understanding the child in the school is mentalization. Mentalizing is a form of imaginative mental activity, whereby one endeavours to understand the behaviour of others in terms of their mental states (e.g. needs, desires, feelings, beliefs, goals, purposes, and reasons) (Allison & Fonagy, 2014). This ability to mentalize is born in a context of an attachment relationship and is the key to social communication and the gathering of social information (Fonagy, Luyten, & Strathearn, 2011). An infant begins to acquire the capacity to mentalize through their experience of being mentalized by others; namely, through interaction with primary caregivers who attribute attuned and separate mental states to the infant (Fonagy, Jurist, & Target, 2002). Through this process the child finds its own individual agency and subjectivity through their interactions with the mind of another subject. It is through such intersubjective interaction that they are affirmed as an active social agent worthy of engagement (Allison & Fonagy, 2014). The importance of being understood and mentalized by others is a key theme in the literature around interventions for CYP excluded. For example, Michael and Frederickson (2013) indicated that positive relationships with staff who supported children with their emotional needs and sought to understand their behaviour in terms of mental states was key in changing disruptive behaviour. CYP also described in the research how entering in a relationship where they felt listed to and understood helped them to reflect on their own behaviour and not to react impulsively towards others (Malberg, 2008).

Mentalization is not only limited to the relationship of the child and the primary caregiver. The school environment is a system which creates its own climate

for mentalizing in both staff and students (Campbell, Fonagy, Sacco & Twemlow, 2005). As with parents, teachers who are able to mentalize the child's behaviour – to reflect on the feelings and thoughts behind such behaviour, instead of viewing it simply as 'bad behaviour' will help the child to understand the way they and others in the situation may be feeling at this point; in turn the child will develop more constructive ways of managing their emotions behind this behaviour (Dawson, & McHugh, 2018).

Children who are excluded are more likely to have insecure attachments (Geddes, 2006) and therefore limited mentalizing skills. The process of exclusion practices in school often leads to the child's removal to an isolated space and thus taken out of a reciprocal relationship with others. Isolation spaces prevent a mentalizing relationship being activated, thereby preventing the child, through engagement with another mind and perspective, to develop an awareness of and reflect on their own mental state and behaviour. This development of an awareness of the child's own feelings and those of others helps children to react less impulsively with peers and think about how their behaviour impacts on others (Dawson & McHugh, 2018).

A project that demonstrated the impact of mentalization within the school context was the Capsle Programe; a programme designed to foster mentalizing between children and staff (Fonagy, Little, Sacco, Twemlow & Vernberg, 2005). The outcome of the Capsle Programme led to the reduction in the number of disciplinary referrals and the improved achievement in test scores, which, if they had had two years' experience with CAPSLE, continued even when children left the school. This model was also applied to a school in Negril, Jamaica, and showed corresponding reductions in aggression and improvement in altruistic behaviour, especially by boys (Fonagy et al., 2005).

The circular process of mentalizing is important not only for parents' relationship with their child, but also their child's teacher. The parent's capacity to mentalize and to feel mentalized by teachers is another important facet to the parent's experience at school (Campbell, Fonagy & Lorenzini, 2014). If there is relationship of understanding between the teacher and

parents, rather than one of antagonism or separation, they will feel mentalized and be open to mentalize themselves and other perspectives in the system, such as the teacher and their child (Fonagy et al., 2002). The space which opens up in the parent's mind to mentalize themselves and gain other perspectives on the situation is key to collaborative working needed amongst systems members when a child is excluded (Barlow, Harriss & Moli, 2008).

A key theme within research for children who are excluded is the feeling of being misunderstood and not listened to either in the relationship between the child and the staff, child and family, and parent and the staff (Loizidou, 2009; O'Connor, 2011; Satory, 2014). Mentalizing offers one way of not only tackling such feelings, but their causes.

1.5.3. Understanding Learning in Context:

A key theory for understanding a child's behaviour and learning within the school as a relational and interpersonal process is the concept of epistemic trust. The concept denotes the trust required by someone to allow learning (particularly social learning about 'how we behave in these circumstances') to take place, and for transmission to occur from one person to another (Allison & Fonagy, 2014). Epistemic trust is therefore crucial in the child's experience of the classroom and school; a key site reflecting for social learning (Fonagy et al., 2005). Furthermore, it is even more significant for CYP with behavioural difficulties to be in epistemically trusting relationships so they are open to learning about their own behaviour and how to change that behaviour (Bateman, Campbell & Fonagy, 2017).

Epistemic trust is also a key ingredient in the family's relationship with school staff. Research looking at parents of excluded CYP typically shows a lack of trust in the teacher's actions, making it difficult for parents to listen to school staff or take on board and understand what they are saying (McDonald & Thomas, 2003). Trust is, therefore, a key component for the parent's own learning (Dawson & McHugh, 2018).

Excluded children and their families may already have difficulties in building epistemic trust with others, especially those in trusted and authoritative positions, such as teachers. As research shows, excluded children and their family members are more likely to have experienced adverse childhood experiences, including developmental adversity and attachment difficulties trauma (Allen, 2012), which may trigger a profound breakdown of epistemic trust (Bevington et al., 2017). For example, children who have been taken into care are twice as likely to be excluded compared to those who have not (DfE, 2017). Moreover, a child on a Child in Need Plan is three times more likely to be excluded from their school than other pupils. These children may have had experiences of neglect, abuse, and have come from an unsafe home environment (Dyer & Gregory, 2014). These experiences would have impacted early childhood attachment relationships and the child's ability to feels safe, trust and learn from their caregiver how to process and regulate their emotions and behaviour (Bevington, Fonagy & Fuggle, 2015). In particular, the experience of abuse may lead children to avoid thinking of the minds of others who might harbour malevolent intentions, especially in the context of intra-familial abuse (Allen, 2013; Fonagy, Gergely, & Jurist, 2002). This breakdown of epistemic trust may lead to form intractable rigidity with respect to the child or parent's behaviour, whereby they become closed off from and unreceptive to the communication of school staff. The loss of epistemic trust results in a situation where the capacity for learning and change is absent (Fonagy et al., 2005). In reducing the capacity to learn from teachers or to listen to their point of view, the child and family may become 'hard to reach' (Byrne et al., 2018).

A key theme identified in research into experiences of school exclusion showed that significant and transformative relationships for excluded children and their families were connected to establishing trust between children, parents, and teachers (Harris et al., 2008; Mc Donald & Thomas, 2003). Establishing epistemic trust and creating an attuned relationship between the children, parents and teachers serves to open both the child's and parents mind to a trusted source of communication in the context of the school. The

child and family in turn begin to conceive of their familial and wider social context in terms of a trusted learning environment (Fonagy et al., 2014).

Another theory which highlights the benefits of conceiving of learning in relational terms is the theory of 'situated learning' and 'communities of practice' (Lave, 1991; Wenger, 2010). Key features of the multi-family programme are 'Parent Learning' and 'Family Class'. Both are social activities where parents, staff and children come together to share and learn from others. 'Parent Learning' allows for parents to weekly share their dilemmas and concerns with their child's behaviour, and pool together resources and learn from others about possible solutions. Furthermore, the 'Family Class', allows parents and children to join in an enjoyable activity together, share interaction with each other and learn from each other's interactions.

The structure of the multi-family programme is reminiscent of the idea of a 'community of practice', which are conceived of in terms of "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger, 2004, p. 2). The CYP and their families come together with the shared experience and concern with disruptive behaviour and school exclusion in order to learn from each other about how they might help themselves and other families. Learning within this social context thus moves away from the individual and is firmly based on active social participation. In turn multiple opportunities for learning arise within the context of the school which are not limited to the dyadic relationship between the teacher and child. Going beyond such narrow conception, the learning situation is consequently seen to pervade other aspects of school life for child, parent, and staff, conceiving of the child's learning not simply in terms of knowledge acquisition, but as a broader interactive and social process (Hughes et al., 2013).

1.5.4. Collectivism in the School System:

A systemic approach is adopted within the school by opening up the school to the participation of families. In doing so, the family and school are no longer

marked as absolutely separate spheres, but as part of an interconnected system. This model is reminiscent of 'community schools' (Epstein, 1987), families are brought into schools to help create a joint system of support for the child and parents, establishing a shared sense of responsibility for the child's education and development. Often children who are excluded from school present the same behavioural difficulties in their home environment (Huray, Gnomes, Morris, Nineteman & Skagerberg, 2014). Connecting the separate spheres of school and home helps to create a mutual system of support, wherein the child's needs at school or at home are considered as whole, rather than separate (Epstein, 1992).

1.6. Scoping Review: Therapeutic Interventions in AP settings

In light of the above, a scoping review was undertaken to research therapeutic interventions within AP settings. A specific literature review strategy and exclusion and inclusion criteria was employed. A scoping review was deemed necessary for this study as I was aware that research into therapeutic interventions in AP settings is a niche and under researched topic area, outlined in key policy documents (Timpson, 2019). Furthermore, I was broadly interested to look at how and where the interventions were employed within a UK context and what learning outcomes resulted from them.

1.6.1. Literature Review Strategy

A literature search was conducted to review the current research on CYP and families' experiences of school exclusion as well as a more specific research on therapeutic interventions within AP for CYP excluded from mainstream provision.

For both search areas the online database search engine EBSCO was used to search several databases, including, Academic Search Complete, Scopus, ERIC, CINAHL Plus, Psycharticles and Psychinfo, for articles published from 1990 to 2019.

For the literature review into experiences of school exclusion and AP, searches were undertaken using the below terms: adolescent, child, youth or parent and excluded, suspended or a risk of exclusion and therapeutic alternative provision or alternative provision or therapeutic school or pupil referral unit. I also conducted research in this area through a snowballing technique, whereby the reference lists of identified papers were searched for further articles. Furthermore, I used Google Scholar to search for relevant research and 'grey literature' such as third sector and government publications on school exclusion and AP.

For the specific scoping review into therapeutic interventions within AP settings a more rigorous search was carried out using the same databases outlined above. Searches were undertaken using the following terms: adolescent, child or youth and excluded, suspended or a risk of exclusion and therapeutic alternative provision or alternative provision or therapeutic school or pupil referral unit. Furthermore, an inclusion and exclusion criteria was applied. The CYP must be permanently excluded or at risk of exclusion or fixed period exclusion. They must also attend a therapeutic AP, AP or PRU within the United Kingdom. This search strategy initially revealed 1,224 articles.

Through a process of manually reviewing the abstracts and texts approximately nine studies were deemed relevant. Studies that were excluded included those that did not relate closely to the topic. For example, studies that focused solely on experiences of exclusion but not therapeutic interventions for the demographic. Or studies which focused on therapeutic interventions for CYP at risk of exclusion within a mainstream school setting.

Research around topic literature for the studies such as research into emotional cultures in mainstream and learning communities was conducted through searches in Google scholar and UCL explore (UCL Library Services' single search tool for finding journals, books, full-text articles and archive material). Through my current clinical placement I held a UCL honorary contract and was therefore able to utilise their library resources.

1.6.2. Selected Studies

In sum, nine studies were selected in the scoping review. I will argue that these studies do not consider the subjective experience of children and families and are individualistic in nature focusing predominantly on the child experience. Furthermore, the research focuses on primarily psychodynamic or behavioural interventions and does not explore a systemic approach.

Firstly, two studies in the review focus on behavioural therapeutic interventions in APs for CYP. Pennacchia & Thomson's (2015) study gathered data via research field notes and observations across 11 AP sites for pupils age 12-16 in the UK. The study employed strategic sampling and selected APs with an 'outstanding' Ofsted award. The study utilised a deductive thematic analysis (TA) approach analysing the data through lens of Foucauldian theories around discipline and order (Pennacchia & Thomson, 2015). The findings of the paper argue that behavioural interventions dominate the landscape of therapeutic practice within these schools, with the overall aim of inaugurating the discipline of minds and bodies within these environments. Interventions are enacted through surveillance and measuring activities with reward and punishments. The study found in all APs a degree of talking therapy provision which took a more relational approach to working with the CYP. However, overall the paper argues that individualistic behavioural interventions dominate practice. The paper questioned the long term impact of these approaches for children who move out of this environment and thus are not used to such external controls shaping their behaviour and also suggested that behavioural interventions should not negate the need also for children to have emotional disclosure and dependence within these environments. The practice of behavioural interventions it is argued here positions school exclusion as a behavioural issue located in the child. Although the deductive approach of this paper provides an interesting theoretical insight, the framework this imposes on the data analysis limits the opportunity to remain open to inductive meanings and thus possible new and different perspectives.

Secondly, Capstick's (2005) quantitative study explored the efficacy and therapeutic value of behavioural interventions employed at a PRU in Camden for CYP aged 11-14. The study utilised questionnaires to find out the effectiveness of rewards from the perspective of pupils and staff. Questionnaires were completed by 11 pupils and eight teachers. The study explored perspectives on the efficacy of rewards in terms of changing behaviour and increasing motivation to learn. Results showed that pupils and teachers have very different perceptions of the value of rewards. 75 per cent of teachers perceived that rewards change pupils' behaviour and increase their motivation to learn and work harder, whereas over 50 per cent pupils perceived the opposite (Capstick, 2005). These findings confirm previous research around the limited effectiveness of behavioural regimes. In sum, both studies do not include the subjective experience of CYP and families or consider how wider systemic factors may influence with the experience and efficacy of behavioural interventions for the child.

The next study Bruder & Spensley (2015) examines the therapeutic work conducted by a clinical psychologist on a one year pilot at a PRU in Staffordshire. The pilot project based a clinical psychologist within a PRU. The role of the clinical psychologist involved one-to-one work with pupils and consultation and training to teaching staff. The study adopted a quantitative approach and utilised a feedback questionnaire. Out of the 26 pupils who used the service nine completed the questionnaire. The results showed that four out of nine of the participants had an experience of feeling listened to and felt free to express themselves with the psychologist. Teaching staff also reported that they felt better equipped in understanding how to support the pupils' presentations.

A strength of this research was the exploration of the pupil's emotional world and important contextual factors such as the child's relationship with the psychologist, teaching staff, and family, the child's parental mental health and the pupil's past engagement with CAMHS. Acknowledgement of these factors present a nuanced picture of school exclusion and intervention within AP

settings highlighting the systemic and complex nature of this issue. The child is not constructed as an object to be disciplined but rather an emotional and relational agent and therefore an intervention is explored which takes this into consideration.

The author acknowledges limitations of the research. The use of a questionnaire does not account for the subjective voice of CYP and families. Furthermore, the author outlines that the research may present positively skewed results as only nine of a total of 29 CYP who engaged in the service completed the questionnaire, the remaining others who did not complete the questionnaire may have felt very differently.

Next Cullen & Munroe's (2010) mixed method study looked at an educational psychologist initiated project involving professional sports input to a PRU based within an inner city for ages 11- 14. The sample was made up of 10 pupils (boys) who attended a sports and psychology project one afternoon a week for about an hour-and-a half. The sample group was from a diverse ethnic background including Turkish, British, Caribbean and Asian heritage. The study gathered qualitative data through individual and group CYP interviews and group staff interviews. Unstructured observations of the pupils during the project were also carried out. Quantitative data on the number of half day exclusions from the PRU and day absences were collected at the beginning and end of the project.

Outcomes for this project were based on the decrease of half day exclusions and an increase in overall attendance at school. The study found that the project had relatively little impact on this. The qualitative data illustrated the importance of the creation of very positive relationships and interactions with the young people. The PRU staff enjoyed working with the young people and found them very motivating. The CYP qualitative feedback indicates that the children valued in particular, the team work and also the sense of belonging which came from being part of this team. They also commented on how the group improved their self-esteem and helped them to regulate their emotions.

Although the author tried to conduct parent interviews in the end none were carried out. The author notes that a key limitation of the study is the omission of data on families' experience of the project and the impact of the project on a family level. Furthermore, interviews were limited to 15 minutes which may fail to capture an in depth account of these students' experiences.

Nicholson & Putwain's (2018) study explored the practice of the therapeutic intervention the self-system model of motivational processes (Connell & Wellborn, 1991) in an AP for 14-16 year olds. The self-system model of motivational processes (Connell & Wellborn, 1991) suggests that students will be engaged in their learning when their learning environment satisfies the psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 35 students and data was triangulated using staff interviews and lesson observations. Interpretive phenomenological analysis was used to code the data.

Results of the study found that more staff practices were categorised as facilitating one of the three needs. Facilitation of these needs in turn fostered trusting, caring and respectful student–staff relationships leading students to become re-engaged in their education. For example, when the need for autonomy was met, students became self-regulated learners, internalise the value of school and disruptive behaviour decreases. A key strength of this paper is the utilisation of a qualitative approach which adds a different dimension to this research field with an exploration of the lived experience of these students. However, the focus on IPA potentially negates the importance of the context by focusing on the individual experience and thus does not explore school exclusion as an issue which is affected by and affects other systems the child is attached to.

There were a number of studies prevalent in the scoping review focusing on psychodynamic interventions. Three of these studies stress the importance of 'containment' within therapeutic practice in PRUs.

Firstly, McLoughlin's (2010) study draws on her own therapeutic case studies to highlight psychodynamic work within a PRU for 6 -16 year olds in an inner London borough. The study employs a deductive approach and applies Bion's (1962) concept of emotional containment as a crucial important factor in working in PRUs. The author utilises case studies to show that this containment is necessary for work in an environment like a PRU which at times can be emotionally unstable and hard to maintain boundaries. In this context one has to construct boundaries based on Bion's (1962) three concentric circles of containment, around the child and family, the PRU staff group and the network. The containment of the child was facilitated through individual psychotherapy, the parent through parent work and the staff and wider network through a work discussion group and supervision. The author argues that these concentric circles of containment are necessary to create time and space for the system to think together particularly in an environment like the PRU where constantly networks are in a state of flux and organisational relationships need be negotiated (McLoughlin, 2010).

Secondly, Solomon & Thomas's (2012) study outlines the importance of this concept in therapeutic practice in a PRU for students aged 11–14. The authors of the paper describe their therapeutic approach in the PRU which is based on psychoanalytic ideas of containment and restorative practice. The authors of the paper argue that the most important factor to ensure successful AP therapeutic work is the emotional containment of the staff. The paper argues that behavioural interventions by themselves are not sufficient therapeutic practice within this environment, as they tend to ignore the experience of staff and the emotional impact of the work which in turn impacts their relationship with the pupils. The paper outlines that practices which draw on psychoanalytical ideas around containment, holding and attachment are key to provide a safe holding environment within the PRU to allow staff and pupils to reflect and mentalize behaviour and thus develop ways of managing disruptive behaviour. The paper also affirms the importance of restorative practice in order to repair relationships within the school community. The authors argue that behaviour is positioned as a relational issue which is influenced by the whole system of the school (Solomon & Thomas, 2012)

Finally, another paper which draws on the importance of containment within therapeutic interventions in AP was Diamond's (2013) case study on the Mulberry Bush School, a specialist therapeutic provision for children with severe emotional difficulties, many of whom are excluded from mainstream provision. The author stressed the importance of 'containment' in its work. This research utilised psychoanalytical theory to inform readers and researchers about the use of a "lived experience" of therapeutic community work as an effective intervention for severely emotionally troubled children whom the majority of which are excluded from school. A core concept of the school is to provide a "24 hour curriculum" and emotional holding for children with severe attachment disorders. The author argues that the emotional world of the child is positioned as integral to their development, ability to regulate behaviour and capacity to learn. Thus this approach departs from previous mentioned behavioural interventions focusing solely on the child's behaviour. The school stresses the importance of creating safe individual and group therapeutic relationships within structured and purposeful living routines, which over time children can explore and internalise. The author also argues that the residential aspect of the school allows the staff team to develop secure attachments. Therefore, provision within this setting may be more accessible for these families than a traditional clinic setting which constructs different boundaries and physically, more distanced relationships.

In sum, the exploration of psychoanalytical skills in these studies provides a nuanced exploration of AP therapeutic practice and the importance of a relational approach in therapeutic work with this demographic. However, the studies do not account for the families' and children's voice within the research. This potentially limits the robust nature of the findings as they are not grounded in the lived experience of service users within this environment.

Finally, Malberg's (2008) study offers another psychodynamic reflection into therapeutic work undertaken at a PRU for pupils aged 14 and above. The author draws on case studies to illustrate the process, effectiveness and learning from the implementation of two mentalization based psychodynamic

groups, one for CYP and one for staff. Case studies are used to exemplify the importance of holding in mind the needs of the external world (the stressful, unpredictable context and rules and regulations of the PRU) and the internal world (the emotional world of the pupils which seeks expression and consistency in the therapeutic space) within this environment and how they interact with each other (Malberg, 2008). The therapist reflected that the group for teachers provided an invaluable space to mentalize themselves, the CYP and their families; a crucial skill in the stressful and overwhelming environment of the PRU. Furthermore, the author also argued that the group for CYP improved their capacity to mentalize and enter into and feel different emotional states rather than enact disruptive behaviour. Again the standpoint of the research from the therapist's perspective fails to include rich and interesting insights from the PRU students and does not examine how this approach may have impacted important relationships in the child's wider network for example, their family.

1.6.3. Summary

This scoping review highlights that the existing body of research on therapeutic interventions for CYP excluded from school focuses predominantly on psychodynamic or behavioural therapeutic interventions. Furthermore, despite the systemic nature of exclusion outlined in Section 1. 3.1 none of the studies include both the CYP and families' subjective experiences and also take into consideration an exploration of their social contexts, which shape these experiences. The studies within the review also focused on the impact of these interventions at solely a CYP level. Another key gap in the research is the absence of the experience of younger children below the age of 11 and studies which looks at the therapeutic practice of the school in the context of the whole journey of children and families from mainstream exclusion to AP reintegration.

1.7. Rationale

In light of the importance of considering systemic factors at play in school exclusion outlined in Section 1.3.1 and the research gaps identified in the scoping review the current study seeks to offer a novel perspective. To attend to these research gaps and the importance of systemic factors this study will explore CYP (including those below the age of 11) and their families' subjective experience of their journey from school exclusion to integration into a therapeutic AP. In turn, this study seeks to highlight key systemic principles that remain absent from or unexplored in research.

Clinical psychologists are a key profession within a network of helping agencies working with excluded children and those at risk of school exclusion (National Health Service, NHS England, 2015). The integral mental health policy document the Green Paper (2017) advocated the primacy of educational settings as a key site for children's mental health provision. In this paper there was a particular emphasis on the role of clinical psychologists in the provision of consultation for school staff and the development of whole school approaches towards mental health support in these contexts (DfE, 2017). This paper also outlines the role of clinical psychologists in the supervision of a new key workforce within this provision: Education Mental Health Practitioners. These practitioners will offer individual and group support to young people with mild to moderate mental health issues including anxiety, low mood and behavioural difficulties within the school setting (DfE, 2017).

Furthermore, the most recent development within the government's programme of expansion and collaboration between schools and mental health services is embodied within The Link Programme (DfE, 2018). The Link Programme is led by the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families and funded by the Department for Education. This programme affirms the centrality of clinical psychology input and provision in schools (DfE,2018). The link programme draws together professionals from schools and mental health services within their clinical commissioning group (CCG)

area in a series of workshops to draw up long term plans to embed a culture of collaborative working across these two service areas. CCGs have outlined clinical psychologists as a key profession to attend this workshop and shape these plans (DfE,2018).

In addition, another key policy document the British Psychological Society Faculty for Children, Young People and their Families review of best practice in psychological services in schools and colleges (2017) affirms the importance for clinical psychology provision and input in schools. The review outlines the importance for clinical psychology training of school staff to understand and detect early signs of distress and the impact of trauma on a child's behaviour (Faulconbridge, Hickey, Jeffs, McConnellogue, Patel, Picciotto, & Pote, 2017). The paper affirms the role of clinical psychologists as a key workforce in this provision in a number of areas including: training and consultation for school staff, conducting clinical assessments and interventions and the provision of clinical formulation for staff around a child's difficulties (Faulconbridge et al., 2017).

Thus, the prominence of schools as a key site of mental health provision and the importance of clinical psychologists within this provision outlined in these policy documents affirms the relevance and timely importance of this research. The research findings have potential to contribute to practice, knowledge and theory within this area, which will help to shape this evolving collaborative relationship and service provision between schools and mental health services.

A core claim that underpins the rationale behind this thesis, is that it is imperative clinical psychology continues to develop a framework which seeks to comprehensively engage with the issue of school exclusion in all its systemic complexities. This requires clinical psychology to attend to all the different systems the excluded child is connected to: from the family and school, to macro level factors, such as the child's economic context. This demand aligns with the current priority of the profession to become a vehicle

for policy change, and to engage with all the different systems which may affect a child's mental health and wellbeing (NHS England, 2015).

1.7.1. Aims

The current study aims to explore the subjective journey of CYP and their families from school exclusion to therapeutic AP. To explore this trajectory the study will focus on a systemic understating of school exclusion and pay particular attention to how relationships and the 'problem' are constructed in these environments, as well as how these experiences are influenced by different contexts. Within this exploration key psychological theories of systemic, mentalization and epistemic trust will be utilised to enrich the understanding of such experiences.

The proposed study will explore this by:

- Carrying out qualitative interviews with CYP and family members and a drawing exercise with the CYP in order to learn from their subjective experiences of this journey.

1.7.2. Research Questions

1. How do participants understand their experience of the journey from exclusion to therapeutic AP?

2. How do participants construct relationships within both environments?

3. How is the 'problem' behaviour managed in these different contexts?

4. How are emotions managed in these contexts?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Overview

This study adopted a qualitative approach using a mixture of visual and verbal data collection, analysed using TA. In this chapter I will first outline the ontological and epistemological position of the study and then a rationale for the qualitative approach is provided. Following this, I describe the procedures of the study, including information about participants, ethical approval and data collection. Finally, the analytical approach will be discussed.

2.2. The Ontological and Epistemological Position

2.2.1. Ontological Position

Ontology is the philosophical concern about the nature of the world and its phenomena (Willig, 2013). A process relational ontological approach informed this study (Brown & Stenner, 2009). This position views the nature of the world as consisting of inter related, on-going processes understood as in a constant state of becoming rather than a static state of 'being' (Brown & Stenner, 2009). This approach acknowledges that systems such as the family are both materially located and malleable, emergent through ongoing processes of development and change (Brown & Stenner, 2009). Thus people are located in relational and material systems which are dynamic and subject to change and therefore to understand their experiences holistically one has to consider their position in relation to these contexts (Dowling & Osborne, 2003). This theory provides the lens in which the CYP and families' experience of school exclusion and AP will be explored. The exploration will focus on their many interactions with different systems including their own family, other families, the school and wider networks.

2.2.2. Epistemological Position

Epistemology is the philosophical concern about the nature of knowledge and knowledge acquisition and is therefore concerned with exploring how we know what we know (Burr, 2006). A critical realist epistemology underpinned this study. This approach can be conceptualised as a stance, which lies between realist and relativist epistemologies (Willig, 2012). A realist epistemology argues that reality is objective and consists of concrete facts out there to be discovered, which can be known through our senses (Willig, 2008). Research as seen from this position can obtain knowable truths about the world and findings can directly reflect reality (Willig, 2012). In contrast, a relativist approach advocates that reality is relative and constructed according to our perceptions and interpretations shaped by our different social and cultural contexts (Burr, 2006). Research, as seen from this perspective, explores people's perceptions and constructions of reality rather than revealing objective truths about reality (Burr, 2006). A critical realist epistemology is informed by both these positions, it acknowledges the co-existence of material reality alongside the individual's subjective experience and human agency (Corbin, Strauss & Strauss, 2015). This position argues that a person's material context exists, however their interpretation of this context will be shaped by their own agency and meaning making processes (Corbin et al., 2015). This position will be utilised within the study to explore CYP and their families' subjective experience of leaving mainstream and entering AP rooted within their material and social contexts.

This epistemological position is particularly helpful in the study as it provides a framework to facilitate a holistic and rich exploration of the topic area. As outlined in the introduction one cannot isolate a child's behaviour, which leads to exclusion from their material, and social contexts and important factors such as economic stability, parenting and early childhood experience (Gill, 2017). Therefore, this epistemological stance does not negate or diminish the importance of these contexts in mediating the participants' subjective experience and this research will argue that one cannot isolate participants' subjective experience from their material and social reality.

2.3. Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative methodology incorporating two forms of data collection, which was then analysed as one data set. The rationale to analyse the two data sources collectively derived from the implementation structure of the interview and drawing activity as a connected and complimentary data exercise (Wezemaela & Zweifela, 2012). The drawing exercise was embedded within the interview schedule and used to elaborate on narrative data and stimulate content related to the interview questions, perhaps more difficult to surface via verbal communication (Noyes, 2009; Okada, Sherborne & Shum, 2008). As Okada et al. (2008) comments this integration of narrative and visual data exercises 'mediate[s] the inner mental world and outer physical world´ (p. 8) facilitating the visualisation of inner world views (Wezemaela & Zweifela, 2012). Thus the connection of the two data methods from the beginning led to the natural progression to therefore analyse these data sources together which is also a standard research procedure used in similar mixed methods research (McGrath, & Reavey, 2013; Yardley, 2008).

This methodology provides a framework for focusing on explorative open-ended enquiry and the participants' meaning-making processes (McGrath & Reavey, 2013) and therefore suited the explorative nature of the study. The qualitative approach as Willig (2013) affirms is "concerned with the quality and texture of experience, rather than the identification of cause-effect relationships" (p.8). The identification of "cause-effect relationships" has often dominated research in the field of school exclusion in the form of policy reports focusing on the demographic and outcomes of those excluded (Parker et al., 2015) and therefore this methodology was chosen to facilitate a different type of exploration within this area.

Furthermore, I intentionally chose a methodology, which would endeavour to be as inclusive as possible, and not repeat participants' experience of exclusion with the research process itself. It is argued that often quantitative

research can be reductive or label participants' experience and thus exclude their subjectivity and agency within the research process (Willig, 2008). In contrast, qualitative methodology with its focus on open-ended enquiry (Braun & Clarke, 2013) provided an inclusive framework to encapsulate many different CYP and families' voices within the research.

2.3.1 Data Collection

Two data collection methods were employed to explore participants' subjective experience of this journey. These methods were:

2.3.1.1. *Qualitative interviews:* Interviews were selected to provide an open space to explore participants' experience of school exclusion and AP; their relationships within these contexts and interactions with many different systems. One to one semi-structured interviews were conducted at the school with CYP and family members attending the school. One to one qualitative interviews rather than focus groups were chosen to allow for an in depth discussion about the participants' personal experience. Individual one to one interviews provided a platform for participants to engage in a different type of conversation than the predominant group conversations enacted within the family class and parent group, where participants shared and talked to each other in a group context.

I wanted to use a research method, which would contrast these activities and mark the interview as a distinct space to talk in a more personal and intimate manner (Hedges, 1985) about their experience of school exclusion and the AP. Focus groups were deemed to create a context too similar to the social spaces already enacted within the school setting. Furthermore, the interview questions may touch upon potentially sensitive topic areas, therefore the private and individual space of a one to one interview would perhaps allow for certain personal narratives (Foster & Robson, 1989) and feelings to arise which may have been difficult in a focus group with others present. Furthermore, I also hoped that this space would allow for an easier expression of differing and non-conforming views (Weber, 1995).

2.3.1.2. *Drawing Exercises:* Drawing exercises were employed within the CYP semi-structured interview. There are four key reasons why visual methods were employed within this study.

Firstly, visual methodologies are particularly useful when working with CYP (Fargas-Malet, Larkin, McSherry, & Robinson, 2010). A drawing exercise can help build rapport between the researcher and participant through an external activity (Hazel, 1996) and provide a tangible reference point throughout the interview to help structure conversation and aid its flow (Barriage, Li, Lopatovska & Mabbott, 2017). The drawing exercise was implemented in the interview at time to help the CYP organise their own narratives around their journey from mainstream to AP (Hill, 1997). Also as an unfamiliar person for the children this activity helps to create a relaxed perhaps less confrontational dynamic in the room then solely a one to one interview; particularly helpful with a demographic who may find it difficult to trust unfamiliar people (Nicholson & Putwain, 2018).

Secondly, this demographic may have additional learning needs (Gill, 2017) and visual exercises within research methods are often thought to be more accessible than questionnaire formats or solely one to one interviews and thus may work better with this population (Backett-Milburn, Harden, Jackson & Scott 2000). The language and format of outcome measures may also present a barrier for some children to partake depending on their literacy and verbal communication levels (Harden et al., 2000). An activity, which also engages their body as well as their mind, may have helped with concentration and focus in the interview (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999). Also considering the age of some of the participants (aged 7-10) this was deemed even more appropriate.

Thirdly, in addition to aiding conversation flow and creating an engaging environment the drawings were also a research tool in their own right. Visual exercises can facilitate as Noyes (2009) terms the “surfacing of... unknown

unknowns" (p. 141); all our emotions, thoughts and feelings less consciously accessible to us. Thus the CYP's drawings may also provide an insight into CYP's more unconscious meaning-making processes throughout their journey (Milner, 2010).

Finally, drawing exercises were also chosen to empower CYP in the process. Within research children can often feel disempowered and passive agents in the process, with research done fundamentally on them not alongside (Mayall, 2000). This experience may also resonate with their experience of school exclusion and transition to AP where they may have also have felt powerless and passive in the process (Coram, 2019). Furthermore, within the current explosion of media attention and political interest around school exclusion and AP there is an often lack of CYP voice present within this narrative (Coram, 2019). Thus drawings were used as an intentional method to create a platform for CYP to actively construct their own narrative and allow their own voices to emerge. As Barley and Russell (2019) affirm this method creates a "paradigm shift in the conceptualization of children from passive participants to active, knowledgeable social agents able to contribute to the production of knowledge that is not solely reliant on the verbal" (p.1).

In discussion with a current colleague, an art therapist, who had experience working with CYP with visual activities I developed two drawing exercises. The first drawing exercise was positioned near the beginning of the interview; children were invited to draw a self-portrait of themselves on their first day at the AP and then a portrait of themselves today having been at the school for at least one year. This exercise provided a tangible reference point (Banks & Zeitlyn, 2015) to explore the child's journey from mainstream to AP. The second drawing exercise was employed later on during the interview when asking questions pertaining to the CYP's family. The CYP were invited to draw a picture of their family on their first day at the school and then now today to explore CYP's relationship with their family throughout this journey. The drawing exercises were developed directly from and rooted within the research questions (McGrath, & Reavey, 2013) specifically attending to the research question exploring the participants understanding of their experience

of the journey from exclusion to therapeutic AP. This drawing exercises directly looked at these experiences and also any change over time CYP experienced during this journey. This exercise opened up discussion around family and systemic factors in a tangible and accessible way as they provided an external and material object that can help CYP to conceptualise and communicate complex and abstract ideas (Buckingham, 2009).

The drawings were analysed within the thematic analysis framework using content analysis (Guerin & Merriman, 2006). Content analysis is as Krippendorf (2018) describes a research technique for "making replicable and valid inferences from visual data" (p. 18). Content analysis allows for the exploration of themes from the visual data. A content analysis was conducted whereby the data was examined for recurring themes. In a similar procedure to the analysis of the narrative data, visual themes arose from the images and meaning was attributed to what was concretely drawn on the page. Meaning and themes were rooted specifically in the concrete details of the drawings and never imposed without having a link to a specific detail within the drawing.

2.3.2. Recruitment and Research Procedure

2.3.2.1. *Recruitment:* In August 2017 I contacted and met with the co- founder of the AP and expressed my interest to conduct my thesis research at the school. He was positive about my proposal and gave approval to conduct the research at the school (Appendix B). I began attending the school one day a week from May- July 2018. During this period I attended 'Parent Learning' and 'Family Class' to become a familiar face to the families. From late June I provided family members who indicated an interest in the research an information sheet (Appendix C) and explained the study to them. I emphasised that they or their CYP were under no obligation to participate. At the end of this term, July 2018, I approached CYP whom I had parental/caregiver consent to ask if they would like to take part in the research. I provided them with an information sheet (Appendix D) and spoke about the research with them. Again I reiterated to the CYP that they were under no obligation to participate.

2.3.2.2. *The AP School*: Details of this research site are outlined in the introduction and a glossary of specific key activities of the school are presented in Appendix A.

2.3.2.3. *Sample*: Nineteen participants were recruited for the study; 11 parents and 8 children. Participants did not necessarily come from the same family unit. Although participants did not necessarily come from the same family unit I am interviewing a representative sample of different members of the family system (parent and child) which the model of the school works with. This provides an exploration of a whole family experience as views are present within the research from different members of the family system.

The inclusion criterion was that parents were over 18 and engaged in the school to some extent either attending the multi-family day or the school on one other full day. Criteria for the CYP was that they had been engaged in the school for at least two terms on a full time or part time basis. Altogether 19 interviews were conducted and all CYP took part in the drawing exercises to some extent. A large sample group was chosen to facilitate a rich systemic exploration of the topic and be inclusive of different family members and CYP experiences.

Three males and eight females took part in the adult interviews comprising of mothers, fathers and other family members. There was a mix of ethnicity and ages within this group. Ages ranged from 29 to 50 and ethnicities from White British, Afro Caribbean to White Portuguese. Some parents and their CYP had been at the school for a few years others a few weeks. The family members had different levels of engagement with the school. Some family members were present at the school regularly a few days a week, including the multi-family day, others attended one day a week either on the multi-family day or another day.

The CYP participants ranged from ages 7-14, with two girls and six boys taking part. The children had been at the school for different lengths of time, and comprised of both full time and part time attenders, but all participants had attended the school for at least one year. The children were from different ethnicities such as Afro Caribbean, Asian, Mixed race and White British. Within the group there were backgrounds of being in care and adoption. Some of the children came from single parent families. The majority the CYP had different learning needs, Education and Health Care (EHC) plans and received FSM. All the younger CYP participants (aged 7-10) family members engaged in the school weekly on the multi-family programme day.

Furthermore, the diversity of sample group in terms of their level of engagement in the AP and the multi-family programme was also intentional. This diversity provided an opportunity to explore how different levels of system interaction affected the participants' experience of this journey and the AP.

2.3.2.4. *Procedure:* Once informed consent was secured. All participants were made aware via verbal communication and written communication on the consent forms that what they say in the interviews as well as CYP drawings may be used in publications and reports and be publically available. All interviews took place at the school in a private space at a convenient time for the participant. All family member interviews were carried out first and then the CYP.

Adult interviews varied in length and ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour. The interviews were guided by a semi-structured schedule (Appendix E) but a flexible stance was adopted throughout to allow for a natural flow in conversation and follow up on participants' unique meaning making processes.

CYP interviews lasted between 15-40 minutes depending on the child's level of engagement. Again here a semi-structured schedule (Appendix F) guided

the interview but at times in relation to the respondent's answers the conversation flowed in different directions. During the interviews the younger CYP (aged 7-10) were invited to take part in both drawing exercises and the older children (aged) were asked to complete the self-portrait drawing exercise only. This decision was based on the rationale that the older CYP parents were not present within the school on a regular basis.

2.3.3. Ethics

2.3.3.1. *Ethical Approval*: The University of East London's School of Psychology Ethics Committee gave ethical approval for the study in May 2018 (Appendix G).

2.3.3.2. *Informed Consent:* After the adult participants had read the information sheet and we had spoken about the study they were provided with the relevant consent form (either the adult consent form, the CYP parental/primary caregiver consent form or both if applicable, see Appendix H-I). For CYP parent/primary caregiver consent was obtained first. CYP then read or listened to an explanation of the study from the information sheet. We then discussed the study and then the CYP was provided with an assent form (Appendix J). Once participants confirmed that they understood the study and would like to proceed, written consent was obtained. Participants' right to withdraw from the study prior to the analysis stage without providing a reason and with no negative repercussions was outlined. It was also made clear that this study was participatory; they did not have to take part and neither would it affect any part of their relationship with the school.

2.3.3.3. *Confidentiality:* The researcher collected and transcribed all the data. All identifying features in the transcript and drawings were altered to help ensure anonymity. All participants and any other names they may mention during the interview were assigned a pseudonym. Consent forms, original CYP drawings and any printed transcripts were stored in a locked cupboard in my supervisor's office or at the school. Interview recordings, typed transcripts, scanned copies of CYP drawings and any drafts of the study were saved in an encrypted password protected file on my computer. Participants were informed that information they shared would be kept confidential, however if during the interview there were concerns about risk of harm either to themselves of others than I would have to let appropriate adult know. For example, the school safeguarding lead, and if appropriate the Ethics' safeguarding lead.

2.3.3.4. *Risk:* No adverse events were expected as a consequence of taking part in the study. However, it was acknowledged in the information sheet the potential risk that participants may become distressed discussing their experiences. To help minimise risk, the interview structure was flexible and non-obligatory to follow and participants at the beginning of the interview were reminded of the right to withdraw. After each interview a debrief was offered.

2.3.4. Analytical Approach

2.3.4.1. *Thematic Analysis*: Thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clark, 2013) was utilised to analyse the data set. The objective of TA is to elicit rich and meaningful patterns across data sets (Braun & Clark, 2013). I chose TA for its epistemological and ontological flexibility and therefore fit with the systemic ontological position of this study.

The study adopted a dual inductive-deductive approach to the implementation of TA. An inductive TA builds research from the bottom up with a focus on the 'raw' data and does not impose a pre-determined coding frame on the data

(Braun, Clark & Terry, 2015). In contrast, a more deductive 'top-down' analysis, places an established theoretical framework on the data providing a reference framework for the analysis to flow from (Braun et al., 2015).

The dual inductive-deductive approach was deemed most suitable as it affirmed my position as a researcher as Joffe (2012) argues entering this study with particular "preconceived categories derived from theories" (p.210). My research questions were open ended and overall looking at the participants' experience of school exclusion and AP reintegration. However, I was looking at their experience in a school with a particular systemic framework and I adopted a process relational ontological position, which positioned my role as a researcher attending to different systemic factors at play. Thus, I had these systemic perspectives in mind and also other key theories of the approach of the school such as mentalization, attachment and epistemic. However, this theoretical orientation did not impose a pre-established coding framework. I remained open to the new ideas and concepts and thus inductive meanings driven from the 'raw data' encapsulating a multiplicity of subjective experiences. I was not committed to looking for specific particular findings from this angle from the beginning but rather would be led by the findings gathered from the open research questions. This framework therefore provided a method to elicit both manifest and latent themes in the data. Manifest themes are those which can be directly observed in the data and latent on the other hand refers to themes which relate to ideologies or theories that are potentially underneath the manifest 'surface' level data (Delahunt & Maguire, 2017).

2.3.4.2. *Transcription*: Transcription was viewed as an initial stage of analysis (Braun & Clark, 2013). The recordings were transcribed verbatim at the sematic level. Transcribing conventions are contained in Appendix K adapted from Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindal (1994).

2.3.5. Outline of Thematic Analysis

The dataset was thematically analysed using stages outlined by (Braun & Clark, 2013). Each of the following steps was conducted in a systematic order, first looking at adult interviews and then CYP interviews. CYP drawing content analysis also followed the following steps and was conducted at the point in which the drawings arose during the CYP interview.

2.3.5.1. *Familiarity with the data:* All interviews were read repeatedly and CYP drawings explored. Emerging ideas and potential areas of interest were marked on the margins of the transcripts and drawings. Pertinent observations from field notes were also added to this data**.**

2.3.5.2. *Generating initial codes:* Due to the large number of interviews (18) narrative data transcripts were uploaded to NVIVO (a qualitative data analysis computer software). This software provided a robust framework to code all the data in a comprehensive and thorough manner. Codes can be defined as "a succinct label that captures a key analytical idea in the data" (Braun et al., 2015, p.100). The data at this stage was coded in a broad and inclusive manner. The coding of the data was rooted in the open research questions paying particular attention to narrative around the participants' experience, relationships in these environments and the management of emotions and the 'problem' behaviour in these contexts.

2.3.5.3: *Searching for themes:* After the transcripts had been coded, codes were collated into potential themes. This was a very importance stage at the research. I had a large amount of data and I remember feeling slightly overwhelmed by the sheer size of all the data and all the subsequent codes created (as I had coded in a broad and inclusive manner covering all of the participant's experience). At this point I met with my supervisor to share how I was feeling at this stage of the analysis. In discussion with my supervisor it was clear that I had to create an argument with all this data- an argument which was rooted in and emerged from the data rather than imposing a framework.

Creating this argument involved actively identifying the relationship between codes and potential overarching ideas. An early overarching thematic map was drawn out (Appendix L) to visually conceptualise how the codes grouped together. This map gathered broad areas of interest relating to the open research questions. At this stage, I noticed that a key issue for the participants was the sense of belonging and relationships of understanding and trust at the AP. This led me to draw upon theories around mentalization and epistemic trust. Furthermore, many participants described the atmosphere of the school akin to that of being in a family, so I included more research on partnerships between school and the family. This led me to focus on the work of a key theorist within this area Joyce Epstein. I looked specifically at her work around the relationships between the family and the school and the involvement of family members at school. Furthermore, another interesting feature of the data was the participant's exclusion of emotions in the mainstream school context and emotional containment within the AP environment. This led me to explore literature around emotional cultures particularly within the mainstream classroom provision and the impact of emotional containment for the child.

2.3.5.4. *Reviewing themes:* After the initial overarching thematic map (Appendix L) more developed and detailed thematic maps were produced (Appendix M). These thematic maps were developed from the data and attended to key stages that the participants described about their journey from school exclusion to AP. For example, participants spoke of the broad impact of school exclusion not only on their child but on all areas of their life. They described exclusion as a destructive force which led to a breakdown of relationships in a number of different areas. This lead to particular reading around systemic principles such as the child as a relational self and also the system of the family as an open system which is connected to and impacted by many different systems. These findings pointed towards the theme around 'System Breakdown'.

Another example of how the themes were elicited for the data is in the participants' experience of the AP. A key feature of the participants' experience of the AP was one of belonging and inclusion. Participants noted the therapeutic value of feeling connected and supported to the school staff, other parents and their child during their time at the AP. These findings led again to explore the family as an open system and the impact of being connected to rather than excluded from other systems the family unit interacts with. From these participant descriptions the theme 'System Integration' was developed to describe this key feature of their journey.

Moreover, participants described key experiences of trust, understanding and being listened to in their relationships with staff, within their own family and other families during this journey. These characteristics of their relationships were described differently across the two contexts of AP and mainstream. This led to further reading around the importance and therapeutic value of being understood and fostering trust between professionals and service users.

Thematic maps were reviewed alongside transcripts, CYP drawings and field notes to review how closely connected the themes were to the data. Key extracts were then added to different themes. Themes were checked for

internal coherence, consistence and a distinctive nature. This was challenging at times because there seemed to be many overlapping themes between the 'System Integration', which concentrated on the methods used by the school, and 'System Transformation', which focused on the impact of these methods. It was difficult to distinguish the participants' description of the model and its impact in a separate manner. This process led to certain themes being collapsed and taken out of 'System Integration' to maintain its distinctiveness and to refine and make sure data in these sections particularly referred to a method. Finally, I checked that coded extracts were in the correct theme and the themes worked in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. I checked to confirm that the analysis and data match each other and the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.

2.3.5.5. *Defining and naming themes*: Each theme was clearly defined and given a name. I checked that the analysis was telling a coherent story about the data and topic. I made my final selection of vivid extract examples, and reviewed the extracts' coherence and effectiveness in relation to the research question, literature, and overall narrative of the report. I found the selection of vivid extracts particularly challenging at times as I had a lot of data which was very rich. To help with this refinement process I discussed the extracts I was deliberating on with my supervisor. This helped me to re-focus on the claims I wanted to make for each theme and in turn identify the most compelling extracts to illustrate this.

2.3.6. Reflexivity

Here I will reflect on as Willig (2008) terms personal reflexivity: the awareness that my own position; professional and personal may have influenced and shaped the research process.

I was particularly interested in research at this school because of the space in which it delivered therapeutic intervention; non-traditional, accessible and outside of the clinic. All previous clinical experience prior to training was in these types of contexts. I worked on a mental health project working with

young people involved in youth offending based on an estate within their neighbourhood. I also worked in an intentional community for adults with learning disabilities with an emphasis on creating a family home environment for staff and service users. Both services challenged traditional ways of delivering therapy, were systemic in nature and also enacted different boundaries between staff and service users. As a result of these experiences I was intrigued by the way often very close and trusting relationships were developed in these environments outside of traditional clinic settings. I had also known about the model of the school through a previous work connection and was particularly struck by its multi-family approach. In this study therefore I was curious to explore how relationships were enacted and therapy took place in similarly, a non-traditional setting where many systems and professionals are integrated including home, school and health.

Moreover, personally I felt that due to my own family background the school perhaps had a particular appeal and resonance for me. I am from a big extended family and as a child I grew up alongside and was cared for by cousins, aunties and uncles. I love being part of a big family and have a very positive experience of it. Therefore, the culture of the school which places family at the core of its work with its open door to family members and regular multi-family activities seemed a very a familiar and exciting context for me to be around. Thus, due to my own family background I held a particular assumption around the positive experience a child can have growing up in a wide supportive network. This experience also shaped a particular interest in inter and intra family interactions in the school.

Finally, I also had a growing awareness during my years on a Doctorate level course about the many opportunities that education had afforded me in life. I am from a working-class background and am the first generation in my family to go to university. Education has given me many opportunities and a result I will have less economic pressures than my parents had. This background has affected my awareness of the importance education for all CYP as a powerful vehicle for social mobility, job security and financial stability.

Altogether, these personal and professional experiences have meant that I undertook this research holding a position that education, family network and background have a huge impact on the lives of CYP. These assumptions were challenged during the research in particular from participants who had less engagement with the multi-family programme of the school. These participants questioned the value of this approach and the rationale of having parents within the school. This challenged my assumption that all participants would have liked the family atmosphere of the school. To disrupt my instinctive assumption that creating this atmosphere was positive I tried to pay particular attention to these minority views. I did this by keeping a reflective journal (Bolton, 2003) (Appendix N-O) and having reflective discussions with my academic supervisor to remain aware how my feelings and personal histories were impacting the research process.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Overview

In this chapter, the research findings are interpreted and discussed. The analysis is underpinned by Systems Theory and the understanding of the child as a relational self that is part of a wider social system. It will be argued that the behaviour of a child that leads to exclusion is shaped by this wider systemic context, and that exclusion can also have a negative impact on this context. A suitable and successful strategy of intervention into such situations, as I contend, therefore, necessitates approaching school exclusion as a systemic, not individual, problem.

This argument is presented in terms of four themes: ‘System Breakdown’ ‘System Integration’, ‘System Transformation’ and ‘Cracks in the System’.

It will be argued that school exclusion leads to a breakdown of the different systems the child is attached to, particularly their school and home, which in turn leads to the isolation of the problem by only considering one part of this wider systemic context. AP intervention instead treats the child as a relational self and views the child’s behaviour as formed within a wider systemic context. Moreover, the AP intervention is focused on the interpersonal relationships within these contexts, thereby understanding the ‘problem’ behaviour not as intrinsic to the child but as related to this wider context. This model relocates the solution to this problem in terms of the relationships and social contexts that the child is attached to, rather than solely within one individual or system – the child, parent, or school. In doing so, different parts of this wider system become activated and are able to provide collective support for the child.

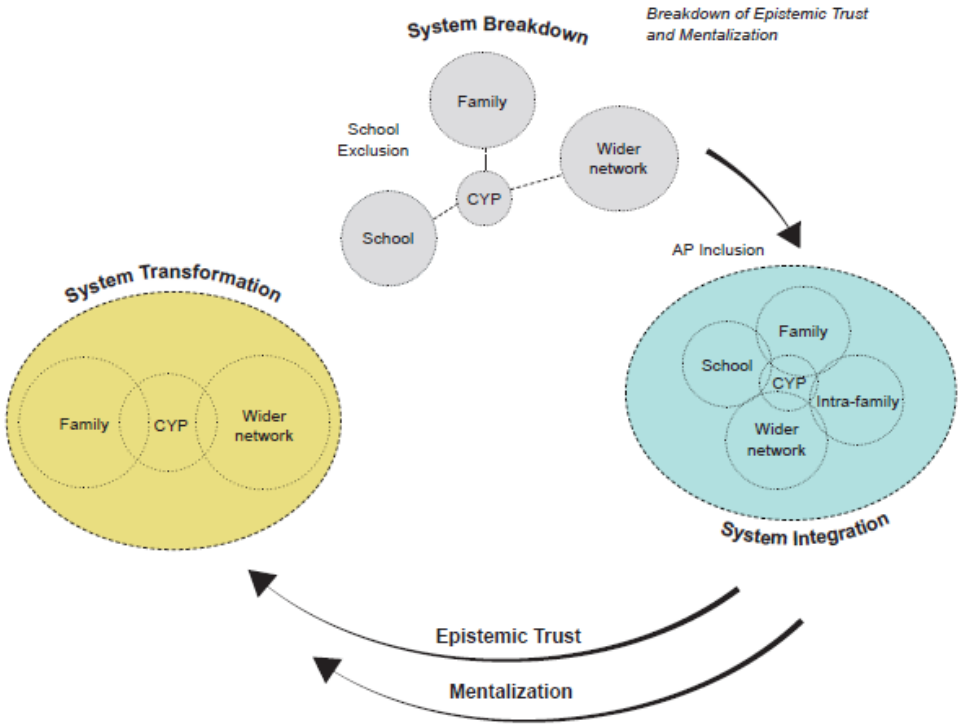


Figure 1: Core Concept Thematic Map

3.2. System Breakdown

In this first theme I will argue that school exclusion is a pervasive, and not an isolated, phenomena, which affects the child's whole self and system. The pervasive impact of exclusion leads to a breakdown and isolation of all the different parts of the system. This isolation in turn creates a sense of paralysis within the system, making it difficult to mobilise the system to support the child. This theme is explored below through the sub themes of CYP exclusion, Family Exclusion, and Wider Network Exclusion.

3.2.1 CYP Exclusion

Participants' narratives highlight that school exclusion leads to many different types of exclusion in the child's life.

One aspect of exclusion the children describe is their spatial exclusion:

> Noah: It felt like you were in prison because even if you were calmed down they wouldn't let you out.
>
> Scott: They just used to restrain you and lock you in rooms.

In these two statements the children describe how exclusion from the classroom led to their segregation in an isolated space, an action that is described as punitive and oppressive, akin to a 'prison' where staff would 'restrain and lock you'. These descriptions highlight how the child's exclusion moves them into a physical space closed off from the open system of the classroom. In such situations, the child is not only excluded from exercising their spatial freedom in communal spaces where they can relate with others, but from their relational self (Burkitt, 1994). This description of spatial exclusion corresponds with the research of Barker et al. (2010), which argues that the creation of segregated spaces within school for the punishment and regulation of the child's behaviour and body are experienced like prisons.

This spatial exclusion was also described by a parent at the school as leading to the child's social exclusion away from classmates:

> Sophie: They (disruptive children) weren't able to mingle or be around their friends… they didn't want to interrupt the children or …the lesson or to integrate the group setting because they were seen as a problem. They don't want it to spread in the group setting.

In this account Sophie describes the rationale behind exclusion as one of attempting to prevent the child being able to 'mingle or be around' their friends and peers. This description notably presents the exclusion and segregation of the child in terms of a contagion which needs to be spatially and thus socially isolated, so that their behaviour will not 'spread' to the group. The child's contact with other pupils was thus seen as representing a potentially

destabilising effect on the equilibrium or homeostasis of the class room system (Bateson, 1972). In such cases, the school imposes a closed system around the child, who is taken out of the classroom's relational and mentalizing context. The implication of this approach is that that the child's behaviour is isolated from the context of the classroom and viewed as intrinsic to the child: 'they are seen as the problem'.

The above parent's description of exclusion is prevalent in the DfE rationale behind exclusion outlined in the introduction, wherein the pupil's behaviour is seen as a threat to the education or welfare of other pupils (DfE, 2017). The communal context is again seen as separate to the behaviour of the child, rather than supportive of it, leading to the need for exclusion in order to preserve the communal well-being. This separation of the child from the social context serves to individualise the problem, with the child being removed from a group setting where they may find support. The impact of this individualisation of the problem through separation on the excluded child was a key theme of Hallam and Mainwaring's report (2010), which found the child's experience of isolation from others caused them to internalise the problem, viewing themselves as intrinsically naughty and bad.

The removal of the child from the social context, as the above parent further observes, has a negative impact on the child's capacity to express their emotions:

> Sophie: She wanted to get away, she felt trapped … you know I think it makes it worse the situation because then it will become vent anger inside and it will be worse to express yourself...and I think the trust goes as well because your meant to trust the adult that is in charge of you.

Sophie describes here how the child's exclusion to an isolated space during disruptive behaviour left her feeling 'trapped' with 'vent anger' left inside. It is argued here therefore that the closed system enacted around the child prevents the child from being able to 'express yourself' with another and in

turn ‘trust goes’ in the context as a site to tolerate, communicate and contain the child’s emotions. What results from this break down in epistemic trust between the child and the ‘adult in charge’; the child views that the social context of the school is no longer a place where they can learn about how to process emotions lying behind their behaviour. Nicholson and Putwain’s (2015) study exploring relationships between staff and CYP in a secondary Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) outlined that trust within these relationships is a key mechanism of change leading to the pupil’s understanding and regulation of their behaviour and emotions. The study outlined a key outcome of this was the CYP’s educational reengagement.

Emotional containment of the child which is missing from the example Sophie describes, is cited as key when working with this demographic in AP settings (Diamond, 2013; McLoughlin, 2010; Soloman &Thomas; 2013). The research argues that in these situations the child’s emotions are communicative to staff and therefore to exclude the child misses an opportunity to engage the child, find out what is going on and help them. Containment of emotions is a learned process, whereby the child learns how to process their emotions through the mirroring and containment of emotions by the caregiver (McLoughlin, 2010) or as Sophie describes ‘the adult in charge of you’. Therefore, mentalizing the child in this context, bearing with and containing their emotions will in turn help the child develop internal mechanisms to contain their own emotions. However, without this interaction and experience of containment it is very hard for the child to know how as Sophie describes ‘express yourself’ in a healthy way which does not lead to disruptive behaviour.

The parent’s above description here also resonates with literature about the suppression of emotional expression in the classroom. As Gillies (2011) argues, the acting out of emotions in the classroom is typically viewed as negative, employing schemes to teach children to manage their emotions and train them in self-efficacy. However, the impact of low emotional expressivity and reciprocity in the classroom between the teacher and the child has been associated with low engagement and poor behaviour, affirming that emotional expression is fundamental to the child’s learning experience (Loinaz, 2019).

In sum, this sub theme has shown that school exclusion leads to a breakdown and separation of many different aspects of the child's world – socially, spatially and emotionally – thus individualising the problem and closing off opportunities for the child to communicate and learn from their emotions.

3.2.2. Family Exclusion

The child's exclusion from school can also lead to the exclusion of their families from the school community. Family exclusion is enacted across different relationships within the school community and their own family.

Firstly, family members describe their experience of exclusion from the mainstream school community:

> John: They always say oh the essence is the school community …I felt always isolated, I could see fingers being pointed…you know once the problems had started the parents can be quite cruel …towards me and my son and I was kept out.

> Teresa: I didn't really talk to anybody because the way how he (my child) was made to feel ostracized ...you kinda like were shunned.

In these accounts family members discuss their experiences of being 'shunned', 'ostracised' and 'isolated' during their child's exclusion. These descriptions demonstrate the ways in which the child's exclusion reverberates throughout the wider system of the family and school. In a similar process therefore, it can be seen the family's isolation from the school community in turn enacts a closed system around the family whereby they are 'kept out' of reciprocal relationships and mentalizing with others where there would be the possibility of feeling supported by the community and understood. It can be argued, therefore, that this closed system around the family serves to exclude and isolate family members.

Similarly, to the child's isolation, the parent's isolation from the school community also individualises the problem behaviour within one part of the system, here it is located with the parent. As one parent describes:

> Michael: All I could see was other parents was like growling at me …You don't even know me, you don't know how I conduct myself with my son or what I teach him. You don't know how our relationship is. He's got issues that are beyond my household.

This account describes Michael's experience of the school community as judgemental: they did not 'even know' him or their 'relationship' yet he encountered hostility and 'growling' from them. It can be argued that the community of school, distancing of themselves from Michael enacted a closed system around the parent, thereby making invisible the systemic nature of his child's issue, which he considered 'beyond his household'. Factors in school exclusion 'beyond the household' are a key feature in research on the demographics of these CYP. One in two of these children has a recognised mental health need and they are four times more likely to be from the poorest families (Gill, 2017).

Furthermore, family members also reported a breakdown with their relationships with school staff, as Matthew describes:

> Matthew: You always felt like you were fighting, I tried to have a conversation with the head but I thought you are never going to understand …it is hard to work with a person you feel you are not being listened to or understood.

In this extract Matthew describes a relationship with the head teacher, characterised by 'fighting' and not 'feeling listened to or understood'. This description demonstrates how the exclusion of Matthew's child pervades his relationships with school staff, which is perceived in terms of conflict and distrust. In this case, epistemic vigilance is acute, with the context of the school being closed down to the parent as a system of support and social

learning in his role as a parent. This exclusion of Matthew from a relationship of support means that the parent feels stuck, as it becomes 'hard to work' with this system and move forward collaboratively. Matthew's experience of alienation from school staff resonates with literature on parents' experience of exclusion. McDonald and Thompson's (2003) study issue illustrated parents were often left feeling in a powerless and passive position towards school staff in the face of an impending exclusion. Relationships within teachers were conveyed as very difficult and fraught with miscommunication, in turn the systems of home and school become entrenched as separate spheres (Epstein, 1987).

In addition, school exclusion is also shown to be damaging to family relationships and family life, leading to heightened conflicts between parent and child as these two parents describe:

> Claire: I didn't know how best [to] help my daughter, I didn't feel that she was in the right family …it pushed me to the brink.

> Ana: your dealing with a family that already work across two homes, two working parents your introducing these exclusions that happen that day for the next day …it meant we couldn't keep him in a routine ...he was been chucked all over the place… we have been trying to make everything as consistent as possible but you [the school staff] are working against us… It was just fighting fire with fire. It was just impacting his behaviour …becoming increasingly angry.

Claire's and Ana's account here describes the immense pressure school exclusion puts on the family creating a situation akin to 'fighting with fire' and being 'pushed to the brink'. The process of exclusion exacerbates pre-existing vulnerabilities within the family network – as Ana reports, they are a family which 'already work across two homes'. Exclusion is characterised as a chaotic force that harms the family network, leaving Claire in a position where it is difficult to mentalize with her daughter and 'know how best to help', and Ana in a position struggling to 'keep a routine' while her son is 'chucked all

over the place'. The extract also seems to show an awareness from Anna that the professionals could not mentalize her child as a relational self, viewing exclusion as having a negative impact on his behaviour and the system 'working against' her and the family. In these cases, the parents regard themselves as powerless and passive agents, both in the school and their own family system. This sense of powerlessness in the system and relationships of antagonism with school staff resonates with literature around parents' experiences of exclusion which conveys the heighted day to day stress this places on a family (Briggs, 2010).

3.3.3. Wider network exclusion

The pervasive impact of exclusion can also be seen to reverberate throughout the parent's work and study life. As one parent describes:

> Claire: Eventually Jade was excluded permanently; she was at home with me for about 3 months. I had to defer from university I could no longer attend because …prior to the exclusion I was being called every [day] to collect Jade …she would literally be at home with me…meaning any commitments that you have: going to work, going to university…go.

Claire describes in this extract how her child's exclusion from school had major impacts on her 'work' life and 'university' studies. As the extract shows, the child's exclusion collapses the separate spheres of 'education' and work' in Claire's life. The breaking down of these two independent spheres means Claire can no longer 'attend' other systems in her life. The family, as is evidenced here, operates in an open system with permeable boundaries (Bateson, 1972), which are often influenced by the economic situation of the family. The exclusion of the child from school leads to the exclusion of the parent from other systems – of work or study – consequently isolating the parent from protective and supportive social contexts that can build resilience for families (Deighton & Lereya, 2019).

In sum, this theme has highlighted the destructive impact exclusion has on the system of the family, which leads to the further isolation, disintegration and fragmentation of both the child and parent. This ends up putting immense pressure on the family system. The problem becomes both entrenched and paralysed, closing off potential systems of support from working together. As it is currently enacted here school exclusion does not account for the child's being as a relational self and the child's family as relational which operates and needs support from other systems in its world.

3.3. System Integration: Social Selves

The first theme has shown that school exclusion leads to the isolation and separation of many different parts of the child and their family system. This implies that any effective model of intervention needs to attend to all of these excluded parts. The second theme will illustrate specific methods of the AP model which work to integrate these excluded parts. This theme is divided into two sub themes, each outlining a specific method utilised by the school to activate different parts of the system and to enact a collective, rather than individualised, approach to the problem.

3.3.1. Expose the System

The first method employed is one of systemic exposure. Multiple practices within the school create visibility of many different relationships in the system: inter- and intra-family, staff and family. By bringing together different systems in one place the systemic nature of the child, the contexts of their behaviour, and available system of support is made visible. Furthermore, the use of the school space in a different way creates visibility of the school's intentions and actions, which serve to build relationships of understanding and trust.

Firstly, the integration of family into the school system creates visibility of the parent and child relationship, affirming the child as a relational self and the parents as active, helping agents within this system. As Benjamin illustrates:

> Benjamin: When you are struggling… your parents [are] next to you… they can help you. You still get to spend time with them and plus you can see them.

Benjamin describes how the presence of parents in the AP creates a supportive context where parents are ‘next to you’, ‘you can see them’ and ‘they can help you’. The active presence of parents, it seems, helps the child to feel safe (Howes & Smith, 1994). Furthermore, the presence of parents at the school also seems provide opportunities for the parent to mentalize the child. They are brought into the school system, which allows them to understand the behaviour of the child in terms of mental states (Fonagy et al., 2017) and to better help them with their needs. In turn, the spheres of home and school are no longer separate but brought together in a collaborative relationship (Epstein, 1987). In this instance Benjamin having his parents at the school provides an opportunity for his parent’s to mentalize his ‘struggling’ behaviour and help him to overcome this situation. This experience opens the child’s mind up to learning that solutions to ‘his struggling’ are found in the social context. The feeling of being supported by the system in turn fosters epistemic trust between parent and child. This use of mentalization as a key tool for helping school relationships for children within AP settings is also conveyed in Malberg’s (2008) research exploring the impact of mentalization based group for teachers and CYP in a PRU. The outcomes of the group found that it provided a key space for teachers to open up curiosity about disruptive or ‘struggling’ behaviour and in turn helping them to respond to the child appropriately (Malberg, 2008).

Furthermore, as a parent (Emily) describes below, parental presence at the school has led to closer relationships within the system of the family, as well as a greater connection between the spheres of the school and family:

> Emily: I just feel a lot closer to Daniel …here I sit at the table next to him after lunch he goes to play football and I sit outside and watch him

> so I can comment on positive behaviour so that he feels that school and home is more connected so that is not like worlds in opposition.

By being visible to her son in the school, and being able to comment on his activities, Emily feels ‘a lot closer to Daniel’. This not opens her eyes to his ‘positive behaviour’ but also draws the two systems of school and home into a complimentary relationship, so they are no longer perceived as ‘worlds in opposition’ (Epstein, 1990). This practice thus seems to repair the system breakdown and fractured relationship between school and family.

The creation of greater connection between the two spheres within the AP is experienced here as helpful. This experience contrasts findings from a study interviewing parents of CYP at a specialist residential educational provision for CYP with severe emotional and behaviour difficulties and at risk of exclusion. In the research parents described how their separation from their child when they stayed at the provision ‘helped the families survive’ by allowing them a period of respite from a connection to their child at home and at school (Harriss et al., 2008).

Furthermore, in the extract below parent (Amy) comments on the transparency and connection that is created between the family and the educational system:

> Amy: Emma, who runs parent learning, she took me up to Keiron’s class to sit and watch from a kinda of outside way …and see how he interacts. Emma pointed out a few things I probably wouldn’t have noticed …An example, he dropped a ruler and then he straight away picked it up and put it on a table. Now to me that is not a big deal but for Emma she was like, no, that could have led to him becoming distracted, there was so many things that she obviously knew that could have led to [distraction]. ….I really came out feeling really proud …because …I actually got to see it first hand and he did really well…it was nice to have Emma sit there and point out things I wouldn’t have noticed.

In this extract, Amy highlights how the educational system, and particularly expertise of school staff, is made visible to her by being able to observe her child's class. This experience of seeing 'first hand' classroom activity and the work that staff do fosters a closer connection between the parent and her child, making her feel 'really proud' of his behaviour. Through this experience it seems she is able to see another positive side of her child that 'she wouldn't have noticed' before; something that is in stark contrast to her experience of mainstream school, where she received 'no positive feedback'.

Another important aspect that is commented upon by participants in AP, is the visibility and presence of school staff to the child and family. This visibility and staff presence is in stark contrast to CYP's experience of mainstream school, where staff were described as invisible and emotionally unavailable to the child. As on pupil Jade states:

> Jade: My principal [in mainstream] … didn't talk to any kids, never smiled…had a very grumpy face… even when she was happy. She just stayed in her office.

Jade's description of her principal who 'never smiled' and 'stayed in her office' exemplifies the model of a closed system which constructs a spatial and emotional barrier between the principal and the child. In contrast, Benjamin and parent Sophie describe how AP staff maintain a close and active presence with the child, offering both educational and emotional support:

> Benjamin: Teachers always give you lots of praise…they help you if you got stuck on something and they sit next to you and help you all like if you need any more help.

> Sophie: (in mainstream) Its rules and regulation …they are not allowed to hug a child…There is this screen where I am the teacher you are the child….But here there is lots of kinetic areas... they are allowed to hug

> a child … interact with a child. …we do need to have that interaction otherwise … I think the world will crumble.

These extracts illustrate staff as an active visible presence who give of ‘praise’, ‘help’, ‘sit next to’, ‘interact, ‘’hug’ the child and create ‘kinetic areas’. These descriptions illustrate the importance of staff being actively visible and fostering positive interactions with the child. In contrast to Jade’s account of her principal above, the image of AP staff is one of abundance, generosity and emotional reciprocity. Furthermore, it seems that through Benjamin’s experience of teachers giving him ‘help’ and ‘praise’ means he is able build epistemic trust and initiate help seeking behaviour. This importance of trust resonates as a key aspect in interventions for this demographic in helping students grow in self-esteem and their abilities (Malberg, 2008; Putwain & Nicholson, 2018). This building up of trust, moreover, transforms the school context for Benjamin as a place of support, interaction and learning. Thus, visibility and the creation of an interactive open system leads to creative growth, both in the child and the whole system. Benjamin is no longer ‘stuck’ and, as Sophie states, the world will not ‘crumble’.

Furthermore, creating visibility in relationships and maintaining interactions between parents, children and school staff serves to build a context of trust, understanding and emotional support. This can be seen in the following extracts from the parent Mary and the pupil Sam:

> Mary: You see them (other parents) smiling, crying and you think ‘wow’ I know where you are coming from but you don’t feel embarrassed or ashamed to be crying when your child has kicked off … you actually just feel okay lets deal with this …I trust each and every one of the parents that come in.

> Sam: Instead of ….be told to get out of a class …that is not going to help a child. It is better if you just sit down and talk and explain what is going on. It helps because here you can just get whatever off your chest and you can just give your view on what is happening …They

> (children) feel kinda relaxed and they just feel like the teacher understands them and they can just get on with their work.

These accounts describe interaction where there is a visible outlet of emotional expression: parents are communicating with one another ‘smiling and crying; and the child is getting ‘whatever off ‘their ‘chest’. In contrast to descriptions in Theme One, where emotions and expressions were excluded from a relational context and bottled-up ‘inside’, here everyone both parents and pupils are encouraged to communicate and express their emotions.

This context of visibility of the parents and children expressing their thoughts and emotions with one another seems to help the parent and child to feel mentalized and to build epistemic trust with others. ‘I know where you are coming from’ (Mary); the ‘teacher understands’ (Sam). The mentalization of the parent and child in this context therefore empowers the child and the parent as active, subjective agents, allowing them work through their emotional states: ‘okay lets deal with this’, as Mary says; and Sam feels ‘relaxed’, and is able to ‘just get on’ with his ‘work’. These findings are in line with Nicholson and Putwain (2018) study of therapeutic practice within an AP for 14-16 year olds. Semi structured interviews with the students found that development of relationships of trust between staff and pupil allowed them to freely express themselves which they valued and in turn met their psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence. Crucial needs argue Nicholson and Putwain (2018) for the pupil’s educational reengagement.

3.3.2 Build a Community

In this second sub theme I consider participants’ experience of building a community of parents and staff to think collectively about the children. The opening up of the school system to parents facilitates the creation of a as Epstein (1987) describes a ‘caring community’ to collaborate and solve together problems and difficulties that may arise. This approach locates working with the ‘problem’ and thinking about possible solutions within a

community context, rather than individualise the problem through the exclusion of the child and family. As these parents describe:

> John: It is fantastic… a huge brainstorm; everyone chips in and gives different ideas and you pick up and choose what would be more suitable for your child…You can unload and share your experiences and learn; you are learning all the time…. You are not judged no one is there to say that you are doing it wrong, you should this, you are there to share. It is a different experience; yeah, you… [feel like you can] help in a way.

> Amy: Every single person that spoke I could pick and think that relates to me. It's like inclusion; I felt very included. Everything always seems to be done altogether, whereas in the other school he was always excluded, the only one. It goes back to this saying that that we are all included…I feel like not isolated and not alone. Before I felt like I am the only one who is going through this and like no one can relate, like no one can understand. And here people [are] in similar situations, and we can all help each as such, and they say a problem shared is a problem halved.

In these extracts parents see the place of the school as space where they can 'share' and 'learn' with each other, and therefore feel very 'included'. Moreover, parents note how they are not judged by other parents in the group, but feel a sense of recognition and the possibility of seeking help from others. Epistemic trust is built within this community and in turn they transform from being passive and powerless agents in the process of exclusion (Cullen, Macleod, McCluskey & Pirrie 2013) to active agents. In contrast to the mainstream parent community, where, as described in earlier accounts, they felt 'isolated and shunned', and consequently positioned as a passive agent, here they feel they are an active part of an inclusive community of understanding. These extracts demonstrate how bringing the parents back into a place of inclusion with other parents in similar situations can create a non-judgemental space where experiences are related and

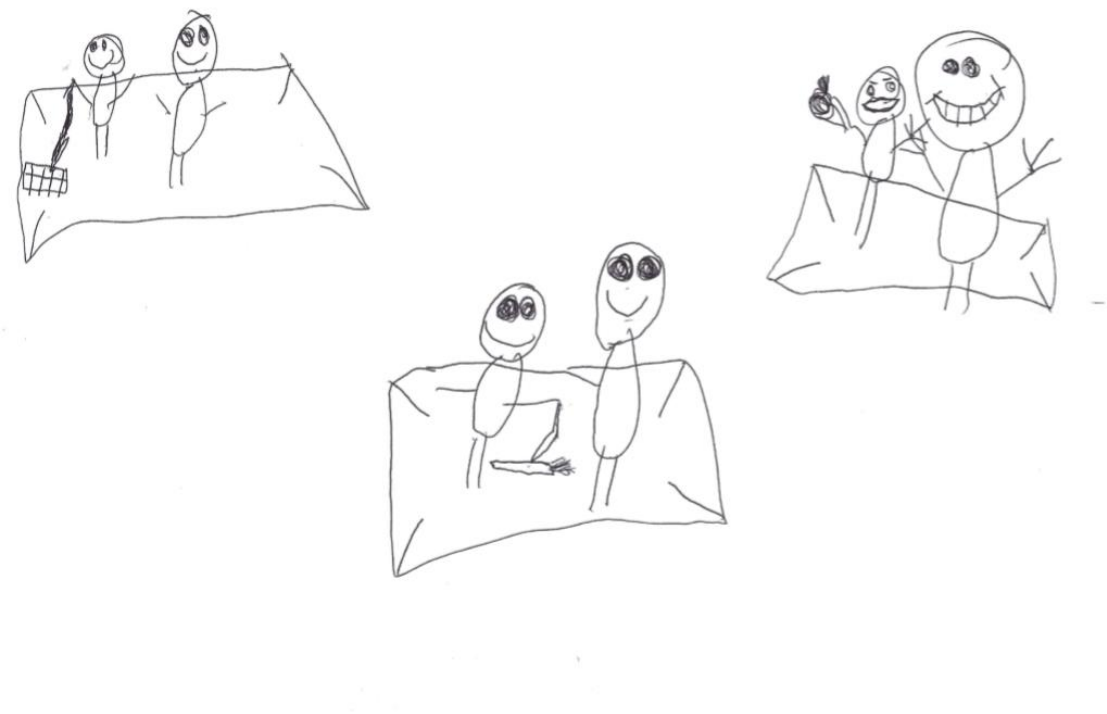
shared. The benefits of this group are reminiscent of the benefits of 'peers support models' now increasingly prevalent within the National Health Service (NHS) and third sector mental health provision (Curtis, Hilton & Mead, 2001). Key benefits of this practice model are cited as the non-stigmatising, judgemental and inclusive space it provides for service users to share and work through their problems.

The above extracts also demonstrates how the creation of this communal and included space of parent learning, where a problem can be shared and worked through collectively is highly valued and therapeutic for parents. This feature of parent learning is also in line with Dorfler, Eden and Pyrko (2017) qualitative research on two communities of practice groups in NHS Scotland; one formed around professionals working in the area sepsis and the other dementia. Similarly, to parent learning the author argues that the process of 'thinking together' in this groups with people with the same problems was very helpful. Key findings from the research affirm that these groups brought the professionals out of isolation where they could learn from each other in a non-judgmental space about sepsis in practice. The sharing of knowledge and problems in this context was outlined as extremely helpful (Dorfler et al., 2017).

The community that is created through parent learning is also is enacted experientially within the family class. In the family class, this joining of families creates a communal context where they can learn and share from one another. This is apparent in the statements by Michael (a parent) and Scott (a pupil) below, and is also visually illustrated by another pupil's drawing:

> Michael: I think it's because we are so close together in such a close confined space. We interact with each [other]. I think all of these things structure us to be to become like a family, it has some kinda of impact, definitely, because if I can't get through to Shane…, I will approach somebody else – I will approach like John or Matthew – and say: look guys I see how you are, you have a really good way. Is it possible you can give it a try and they will do it?

Scott: You have a choice to help your kid or others kids and my mum helped Joe. Yeah, she has helped Joe read and stuff. I think it's a good idea because they learn, and also the kids learn, and also the parents learn.



Drawing of 'Family Class' by Benjamin

This close connection between other families allows for intimacy and sharing, creating a network or community akin to that of a 'family'. For Michael, it seems that this structure facilitates systemic mentalization (Asen & Fonagy, 2012) and recursion (Bateson, 1972). A visible and trusted network of support is created where he can observe other families and ask for their help and feedback when needed. Furthermore, Scott affirms the centrality of other parents in system providing resources for children: they can 'help your kid or others'. In both instances, the active position of parents is affirmed. Instead of the child or parent being excluded from the school context and network, it is by actively relating with others – both intra and inter-family – that children and parents can learn from and help one another. The families thus move from a closed and isolated context of exclusion to an open and communal context of

inclusion, where they are able to interact, form bonds of epistemic trust, and learn from others.

This sense of community also applies to the classroom context. As Sophie (a parent) observes:

> Sophie: If there was someone struggling and she would go over to see if their doing okay, she would be ushered away and it would be left to the teacher or the child to deal with, or the child would be removed from that room [and] that matter would be dealt with elsewhere. Whereas if there is a problem in the classroom now, they kinda of deal with it in a group setting, and they try to help each other, which, I also think, is a good stepping stone, a good learning ground for the outside world.

In contrast to mainstream school, where the ‘child would be removed’ and ‘dealt with elsewhere’, in the AP the problem and solution to the problem remain in the ‘group setting’. Resources to solve this problem are thus located in the social and communal context with children becoming active agents in the classroom that try ‘to help each other’ with issues that arise. The classroom here, moreover, is seen as a microcosm of the ‘outside world’, and therefore again helps the child to learn to consider their behaviour, and the solutions to their behaviour, within the social and collective, rather than individual, context (Allison & Fonagy, 2014).

One way of framing the difference between the experience of exclusion in mainstream schools and parent learning is through the idea of negative or positive feedback loops through this community – a key concept from systemic therapy (Carr, 2012). A recurring feature of parents’ experience of exclusion in mainstream school was one of negative feedback, which created a continual and reinforcing loop. As Michael a parent describes below:

> Michael: Every time he keeps doing something bad, if I keep saying “you’re a bad boy, you’re a bad boy, you’re a bad boy”. He’s going to

> be a bad boy. Subconsciously you're feeding that into his head: that he's a bad boy.

In contrast to the above, a key feature of the AP is the interruption of this negative self-fulfilling feedback loop of 'bad boy', which is replaced with positive feedback. Both teachers and parents are key agents in establishing this feedback loop, as Claire (a parent) notes:

> Claire: Other parents sit in with our children. They have pleasant experiences and then they report back and so it is nice to hear from other parents as well as teaching staff that "oh they read really well today"; "oh it was so grown up …how they approached something"; and "I was really impressed by their behaviour". So it gives you a more balanced view of your child. Because when you are being told they are being badly behaved all the time you yourself find it difficult to see the good in your child.

In contrast to negative feedback loops, which feed into reinforcing and perpetuating a child's bad behaviour or feelings of badness, establishing a positive feedback loop, as the example above demonstrates, helps parent to see 'the good' in their child, and become aware of different aspects of their child. The impact of positive feedback loops is also conveyed by Koch's (1985) therapeutic application of emotional feedback loops for families learning to adapt with the choric illness of a significant family member. The qualitative study found that when families engage with positive feedback loops and emotional expression about the situation they are more able to cope with the ill family member and less stressors are present within the family system.

In sum, this section has highlighted the various methods used in the AP to create an integrated and communal system, wherein the child and family feel able to trust and seek help from other families and staff. A key feature of all the above methods, is the creation an integrated context where relationships

of trust are able to be formed and developed, thereby facilitating an open system where members can learn from each other.

3.4. System Transformation: Creative Selves

The third theme considers the transformative impact of the model on different parts of the system: the child, the family, and the wider school network. The transformative impact of AP on these different parts, as demonstrated, leads to both an integration within the family and wider network system, as well an integration of different parts of the child.

3.4.1. CYP Transformation

A key aspect of the model is its integrative approach to the child as a relational self (Burkitt, 1994). As outlined in Theme 1, school exclusion often leads to the disintegration of the child's self whereby the self is fragmented into different parts: educational, emotional, relational and social. The AP model effects a reintegration of these different parts within the child, thereby affirming the child as a relational self. This reintegration runs parallel with and helps the reintegration of different systems and networks, primarily school and family.

The reintegration of the 'educational self' was a striking feature of both the CYP drawings and the child's comments of these drawings, as can be seen in the examples presented below:

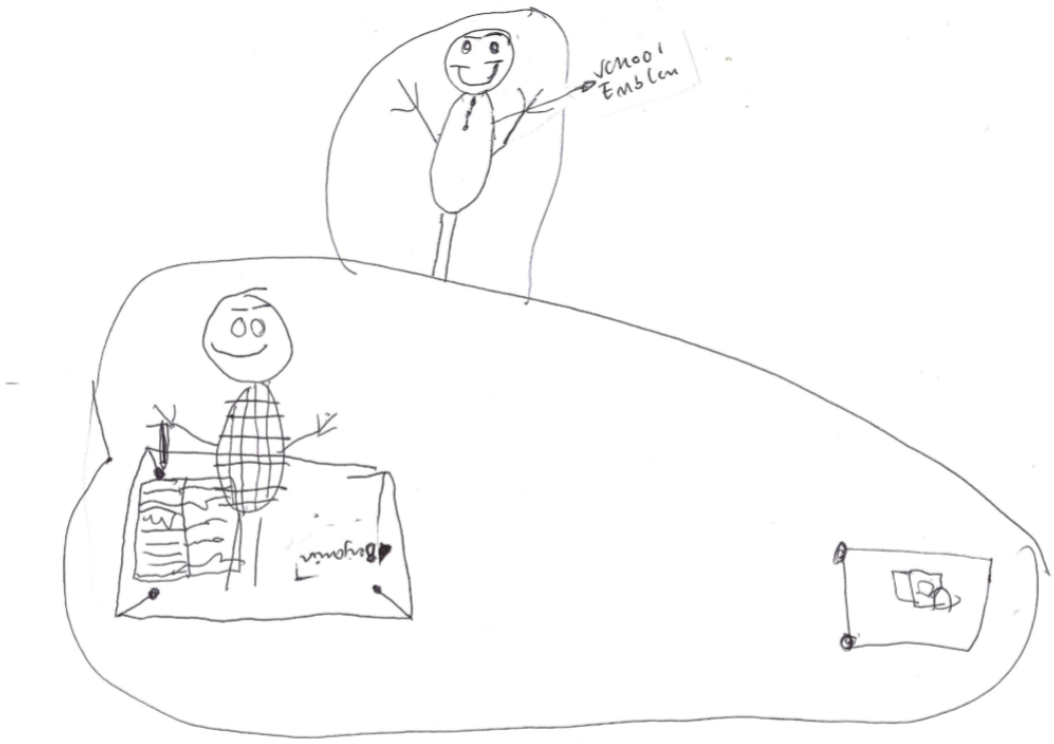
Drawing by Sam on his first day at the school (left) and now on the day of the interview (right)

Interviewer: So this is you today?

Sam: Yeah, working.

Interviewer: Is there any differences between you then and you today?

Sam: That one I don’t really care about anything. That one I am working.



Drawing by Benjamin on his first day at the school (topic figure) and now on the day of the interview (bottom figure)

Interviewer: Has anything changed between this Benjamin and this Benjamin?

Benjamin: I do more work, I am much confident now, much happier now.

Interviewer: And why do you think you are much more confident now?

Benjamin: Because the school helped me to get much [more] confident.

Interviewer: What helped you in the school?

Benjamin: Because each time I kept doing spelling mistakes they used to help me to write it.

In the above drawings, the CYP draw themselves within the educational context as happily working. Both Sam and Benjamin choose to emphasise their educational self. Sam depicts himself with his educational objects: his desk, pen and paper. Benjamin depicts himself as happily present within the space of the classroom – the drawing shows his desk (with his name on it), pen and paper. Both drawings affirm that the educational self is now considered an active part of the child; as something belonging to them. This sense of belonging is particularly suggested by Benjamin's writing his own name on his desk.

Both drawings and their commentary mark a similar transition. Sam's inclusion of his education self depicts a transition from a place where he does not 'care about anything' to happily working. Benjamin draws himself on his first day positioned outside of the wider circle, perhaps representing his exclusion from the mainstream classroom context, and then moves to inside a bigger context: the AP class. These transitions lead to creativity and growth in the children; something becomes alive again within them. Sam moves from a place of exclusion and despondency, where he doesn't 'really care about anything', to a place of active 'working' and becomes an active agent. Sam's drawing highlights how when excluded he considered himself as a passive and powerless agent, excluded from both relationships with others and from parts of his self. With his inclusion within the educational system, by contrast, he depicts himself in a place of being an active and empowered agent, happy and able to 'work'. Similarly to Sam, Benjamin draws himself as happily and confidently working. In both these cases, the learning self is connected to the emotional self; parts of the child are integrated and the child becomes an active and 'confident' agent, affirming the need for emotional stability for learning (Frederickson & Michael, 2013).

As is indicated in the above discussion of the drawings, the integration of the education self increases the child's self-esteem and growth in other areas.

> Liam: I used to put myself down [a] lot before, but now I feel more confident in some of the stuff I do. I used to never play football or any sports, or go swimming and stuff, but I have started doing that now.

Liam describe how his inclusion in an educational context means that he now 'feel[s] more confident', which has given him the confidence to try new activities such as 'football' and 'swimming'. This example affirms here the link between the child's emotional and learning self. Due to a change in their learning context there is a marked increase in their self-esteem. This increase has had impact on Liam's growth in other areas, such as sports activities. Instead of creating a feeling of exclusion and putting himself down, Liam feels a sense of inclusion and confidence to engage in social activities, where he can grow.

The use of sports and its impact on the child's self-esteem is noted in Cullen and Munroe (2010) research on a psychologist run project for CYP based at a PRU for 11-14 year olds which involved professional sports input. Sport professionals played football with students one afternoon a week for about an hour-and-a half. The sports professionals also joined the CYP in therapeutic conversations and helped them to problem solve any situations of conflict, which arose from the football. CYP reported an increase sense of belonging and self- esteem from being part of this sports team and trying a new activity. The CYP also described improved emotional regulation skills.

The impact of the model is the integration of the child's emotional self. As Liam describes:

> Liam: I was quite fragile and …I was quite explosive as well, because when I used to argue or something I would just blurt stuff out, but now I am quite concentrated and I know what I am going to say and I know what I am going to do.

In the above extract, Liam notes that a crucial change in his emotional regulation from being 'quite explosive' to now 'concentrated'. When there are

situations where the child might explode or argue, a distance is now creating where the child feels able to control or manage their emotional states.

A key outcome of increasing mentalization, as the example of Liam above suggests, is emotional regulation (Fonagy et al., 2017). In becoming engaged in a school where all parts of the system endeavour to mentalize the child's behaviour, Liam is, in turn, able to mentalize his own behaviour. Instead of acting out in an 'explosive manner', Liam is now able to concentrate and reflect on his own emotions going and is able to better control his behaviour. This also resonates with the evidence of a mentalization group for CYP in a PRU setting. A key outcome of the group was that CYP developed their capacity to mentalize and feel different emotional states rather than enact disruptive behaviour (Malberg, 2008).

The transition of the child from the closed system of exclusion to an open one of inclusion transforms the child's excluded self into a relational self. As Sam (a pupil) describes:

> Sam: Some teachers listen, but some just don't, they just ignore you, they just straight down …blah blah blah… talk a load of false. It just annoys all kids, it gets on everyone's nerves. So then when like someone understands what is happening the kid always feel real then they feel …oh someone actually trusts me and they believe me. Instead of oh yeah everyone just hates me they don't listen to me blah blah blah.

The above extract brings to light a key outcome of mentalization. Instead of teachers that 'ignore you' and 'talk a load of false' the child feels in the AP that 'someone understands'. As a result, Sam finds his subjectivity through a process of mentalization. The teacher brings Sam into an active relationship where he feels that 'someone actually trusts' and 'believes' him. Sam's experience of recognition means that he can begin to trust his own feelings and thoughts and the kid can 'feel real'. This experience also fosters epistemic trust between the child and the teacher, creating a context in which

the child is open to learning (Fonagy et al., 2017). Feeling that he has been mentalized by the teacher allows him in to, in turn, mentalize other's mental states, and to move away from feeling like 'everyone just hates me'.

The growth of the child noted in these areas is in direct contrast to the experiences reported in Hallam and Mainwaring's (2010) comparative research on the 'possible selves' of secondary school students in both a PRU and mainstream provision. 'Possible selves' relates to the dreams and aspiration of the students. Hallam and Mainwaring (2010) found that pupils within the PRU had a very negative and 'fragile self' compared to those in mainstream. However, within this AP setting it is clear an impact of the model is the growth of the possible self in many different areas: emotionally, educationally and socially.

3.4.2. Family Transformation

Another impact of the model within the school is a transformation of relationships within the family unit. This is illustrated by the description of a parent and drawing by a CYP below:

> Anna: [crying], I mean it sounds awful but I got to a point where I was just like I just don't like him, he makes my life an absolute nightmare but I remember a point when I don't know when it is but I remember thinking God I have fallen back in love with him…we have come out the other side...there must have been a shift in his behaviour.

Benjamin's drawing of his family before he started at the AP and his family now today

> Interviewer: Do you think your dad has changed since coming to this school?
>
> Benjamin: Yes, at home he is much more relaxed …and he is much happier as well…we get along and we don't shout at each other… we are all much happier. They are shouting at me before, so I am shouting back.
>
> Interviewer: And now?
>
> Benjamin: [We've] 'got smiles' and we get along.

Both these extracts highlight a marked change in the family unit. In the case of Anna, the relationships between parent and child changes from a 'nightmare' situation to one of 'love'. In the case of Benjamin, the relationship between child and parent is transformed from one of 'shouting' to one of 'smiles'. As the above examples indicate, such a transformation seems to be the result of increased mentalization, which establish emotional feedback loops across the family

network. Moreover, both extracts highlight that how the child's behaviour can have a significant impact on family relationships.

3.4.3. Wider Network Transformation

Another impact of the model is a transformation across the wider network of relationships between family and school staff, which are now built on trust and mutual understanding. As parents Emily and Claire describe:

> Claire: Once I realized they (staff) were not here to undermine me …they would back me up… we have a working relationship.

> Emily: I feel like the school and the parent are working together and we have come out of a year where we felt that we were being pushed into conflict so that is a huge relief …to be in a place where having to not to fight for …your child needs.

These accounts describe parents' positive relationships with working together with school staff in the AP. Through the creation of a relationship where the parent feels mentalized and understood, epistemic trust is formed between the two systems of the school and the home. The parents and school staff are now part of an integrated and open system, wherein the parts are working together. Instead of the systems breaking or closing down, the system is mobilised by making a network of systems of support available to the parent. The parents' emphasise their active role within the system: they have a 'working relationship' and are 'working together'. The unity of systems of family and school is emphasised in stark contrast to the isolation and disintegration of systems outlined in Theme 1. Systems move from separate to collaborative spheres working together in relation to the whole child (Epstein, 1990).

In sum, this theme has highlighted the positive impact of system integration, which serves to activate family participation at the school across multiple

levels, creating relationships across the system to support the child and parent to grow.

3.5. Cracks in the System: Split Selves

The fourth theme considers divergent narratives within the participants' experiences of the school. This theme is explored through the sub themes of 'System Outsiders' and 'System Conflict'. The majority of family members experienced the model of the school as overwhelmingly positive and transformative. However, for some parents the integration of the contexts of home and school within the AP, with parents present on site at the school, was viewed as unhelpful and putting pressure on other areas of their life.

3.5.1. System Outsiders

Parents who were less involved in the multi-family programme reported a different experience of relationships with other family members at the school. As Ana describes:

> Ana: I haven't done a lot of the parent group on the Wednesday I have been here on the Tuesday so … I have had a slightly different experience. But I found it really depressing … at one point I just had to stop coming for a while. I used to drop him off and come back it was just too heavy and I think the whole thing I have learnt is … no one is going to look after me apart from me. So it is really important that I am functioning … because if the wheels come of me it comes off everyone.

In contrast to other parents' experience of integration, where sharing with other parents was experienced as hopeful and providing a relief, Ana describes her experience of the group as 'really depressing' and 'too heavy'. This is in marked contrast to someone like John, who described not 'wanting to miss' a Wednesday and 'the sense of belonging' which came from being part of this system. Instead of the parent group providing a system of support, however, Ana describes here having to separate herself from this system due

to its ‘heavy’ and ‘depressing’ nature in order to support herself. Ana finds the nature of the open system of the school draining rather than life sustaining and has to separate herself and enact a closed system to survive. This challenges theory pertaining to the life sustaining nature of open systems as an environment where one flourishes (Bateson, 1972). Furthermore, Anna’s extract here also challenges literature around emotional cultures which advocate open emotional expression as the norm in the development of a healthy emotional life (Gillies, 2011). It seems here that Ana is using a different ethics of emotions, for example, being strong for others rather than the prevalent emotional culture in the parent group of sharing with others and showing your vulnerabilities. It seems here that this norm is perhaps too different for Anna.

Ana conceptualises her support system as individualised within herself, rather than located within the collective system of the parent community at the school: ‘no one is going to look after me apart from me’. While parents reported that the multi-family day built a system of support through the collective approach of families helping other families and learning from one another, Ana has an individualised conception of her family support system: ‘if the wheels come of me it comes off everyone’. Thus, in contrast to the collective approach of supporting one another enacted on the multi-family day, Ana’s positions herself outside of this system, locating her system of support outside of this community.

3.5.2. Conflict in the System

Some participants further described how engaging in the AP meant that their systems of work, family and school were in conflict with each other. Participation in the system of the school left some parents unable to participate in the system of work, and therefore put the family in a very stressful situation. In the following extract, Stephanie discusses her experience of this system conflict:

> Stephanie: For me I am having to make up 18 hours… so it put a lot of pressure. They have to understand yes business needs comes first but without having your work person being there emotionally and physically you are not going to get a 100 per cent out of us. …it is not that we don't want to come to work it is because we can't.

This extract highlights how the time-demanding model of the school can be in conflict with parents' work schedules, putting pressure on the parent 'to make up 18 hours at work' due to their attendance at the school. This example highlights the importance of macro forces (Patel, 2016) present within school exclusion; namely, the ways in which a family's economic status conflicts with a model of provision which impacts the family's ability to work. Stephanie seems to describe here a tension in the model of the school in its conception of the family as an open system with therefore also its interactions with the world of work (Von Bertalanffy, 1968). The overall family's functioning is crucially impacted by this material context particularly in a time of austerity (Harper, 2016). Stephanie demonstrates in the above extract a holistic view of the human person, which is made of many different selves (Burkitt, 1994); she is not only a 'work person', but someone who is affected 'emotionally and physically' by many different systems during the process of school exclusion. She affirms that if in the area of work employers need '100 per cent', there needs to be greater understanding between the systems and wider collaboration between systems supporting each other.

The conflict is rooted in the historic and wider organization of work and family as being separates systems society founded in both patriarchy and capitalism (Hartmann, 1976). This points, therefore, to the need for a wider use of mentalization amongst the systems involved. As Stephanie advocates, employers also need to mentalize their workers also a whole person and be considerate of any difficulties they may be facing, and not simply make a judgment that they 'don't' want to work'. This indicates a need to extend systemic mentalization to include the system of work. Conceptualizing the family as an open system requires not only the school and family to be able to

mentalize each other, but also for employers to be able to mentalize their employees; to try to understand the lives and pressures of these parents.

Similarly, Jade (a pupil at the school) also advocates for flexibility between these two systems when speaking about parents being present at the school:

> Jade: I would have parent rooms …they'll be like wifi … for them to do work and talk to their kids. So … if your kid has problems you can come in and when they're in class you can still do your work.

Jade acknowledges again a holistic conceptualisation of the human person as a 'parent' and 'worker' who has 'their job'. A better alignment of these systems would be facilitated by having a 'little room' which had wifi allowing parents to participate in the system of work and families by enabling them to 'do work and talk to their kids'. Within this extract again the systemic nature of school exclusion is highlighted. In particular, Jade highlights the importance of the excluded child as part of a family system and therefore the significance of parental presence to demonstrate to the child an adult which can help solve problems (Howe & Smith, 1994). She also affirms the position of the family as part of a wider economic system, and therefore advocates mutual support for both child and parent: 'So like if your kid has problems you can come in and when they're in class you can still do your work'.

In sum, this section has attempted to highlight divergent narratives in the above analysis, presenting different experiences of the system of the school. Such experiences, as I further highlight, suggest the need to consider the macro factor of parent's work lives, as well as the need for greater interaction and mentalization between the systems work and school.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Overview

The overarching aim of the study was to explore the experiences of CYP and families who have been excluded from school and attended a therapeutic AP. Within these experiences particular attention was paid to the participants' experience of relationships, emotions and how the problem is managed in these contexts.

The summary of findings highlights a journey characterised by two distinct but interconnecting transitions. A journey first from isolation to connection which in turn initiates a journey from stagnation to creation. This journey is undertaken at a systems and an individual level. In a parallel process as the system around the child becomes activated, connected and creative the child connected to that system becomes integrated, an active agent and develops. The findings affirm the interdependent nature of the system and the self (Burkitt, 1994). Below these features of the participant's journey from school exclusion to therapeutic AP will be summarised in relation to wider literature and articles captured within the scoping review. Following this, I outline the implications of the findings for clinical psychology and critically evaluate the study.

4.2. Summary of Findings

4.2.1. Isolation to Connection

Findings within the themes 'System Breakdown' and 'System Integration' characterise the participants' subjective journey from systemic isolation to systemic connection. These findings address the research questions on how participants understand their experience of the journey from exclusion to therapeutic AP. 'System Breakdown' highlights exclusion as an experience,

which goes beyond the child's isolation from an educational institution. It is described as a process, which pervades relationships within the family, school, the wider network and the child's relationship with different parts of itself. The families' journey to the AP is shown to lead to systemic connection. Different interdependent parts of the child become integrated alongside system connection across several different contexts: inter and intra families and the professional network. This systemic connection within the child and all the systems attached to the child creates stability within the child and the network to support a successful reintegration back into mainstream provision.

Firstly, CYP convey an experience of exclusion characterised by spatial and thus social isolation. This finding relates to the research question on the experience of the start of the participants journey within the mainstream environment. Pupil participants described their segregation from the mainstream classroom into spaces, which resembled as Noah describes a 'prison' and for Scott a place where they 'restrain and lock you'. These descriptions of segregation spaces are in line with reports on the use of isolation booths for managing disruptive behaviour in mainstream (Perraudian, 2018). The reports describe isolation experiences of children of up to eight hours at a time with parents describing the process as 'barbaric' (p.1). In line with this report and the findings of the data, school exclusion literature also conveys how these spaces are experienced as places of punishment akin to a penal environment (Barker et al., 2010). Barker et al. argues that the seclusion of CYP in these spaces in turn constructs the child as a 'prisoner' (p.384) and a threat to the group. This description resonates in participant Sophie's account of her daughter's seclusion as she describes her removal from the classroom context as an attempt to stop the problem (her child) 'spread in the group setting'.

The findings also highlight that a sense of isolation pervades the child and parent interpersonal relationship with staff. This finding addresses the research question on how participants construct relationships within the mainstream environments. Firstly, participant Sam (pupil) describes a non-mentalizing relationship with school staff who 'ignore' and 'talk a load of false'

at you. In this account the act undermines the subjectivity of the child as Sam describes this doesn't help him to feel 'real'. These findings are in line with literature on exclusion experiences which convey relationships with staff imbued within conflict and misunderstanding (Briggs, 2010; Farouk, 2017). Within Briggs et al. (2010) research participants recalled feeling isolated from healthy, fulfilling relationships with school staff and as one participant recalls feeling that the school community and 'the world is out to get me' (p.12). The author argues that for CYP this sense of isolation as a result of school exclusion can often lead to further exclusion, isolation and criminalisation (Barker et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the parent's experience of school exclusion is also conveyed as one of isolation. This finding addresses the research question on how do participants (family members) construct relationships within the mainstream environment with the staff. This sense of isolation and disconnection pervaded parents' relationship with school staff during the exclusion process. As participant Emily (parent) described the relationship between her family and staff school was like two 'worlds in opposition'. This is in line with McDonald and Thomas (2003) and McLoughlin (2010) research on parents' reflections on their child's exclusion where they felt they were constantly not being listened to by staff, creating a breakdown of trust and communication between the two systems.

Furthermore, this spatial and social isolation also resonates through the families' experience of the parent community at the mainstream school. This finding addresses the research question on how do participants (family members) construct relationships within the mainstream environments with the parent community. In the lead up to their child's exclusion from mainstream parents described feeling 'shunned' and 'kept out' of this community. Within the field of exclusion literature the parental experience often focuses on conflictual relationships with staff. There is little or no mention of other key relationships with the rest of the school community. Therefore, the findings of the study illuminate a key facet of their exclusion experience and convey the pervasive impact exclusion has on the families'

relationship with the whole school community. The families' experience of isolation within the school community in turn has key implications for the position of 'the problem' with this system.

The parent's isolation from the whole school can leave them very isolated in terms of support. If parents feel in relationships of misunderstanding, distrust and conflict within the school community they are less likely to want to engage with the school (Epstein, 1987). Low parental involvement in school is shown to increase children's disruptive behaviour (Patterson et al., 1992). Therefore, the parent's isolation from the community and consequent likely disengagement from this system has potential negative implications for helping the child in this context.

The social and spatial isolation of the family in this context in turn isolates their 'emotional self' (Burkitt, 1994). Participants describe a mainstream context where emotions could not be expressed within communal spaces; consequently their emotions were cut off and unprocessed. This finding addresses the research question on how emotions are managed in the context of the mainstream environment in this instance the child's emotions. For example, participant Sophie described how her daughter's exclusion from the classroom as a result of expressing anger consequently isolated her from her emotional and relational self. Her exclusion meant she could 'trust the adult' to express and process her emotions with her as she was put into an isolated space, consequently her emotions became 'trapped' inside her. In this account epistemic trust is broken down between Sophie's daughter and this 'adult'; she could no longer trust this person as a source of containment and social learning. This account is in line with research on emotional cultures within the mainstream environment. Gillies (2011) argues that emotional expression in the classroom is viewed as disruptive and a barrier to learning. As a result there has been a separation and isolation of emotions away from the classroom context. Furthermore, qualitative research into teachers' views on emotional cultures at school highlights their feelings of unease towards the classroom as space for emotional expression (Loizidou, 2009). Despite substantial research which highlights the importance of

emotions for learning and developing, and furthermore, emotional attunement as key in relationships with CYP with behavioural difficulties (Fonagy et al., 2017); emotional expression is still viewed as incongruous to the mainstream classroom setting. In sum, the findings of the study along with other literature affirm that emotional expression is discouraged in the classroom and can lead to a pupil's exclusion from this context (Loinaz, 2019).

The isolation of emotions is also prevalent in the use of behavioural interventions for this demographic, Pennacchia and Thomson's (2015) research on eleven APs found that behavioural interventions dominate the therapeutic practice of these APs with the overall aim of inaugurating the discipline of minds and bodies within these environments. Interventions are enacted through surveillance and measuring activities with reward and punishments. The study found in all APs a degree of talking therapy provision which took a more relational approach to working with the CYP. However, overall behaviourist interventions dominate the practice. The paper questioned the long-term impact of these approaches for children who move out of this environment and thus are not used to such external controls shaping their behaviour and also suggested that behavioural interventions should not negate the need also for children to have emotional support and dependence within these environments (Pennacchia & Thomson 2015).

A quantitative study within the scoping review on behavioural interventions (Capstick, 2005) also showed that pupils and teachers have very different perceptions of the value of rewards. Seventy five per cent of teachers perceived that rewards change pupils' behaviour and increase their motivation to learn and work harder, whereas over fifty per cent of pupils perceived the opposite (Capstick, 2005). These findings confirm previous research around the limited effectiveness of behavioural regimes (Parker et al., 2016). Behavioural interventions highlight a lack of consideration of the child's emotional self as a factor affecting their behaviour. Behavioural interventions do not engage with the relational and emotional world of the child or consider how wider systemic factors influence the child's behaviour. The findings of these articles, which highlight the limited nature of behavioural interventions

for CYP and point towards a need of the child to express their emotions in the school context, are in line with the findings of this study. Children found the environment of the AP as a site for emotional expression helpful and therapeutic; as Sam describes, a place where you can 'just get whatever off your chest'.

The illustration of contrasting emotional cultures in the AP and mainstream for CYP also translates to the parents' experience. This finding addresses the research question on how emotions are managed in the context of the mainstream environment in this instance the parent's emotions. As participant Michael (parent) describes mainstream was a place devoid of emotions where every parent is 'playing poker' and 'it's all rosy'. In contrast the AP is place where 'all your cards are on the table'. Similarly, as Mary describes the AP is a place where 'you don't feel embarrassed or ashamed to be crying when your child has kicked off'. Within exclusion literature the emotional experience of parents with the school environment is lacking thus this finding as another layer of richness to the research area.

The importance of emotional expression and containment for both CYP, staff and parents is a key feature within literature on therapeutic interventions in the AP environment. The literature affirms the importance of mentalizing relationships within this environment to try to understand the emotion, thoughts and feelings of the teacher, CYP and parent in this environment (Diamond, 2013; Malberg, 2008; McLoughlin, 2010). This literature however is written from the therapist's perspective and thus fails to capture the subjective experience of containment and mentalization from the parent or CYP point of view.

Another key feature is the isolation of the child's educational self. This finding relates to the research question on the experience of participants journey, in this instance starting at the AP. In the CYP drawings many of the children drew a portrait of themselves on their first day at the AP without any educational context or objects, illustrating an absence of the learning self from their identity. As Sam (participant) described in this drawing he 'don't really

care about anything'. The loss of the educational self as a result of exclusion highlights a new dimension within literature on the pupil's experience of exclusion. Although exclusion literature describes the loss of learning of the children during this process and illustrates a disengagement from education as result of exclusion (Bruder & Spensley 2015; Briggs, 2010; Capstick, 2005; Cullen & Munroe, 2010; Nicholson & Putwain, 2018) research does not conceptualise this as a disengagement and loss of a part of the child's self- their learning self. The drawings illuminate further the impact exclusion has on the child not just in terms of their educational progress but it terms of their identification as a learning self. This conceptualisation within the findings highlights further, the impact of exclusion on the child's subjectivity and the disintegration of their very being.

The breakdown of these relationships and the isolation of the family from the system of the school in turn isolate the 'problem behaviour' to one part of the system. These findings pertain to the research question on how 'problem' behaviour managed in these different contexts in this instance in the mainstream environment. In line with this isolation of the problem in one system area many interventions outlined in the scoping review respond to this issue with individualistic interventions, which only intervene in one area of the system. Interventions either worked at an individual level with the CYP or worked with different members of the child's system but with an individual rather than collaborative framework.

The journey to the AP signals a transition into a place of connection. These findings addressed the research question on the participants' journey, in this instance detailing their experience in the AP and the relationships they have with staff and other parents in this context. The school environment opens to include all members of the child's system in turn the spheres of family and school connect. The two systems work together to help the child's difficulties, in turn 'the problem' moves out of isolation and connects to the wider context where a pool of resources are available to support. As Anton describes parent learning provides a communal space to have 'a huge brainstorm where everyone chips in and gives different ideas'. The culture of the space is not

one of isolation but rather an environment where you ‘share your experience’ and ‘feel not judged’. This is also reflected by Amy who describes this connection with staff and other parents in this group as one of feeling ‘very included’ where you are not solving all your issues ‘alone’ but ‘altogether’. In turn this connection of the problem to the context means that the ‘problem is halved’.

A key finding of the study is the therapeutic value of collaborative working across the systems of home and school to bring about change. Participants described an experience of trust and solidarity when all systems were in one place, and interacting with each seemed to create multiple opportunities for visibility of the ‘problem and the solution’ and thus opportunities for change. However, the interventions outlined within the scoping review due to their individualistic approach do not create visibility between the systems and thus perhaps miss out on opportunities for interactions between the systems to engender change.

The findings illustrate that the relationships of connection are made through the key mechanisms of mentalization and epistemic trust. Participants described feeling very included and understood by staff and parents in turn solidarity forms between all systems. These relationships of understanding seem to in turn allow trust to form between all system members. This finding is line with the studies of Malberg (2008), McLoughlin (2010), Solomon and Thomas (2013), and who all emphasise mentalization as key in helping CYP and families feel understood, form trusting relationships and develop the ability to reflect on their own behaviour and others. However, there is a key difference in the use of mentalization within these studies and the model of the school. These studies looked at interventions where mentalization operated within the framework of a dyadic relationship either between staff and child, parent and child or staff and parent. Thus the data within this study has widened the framework on the therapeutic value of mentalization and points towards the value of a systemic mentalization framework where mentalization is activated across many levels of the system; inter families, intra families and the school community as a whole. This systemic

mentalization it appears from the data creates multiple opportunities for change and recursion.

The study highlighted one area of disconnection, which persists throughout the participants' journey: the disconnection between work, home and family. These findings address the research question on the participants' experience of the journey from exclusion to therapeutic AP in this instance a place of disconnection, which endures throughout the whole journey. Families described the pressure of not being able to work during the exclusion process and while they attended the AP. Although the economic vulnerability of excluded families is clearly noted in numerous policy documents it is a missing area within the exclusion literature. Furthermore, none of the interventions within the scoping review considered the impact of this factor on the families or CYP or highlighted interventions, which touched on working at this more structural level, taking into account these financial pressures. The prevalence of financial pressures throughout the participants' journey indicates a need for interventions to take into consideration macro as well as micro factors within the issue of school exclusion.

4.2.2. Stagnation to Creation

The findings also illustrate a journey from stagnation to creation. The CYP and family move from the environment of exclusion, characterised by stagnation and helplessness to the environment of the AP, which they describe as an experience of growth and creativity. These findings address the research question on understanding the participants' experience of the journey from exclusion to therapeutic AP and their relationships within these contexts.

A key area of creative growth is within the development of the child's educational and emotional self. The drawings highlight that the child's educational inclusion at the AP has led to a reintegration of their learning self. CYP draw themselves active and working alongside their educational context and objects. In a circular process as the child's education self is reintegrated

so is their emotional self, and their self- esteem grows and in turn has a positive impact on their learning. This finding is in line with research highlighting importance of self-esteem for learning (Farell & Polat, 2003). The findings also highlight that a key mechanism for the child's increase in self-esteem and progression in learning within the AP. was rooted in relationships of attunement, trust and understanding. Teachers in the school were positioned as 'helpers' who gave 'praise'. Correspondingly Nicholson and Putwain (2018) also conveyed the importance of trust and relatedness as key factors in the excluded child's reengagement in their education. Similarly, to the findings of the study around self-esteem Nicholson and Putwain (2018) also argue that the child's reengagement in education increased their sense of autonomy and competence.

Feedback loops within this journey also transform from being stagnant within the mainstream environment to creative in the AP context. Relationships within the mainstream setting where characterised by negative feedback as Michael (parent participant) explained: 'if I keep saying you're a bad boy…he's gonna be a bad boy'. In this context it is hard for the 'the boy' to grow and change his behaviour. In contrast, participants describe positive feedback loops in the AP, which as Claire (participant) describes, helps to see the 'good in the child'- her daughter. Through these alternative and positive feedback loops the child develops and also the parent's perspective on the child grows, helping them to see other 'good' sides of the child. These feedback loops thus also serve to bring relationships of closer connection between the child and family.

Furthermore, the use of the parent learning and the family class highlight the value of a creative approach to solving the child's difficulties. This finding addresses the research question around how the 'problem' behaviour is managed, in this instance in the AP context. The sub theme 'Build a Community' highlights that instead of the problem stagnating and siloed into one part of the system it is pooled into an open system where parent and children group together and creatively think about resources to help with the problem. This approach resonates with Epstein (1987) creation of 'a learning

community' which bring together the spheres of home and school to learn from and help one another. Within this context creative relationships can grow. As Dyson and Tucker (1976) noted in their therapeutic work with CYP with behavioural difficulties joining the systems of home and school led to better communication and responsiveness between the two spheres. In this study families reported the therapeutic value of this approach: they did not feel alone with their child's difficulties and consequently in this collaborative context felt more able to support their child. Through this creative approach to the problem families move into the position of active agents in the process of change (Dawson & McHugh, 2018) in turn helping their child and one another. This community approach is in stark contrast to the other interventions within the literature, which impose an individualistic rather than collaborative framework to the problem.

In sum, the findings illustrate that the families' transition into an open system within the AP allows life and creativity to flourish again at both a system and individual level. The literature from the scoping review does not account` for the systemic impact of the interventions in the AP but rather focuses on impact at an individual level: the CYP. This highlights a gap in the research as again it negates that the child is part of a system and therefore for to be change at a child's level there must be change in other parts of the system also.

4.3. Implications

Below I outline and discuss the clinical, service and research implications of the study for the profession of clinical psychology.

4.3.1. Clinical Practice: School Exclusion needs Family Inclusion

The findings in this study highlight that a multi-family systemic approach which works alongside the whole school community provides an effective intervention for this demographic. However, this approach contrasts with

traditional service structures and provision for this demographic (NICE, 2013) and those prevalent in the scoping review.

Captured within the theme ‘System Integration’ a key finding within the study was the therapeutic value of the multi-family programme and ‘families helping families’ embedded within ‘Parent learning’ and the ‘Family Class’. This practice facilitated a very different relationship towards help seeking for the families.

During the process of exclusion families described relationships with helping agencies as antagonistic and disempowering which were rooted in models of deficiency. Matthew describes how he was always felt he was ‘inadvertently been told’ by the school, social care and help agencies that he was ‘failing as a parent’. Ana also describes an experience of working with these same agencies like ‘fighting with fire’, feeling constantly that these agencies were ‘working against’ her and her family. This finding is in line with, Cyhlarova, James and Robotham (2009) evaluation on choice and partnership approach in CAMHS which found a relationship between staff and families characterised by miscommunication and a lack of collaboration. Furthermore, the findings highlight that the impact of these relationships with helping agencies during the process of exclusion process left families in a disempowered and passive position breaking down intrinsic resources of support within the family. This was reflected within the theme ‘System Breakdown’ as Claire describes during the period of exclusion feeling ‘pushed to the brink’; and not ‘knowing how best to help’.

In contrast, the multi-family programme moves the CYP and family into a position of active agents in the process of helping their child and other families. The sub theme ‘Build a Community’ reframes the family and the community they form with other families as an abundant system full of resource. This practice forms very different relationships towards help as Anton describes the parent learning as a place where you are ‘not here to be judged or to be told you are doing it wrong… you are here to help each other’. The family moves from a position of breakdown to inclusion with other families

to create a system of support and choice as Anton describes ‘you can pick and choose which ideas help your child’. Thus the practice affirms families’ capabilities of helping each other instead of delivering a practice which disempowers families (Pilgrim, 2014).

These findings highlight two important features for clinical psychologists. Firstly, the focus of clinical practice in this area to primarily support the most intrinsic helping system of support for the child- the family (Bevington et al., 2017). Clinical practice should support and nurture these families to be in a place where, as Anton describes he can ‘help my child’, rather than work against and disintegrate the family system as outlined in the theme ‘System Breakdown’.

The multi-family programme provides a framework to facilitate this transition to active agents and does not undermine the intrinsic capacity of the family as a system of support. A clinical psychologist’s practice of systemic models more commonly involves working with one family at a time (Bownas & Fredman, 2016). However, this research points towards the valuable interactions and opportunities for behaviour change which arise when many families interact with each other in live context; particularly families who have during the process of exclusion felt particularly excluded from other families and whole school communities. In this context, the locus of expertise and therapeutic value moves away from being located in the professional within the clinic room and becomes embedded in the already natural ecology of the child’s word; their relationships with their family, community and school (Orford, 1992). This model within the AP is resonant of Kretzmann and Mcknight (1993) *Building Communities from the inside out*. In this book they advocate an approach to building to resilience in communities which starts with first most drawing out, connecting and building upon the communities pre-existing resources and problem-solving capacities. Thus, the model would infer a different role for the clinical psychologist in their work with CYP and families. A role perhaps which moves away from delivering therapy within a dyadic relationship in a clinic setting, to perhaps taking a more facilitative role with systems, to facilitate multiple interactions amongst families.

Furthermore, the research also highlighted that value of enacting different professional boundaries within this context. It seems that in the AP families were able to build close and trusting relationships with school staff as a result of different relationship boundaries than the traditional professional and service user dynamic. As participants Teresa (parent) describes they were all a ‘bit familiar’ with each other and Michael (parent) ‘it proper feels like a ‘family’. This indicates a value in the blurring of boundaries within this context, where as Sophie described there is ‘no screen’ between the professional and the service user. This ‘no screen’ was enacted in the way teachers, parents and staff all ate together and joined in fun actives, such as football. This highlights the opportunity for clinical psychologists to think about the boundaries in clinical practice and how helpful or unhelpful they are in enacting therapeutic change.

4.3.2. Service: Systemic Landscapes, from the Clinic to the Community

The demographics of excluded CYP highlight multiple vulnerability factors within the family, often for these families traditional service structures are experienced as inaccessible and stigmatising (Gill, 2017). The clinic environment and appointment-based systems have been shown to create barriers for families with complex needs (Bevington et al., 2017). In line with the findings of this study and also recommendations in policy documents, services which are community focused and integrated into existing resources in children’s lives such as school are proven to be the most accessible and effective (Timpson, 2019)

A key theme within ‘System Integration’ was the therapeutic value of seeking support in a live school environment. It seems that the parents experienced the school space as a therapeutic, non-stigmatising environment as John describes it was ‘welcoming’ and akin to a ‘home’. Furthermore, the integration of the spheres of home and school in this space facilitated a closer connection between the two domains helping to create trusting and collaborative working relationships with other parents and school staff.

In addition, the research has also highlighted the positive impact of the systemic model of the school which affirms the provision of mental health support not solely within individual session work with children but rather embedded within a whole school and community approach. The therapeutic approach of the school was imbued within relationships with all different staff members, the classroom and family activities. Furthermore, relationships between all members of the school were viewed as collaborative, whereby they all support each other with the child's difficulties and emotional wellbeing.

Furthermore, this space afforded multiple opportunities to deliver interventions with CYP and parents at any one time; for example, participants described experiences in the classroom, at the park, on the stairs and whilst playing football. There seemed to be therapeutic value in as Sophie describes the 'kinetic' nature of this space. Unbound by the strict temporal and spatial boundaries of clinic appointments therapeutic interventions took place wherever there was live interaction, in turn enabling multiple opportunities of change at any one time.

These findings point towards a whole school approach to mental health provision which is not located solely within the therapeutic staff at the school or a particular activity within a set time and place. In particular, this research has shown how the inclusion of parents as an integral demographic within the school community can help foster trusting and productive relationships with staff, in turn creating an integrated network of support for the child including home and school. This whole school and community approach is advocated within the British Psychological Society Faculty for Children, Young People and their Families review of best practice in psychological services in schools and colleges (2017) which affirms the importance of training all school staff in the therapeutic skills. Such an approach aims to help the whole community of the school, including families, to develop support systems that can begin to build resilience at a wider level. A community approach would consider the psychological wellbeing of staff, students, families and the local community together. The whole community would be equal partners in shaping the

school's psychological and wellbeing strategy, supported by more specialist clinical staff (Faulconbridge et al., 2017)

The findings of the study also raise an interesting observation of how clinical psychologists can think about the use and design of space within services to facilitate therapeutic change. Spatial orientated research affirms the impact of space on one's subjective experience and furthermore affirms space as the production site of experience (Smith & Tucker, 2014). Participants described how the use of open and communal space with the school created visibility in relationships with others and whole systems. For example, the open and communal use of the classroom space for parents as well as children, created as Amy described in the theme 'System Integration' visibility between her and the educational system. Amy's presence in this space facilitated relationships of trust to be built with her and the school staff and a closer connection with her son as she observed his positive behaviour. Furthermore, Michael describes how the 'tight nature of the space' where they are all 'packed in' at times helped them be like a 'proper family'. Again here it seems the physical infrastructure of the research site helps to facilitate the systemic approach of the AP in a way that participants can have an embodied experience of this model. This indicates the need for the profession to not only consider the space in which services are delivered but also the use of space within that environment which the findings of this study suggest are significant in modulating one's subjective experience of the intervention.

4.3.3. Theory and Policy: Bringing the Macro and Micro Together

The statistics of those excluded highlight social inequality as a significant factor in school exclusion. These CYP are four times more likely to be from the poorest families (Gill, 2017). Furthermore, the findings highlight that both the exclusion process and the model of the AP can at times, put even more financial pressure on these families. In light of this, it is important for the profession to consider macro factors present within school exclusion and how these interact with models of intervention.

An area of tension highlighted in the findings is the conflict between families' engagement with the model and also the world of work. Some families reported the financial pressure they were under as a result of not being able to work a full week, due to their attendance at the school. This financial pressure was also present during the exclusion process as families described how their working hours were severely disrupted by having to pick their children unexpectedly from school as a result of numerous day exclusions. These findings indicate a need for the profession to consider how social inequalities deleteriously influence individuals' subjective experiences and engagement in interventions. Clinical psychologists' role in service design should therefore consider how interventions can have a complimentary rather than antagonistic relationship with the sphere of work.

Furthermore, clinical psychologists' intervention in this area should also be directed towards policy work and challenging oppressive policies, which put huge pressure on these families (Harper, 2016). These findings convey that the model with its core focus of family engagement at the school has a transformative impact on the child and family but with one 'Crack in the System'- the financial pressure some families feel in engaging in this model. This finding points towards the need of a financial system to support these vulnerable families during this period and thus macro level support for this issue.

Therefore, systemic practice with this demographic should intervene not only within the domains of family and school but also at a structural level considering the macro factors in exclusion such as poverty levels of these CYP and families. Interventions therefore should also be directed at creating sustainable structural changes (Patel, 2016). An implication of this is that clinical psychologists integrate research and advocacy work with other pertinent areas such as law and economics to strengthen a macro-level approach and systems level work (Patel, 2016).

4.3.4. Future Research

The scoping review revealed that research within this field is very limited and focuses primarily on the therapist's perspective and individualistic interventions. The systemic perspective on school exclusion is lacking within the research (Asen & Scholz, 2010). Considering the findings of this study which highlight the benefits of a systemic approach for this issue further research on this type of intervention would be of value.

Furthermore, the findings of this study highlight the therapeutic value of systemic mentalization and building epistemic trust across multiple relationships in the school environment including the child's relationship with their parent and school staff, and the parent's relationship with the whole school community including staff and other parents. The evidence base for mentalization-based treatments is based primarily on individual work and directed towards a particular pathology. Similarly, the articles within the scoping review focus on mentalization as an individual level intervention directed towards the parent or the child. Research on the school as a site of systemic mentalization and the potential opportunities of this is an under-researched area (Fonagy et al., 2005). Furthermore, considering the current policy drive and funding towards schools as a prime site of mental health provision for CYP (DfE, 2017) and the developing use of mentalization within this context and in teacher training (Riley & Swan, 2015) there is a value to research the application of mentalization in a wider systems context.

Another area of research could be directed towards an exploration of the interplay between the CYP intersecting identities such as ethnicity, gender and age and their experience of school exclusion and the intervention. Analysis into the demographics of those excluded highlight the vulnerability of certain groups to exclusion. For example, in 2016/17, pupils from the Traveller of Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma ethnic groups had the highest rates of both temporary ('fixed period') and permanent exclusions (DfE, 2018). Therefore, further research which examines how these identities interact with school exclusion will provide a more nuanced exploration of the issue.

4.4. Critical Evaluation

The evaluation of the integrity of qualitative research is a contested issue. To help with this task I deployed Ritchie and Spencer's (2012) quality framework which applies the principles of contribution, credibility, rigour and reflexivity to the evaluation of research.

4.4.1. Contribution

Contribution refers to the value and relevance of the research to areas such as practice, policy and theory (Ritchie & Spencer, 2012). The adoption of a systemic and qualitative approach in the study has widened theoretical understandings around the nature of exclusion and systemic interventions in AP settings for this demographic. The current limited body of literature within this field mainly draws on therapists' perspectives on interventions in AP and highlights a gap within the child and family subjective experience of exclusion and interventions. Furthermore, the unique model of the research site had yet to be researched upon and thus offers several new insights and implications for clinical psychology's role in this area, across practice, policy and service design.

4.4.2. Credibility

Credibility refers to the plausibility of the claims illustrated within the research. (Ritchie & Spencer, 2012). To demonstrate the credibility of this study I have grounded the analysis in relevant extracts from both CYP and family members and CYP drawings and have endeavoured throughout to link this analysis to relevant theory. Furthermore, the diversity of sample group made up of CYP and family members of different ages and backgrounds and level of involvement in the school led to diversity in some areas of exploration. This diversity is particularly illustrated in the fourth theme 'Cracks in the System' in turn providing a nuanced depiction of the AP environment. The inclusion of contrasting and minority views within this theme demonstrate richness and credibility to the claims being made. Meetings with my academic supervisor throughout the development of my analysis chapters where I shared extracts and spoke about emerging and diverse narratives also helped me to keep

connected to these narratives and thus strengthen the credibility of the research.

4.4.3. Rigour

The rigour of the research can be examined by the three principles of audibility, defensibility and reflexivity (Ritchie & Spencer, 2012).

4.4.3.1. Audibility: Audibility refers to the careful documenting and recording of research decisions and positions adopted (Ritchie & Spencer, 2012).
In chapter two, I have outlined my methodology and detailed the analytic steps taken. I have sought to provide a rationale for each step in my methodology and analysis. To demonstrate transparency I have included extracts of raw data (Appendix P-R) and an initial data map (Appendix L) that illustrate the development of themes. To further demonstrate transparency I have included extracts (Appendix N-O) from my reflective diary to highlight my thoughts and feelings throughout the study, which may have shaped the research decisions.

4.4.3.2. *Defensibility:* The rigour of the research depends on a coherent rationale for the particular sample and methodology adopted within the study (Ritchie & Spencer, 2012). In chapter one I provided a clear rationale for undertaking this study and on the specific focus of the research on the CYP and family experience of exclusion and the AP setting. In chapter two I have outlined a clear argument for my particular methodology and epistemological and ontological position.

4.4.4. Reflexivity

Firstly, rigour in qualitative research requires the researcher to adopt personal reflexivity; the awareness that their own sociocultural position, beliefs and assumptions may have influenced and shaped the research process (Willig, 2013). Furthermore, epistemological and methodological reflexivity

encourages the researcher to reflect upon the strengths and limitations of adopting a particular position (Ritchie & Spencer, 2012).

4.4.4.1. *Personal Reflexivity:* As demonstrated throughout the study the system and the community of the school was robust. The nature of the school was one of openness and community. For example, parents, staff and children ate together at lunch and most spaces were all communal. At times I felt a constant tension throughout to balance my role as an independent researcher and therefore position myself outside of this system but also on the other hand wanting to become part of it. I also realised that integration into the system to a certain extent was integral in gaining trust and familiarly with CYP and families so that they would feel comfortable taking part in an interview.

My position within this community and space changed during my time at the AP which may have impacted the research process. I was introduced to the families by my field supervisor as a Doctoral student conducting research at the school and joined parent learning and family class for several weeks to become a familiar face. I wondered if the families instinctively identified me with staff at the school and therefore perhaps interview responses were influenced by this. After several weeks of joining these activities I attended the school on a different day and situated myself in a space clearly marked for family members to 'hang out' while their child was in class. The space was not associated with any formal school activities or staff. This transition may have changed my position in the AP within the participant's mind as I no longer sat alongside staff members, a position at times taken up during the school activities. As a result, perhaps family member interviews conducted at this time expressed different views.

During my time in parent learning there were also several visitors from other schools- media personnel and politicians learning about the model of the AP from the families. Family members shared their positive experiences of the AP and felt hugely motivated to publicise the model of the school so other families

in similar positions may benefit from this practice. I wondered if I was also identified by participants as another media personal to hear 'publicity' stories. To make clear to CYP and families my position as an independent researcher, separate from school staff and external visitors I reiterated this position at the beginning of the interviews, and encouraged all views of their experience at the school.

Another challenge I noticed after my first interview was the tendency to be drawn into a conversational style with some of the parents. During my time in the school activities I had got to know some of them well and been privy to many personal and moving stories. This may have limited inquiry and curiosity in the interview. I shared this concern with my supervisor, and we reflected together on how I could navigate this dynamic in the interviews. We discussed the importance of open and probing questions (Turner, 2010) and I adopted these techniques in subsequent interviews.

4.4.4.2. *Epistemological and Methodological Reflexivity:* The critical realist epistemological position and a systemic ontological stance of the study supported answering the research questions in two key ways. Firstly, this stance facilitated exploration of participants' subjective experiences of their journey and also how these experiences interacted with different material contexts in their life. Secondly, the position allowed me to consider and explore the importance of relationships and the multi-level system interaction present within the experience of school exclusion and the intervention of the AP.

The methodological approach of the study also provided certain opportunities. Individual interviews provided a safe, private space were family members and CYP could share openly about their experiences of exclusion and inclusion at the AP which were very moving accounts. Furthermore, one to one interviews allowed the participants to enter a different space from the predominant prevailing group and communal spaces of the school. This change may have afforded participants to share more openly with differing viewpoints without

having to be mindful of one another or maintaining a group narrative (Bion, 1962). In addition, the implementation of a drawing exercise in the CYP interviews provided a tool to make these interviews more accessible.

However, during the CYP interviews I observed differing levels of engagement and I reflected afterwards that perhaps a CYP focus group may have facilitated more discussion. The dynamic of a one on one interview may have felt confrontational for the CYP. Furthermore, a focus group may have created a more comfortable environment for the CYP to share and encourage a flow of ideas between each other.

To further develop the accessibility of the research for CYP a more participatory method such as Photo Voice (Burton & Kagan, 2000) could be deployed to increase collaboration during the process. Photo Voice is a participatory method in which people use cameras to document their experiences of different contexts (Redwood-Jones & Wang, 2001). A key principle of photo voice is the participant's autonomy, thus using this method may be a particularly powerful experience for these CYP to take up a more autonomous position contrasting from perhaps a marginalised identity assumed as an excluded pupil (Briggs, 2010). Therefore, future research may begin by reflecting and researching more innovative and empowering research methods to engage this demographic.

The approach of combining two forms of data and treating it as one data set also opened up certain possibilities and closed others. Advantages of this is that it provided a clear and robust framework to analyse the data comprehensively. The drawing exercise was embedded within the interview schedule and therefore, it was a logical decision to analyse the data together as they were intricately connected to one another (McGrath & Reavey, 2013). Analysing the data collectively drew out rich insights from the drawings and the text in turn illuminating a dynamic dialogue between the two data sources (Yardley, 2008).

However, they may have been certain limitations to analysing the data in this way. Perhaps analysing the drawings as part of and connected to the narrative text may have closed down and limited possible analytical insights into the drawings. Looking at the drawings within the framework of the narrative text may have detracted attention away from new, different and perhaps contradictory themes arising within the drawings. An alternative approach would have been to conduct the drawing activity and the interview as completely separate exercises. The drawing activity would be a separate research method, unconnected to the interview questions. In turn the drawing and interview data would be coded completely separately.

4.5. Study Limitations

A key objective of the AP model and feature of the school exclusion journey is not only reintegration into AP, but also if possible, reintegration back into mainstream provision. Therefore, I feel a potential gap in the thesis research is leaving this part of the journey unexplored. Inclusion of this area would provide a more comprehensive insight into this full journey and relationships with all systems involved in the process. Asking questions relating to this reintegration would potentially draw further interesting insights into change over time for the child and family during a longer period of time, particularly in their relationship with the mainstream school environment.

Furthermore, another limitation of the study was perhaps not to include the AP staff as participants in the research. The inclusion of the staff experience would provide another insight into the richness of the systemic work at play in this context and the key mechanisms they understand as facilitating therapeutic change in their relationships with the children and family members.

Furthermore, perhaps another limitation in the thesis was that participants did not come from the same family unit. This was difficult due to recruitment and the availability of parents to match with those children who wanted to participate in the research. The inclusion of views from the same family unit

may have allowed for an interesting comparative data analysis of experiences of school exclusion from within the same family.

4.6. Final Reflections

To summarise, the thesis has sought to explore participants' journey from school exclusion to therapeutic AP. An analysis of the data illuminated several key findings that are relevant to the profession of clinical psychology. Firstly, the reconceptualization of the issue of school exclusion as a systemic one. The study has highlighted the systemic impact of school exclusion on the whole of the child's system. The research site by bringing together all members of the child's system in one place makes visible the child's difficulties in the context and in turn mobilises a comprehensive network of support. Families and CYP transition from a place of exclusion to take up an active role in solving 'the problem', supported by a network of trusted families and school staff. This model illuminates a very different way of working with families than the structure of traditional models of care in NHS services and schools. Therefore, ultimately, the findings indicate a need for clinical psychology to creatively engage with this issue and think about service frameworks that can engage the child's whole system impacted during school exclusion in non-stigmatising and integrative environment.

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6. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Glossary of Key Terms

Alternative Provision: Alternative provision refers to education outside of mainstream schooling. It is provided for pupils up to the age of 18 by either their mainstream school or the local authority. AP is provided through full or part-time, and short or longer-term placements. There are a number of different alternative provision settings within the UK, these include pupil referral units (PRUs), AP free schools and academies, and independent providers.

Behavioural Interventions: Behavioural interventions are grounded in learning theory and advocate that most human behaviour is learned through the interaction between an individual and their environment. Behavioural interventions aim to teach and increase useful behaviours and decrease harmful behaviours or those that disrupt learning.

Children and adolescent Mental Health Services: These services based within the NHS assess and treat children and young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties**.**

Child in Need Plan: A child is defined as 'in need' under the Children Act 1989, where: a) they are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for them of services by an LA; b) their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for them of such services; or c) they are disabled. A plan will be drawn up by Children Services to support the needs of these children and/ or family.

Child Protection Plan: A plan drawn up by social care services to protect a child who they feel is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. It involves more intensive intervention than a Child In Need Plan.

Education, Health and Care plan: An Education and Health Care (EHC) plan details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has SEN or a disability. It is drawn up by the LA after an EHC needs assessment of the child or young person and after consultation with relevant partner agencies.

Family Class: A weekly afternoon activity at the research site where family members and children come together to partake in therapeutic family activities and games alongside school staff. During this time parents and children share interaction with each other and learn from each other's interactions. Through action or doing things together, combined with reflection, families will be encouraged to observe and comment on behaviours, interactions and patterns and to practice new ones. The presence of other parents and children offer a new and different perspective on the current issues for each family.

Fixed period exclusion: When a pupil is temporarily removed from the school for a fixed amount of time (including exclusion during lunchtime), before returning to school.

Free school meals: As under Section 512 of the Education Act 1996, as amended, places a duty on maintained schools, academies and free schools to provide free school meals to pupils who receive, or whose parents receive certain qualifying support payments.

Looked after child: As defined in Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, this

means a child (0-18 years of age) who is subject to a care order (or an interim care order) or who is accommodated by the Local Authority.

Ofsted: The government watchdog responsible for inspecting schools and other educational institutions. Ofsted inspects and rates schools' effectiveness as Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate.

Parent Learning: A weekly morning group at the research time where parents and therapeutic staff of the school come together for two hours. The group begins with a particular topic presented by one of the staff in relation to the child's learning, behavioral and emotional development. For example, understanding and interpreting emotions and children's mental states. Discussion follows on from this topic. During this time parents also share their dilemmas, concerns and experiences with their child that week. Other parents listen, offer advice and suggestions or share perhaps similar experiences too. Families learn from each other during the group about possible solutions to the difficulties they may be having with their chid.

Permanent exclusion: This results in a child being permanently removed from a school's roll in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

Pupil referral unit: A type of school that is set up and maintained by local authorities to provide an education to pupils who cannot attend mainstream or special schools.

Special educational needs: A child or young person has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her, with significantly greater

difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age. It can also be the case that a child has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities provided for others of the same age in a mainstream setting.

Social and emotional mental health needs: A type of special educational needs in which the chid or young person has difficulties in managing their emotions and behaviour.

Special school: A school which is specifically organised to make special educational provision for pupils with SEN.

Therapeutic Alternative Provision: An alternative provision with a therapeutic and psychological framework for viewing the child's behaviour. Psychological support for the child and family is provided by trained therapeutic staff.

Appendix B: Research Site Confirmation Letter

[redacted] [redacted]

Shauna Mullarkey
School of Psychology,
University of East London,
Water Lane,
London E15 4LZ.

3rd May 2018

Dear Shauna,

We are happy for you to conduct your thesis research at [redacted] School as part of your Clinical Psychology Doctorate.

We are looking forward to the end result.

Best wishes,

[redacted]
Headteacher

[redacted]
Consultant Psychotherapist
& School Governor

Appendix C: Adult Participant Information Sheet

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You are invited to take part in a research study to talk about your experience of the school. Before you decide whether you would like to take part, it is important for you to know why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the information below. If there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you are happy be involved you must sign the attached consent form and return to the school.

If you DO NOT want to be involved then you do not need to do anything further.

Who am I?

I am a postgraduate student in the School of Psychology at the University of East London and am studying for a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology.

What is the research?

The research is an exploration of parents' and children's experience of the school.

Why have you been asked to participate?

I am looking to involve parents and children who attend the school.

You are quite free to decide whether or not to participate and should not feel coerced.

What will your participation involve?

If you agree to participate you will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview where you will be asked questions about your experience of the school.

The interview will take place at the school and will last for approximately 40-60 minutes although the actual length can be determined by you and what you would like to say. The interview will be audio taped and transcribed by myself. You will not have to talk about anything that you do not want to talk about and you can refuse to answer any question at any point

What will happen to the information that you and others give us?

After the interviews I will listen to the recordings and type them up into a transcript. Any names you mentioned (including your own) and anything you say that could identify you will be altered. The typed transcripts may be read by my supervisor at university Dr Laura McGrath and the examiners who test me. No one else will read the transcripts.

After my examination I will erase the interview recordings. The typed transcripts will be stored securely in a password-protected file on a password-protected computer for an indefinite period of time. This is so that they can be used to inform future research and publications.

I will keep the information you share confidential. I will only breach confidentiality if you share information that makes me concerned that you or someone else is at risk of harm. If that happened, I would have a responsibility to tell someone who can help keep you and/or someone else safe. I would try to let you know that I needed to share that information.

What if you want to withdraw?

You are free to withdraw from the research study up until the analysis stage of your research (around 2 weeks after the date of your interview) without explanation, disadvantage or consequence.

Other important information

There are no risks or dangers involved in taking part in the research, although it is possible that you could get upset if you share information about something you find difficult or emotional. If you did get upset, I would be happy to contact someone in the school who you can talk to.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Name: Shauna Mullarkey

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Dr Laura McGrath, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Mark Finn, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

Adult Information letter; children interviews

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child has been invited to take part in a research study to talk about their experience of the school.

Before you decide whether you consent for them to take part it is important for you to know why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the information below. If there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

If you are happy for your child to be involved you must sign the attached consent form and return to the school.

If you DO NOT want your child to be involved then you do not need to do anything further.

Who am I?

My name is Shauna Mullarkey and I am a postgraduate student in the School of Psychology at the University of East London and am studying for a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. As part of my studies I am conducting the research you are being invited to participate in.

What is the research?

The research is an exploration of parents' and children's experience of the school.

Why has my child been asked to participate?

I am looking to involve parents and children who attend the school.

You are quite free to decide whether or not you would like your child to participate and should not feel at all pressured.

What will your child's participation involve?

If you agree for your child to participate then they will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview where they will be asked questions about their experience of the school.

The interview will take place at the school and will last for approximately 20- 30 minutes although the actual length can be determined by your child and what they would like to say.

The interview will be audio taped and transcribed by myself. They will not have to talk about anything that they do not want to talk about and they can refuse to answer any question at any point

Your child may also be asked to do some drawings relating to their experience at the school

What will happen to the information that your child and others give?

I will listen to the recordings and type them up into a transcript. Any names your child mentioned (including their own) and anything they say that could identify them will be altered in the transcripts and any names they put on the drawings. The typed transcripts may be read by my supervisor at the University of East London Dr Laura McGrath and the examiners who test me. No one else will read the transcripts.

After my examination I will erase the recordings. The typed transcripts will be stored securely in a password-protected file on a password-protected computer for a maximum of five years. This is so that they can be used to inform future research and publications.

Quotes from what your child may say and your child's drawings may be used to inform future research and used in reports and publications. Any personal information your child has provided (e.g. their name, or the names of other people), will be redacted or changed (to ensure anonymity).

I will keep the information they share confidential. I will only breach confidentiality if they share information that makes me concerned that they or someone else is at risk of harm. If that happened, I would have a responsibility to tell someone who can help keep your child and/or someone else safe. I would let you know if this needed to happen.

What if you want your child to withdraw?

Your child is free to withdraw their data from the research study up until the analysis stage of the research (around 2 weeks after the date of their interview) without explanation, disadvantage or consequence.

Other important information

There are no risks or dangers involved in taking part in the research, although it is possible that your child could get upset if they share information about something they find difficult or emotional. If they did get upset, I would let you and a senior member of the school staff know.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Name: Shauna Mullarkey

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Dr Laura McGrath School of Psychology,

Appendix D: Child and young person participant information sheet

Your School Experience

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide if you want to take part, it is important that you understand what the project is about, and what you will have to do if you decide to take part.

Who am I?

My name is Shauna and I am a postgraduate student studying for a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. As part of my studies I am conducting the research you are being invited to participate in.

What is this project about?

Your school is an alternative provision school and the aim of this project is to see what your experience of the school is.

Who am I speaking to?

I am speaking to young people and children who attend this school. I will also be asking parents attending the school about their experience too.

What does this involve?

If you want to take part you will be asked to have a one to one conversation with myself at the school. The conversation can last for as long as you want to talk (up to a maximum of 1 hour).

The interview will be audio-recorded so that I can write down what you said afterwards. You will be asked questions about what it is like being a pupil at this school. You may also be asked to draw some pictures related to your experience at the school. Quotes from what you say and your drawings may be

used to inform future research in reports and publications. In this information you provide your own name will be changed, as well as the names of others or places that you may mention or out on the drawings.

Will information about me be kept confidential?

Your interview will be strictly confidential and private. The only time I might need to break this rule is if you say something that makes me think that you or someone else is in danger. In that case, I will have to tell someone whose job is to protect children and make sure they are safe.

Audio recordings will be kept in a protected computer file and only be accessed by myself. When the recordings are typed up your name will be changed, as well as the names of others or places that you may mention. This information (non-identifying) may be used to inform future research and reports.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you whether or not you take part in this study. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you choose not to take part you this will not affect you in any way and you will not get in trouble.

Even if you start to take part and then change your mind that is also okay. You are free to change your mind until the analysis stage of your research (around 2 weeks after the date of your interview)

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.
Name: Shauna Mullarkey

Appendix E: Adult Interview Schedule

As the interviews will be semi-structured the following provides a guide to the areas to be covered in the interview. The precise way in which interview unfolds will be influenced by the participant's responses.

Introductions and engagement
Re-iterate consent/assent, confidentiality and that the participant may withdraw at any time. Agree approximate length of interview.

Background

a) **Journey to the school**

I would first all like to talk a bit about your journey to the school (Exclusion/ School refusal)

Q. How was it leaving your old school?

Q. How did that make you feel? (Impact your relationship with the school, child, family)

Q. How do you think your child felt at that time?

b) **Starting at Alternative Provision**

Q. How did you find out about the school?

Q. When you heard about it, what did you think?

Q. What did other people (your partner/parents/friends) think when you told them about the school?

c) Experience at the school

Q. How would you describe the school?

Q. How long have you been coming to the school? How often do you attend the school- how many days a week?

Parent learning programme (this section may not be applicable to all parents if they do not attend the parent learning programme)

You've been engaging in the parent learning programme
Q. What has that been like for you?

Q. How would you describe the parent learning programme?

Q. What takes place during the parent learning programme?…
Possible further questions

- Have you ever been to a group like it before?
- What is different about the group?
- How have you found talking in this group compared to other services/schools?
- What makes you want to attend the group?
- What sort of feelings do you experience in the parent group?
- How does it feel to share with other parents in that space?
- What about the group makes it feel okay for you to share with other parents?
- What if anything has been helpful about the group?
- What if anything have you learned from other parents in the group?
- What if anything has been challenging about being part of the group?
- If so how has being part of the group changed you/ your relationship with your child/ family/ other parents and teaching staff?

- Has it changed the way you think about yourself? Your child/ you as a parent?
- What does it mean to you to be part of this group?

Prompt:

- Can you tell me a little more about why it's been [whatever said above]?

-Can you give me an example of that?

-Change- (If you could compare yourself at the beginning of the group to how you are now).

-Can you tell me a bit more about why you feel like that when in the group?

-How do you make sense of that?

- How do you understand it?

Family Learning (or if the parent does not attend family learning that joining child in their class on another day)

You've been having engaging in the family learning

Q. What has that been like for you?

Q. How would you describe family learning?

Q. What takes place during the family learning?

Possible further questions:

- Have you ever been to an activity like it before?
- What is different about family learning?
- What makes you if anything want to attend family learning?
- What sort of feelings do you experience in the family learning?
- How does it feel be in family learning supporting your child/ other children?
- What if anything do you enjoy about family learning?

- What if anything have you learned from family learning about yourself, your child, other children, other parents? (Has anything surprised you?)
- What if anything has been challenging about being part of family learning?
- How has being part of family learning changed you/ your relationship with your child, family, other parents and teaching staff?
- Has it changed the way you think about yourself? Your child, you as a parent?

Prompt:

- Can you tell me a little more about why it's been [whatever said above]?
-Can you give me an example of that?
-Change- (If you could compare yourself at the beginning of attending family learning to how you are now).
-Can you tell me a bit more about why you feel like that when in family learning?
-How do you make sense of that?
- How do you understand it?

Leaving the school

Q. How do you feel about leaving the school?

Q. What are your goals (and/or your child's) for when you leave?

Q. What are your hopes for your child/ your relationship with your child/ school when you leave the school and your child is back in mainstream education?

Debriefing

-Thank participant for taking part.

-Ask how they feel about the discussion we've just had.

-Remind participant of their right to withdraw and what will happen to the information they've shared today.

-Check whether they have any queries or issues that they would like to discuss.

-Explain to the participant that if the interview raised any difficult or emotional issues that they would like further support with I can help them to arrange a time to talk with someone of their choice.

Appendix F: Children and Young Person Interview Schedule

As the interviews will be semi-structured the following provides a guide to the areas to be covered in the interview. The precise way in which interview unfolds will be influenced by the participant's responses.

Introductions and engagement
Re-iterate consent/assent, confidentiality and that the participant may withdraw at any time. Agree approximate length of interview.

Drawing Exercise

Children are invited to draw a self-portrait of when they first started at the school and themselves today at our interview having been at the school for more than a term now. Discussion will follow looking at these drawings.

Background

Q. How did you find out about the school?

Q. When you heard about it, what did you think?

Q. How did you feel about leaving your previous school?

Q. How long have you been coming to the school? How often do you attend school? …(How many days a week?)

Q. What did other people (your family/friends) think when you told them about the school?

The School

What is a typical day like at the school?

What have you noticed that is different about the school?

Q. What are the things about the school that you like best?
F Prompt: Can you give me an example of that?

Q. What are the things about the school that you don't like or find less helpful?
F Prompt: Can you give me an example of that?

Q. What is different if anything about this school compared to other schools you have been to?
F Prompt: The classes, teachers, lunchtime, the other pupils…?
Can you give me an example of that?

Family Questions

Drawing Exercise

Children are invited to draw a picture of their family when they first started at the school and picture of their family today at our interview having been at the school for more than a term now. Discussion will follow looking at these drawings

Q. What is it like having your (family member) at your school too?
F Prompt: Can you give me an example of that?

Q. Is there anything you find helpful, enjoy or like about it?
F Prompt: Can you give me an example of that?

Q. Is there anything you find less helpful, don't enjoy or don't like about it?
F Prompt: Can you give me an example of that?

Possible Further Questions

- What is it like spending time with your parent at school?
-Has your mum/dad/ grandparent changed in any way?
- Has this changed over time?
- Has the school helped or has this had anything to do with the school?
What particular aspect of the school?
-have there been other things which have made a difference?

Q. Do you think you will miss anything when your time at the school ends?

Relationships with other Families and children

Q. What are the other parents/ children like?

Q. How do you get on with them?

Q. Can you tell me more about what your friendship/ relationship is like with them? (in family learning and around the school)

Changes to Mainstream

Q. Is there anything, which Mainstream can do differently to help kids?

Q. What would you idea schools be like? Can you give three things that it should have?

Hopes and dreams

Q. What are your hopes/ goals going forward?

Q. What would you like to be when you grow up?

Closing Comments

Q. Is there anything we have not talked about which you think is important?

Prompts such as ‘How’ and ‘In what way’ will be used throughout to elicit further details from the children. Specific examples will be elicited in order to obtain rich data

Debriefing

-Thank participant for taking part.

- Remind participant of their right to withdraw and what will happen to the information they’ve shared today.

-Check whether they have any questions or about the interview

Appendix G: University of East London Ethics Approval

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants
BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

REVIEWER: Matthew Jones Chesters

SUPERVISOR: **Laura Mcgrath**

STUDENT: Shauna Mullarkey

Course: Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

Title of proposed study: TBC

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.

2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below)**:** In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision

notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.

3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below)**:** In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

Approved

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER *(for reviewer)*

Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?

YES

Please request resubmission with an adequate risk assessment

If the proposed research could expose the researcher to any of kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:

☐ HIGH

Please do not approve a high risk application and refer to the Chair of Ethics. Travel to countries/provinces/areas deemed to be high risk should not be permitted and an application not approved on this basis. If unsure please refer to the Chair of Ethics.

☐

MEDIUM (Please approve but with appropriate recommendations)

[X] LOW

Reviewer comments in relation to researcher risk (if any).

Reviewer *(Typed name to act as signature)*: Matthew Jones Chesters

Date: 9th May 2018

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

RESEARCHER PLEASE NOTE:

For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's Insurance, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Research Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place.

For a copy of UELs Personal Accident & Travel Insurance Policy, please see the Ethics Folder in the Psychology Noticeboard

Appendix H: Adult Participant Consent Form

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Please tick (√) appropriate box:

1. I confirm that I have read and/or listened to the researcher read the Information Sheet and understand what the study involves. ☐

2. I have had the opportunity to think about the information, ask questions and have had these answered by the researcher. ☐

3. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures I will be involved in have been explained to me. ☐

4. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw without giving any reason up until the study's final analysis is complete. Should I decide to withdraw from the study, any data that they provided will be withdrawn and not used in the analysis. ☐

5. I understand that what I say will be treated as strictly confidential, and handled in line with the law (Data Protection Act 1998 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation after 25 May 2018). ☐

6. I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed. ☐

7. I agree to the interviews being audio-recorded by the researcher. ☐

8. I consent to participate in the above study. ☐

Parent's name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……..

Parent's signature

……

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……..

Researcher's Signature

……

Date

……

Appendix I: Parent/ Guardian consent form for CYP participant Interview

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Please tick (√) appropriate box:

1. I confirm that I have read and/or listened to the researcher read the Information Sheet and understand what the study involves. ☐

2. I have had the opportunity to think about the information, ask questions and have had these answered by the researcher. ☐

3. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures which my child will be involved in have been explained to me. ☐

4. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that my child is free to withdraw without giving any reason up until the study's final analysis is complete. Should my child decide to withdraw from the study, any data that they provided will be withdrawn and not used in the analysis. ☐

5. I understand that my child's involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed. ☐

6. I understand that what my child may say will be treated as strictly confidential, and handled in line with the law (Data Protection Act 1998 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation after 25 May 2018). ☐

7. I understand that what my child might say may be used in reports and publications as quotes along with the responses of other people who are taking part in the study. ☐

8. I understand that my child's drawings created during the interview may be used in reports and publications along with the drawings of other children who are taking part in the study. ☐

9. I agree to the interviews being audio-recorded by the researcher. ☐

10. I consent for my child to participate in the above study. ☐

Child's name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……

Parent's name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……..

Parent's signature

……

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……..

Researcher's Signature

……

Date

.....

Appendix J: Child and young person participant assent form

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Please tick (√) appropriate box:

1. I have read and/or listened to the researcher read the Information Sheet and understand what the study involves. ☐

2. I understand that I do not have to take part in this study if I do not want to. ☐

3. I understand that even if I start to take part and then change my mind that is also okay. I am free to change my mind until the analysis stage of the research. ☐

4. I understand that what I say will be treated as strictly confidential, and handled in line with the law (Data Protection Act 1998 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation after 25 May 2018). ☐

5. I understand that what I say may be used in reports and publications as quotes along with the responses of other people who are taking part in the study. ☐

6. I understand that my drawings may be used in reports and publications along with the drawings of other people who are taking part in the study. ☐

7. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I wish to ask. ☐

8. I agree that the research project named above has been explained enough to me and I agree to take part in this study. ☐

9. I agree to the interviews being audio-recorded by the researcher. ☐

10. I assent to take part in this study. ☐

Your name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……..

Your signature

……

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……..

Researcher's Signature

……

Date

……

Appendix K: Transcription Key

(....) Indicates that words have been omitted to shorten quote

[ ] Indicates when an non identifying information has replaced identifying information

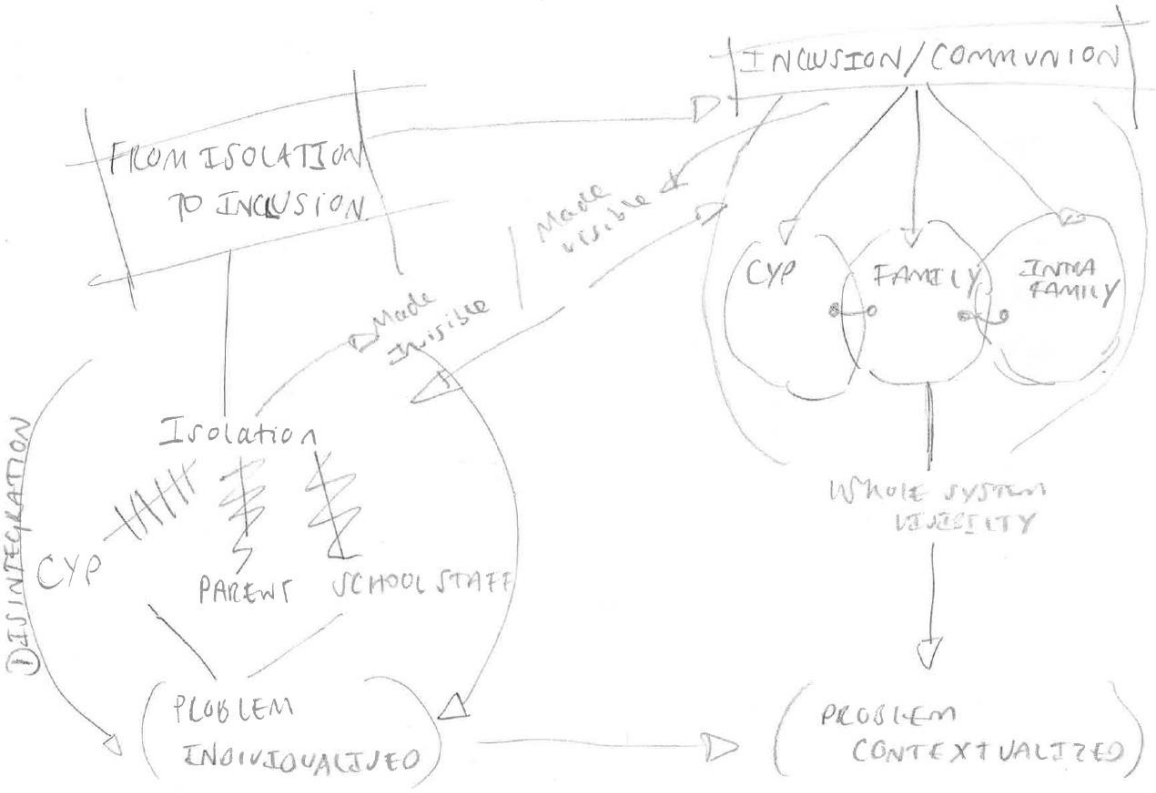
.. Represents a brief pause

... Represents an extended pause

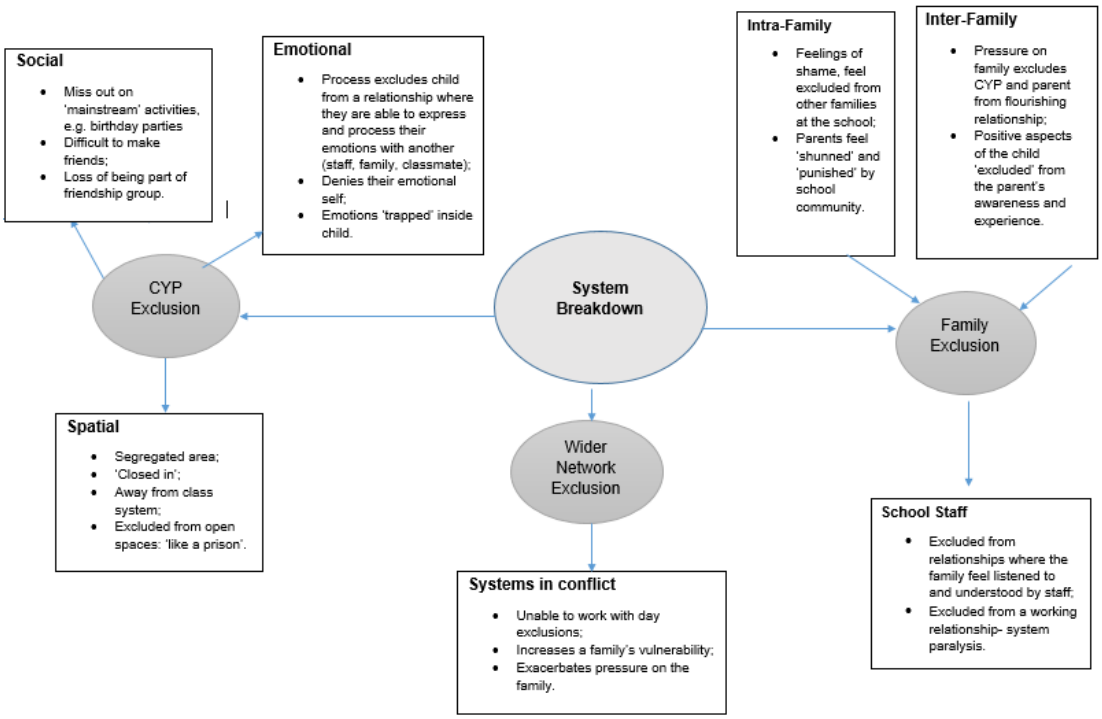
Underlined Represents when a word is emphasised

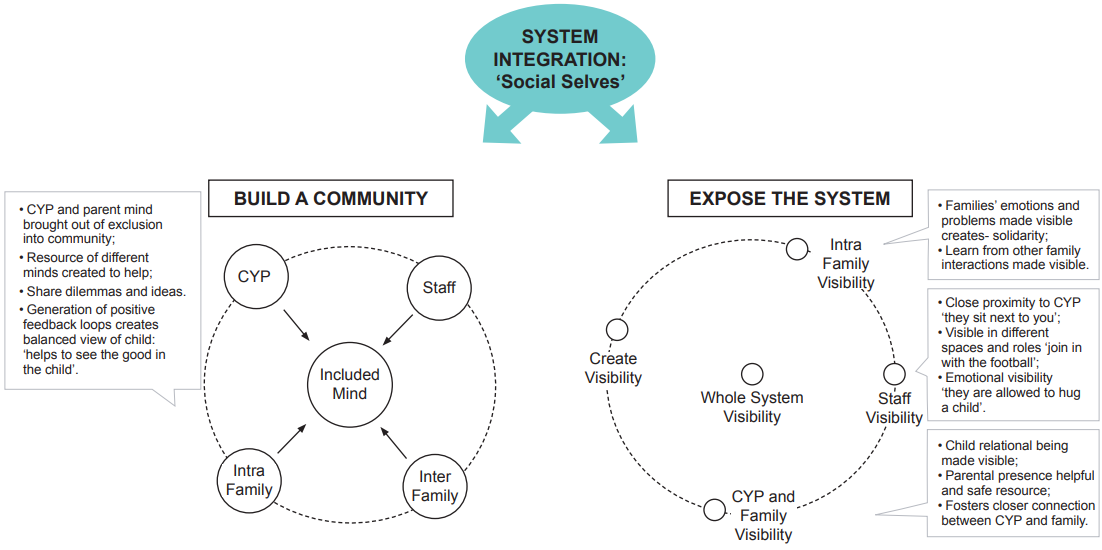
[laughter] Laughter during the interview

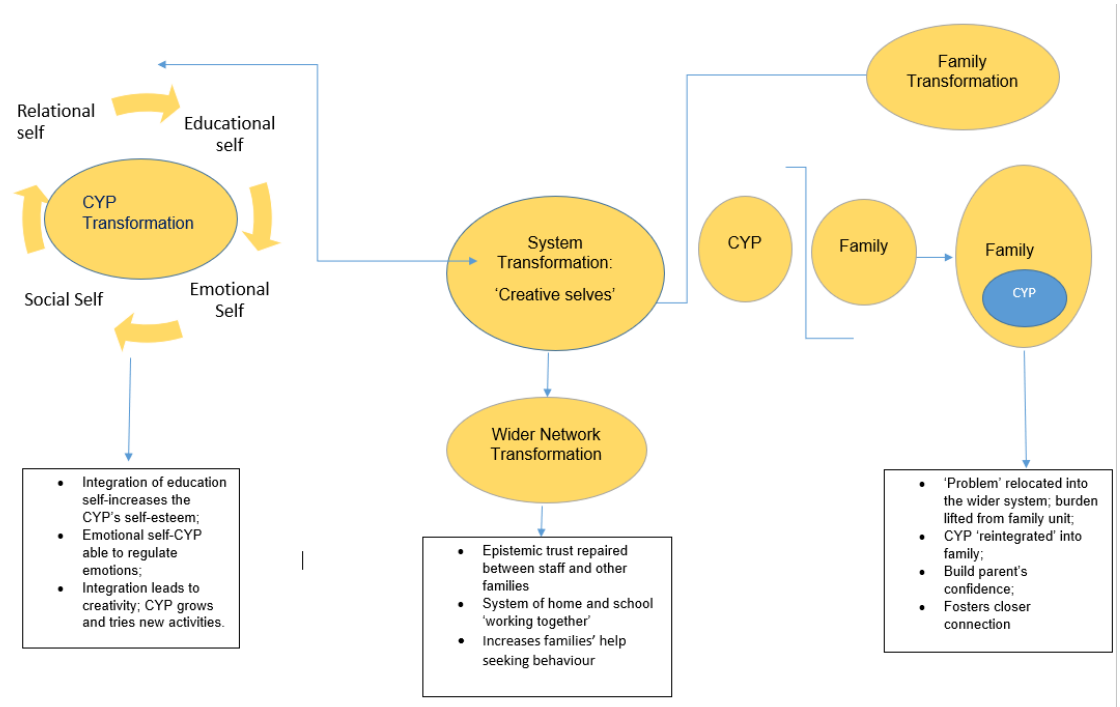
Appendix L: Early thematic map

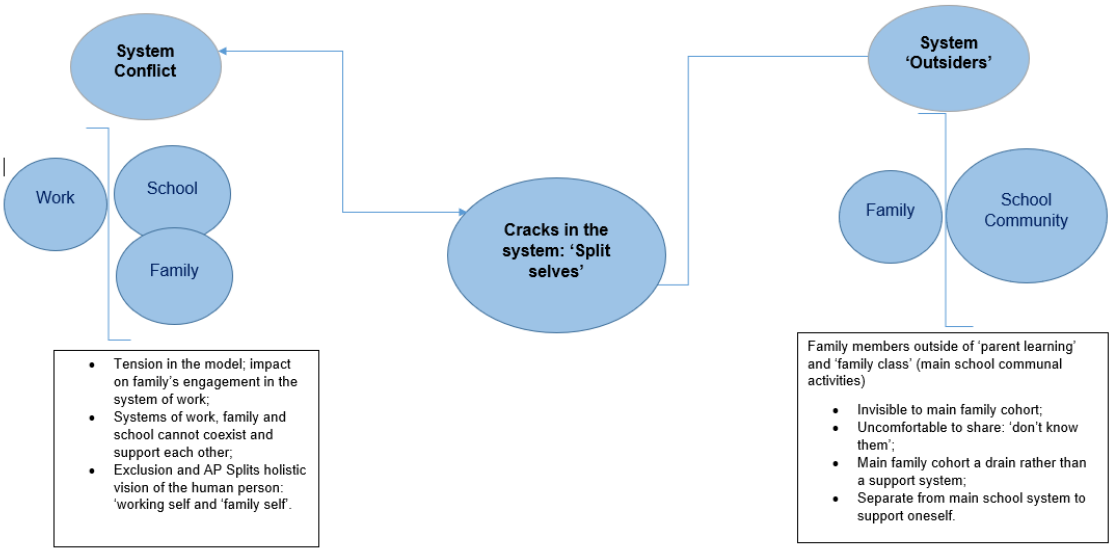


Appendix M: Examples of final thematic maps






Relational self
Educational self
CYP Transformation
Social Self
Emotional Self
Integration of education self-increases the CYP's self-esteem;
Emotional self-CYP able to regulate emotions;
Integration leads to creativity; CYP grows and tries new activities.
System Transformation:
'Creative selves'
Wider Network Transformation
Epistemic trust repaired between staff and other families
System of home and school 'working together'
Increases families' help seeking behaviour
Family Transformation
CYP
Family
Family
CYP
'Problem' relocated into the wider system; burden lifted from family unit;
CYP 'reintegrated' into family;
Build parent's confidence;
Fosters closer connection


System Conflict
Work
School
Family
Tension in the model; impact on family's engagement in the system of work;
Systems of work, family and school cannot coexist and support each other;
Exclusion and AP Splits holistic vision of the human person: 'working self and 'family self'.
Cracks in the system: 'Split selves'
System 'Outsiders'
Family
School Community
Family members outside of 'parent learning' and 'family class' (main school communal activities)
Invisible to main family cohort;
Uncomfortable to share: 'don't know them';
Main family cohort a drain rather than a support system;
Separate from main school system to support oneself.

Appendix N: Reflexive diary extract one

July 2018, After the last day of term

Today was the last day of term. My field supervisor said it would be a good day to come in to see if any parents would like to take part in an interview as there would be lots of family members in for the last assembly of the term. It was a really hot day and we all packed into one of the classrooms to have the assembly- staff, pupils and their family (parents, grandparents, and siblings). During the assembly the headteacher congratulated each of the children and they were given certificates for their achievements during the term. The headteacher congratulated one of the children on being there for his sister on her graduation day and it felt lovely to see apart from educational progress, family life and family achievements being celebrated here. We also said goodbye and congratulated all those returning to mainstream education. When the children received their certificates some of them were crying, it seemed with tears of joy from being very proud of themselves and perhaps a little overwhelmed and emotional with all praise and good feedback. Perhaps also mixed feelings about the time of transition ahead with the term now over.

One of the little boys who I had seen around school who was always very active and chatty, at the point when the headteacher gave him his certificate he was crying. He seemed really taken back by recognition of his achievements and the whole school being very proud of him. I found it really moving to see and wondered if it was rare it was for him and all these children to be celebrated in their mainstream school.

In the assembly we also said goodbye to Marie (a parent) whose child was reintegrating back into mainstream. She was quite emotional when we were all saying goodbye to her and I wondered how it must be for her now leaving this place… although happy her son will be back in mainstream provision, she will no longer be part of this community. I was also struck by the change which took place in the school in both CYP and families as it reminded me

how the environment of the school is so much more than inclusion in education. The whole environment just feels so very different from my current clinical placement where it was very hard to work with the whole system and where the ‘change’ seemed at times a very rare occasion in the work.…

Appendix O: Reflexive diary extract two

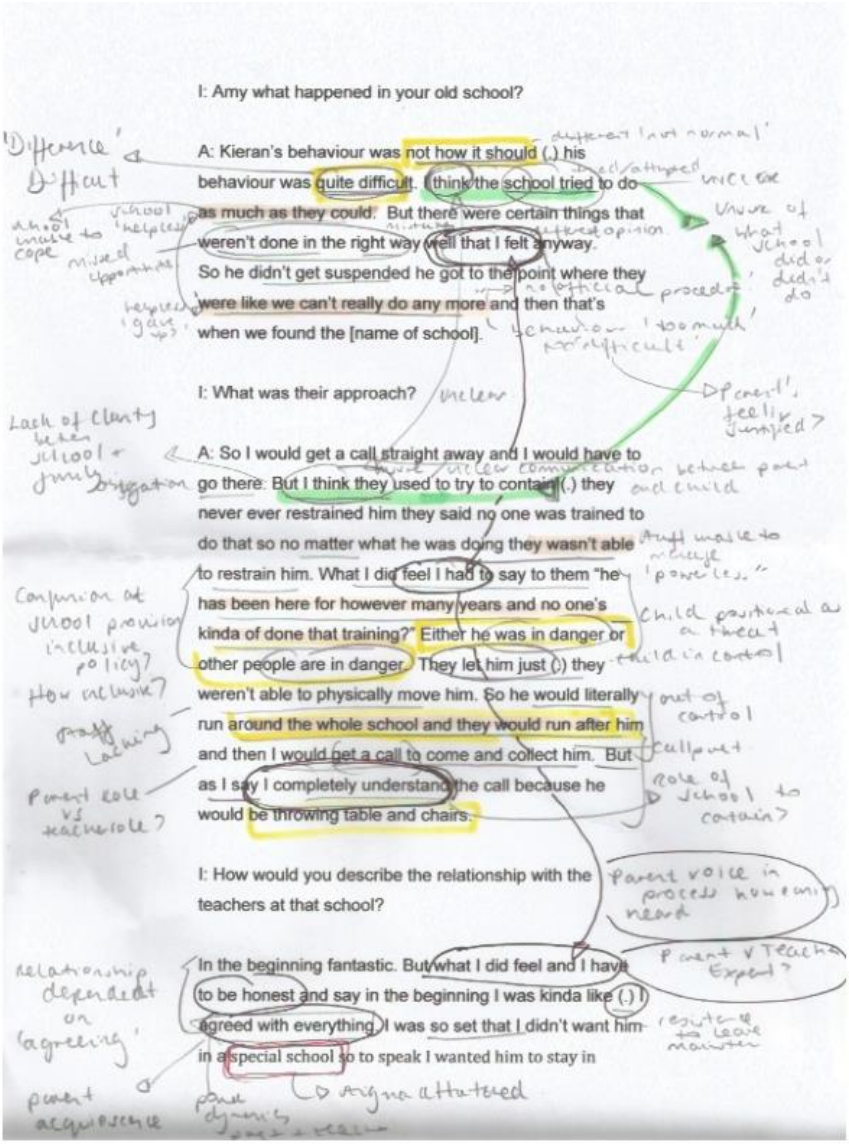
September 2018, Last day of data collection

Today was my last day at the school. I conducted my last interview in the morning. It feels in a way really bitter sweet! I am glad I have collected all the data, but I will miss being in this environment with the families. Despite everything going on for these families and the children there was always real joy, laughter, fun and hope in the school. It felt quite sad in a way to say goodbye to some of the parents. I had spent a long time with them and had been privy to many moving stories about their life. I saw how committed they were to their children and how they were always trying to understand and help their child more. It felt a real privilege to be part of the group and I feel it has taught me a lot about family life.

In the afternoon I was sorting all my consent forms out in the parent room and Amy one of the parents who I had spent quite a bit of time with during my time at the school came in. I had often spent time talking with her in the parent room and joined her for lunch in the school dining room. Today in the parent room she was helping out another parent who had just arrived at the school with their various queries- where to go for lunch… what time is family class happening at etc. This seemed quite a different position for Amy to take up. She was quite quiet and anxious at the beginning about this new school environment and now here she was a couple months after arriving reassuring other parents and helping them to understand how the school day works. It was really lovely to see this change during her time at the school and that now she was in a place offering encouragement to others and she seemed really happy to be able to do this. I was struck by how much of the culture of the parent learning in the room beside us overflows into this space where you see parents as active agents in this system and therapeutic process. There seems a constant life cycle in the school which is sustained by all members helping each other- Amy now a few months in helps another parent at the start of her cycle at the school. It also leaves me thinking how much is not captured in the interviews, just like therapy in this environment is not captured or located in

one particular relationship or space but is a culture which permeates the whole system. I wonder if an ethnographic approach to this research may have captured to a greater extent all these nuances?

Appendix P: Example of raw data (adult interview)



I: Amy what happened in your old school?

A: Kieran's behaviour was not how it should (.) his behaviour was quite difficult. I think the school tried to do as much as they could. But there were certain things that weren't done in the right way well that I felt anyway. So he didn't get suspended he got to the point where they were like we can't really do any more and then that's when we found the [name of school].

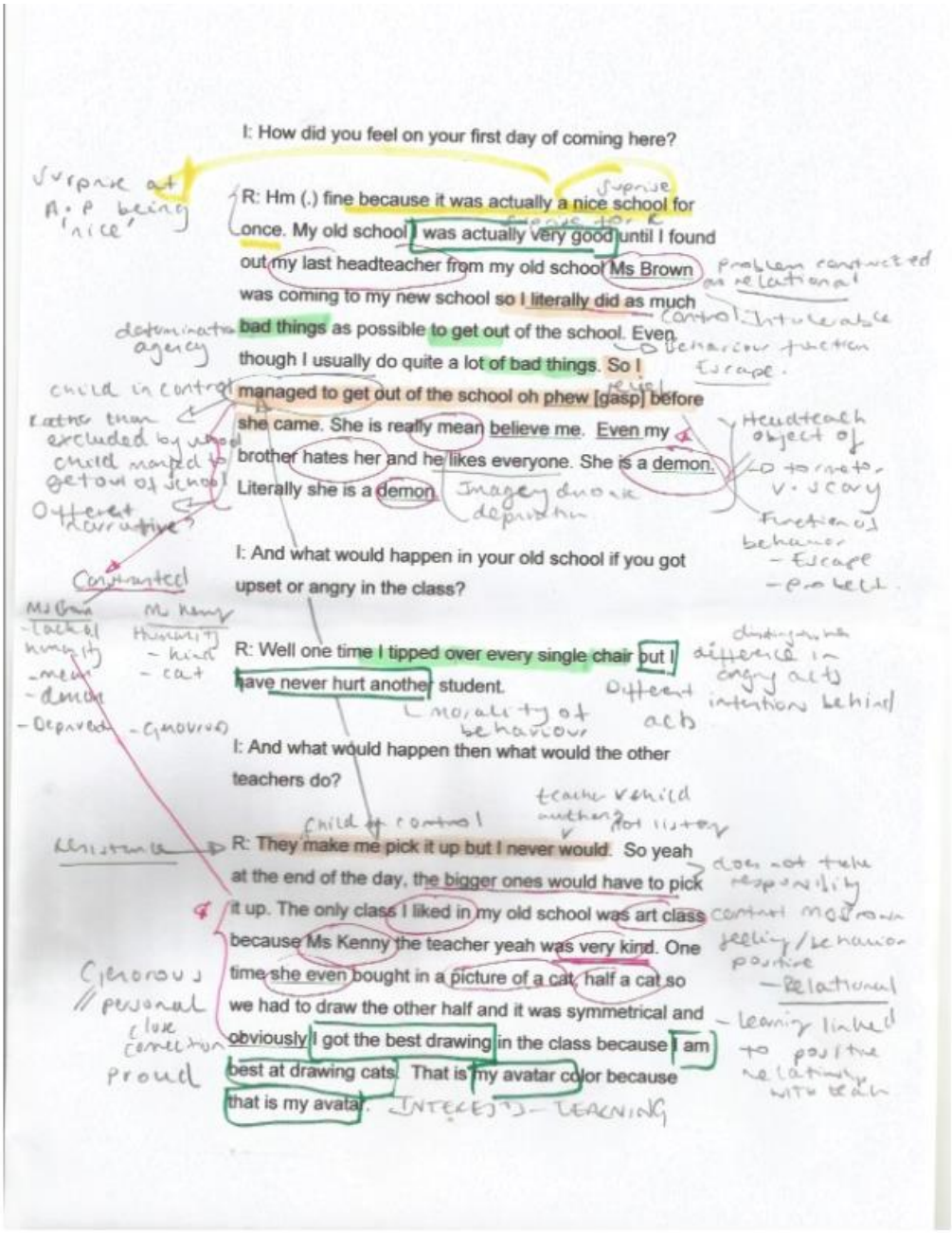
I: What was their approach?

A: So I would get a call straight away and I would have to go there. But I think they used to try to contain (.) they never ever restrained him they said no one was trained to do that so no matter what he was doing they wasn't able to restrain him. What I did feel I had to say to them "he has been here for however many years and no one's kinda of done that training?" Either he was in danger or other people are in danger. They let him just (.) they weren't able to physically move him. So he would literally run around the whole school and they would run after him and then I would get a call to come and collect him. But as I say I completely understand the call because he would be throwing table and chairs.

I: How would you describe the relationship with the teachers at that school?

A: In the beginning fantastic. But what I did feel and I have to be honest and say in the beginning I was kinda like (.) I agreed with everything. I was so set that I didn't want him in a special school so to speak I wanted him to stay in

Appendix Q: Example of raw data (child interview)



I: How did you feel on your first day of coming here?

R: Hm (.) fine because it was actually a nice school for once. My old school I was actually very good until I found out my last headteacher from my old school Ms Brown was coming to my new school so I literally did as much bad things as possible to get out of the school. Even though I usually do quite a lot of bad things. So I managed to get out of the school oh phew [gasp] before she came. She is really mean believe me. Even my brother hates her and he likes everyone. She is a demon. Literally she is a demon.

I: And what would happen in your old school if you got upset or angry in the class?

R: Well one time I tipped over every single chair but I have never hurt another student.

I: And what would happen then what would the other teachers do?

R: They make me pick it up but I never would. So yeah at the end of the day, the bigger ones would have to pick it up. The only class I liked in my old school was art class because Ms Kenny the teacher yeah was very kind. One time she even bought in a picture of a cat, half a cat so we had to draw the other half and it was symmetrical and obviously I got the best drawing in the class because I am best at drawing cats. That is my avatar color because that is my avatar.

Appendix R: Example of raw data (child drawing)