

**An exploration of Educational Psychologists' views on the
impact of remote consultations on attuned interactions**

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April 2023

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the School of Psychology,
University of East London for the degree of

Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology



**University of
East London**

Declaration

By submitting this thesis, I declare that I have not formerly in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any degree. This study has gained ethical approval from the University of East London, School of Psychology. I declare that the entirety of the work is my original work, that I am the sole author (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated).

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April 2023

Acknowledgements

I would like to say thank you to my Professional and Academic tutor, Dr Janet Rowley and my fieldwork supervisor, Amanda Holgate, for their advice and support. My tutor and supervisor are always willing to listen, provide support and encouragement throughout the thesis and is very much appreciated.

I would also like to say thank you to my parents, my sister for their accompany and support to fulfil my dream. Thank you to the whole of cohort 15 for the encouragement and friendship. Also, the proof-reader for helping me with the proof-reading.

Finally, many thanks for all the participants who took part in the interviews and enable this study to be successful.

Abstract

The thesis focuses on EPs' experience of attuned interactions with service-users in the context of remote consultations. The design of the research project was qualitative in nature. Ten Educational Psychologists were recruited from nine different UK Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) and invited to attend interviews via Microsoft Teams. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data based on Braun and Clarke (2021)'s 6-step framework. The research findings suggest that EPs view that it is possible to maintain levels of attunement during remote consultations, for example, by receiving through nodding and smiling. Remote consultations also support addressing the power balance between the service users and professionals. Remote consultations are more accessible for some children and young people with additional needs because this type of consultation requires fewer social interactions, and may feel more comfortable for them. The findings also indicated that Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) and Video Interactive Guidance (VIG) training can be supportive for EPs in developing their awareness about the importance of empathy, person-centred practice, listening, reframing and displaying a friendly body posture during remote consultations. Nonetheless, some of the participants in the current study view being attuned with others as being in the nature of psychologists, rather than something that can be trained through VERP or VIG. It was also expressed that a clear understanding of remote consultation practice and equal opportunities for individuals to participate in them, are also important to maintain attuned interactions during remote consultations. The study concludes with the suggestion that EPSs may consider remote consultations as one of the options for consultations rather than a temporary way of working, because of their benefits for EPs, parents and children with needs.

Furthermore, universities and EPSs may also consider providing more opportunities for EPs to engage in VERP and VIG training and delivery. Further research exploring the views of parents and children on remote consultations would be helpful to complement the perspectives of the EPs.

Keywords: Educational Psychologists, Attuned Interactions, Consultation, Remote Consultations, Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP), Video Interactive Guidance (VIG)

"Yesterday is history, Tomorrow is a Mystery, Today is a Gift. That's why it's called the Present." - Walter Drogway

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List of Abbreviations

AACAP American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

AEP Association of Educational Psychologists

APA American Psychological Association

AVIGuk Association for Video Interaction Guidance UK

CASP Critical Appraisal Skills Programme

EP Educational Psychologist

EPS Educational Psychology Service

HCPC Health and Care Professions Council

MMAT Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool

PEP Principal Educational Psychologist

TEP Trainee Educational Psychologist

UEL University of East London

VERP Video Enhanced Reflective Practice

VIG Video Interaction Guidance

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Chapter overview

This chapter offers an introduction to the study and presents the study's background, which includes an overview of exploration of the current research topic in previous studies. This study focuses on Educational Psychologists' (EPs') experience of attuned interactions with service-users in the context of remote consultation. This chapter also includes the psychological frameworks underpinning the present study, researcher reflexivity (the researcher's position), the rationale for the current study and an outline of the remaining chapters.

1.2 The use of consultation in EP practice

Over the past twenty years, there has been a rapid growth in the number of EPs who incorporate consultation into their psychological practice (Dunsmuir et al., 2009; Farrell & Woods, 2015; Larney, 2003; Leadbetter, 2000; Shannon & Posada, 2007; Wagner, 1995, 2000, 2016). For instance, Leadbetter (2000) analysed "job advertisements" in the Association of Educational Psychologists' (AEP)'s broadsheet and discovered that 'consultancy' was mentioned in one shape or form, including the idea that "everything we do is consultation" and "moving to a clear consultation model" (Leadbetter, 2000, p. 452). The final part of this study asked Principal Educational Psychologists (PEPs) about their opinions about future forms of practice, and they agreed that future EPs' practice will move closer to a consultative position, including joint work with schools (Leadbetter, 2000).

In addition, Shannon and Posada (2007) investigated EP service delivery models and EPs' attitudes towards consultation through questionnaires and interviews, and discovered that 91 per cent of EPs participated in consultation.

However, this study has limitations, as the researcher invited only 28 Local Education Authorities (LAs) to participate in her study, so the research results might not reflect the situation of all LAs in the UK (Shannon & Posada, 2007). As noted by Leadbetter (2000) and Shannon and Posada (2007), it seems like there had been an increase in the number of EPs working on joint approaches and engaging in consultation.

Although consultation has gained popularity in the field of Educational Psychology over the past two decades, there appear to be a lack of consistency and clarity about the definition of consultation and what professionals should do during a consultation. For example, in the views of Dickinson (2000), Munro (2000) and Sheridan et al. (1996), consultation has been defined as a collaborative, interactive process, which involves working with the person using a planned, systematic consultation framework. The process of consultation includes the use of skills, such as questioning, listening, reflecting, contributing psychological knowledge, evaluating and reviewing the outcome and agreeing further plans (Dickinson, 2000; Munro, 2000). EPs organise consultations with the problem owners, and the aim is to empower the problem owners to devise achievable plans to resolve these problems (Leadbetter, 2006).

Wagner (1995, 2000, 2016) developed one of the most influential models of consultation in the UK's EP practice. Wagner (2000) defines a consultation as a "voluntary, collaborative, non-supervisory approach established to aid the functioning of a system and its inter-related systems" (p.11). It has been suggested that the word 'consultation' may not be suitable to describe what EPs do because of its connection with the 'medical approach' to consultations, whereby an expert provides advice about diagnosing and solving problems (Wagner, 2016). However, the term

'consultation' has been used in the field of educational psychology for a long time, and therefore it has been used continuously, with the emphasis that EPs are 'working jointly' with schools and parents (Meyers, 1973). EPs do not see themselves as the expert on the situation and they value the expertise that individuals bring (Wagner, 2016).

In other words, a consultation is a process of collaboration, in which EPs are requested to work collaboratively and equally with the parents and teachers, and may involve working at the individual, group and the organisation levels (Wagner, 2000). The aim of a consultation is to support the development of skills and expertise, and to generate knowledge through cooperation, rather than offer the participants 'expert' advice (Wagner, 2016). This has led to the quotation: "Everything we do is consultation" (Wagner, 2000, p.12) in that all the EPs' intentional interactions and communication with the service users, such as the teachers, parents, children, and other professionals, constitutes consultation (Dickinson, 2000; Wagner, 2000).

Wagner (1995, 2000, 2016)'s model of consultation has become the main approach to consultation in several UK Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) (Farrell & Woods, 2015; Larney, 2003; MacHardy et al., 1998; Munro, 2000; Wagner, 2000). A UK EPS evaluated Wagner's consultation approach through questionnaires (MacHardy et al., 1998). They have received a relatively high response from the teachers (65 per cent), and the teachers agreed that consultation seemed to support them with the problem analysis, and empowered them to think of solutions, together with the professionals (MacHardy et al., 1998). The teachers also commented that consultation appeared to influence their future practice, such as how to solve problems (MacHardy et al., 1998).

Similarly, another evaluation was conducted within a UK EPS (Gillies, 2000). Around 52 participants offered feedback through the questionnaires, and it was discovered that consultations helped the teachers to build their confidence regarding problem-solving (Larney, 2003). In addition, studies conducted by Larney (2003), Sheridan et al. (1996) and Wagner (2016) also revealed a similar result, and the senior managers mentioned that consultations with professionals enhanced the teachers' classroom management skills and school performance.

1.3 Remote consultation in EP practice

Throughout the history of EPs' consultations, consultations have tended to take place in person, with both the professionals, teachers and parents present in the same physical space, at the same time (Fischer et al., 2017). Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, many EPs needed to adjust their working style, and had to conduct most of their work remotely, including consultations (AEP, 2020; HCPC, 2020; von Hagen et al., 2021). In January 2022, the UK government lifted most of the COVID-19 restrictions, and all workers were encouraged to return to work in the office, rather than from home (House of Commons, 2022).

Even with the removal of the COVID-19 restrictions, however, remote consultations in EP practice, and their perceived influence on attuned interactions, are still worthy of further investigation. According to a report published by the House of Commons Library (2021), it is hoped that, in the future, "every worker in the UK will be able to request working remotely, and hybrid working is encouraged" (p.36). Furthermore, an annual report published by the AEP (2021) acknowledged the change of working style, to which EPs needs to adapt after the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, hybrid working. In other words, in the foreseeable future, employees in the UK, including within EPSs, can decide whether they would like to work from

home or split their time between working in the office and at home. This would entail a continuation of the use of remote consultation in EP practice. Currently, a number of UK EPSs, have continued to provide the option for EPs to conduct consultations remotely.

Remote consultations, also known as 'Teleconsultation', is a term that is mostly used in the US, and has been defined as conducting consultations via videoconferencing software, such as Microsoft (MS) Teams (Bice-Urbach et al., 2018). To the researcher's knowledge, there exists no specific definition of remote consultation or teleconsultation in the UK context. The present study focuses on the provision of consultations using video conferencing software, rather than telephones, mobile devices, emails and texts, because video conferencing involves real-time, joint problem-solving, and fits into Wagner (2000)'s definition of consultation (Fischer et al., 2018). Video conferencing software; for example, Google Meet, Zoom and Microsoft Teams, allows EPs and service users to interact via the internet and connect through the computer cameras as if they are physically joining the consultation in the same room (American Psychological Association, APA, 2013; Antonacci et al., 2008; Singh & Awasthi, 2020). It is important to note that remote consultation is another form of consultation, rather than a separate approach to consultation (Bice-Urbach et al., 2018).

While many EPs have been given the option to conduct consultations remotely, there are mixed findings regarding the impact of remote consultations, particularly in building relationships with service users. Most of the studies related to remote consultations are based in the US (e.g., Schultz et al., 2018), and in the area of health. There are positive findings that support the use of remote consultation (Bice-Urbach et al., 2018; McIntosh et al., 2013; Schultz et al., 2018). For instance,

in the area of psychiatry, when considering remote and face-to-face interaction with patients, similar outcomes have been found in the area of consultations, diagnoses, suggested treatments and results (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, AACAP, 2008). It could be argued that the aims of the consultations in the above study may be narrower than in typical EP consultations. The results shed light on EPs' remote consultation and seem to suggest that this may have the potential to address some of the disadvantages of in-person consultations while maintaining the quality of EPs' consultations at the same time.

Besides, some EPSs in the UK offer EPs the option of remote consultations, so that services can reach a wider, different population; for instance, the physically vulnerable group such as individuals with visual impairments (Ihorn & Arora, 2018). Ihorn and Arora (2018) explored the use of remote consultations to offer support for students with visual impairments. Their study suggested that students with visual impairments can be reached through teleconsultation, and they found teleconsultation practicable and acceptable.

Nevertheless, other studies have highlighted the concerns about remote consultations, noting that it appears more difficult for professionals to build strong relationships with service users, and that it takes longer for the professionals and service users to become familiar with each other through the computer screen (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016). In addition, poor video and sound quality make maintaining eye contact during remote consultations challenging (Bishop et al., 2002; Callicott et al., 2021; Pesamaa et al., 2004). Furthermore, according to the Children's Commissioner's blog, around 9 per cent of UK families do not have a tablet or laptop, and a device must often be shared between the family members for school assignments and professional meetings (Callicott et al., 2021; Vibert, 2020). As a

result, due to a lack of devices, it is likely that some UK families will find it challenging to engage in meetings with professionals. A lack of appropriate devices may also influence the quality of professional meetings, since facial expressions and body gestures can be difficult to see when using a smaller mobile phone screen (Vibert, 2020).

1.4 The psychological theories that underpin the present study

Wagner (1995, 2000, 2016) has suggested a model of consultation that reflects the complexity of EPs' work, and this model of consultation is underpinned by four theoretical concepts, which are symbolic interactionism, social constructionism, personal construct psychology, and systems thinking, and these theories all underpin the current study. The following section will also discuss intersubjectivity theory, which is the primary theory underpinning VERP and VIG (Kennedy, 2011) and also the current study. Other theories such as mediated learning theory (Feuerstein, 1991; Vygotsky, 1962) will also be explored.

1.4.1 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionist Theory (Blumer, 1969) is relevant to the present study because it helps EPs to understand the meanings which individuals construct for themselves, for their behaviour and for others during remote consultation, which are influenced by their social communication and interactions. This theory argues that individuals live in both how they think of other individuals and the symbolic environment that emerges from individuals' interactions with others (Blumer, 1986; Hargreaves, 1972). Communicating meaning is not a direct process, and individuals often participate in actions including interpretation (Macready, 1997). Owing to language, our relationships and identities are established, challenged and maintained (Macready, 1997). In addition, according to symbolic interactionism, our

view of who we are develops from our communications with others, and others serve as a mirror in which we can see ourselves (Cooley, 1964).

1.4.2 Social Constructionism

Wagner (2000) viewed social constructionism as an important concept within consultations. Social Constructionism (Burr, 1995; Macready, 1997) point out that meaning emerges through the interactional processes, and rather than exploring meanings which individuals assign to their social worlds, it is possible that meaning of individual lives can be created through interaction. Language does not reflect reality, but develops it (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Through language and interacting with others, reality is interpreted and created in a social condition, as a result of which, knowledge is a social construction (Davenport & Prusak, 2000).

Furthermore, social constructionism views consultation as a way to discover personal narratives, and develop personal constructions through conversations (Christie et al., 2000). EPs needs to have an understanding of the different constructions which individuals have, and the context that they are operating in (Conroy, 2012; Macready, 1997). With this understanding, EPs are in a better position to facilitate change during consultation, through supporting individuals to think of different constructions (Conroy, 2012). The current study views psychology under the lens of Social Constructionism because it is important to investigate how remote consultations influence the interaction processes between EPs and service users. The 'reality' and 'meaning' is developed through the interaction processes during consultation, and poor video and sound quality could influence the attuned interactions with service users (Bishop et al., 2002; Callicott et al., 2021; Pesamaa et al., 2004). Hence, it may also be helpful to explore whether remote consultations

have impacted on how professionals perceive and interpret the 'reality' created by the service users.

1.4.3 Personal Construct Psychology

Social constructionist theory is connected with another theory of consultation, namely personal construct psychology, that was originally created by Kelly (1955). For EPs to attend to the constructions of their consultees, an ability to analyse and interpret constructs and the meanings behind the construction of the consultation is important (Conroy, 2012). As a result, personal construct psychology can support EPs not only to discover the constructs owned by the consultees but also to develop these by analysing the meaning under these constructions (Conroy, 2012). Personal construct psychology informs our interactions and helps us to discover and develop constructs (Conroy, 2012). It has been proposed that all individuals created theories about their world, and then use these to understand their own world and make predictions (Conroy, 2012).

Regarding the connection between personal construct psychology and consultations, the former offers a method for investigating the meanings which an individual has created about a situation, developing methods to examine different constructions or adapting the present constructions according to what has been discussed during the consultation (Conroy, 2012).

1.4.4 Systems Thinking

Systems theory is another theory within Wagner's (2000) model of consultation, which aims to explore how do the individuals inside the system interact (Campbell et al., 1994). Changes happens when the individuals in the system switch to an interactionist, systemic perspective, so that the issue "switches from within the individual to something that happens between individuals" (Wagner, 2000, p.13). The

EP and service user are encouraged to participate in the consultation with the aim to explore systemic factors and to support change (Conroy, 2012). Moreover, applying systems thinking helps EPs to shift the direction of the consultation from the individual to a number of wider factors (Wagner, 2000).

Regarding remote consultations, according to Moore (2022), multi-agency consultations are assisted by remote working, because they are highly accessible, and protect both resources and commute time. As a result, EPs have more opportunities to engage in multi-agency consultations, and different agencies have a chance to share their views, which also helps EPs to switch the direction of the consultation from the individual to the systems around the individual (Wagner, 2000).

1.4.5 Intersubjectivity Theory

The term 'intersubjectivity' means "the interactions between two people as they negotiate meaning and intent" (Landor, 2015, p.66) and is an underpinning theory within Video Interaction Guidance (Kennedy, 2011). Primary intersubjectivity is "the process of communication that takes place between two people, in which emotions are actively expressed and perceived in a two-way dialogue" (Kennedy, 2011, p.93). In other words, primary intersubjectivity can be observed in the non-verbal interaction between two individuals when their facial expressions, eyes and hand movements and body language are all integrated into an organised communicative 'dance' (Landor, 2015), while secondary intersubjectivity 'is characterized by increasingly sophisticated communication, involving a joint focus on something external'. In other words, secondary intersubjectivity is more sophisticated than primary intersubjectivity, being an interaction between two individuals where they focus on each other through a third object or a task (Birbeck et al., 2015).

The ideas of primary and secondary intersubjectivity underpin the 'Principles of attuned interaction and guidance', and they help promote 'attunement' (one of the main goals of VIG) (Kennedy, 2011; Landor, 2015). VIG helps individuals to improve their interactions by recognising the positive areas of their interactions, rather than providing direct instructions of how they should interact. In terms of the present study, EPs have opportunities to learn about primary and secondary intersubjectivity during the VIG and VERP training (Kennedy & Landor, 2015) and, given the level of 'attunement' that both primary and secondary intersubjectivity help to promote, it is possible that VERP and VIG training may influence EPs' attuned interactions during (remote) consultations with service users.

1.4.6 Mediated Learning

According to Feuerstein (1991), an individual is subjected to two different learning experiences. Direct learning is one of these, which means that the learner has direct access to the learning material and learning happens when the learner can obtain meaning from the learning material. Mediated learning becomes important when the learner is finding the learning material difficult to understand (Murray, 2016). In mediated learning, the more knowledgeable individual 'mediates' between the learner and the task, breaking the task down and using various methods to help the learner to maintain their interest in the task. Feuerstein uses a Vygotskian view of learning, in which learning happens when interacting with a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1962).

Under the VIG 'Principles of attuned interaction and guidance', mediated learning is the most important theory for the 'attuned guidance'. To develop attuned interactions, it must be in the learner's 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1962). It is difficult for the interaction to be attuned if the individual's contribution is

delivered in a way that the learner cannot understand. Mediated learning is relevant to the present study because VERP and VIG training may remind EPs of the importance of interacting with the service users within their 'zone of proximal development' during (remote) consultations, to develop attuned interactions.

1.5 Interpersonal skills and building relationships in EP practice

It appears that it is important for professionals, such as EPs, to build interpersonal relationships and connections during their work. In fact, as indicated by Strathie et al. (2011), "Interpersonal communication is at the core of what most professionals do on a daily basis, whether this is communicating with a child or chairing a professional meeting" (p.170-171). Specifically, the ability to communicate and co-operate with service users, build trust and supportive relationships and using both verbal and non-verbal communication is one of the core competencies of EPs' work (HCPC, 2012). As part of this emphasis on supporting the development of positive interpersonal interactions, Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) and Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) have been introduced as part of EP doctoral training programmes at a number of universities. Hence, the next section will provide a detailed description of what are the 'Principles of attuned interaction and guidance', which is the main component of VIG and VERP builds on and an introduction of VIG and VERP in EP training programmes, since they support EPs to develop effective communication skills (Hayes et al., 2014).

1.6 The Principles of attuned interaction and guidance

The main component of VIG and VERP builds on the 'Principles of attuned interaction and guidance' (Kennedy & Landor, 2015). According to Erskine and Trautman (1997), 'Attunement' means "the sense of being fully aware of the other person's sensations, needs, or feelings, and the communication of that awareness to

the other person” (p.90). Attuned interactions are one of the foundational concepts of attachment theory, and Bowlby (1969) stated that it is essential to understand the factors that influence the development of secure attachments; for instance, the sensitivity of mothers when interacting with their babies. The Principles of Attunement are based on interpersonal interactions and mediated learning, for example whether individuals are being attentive, and these principles are used when exploring interactions via VIG and VERP (Murray & Leadbetter, 2018). The ‘Principles of Attunement’ were created by Biemans (1990) and include a list of behaviours that support effective interactions, such as active listening, creating space for others, waiting and turn-taking.

1.7 VIG & VERP and attuned interactions in professional training

In the context of psychology, psychiatry and counselling, the connection between intersubjectivity and working alliances is well established (Clarkson & Pokorny, 1994). Many researchers have studied the concepts that underpin therapeutic relationships, such as empathy, and interpersonal and interaction skills (Hayes et al., 2014). Almost all would agree that the qualities of empathy, positive regard and warmth are important components that underpin the therapeutic alliance (Clarkson & Pokorny, 1994). Any professional training linked to offering ‘help’ to others may require the trainees to learn some of these skills (Hayes et al., 2014).

Working as an EP combines elements of both the therapeutic and learning relationship (Hayes et al., 2014). Building the therapeutic alliance and efficiency in adults’ learning conversations are key during training, and also once qualified as a practitioner (Hayes et al., 2014). Given the strong connection between intersubjectivity, attunement and the skills that are needed for adults’ learning conversations, VIG and VERP seem to have a role to play in fields such as

psychology and education (Hayes et al., 2014). In line with this, building trust and respect among service users (HCPC, 2012) and being able to use a range of verbal and non-verbal communication correctly (HCPC, 2012) are the core competencies required for an EP's work. VIG and VERP are tools which allow trainees critically to examine and reflect on their interactions with others in an informed way, based on the theory of intersubjectivity (Hayes et al., 2014; Murray & Leadbetter, 2018).

EPs can either work directly with service users, such as gaining their voices through assessment, or indirectly with service users through consultations (Sancho et al., 2015). All in all, the ability and skills to interact effectively with a range of individuals in different situations are central to EPs' work (Sancho et al., 2015). Without effective interaction, it is less likely that EPs will communicate psychological knowledge, and encourage change during consultations (Sancho et al., 2015). Therefore, learning how to communicate and interact in an attuned way with service users is an important component of EPs' training (Sancho et al., 2015), and exploring how these skills can be applied in a remote context is seen as important in the current research.

Universities that offer VIG or VERP training introduce VIG to trainee EPs in their first year as a tool to help them to develop effective communication skills (Hayes et al., 2014). VIG also aims to enhance the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills of trainee EPs with the Principles of Attunement (Hayes et al., 2014). VIG allows EPs to review their performance in consultation, which can help them to investigate positive relationships within the school's staff and parents (Murray & Leadbetter, 2018).

Apart from VIG, VERP is also embedded in some of the EP professional training programmes. It gives trainees an opportunity to view themselves from

another perspective and recognise how skills and knowledge interact in practice (Sancho et al., 2015). According to Sancho et al. (2015), “You’re trying to concentrate on the consultation but trying to think about how you come across... you end up considering a lot of different things at once and that can be quite difficult” (p. 192). Such reports recommended that VIG or VERP should encourage trainees to reflect on the complexity of educational psychology consultations, and note the difficulty of combining a range of different processes and skills at the same time (Sancho et al., 2015).

1.8 The influence of VIG and VERP training in attuned interactions during in-person consultations

Several studies have indicated that VIG and VERP training has a positive impact on attuned interactions during in-person consultations (Hayes et al., 2014; Murray, 2016; Pitt & Soni, 2018). The study conducted by Murray (2016) discovered that VERP could support and encourage trainee EPs to consider their attuned interactions and communication skills during consultations (Murray, 2016). For instance, one of the participants said that participating in VERP makes her realise how fast she spoke during consultations, and the influence that might have on attuned interactions (Murray, 2016). The participant also said that it was nice to reflect on her attuned interactions and communication skills so that she could become confident in her own practice (Murray, 2016).

Another study conducted by Pitt and Soni (2018) found that by micro-analysing the VERP video clips, the trainee EP was able to notice moments during the consultations when she was not fully engaged (Pitt & Soni, 2018). In addition, the caregivers’ body language, for example smiles and hand gestures, changed when they felt nervous (Pitt & Soni, 2018). Watching the VERP video clips allowed the

trainee to examine what exactly she did to encourage initiatives, for instance nodding and returning smiles (Pitt & Soni, 2018). Through engaging in VERP training, the trainee felt that her attuned interactions with the caregivers improved (Pitt & Soni, 2018). The caregivers were more willing to engage in the consultation and shared their ideas (Pitt & Soni, 2018).

The study conducted by Hayes et al. (2014) showed that VIG helped trainee EPs to develop their interpersonal skills and supported them to show empathy to others, because the Principles of Attunement stressed the importance of receiving others and following individual initiatives (Hayes et al., 2014). This study showed that VIG can contribute to the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills of the trainees (Hayes et al., 2014). When reflecting on the VIG training experience, one trainee EP stated that she was able to put into practice some of the principles of attuned interactions during the consultations, such as checking the understanding of consultees and 'having fun' (Hayes et al., 2014).

The studies mentioned above indicated that participating in VIG and VERP assists individuals (for instance, trainee EPs) to improve their attuned interaction skills during in person consultations (Hayes et al., 2014; Murray, 2016; Pitt & Soni, 2018), and also empower the service users (for example, caregivers) to express their views during the consultations (Pitt & Soni, 2018). However, the impact of VERP and VIG training on attuned interactions during remote consultations remains unclear. The previous sections have provided an introduction to the study and present the study's background, which includes an overview of exploration of the current research topic in previous studies, and the psychological framework underpinning the present study. The next sections will further explore the rationale for the current

research, reflexivity: researcher position and the distinctive contribution of the current research.

1.9 Rationale for the current research

According to the overview presented above, remote consultation was chosen as the focus of this study because, with the development of hybrid working and the COVID pandemic, its impact on the field of educational psychology could be significant. Hence, exploring remote consultation can help EPs to understand processes that help to maintain attuned interactions during remote consultations. Changes in the UK government's policy mean that EPs in the UK will have more opportunities to work remotely, and some EPSs in the UK have continued to offer EPs the option of continuing with remote consultations, so that services can reach a wider, different population; for instance, the physically vulnerable group such as individuals with visual impairments.

Besides, given the various arguments on remote consultations, and their impact on the building relationships and making connections with service users (Bice-Urbach et al., 2018; Bishop et al., 2002; Callicott et al., 2021; McIntosh et al., 2013; Pesamaa et al., 2004; Schultz et al., 2018), there is a need to study the impact of remote consultations and attuned interactions; this is because attuned interactions contribute to the effectiveness of communication. Moreover, without attuned interactions, it has been argued, the psychological knowledge that the professional shares with the service user during a remote consultation to support changes will be less effective (Sancho et al., 2015).

In addition to perceptions on the impact of remote consultation on attuned interaction in EP practice, there is also a need to study EP views on whether their VIG and VERP training supports their attuned interactions during EPs' remote

consultations. There are only a few studies on VIG and VERP training and attuned interactions (Hayes et al., 2014; Murray, 2016; Pitt & Soni, 2018). Furthermore, one of the studies is based on the researcher's own reflections and personal experience with VIG and VERP (Pitt & Soni, 2018). It would be useful to identify, apart from VIG and VERP training, other elements that EPs perceive may influence attuned interactions during remote consultations. Hence, this current study was guided by the research questions listed below:

Main research question

RQ1: What are EPs' views on developing attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users?

Subsidiary research questions

RQ2: What are EPs' views on the influence of VIG/VERP training on their attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users?

RQ3: What do EPs think helps promote attuned interactions during remote consultations?

1.10 Summary of the research design and methodology

Qualitative research has been identified as the research design for the current study. This approach aims to provide in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Thus, a qualitative design was felt to be appropriate to gain further insights into EPs' views on the impact of remote consultations on their attuned interactions with service users. In addition, given the inclusion of VIG and VERP in EP doctoral training programmes, it was considered to be relevant to the current study to explore the EPs' views on how their VIG and VERP training experiences supports their use of attuned interactions during remote consultations.

1.11 Reflexivity: researcher position

Reflexivity is a self-evaluation process, during which researchers reflect on their own background and perspectives and acknowledge that these may influence how we view, anticipate and design our studies (Berger, 2015; Finlay, 2002; Skukauskaite, 2021). During the self-evaluation process, researchers may feel discomfort owing to the disclosure of themselves and their defencelessness (Hurdley et al., 2017). However, acknowledging this discomfort can help researchers to investigate how their own perceptions and personal background shape the qualitative research process, and enabling them to conduct research from a new perspective (Day, 2012; Skukauskaite et al., 2018). Thus, in agreement with Day's (2012) and Skukauskaite's (2018) studies, the next paragraph will present how my background and perceptions may have influenced the direction and process of the present research.

Prior to training as an EP, I worked as a teacher in Hong Kong, supporting students with Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) needs, and working closely with parents and professionals, such as social workers and EPs. I also supported teachers in a UK primary school as a volunteer classroom assistant. Further to this, I completed a postgraduate dissertation related to technology and social support. My interest in technology and its potential impact on social communication and interactions has influenced the direction of the present research. Finally, I underwent training during the COVID pandemic and had opportunities to conduct assessments and consultations with parents, professionals, children and young people remotely. At the same time, I received training on VERP to enhance my levels of attunement with the service users.

Whilst working with service users, it became obvious to the researcher how remote working influences the quality and accessibility of EPs' work. At the same time, I completed an assignment and reflected on fairness – to me, the most important value, which underpins all actions of the researcher. According to Hayes et al. (2014), being 'attuned', and able to connect, and interact with service users, also has an impact on whether professionals can co-construct ideas with the service users successfully during the consultations. I have experience of being able to connect with the service users during remote consultation, for instance I received the service users by smiling and nodding and have fun by changing the virtual background. The service users appeared to appreciate the fact that I was able to receive what they shared during remote consultation, and plan together for further actions.

Reflexivity also means examining my own biases and assumptions (Patnaik, 2013). Considering my own biases and assumptions can help ensure that my own views do not influence the study findings. For instance, I may have biases on the idea of 'being attuned' with service users during remote consultation because it is based on my own experience, and I do not find connecting with the service users in remote working difficult. Other EPs may find connecting with the service users remotely difficult, owing to different factors such as their technology skills. In conclusion, my interest in the use and influence of technology, experience of interacting with service users during remote consultation and VERP training have shaped and informed the current research.

1.12 Distinctive contribution of the current study

The present study provides an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of EPs' views of their experience of attuned interactions with service-users in the

context of remote consultation. It is acknowledged that an in-depth understanding of EPs' experience of attuned interactions with service-users during remote consultation will influence future EP practice, especially EPs' working style.

1.13 Chapters outline

The present thesis has been structured into five different chapters, each of which is summarised as follows:

Chapter 1 offers an introduction to the study by presenting the study's background and an overview of current thinking related to the psychological theories that underpin the present study. This chapter also includes a review of the key ideas relating to the study, that is, interpersonal skills and building relationships in EP practice, the Principles of attuned interaction and guidance, VIG and VERP and attuned interactions in professional training, the influence of VIG and VERP training in attuned interactions during in-person consultations, the rationale for the current study, a brief summary of the research questions, design and methodology, the researcher's position and the distinctive contribution of the current study.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature search strategy, article selection criteria, synthesis matrix and a comprehensive literature review of relevant studies relating to the key topics, that is, remote consultations and attuned interactions.

Chapter 3 presents an explanation of the research design and methodology. The ontology and epistemology, the research design and procedure, including participants' recruitment and their background have been included in the current study. Also, the data analysis method as well as the ethical considerations are discussed.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the present study. An overview of the themes and sub-themes from the thematic map and a summary of the finding will be discussed.

Chapter 5 offers a discussion of the research findings related to the research questions. The implications of the current study for EP practice are also presented in chapter 5. The contribution and limitations of the research, links to psychological theories, the implications for EP practice and EPs' training courses, dissemination of the study results and recommendations for future studies are presented. The conclusion paragraph offers a summary of the research study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Chapter overview

The present chapter provides an explanation of the literature search process carried out relating to the main topics of the thesis, that is remote consultations and attuned interactions. The chapter provides a systematic literature review of the relevant literature.

The relevant studies identified by the literature search will be discussed and critiqued. The researcher was interested in identifying information in the literature related to remote consultations and attuned interactions. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of synthesis matrix, the systematic literature review, and explains how it informs the rationale for the present research and the current study's research questions.

2.2 Systematic literature review

A systematic literature review has been defined as an approach to help researchers to make sense of a large volume of studies on a specific area of research (Booth et al., 2021; Petticrew & Roberts, 2008). Most importantly, it provides a platform for researchers to identify any potential gaps in the literature (Booth et al., 2021; Petticrew & Roberts, 2008); in other words, areas that require new studies. A good systematic literature review often maps out the weaknesses in the studies and areas for further investigation (Booth et al., 2021). The systematic literature review in the current study was guided by the following review question:

‘What is known about attuned interactions during remote consultations in
Educational Psychology practice?’

2.3 Key terms underpinning the literature review and research

This study and the systematic literature review are underpinned by two key terms, namely: remote consultations and attuned interactions.

2.4 Systemic literature search strategy - database

A literature search was conducted using Scopus to locate the relevant studies published up to December 2022. Apart from Scopus, the British Library e-theses online service (EThOS) was also used to search for doctoral theses and literature, while OpenGrey was used to search for the grey literature. Snowball referencing or hand searching was applied to the reference lists of studies which were selected to locate all possible relevant research that was not located when conducting the Scopus, British Library e-theses online service (EThOS), and OpenGrey database searches. Duplicate studies were removed manually. The search strategy was based on the review question:

‘What is known about attuned interactions during remote consultations in
Educational Psychology practice?’

2.4.1 Development of the search terms

The search terms below were used for the literature review question – literature search: (Attuned interaction OR Attunement) AND (Remote consultation OR Online consultation OR Video conferencing OR Telepsychology) AND (Educational Psychology).

2.4.2 Selection Criteria for the studies

For the literature review question, one potentially relevant study was identified by the database search. Since only one study has been identified using these search terms, a further search was conducted to broaden the results. This was conducted using the terms (Attuned interaction OR Attunement) AND (Remote consultation OR

Online consultation OR Video conferencing OR Telepsychology), and four potentially relevant studies was identified by the database search. Through interacting with a researcher who is also interested in attuned interactions and remote working, one study (IN AUTHOR’S FIRST NAME(S) (Amy) AND AUTHOR’S LAST NAME (Moore)) was found in the British Library EThOS, and no studies were found in the grey literature. Two studies were regarded as unsuitable after screening the titles. The main reason for their exclusion was because there has been no mention of educational psychologists or psychologists, and no mention of attuned interactions (Table 1).

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

	Inclusion	Exclusion
Design	Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods design	Literature reviews or articles
Participants	Educational Psychologists (EPs), Trainee EPs or Psychologists or Trainee Psychologists and school psychology graduate student	No mention of Educational Psychologists (EPs), Trainee EPs or Psychologists or Trainee Psychologists and school psychology graduate student
Location	The studies were conducted in a country where the educational psychology practice similar to that in the UK	The studies were conducted in a country where the educational psychology practice differed from that in the UK
Content	Attuned interactions and remote consultations; of direct relevance to EP practice	No mention of attuned interactions and remote consultations; not of direct relevance to EP practice

The remaining studies (n=4) were examined in detail. Snowball referencing or hand searching was applied to the reference list of the remaining studies, and from

these two studies were located (n = 2). Of the remaining studies, one paper was excluded because the studies were duplicates (n=1), or focused on other elements, such as therapists (n = 1). Therefore, four studies that matched the inclusion criteria were included for the literature review question in this systematic literature review. The results of the search and each stage of the screening process for review question are presented in the PRISMA table in Figure 1.

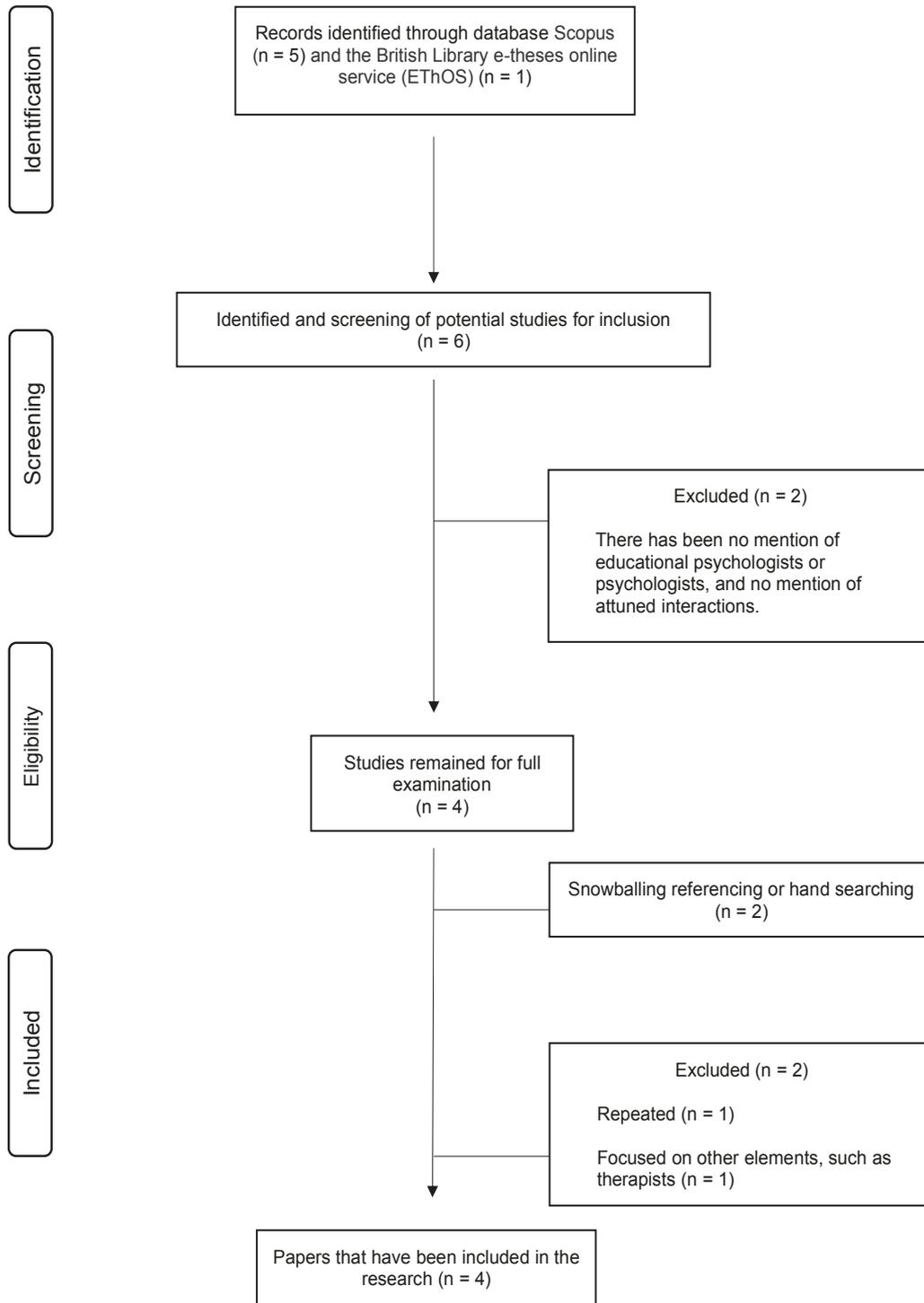


Figure 1: PRISMA flow diagram of studies selected for the review question: What is known about attuned interactions during remote consultations in Educational Psychology practice?

2.5 Critical analysis of relevant studies

A qualitative research approach was used for 2 studies included in this literature review (Table 2). Qualitative studies were critically appraised based on the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) (Table 3). A quantitative research approach was used for one of the studies included in the literature review (Table 2), and the quantitative study was critically appraised based on the quantitative paper appraisal checklist developed by Cathala and Moorley (2018, p.101). A tick was given to a study if it touched on the main and sub-areas of concern (Table 4). A mixed research approach was used for one of the studies included in the literature review (Table 2). The study was critically appraised using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) developed by Hong et al. (2018) (Table 5).

2.6 Emerging Themes from the previous research

Following a full examination and reading of the four papers, it appeared that there were themes emerging from the past research. The findings from the four papers were analysed and the main findings from all were synthesised through a synthesis matrix (Appendix G). A synthesis matrix was created to synthesise information from previous research to inform the present study. The synthesis also examined the gaps of the knowledge, in other words, the areas that require further investigation or where it overlaps (Ingram et al., 2006). Three themes were identified: (1) The feasibility of remote consultations, (2) The benefits of remote consultations and (3) The challenges of remote consultations.

2.6.1 The feasibility of remote consultations

Bice-Urbach and Kratochwill (2016) produced the first study that examined whether it is suitable to offer support related to behavioural interventions for teachers through remote consultations (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016). This study involved “six teachers and students, and a multiple-baseline research design was used” (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016, p.29-31). The study found a positive result between teachers carrying out behavioural interventions via problem-solving remote consultations and decreased disruptive behaviour among the target students (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016). The result of this study indicated that completing remote consultations did not seem to influence the consultees’ (teachers) rating of the effectiveness of the consultant. A revised version of a questionnaire developed by Machalicek (2008) has been used “to examine the viability and acceptability of remote consultations, the consultees’ mean rating ranged from 5.75 to 7, which indicated that the teachers found the consultations and consultants effective, even when the consultations were remote” (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016, p. 39). As a result, this study suggests that remote consultations can be effective (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016). Before starting the remote consultation, the teachers gave a comparatively high score with regard to the acceptability and achievability of remote consultations, and most of them raised concerns about the technology (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016).

Although Bice-Urbach and Kratochwill (2016) confirm the feasibility of teleconsultation, there are several limitations to their study. The two schools which are included in the study are homogenous, which means that they have similar access to technology equipment and support (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016). The teleconsultation experience might differ in rural areas (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill,

2016). Moreover, participation in the study was voluntary, and therefore the teachers who chose to participate may have had more experience with technology and so have been more willing to participate in remote consultations (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016). The small sample size also restricts the generalisability of the study's result (teachers' positive perception of remote consultation) (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016).

Another study conducted by Moore (2022) explored delivering an online EP service during the COVID-19 pandemic. "The participants were recruited using the #TwitterEPs hashtag and snowball sampling methods were used to invite individuals through professional links" (Moore, 2022, p.49). The researcher sent questionnaires to 63 participants across the UK, and 8 of the participants represented non-EP professionals such as teachers and SENCOs (Moore, 2022). 6 participants who had completed the questionnaire were invited to participate in the interviews (Moore, 2022). The study shows that remote working enabled EPs to continue to provide service such as consultations and assessments online, during and after the COVID pandemic (Moore, 2022). EPs have also said that remote consultations have become an essential aspect of remote working, and they discovered that the frameworks and skills that they employed previously during in-person consultations can also be used during remote consultations (Moore, 2022). Moreover, schools are also impressed by how flexibly EPs were able to meet their needs through offering remote consultations during the pandemic (Moore, 2022).

2.6.2 The benefits of remote consultations

There are advantages to conducting consultations via video conferencing software. The field of telepsychiatry may be able to shed some light on the field of educational psychology. In the field of telepsychiatry, a study discovered that

videoconferencing can help not only the participant but also the professional to maintain focus on the aims of the session (Bice-Urbach et al., 2018). Young individuals are more likely to be involved in assessment through video conferencing software, and are usually satisfied with their experience (Bice-Urbach et al., 2018). In fact, some individuals even rated their telepsychiatry experience as even more satisfying compared with in-person consultation because telepsychiatry interactions are usually more efficient. In other words, the equivalent amount of clinically related information is usually explored using less time (Ermer, 1999). Apart from that, both the individuals and the professionals seem to concentrate more during the telepsychiatry interactions (Ermer, 1999).

Callicott et al. (2021) explored how UK VIG guiders adjusted their working style and implemented VIG through video conferencing software (for example, MS Teams). Their study may shed some light on EPs' service delivery, for instance remote consultations. This study is based on one case study and literature about the use of conferencing software for interventions (Callicott et al., 2021). Mixed results were produced when implementing VIG remotely. On the positive side, the VIG practitioner was more willing to name thoughts and feelings during the remote VIG process, which is an essential part of 'receiving initiatives' (Callicott et al., 2021). Naming feelings and checking in with service users during VIG sessions helps to encourage and build an open, in-depth discussion (Callicott et al., 2021). Moreover, some service users feel more relaxed during remote VIG sessions because they are in an environment where they feel comfortable, that is, at home (Callicott et al., 2021). In addition, only a small part of their house will be seen when they are on camera, and they do not need to worry about tidying their room or house before the VIG sessions begin (Callicott et al., 2021).

A study conducted by Moore (2022) suggests that interacting with service users online adds significant gains to EP practice. When working with service users, connecting remotely offers a space for meetings that is distance from school, which is often the location of issues. Therefore, this neutral online space can help to minimise the hierarchical structures, and enable EPs to offer support, when physically accessing the school is impossible. Moore's (2022) study also suggests that children who experience challenges in attending school appeared to be more eager to meet with EPs remotely, possibly because the remote consultation space is neutral, non-threatening and can help to balance the power between the service users (children) and EPs.

2.6.3 The challenges of remote consultations

While conducting remote consultations and assessments via videoconferencing software seems to have its advantages, a major consideration is how this will impact the relationship between the professional and the service user (Bice-Urbach et al., 2018). Lambert (1992) stated that the relationship between the professional and the service user is the most important element when supporting the service user to change. Several studies reported issues with video conferencing, such as images freezing and a loss of sound, during remote consultations (Bishop et al., 2002; Kennedy & Yellowlees, 2000). A lack of eye contact also makes building relationships with service users during remote conferencing challenging (Pesämaa et al., 2004). Moreover, the problem of a slow signal (Manning et al., 2000) might cause a small delay in the receiving of information, which will influence the direction of the conversation because the data need to shift between settings (Bice-Urbach et al., 2018).

An additional issue with remote consultation is that individuals attending a meeting may speak at the same time due to signal delay and so appear to interrupt each other (Manning et al., 2000). This may also reduce individuals' confidence about using videoconferencing software (Manning et al., 2000). Although signal delay during online meetings can cause uncomfortable feelings, there is no evidence of its influence on rapport building (Manning et al., 2000). It has been suggested that, during the first remote session, service users should be given guidance on technology failure and information security (Baker & Bufka, 2011). Since interactions take place via a computer screen, professionals should tell the service users when they are taking notes, moving away and looking down from the camera (Novotney, 2011).

According to a study conducted by Moore (2022), several EPs reported that being attuned with others was felt to be easier during in-person meetings, compared with online (Moore, 2022). Several participants also said that they found interacting with others online difficult, and they shared that the ending of remote consultations was felt to be forced due to a lack of problem-free talk before and after the consultations (Moore, 2022). Several participants felt that remote consultations did not allow both the EP and the service user to connect over and above just a discussion of the problem (Moore, 2022). The researcher concluded that there seemed to be not many noticeable variations in the attuned interactions among EPs and service users during the in person and remote interactions, although the participants did wonder whether individuals were easily distracted, or not emotionally available during the remote consultations (Moore, 2022). Several participants mentioned that their experiences interacting with service users remotely had been distracted by their environment such as others speaking in the vicinity or that the

digital devices that they were using did not allow them to interact with others easily, for instance a mobile phone with a small screen (Moore, 2022).

In addition, an EP participant said that she found situations such as when a parent had started to cry in a meeting difficult because she could not provide the emotional support for the parent, such as offering her a tissue (Moore, 2022).

Another EP participant also said that in terms of non-verbal interactions, there were lots of 'unsaid dynamics', such as silences that they could not unpick because they were not in the same physical space (Moore, 2022). The study results indicated that there appeared to be some differences in being able to provide emotional support, and in non-verbal interactions between EPs and service users during remote consultations (Moore, 2022). Factors such as the consultation environment, the opportunity of problem-free talk and the quality of digital devices were all found to have an influence on the attuned interactions between EPs and service users during the remote consultations (Moore, 2022).

Similarly, another study conducted by Downing (2021) examined whether psychologists had discovered any differences in how they build up relationships with service users, when they shifted to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic. It should be noted that this study was conducted in Australia where the position of the psychologists, or educational psychologist, follows a framework where the position of the educational psychologist may differ from that in the UK. 50 solo-practice (which means working alone, rather than in a team), Australian-based psychologists completed a survey and answered a range of questions related to their experience of remote working during the pandemic (Downing, 2021). Several psychologists reported that it was difficult to read subtle emotional cues through a computer screen, and they had to depend more on the verbal interactions, for

instance 'you look upset' (Downing, 2021). The study results also indicated that when working or consulting online, it was more difficult to connect with the service users because body language was missing, and the service users tend to talk more due to lack of interpersonal cues (Downing, 2021).

In addition, the psychologists expressed that the relational skillset that they needed were different when interacting with service users through teleconferencing platforms, and the psychologists could read service users' body language through their heads and shoulders only (Downing, 2021). The psychologists also said that they needed to pay attention to the service user's facial expressions and body language, and the service users felt more 'distant' from the psychologists (Downing, 2021). Furthermore, service users were more likely to be influenced by their home environment, for instance sounds and pets (Downing, 2021). Also, similar to Moore (2022)'s study results, the lack of a physical consulting environment made offering comfort to service users difficult, especially when they became distressed (Downing, 2021).

One of the participants noted that when conducting consultations online, he or she used larger body gestures and spoke louder (Downing, 2021). Besides, issues with video conferencing, such as images freezing resulted in psychologists and participants speaking over each other, and it was difficult to unpick and read the facial expressions (Downing, 2021). The limitation of this study was its small sample size, which reduces the generalisability of the result to other contexts. Overall, this study concluded that the change from in-person to remote working created challenges for the psychologists, and the psychologists needed to re-consider the best way to create meaningful interactions with individuals through teleconferencing software (Downing, 2021). Furthermore, the study found that the change from in-

person to remote consultations had also required psychologists to engage in and reflect on a range of embodied multisensory and affective interactions with their individuals. For instance, maintaining eye contact, adjusting the quality and the volume of sound, the size of the screen and the body language (Downing, 2021).

Furthermore, Callicott et al. (2021) explored how UK VIG guiders adjusted their working style and implemented VIG through video conferencing software. Their study may shed some light on EPs' service delivery, for instance remote consultations. Their study suggests that on the negative side of implementing VIG through video conferencing software, the feelings of comfort due to being at home may be overshadowed by anxiety about how to manage the technology (Callicott et al., 2021). Furthermore, according to the Children's Commissioner's blog, around 9 per cent of families in the UK do not have any digital devices at home, for example tablets and laptops (Vibert, 2020). A device often needs to be shared between different family members for social and professional purposes, so it is likely that individuals may not have a device to use for an intervention; for instance, VIG (Callicott et al., 2021). Even if the service user has a device, such as a mobile phone, accessing VIG through a mobile phone may influence the shared review process because attuned interactions are difficult to recognise through a small screen (Callicott et al., 2021). According to the principles of VIG, it is crucial to recognise attuned interactions in video clips and during the interactions between the VIG guider and the service users in real-time (Callicott et al., 2021).

In the case presented by Callicott et al. (2021), when the professional shared her screen, the service user and VIG guider could only see each other in a small pane in the bottom corner of their screen. Hence, it was difficult for both the VIG guider and the service user to receive each other through facial expressions, and

was challenging for the VIG guider to view the attunement between herself and the service user (Callicott et al., 2021). It is also difficult for the professional to understand how the service users think and feel (Callicott et al., 2021). The service user in the case study also stated that she prefers receiving VIG through a laptop rather than a mobile phone so that she can have a clear view of the video clips (Callicott et al., 2021). When a digital device is used, it can take longer for the professionals and service users to get to know each other (Landor, 2017). Issues with technology, for example, unreliable internet speed, connections, and low-quality sound and video, interrupt effective collaboration and pose challenges to rapport building (Callicott et al., 2021).

The study conducted by Callicott et al. (2021) has its limitations, as it is based on one EPS and one case study, which decreases the ability to generalise the result to other contexts. The findings of the study are restricted by the amount of information that can be extracted from one case study (Callicott et al., 2021). In short, the study found that there are both benefits and challenges associated with using digital platforms to deliver VIG sessions, and clear guidelines are required about how to deliver services remotely.

2.7 Summary of the systemic literature review and how the literature review informs the current study

From the above systematic literature review (which also sought to synthesise information from previous research to inform the present study), the acceptability and achievability of remote consultations appear to be high, even though some of the studies are based on the US and Australia context, and the consultee of the study based on the US context is a school psychology graduate student rather than a trainee EP (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016). A study conducted by (Moore, 2022)

demonstrated the feasibility of remote working, which enabled EPs to continue providing services such as consultations remotely, especially during COVID pandemic and into the recovery phase (Moore, 2022).

According to Callicott et al. (2021), there are some benefits associated with remote consultations. VIG practitioners are more willing to check in with and name feelings with service users during VIG sessions, and some service users feel more ready to share when they are in an environment in which they feel comfortable (Callicott et al. 2021). Their study may shed some light on EP practice of remote consultations (Callicott et al. 2021). Another study conducted by Moore (2022) suggests that remote working space can help balance the power between EPs and service users.

According to studies conducted by Downing (2021) and Moore (2022), there are some challenges in the attuned interactions between the psychologists and the service users during the remote working and consultations such as ability to offer emotional support and ability to read non-verbal interactions. According to Callicott et al. (2021), delays in the images and sound during remote VIG and VERP sessions appear to pose challenges to attuned interaction skills, such as receiving others and rapport building.

The impact of remote consultations on attuned interaction skills with service users still remains unclear. As a result, the present study aims to offer new insight around the impact of remote consultations on attuned interaction skills with service users, and this is from the perspective of EPs.

It also remains unclear how VIG and VERP training experiences supports EPs' use of attuned interactions, especially during remote consultations. Situating oneself slightly away from the camera, so that one can be seen clearly, and

informing the consultees when looking down and taking notes are some of the methods that could promote rapport building and attuned interactions (Novotney, 2011). Hence, the present research aims to offer new perceptions around how VIG and VERP training experiences supports EPs' use of attuned interactions. It would be interesting to learn more about what EPs think helps promote attuned interactions during remote consultations within the UK Educational Psychology context.

2.8 Chapter summary

This chapter provides a review of the literature search strategy, article selection criteria, synthesis matrix, and relevant literature on remote consultations and attuned interactions.

The literature reviewed offers some ideas on what may support attuned interactions during remote consultations, apart from VERP and VIG training, and helps to inform the present study. The research methodology, design, procedure, data analysis, ethical considerations and ontology and epistemology which were used in the current study will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Chapter overview

The aim of the current chapter is to explain the design and methodology which have been used in the current study. In the present chapter, the researcher will first discuss ontology, epistemology and the study's research paradigm, followed by discussing the study's qualitative research design and data collection methods. The approach to data analysis will then be outlined, that is, reflexive thematic analysis, and finally the researcher will discuss how ways of ensuring the quality of the research has been addressed as well as ethical considerations. Hence, this chapter and the current study was guided by the research questions listed below:

Main research question

RQ1: What are EPs' views on developing attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users?

Subsidiary research questions

RQ2: What are EPs' views on the influence of VIG/VERP training on their attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users?

RQ3: What do EPs think helps promote attuned interactions during remote consultations?

3.2 Ontology and epistemology

Ontology has been defined as "claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other" (Grix, 2004, p.59); in other words, ontology means how individuals perceive reality and being, while epistemology means how knowledge is gathered by individuals (Mack, 2010).

“Ontology is the study of being” (Crotty, 1998, p.10). Ontology is the beginning which will possibly guide researchers to develop their own theoretical framework (Mack, 2010). In addition, the ontological assumptions help to inform the epistemological assumptions, support the methodology and are related to how data are collected (Mack, 2010).

The word ‘Ontology’ comes from the Greek word for ‘existence’ (Marsh & Furlong, 2002). Ontological assumptions mean how reality is created and whether a ‘real world’ exists outside our perceptions, such as whether there have existed differences between the social classes, ethnicities and gender identities throughout human history (Marsh & Furlong, 2002). Ontology helps researchers to confirm the existence of the objects or phenomena that they are studying (Moon & Blackman, 2014); for example, a realist ontology means that there is only one reality that can be examined as the “truth”, and a real-world exists outside individuals’ experience of it (Moses & Knutsen, 2012), while a relativist ontology means that reality exists in individuals’ minds only, and individuals cannot search for the truth. Instead, reality differs between individuals because each of us has experienced it at a specific place and time (Moon & Blackman, 2014).

If ontologists examine the meaning of ‘something’ that exists, then epistemologists examine the meaning of we understand ‘something’ (Mack, 2010). If the ontological position reflects the researcher’s perspective on reality, the epistemological position reflects the researcher’s views on how and what can we understand about reality (Marsh & Furlong, 2002). Epistemological assumptions are related to the generation and the communication of knowledge (Cohen et al., 2007; Scotland, 2012); put simply, “what it means to know” (Scotland, 2012, p.9). Guba and Lincoln (1994) stated that epistemology asks the question, “what is the nature of

the relationship between the would-be knower and what can be known” (p.108)? According to Crotty (1998), epistemology has been defined as “the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology” (p. 3). Epistemology therefore influences the design of studies to discover knowledge (Moon & Blackman, 2014). Epistemology is related to “all of the features related to the validity, scope and ways of gaining knowledge; for instance, what comprises a knowledge claim and how knowledge can be gained and produced” (Moon & Blackman, 2014, p.5). Epistemology can be divided into different types: objectivist epistemology, constructionist epistemology and subjectivist epistemology. Objectivist epistemology assumes that there exists a reality that appears outside the human mind (Moon & Blackman, 2014); for example, “a tree in the forest is a tree, regardless of whether anyone is aware of its existence or not ... When human beings recognize it as a tree, they are simply discovering a meaning that has been lying there in wait for them all along” (Crotty, 1998, p.5-9). The values of objectivist researchers do not influence how knowledge is generated (Pratt, 1998).

The constructionist epistemology does not support the idea that individuals need to search for the objective “truth” (Bruner, 1986). Rather, ‘truth’ appears only when we interact with the realities in our world, and ‘reality’ does not exist outside human culture or language (Bruner, 1986). According to Bruner, (1986), “what we call the world is a product of some mind” (p.95). For constructionists, individuals build knowledge through interacting with the reality (Crotty, 1998). This epistemological stance believes that different people have different interpretations of the same phenomenon or object, and how individuals interpret their world is related to their cultural and historical context. Hence, meaning is created through individuals’ communications and interactions (Creswell, 2009). The subjectivist epistemology

assumes that how knowledge is created relies on individuals' perceptions and understanding of reality (Moon & Blackman, 2014). Thus, reality can be interpreted by different languages and symbols and so structured according to individuals' aims (Powell, 2001). Individuals create meaning for the reality and explain it using a method that is reasonable to them (Pratt, 1998).

3.2.1 Research paradigms

A paradigm is created when we integrate the ontological and epistemological assumptions (Mack, 2010). Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) defined a paradigm as “a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts or propositions that orient thinking and research” (p.2). Grix (2004) stated that individuals who would like to carry out clear, accurate studies must examine the philosophical underpinnings that support their study question, purpose and methodology.

Every paradigm is developed according to its unique ontological and epistemological assumptions (Scotland, 2012). Individuals can neither prove nor disprove the philosophical underpinnings of different paradigms because all hypotheses are conjecture (Scotland, 2012). Each paradigm has its own ontological and epistemological perspective (Scotland, 2012). Therefore, its beliefs about reality, that support the specific direction of studies, differ (Scotland, 2012). The critical paradigm incorporates different ideologies; for example, feminism and postmodernism (Mack, 2010). “The critical paradigm is anti-foundational; it attacks reality. People are not only in the world but also with it” (Crotty, 1998, p.149). Reality is changeable by individual action (Scotland, 2012). The critical paradigm aims to cope with the issues of fairness and marginalism (Scotland, 2012).

The research paradigm underpinning this study is critical realism. Critical realism is based on critical theory and the belief that research is carried out to

enhance “the emancipation of individuals and groups in an egalitarian society” (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 26). The critical educational researcher attempts to understand the behaviour of the members of a society and make changes to that behaviour (Mack, 2010). “Critical realism shows that social structures are real” (Fryer, 2020, p.24). They are real, as social structures influence individuals’ knowledge, reactions and identities (Fryer, 2020). Reality does not simply involve individuals who are acting according to their own will (Fryer, 2020). Instead, reality has social structures, that appear when individuals act together (Fryer, 2020). The social structures affect how individuals act (Fryer, 2020). Actions can help individuals to change these social structures (Fryer, 2020). Then, these social structures affect the next action of individuals, and this process continues (Fryer, 2020).

Critical realism is the research paradigm underpinning this study owing to the different social structures existing in other countries. In fact, the expectation of EPs’ role and the definition of consultation varies from country to country; for instance, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) in the US reported that only 10 per cent of their members conduct consultations (Castillo et al., 2012). In other words, compared to the UK, fewer psychologists from the US view consultations as their main approach to work (Castillo et al., 2012; Leadbetter, 2006). The social structure seems to influence the work of EPs, and different countries have different social structures.

Critical realism is viewed as an inclusive philosophy since it integrates both the positivist and constructivist positions, to offer a comprehensive view of ontology and epistemology, and can be seen as another option for both positivism and constructivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Gorski, 2013). One of the most important principles of critical realism is that individuals’ knowledge represents a small portion

of reality only, and ontology (what does 'reality' mean to us?) is not reducible to epistemology (what do we know about 'reality?') (Fletcher, 2017). Critical realism accepts the idea that there is a reality out there and individuals can try to interact through philosophy and social science (Danermark et al., 2002). However, some types of knowledge are not far from reality compared with others (Danermark et al., 2002). Critical realists can obtain knowledge "in terms of theories which can be more or less truth-like" (Danermark et al., 2002, p.10).

Critical realists claim that qualitative research methods are employed to collect rich explanations of the existing systems that are of concern (Bhaskar, 1998) and, if a better recognition of the situation is needed to make a difference to these systems, then examining the advantage of the current systems can be accomplished by using quantitative measures (Edwards et al., 2014). Critical methods, e.g., focus group interviews and open-ended interviews, allow reality to be critically viewed from a political and cultural perspective, and these methods are usually applied to gather qualitative data (Scotland, 2012). Like interpretivism, analysis usually includes a thematic explanation of the data; but detailed values are allocated to these explanations (Scotland, 2012). Critical studies should fully acknowledge their (e.g., historical and cultural) context, and encourage the dialogical connection of equality among the researchers and participants (Scotland, 2012). Moreover, researchers should create a plan for change and helping the participants to improve their lives, which should have catalytic validity (Cohen et al., 2007).

The ultimate goal of critical realism is the emancipation, and it is a transformative paradigm which challenges the notion of epistemological objectivity and the separation of value from fact (Price & Martin, 2018). This offers an opportunity for the researcher to conduct a study that is underpinned by one of her

most important values – promoting social justice, with the goal of achieving social change. For the current study, this means that the technological devices and the training on attuned interactions that EPs receives may differ, which influences the EPs' ability to be attuned to the service users during remote consultations, and thus offer a high-quality service to service users.

Moreover, critical realism provides the researcher with reflexivity because it differentiates between the reality and how we view it (Cosgrove & McHugh, 2000). “The transformation model of social activity offers a framework for recognising how reflexivity may act as a mediator between agency and structure, providing research opportunities to question how we transform or replicate reality” (Botha, 2021, p.12). This means that the researcher not only discusses the development of attuned interactions during remote consultations with the service users, but also how to promote attuned interactions during remote consultations. As a result, critical realism was considered as the most suitable research method for the present study.

3.3 Qualitative research design

Ochieng (2009) suggested that qualitative researchers are interested in the study process, but not the outcome. Qualitative researchers are keen on examining ‘meaning’; for instance, how individuals interpret their lives, and how they construct the world (Ochieng, 2009). Individuals’ behaviour is significantly affected by the situation and, as a result, individuals need to examine their behaviour in a specific situation (Ochieng, 2009). Individuals’ behaviour cannot be understood without recognising the framework which others use, which helps to explain how they think and feel (Ochieng, 2009). For qualitative research, the researcher is the main tool for the information collection and analysis, but not tools such as questionnaires

(Ochieng, 2009). Moreover, qualitative studies collect words as data and interpret them using different methods (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

The qualitative method is particularly suitable if the goal of the study is to learn from individuals within a specific process and how they experience it (Ochieng, 2009); for example, the meanings which individuals assign to objects, and how they explain their experience (Ochieng, 2009). This study would like to gain insights into EPs' views on developing attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users, the EPs' views on the influence of VERP/VIG training on their attuned interactions during remote consultations and what the EPs think helps to promote attuned interactions during remote consultations. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore how the EPs interpret the impact of remote consultations on attuned interactions, and how the EPs assign meanings to VERP or VIG and other tools that support attuned interactions. As a result, the qualitative research approach was chosen as the research design for this study.

The qualitative research approach is challenging and exciting in different ways, as it represents the conflicts and complications of reality but still enables us to understand the patterns of meaning (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The qualitative research approach also helps researchers to remain curious and work critically towards understanding knowledge and life (Clarke & Braun, 2013). As researchers, we do not accept knowledge or phenomena as they seem to be, but examine and ask questions about why knowledge and phenomenon are formed in a specific way and whether they could be different (Clarke & Braun, 2013). It also enhances researchers' reflexivity (Chapter 1), which means carefully considering their research process and responsibilities (Finlay, 2002).

One of the disadvantages of qualitative research methods is that their results cannot be generalised to a wider context, while it is less likely when conducting studies using quantitative research approaches (Ochieng, 2009). Therefore, the aim of the current research is not for the findings to be generalised but for the reader to judge if the findings can be applied to their own context (Lowhorn, 2007).

Building on the reflexivity of the researcher in chapter 1, I have experience of being able to connect with the service users during remote consultation, for instance I received the service users by smiling and nodding and have fun by changing the virtual background. The service users appreciated the fact that my being able to receive what they shared during remote consultation, and plan for further actions. As a result, I expected the research participants (EPs) to share some of their positive experience of being able to connect with the service users, for instance receiving them by repeating their words or through eye contact.

3.4 Study method and data collection

3.4.1 Participant recruitment

The study received ethical approval from the University of East London (UEL), School of Psychology Ethics Committee (Appendix A). The criteria for participation were that the participants needed to be qualified EPs (including newly-qualified EPs, EPs who qualified a few years ago and specialist EPs) who worked for a UK local authority and had experience of participating in training or conducting VERP and VIG with service users (including parents, teachers and students). The researcher of the present study assumed the participants were using Wagner (1995, 2000, 2016) models of consultation. The guidelines for thematic analysis suggest that the sample size should be in line with “the size of the research (‘small’, ‘medium’ or ‘large’) and the type of data collection” (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p.50). According to Clarke &

Braun (2013), “6-10 participants are suggested” for small-scale research (p.50).

Thus, this research is a small-scale research project that involves interviews with ten EPs (nine females and one male).

3.5 Ethical consideration

3.5.1 Ethical approval

The researcher applied for ethical approval on 18 February 2022, and this was granted on 24 February 2022 by the University of East London, School of Psychology Ethics Committee (Appendix A). In general, when conducting psychological research, the researcher should follow ethical principles related to “Respect for the autonomy, privacy and dignity of individuals, groups and communities, Scientific integrity, Social responsibility and Maximising benefit and minimising harm” (British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics, 2021, p.6). With regard to the autonomy and dignity of the participants, there is a clear responsibility towards the participants; for instance, “psychologists acknowledge the experience and insights of their participants” (BPS Code of Human Research Ethics, 2021, p.7). Researchers should also respect the privacy of the participants by ensuring that individuals cannot be recognised by others (BPS Code of Human Research Ethics, 2021).

In the area of scientific integrity, researchers should ensure that the qualities of their studies are high and robust by stating clearly the goals of the study, and ensuring that the study is achieving what it plans to achieve (BPS Code of Human Research Ethics, 2021). Social responsibility means that “the aim of gathering psychological knowledge should be to support beneficial results” (BPS Code of Human Research Ethics, 2021, p.8). Researchers must be able to work jointly with other researchers and participants, be able to reflect on their own practice and be

able to respond to the challenges faced by others involved in the study (BPS Code of Human Research Ethics, 2021). Increasing benefit and preventing harm mean that researchers should consider the whole research process from the perspective of the participants, other individuals and communities who are likely to be influenced by the study, and bear in mind the goal of increasing benefits and preventing risks (BPS Code of Human Research Ethics, 2021).

3.5.2 Informed consent

The participants in this study were informed before the interview began that they could withdraw at any point during the research process and had the right not to answer any questions if they do not wish to. In addition, all of the participants engaged in the research received a consent form (Appendix B) about their willingness to engage in the study, and all of the participants need to sign the consent form before taking part in the interview. All of the participants engaged in the study also received an information sheet (Appendix D), and were informed how their data would be stored, as well as what should they do if they would like their data to be removed from the research. According to the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2021), researchers should ensure that their participants provide valid consent and that individuals whose data are generated for the aims of study consent voluntarily and freely to their participation, having been provided with adequate information to allow them to make a decision. All informed consent included a clear statement that information related to the study has been provided to the participant and been understood (BPS, 2021).

3.5.3 Confidentiality and privacy

According to the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2021), researchers should respect the privacy of their participants, and ensure that they are not

identifiable unless they wish to be. As a result, a data management plan, in which the researcher provides detailed information on the data collection, storage, and responsibility for the data management, was submitted by the researcher and approved by the UEL research data manager on 23 February 2022 (see Appendix H).

All of the interview transcripts were transcribed in a consistent manner, and the collected data were anonymised. A pseudonym was allocated to each transcript to anonymise the participants when reporting the data gathered for this study; e.g., the pseudonym 'Luna' was given to one of the participants. Nobody, except the researcher and the supervisor, has access to these pseudonyms. The video of the interviews and transcripts were stored on MS OneDrive for Business and only the researcher and supervisor had access to these documents. Data uploaded to the Otter Voice Meeting Notes will be transferred to UEL storage - MS OneDrive for Business - and deleted from Otter Voice Meeting Notes. All data will be kept until September 2023. This will mark the end of the researcher's study, and all data will be deleted at that point.

3.5.4 Recruitment procedure

The participants were recruited between April and August 2022. They were randomly recruited by sending emails and the research poster to EPs from various EPSs within the UK (excluding Scotland and Wales, because they have slightly different systems for EP training and services). The participants were recruited from nine different UK EPSs. The details of the 10 participants are shown in Table 6. The participants have all been provided with pseudonyms. All of the participants volunteered to participate in the study, and written consent was obtained in this regard (Appendix B). The data from all 10 interviews were included in the study.

Table 6*Details of the participants*

Participants			
Participant*	EPS	Role	Experience of working as an EP
Olivia	A	EP	2 years
Tom	B	EP	Newly-qualified
Alice	A	EP	Newly-qualified
Lily	D	EP and AEPs' supervisor	Newly-qualified
Luna	E	EP	2 years
Grace	F	Senior Specialist EP and Trainee Educational Psychologists' (TEPs') supervisor	A few years' experience
Daisy	G	EP	Newly-qualified
Ella	H	EP	Newly-qualified
Sofia	I	EP	8 years
Poppy	J	EP	30 years

*** pseudonyms have been used**

The current study originally aimed to recruit only EPs who were newly-qualified because the VERP and VIG training are still a comparatively new experience to them, so it is easier for them to reflect on them. Nevertheless, one potential participant who has 30 years of experience of working as an EP said that the research seems to exclude participants with experience, and that she could not understand the reason behind this. Hence, the researcher of the present study reflected on this and decided that participants who were not newly-qualified would also be included in the current study since they may also have recent VERP and VIG training experience from their EPSs.

3.5.5 Data collection - Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interview is well-known as a technique to collect data due to its flexibility and versatility (Kallio et al., 2016). It can be integrated with both individual and group interviews (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The rigidity of its structure may differ, based on the aims of the study and the research questions (Kelly et al., 2010). Moreover, the semi-structured interview allows researchers to prepare the questions before the interview starts, so that they are prepared and skilful with regard to their interview skills (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The semi-structured interview encourages the participants to express their views freely and improves the collaboration between researchers and participants (Galletta, 2012; RWJF, 2008).

The semi-structured interview requires researchers to possess a certain amount of previous knowledge in a specific area of research as the interview questions are related to prior knowledge (Kelly et al., 2010). The interview questions are designed prior to the interview and developed using the interview guide (RWJF, 2008). The semi-structured interview guide offers clear instructions for the researcher to follow during the interview and this method produces comparable qualitative data (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006), although researchers do not need to follow the guidelines closely (Kallio et al., 2016). Alternatively, researchers are required to gather related data from different participants and offering the participants instructions on what to discuss, so that the research topics can be investigated broadly (Gill & Baillie, 2018; Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). Since a semi-structured interview often includes open-ended questions and the discussions may differ, compared with the interview guide (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006), it is advised that

researchers record the interviews so that they can be transcribed and analysed later (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Due to the above-mentioned advantages, the semi-structured interview was chosen as the data collection method for this study. All of the semi-structured interviews were conducted online due to the outbreak of COVID-19. All of the interviews were recorded using the standard technology provided by the university, so MS Teams was recommended as the platform for conducting the remote interviews and was validated by UEL IT Department to maintain a high level of confidentiality for the interviews.

In the current study, all 10 interviews were conducted remotely using MS Teams on the researcher's personal laptop and recorded remotely using MS Teams, accessed using the researcher's UEL log-in. All of the participants engaged in the interviews using their own devices and answered a total of six questions with prompts (Appendix C). The participants read the information sheet (Appendix D) and signed the consent form. The researcher stated that participating in the study was voluntary, and that the participants had the right not to answer any of the questions if they did not wish to. At the end of the interview, the researcher asked questions such as whether there was anything that they felt was important that they had not had a chance to say during the interview, and ensured that the participants had received sufficient space to reflect and listen. No interview needed to be rescheduled and there were no technical issues during the remote interviews. The interviews were not expected to last any longer than 40 minutes. The shortest interview lasted 16 minutes and the longest lasted 45 minutes.

3.5.6 Remote interviewing

Video conferencing software, such as MS Teams, allows two or more individuals who are located in different places to interact instantly through video (Gough & Rosenfeld, 2006). Video conferencing software usually requires access to specific software and a stable internet connection (Gray et al., 2020). Both the researchers and the participants can connect to the software through their devices, such as mobile telephones and computers (Gray et al., 2020). There are several advantages associated with conducting interviews remotely; for instance, time, financial and geographical constraints will not be an issue for either the researchers or the participants (Cater, 2011; Winiarska, 2017). The researcher is also able to access a larger population and so increase the number of individuals participating in the study (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Janghorban et al., 2014). Remote interviews can also help to reduce unpredictable situations, e.g., poor weather, that discourage participants from engaging in face-to-face research interviews (Sedgwick & Spiers, 2009).

The study conducted by Deakin and Wakefield (2014) discovered that the quality of face-to-face and remote interviews was similar and that the participants appear to be both expressive and more open about what they think during the remote interviews (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). The remote interview provides participants with the freedom to withdraw whenever they want, by simply closing the video conferencing software (Janghorban et al., 2014). The nature of the remote interview can encourage participants to reschedule the interview (Janghorban et al., 2014). Also, the researchers can avoid spending time and financial resources, if the remote interview needs to be rescheduled (Janghorban et al., 2014).

Nonetheless, there are disadvantages associated with conducting remote interviews. Researchers have less control over environmental distractions, which may influence the participants' focus during the interview process (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Volda et al., 2004); for example, it is usual for individuals to multi-task by checking emails or surfing the internet while simultaneously participating in remote interviews (Volda et al., 2004). As a result, it is possible that remote interviews may help researchers and participants to dispense with travel time, but far fewer data may be collected (Jowett et al., 2011). Due to the internet connection issue, a delayed response can be misinterpreted as the participants failing to pay attention (Jowett et al., 2011). It may also be more difficult for researchers to understand whether 'silence' means that the participants are thinking about the question or do not wish to respond (Jowett et al., 2011). Given the pandemic context, the researcher utilised remote interviewing as the method of data collection.

3.5.7 Development of the interview questions and prompts

The researcher was working alone, with regular supervision by a supervisor. The researcher designed the semi-structured questions and prompts, and the supervisor offered suggestions to the researcher about how these might be improved and reconstructed. Both the researcher and the supervisor agreed that the interview questions and prompts should be related to consultations, remote consultations, attuned interactions, VERP and VIG. A total of six semi-structured questions were developed, each of which was followed by at least one prompt (Appendix C). The semi-structured questions were divided into six areas: a general overview and introduction, the experience of conducting remote consultations, the experience of conducting VERP and VIG, the experience of applying the Principles of Attunement

during remote consultations, other elements that support attuned interactions during remote consultations, final thoughts and the ending.

3.5.8 Transcription

In this study, the researcher worked independently when transcribing the interviews. All of the interview transcripts were transcribed using 'Otter.ai - Voice Meeting Notes & Real-time Transcription', and the researcher obtained approval from the UEL School of Psychology ethics committee for this.

3.6 Data analysis strategy

3.6.1 Data analysis strategy rationale

The researcher considered a range of data analysis methods and the rationale for the strategy selected will be outlined below. Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that Grounded Theory is similar to thematic analysis with regard to the data analysis procedures (coding or recognising themes from the data). Although there exist similarities between the two strategies, there are also differences (Alhojailan, 2012). It has been suggested that, in Grounded Theory, the data collection happens at the same time as the data analysis process, and further data collection should be based on what has already been analysed (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Moreover, Grounded Theory analyses data that are not determined before the study starts; e.g., if the sample used has been determined and defined before the start of the study, then thematic analysis seems to be more appropriate as the data handling strategy (Alhojailan, 2012). Grounded Theory analysis depends on theoretical sampling, which is decided upon during the data collection process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Grounded Theory is not a perfect data-handling strategy for a piece of research underpinned by critical realism, and this can be explained by a few reasons (Fletcher, 2017). Even though Grounded Theory can be led by existing theories

during the data analysis process, it does not actively engage with them (Glaser & Strauss, 1967); for example, researchers who analyse study results using Grounded Theory develop theories from their data by inductively coding every single line of it (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Conversely, for critical realism, “active thought experimentation is needed before research even begins” (Hart et al., 2004, p.166). Moreover, critical realism aims to explore the best explanation for reality, by becoming involved with the existing theories that are related to reality (Fletcher, 2017). In addition, the inferential process related to Grounded Theory is mostly induction, whereas that to critical realism is primarily retroduction (Fletcher, 2017). Grounded Theory is driven by data, while critical realism applies an analytical process led by the theory and the researcher (Fletcher, 2017).

Thematic analysis was used as the data handling strategy for this study because this study does not aim to generate theories (Charmaz, 2006). Moreover, the data collection and analysis process of this study began separately, rather than at the same time, and the data collection was not based on what had already been analysed. As a result, thematic analysis appears to be a more suitable data handling strategy for this study.

In addition, when conducting research based on thematic analysis, the researcher can apply theories to it flexibly, without making any prior assumptions about what may we learn from the data (Willig, 2001). The researcher can help individuals to explain their experiences, and also maintain a close relationship to them at the same time. Thematic analysis is helpful for understanding the view point of individuals, noticing any differences and similarities between them, and gathering unexpected views (Braun & Clarke, 2006), while critical realism, as an ontological position, assumes that “reality is ‘out there’ but access to it is always mediated by

socio-cultural meanings, and, in the case of qualitative analysis, the participants and the researcher's interpretative resources" (Terry et al., 2017, p. 22). The researcher can never understand or gain access to the reality directly, and individuals' words offer access to how they view the reality, for which the research creates explanations and interpretations (Terry et al., 2017). In relation to the present study, the data gathered not only reflect the perspectives of the research participants, but also how researcher interprets and understands the data based on their own knowledge and experience. As a result, the choice of reflexive thematic analysis fits with critical realism, which is the ontological position of the current study.

3.6.2 Thematic analysis

This section and the section after will explain Braun and Clarke (2006)'s thematic analysis in detail. Thematic analysis is a broadly-used, but poorly-identified qualitative data analysis method, compared with grounded theory and phenomenology (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Roulston, 2001). Thematic analysis has been used as a method for reporting, classifying, and analysing the frequency of themes (Alhojailan, 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis supports the description of data and offers interpretations of the study topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) claimed that thematic analysis is the first qualitative research method that should be learnt because "it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis" (p.78).

Both Braun and Clarke (2006) and King (2004) suggested that thematic analysis is a practical method for investigating and highlighting the differences and similarities between the research participants and gathering unexpected insights. Moreover, owing to its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis is an approach that can be adjusted according to the specific aim of the study, and produces detailed,

complex data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004). The aim of thematic analysis is to recognise and analyse, for example, interesting patterns (themes) that arise from the data, and use them to support the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Analysing data using thematic analysis requires far more effort than mainly reviewing the data, and a well conducted thematic analysis interprets the data (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

In comparison to interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) or grounded theory, thematic analysis is unconnected to any existing theoretical frameworks and, as a result, can be used under different theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can be viewed as a realist method, which states the reality and meanings of individuals, or can be presented as a constructionist method, which studies how discourses (e.g., meanings and experiences) work in society (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It can also be categorised by theories, for example, critical realism (Willig, 1999), which appreciates how people create meaning from their experience, and how the wider community influences those meanings, while focusing on other restrictions of 'reality' (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Hence, thematic analysis can be used to, examine, reflect on, unpick and explain reality (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In addition, thematic analysis is a flexible approach that helps individuals to concentrate on the data in diverse manners (Braun & Clarke, 2012). With thematic analysis, the researcher can focus on interpreting meaning through the complete data set or the researcher can choose to investigate a specific area in detail (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The researcher can decide to report what is explicitly stated from the data or the ideas behind those data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Different types of thematic analysis are appropriate for a diverse range of study questions and topics, which come from different ontological frameworks such as critical realist (Boyatzis,

1998; Braun & Clarke, 2012; Marks & Yardley 2004; Terry et al., 2017). Regarding the present study, thematic analysis is conducted within a critical realist perspective, and the research questions captures “an understanding of participants’ experiences as lived realities that are produced and exist within broader social contexts” (Terry et al., 2017, p.22). In other words, thematic analysis is conducted within a critical realist perspective to explore the EPs’ views on ‘the impact of remote consultations on their attuned interactions with service users’, including ‘their accounts of whether VIG and VERP training supports their attuned interactions during EPs’ remote consultations’, and ‘other elements that EP perceive may influence attuned interactions during remote consultations’ within individual constructs of EPs’ remote consultations and attuned interactions, and the training and support that they receive on these.

Thematic analysis can be employed within different study questions, ranging from individuals’ experiences to understanding the construction of a particular circumstance in a certain context (Clarke & Braun, 2013). It can also be used to examine different categories of data, from media to interview transcripts to focus groups (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Neville et al., 2015). It works with different sizes of data sets, and can be applied to develop analyses that are theory- or data-driven (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Although thematic analysis is flexible, this flexibility can cause inconsistency when establishing the themes from the research dataset (Holloway & Todres, 2003). Furthermore, new researchers may feel unconfident when analysing research data using thematic analysis because not enough studies have been conducted on thematic analysis, when compared with grounded theory (Nowell et al., 2017).

3.6.3 The thematic analysis process

This study follows Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-step framework. This is an important approach in the area of social science (e.g., psychology) since it provides a clear framework for conducting thematic analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The 6-step framework is a guide rather than a prescribed model which researchers must follow and, as a result, should not be considered in a linear direction since it involves a more dynamic movement throughout the different stages of the process when analysing data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

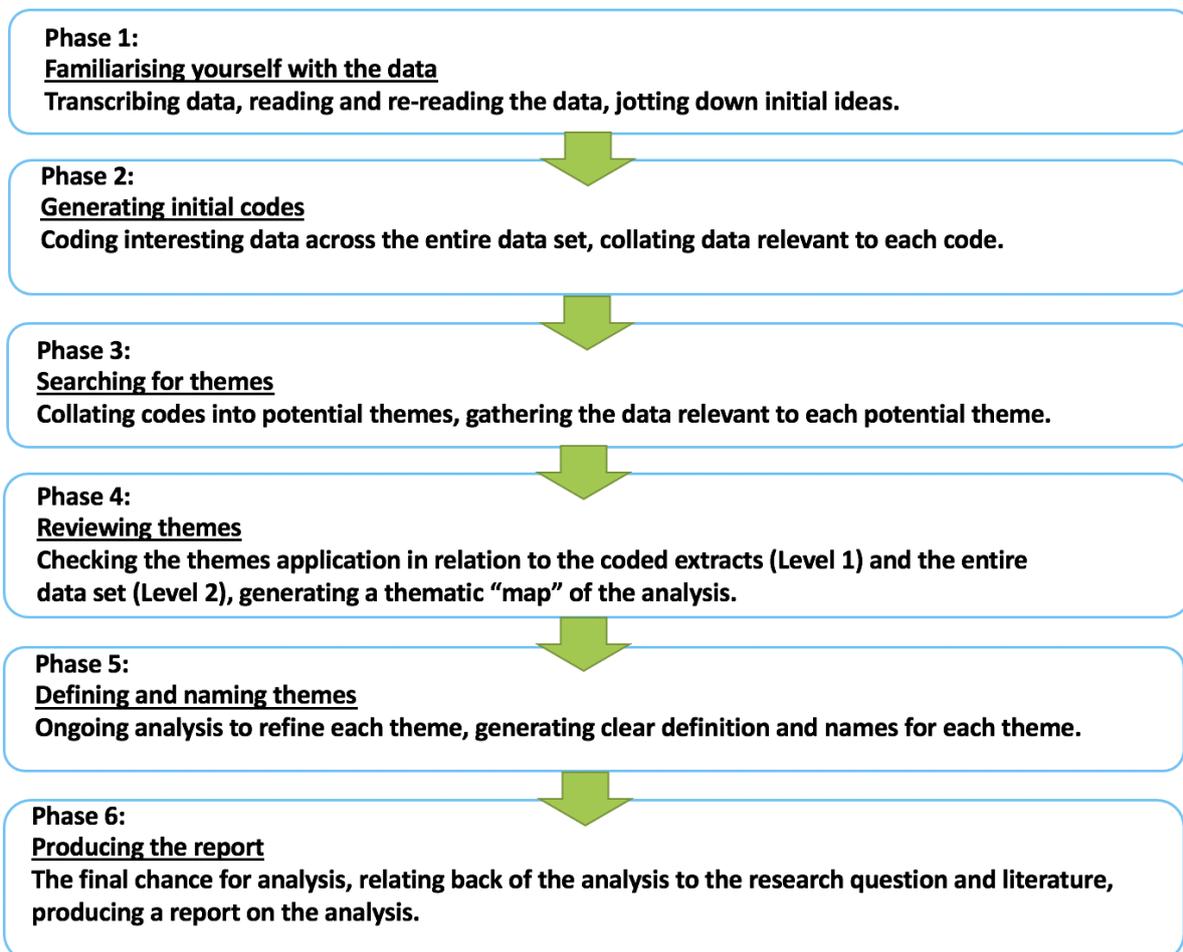


Figure 2: Summary of the 6-Phase Framework for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.35)

3.6.4 Inductive and deductive thematic analysis

Themes can be drawn inductively or deductively from the research data (e.g., Boyatzis, 1998; Hayes, 2000). Drawing themes inductively indicates that the themes obtained from the data are strongly connected to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Patton, 1990; Terry et al., 2017). In this approach, if the data have been obtained through interviews or focus groups, the themes identified would have a minimal connection to the specific questions asked (Braun & Clarke, 2006). They would also not be led by the researcher's theoretical interest in the topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Hence, inductive analysis is a way of coding information without fitting the information into a coding framework or "the researcher's analytic presumptions" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Moreover, researchers have developed codes and themes using the data as the starting point (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2012; Terry et al., 2017). As a result, this type of thematic analysis is led by data (inductive) (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In contrast, a deductive approach entails the researcher bringing a range of ideas to analyse the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In other words, the codes are driven mainly by the pre-existing theoretical ideas that the researcher brings, offering a foundation for viewing and interpreting the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). As a result, what is discovered by the researcher during the analysis is not usually connected to the data's content (Braun & Clarke, 2012). A deductive approach is less restricted by the semantic meanings in the data, compared with an inductive approach (Terry et al., 2017). A combination of both approaches is usually used during coding (Braun & Clarke, 2012). It is difficult to be inductive only, owing to the fact that researchers always bring new concepts and information to the data during the analysis process and seldom disregard the semantic connections within the data,

when coding for a specific theoretical concept (Braun & Clarke, 2012). We as researchers at least need to have an idea of whether or not it is useful to code the data for that construct (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

When interpreting data using thematic analysis, researchers need to consider which types of thematic analysis to use to interpret and understand the rationale behind the specific form of thematic analysis that they are using (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Hence, the thematic analysis approach underpinning the present study is inductive because only a small number of studies have been carried out by other researchers concerning remote consultations and attuned interactions. Furthermore, only a few pre-existing theoretical ideas have been developed, as a result of which the researcher decided to develop codes and themes using the data as the starting point. All of the themes and codes in the present study were driven by the data itself.

3.6.5 Semantic and latent coding

Analysing the dataset under a semantic approach means that the codes are recognised through the precise meaning of the data, and the researcher does not investigate further what a participant describes (Byrne, 2022). What semantic codes try to create can be recognised as a descriptive investigation of the data, focusing mainly on communicating the exact content of the dataset (Byrne, 2022). Whilst latent coding aims to recognise the hidden meanings that help to explain the descriptive content of the dataset (Byrne, 2022). The researchers are required to be more active and creative during the data analysis, when coding the data in a latent way (Byrne, 2022). In the present study, the researcher coded the data using semantic and latent coding and they were used equally (Byrne, 2022). According to Patton (1990), it is possible to double-code information according to what the

participants expressed (semantic meaning), and what the researcher recognised (latent meaning) from the research data.

3.7 The detailed coding process

Phase one: Familiarisation with the data

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), familiarisation with the data means that it is necessary to “immerse yourself in the data to the extent that you are familiar with the depth and breadth of the content” (p.16). Immersion usually includes reading the data repeatedly but also looking for patterns and meanings at the same time (Braun & Clarke, 2021). During this phase, it is important to start writing down ideas for the coding that you will then return to during the rest of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Also, it is important for the researcher to consider the breadth and depth of the dataset, and not to be selective, such as by ‘skipping’ the entire phrase (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The researcher of the current study listened to the interview recordings before transcribing the interviews, to familiar herself with the data. The researcher did not take notes when listening to the interview recordings because she wished to focus on the main ideas that were mentioned during the interviews. The researcher then began the transcription process by transcribing the verbal interview scripts into written form using transcription software called ‘the Otter Voice Meeting Notes’. The researcher checked each transcripts several times, when the transcription of all the interviews had been completed. The researcher noted the sentences and paragraphs that she found interesting in the transcripts and also recorded how she felt about the analysis. Please refer to appendix K for some of the notes that the researcher made, while she was familiarising herself with the transcripts.

Phase two: Generating the initial codes

According to Braun and Clarke (2021), phase 2 begins when the researcher has read through the data and gathered a list of the interesting points in them. This phase then includes gathering the initial codes from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). According to Boyatzis, (1998), codes are “a feature of the data (semantic content or latent) that seems interesting to the researcher and “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data of information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (p. 63). It is important for the researcher to work through the data, and recognise areas in the dataset that are interesting and may help to develop the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The researcher should code as many potential themes as possible, and the code should be related to the context of the dataset (Bryman, 2001).

Appendix K (Figure 20) presents the coding process of one of the interview transcripts. Code A3 provides an example of what the researcher interprets from the data item, and this code is detailed enough and can be explained within the context of remote consultations. It was important for the researcher to keep a record of the changes made to the codes (Byrne, 2022). According to Braun and Clarke, (2014), the researcher seldom follows a linear path through the six phases. As a result, keeping a log of the evolution of the codes can enhance the transparency of the coding, and at the same time help the researcher to revise the codes, if the coding method does not appear to be working (Byrne, 2022).

Inspired by Byrne (2022)’s study, the table in appendix K offers an example of how the researcher of the present study kept record of the evaluation of the codes and the general analytical process. Regarding data item A7, the researcher originally coded the data at a semantic level, which meant that she coded exactly what the

interviewee said. However, the researcher discovered that the code was too detailed, so the researcher decided to go further and to explore the hidden meaning behind what the interviewee had said. Similar, with regard to data item D10, the researcher developed a pattern of coding about how physically being in a room can help EPs to provide emotional support for parents. Eventually, the researcher decided that the code was too precise, and that it was better to include this topic under a more general code labelled “limitations with technology”.

Phase three: Searching for the themes

This phase started once all of the related data items were coded. The attention changed to the explanation of data items that were spread around the whole dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The coded data were analysed and interpreted to see how different codes might be linked together because the meanings underpins the codes might be the same, so that the themes or sub-themes could be established (Braun & Clarke, 2021). It is crucial to note that the importance of the themes does not rely on the amount of data items that support this, but the codes and data items are arranged in a way that produces something meaningful and responds to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Each theme should be independent to the other themes, but they should also link together to create a consistent dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The researcher must abandon any codes or possible themes that may not suit within the general interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The researcher can consider creating a group to include all of the codes that do not seem to integrate with any possible themes, and the researcher can decide to see this as a theme on its own or to remove it later (Braun & Clarke, 2012). There are no set requirements regarding how many themes that there should be (Braun & Clarke, 2012), although the interpretation of the data

can become unclear if there are too many themes, and too few themes can lead to a failure to analyse the data completely (Braun & Clarke, 2012). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), it may be useful to use visual images, such as tables or mind-maps, to help to categorise the different codes into themes, and a thematic map that includes all possible themes, codes and data items (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Regarding the present study, the researcher gathered the codes and turned them into possible themes. With regard to the initial thematic map for the first research question, eight main themes and 26 sub-themes were developed. Appendix K shows the three initial thematic maps for the three research questions. The theme “developing collaboration between the EPs and the service users” and “developing ‘trust’ with service users” were established, and separate sub-themes such as ‘turn taking’ and ‘lack of relationship building’ were established to indicate the impact of remote consultations on the EPs’ attuned interactions with the service users. The theme continues development of the collated coded data items that are related to practice and training on remote consultations and attuned interactions during this early stage of analysis.

Similarly, regarding the initial thematic map for the second research question, five main themes and 14 sub-themes were established. The theme ‘little influence’ was created, and five separate sub-themes, such as “embedded into EPs’ practice” and “positive VERP & VIG experience”, were established to indicate the EPs’ views on the influence of VIG/VERP training on their attuned interactions during remote consultations with the service users. It is important to remember that this was still the early stage of the data analysis, and therefore the themes required further revision. Regarding the initial thematic map for the third research question, two main themes and 11 sub-themes were created. The themes ‘during remote consultations’ collate

sub-themes such as 'equal opportunities' and 'a chance to contribute', and highlighted what the EPs think helps to promote attuned interactions during remote consultations.

Phase four: Reviewing potential themes

During this phase, the researcher needs to complete a review regarding the data items that has been coded and the dataset as a whole (Braun and Clarke, 2021). It is normal to discover that some potential themes that may not best interpretate the meaning of the dataset or may not answer the research questions (Bryne, 2022). In addition, some of the data items may be inconsistent, and therefore need review (Bryne, 2022). Braun and Clarke (2012) listed a range of questions for the researcher to consider when reviewing the potential themes, such as "What are the boundaries of this theme (what does it include and exclude)?" and "Are the data too diverse and wide ranging (does the theme lack coherence)?" (p.65).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this phase involves two levels of reviewing and redefining of the themes. The first level of reviewing entails reviewing from the perspective of the coded data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This means that the researcher must read all of the datasets collated for each code that underpin each theme and sub-theme to see whether or not they create a clear pattern (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The second level of analysis involves a similar process, but this is related to the whole dataset. At this level, the researcher not only considers the validity of the individual themes related to the data set, but also whether the potential thematic map "accurately reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole", which depends on the theoretical and analytic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 21). During this phase, the researcher re-reads the whole data set, for two reasons (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first reason is to check whether the themes 'function'

based on the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and the second is to include any data that were neglected earlier when coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

If the thematic map works, then the researcher can move on to the next phase. If the map does not fit the data set, the researcher must review and refine the codes further until a thematic map has been generated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this process, it is likely that the researcher will recognise possible new themes, and needs to start coding for them (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is important to know when to stop re-coding the data, and if the aim of the re-coding is to fine tune a coding frame that is working, then the researcher should consider stop editing (Braun & Clarke, 2006). By the end of phase four, the researcher should have a clear understand of the different themes, the connection between each of the theme, and the idea that they represent (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Regarding the first level of reviewing in the present study, when reviewing the potential sub theme “EPs’ consultations are solution based”, in relation to the theme “EPS model of service delivery”, the theme referred to the types of consultations that influence the EPs’ attuned interactions with the service users during remote consultations and also the EPs and service users’ expectations of the EPs’ remote consultations. As a result, the sub-theme “EPs’ consultations are solution based” was separated into two different sub-themes “the different types of consultations” and “clear expectations of EPs’ remote consultations”.

During the level two review, the researcher addressed issues with regard to the themes “developing collaboration between the EPs and the service users” and “developing ‘trust’ with the service users. The researcher felt that these two themes were too similar and, as a result, integrated them into one: “relationships”. Moreover, the 13 sub-themes that underpin the two main themes were integrated into three

sub-themes. For instance, “power to get straight into the topic” and “power to step away from the meeting” were integrated into the sub-theme “levelling out the power dynamic”.

Phase five: Defining and naming the themes

This phase required individuals to define and redefine themes and that meant recognising the meaning underpinning each theme, and deciding on the data items that each theme represents (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is important to avoid capturing a lot of data under a theme, or being too complicated, and this can be avoided by arranging data extracts into a narrative that explains what is interesting about the data and the reasons for this (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is also important to examine how each individual theme are related to the wider ‘story’ about the data and ensure that there are no overlaps between the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher, therefore, is required to consider the themes, and also the relationships between each one (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher also needs to consider whether there are any sub-themes under each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Sub-themes can help to provide a structure to a specific complex theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

At the end of phase five, the researcher should be able to explain the meanings of the themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that the researcher can try to describe the content of the theme in a few sentences, and further rearrange them. The sentences or data extracts can be written in an illustrative way, offering a fundamental explanation of what individuals expressed, or in an analytical way, and the researcher must ensure that the important information has been interpreted from the data items and contextualise this interpretation with reference to the available literature (Byrne, 2022).

Regarding the present study, Appendix K provides an example of how to report the data in an illustrative way. This dataset was taken from the theme 'non-verbal communication', and the sub-theme 'receiving with small gestures'. The data extract discusses the importance of recognising the feeling of others through wider body language, and one of the participants offers an example of only being able to see the forehead of individuals and not other parts of their bodies when organising a meeting online and how this affects individuals understand the feelings of others. This data extract informed the dataset and presented evidence of the importance of receiving through wider body language.

Appendix K offered an example of describing a data extract analytically. This dataset is obtained from the sub-theme 'positive experience with using video'. The focus of this data extract emphasises on offering a deeper understanding of what and how things have been described. The way in which the participants described their positive experience was examined and discussed in relation to the literature and also to the researcher's personal experience when interpreting the data, and can be found in the researcher's reflective diary (Appendix N).

The researcher conducted a final review of the names of the themes. To ensure that the themes were easy to remember and informative, the researcher checked the themes by describing the content of each one using a few sentences (Braun & Clarke, 2021). If the themes cannot be described within a few sentences, then additional clarification of themes is needed. For the present study, no further refinement was required.

Phase six: Producing the report

Unlike quantitative studies, the writing-up of quantitative research is interlinked with the process of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The codes and

themes change during the analysis phase, and so does the writing-up (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Changes in the codes and themes should be recorded during phase six and reviewed in informal documents, such as notes. The researcher should keep a research journal during the research (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Phase six is the final check and completion of the record that individuals would usually write before writing the entire thesis (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

During this phase, it is important for the researcher to decide on the order of themes that will be reported. The themes should be connected in a meaningful, logical way and be built on previously reported themes, but still be able to communicate the meaning that underpins the themes when reading independently (Braun & Clarke, 2012). For instance, the researcher reported the theme 'receiving initiatives' first for research question two because this theme represents one of the core principles of VERP and VIG, and connects well with the themes that follow: 'encouraging initiatives' and 'guiding'. The theme 'little influence' was reported last because this theme is independent of the themes the preceded it.

During the interviews, the researcher continually engaged with the interviewees by summarising and rephrasing their answers. A short summary of the findings will be provided to the interviewees so that they can share what they think and feel about the findings and reflect on them.

3.8 Ensuring the quality of the research

Qualitative research, with its aim of generating knowledge based on individuals' experiences, occupies a unique position in the literature (Sandelowski, 2004), although there always been issues around the trustworthiness of qualitative study, especially by positivists, due to their view that the researcher cannot report the research 'validity' and 'reliability' in the exact method as in a naturalistic study

(Shenton, 2004). Many naturalistic researchers, however, choose to use different terminology to separate themselves from the positivist paradigm (Shenton, 2004); for instance, Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability) that should be considered by qualitative researchers to ensure the trustworthiness of their studies. Guba's (1981) construct correlates with the criteria utilised by positivist researchers: credibility as opposed to internal validity; transferability as opposed to external validity; dependability as opposed to reliability; and confirmability as opposed to objectivity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also stated that the trustworthiness of studies is determined by four different criteria, and they are Truth value, Applicability, Consistency and Neutrality. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) construct has been approved by many researchers and is a frequently-cited framework for qualitative studies (Treharne & Riggs, 2014). Hence, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) construct was followed to confirm the trustworthiness of the present study.

3.8.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that credibility is one of the essential factors in establishing trustworthiness in qualitative studies. According to Merriam (1998), qualitative researchers have developed concepts, e.g., credibility, to discover whether the findings of a study match the reality. Credibility has been defined as "the confidence in the 'truth' of the research result" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.218). Credibility addresses the issue of whether the researchers have interpreted the information correctly, and how to present it (Amankwaa, 2016; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Macnee & McCabe, 2008; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

In qualitative research, researchers can establish the credibility of a study by using strategies, activities and tactics, such as triangulation, which means the "cross-

checking of data and interpretations through the use of multiple data sources and/or data collection techniques, as well as the different investigation” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.109). In addition, credibility can also be ensured using reflective journals, which means “introspective journals that display the investigator’s mind process, philosophical position, and bases of decisions about the inquiry” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.109). Furthermore, according to Treharne and Riggs (2014), activities that help researchers to produce credible results include continually engaging with the interviewees and the triangulation of researchers and sources. Checking and debriefing with other researcher members can also be used to assess research credibility (Treharne & Riggs, 2014). During the interview, the researcher of the present study continually engaging with the interviewees by summarising and rephrasing their answers. A short summary of the finding will be provided for the interviewees so that they can share how they think and feel about the findings and reflect on this.

There are also tactics which can help to ensure that individuals are answering the interview questions honestly (Shenton, 2004). Specifically, individuals should be offered the opportunity to withdraw the study, so only those who are willing to participate are included (Shenton, 2004). The researcher should build a rapport with the participants at the start of the interview, for instance by saying that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions being asked (Shenton, 2004). The participants should also be made aware at any early stage that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without providing an explanation (Shenton, 2004).

The researcher of the present study stated at the beginning of each interview that there were no right or wrong answers to any of the questions asked. The

researcher was just interested to hear about the participants' own experiences, opinions and thoughts are all valuable. The researcher stated clearly on the information sheet and also at the beginning of each interview that the participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. The researcher attended frequent supervision and debriefings with the supervisor throughout the study process and together they discussed how to make the participants feel comfortable and to build rapport with them during the remote interviews, for instance by allowing the participants to turn their camera off if they want to, and a reflective journal was kept (see Appendix N).

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability means “showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.218). In addition, according to Bitsch (2005) and Tobin and Begley (2004), transferability refers to the stage during which qualitative study can be applied to other situations or settings, and this is equal to generalizability. ‘Thick description’ is a tool that can help to promote the transferability of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thick description requires individuals to explain the full research processes, starting from the data gathering to the research background and the discussion of the results (Anney, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Apart from ‘thick description’, there are other tactics that can be used to ensure the transferability of a study; for instance, ensuring that the number of organisations participating in the research and where they are located, the amount and duration of the data collection sessions and the amount of time spent on the data collection are clear (Shenton, 2004).

To ensure the transferability of the present study, the researcher used 'thick description', explained the research from collecting data to the research results, and ensured that the interpretations of the study results were clearly stated so that other researchers can decide for themselves if they can apply the findings to different situations (Anney, 2014).

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability means that researchers need to show that the study results are compatible, and it is possible to produce the same study results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, according to Bitsch (2005), dependability has been defined as "the stability of findings over time" (p.86). Dependability can be established using strategies such as an 'inquiry audit', which means asking a researcher who is not part of the study process to examine both the process and results of the study. The aim of the evaluation is to check that the research findings and conclusions are generated through interpreting the research data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Treharne and Riggs (2014) also stated that auditing can help to ensure the dependability of a study, and researchers who are not part of the study can follow the audit trail developed by researchers who are part of the study to ensure dependability (Treharne & Riggs, 2014). Moreover, the researchers should ensure that the study process is logical and recorded in detail, which will allow other researchers to replicate the work, and gather the same results (Shenton, 2004; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

There are other measures that can be applied to enable individuals to develop an in-depth understanding of the study methods, such as explaining what is planned and performed on a strategic level (Shenton, 2004). The present study ensured dependability by stating clearly the recruitment process (please refer to 3.4.1

Participant recruitment), and the process of data collection, elaboration and explanation (please refer to 3.5.5 Data collection – semi-structured interview, 3.6 Data analysis strategy rationale and chapter 5).

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability has been defined as “the degree to which the findings of the research are shaped by the experiences and views of the respondents, rather than the researcher’s bias, preferences, motivation, or interest” (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability is also related to making sure that there are connections between the research results and the data, and the researchers need to prove that the conclusions and explanations of the research are drawn from the data (Tobin & Begley, 2004). The main principle for confirmability means the level to which the researcher accepts his or her own prejudices (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Moreover, beliefs lead to decision-making and, therefore, researchers should admit the reasons for supporting and acknowledge the weaknesses of the approach employed in the study (Shenton, 2004).

Again, tools such as an ‘audit trail’ can be used to ensure the confirmability of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An ‘audit trail’ requires researchers to record the steps that have been followed throughout the research process and report the result of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Similarly, according to Bowen (2009), an ‘audit trail’ provides clear evidence that the researcher has followed the appropriate research process to produce the result. Moreover, the researcher can also keep a reflective diary, which should contain personal reflections related to issues that emerged during the study (Anney, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In the present study, the researcher illustrated how each theme emerges from the data, by offering detailed quotes from the interview transcripts (Cope,

2014). Moreover, the researcher kept a reflective diary (Appendix N) to reflect on the issues that arose during the research procedure.

3.9 Chapter summary

This chapter offered an overview of the current study's ontology, epistemology, the research paradigms, research design, study method, data collection, data analysis strategy, the quality of the research and ethical considerations. It was stated why critical realism was selected as the paradigm for this study. The use of semi-structured interviews was justified as well as the advantages and disadvantages of conducting remote interviews. The approach to data analysis explained why thematic analysis was chosen. The detailed process of how the researcher analysed the data using thematic analysis (a 6-step framework) was outlined. Steps taken to ensure the quality of the present study were discussed and some ethical considerations related to the present study, such as informed consent and the participants' privacy were noted.

The chapter which follows will present the findings of the study.

Chapter 4

Presenting the results - Interviews

4.1 Chapter overview

Chapter 3 offered an explanation of the participants involved in the semi-structured interviews, together with the ontology, epistemology, research paradigms, research design, study method, data collection, data handling strategy, quality of the research and ethical considerations.

This chapter and the present research were guided by the main research question RQ1: 'What are EPs' views on developing attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users?' as well as two subsidiary research questions. Subsidiary research question RQ2: 'What are EPs' views on the influence of VIG/VERP training on their attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users'? RQ3: 'What do EPs think helps promote attuned interactions during remote consultations'?

The analysis of the research data (the 10 EPs' interviews) will be discussed in this chapter. Three thematic maps have been used to present the themes and subthemes that were identified from the interview transcripts. The first thematic map presents the EPs' views on developing attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users, and the second thematic map presents the EPs' views on the influence of VIG/VERP training on their attuned interactions during remote consultations. The third thematic map shows what the EPs think helps to promote attuned interactions during remote consultations.

This chapter is divided into three parts, involving a presentation of the themes and subthemes for main research question one, and subsidiary two and three, respectively. For research question one, RQ1: What are EPs' views on developing

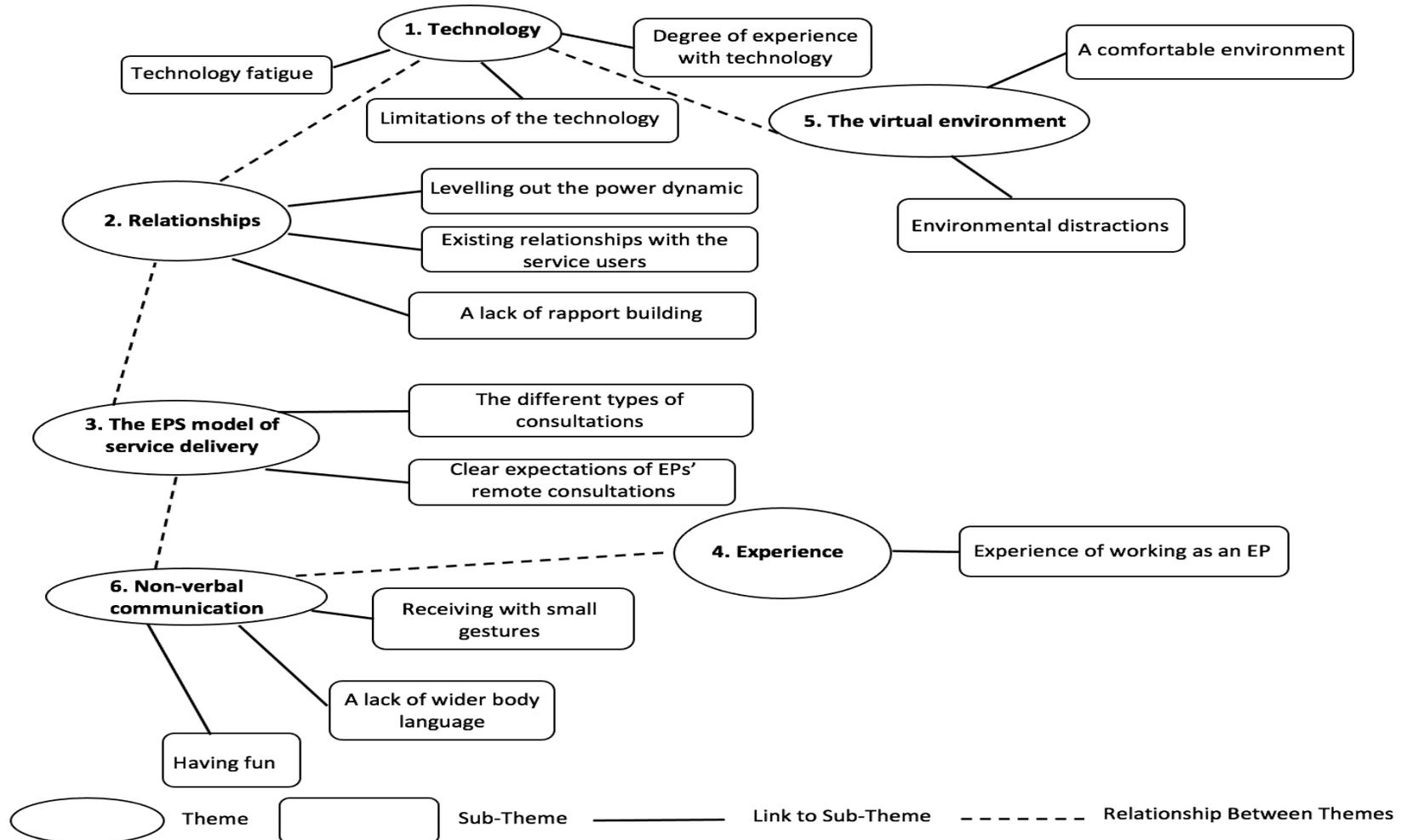
attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users? six themes were identified, namely: Technology, Relationships, the EPS model of service delivery, Experience, the Virtual environment and Non-verbal communication. For research question two, RQ2: What are EPs' views on the influence of VIG/VERP training on their attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users? four themes were identified, namely: Receiving initiatives, Encouraging initiatives, Guiding and Little influence. Finally, for research question three, RQ3: What do EPs think helps promote attuned interactions during remote consultations? two themes were identified, namely: Before remote consultations and During remote consultations.

The subthemes will be explained and discussed after having explored these larger themes. Direct quotes from the participants will be presented to support the construct of the themes (Appendix K has a complete list of the direct quotes). Following the presentation of the research data, a discussion of the data will be presented in Chapter 5.

4.2 Summary of the themes – research question 1

For research question one, six themes were identified, namely: (1) Technology, (2) Relationships, (3) the EPS model of service delivery, (4) Experience, (5) the Virtual environment and (6) Non-verbal communication. Figure 3 shows the sub-themes identified and each will be presented in turn. For the detailed process of how the researcher analysed the data, based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-step framework, please refer to Chapter 3 3.7 the detailed coding process.

Figure 3. A thematic map presenting the EPs' views on developing attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users



4.3 Theme 1: Technology

This theme highlighted that technology is one of the factors which influences EPs' development of attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users. For instance, this development may be affected by the EPs' experience of technology fatigue after conducting multiple remote consultations, the limitations of the technology and also the EPs and service users' degree of experience with technology.

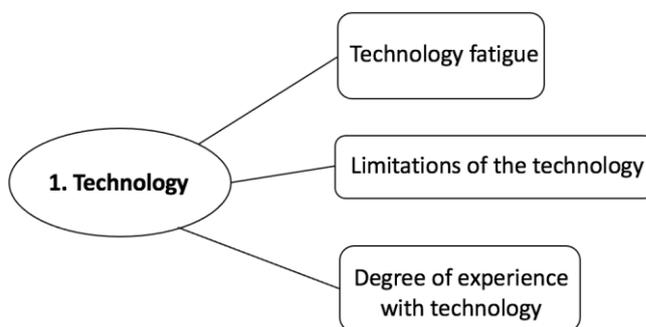


Figure 4 Theme 1: Technology

4.3.1 Subtheme 1.1: Technology fatigue

The participants described that having multiple remote consultations caused them fatigue and influenced their attuned interactions with service users. For instance, “sometimes I think virtual consultation could just feel quite effortful, particularly in COVID, when everybody was constantly sorts of doing virtual meetings, and almost everything was happening over a screen.” (Alice, Interview 3)

I don't know whether you find it but when there are lots of virtual meetings, sometimes I feel a bit like not for this. But sometimes it's literally like virtual meeting, virtual meeting, virtual meeting Whereas in real life, I might have driven somewhere and had a bit of decompression, you know. So, I guess that can affect being in the moment, which I do think is really linked to attunement, like really being with a person. (Grace, Interview 6)

‘One participant also stated that she asked her supervisor whether she could conduct remote consultations less frequently, so that her performance during remote consultations would not be affected.’

If you are doing lots of virtual consultations, one thing I negotiated with my supervisor was that I wouldn't do because, at one point, I was doing quite a lot in one day, because you can just literally end the call and jump into another one.

(Ella, Interview 8)

4.3.2 Subtheme 1.2: Limitations of the technology

Apart from technology fatigue, the participants also stated that there are many disadvantages and limitations associated with using digital devices, e.g., Wi-Fi-connections, which also influences their attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users. For instance, “I think you can still pick pick up on things technology allowing obviously without like cameras, freezing and those kinds of things.” (Luna, Interview 5)

And to sort of actively listen, I guess it doesn't always the only barrier, really, from my point of view, although you'd have to ask the participants as well, but would be issues with technology, you know, if there's like a Wi-Fi issue, and particularly with trainees who might not always have great access to Wi-Fi, because of where they're living or sharing with others. (Grace, Interview 6)

‘The participants also stated that, at times, it is difficult to spot some of the visual cues that occur during remote consultations because they can only view individuals on a very small screen. Moreover, it can be challenging to decide when to speak due to the time-lag caused by the Wi-Fi connection, which also influences attuned interactions during remote consultations.’

Because you haven't got the same kind of visual cues in the same way, because you're looking at a tiny little person on the on the screen. So, you don't notice some of those details in the same way. (Poppy, Interview 10)

I think one of the things that's a bit less natural about like video consultations, is sometimes there might be just a tiny bit of a lag or you're not quite as it's not sometimes quite as obvious whether somebody's finished talking or something like that. And so, it's easy to jump in before somebody is finished. And I think that's.....that can really kind of switch you off or make you feel like somebody's not listening. (Alice, Interview 3)

I think technology can sometimes make it difficult. So, I don't know if you've been in one of those, like a meeting, and both people are trying to speak at the same time and you are kind of online, it seems harder sometimes to kind of navigate that. (Luna, Interview 5)

4.3.3 Subtheme 1.3: Degree of experience with technology

The participants mentioned that some service users, especially parents, have less experience of participating in remote consultations, because they do not have access to digital devices and remote consultation software. In addition, the EPs themselves are also often not very skilled at using remote consultation software, which makes it difficult to achieve attuned interactions during remote consultations. For example, "There are lots of issues, there's also to do with sort of technology poverty, if that if I've got the right phrase, you know, people who actually don't have access to things." (Poppy, Interview 10)

If people are already used to the platform, that helps enormously. So, you know, nowadays, all my discussions with staff in schools that are on teams, they all use it, they all have experience of it..... Right at the beginning, people didn't know how

to connect, they didn't know how to use the different features. (Poppy, Interview 10)

I think it was probably quite hard for some assume that parents had good technology. So, I think it was important for schools to ensure that the parents didn't feel..... I suppose not included if they didn't have the right equipment.

(Sofia, Interview 9)

Maybe parents might feel less confident to say their views if they're not used to virtual consultation, or maybe some people might say stuff more confident to say stuff that they might not say, in real life, if you will have to kind of be in the room together when you are finished. (Alice, Interview 3)

The participants also mentioned that, due to practice and their frequent engagement in remote consultations, their skills in conducting remote consultations have improved and conducting remote consultations has now become part of their practice. For instance, "I think we've all become quite skilled in remote consultations so that there isn't a huge amount that gets missed anymore. I think over time, we've developed that skill." (Olivia, Interview 1) "I think that's just useful that we, I suppose, recognise that this will be a way of working. I imagine it'll be part of my practice now." (Luna, Interview 5)

Furthermore, 'the participants expressed that young people and children tend to have better technology skills than their parents, and so engage better in remote consultations.'

I would say with young people, I wonder whether and I have asked them, it might actually be a preferred means of contact in terms of interpersonal communication, and I'm just thinking of a case sort of in the pandemic, and it was a young person who was having quite a tough time and was sort of in his

bedroom. And sort of a quite anxious boy, and he, he would not have let me into his space to talk face-to-face whereas he felt that he was able to sort of talk to me if I think it was Teams, his mum was sort of next-door kind of listening but not not in there. And I think actually, we may be connected better because he was really into computers, and he sort of liked that. (Grace, Interview 6)

With children, I found that it was almost like entering into their interpersonal space that they're really familiar with. So, they actually had a lot of skills knowledge I felt of virtual interaction, and they seemed quite comfortable in that space. And I know, in terms of attunement, hmm..... we actually had quite a lot of fun (Ella, Interview 8)

However, 'one participant stated that remote consultations can be difficult for very young children because they cannot yet maintain their focus on a screen for a long period of time.'

I think something was limited working remotely I wonder if it's more successful with the adult than the child because of the kind of adults can manage possibly the screen time they are sitting still, and talking to a new person in this, whereas if you're with a child in school, I think you might be with them with their friends to start with. (Sofia, Interview 9)

4.4 Theme 2: Relationships

This theme indicated the relationships between the EPs and service users during remote consultations; for example, the virtual environment can help to level out the power dynamic between the EPs and the service users, and an existing relationship with the service users is also important in enabling the EPs to develop attuned interactions during remote consultations. A lack of rapport building during remote consultations influences the development of attuned interactions.

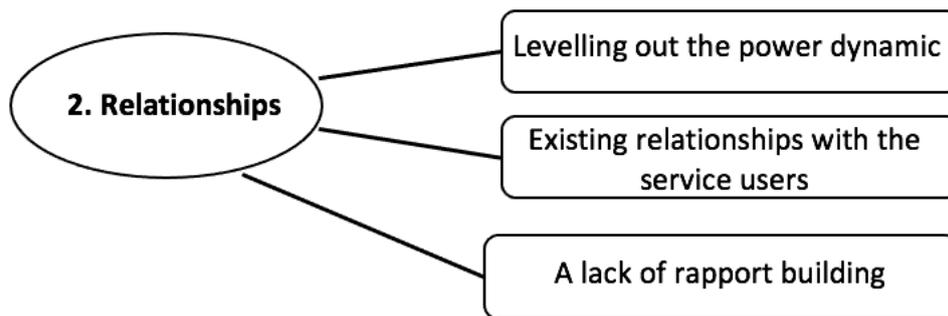


Figure 5 Theme 2: Relationships

4.4.1 Subtheme 2.1: Levelling out the power dynamic

The participants stated that remote consultations help service users to feel more powerful. For example, service users can leave the consultation and turn their microphone and/or camera off any time they wish. For instance, “I suppose with a phone consultation, there is that levelling of that power dynamic because now you're having a phone conversation, or you are having a video conversation, and potentially, you're at home.” (Tom, Interview 2) “And so yeah, with parents, I think there's definitely that and also that power, again, I've been able to turn the mic off, turn the camera off when they needed.” (Ella, Interview 8)

There are some parents and children who still prefer to work in that way, which I think is really interesting. I think. I've noticed that for some children, it kind of balances out the power a little bit because I think one child said to me that they could just turn the computer off anytime they wanted, which I think was really well, it's a really powerful statement, I think because it shows that by us being online that they could choose to end that in a more comfortable way if it wasn't kind of it's just more authentic consent, really, I think. (Ella, Interview 8)

The participants also mentioned that ‘the parents and EPs pay more attention to the consultation itself because remote consultations allow the participants to think less about the consultation process and focus more on the context surrounding the individuals.’

And the reason I think that's good for attuned interactions is because you're maybe more present, and there's less, you know, kind of stepping back in a way from that moment of interaction and thinking about the context around the person that's in the interaction. (Daisy, Interview 7)

4.4.2 Subtheme 2.2: Existing relationships with the service users

The EPs mentioned that ‘their existing relationships with the service users are important because they help to maintain attuned interactions during remote consultations and allow EPs to engage in gentle questioning, guiding and moving onto more sensitive issues.’

It depended on whether you had like a relationship with somebody before working with them virtually. Yeah, and it gets much easier if you already know someone and they know you. And, they can almost particularly feel them working with parents, they can almost kind of refer to the fact that we've worked together before and that we've got a relationship kind of thing to try and build a bit of trust. (Alice, Interview 3)

I guess, already having like that prior relationship, where you've met in real life, perhaps because you kind of knows each other, you know each other, like how you communicate. So, you're more able to leave space when you need to kind of do that gentle questioning and guiding and it's more likely to go down better. (Lily, Interview 4)

Kind of moving further receiving initiative in developing attuned interactions. I again, I think that that is possible online. I think I think I do do it. I think like I said, I think it is easier perhaps when you I find it may be easier when there's some kind of existing relationship there. (Luna, Interview 5)

I think it depends it depends on the relationship that I have, if we're sort of moving further down, and looking at the bottom ones The deepening of the discussion, and the guiding, sometimes can feel a little bit more difficult.

Attuned interrupting is a favourite phrase of mine. (Poppy, Interview 10)

Moreover, 'when no prior relationship exists, the service users are less clear about what the EPs' consultation means, which can make it difficult for the EPs to implement attuned interactions and guide the conversation during remote consultations.'

And I find sometimes with parents who it can be difficult to keep on track because they view you as someone that they can offload to. And for some parents, it can be a really big thing meeting the educational psychologist, even though I kind of forget that, as a professional, that it can be more difficult to kind of guide the conversation about the information that I need because it's more difficult to have those cues. (Lily, Interview 4)

4.4.3 Subtheme 2.3: A lack of rapport building

The participants stated that 'it is difficult to build a rapport during remote consultations, and they do not have a chance to explore how the service users are doing before the consultations, offer them a drink or close a meeting by walking to the same place together. A lack of rapport building can influence the building of trust and the use of attuned interactions between EPs and service users.'

I think one of the things about remote consultation that I think I'd be my practice is the kind of missing the little bit before the meetings and after the meetings. So, for example, if I'm kind of going to someone's home, or going to someone's place of work, or school or an office, there'll be a bit of small talk naturally, before you kind of sit down to have the conversation, like, you know, like you offer a drink or you know, whatever it is you check in how someone's doing. Afterwards, as well, when the kind of meeting finished, you might walk to the same place together, just kind of, again, close the conversation a little. (Luna, Interview 5)

When I'm working with schools I haven't worked to before like SENCo might come and meet you before, you might see the parent in reception. And you can do a bit of that kind of incidental, like, Oh, how's your morning been? Or I like your shoes, just that kind of stuff where they can build a bit of trust with you. But I think virtually, you tend to just wait for everyone to get there and then sort of jump in? And I don't know, I feel like people were a bit more like not as invested a bit more like who who are you, like we're just here for a purpose rather than that kind of more like holistic approach. (Alice, Interview 3)

In terms of, I think, something that I do find quite hard, but I guess it can happen in person as well, as is knowing what happens when you leave the consultation, and sort of how is the person and like, if it's a trainee, for example, if you're having supervision, and you think things are okay, and then you press leave, and then you don't sort of, you know, that kind of incidental stuff where you're kind of about to leave, but you sort of walked down the stairs together, and they're like, Oh, actually, just one more thing. You know, like, so is that last minute. Same with teachers. (Grace, Interview 6)

The participants also stated that, during remote consultations, they feel pressure to get into the conversations, and then click off, rather than applying attuned interactions. For example, “When I'm online, there's almost a pressure of like, coming up with something and needing to say something a little bit more, because people can't physically see that you're interested.” (Lily, Interview 4) “I think online that can feel different because sometimes you kind of adjust, we've got an hour, we need to get stuck into the conversation. And we'll just both click off when we're done.” (Luna, Interview 5)

4.5 Theme 3: The EPS model of service delivery

This theme highlighted the different types of service delivery model and this is related to attuned interactions during remote consultations.

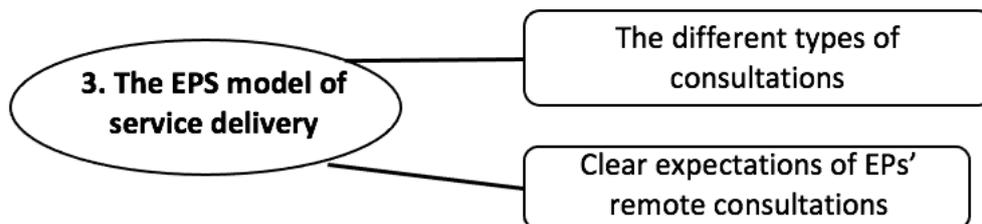


Figure 6 Theme 3: The EPS model of service delivery

4.5.1 Subtheme 3.1: The different types of consultations

The participants stated that ‘the EPS model of service delivery is also related to attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users. For instance, EPs have less chance to apply attuned interactions with service users, if they are mainly focusing on statutory work.’

I think, am I actually making time to do those things. And if I'm doing statutory work, so writing that psychological advice, I'm information gathering, for the most

part is how I look at it. So, I'm not going to be really doing that guiding because we're not trying to get to, we're not problem solving..... (Lily, Interview 4)

And probably during that first year of kind of remote working, our service was mostly doing sort of statutory work. So, there was a lot there were lots of kind of statutory information gathering meetings, which, because we weren't doing as much other work we tried, we tried to use as a bit of a consultation, where possible, to try and do some of that problem solving and get to what the sort of provision could look like. (Alice, Interview 3)

I worked in a service that was a consultation service delivery model. So, I'd say 90% of my role in that service was delivering consultation. And by consultation, I mean, kind of a psychological process consultation in terms of helping people to feel empowered to solve their own problems and solve additional problems they face in the future, and really understand the dynamics and the conversation of how narratives are being constructed about certain people and what the constructions of the problem might be. (Ella, Interview 8)

In addition, one participant also mentioned that 'it is difficult to connect with the service users, when the consultations are mostly initial consultations. Moreover, it is more difficult to manage non-verbal communication, especially when the group of individuals involved in a remote consultation is large.'

I tried to really engage and really think about things. But of course, parents and teachers are all different. They'll have different personalities. They'll have different ways of approaching things and I think that's where and the problem is you can never know these things beforehand because my consultations are usually initial consultations. (Tom, Interview 2)

And, and maybe also depends on how many people are on the screen. Because if it's one-on-one consultation, I wonder if it's a bit easier to sort of, comment, like, Oh, I wonder how you're feeling or or somebody, you might notice something in their eye, or they might lean forward or something. (Grace, Interview 6)

That can be difficult when there are lots of people. I found it harder to manage the nonverbal communication within this space. So, sometimes you'll be in the room of someone and you'll just say you'll you kind of say, Oh! I'm feeling a lot of anxiety, you know, I'm wondering if that's what you know, the child is experiencing? (Daisy, Interview 7)

One participant stated that 'she did not think that the expectation of 'information giving' during remote consultations was made clear to her during her training course, and therefore she has less chance to apply attuned interactions with service users during her remote consultations.'

I don't feel like that was made as obvious to me as it is that actually they do want a bit of information giving. And they do want you to kind of I don't go into consultations anymore without a few things in mind that I can suggest because otherwise, you just get to the end, and they're like, Oh, what should we do? (Daisy, Interview 7)

4.5.2 Subtheme 3.2 Clear expectations of EPs' remote consultations

The participants highlighted 'the importance of service users having a clear understanding and expectations of EPs' remote consultations because this can support the use of attuned interactions and building trust; for example, EPs being explicit when taking notes and looking away from the screen. In addition, it is important to acknowledge that remote consultations is a new method of consultation,

and also to be open about their limitations and how individuals may feel during remote consultations’.

I think everything about virtual consultations just make trying to make it as kind of explicit as possible and make sure there's not too much kind of unsaid because I think that can sort of fester a bit in like a virtual space. (Alice, Interview 3)

I think some school stuff, and parents obviously would much prefer you to be in school, serving the child and working with them. And so, I think making sure everyone had a clear understanding of the expectations, and the logistics are probably really helpful. (Alice, Interview 3)

So, I suppose what I always do at the beginning of any consultation is to talk about how the consultation will go. And I would always explain that, although we're interacting, there might be times when I look away from them to write something down. So, I think by explaining that, you know, that's important to know why you, you wouldn't perhaps be fully attentive, seeming attuned all the time. (Sofia, Interview 9)

With the different participants is maybe just being open about the fact that it's virtual and discussing maybe together what limitations might be and what strengths might be and sort of asking people how they feel about it. (Grace, Interview 6)

I think encouraging initiatives is really hard. I think that people do a lot of trying to weigh and people are thinking really hard about don't interrupt them, or, you know, I think you have to be a lot more explicit in a digital space that you want their initiative like, Oh, I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on that, rather than almost trying to notice them, because you can't pick up on those phatic cues so easily, you need to be more explicit. (Daisy, Interview 7)

4.6 Theme 4: Experience

This theme highlighted that experience of working as an EP influences the development of attuned interactions during remote consultations.

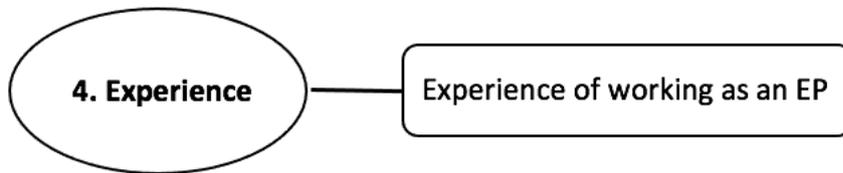


Figure 7 Theme 4: Experience

4.6.1 Subtheme 4.1: Experience of working as an EP

Attuned interactions and interpersonal skills are all related to the experience of working as an EP. Experienced EPs seem to develop better attuned interactions during remote consultations. For instance, “I think it's really honed our consultation skills because it's likely that your involvement was mainly based on consultationattuned interactions..... I think it's more similar than you might have thought before.” (Sofia, Interview 9)

The younger the trainees, the younger EPs said, there's a big difference between remote there's a big difference between in person you don't feel as connected. But interestingly, the much older much more experienced EPs said that there wasn't that much of a difference. So that was interesting for me to kind of reflect on so perhaps it's more about your skills as an EP your skills of consultation, your interpersonal skills that you bring that's the important thing, and it's less about perhaps the medium in which it is conducted. (Tom, Interview 2)

When I was training, sometimes my supervisor would watch the consultation as well. And I think it was a combination of her being way more experienced and knowledgeable, but also being kind of like an onlooker, she could often sort of

notice, oh, that person was kind of not as engaged or this person looked a bit upset. (Alice, Interview 3)

In terms of interpersonal skills, it's really interesting, because some of the people I've never met in real life, but we had met on the screen, in supervision. And I think, pretty much..... I felt able to connect almost as well on the screen than in person. I guess, I think it's possible to sort of attune to somebody fairly well on a screen, and in supervision sort of context, to kind of leave, to kind of pauses. (Grace, Interview 6)

I would still I don't think I've changed; it'd be really interesting because I've not looked at myself on a recording of a consultation that's remote. That I would hope that I am very good at showing the earlier building blocks of attuned interactions. (Poppy, Interview 10)

4.7 Theme 5: The virtual environment

This theme demonstrated the importance of how being in a comfortable environment, such as being at home, can help EPs and service users to be more attuned and focus more effectively during remote consultations, while the background lighting during remote consultations and pop-up notifications can distract the attuned interactions between EPs and service users.

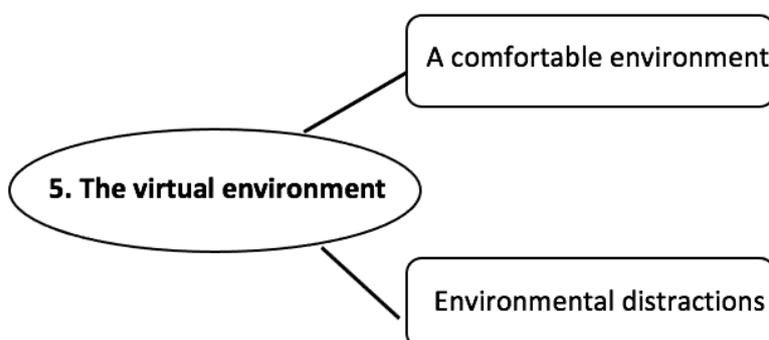


Figure 8 Theme 5: The virtual environment

4.7.1 Subtheme 5.1: A comfortable environment

The participants mentioned that 'it is important for service users to be in a comfortable environment during remote consultations. The demand for service users to advocate during remote consultations is low, which can help to promote attuned interactions during remote consultations.'

I have noticed when the parent enters a room and you are like, do we shake hands? What's the what's the advocate here, whereas online I felt, I got a feeling that parents were a little bit more comfortable because there was less of that. And less of demand for advocate, I think in terms of who is this person? How do I interact with them? How do I interact with the professional in this space, and actually, they were just able to kind of click on and we were, it was more about the conversation than anything else that was going on. (Ella, Interview 8)

You do an in-person consultation, you might be in the school, and parents might come to that consultation already feel a certain way about school. And it adds a level of contextual complexity. And whereas when it's virtual, like I say, it is really about being present in that moment of the dialogue, and enjoying that dialogue between each other and kind of that, almost like a back and forth tennis match of give, given and receive and each other with, with questions and responses and humour as well. (Ella, Interview 8)

I kind of prefer virtual consultation in some senses, if I'm facilitating because you can sort of I don't know how to phrase this. I kind of in kind of, I don't want to use the word manage or control, because it doesn't sound very nice, but sort of structure things a bit better, because you can, sort of really, it can maybe enhance how democratic the spaces because you can sort of say that people can be on mute, and then someone can raise their hand and then you can sort of

suggest that they that you sort of receiving their hand up, and then they they're sort of talking and you can receive that and deepen the discussion.

(Grace, Interview 6)

One participant stated that 'remote consultations are more accessible for children with autism because they require fewer social interactions, and it feels more comfortable for them.'

The only thing that I haven't spoken about is when I've worked with autistic children. And when I did my research with them, one thing that they mentioned was that the virtual interaction really was a lot more accessible for them. And it kind of eased the social interaction. (Ella, interview 8)

The EPs are also physically better attuned with the service users when the consultations are conducted online, and they do not need to get up early to go to schools. For instance, "If the EPs is not had to get up at seven o'clock to drive an hour and a half to the school for an hour's meeting, then they are probably able to be a bit better at their job." (Daisy, interview 7)

4.7.2 Subtheme 5.2: Environmental distractions

When conducting remote consultations, 'EPs can choose to be in a place that is less busy and does not have a lot of background noise, so that they can feel more attuned with the other individuals.'

I think I quite like virtual consultation. And I know that it's sort of a two-way process or it's about what are the people in the in the participatory kind of process prefer but I actually feel that I can sometimes attune with people more than if I'm in a busy space and thinking of other things and there are children running around and like I just think if there are some practical things, then actually that

could still definitely be attunement and you can still build relationships and move forward. (Grace, Interview 6)

However, background lighting and pop-up notifications can influence the attunement between the EPs and service users during remote consultations.

And you know, things like, for example, the lighting where you are, appears to suddenly change, and every now and then your face becomes in semi-darkness, and then you come lights up again. So, if you were talking to me about something really, really difficult and painful as a potential client, I might have missed some of those cues. (Poppy, Interview 10)

When you're talking, you're not really sure if anyone's listening, or sometimes you're the one that's trying to check an email while listening to something. And I think you have to almost exaggerate your cues to show that you are listening.

(Alice, Interview 3)

Always really conscious, for example, in remote consultations and things to switch like emails, close it off completely. Or actually, I've stopped things from popping up on my computer, because, I mean, there is nothing worse you can tell when someone kind of glancing at something else. (Luna, Interview 5)

4.8 Theme 6: Non-verbal communication

This theme indicated that some non-verbal communication, for example, small gestures like nodding (receiving – in terms of principle of attunement) and having fun by pointing out interesting things in the service users' background are still achievable during remote consultations. Also, it is easier to see one's own facial expression when conducting remote consultations. In comparison, wider body language is more difficult to notice because one can only see part of the service user's body.

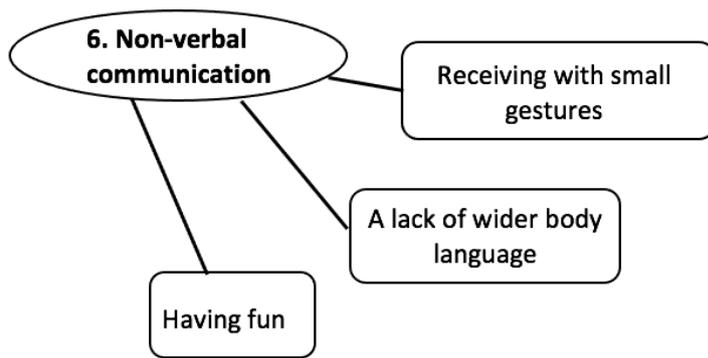


Figure 9 Theme 6: Non-verbal communication

4.8.1 Subtheme 6.1: Receiving with small gestures

The participants stated that small gestures, such as nodding to signpost to the service users that you are listening to what they are saying, are still achievable during remote consultations. It is also easier to view facial expressions during remote consultations and reflect on them. For example, “I think it's still achievable in remote consultation. Like, like, for example, we're speaking now, and you're just not nodding, and you'll give me X. And it helps. It's all those kinds of things that help.” (Luna, Interview 5)

It could be easier because you literally just see someone's face all the time. And so, you can, you can see your own face, too. So, you can see how you look, what kind of facial expressions you are making, what gestures you are making, it's almost it is real-time feedback. So, you can kind of adjust how you are responding or appearing. (Olivia, Interview 1)

I think I've probably really tried to kind of lean in and like, make sure I'm looking at the camera. And even though you can't really make eye contact with people trying to almost say like, Oh, I'm listening, I'm looking at you in the top corner or kind of, I guess just more signposting of the fact that you're listening. (Alice, Interview 3)

However, 'it can also be more difficult for EPs to provide emotional support for service users, such as a tap on the arm, which helps EPs to develop attunement and build rapport.'

Being physically in the room, it's much easier for me to provide support emotionally, it's not I'm not gonna give them a hug or anything because that will be too much. But I think small gestures, and just being in that physical space can be really helpful for consultants when they do feel sad, or they do feel upset, or maybe even a bit triggered by what we're talking about. (Tom, Interview 2)

An angle where in-person consultation has that benefit because you can be physically present and just a small thing of like handing someone a tissue or like a tap on the arm or something like a soft touch on the arm or something that can be a small gesture like that can be quite powerful for showing that you care and that you're empathising with them. (Tom, Interview 2)

4.8.2 Subtheme 6.2: A lack of wider body language

The participants also stated that, due to the nature of remote consultations, they can only view part of the service user's body; for instance, the forehead. "I think you can still receive initiatives by looking at facial expressions, I guess. Obviously, you can't see sort of the whole body. But I wonder if it's about being explicit about that." (Grace, Interview 6)

But I think some other challenges are sort of the wider body language, you don't get such a feel for that, because you only see a certain part of their body. Some people who join on their phones, you only see their forehead. (Olivia, Interview 1)

4.8.3 Subtheme 6.3: Having fun

The participants acknowledged that they can still have fun with the service users during remote consultations, for instance, by changing the virtual background,

and the use of virtual classrooms. “I use things like a virtual classroom, and they just, I remember that there is one boy just really laughing that we were using characters on the on on this shared space.” (Ella, Interview 8)

I think you can have fun and often quite a bit of fun on-screen during the consultation might be around kind of how inept people are on screen and like, changing the backgrounds and you know, you can't really you can't see the wider stuff, though. Like, you can sort of comment on people's backgrounds, like what's in the house. And that's a nice way of connecting, maybe having a bit of fun.

(Grace, Interview 6)

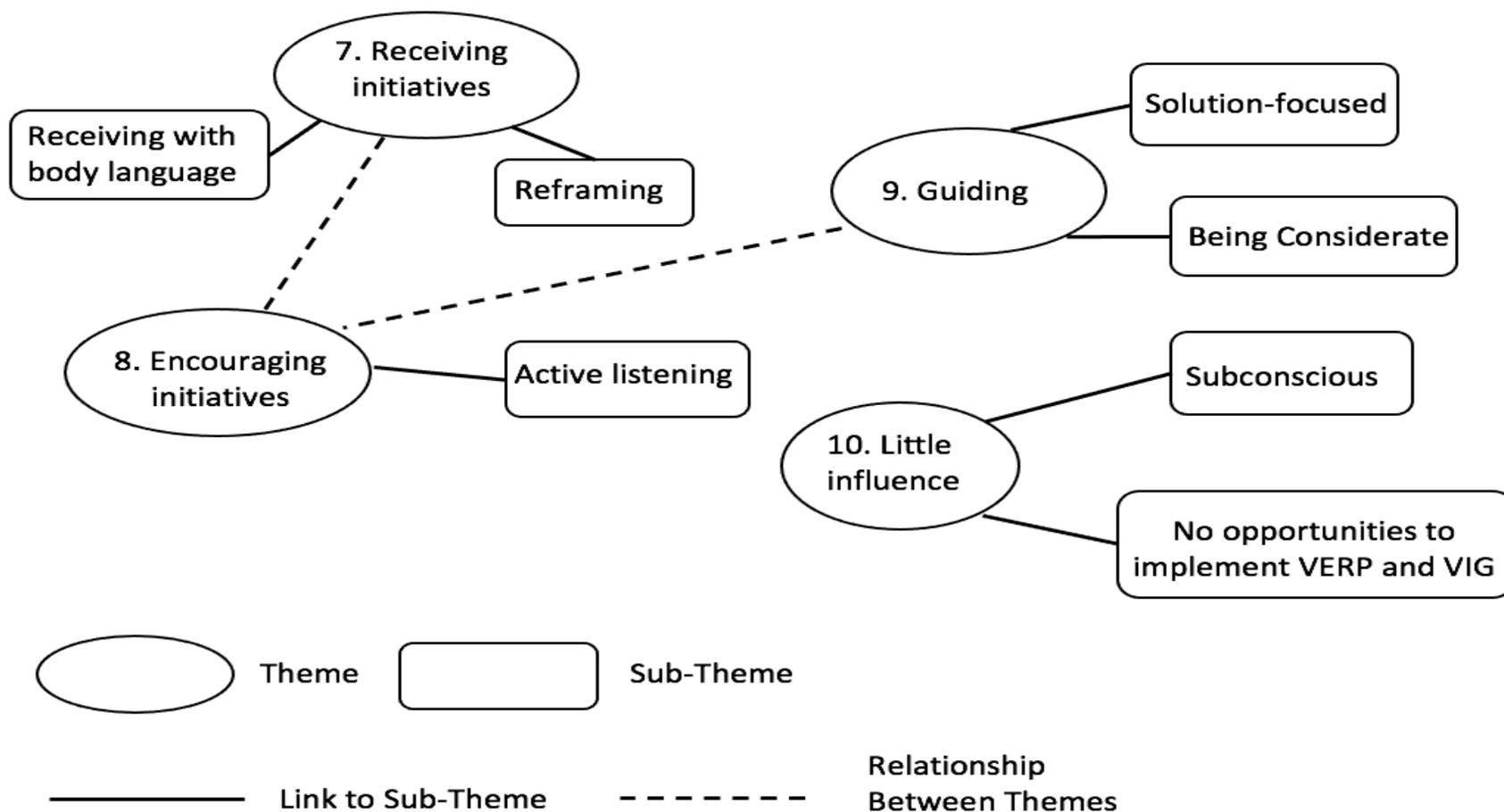
Also, using humour is possible; for example, pointing out interesting things that appear in the service users' background. “I think probably using a bit of humour, particularly like if people were at home and like their cat wandered in, or I don't know, you could see that.” (Alice, Interview 3)

If you with a mum or something, and there's a little one kind of playing in there sort of looking, or there's a dog or something like that, that can kind of just make it a bit more of a relaxed space. (Grace, Interview 6)

4.9 Summary of the themes – research question 2

For research question two, what are EPs' views on the influence of VIG/VERP training on their attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users? five themes were identified, namely: (7) Receiving initiatives, (8) Encouraging initiatives, (9) Guiding, and (10) Little influence. Please refer to figure 10 for the sub-themes identified.

Figure 10. A thematic map presenting the EPs' views on the influence of VERP/VIG training on their attuned interactions during remote consultations



4.10 Theme 7: Receiving initiatives

This theme indicates that, from the perspective of the EPs, VERP and VIG training experience can support attuned interactions, such as receiving initiatives (receiving with body language and reframing) during remote consultations.

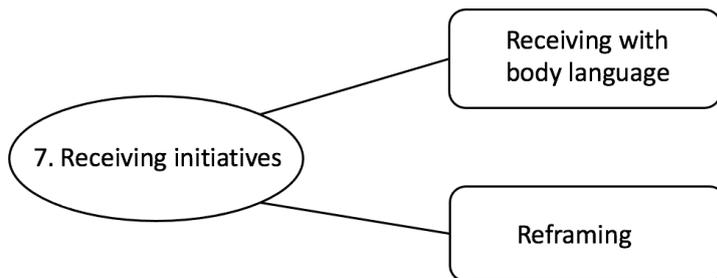


Figure 11 Theme 7: Receiving initiatives

4.10.1 Subtheme 7.1: Receiving with body language

One participant mentioned that ‘he started thinking about the body language that he used to receive from others during the VIG training, and tried to use more body language to receive others during remote consultations.’

Really important receivable by body language. I think that's also quite important. I will quite often, this is something I picked up before but during my training, I started when I was having video conversations, I started getting loads of thumbs ups. So instead of saying stuff, I'd be like, oh, like, oh, like I smile loads and that sort of thing. And I don't know, I think that's well-received. (Tom, Interview 2)

VERP and VIG training also help the EPs to reflect on ‘whether their friendly posture appears slightly forced during remote consultations and also to be attentive to what the service users are trying to express through verbal and non-verbal communication.’

I don't know sometimes I guess it's a bit harder to feel kind of the energy that you might get in a session with a group of people in a consultation or a group of

trainees in a training session or something. So, I'm wondering whether I'm maybe it's a bit forced my friendly posture, when I'm doing consultation online. (Grace, Interview 6)

And yeah, just showing interest being attentive. And I think that relates to probably how I am as a person and everything I've kind of, you know, trained and thought of as well, but I'm even I'm conscious of that in any interaction, to be honest, is to try and pay attention to whoever I'm with. (Luna, Interview 5)

Looking for initiatives, yeah, looking for ways in which the other person is trying to give you information is super important. That could be like through the language that they use the body language like you can quite often see, especially in a video call, if someone is becoming a bit tired or a bit like you're losing them a little bit, or there's something they want to say they quite often show that in their face. (Tom, Interview 2)

4.10.2 Subtheme 7.2: Reframing

VERP and VIG training also offer a framework for EPs with regard to their reframing skills; for example, 'offering promises, leading and guiding service users, but not asking questions directly. One EP said that she used a model or something similar for scaffolding and shared her screen with the service users during remote consultations.'

That can get kind of ties in with scaffolding as well that you can use your psychological knowledge to ask questions or give promise not to lead them because you didn't want to put words in their mouth. But sometimes there can be something that we want to talk about. But not tell them about it if that makes sense. So, it could be like, so I know that the students I'm working with have had difficulties with harmful sexual behaviour. And so, we can ask questions in a way

that kind of leads us to that topic. So, they can then talk about it and give their views rather than me putting words in their mouth. (Tom, Interview 2)

And because actually, it's about thinking about what that person might need from that interaction, which is I think that reframing is a really key part of my practice as an EP. So, it's actually offered a framework to do that. (Ella, Interview 8)

I probably did do a bit more scaffolding of people's responses. So, because it feels in a way, not very concrete, or being in like a virtual space. So, sometimes tried to share my screen and use it, like a template of the multi-element model or something. Maybe type into it, or direct people's attention to it, to try and just give us a bit more structure and, like draw people back in, I suppose, and get a bit more of that feeling of sort of collaboration. (Alice, Interview 3)

4.11 Theme 8: Encouraging initiatives

This theme highlighted that the VERP and VIG training experience can help EPs to encourage initiatives; for instance, active listening.

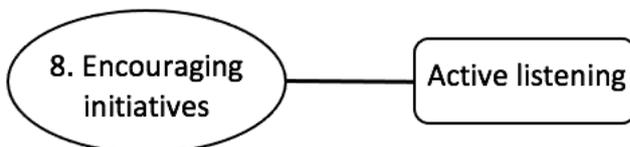


Figure 12 Theme 8: Encouraging initiatives

4.11.1 Subtheme 8.1: Active listening

The participants mentioned that ‘the VERP and VIG training reminded them of the importance of active listening. Being able to listen and help the service users to share what they think is an important part of EPs’ job.’

Listening actively is probably the most important thing in doing a consultation. And this is true for in-person and remote, especially remote, because that's, especially if it's like a video call or a phone call or something. That's what you are then just

exclusively doing, you're just listening to them. And you're really listening to what they're saying. And you're picking out on the words that they choose and words that they say because sometimes or quite often, there'll be times where they'll use language. (Tom, Interview 2)

It's sort of those active listening skills, isn't it that are relevant to the attuned interactions, and that these are the things that I try and incorporate into all of my consultations and interactions with colleagues, with staff members at school with parents. (Olivia, Interview 1)

Yeah, the listening and waiting, which is so much part of our job as far as if I was to define our job. Sometimes I think it's just sitting with people, you know, metaphorically sitting, and just listening to what what they want to talk about or get off their chest, a lot of it is people don't have an understanding of what you know, they might be a bit scared about coming to consultation. (Sofia, Interview 9)

4.12 Theme 9: Guiding

This theme indicated that the VERP and VIG training reminded the EPs of the importance of reflection and checking in during remote consultations, which are important skills for devising solutions with service users during remote consultations. Moreover, the participants stated that 'the VERP and VIG training reminded them of the importance of being considerate and also of person-centred practice; for instance, they check, wait and reflect on their interactions with the service users.'

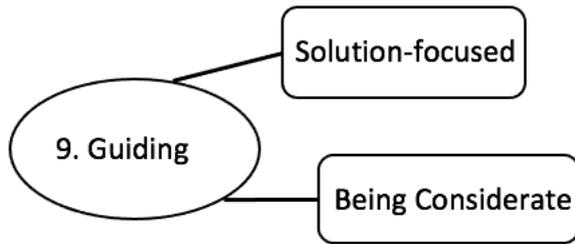


Figure 13 Theme 9: Guiding

4.12.1 Subtheme 9.1: Solution-focused

The participants described how they use attuned interaction skills, such as reflection and checking in, to devise solutions during remote consultations. “So that's a lot of reflecting back and using scaling, and checking in, which I guess fits with the principles of attuned interaction quite nicely Yeah, and I've just reflected now that it's really difficult to do.” (Lily, Interview 4)

This was about a year or two ago, where it was getting really heated. And they had to say, Okay, let's pause for a minute. Let's take five minutes let's go outside, have a breath of fresh air, and then come back to this, to then go on, because it was just getting to the point where it wasn't helpful anymore, it was just kind of the consultation was breaking down. And so, he paused it, and then they came back, and then it was more productive. So, I think that could be naming that conflict and allowing, ensuring that the consultation didn't go completely off the rails. (Tom, Interview 2)

4.12.2 Subtheme 9.2: Being considerate

The participants stated that ‘the VERP and VIG training reminded them of the importance of being considerate and engaging in person-centred practice, based on the principles of attunement, such as checking in, reflection and waiting.’

Yeah, giving the other person space is so important. And quite often that does mean asking a question and waiting for a response. But also, when another

person has been speaking for a while, not immediately responding, letting the silence hang, and nine times out of 10, the other person will continue talking, they'll take that as a sign that they can continue talking, and they'll fill that space up. (Tom, Interview 2)

I think, you know, have given, like, extra turns and that kind of thing. Checking that other people are understanding you, you know, I always try to do that. To be honest, in my VIG practice, that's something that I'm trying to get better at. (Daisy, Interview 7)

One participant stated that, 'due to the VERP and VIG training, thinking about attunement supports her to think of the role that both the child and the parent play during remote consultations.'

Since doing the VIG training, it helped me think about relationships in a more in-depth way and the roles that both the child and adult play and also the impact that can have on the child's behaviour and in ways that we can attune to people in a more authentic way in terms of my practice, but also in the practice that I'm supporting when working with parents and teachers too. (Ella, Interview 8)

It takes it away from that it's about kind of the two, two or more people in interaction with each other and how they both have a role to play in that rather than it just being necessarily all about the child who needs to change. (Ella, Interview 8)

4.13 Theme 10: Little influence

Some of the participants mentioned that 'the VERP and VIG training had little influence on their attuned interactions during remote consultations. They stated that they did not learn how to be attuned with others through either the VERP or VIG training, and attuned interactions were embedded in their practice. Moreover, some

of the participants stated that they do not have any opportunities to implement the attuned interaction skills that they learnt from their VERP and VIG training.'

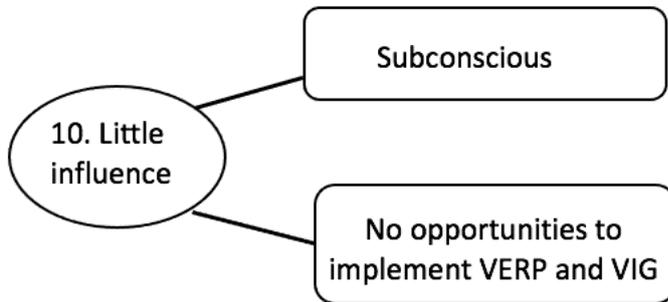


Figure 14 Theme 10: Little influence

4.13.1 Subtheme 10.1: Subconscious

The participants stated that attuned interactions are part of their practice, and they are unsure whether being able to engage in attuned interactions is related to their VERP and VIG training. "I hadn't consciously connected up what I know about attuned interactions and online consultation because I was sort of would hope that my interactions are pretty attuned anyway." (Poppy, Interview 10) Also, "it's kind of an organic thing. It wasn't a conscious thing. Oh, I need to make sure I'm thinking about attuned interactions when remote working" (Poppy, Interview 10).

I think it just kind of became embedded generally. So, I don't know if I specifically thought about VERP. Whilst I was doing remote consultations, but I think it's all a part of that training we've had to make sure we are engaging in attuned interactions. And I think naturally, as a psychologist, you're wanting to know more. And through having knowledge of what those principles are for achieving interactions, and conciliation skills and all of those kinds of things. (Olivia, Interview 1)

Suppose if we think of attuned interactions, which is, I think VIG. It's like what we do and a little bit more besides. So, I think all that attuned kind of framework that you showed there is very much part of my practice. (Sofia, Interview 9)

I think that a lot of this knowledge is tacit knowledge, rather than kind of declarative or procedural knowledge. I think the more time you spend being an EP and training to be an EP, the more that it becomes like second nature, rather than I'm explicitly doing this, you know, you just find yourself doing these things.

(Daisy, Interview 7)

4.13.2 Subtheme 10.2: No opportunities to implement VERP and VIG

The participants shared that the degree to which VERP and VIG practice and training are accessible within the EPS service influences how far the EPs implement them in their work. One EP mentioned the time pressure that she is under to solve problems, and that it is difficult for her to integrate elements of VERP and VIG into remote consultations. "But it's that kind of classic thing of it was great when I did it on the training, but I haven't had the time or the space to be able to implement it into my work just yet." (Tom, Interview 2)

I think I do because I try and use it all the time. But I guess it's more, it's more difficult. And sometimes I just feel under pressure to kind of solve the meeting, solve the problem, decide the next action, and then move on to the next thing.

(Lily, Interview 4)

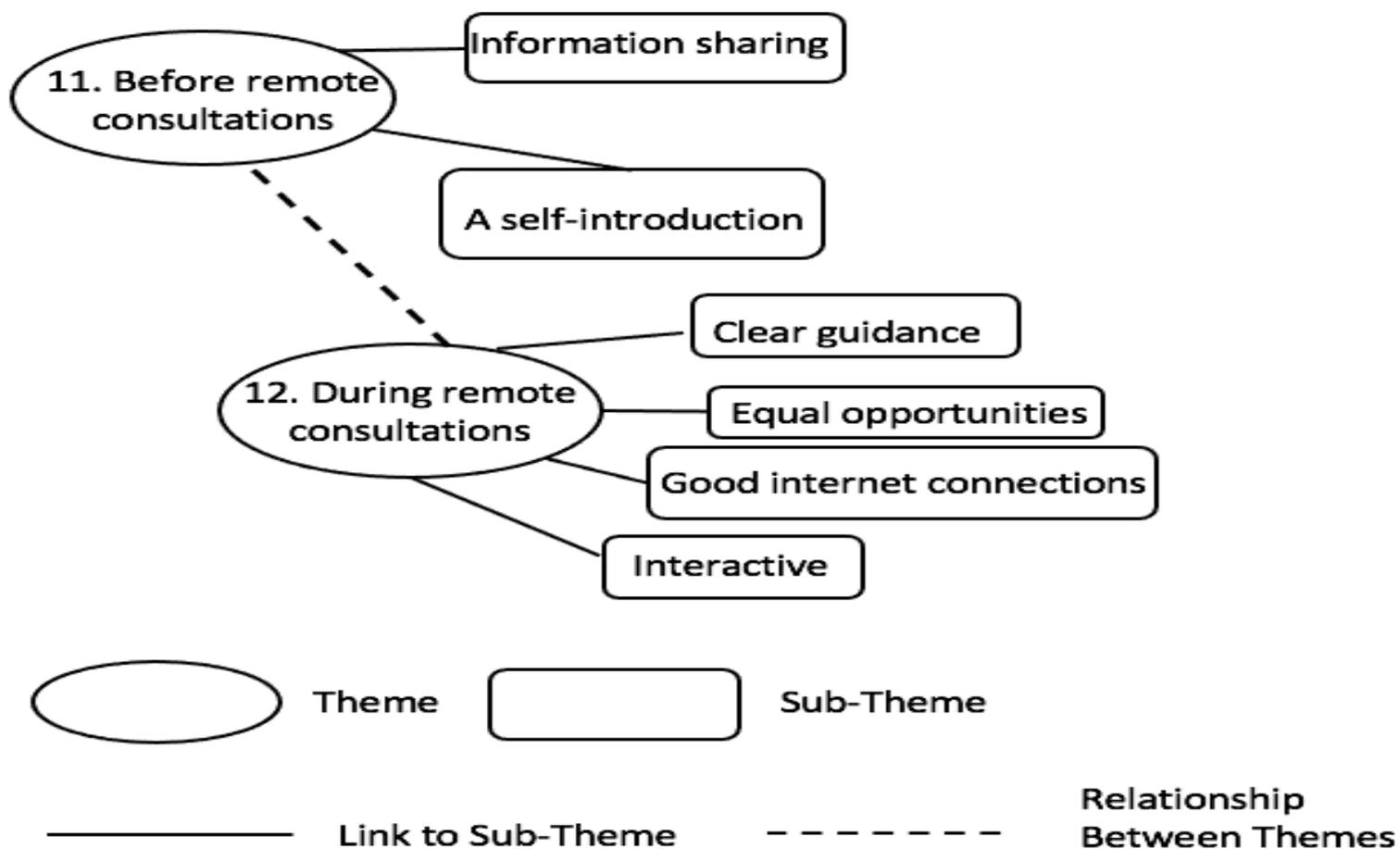
One EP shared that 'COMOIRA rather than the VERP or VIG training has been used to address the issues related to engaging in attuned interactions during remote consultations at one of the universities which offer a doctoral training course.'

And I wonder if I didn't work in my service, where it so easily supports VIG how accessible it would be. And especially if you train somewhere like X where they use COMOIRA and that's it. That's how they train with the principle of attunement for the internet. (Lily, Interview 4)

4.14 Summary of themes – research question 3

For research question three, two themes were identified; namely (12) Before remote consultations and (13) During remote consultations. Please refer to figure 15 for the sub-themes identified.

Figure 15. A thematic map presenting what the EPs think helps to promote attuned interactions during remote consultations



4.15 Theme 11: Before remote consultations

This theme presented items (apart from VERP and VIG) that can help to support attuned interactions before remote consultations, such as information sharing and introducing oneself.

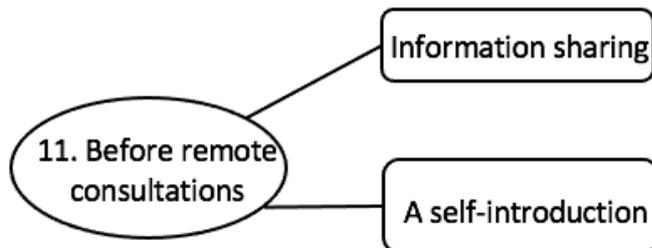


Figure 16 Theme 11: Before remote consultations

4.15.1 Subtheme 11.1: Information sharing

The participants stated that, at times, they provide a list of information and principles related to attuned interactions for service users to read before remote consultations, and also conduct some reading on VIG, and look at how they and the service users interact. For example, “I might have sent a list of things that we might talk about beforehand. It just feels it It's more structured, which is not necessarily a bad thing. It could be quite a good thing” (Poppy, Interview 10).

Send in some of the principles and thinking about, I've not done this, but it's something I could think about doing and thinking about kind of ways that I might be responding to them, and using it as a bit of a modelling framework to see kind of what helped them feel comfortable? (Ella, Interview 8)

It might be how we talk; it might even be using some of the VIG resources and looking at how we interact I think probably of the time, I mean, I'm just thinking, sometimes, we might bring things in like if it is with a parent and a child. (Sofia, Interview 9)

4.15.2 Subtheme 11.2: A self-introduction

The participants mentioned that they send one-page profiles to the service users to provide them with a brief introduction about themselves, which can help to support attuned interactions during remote consultations. “I send them stuff about me before I could make one of those one-page profiles, you know, with emojis and stuff, which I think helps.” (Daisy, Interview 7) “I send like maybe a video of myself beforehand or like a one-page profile. And so that when I came on the screen there, you've maybe already seen the way I interact or read a little bit about me.” (Ella, Interview 8) “So, I've had an opportunity to introduce myself, see what the purpose of the consultation is, and give a sense of who I am a little bit.” (Tom, Interview 2)

4.16 Theme 12: During remote consultations

This theme highlighted items that can support attuned interactions during remote consultations, i.e., clear guidance on attunement and consultations, offering equal opportunities for the service users during remote consultations, good internet (Wi-Fi) connections and being interactive.

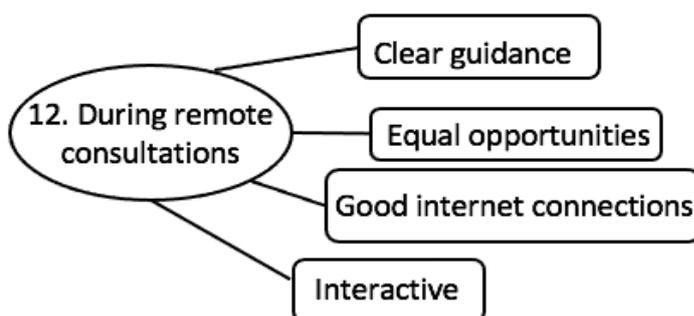


Figure 17 Theme 12: During remote consultations

4.16.1 Subtheme 12.1: Clear guidance

The participants stated that it is important for the service users to understand what remote consultations are. For instance, “Making sure you're really clear about what's going to happen, because for some people, you know, remote consultations, are quite scary, some people find it very uncomfortable.” (Olivia, Interview 1) “Laying the groundwork for what the consultation will be about, you know, it's just a subtle, this is the things we're going to talk about, and also giving an indication of what you're like.” (Tom, Interview 2)

Whereas if you kind of do some work beforehand, of just chatting through what I mean by consultation, and what they hope for a conversation. And I think that helps kind of the most common into that space ready to be reflective together. (Ella, Interview 8)

4.16.2 Subtheme 12.2 Equal opportunities

It is important that everyone involved in remote consultations gets a chance to share how they think and feel, and also the EPs should be flexible and work around the service users' schedules. For example, “I try and be very willing to work around their schedule and be very flexible.” (Tom, Interview 2)

I guess trying to just think of things from the participants' point of view of like, actually, would they like a little break or sometimes like, I think I'd be bored if I didn't have a chance to say anything. So maybe even if people don't have specific things they want to contribute, I think if if you can get everybody to say something early on, they're probably more likely to then say something else later down the line.” (Alice, Interview 3)

Management of multiple people in a remote consultation, because you're not in a room there. It can be difficult to pick up on those little subtle cues of when

someone wants to talk. And so, sort of managing that to make sure that you hear from everyone. And that you can sort of say, Oh, if hold on a second, I think Susan or you know, whoever just has something that she wants to add. (Olivia, Interview 1)

4.16.3 Subtheme 12.3 Good internet connections

The participants shared that a good Wi-Fi connection is also important for maintaining attuned interactions during remote consultations. For example, “If it doesn't really work, like if Wi-Fi connection is awful, then I think it's best just to stop using that method and to try and phone call or arrange to see each other in person if possible.” (Grace, Interview 6), and “Definitely I've said like Wi-Fi, I would say that's the main thing. Wi-Fi and whether people have a laptop or a phone.” (Grace, Interview 6)

I think other things that are really psychologically based on having a good internet connection. Having the technology there to make it as efficient as it can be. I think it's also important to have little scripts in mind, related to the technology. (Olivia, Interview 1)

4.16.4 Subtheme 12.4: Interactive

The participants shared that ‘being interactive during remote consultations, for example sharing notes and pictures and playing games, such as virtual sorting card games, can help to support attuned interactions during remote consultations, especially when children are involved.’ “I think sometimes like you just had like having something shared to look at. Again, I think that relating the in-person consultation as much kind of having a shared tool to help us prompt our discussion.” (Luna, Interview 5)

I've prepared kind of a framework that we're going to follow and I've pre-populated some things that I've screen shared, kind of sometimes I've done it like on a PowerPoint, and I've made notes on screen sharing as we've gone through.

(Daisy, Interview 7)

Certain types of interactions, and whether actually, like, for example, like offering choices and turn-taking in attunement, that can be adapted virtually in ways that might be a little bit more accessible for children with additional needs. For example, I did like a virtual sorting card task together virtually in consultation with an autistic child. (Ella, Interview 8)

4.17 Chapter summary

In conclusion, three thematic maps were presented in the current study to illustrate the study findings. The first thematic map (Figure 3) presented the EPs' views on developing attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users; the second thematic map (Figure 10) presented the EPs' views on the influence of VIG or VERP training on their attuned interactions during remote consultations; and the third thematic map (Figure 15) presented what the EPs think helps to promote attuned interactions during remote consultations. The next chapter (Chapter 5) will offer a detailed discussion of the research. The indications of the current study, the contribution and limitations of the research, the implications for EPs' practice, and recommendations for future studies will also be presented in detail.

Chapter 5

Discussion of the findings

5.1 Chapter overview

Chapter 4 offered an analysis of the research data (the ten EPs' interviews). Three thematic maps were used to present the themes and subthemes that were identified from the analysis of the interview transcripts. The first thematic map represented the EPs' views on developing attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users, and the second thematic map presents their views on the influence of VERP/VIG training on their attuned interactions during remote consultations. The third thematic map shows what the EPs think helps to promote attuned interactions during remote consultations.

This chapter is divided into six parts, involving: a discussion of the findings in relation to research questions 1-3 in more detail, followed by the strengths and limitations of the current study. This chapter will also discuss links to psychological theory, the implications of the current study for EP practice and EPs' training courses, the dissemination of the current study results, and ideas for future studies, and finally present the conclusion.

5.2 Research question 1: developing attuned interactions during remote consultations

What are the EPs' views on developing attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users? (Research Question 1)

Six themes (Technology, Relationships, The EPS model of service delivery, Experience, The virtual environment and Non-verbal communication) were identified. Generally, the impact of remote consultations on EPs' attuned interactions with the service users depends on their degree of experience with technology, their existing

relationships and degree of trust with the service users, and the consultation environment. Some of the non-verbal communication can still be captured during remote consultations. The results will now be explored below in detail.

5.2.1 Degree of experience with technology

The research findings indicate that EPs' familiarity with digital devices and remote consultation software are important in developing attuned interactions during remote consultations. EPs who are unfamiliar with the software, and do not have great access to Wi-Fi creates barriers to turn-taking, making it difficult for EPs to decide when to start speaking. This discovery is in line with the findings of other studies, which highlighted that there are disadvantages to remote consultations including unreliable videoconferencing systems and the low quality of digital devices, such as a loss of sound and images and digital devices with a small screen (Moore, 2022). Many previous studies reported problems with freezing images, that resulted in psychologists and participants speaking over each other and a loss of sound, as well as issues with slow signals, which findings are all in line with the current study (Bishop et al., 2002; Downing, 2021; Kennedy & Yellowlees, 2000; Manning et al., 2000).

In addition, it is suggested that young people and children tend to have better technology skills than their parents, and so engage more easily in remote consultations. However, remote consultations can be difficult for very young children because they cannot yet maintain their focus on a screen for a long period of time. These results support, at least partially, the studies of Bice-Urbach et al. (2018) and Ermer (1999), which stated that young individuals are more likely to be involved in assessment through video conferencing software, and some even rated their experience as even more satisfying compared with in-person consultations because

they are usually more efficient. This means that the equal amount of information is usually explored in a shorter period of time during remote consultations. Compared with Bice-Urbach et al. (2018) and Ermer (1999)'s study, the current research expands the previous findings regarding very young children, and remote consultations can be difficult for them because they cannot yet maintain their focus on a screen for a long period of time. The present study also expands on the area of technology fatigue. To be specific, having multiple remote consultations caused fatigue and influenced EPs' attuned interactions with the service users.

5.2.2 Collaboration and trust with the service users

The present study results extend the idea that EPs can still have fun with the service users during remote consultations, for example, by changing the virtual background and/or using virtual classrooms and screen sharing. The research results also highlighted the idea that remote consultations help to level out the power dynamic between EPs and the service users, and help the latter to feel more powerful; for instance, service users can leave the consultation and turn their microphone and or camera off at any time they wish.

Moreover, the existing relationships with the service users and clear expectations and understanding of EPs' remote consultations also support the use of attuned interactions and the building of trust. These results agree with those of Baker and Bufka (2011) and Novotney (2011), who suggested that service users should be given guidance on technology failure and information security during the first remote consultation session, and that the professionals should tell the service users when they are taking notes and looking down and away from the camera.

The participants in the present study also commented on the lack of rapport building during remote consultations; for instance, the lack of opportunities for small

talk. The research findings are consistent with that of Moore (2022) that the opportunity for problem-free talk was found to have an influence on the attuned interactions between EPs and the service users during remote consultations. To be specific, remote consultations did not allow either the EP or the service users to connect beyond simply discussing the problem (Moore, 2022).

The present study also expands on the area of different types of consultations. EPs have fewer opportunities to apply attuned interactions and connect with the service users, if they are mainly focused on statutory work.

5.2.3 The Consultation Environment

The current study proposes that it is crucial for service users to be in a comfortable environment during remote consultations. The demand for service users to advocate during remote consultations is low, which promotes attuned interactions during remote consultations. These results are partially consistent with the finding of Callicott et al. (2012) that some service users feel less pressured and more relaxed when interacting with professionals remotely because they are in an environment in which they feel comfortable. In addition, it has been suggested that the feeling of being comfortable due to being at home may be outweighed by the feeling of anxiety about how to manage the technology (Callicott et al., 2021). However, it is unclear whether the service users are feeling stressed due to the demands of the technology even when they are in a comfortable environment.

Compared with Callicott et al. (2021)'s study, the present study expands the previous findings to encompass children with special needs, and remote consultations are more accessible for children with special needs because they require fewer social interactions, and so they feel more comfortable with this kind of consultation. Moreover, the EPs themselves also feel more attuned with the other

individuals because the EPs can choose to be in quieter place during remote consultations, although elements such as background lighting can still affect the attunement between the EPs and the service users during remote consultations. In terms of future study, it would be useful to expand the present findings regarding remote consultations and their accessibility for individuals with special needs.

5.2.4 Non-verbal communication

Different to Downing (2021)'s study, this study discovered that psychologists needed to pay attention to the service users' facial expressions and body language, and that the service users felt more 'distant' from the psychologists during remote interactions. The current study discovered that non-verbal communication (small gestures), such as nodding, is still achievable during remote consultations, whilst some participants find it difficult to maintain eye contact. These results partly reflect those of Strong and Soni (2021), who also discovered that elements such as friendly body language can still be recognised through video clips of remote consultations. The finding of the current study is also consistent with that of Pesamaa (2004), that a lack of eye contact makes connecting with the service users during videoconferencing challenging. Compared with Strong and Soni's (2021) and Pesamaa (2004)'s study, the current research expands the past findings regarding wider body language. The participants in the present study mentioned that they sometimes find it difficult to connect with others during remote consultations because only a small part of their body can be captured by the camera. In the future, it would be useful to expand the present findings to cover wider body language and attunement during remote consultations.

5.3 Research question 2: the influence of VERP/VIG training on EPs' attuned interactions during remote consultations

What are the EPs' views on the influence of VERP/VIG training on their attuned interactions during remote consultations with service users? (Research Question 2)

Four themes (Receiving initiatives, Encouraging initiatives, Guiding and Little influence) were identified from the interviews.

Overall, VERP or VIG training experience seems to be experienced as helpful in reminding the EPs of the importance of receiving initiatives through body language and reframing. VERP or VIG training experience can also help EPs to encourage initiatives; for instance, active listening. VERP or VIG training also reminded EPs of the importance of reflection and checking in during remote consultations, which are important skills for devising solutions with the service users during remote consultations. The results are consistent with Pitt and Soni (2018) suggestion that VERP or VIG training help EPs with their interactions with service users so that they are collaborate and participate in the meeting fully with EPs, especially in sharing and developing ideas for provision.

Some of the participants in the present study found it hard to relate VERP and VIG to remote consultations. In addition, attuned interactions and interpersonal skills are all related to the EPs' experience. EPs with more experience feel that attuned interactions are part of their practice, and they are unsure whether being able to engage in attuned interactions is related to VERP and VIG training. The results will now be explained below in detail.

5.3.1 Accessibility of VERP and VIG

The results of the present study provide supporting evidence regarding the degree to which VERP and VIG practice and training are accessible within the EPS service, and influence to what degree the EPs implement them in their work. It seems that, even if the EPs had received training on VERP and VIG, unless they had had enough chances to implement and practice VERP or VIG in their work, they may be unable to develop attuned interactions during remote consultations. Moreover, it appears that practice at implementing VERP and VIG may increase the EPs' confidence and encourage the continued development of their use of VERP and VIG.

Furthermore, the findings of the current study extend those of the previous research and suggests that an ability to attune oneself to others is in the skill-set of EPs and so embedded in EPs' practice. As a result, the present study discovered that, to some of the EPs, VERP and VIG do not play an important role in supporting their attuned interactions during remote consultations. It would be interesting to know what might influence EPs to view being attuned with others to be the skill-set of EPs, while other EPs consider attuned interactions as something that can be trained through VERP or VIG. One explanation could be experience of working as an EP. According to the current study, experienced EPs suggested that attuned interactions were embedded in their practice, and that they did not learn how to be attuned with the service users through VERP or VIG training.

5.3.2 Receiving and encouraging initiatives

The results of this study show that VERP and VIG training remind some EPs of the importance of the attuned interaction principles, such as receiving through body language (thumbs up), active listening (listening and waiting) and scaffolding

(providing prompts rather than asking questions directly). The results are partially consistent with the claim that participating in VIG or VERP sessions as a trainee or trainer reminds the EPs about their attuned interaction skills and encourages their use, such as returning smiles and making body gestures during their work (Hayes et al., 2014; Murray & Leadbetter, 2018; Pitt & Soni, 2018; Strong & Soni, 2021). The present study expands on the fact that VIG and VERP sessions can also support attuned interactions not only during face-to-face consultations but also during remote ones. In recent years, the proportion of EPs' consultations organised remotely has increased owing to the COVID pandemic. As a result, this new discovery could be helpful for universities that organise EPs' training courses and also help EPSs to reconsider the influence of VERP and VIG training on EPs' attuned interactions during remote consultations.

5.3.3 Person-centred practice

It is interesting to note the finding that VERP and VIG training remind the EPs of the importance of being empathic and considerate, putting service users in the centre, showing interest and offering choices. This result sheds light on the research conducted by Hayes et al. (2014), which stated that VIG training supported trainees to show empathy towards the service users. Empathy is something that individuals can be reminded of through VERP and VIG training, and is also the foundation of rapport building, especially when working with teachers (Farouk, 1999). According to the study by Farouk (1999), teachers prefer EPs to be non-judgemental and empathic.

5.4 Research question 3: what do EPs think helps to promote attuned interactions during remote consultations?

What do EPs think helps to promote attuned interactions during remote consultations? (Research Question 3)

Two themes (before remote consultations and during remote consultations) arose from the interviews. Overall, the EPs can help to maintain attuned interactions before remote consultations by information sharing and introducing themselves, and during remote consultations by providing clear guidance on remote consultations, an equal chance to participate and interact, maintaining good internet connections and being interactive. These results will now be explored below in detail.

5.4.1 A clear understanding of remote consultations

The present study discovered that a clear understanding of remote consultations helps to support attuned interactions during remote consultations. The research result is partially in line with Baker and Bufka (2011)'s suggestion that EPs should provide information, such as regarding security and technology failure, for service users during the first session of remote working. Furthermore, based on the findings of the current study, EPs can consider sharing their screens and using tools such as the one-page profile, to provide the service users with a brief introduction about the purpose of the consultations, which can help to support attuned interactions during remote consultations.

5.4.2 An equal opportunity to engage and interact during remote consultations

The current study also extends the idea that it is crucial that service users involved in remote consultations get a chance to share how they think and feel. EPs should also ensure that the service users understand the purpose of the consultations and contribute to them. EPs should also ensure that they are being

interactive during remote consultations, such by as using virtual sorting card games, which can support attuned interactions during remote consultations. The results are partially consistent with Reupert et al (2022)'s research that conducted with Australian school psychologists, and some of participants shared that it is possible to build rapport when interacting with students remotely. For instance, students are willing to bring things that are really important or special to them in their room, and together they share and discuss that item remotely.

5.5 Strengths and limitations of this study

5.5.1 Literature search

The present study has its limitations in terms of literature search criteria, and hence the literature that the researcher identified is not comprehensive. Search terms such as 'teleconsultation' and 'telepractice' would have enhanced the body of the literature relevant to the literature review.

A literature search was conducted using Scopus to locate the relevant studies published up to July 2023. Apart from Scopus, the British Library e-theses online service (EthOS) was also used to search for doctoral theses and literature, while Open Grey was applied to the reference lists of studies which were selected to locate all possible relevant research that was not located when conducting the Scopus, British Library e-theses online service (EthOS), and Open Grey database searches. Duplicate studies were removed manually.

The search terms below were used for the literature review question – literature search: (Attuned interaction OR Attunement) AND (Teleconsultation OR Telepractice). Six studies were found in Scopus, no studies were found in the British Library EThOS, and in the grey literature. All six studies were regarded as unsuitable after screening the titles. The main reason for their exclusion was because there has

been no mention of attuned interactions, not of direct relevance to EP practice and focused on other elements, such as therapists.

5.5.2 Study design and data collection

The current study has its strengths in terms of how trustworthiness is addressed. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) construct was followed to ensure the trustworthiness of the present study (Please refer to Chapter 3 3.8 Ensuring the quality of the research). For instance, the researcher addressed credibility by providing the interviewees a short summary of the finding so that they can share how they think and feel about the findings and reflect on this. The researcher used 'thick description' to address transferability, and make sure that all of the research processes, from the data collection to the study results are clearly explained. Regarding dependability, the researcher stated clearly the process of recruitment, data collection, and elaboration. Detailed quotes from the interview transcripts were provided, and also the researcher kept a reflective diary to reflect on the issues that arose during the research procedure, and also to address confirmability.

The current study also has its strengths in terms of study design. The semi-structured interviews offered a chance for the participants to share their views about remote consultations and attuned interactions. Moreover, the semi-structured interviews were conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams. Remote interviews have the advantage of flexibility and, as a result, a higher proportion of EPs were able to participate in the interviews since they can take place in a time and place which are convenient to them.

In addition, the researcher tried to include the views of all of the participants who wished to participate in the current study. To be specific, the current study originally wished to recruit only EPs who were newly-qualified because the VERP

and VIG training are still a comparatively new experience to them, so it is easier for them to reflect on them. However, one potential participant who has 30 years of experience of working as an EP said that the research seems to exclude participants with experience, and that she could not understand the reason behind this. As a result, the researcher of the present study reflected on this and decided that participants who were not newly-qualified would also be included in the current study since they may also have recent VERP and VIG training experience from their EPSs. In other words, the researcher of the present study ensured that the interviews conducted for the current study were comprehensive, by including all of the views of the participants who wished to contribute to the present study.

Regarding the weaknesses, the current study has its limitations in terms of the study design and data collection. A qualitative research design has the disadvantage that its results cannot be generalised to a wider context, due to the fact that only a small number of participants were able to attend the interviews. However, this was not a stated aim of the current study. With regard to the data collection, although remote interviews offer the advantage of flexibility, the interviewees may have felt nervous due to the fact that they were meeting someone for the first time. In addition, the researcher found it difficult to concentrate during some of the interviews and felt worried about technical issues, such as being unable to record the interviews.

5.5.3 Recruitment

The current study had the advantage of making it possible to recruit participants from all UK EPSs (excluding Scotland and Wales, because they have slightly different systems for EP training and services). The researcher did not invite individuals who were working for the same EPS or studying at the same university as the researcher, to avoid bias. The researcher also created a recruitment poster that

was attached to the recruitment emails to ensure that the recruitment emails were not missed. Regarding the limitations, the present study recruited the participants by sending emails to local authority EPSs only, and potential participants who did not work for the local authority did not have a chance to participate in the study. Hence, recruiting through social media and other platforms may help researchers to reach a wider population. Moreover, there was an imbalance between the proportion of male and female participants in the current study, so it is possible that there may be a difference regarding the amount of information sharing and the feelings about the VERP and VIG training between the male and female participants. As a result, further research is needed.

5.5.4 Participants

One of the participants told the researcher that she felt that the researcher listened to her opinions and included participants with experience in the current study. Furthermore, ten participants were recruited from nine different UK EPSs. In other words, the researcher ensured that the study covered a range of EPSs rather than focusing on one or two of them, since EPs from different EPSs may have unique experiences with regard to implementing VERP and VIG and remote consultations. With regard to the limitations, it may also be interesting to include the views of the service users, although this may be difficult due to the time limit of the study. Moreover, originally, the researcher wished also to explore the views from the perspective of TEPs, but only received two emails from TEPs indicating that they were interested in participating in the study. It would also be interesting to know why a low number of TEPs compared with EPs expressed an interest in participating in the current study, and whether this is because of the accessibility of VERP and VIG.

5.6 Links to psychological theories

The results of this present study have close links to symbolic interactionist theory and also social constructionism theory. Symbolic interactionist theory (Blumer, 1969) helps EPs to understand the meanings which individuals construct for themselves, for their behaviour and for others, which are influenced by their social communication and interactions. Our view of who we are develops from our communications with others, and others serve as a mirror in which we can see ourselves (Cooley, 1964). Social constructionism (Burr, 1995; Macready, 1997) argues that meaning emerges through the interactional process, and rather than exploring meanings which individuals assign to their social worlds, it is possible that meaning of individual lives can be created through interaction.

The present study found that the existing relationships with the service users and clear expectations and an understanding of the EPs' remote consultation support the use of attuned interactions and the building of trust. This shows the importance of communication, as the service users' view of who the EP is and what they do develops and is built up through interactions with the EP. The more service users understand about the role of EPs, the more attuned interactions can be developed to build trust. The current study also discovered that the opportunity for problem-free talk was found to have an impact on the attuned interactions between EPs and the service users during remote consultations, which is linked to the social constructionism theory that meaning emerges through the interactional process. Without the opportunity for problem-free talk, EPs have fewer opportunities to explore the personal narratives and personal constructions that the service users have, such as their personal construct of remote consultations and, as a result, it is

less likely that the EPs will remain attuned with the service users during remote consultations.

The current study also has close connections with personal construct psychology and also systems theory. Personal construct psychology informs our interactions and helps us to discover and develop constructs. It has been proposed that all individuals created theories about their world, and then use these to understand their own world and make predictions (Conroy, 2012). Systems theory aims to explore the interactions between the individuals inside the system (Campbell et al., 1994). Changes happen when the individuals in the system switch to an interactionist, systemic perspective, so that the issue switches from within the individual to something that happens between individuals (Wagner, 2000).

Some of the participants stated that VERP and VIG do not play an important role in supporting EPs' attuned interactions during remote consultations, and that factors such as experience play a more important role. This is linked to the personal construct of the EPs, whereby different EPs have different constructs of what helps to promote attuned interactions during remote consultations. It is possible that the EPs who think that VERP and VIG are helpful will tend to look for continued development opportunities to develop their skills related to maintaining attuned interactions during remote consultations. There are some connections between personal construct psychology and the implications of the present study. For instance, universities may consider including or increasing the priority of VERP and VIG training as part of the EPs' training, since 'attuned interactions can be developed through VERP and VIG training' is a comment construct of EPs.

The current study also found that 'service users involved in remote consultations get a chance to share how they think and feel', which helps to promote

attuned interactions during remote consultations. This is related to the system theory that the participants are not only thinking about promoting attuned interactions during remote consultations from the perspective of within individuals but also between individuals, so that change can happen.

The present study also has close link to 'intersubjectivity' theory and mediated learning theory. 'Intersubjectivity' theory means "the interactions between two people as they negotiate meaning and intent" (Landor, 2015, p.66). Both primary and secondary intersubjectivity help individuals to develop 'attunement' with others, and this is one of the important goals of VIG (Kennedy, 2011). Regarding 'Mediated learning', the more knowledgeable individual 'mediates' between the learner and the task, breaking the task down and using various methods to help the learner to maintain their interest in the task. Mediated learning is related to VERP and VIG training may remind EPs of the importance of interacting with the service users within their 'zone of proximal development' during (remote) consultations, to develop attuned guidance.

The participants shared that using tools such as virtual sorting card games can help to support attuned interactions during remote consultations, which is linked to secondary intersubjectivity. In other words, the focus of the interaction between the EPs and participants is not on each other, but on the sorting card games, which can also promote a greater level of 'attunement'. Moreover, the participants stated that 'VERP and VIG training remind EPs of the importance of being empathic and considerate, putting service users at the centre, showing interest and offering choices', which is linked to the theory of 'mediated learning'. In other words, they remind EPs of the importance of being considerate, putting service users at the centre, conducting remote consultations with the service users within their 'zone of

proximal development', and that the service users should have a chance to interact with the EPs or other individuals who are at the meeting.

5.7 Implications for practice

5.7.1 Implications for EP practice

The present study suggested that VERP and VIG training can support attuned interactions during remote consultations and help to remind the EPs of the importance of empathy and person-centred practice. As a result, EPs who lack experience of VERP and VIG training should consider receiving this training. The participants stated that it is difficult to build a rapport with the service users during remote consultations and, as a result, it is important that the EPs suggest some rapport-building events together before the remote consultations, such as having a cup of tea together and viewing information through screen sharing. EPs should ensure that the service users understand what a remote consultation is and check that they have the right to mute themselves or leave the meeting at any time. Furthermore, EPs should make sure that they indicate clearly when they are looking away from the screen and looking down when taking notes. EPs should also ensure that their emails and other notifications are turned off during remote consultations to remain attuned with the service users.

Furthermore, remote consultations are flexible, and a wide range of service users can be covered. EPs may be better focused during their work and remain attuned because they can engage in remote consultations in an environment in which they feel comfortable and also decrease the time needed to travel to schools. In the future, EPSs can also consider remote consultations as a type of service that they provide, owing to its advantage and EPs can still maintain attuned interactions with service users during remote consultations.

5.7.2 Implications for EPs' training courses

VERP and VIG training have the potential to support attuned interactions during remote consultations and act as a reminder to conduct person-centred practice. As a result, universities may consider including or increasing the priority of VERP and VIG training as part of the EPs' training course. The EPs' training course can also consider providing tips about conducting remote consultations for TEPs, for instance, on how to create a virtual classroom and a one-page profile. Also, technology support and training courses on how to conduct remote consultations through video conferencing software should be provided to students. Universities may also consider pairing up experienced university tutors (EPs) and also TEPs during remote consultations, since EPs with more experience tend to recognise interactions and feelings which TEPs may possibly tend to ignore. Furthermore, EPs with more experience embed attuned interactions into their work, rather than thinking about attuned interactions separately. As a result, TEPs can learn from the experienced EPs, and together they can reflect on their levels of attunement and potential areas for improvement.

5.8 Dissemination of the study results

The researcher is hoping to disseminate the present study results in several ways. First, the researcher is hoping to share a summary or the final version of the thesis with the participants, who have expressed a wish to receive a copy of the study. The summary or final version of the thesis will be shared via email after the study has been examined. Second, the researcher hopes to present the study findings to the EPS service where the researcher of the present study is currently working. The researcher hopes that this will offer the EPs in the service to reflect on

their practice, especially regarding remote consultations and the use of VERP and VIG.

Finally, the researcher would like to disseminate the research results on a wider level through TEP conferences; for instance, those organised by the BPS - Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP). Sharing the research results with different TEPs and EPs from different universities and EPSs may help VERP and VIG training to gain more popularity and, as a result, support attuned interactions during the EPs' work. It also offers TEPs and EPs a chance to understand how they can maintain their levels of attunement during remote consultations, and the advantages and limitations of remote consultations, so that a wider population can have a chance to access remote consultations with EPs. Individuals will also be able to download the present study in electronic form, through the UEL Prof Doc Thesis Repository and via open access, such as the British Library, PsycINFO and Google Scholar. In addition, the researcher would like to publish the research in a peer-reviewed journal, with the support of the supervisor or the placement tutor.

5.9 Implications for future research

The research results indicate that, apart from VERP and VIG training, experience of working as an EP also has an impact on attuned interactions during remote consultations. However, it is still unclear whether there is a difference in attuned interactions between Newly Qualified EPs and senior EPs during remote consultations so, as a result, further study is required. Apart from EPs, it is also essential for future studies to examine this area from the perspectives of the service users to explore how they feel about remote consultations and VERP and VIG training, because the service users should always be at the centre of EPs' practice.

Some of the participants also mentioned that children with needs may feel more comfortable about interacting with EPs virtually because this helps to ease their stress about social interactions. In the future, it is hoped that views can be collected from children who may have needs, so that EPs can offer the best and most suitable service when working with them and identify and avoid any bias related to attending remote consultations.

5.10 Conclusion

To summarise, the present study aims to offer new insight around the impact of remote consultations on attuned interaction skills with service users, and this is from the perspective of EPs. The present study also aims to offer new perceptions around how VIG and VERP training experiences support EPs' use of attuned interactions. It would be interesting to learn more about what EPs think helps promote attuned interactions during remote consultations within the UK Educational Psychology context.

The present study offers new insights into remote consultations and proves that it is possible to maintain attunement during remote consultations, for example, by receiving through nodding and smiling. Apart from that, remote consultations also help to support the power balance between the service users and professionals, so that attuned interactions can be maintained during remote consultations. Remote consultations appear to be beneficial for children with special needs because they help to ease their stress related to engaging in social interactions.

Moreover, the study also offers a new understanding of VERP and VIG training, which can remind EPs about the importance of empathy, person-centred practice, listening, reframing and displaying a friendly body posture during remote consultations. The themes that arose during the present study included the EPS

model of service delivery, which highlighted the fact that EPSs are overwhelmed by statutory assessment, and that, although EPs would like to apply their attuned interaction skills through remote consultations, most of the meetings that they conduct mainly focus on data collection and providing suggestions.

In the future, it is hoped that EPSs may consider remote consultations as one of the options for consultations rather than a temporary way of working, because of their benefits for EPs, parents and children with needs. In addition, clear instructions, guidance and training courses should be provided by the EPSs to the EPs to support the development of their technology skills. Furthermore, universities that organise EPs' training courses and EPSs may also consider providing more opportunities for EPs to engage in VERP and VIG training and delivery and explore what the parents and children think about remote consultations and VERP and VIG, to complement the perspectives of the EPs.

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Appendix A

Notice of ethics review decision letter



University of
East London

School of Psychology Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION LETTER

For research involving human participants

BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

Reviewer: Please complete sections in **blue** | **Student:** Please complete/read sections in **orange**

Details

Reviewer:	Lucy Poxon
Supervisor:	Janet Rowley
Student:	Janet Law
Course:	Prof Doc in Educational and Child Psychology
Title of proposed study:	An exploration of EPs' and TEPs' views on the impact of remote consultation on attuned interactions

Checklist (Optional)

	YES	NO	N/A
Concerns regarding study aims (e.g., ethically/morally questionable, unsuitable topic area for level of study, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detailed account of participants, including inclusion and exclusion criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concerns regarding participants/target sample	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detailed account of recruitment strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concerns regarding recruitment strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All relevant study materials attached (e.g., freely available questionnaires, interview schedules, tests, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study materials (e.g., questionnaires, tests, etc.) are appropriate for target sample	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Clear and detailed outline of data collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data collection appropriate for target sample	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If deception being used, rationale provided, and appropriate steps followed to communicate study aims at a later point	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If data collection is not anonymous, appropriate steps taken at later stages to ensure participant anonymity (e.g., data analysis, dissemination, etc.) – anonymisation, pseudonymisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concerns regarding data storage (e.g., location, type of data, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concerns regarding data sharing (e.g., who will have access and how)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concerns regarding data retention (e.g., unspecified length of time, unclear why data will be retained/who will have access/where stored)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If required, General Risk Assessment form attached	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any physical/psychological risks/burdens to participants have been sufficiently considered and appropriate attempts will be made to minimise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any physical/psychological risks to the researcher have been sufficiently considered and appropriate attempts will be made to minimise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If required, Country-Specific Risk Assessment form attached	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If required, a DBS or equivalent certificate number/information provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If required, permissions from recruiting organisations attached (e.g., school, charity organisation, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All relevant information included in the participant information sheet (PIS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information in the PIS is study specific	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language used in the PIS is appropriate for the target audience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All issues specific to the study are covered in the consent form	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language used in the consent form is appropriate for the target audience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All necessary information included in the participant debrief sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language used in the debrief sheet is appropriate for the target audience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study advertisement included	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Content of study advertisement is appropriate (e.g., researcher's personal contact details are not shared, appropriate language/visual material used, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Decision options

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.
APPROVED - BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED <u>BEFORE</u> THE RESEARCH COMMENCES	In this circumstance, 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 at the end of this form once all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to the supervisor. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.

	<p>Minor amendments guidance: typically involve clarifying/amending information presented to participants (e.g., in the PIS, instructions), further detailing of how data will be securely handled/stored, and/or ensuring consistency in information presented across materials.</p>
<p>NOT APPROVED - MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Major amendments guidance: typically insufficient information has been provided, insufficient consideration given to several key aspects, there are serious concerns regarding any aspect of the project, and/or serious concerns in the candidate's ability to ethically, safely and sensitively execute the study.</p>

Decision on the above-named proposed research study

<p>Please indicate the decision:</p>	<p>APPROVED - MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES</p>
--------------------------------------	--

Minor amendments

Please clearly detail the amendments the student is required to make

3.4 Research Design should include your data analysis method.

3.6 BPS and UEL Ethics regulations state that you must not use personal social media accounts to recruit participants and that separate accounts are set up for this purpose. You are able to advertise and direct traffic to the separate account on your personal account however. For BPS regulations see: [Ethics Guidelines for Internet-mediated Research.pdf \(bps.org.uk\)](#)

Please state that it is a separate account for clarity in 3.6.

3.6 Caution regarding collecting data from close friends/colleagues/personal contacts. You plan to collect data from your personal social media and YR3 in your own course. Despite data being anonymised, the data will be impacted and you will need to reflect on this in your reflexivity sections.

Recommend reading:

- *Taylor, J. (2011). The intimate insider: negotiating the ethics of friendship when doing insider research. Qualitative Research, 11(1), 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794110384447>*
- *Brewis, J. (2014). The ethics of researching friends: On convenience sampling in qualitative management and organization studies. British Journal of Management, 25, 849-862.*

3.11 Your data analysis method of Thematic Analysis needs to be presented here with the specific steps and model of TA you will be following.

Major amendments

Please clearly detail the amendments the student is required to make

--

Assessment of risk to researcher

Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
	If no, please request resubmission with an <u>adequate risk assessment</u> .	
If the proposed research could expose the <u>researcher</u> to any kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard, please rate the degree of risk:		
HIGH	Please do not approve a high-risk application. Travel to countries/provinces/areas deemed to be high risk should not be permitted and an application not be approved on this basis. If unsure, please refer to the Chair of Ethics.	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEDIUM	Approve but include appropriate recommendations in the below box.	<input type="checkbox"/>
LOW	Approve and if necessary, include any recommendations in the below box.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reviewer recommendations in relation to risk (if any):	Please insert any recommendations	

Reviewer's signature

Reviewer: (Typed name to act as signature)	Dr Lucy Poxon
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Date:	24/02/2022
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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 UEL's Personal Accident & Travel Insurance Policy, please see the Ethics Folder in the Psychology Noticeboard.

Confirmation of minor amendments

(Student to complete)

I have noted and made all the required minor amendments, as stated above, before starting my research and collecting data

Student name: (Typed name to act as signature)	Janet Law
Student number:	2027463
Date:	01/03/2022

Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed if minor amendments to your ethics application are required

Appendix B

Consent form



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

An exploration of EPs' views on the impact of remote consultations on attuned interactions

Contact person: Janet Law

Email: u2027463@uel.ac.uk

	Please initial
I confirm that I have read the participant information sheet dated 24/02/2022 (version 1) for the above study and that I have been given a copy to keep.	
I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time, without explanation or disadvantage.	
I understand that if I withdraw during the study, my data will not be used.	
I understand that I have 3 weeks from the date of the interview to withdraw my data from the study.	
I understand that the interview will be recorded using Microsoft Teams.	
I understand that my personal information and data, including audio/video recordings from the research will be securely stored and remain confidential. Only the research team will have access to this information, to which I give my permission.	
It has been explained to me what will happen to the data once the research has been completed.	
I understand that short, anonymised quotes from my interview may be used in material such as conference presentations, reports, articles in academic journals resulting from the study and that these will not personally identify me.	
I would like to receive a summary of the research findings once the study has been completed and am willing to provide contact details for this to be sent to.	
I agree to take part in the above study.	

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant's Signature

.....

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Researcher's Signature

.....

Date

.....

Appendix C

Interview questions

Introduction:

“Thank you so much for agreeing to take part in this interview. I’m _____ I am a student from the University of East London. I am here to gather information as part of my doctoral thesis and are really keen to learn more about remote consultation and attuned interactions, I know that you are the experts on the ground so can offer myself a really valuable insight.

*Please know there are no right or wrong answers to any of my questions, I am just interested to hear about your own experiences, your opinions and thoughts are all extremely valuable. Just to say again, that your participation in this interview is voluntary and **anything you say here will be treated as confidential**. The actual interview responses are only shared with the research team members and any information or quotes included in our write up will be anonymised so nobody will be able to recognise anyone. If we get to the end of the interview and there are things you feel were important that we haven’t talked about, please feel free to raise them with myself then.*

I would like to record this interview with so that I don’t miss any of your comments, is that okay? Again, I really appreciate your time and help with this interview! If at any time you don’t want to answer a question that’s fine, or if you need to stop for any reason, just let me know. Are there any questions at this stage?

General Overview (Background, Rapport Building)

1 Can you firstly tell me a little bit about yourself and your current role within the service?

2 How long have you worked in the service?

Remote Consultation

3 What is your experience of remote consultation?

Prompts: Interpersonal Interaction

VERP

4 Tell me about your experience of VERP / VIG?

Prompts: Impact on interaction with others

Remote consultation and attuned interaction

5 During online consultation, what is your experience of applying the principle of attunement?

Prompts: With visual of the principle of attunement

Have you put into practice any of the VERP / VIG training during remote consultation?

6 What else has supported attuned interaction during remote consultation?

7 Is there anything we haven't talked about today that you think might be helpful to mention?

Appendix D

Information sheet



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

An exploration of EPs' views on the impact of remote consultations on attuned interactions

Contact person: Janet Law Email: u2027463@uel.ac.uk

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part or not, please carefully read through the following information which outlines what your participation would involve. Feel free to talk with others about the study (e.g., friends, family, etc.) before making your decision. If anything is unclear or you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above email.

Who am I?

I am a doctoral student in the School of Psychology at the University of East London and am studying Educational and Child Psychology. As part of my studies, I am conducting the research you are being invited to participate in.

What is the purpose of the research?

I am conducting research into EPs' views on the impact of remote consultations on attuned interactions.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to participate in my research as someone who fits the kind of people, I am looking for to help me explore my research topic. I am looking to involve Educational Psychologists (EPs).

I emphasise that I am not looking for 'experts' on the topic I am studying. You will not be judged or personally analysed in any way and you will be treated with respect.

It is entirely up to you whether you take part or not, participation is voluntary.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to take part?

If you agree to participate you will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview with the researcher of the present study. You will be asked questions about your experience of remote consultation and Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) training.

The interview will be like having an informal chat. You will have the opportunity to tell me about your experiences, as well as being asked some prompting questions. It will be a virtual interview which will take place via Microsoft Teams, camera optional (this should take no longer than 40 minutes). The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed.

I will not be able to pay you for participating in my research, but your participation would be very valuable to develop knowledge and understanding of my research topic.

Can I change my mind?

Yes, you can change your mind at any time and withdraw without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. If you would like to withdraw from the survey, you can do so by leaving any questions unanswered or to stop completing the questionnaire altogether at any point. If you withdraw, your data will not be used as part of the research.

Separately, you can also request to withdraw your data from being used even after you have taken part in the study, provided that this request is made within 3 weeks of the data being collected (after which point the data analysis will begin, and withdrawal will not be possible).

Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

It is not anticipated that you will have been adversely affected by taking part in the research, and all reasonable steps have been taken to minimise potential harm.

Nevertheless, it is still possible that your participation – or its after-effects – may have been challenging, distressing or uncomfortable in some way. If you have been affected in any of those ways you may find the following resources/services helpful in relation to obtaining information and support:

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/> is a free UK charity supporting the mental health and wellbeing of education staff in schools, colleges and universities. Free helpline 08000 562 561. You are also very welcome to contact me or my supervisor if you have specific questions or concerns.

How will the information I provide be kept secure and confidential?

Data will be collected using interviews (not anonymous). Personal data and contact details will not be collected. Names will not be noted on transcripts, only initials. In reporting, pseudonyms will be used to protect confidentiality. No specific details of the participants will be required. All transcripts and Audio recordings will be transferred from the device to the UEL one drive on the same day that they are recorded. Audio recordings and anonymised transcripts will only be accessible to the researcher and, as required, to their research supervisors at the University of East London.

For the purposes of data protection, the University of East London is the Data Controller for the personal information processed as part of this research project. The University processes this information under the 'public task' condition contained in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Where the University processes particularly sensitive data (known as 'special category data' in the GDPR), it does so because the processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, or scientific and historical research purposes or statistical purposes. The University will ensure that the personal data it processes is held securely and processed in accordance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. For more information about how the University processes personal data please see www.uel.ac.uk/about/about-uel/governance/information-assurance/data-protection

What will happen to the results of the research?

The research will be written up as a thesis and submitted for assessment. The thesis will be publicly available on UEL's online Repository. Findings will also be disseminated to a range of audiences (e.g., academics, clinicians, public, etc.) through journal articles, conference presentations, talks, and blogs. In all material produced, your identity will remain anonymous, in that, it will not be possible to identify you personally, but if you do not want the data to be used in this way please do not complete the interview.

Anonymised research data will be securely stored for a maximum of 3 years, following which all data will be deleted.

Who has reviewed the research?

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that the Committee's evaluation of this ethics application has been guided by the standards of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

Who can I contact if I have any questions/concerns?

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Name: Janet Law Email: u2027463@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact my research supervisor Dr Janet Rowley. School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,
Email: j.e.rowley@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of School Research Ethics Committee: Dr Trishna Patel, School of Psychology,
University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.
(Email: t.patel@uel.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet

Appendix E

Debrief letter



PARTICIPANT DEBRIEF SHEET

An exploration of EPs' views on the impact of remote consultations on attuned interactions

Thank you for participating in my research study into exploring EPs' views on the impact of remote consultations on attuned interactions. This document offers information that may be relevant in light of you having now taken part.

How will my data be managed?

The University of East London is the Data Controller for the personal information processed as part of this research project. The University will ensure that the personal data it processes is held securely and processed in accordance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. More detailed information is available in the Participant Information Sheet, which you received when you agreed to take part in the research.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The research will be written up as a thesis and submitted for assessment. The thesis will be publically available on UEL's online Repository. Findings will also be disseminated to a range of audiences (e.g., academics, clinicians, public, etc.) through journal articles, conference presentations, talks, magazine articles, blogs. In all material produced, your identity will remain anonymous, in that, it will not be possible to identify you personally. We will use the audio interview to create anonymous transcripts; any identifying features, such as names or schools will be redacted, and transcripts will be labelled with pseudonym. Although the researcher and her supervisor will know the identity of participants and through recruitment, this information will not be shared.

You will be given the option to receive a summary of the research findings once the study has been completed for which relevant contact details will need to be provided.

Anonymised research data will be securely stored for a maximum of 3 years, following which all data will be deleted.

What if I been adversely affected by taking part?

It is not anticipated that you will have been adversely affected by taking part in the research, and all reasonable steps have been taken to minimise distress or harm of any kind. Nevertheless, it is possible that your participation – or its after-effects – may have been challenging, distressing or uncomfortable in some way. If you have been affected in any of those ways, you may find the following resources/services helpful in relation to obtaining information and support:

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/> is a free UK charity supporting the mental health and wellbeing of education staff in schools, colleges and universities. Free helpline 08000 562 561. You are also very welcome to contact me or my supervisor if you have specific questions or concerns.

Who can I contact if I have any questions/concerns?

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

Janet Law: u2027463@uel.ac.uk

Trainee Educational Psychologists

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact my research supervisor Dr Janet Rowley. School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,
Email: j.e.rowley@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of School Research Ethics Committee: Dr Trishna Patel, School of Psychology,
University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.
(Email: t.patel@uel.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking part in my study

Appendix F

Table 2 Literature Table

Summary table of the four papers identified through the literature search

Research Title (Author and year)	Research Purpose	Research Questions & Methodology	Participants	Main Findings
<p>Teleconsultation: The use of technology to improve evidence-based practices in rural communities Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016</p>	<p>“To examine the impact of teleconsultation designed to improve behaviour support to students living in rural communities” (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016, p.27).</p>	<p><u>Research Questions</u></p> <p>“Determine if teleconsultation could be used to implement evidence-based behavioural interventions that reduce student disruptive behaviour within the classroom” (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016, p.29).</p> <p>“To evaluate the acceptability and feasibility of the teleconsultation process as perceived by teachers” (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016, p.29).</p> <p><u>Data Collection & Methodology</u></p> <p>“The Sutter-Eyberg Student Behaviour Inventory – Revised was used as a descriptive measure of student behaviour prior to beginning the study; direct observation of disruptive</p>	<p>“Six teachers, Six students from Kindergarten through fifth grade, an advanced school psychology graduate student and four independent observers” (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016, p.29-30).</p>	<p>“(a) student disruptive behaviours improved through the implementation of an individualised behaviour support plan developed through teleconsultation” (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016, p.27).</p> <p>“(b) teachers found the teleconsultation experience acceptable and feasible” (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016, p.27).</p>

		<p>behaviours; Goal attainment scaling (GAS) was used to measure teacher perceptions of student behaviour over time; a treatment integrity checklist was used during all of the intervention observations to ensure the teacher was implementing the intervention as intended; Teleconsultation Acceptability and Feasibility Form; Consultant Evaluation Form; Behaviour Intervention Rating Scale” (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016, p.30-31).</p>		
<p>Video Interaction Guidance during the Coronavirus pandemic: Responding to a new way of working Callicott et al., 2021</p>	<p>“This paper outlines how Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) practitioners working within the author’s educational psychology service have adapted their practice to implement VIG through the use of video conferencing software” (Callicott et al., 2021, p. 33).</p>	<p><u>Research Questions</u></p> <p>“The wider purpose of this paper is to share reflections upon effective VIG practice when using video conferencing, and to contribute to discussions about how to adapt therapeutic interventions when face-to-face work is not possible” (Callicott et al., 2021, p. 33).</p> <p><u>Data Collection & Methodology</u></p> <p>“This paper will draw upon literature addressing the implementation of therapeutic</p>	<p>“A practising EP, who is also an experienced VIG practitioner, and a parent of a six-year-old child with social communication difficulties” (Callicott et al., 2021, p. 38).</p>	<p>“Challenges and benefits of implementing VIG using video-conferencing software, for example, feelings of comfort from being at home and feelings of unease about managing the technology, alongside suggestions for how VIG practitioners can enable VIG to continue when home visits are not possible” (Callicott et al., 2021, p. 33, 43).</p>

		interventions using video conferencing software, alongside the case study experience of one of the authors when implementing VIG during the Coronavirus pandemic” (Callicott et al., 2021, p. 33).		
‘Ninja’ levels of focus’: Therapeutic holding environments and the affective atmospheres of telepsychology during the COVID-19 pandemic Downing, 2021	<p>“Discuss the intersection of the social psychology concepts of therapeutic holding spaces and containment with more-than-human theory as it relates to Australia’s mental health sector during the COVID-19 crisis” (Downing, 2021, p.1).</p> <p>“Consider the ways that Australian psychologists worked to build and maintain therapeutic holding spaces and alliances over teleconferencing during this extraordinary time of social crisis and isolation (COVID)” (Downing, 2021, p.1).</p>	<p><u>Research Questions</u></p> <p>“Consider the ways that Australian psychologists worked to build and maintain therapeutic holding spaces and alliances over teleconferencing during this extraordinary time of social crisis and isolation (COVID)” (Downing, 2021, p.1).</p> <p><u>Data Collection & Methodology</u></p> <p>“Open-ended survey” (Downing, 2021, p.4).</p>	<p>“50 solo-practice psychologists” (Downing, 2021, p.4).</p>	<p>“(a) the limited viewing area of a flat screen makes it difficult for therapists to read and respond to their client’s body language and requires different forms of returned bodily gestures in order to show empathy” (Downing, 2021, p.1).</p> <p>“(b) most respondents implemented different affective and relational strategies online to ensure they were not missing important non-verbal cues from their clients” (Downing, 2021, p.1).</p> <p>“(c) the traditionally ‘safe’ therapeutic holding space created in face-to-face therapy can be easily</p>

				subverted by client-end interruptions, and concerns around safety or personal privacy in the client’s home environment” (Downing, 2021, p.1).
Exploring the Role of the Educational Psychologist during the COVID-19 Pandemic. How has Service Delivery Adapted to Online Working Practices? Moore, 2022	“This research explored the impact that the move to online working has had on the service delivery of Educational Psychology services” (Moore, 2022, p.5).	<p><u>Research Questions</u></p> <p>“(1) How has the move from in-person to online EP service delivery, necessitated by the pandemic, affected EP practice?” (Moore, 2022, p.103)</p> <p>“(2) How have the changes with online working been received by EPs and school staff?” (Moore, 2022, p.112)</p> <p>“(3) What are the losses and gains of delivering an online EP service?” (Moore, 2022, p. 116)</p> <p>“(4) What aspects of online working are most useful and acceptable to EPs and school staff?” (Moore, 2022, p.124)</p>	“23 Trainee EPs; 23 EPs; 3 teachers; 6 SENCOs; 4 Senior leaders in school and 4 others (lecturer, speech and language therapist and Senior EP)” (Moore, 2022, p.49-50).	<p>“(a) Online working proved a useful tool to ensure that service delivery has been able to continue throughout the pandemic and into the recovery phase with consultation proving a flexible tool with which to provide service” (Moore, 2022, p.5).</p> <p>“(b) EPs find online working most useful when work is perceived to be straightforward and when relationships are established. Participants reported that online working was less useful when work was more complicated and when relationships with those involved were not established” (Moore, 2022, p.5).</p> <p>“(c) The study also highlighted the loss that not</p>

				seeing the child in context brought to EP involvement. There is also evidence to suggest that online working spaces can reduce hierarchical structures and reduce power imbalances” (Moore, 2022, p.5).
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Appendix G

Synthesis Matrix

	The feasibility of remote consultation	Benefits of remote consultations	Challenges of remote consultations
Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016	<p>Individualised behaviour support plans have been developed through teleconsultation, and students' descriptive behaviours have been improved through these plans.</p> <p>The teleconsultation experience is acceptable and feasible for the teachers.</p>		
Callicott et al., 2021		<p>There are both benefits and challenges when conducting VIG through video-conferencing software. Benefits such as feelings of comfortable from being at home.</p>	<p>There are both benefits and challenges when conducting VIG through video-conferencing software. Challenges such as feelings of uncomfortable about managing the technology.</p>
Downing, 2021			<p>Challenges of telepsychology: holding space being disrupted by distractions and interruptions at the client end.</p> <p>Interacting through a flat screen makes responding and</p>

			<p>reading individual's body language difficult.</p> <p>Different types of returned bodily gestures is requested in order to show empathy.</p> <p>Different affective and relational strategies have been used to ensure that important non-verbal cues were not missing.</p>
Moore, 2022	Remote consultation act as a flexible tool for EP service delivery during the pandemic.	<p>Online working is most useful when the work is straightforward and the relationships between the psychologists and the service users have been developed.</p> <p>Online working space such as conducting consultations through remote consultation software can reduce power imbalances and hierarchical structures.</p>	<p>Online working is less useful when work was more complicated and when relationships with service users are not established.</p> <p>It is a loss that EPs cannot see the child in context during online working.</p>

Appendix H

Table 3 Critical appraisal of qualitative studies based on Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP)

CASP Question	Criteria	Callicott et al., 2021	Downing, 2021
Validity	Clear aims of the research	✓	✓
	Appropriate methodology	✓	✓
	Design appropriate to address the aims of the research	✓	✓
	Recruitment strategy is appropriate to the aims of the research	✓	✓
	Data collected addressed the research issue	✓	✓
	Relationship between researcher and participants considered		
Results	Ethical issues considered	✓	✓
	Data analysis rigorous	✓	✓
	Clear statement of findings	✓	✓
Results help locally	How valuable is the research	Offer some insights into the possibility of implementing VIG using video conferencing software.	Offer some insights into the advantages and disadvantages of online working (psychologists).

Appendix I

Table 4 Critical appraisal of a quantitative study based on Cathala and Moorley, 2018, p.101

Area of critical appraisal (quantitative)	Criteria	Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016
Believability and credibility	Title: Is it clear, what is the length, is it accurate?	✓
	Keywords: Are the key words reflective of the paper?	✓
	Author: What are the author's credentials, do they instil credibility and trustworthiness?	✓
	Abstract: Is the abstract present, and does it conform to an acceptable convention?	✓
Hypothesis, research question, aims	Hypothesis: Is the hypothesis or null hypothesis stated?	
	Research question: Is the question clear or are there clear aims and objectives?	✓
Robustness and rigour	Literature review: Is the literature used peer-reviewed, current and does it support the topic of the paper?	✓
	Sample: Is the sample appropriate, and does the size allow generalisation?	✓
	Ethics: Does the study have ethical approval and if not, is this adequately justified?	✓
Methodology	Design: Is the research design clearly stated?	✓
	Data collection: Is the data collection process clear including recruitment and consent?	✓
	Reliability and validity: Is the reliability and validity of the data collection adequately described?	✓
	Reliability and validity: Any tools been piloted or pretested?	✓

Data analysis and results	Data analysis: Did the researcher follow the steps of data analysis and is how the data was managed clear?	✓
	Results: Are the results accurate and presented in the correct format?	✓
Discussion, recommendations and conclusion	Discussion: Is there a logical flow and is the data placed in context of the study and literature review?	✓

Appendix J

Table 5 Critical appraisal of a mixed methods study based on Hong et al. 2018

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	Responses			
		Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments
Screening questions (for all types)	S1. Are there clear research questions?	✓			
	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	✓			
	<i>Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.</i>				
1. Qualitative	1.1 Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?	✓			
	1.2 Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?	✓			
	1.3 Are the findings adequately derived from the data?	✓			
	1.4 Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?	✓			
	1.5 Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?	✓			
2 Quantitative randomized	2.1 Is randomization appropriately performed?	✓			

controlled trials	2.2 Are the groups comparable at baseline?			✓	
	2.3 Are there complete outcome data?			✓	
	2.4 Are outcome assessors blinded to the intervention provided?			✓	
	2.5 Did the participants adhere to the assigned intervention?			✓	
3 Quantitative non-randomized	3.1 Are the participants representative of the target population?	✓			
	3.2 Are measurements appropriate regarding both the outcome and intervention (or exposure)?			✓	
	3.3 Are there complete outcome data?	✓			
	3.4 Are the confounders accounted for in the design and analysis?			✓	
	3.5 During the study period, is the intervention administered (or exposure occurred) as intended?			✓	
4 Quantitative descriptive	4.1 Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?	✓			
	4.2 Is the sample representative of the target population?	✓			
	4.3 Are the measurements appropriate?	✓			
	4.4 Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?			✓	
	4.5 Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?	✓			

5 Mixed methods	5.1 Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	✓			
	5.2 Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?	✓			
	5.3 Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?	✓			
	5.4 Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?			✓	
	5.5 Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?			✓	

Appendix K

Data analysis – thematic analysis

“some of my schools, I will go in and it’ll be purely in person, whereas others, it will be remote, or I organised it. And if I organised it, then it’s usually a remote consultation, because it’s more convenient for the parents”.

“It seems to be more difficult to establish attuned interactions with parents if most of the consultations are initial consultations”.

“I think her personality being a very open and kind of gregarious person< meant that we could have an attuned interaction, we could make that connection and talk deeply about things and positively”.

“Listening actively, probably the most important thing of doing a consultation”.

“I try and be very willing to work around their schedule and be very flexible, and welcoming them into the consultation, rather than saying like, this is when we’re having a consultation, and you will turn up sort of thing like, and so I think that can be really useful”.

Figure 18: An example of early notes taken during phase one of the reflexive thematic analysis

<p>I Yeah, I think it just kind of became embedded generally. So, I don't know if I specifically thought about VERP. Whilst I was doing remote consultations, but I think it's all a part of that training we've had in order to make sure we are engaging in attuned interactions. And I think naturally, as a psychologist, you're wanting to know more. And through having knowledge of what those principles are for achieving interactions, and conciliation skills and all of those kinds of things. You just you, you draw upon them because you realise that they work to help others feel comfortable to give you the information that's going to ultimately make a positive step, you'll be able to use it in some way to support everyone. So, I think it might not always be conscious. But that might be because it was so well embedded in my training, that you utilise all these skills, and we practice them with our field tutors present.</p>	<p>B2 Attuned interaction has been embedded into EPs' practice generally, and EPs usually do not specifically think about VERP during their consultations.</p> <p>B3 Maintain attuned interactions is the natural of as a psychologist.</p> <p>B4 VERP training helps EPs to embedded attuned interactions in their remote consultations</p>
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Figure 19: An example of preliminary coding

#	Part	Data item	First round of coding	Second round of coding
Q1	A3	I think some other challenges are sort of the wider body language, you don't get such a feel for that because you only see a certain part of their body. Some people who join on their phones, you only see their forehead.	It is difficult for the EPs to read the wider body language of the participants during the remote consultations.	It is difficult for the EPs to read the wider body language of the participants during the remote consultations.
	A7	I think we've all become quite skilled in remote consultations so that there isn't a huge amount that gets missed anymore.	EPs are getting used to remote consultations and the attuned interaction skills that requires.	Practice help EPs to improve their attuned interaction skills during remote consultations.
	D10	Being physically in the room, it's much easier for me to provide support emotionally, it's not I'm not going to give them a hug or anything, because that will be too much. But I think small gestures, and just being in that physical space can be really helpful for consultants when they do feel sad, or they do feel upset, or maybe even a bit triggered by what we're talking about.	Being Physically in the room can help EPs to offer emotional support for parents.	There are limitations with technology.
	G3	I would say that I think a lot of people in the virtual space and myself included, we sit there and we kind of, you know, and you're looking at yourself smiling and trying to make sure that you look warm, and it's actually really draining and to like, do something that would be really natural in another context because there's kind of a falseness to it. Which I think people find quite quite tiring.	Remote consultation can be tiring.	Remote consultations are tiring and this influence how EPs maintain attuned interactions.

Figure 20: An example table of tracking code changes

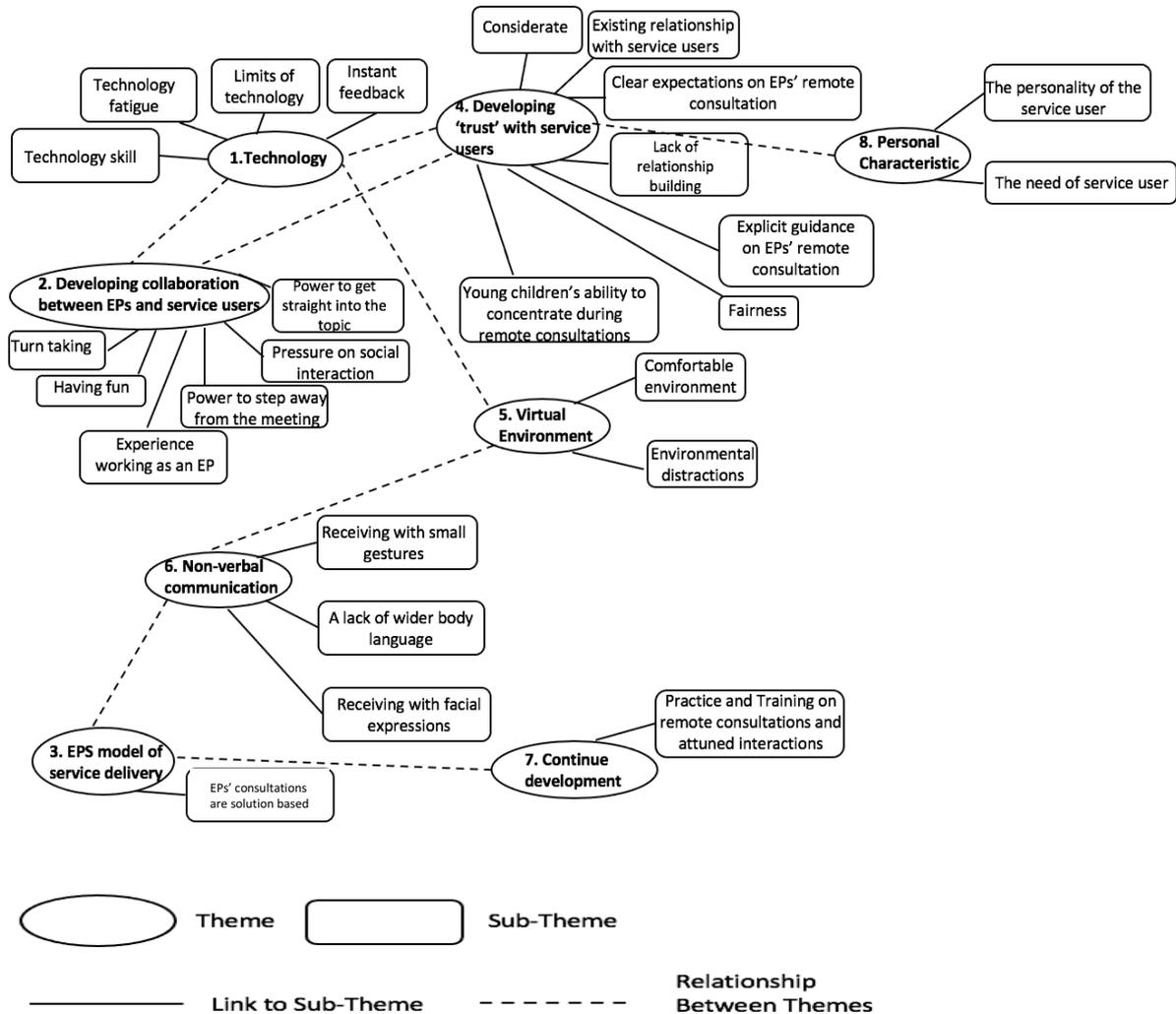


Figure 21: The initial thematic map for the first research question

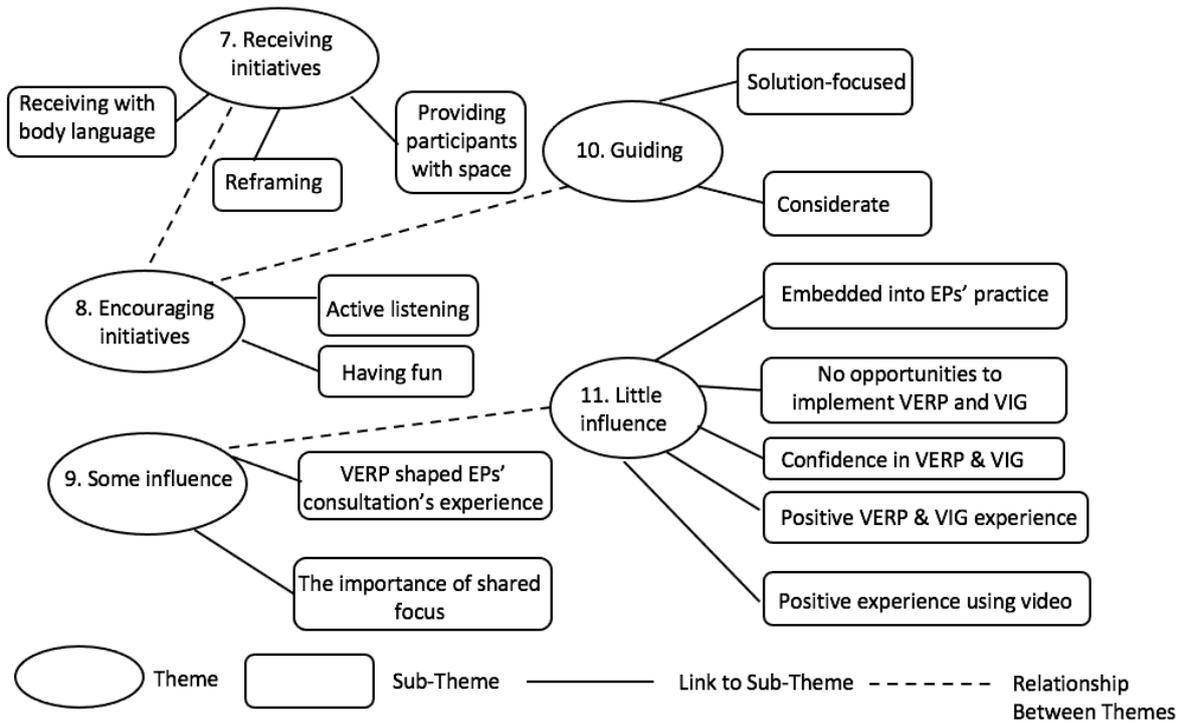


Figure 22: The initial thematic map for the second research question

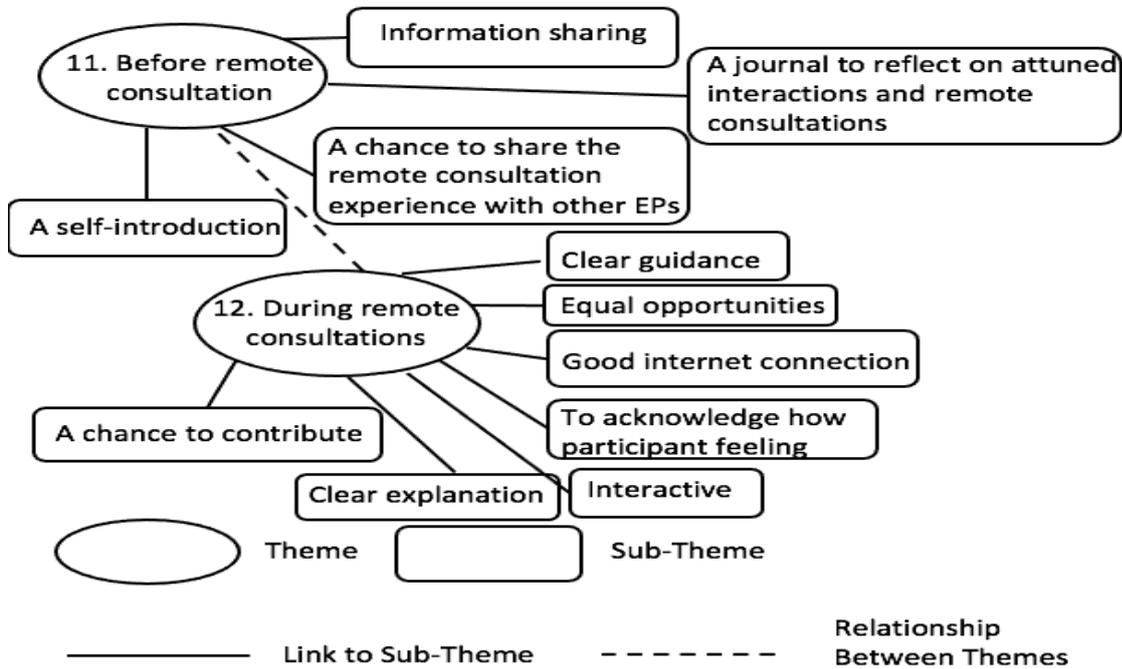


Figure 23: The initial thematic map for the third research question

Example of data extract reported illustratively

But I think some other challenges are sort of the wider body language, you don't get such a feel for that because you only see a certain part of their body. Some people who join on their phones, you only see their forehead (Olivia, Interview 1).

This participant expressed the importance of recognising the feeling of others through wider body language. This participant offered an example of she only managed to see the forehead of the individuals, during a remote meeting, and this influenced individuals' ability to stay attuned and to understand the feelings of others. This data extract presents evidence of the importance of receiving others through wider body language.

Example of data extract reported analytically

"And I've been told that I'm really good at like having a genuine warmth for the people I work with. And that's because I genuinely enjoy it. You know, it's really nice spending time with them." (Daisy, Interview 7).

Discussions around using video and VERP and VIG are generally positive. As is demonstrated in the extract above the participant shared that "I am really good at like having a genuine warmth for the people I work with" "...I genuinely enjoy it..." and "...it's really nice spending time with them...". It is possible that there are some connections with one of the primary aims of VIG and which is to enable individuals to recognise the positive areas of their communications with others and to create change, rather than being informed how to interact with others (Kennedy, 2011).

Table 7 Research question 1: Table of themes, subthemes and supporting quotes

Theme	Subtheme	Supporting quotes
Technology	Technology fatigue	<p>Sometimes I think virtual consultation could just feel quite effortful, particularly in COVID, when everybody was constantly sort of doing virtual meetings, and almost everything was happening over a screen (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>I don't know whether you find it but in when there's lots of virtual meeting, sometimes I feel a bit like not for this. But sometimes it's literally like virtual meeting virtual meeting virtual meeting. Whereas in real life, I might have driven somewhere and had a bit of decompression, you know. So, I guess that can affect being in the moment, which I do think is really linked to attunement, like really being with a person (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>If you are doing lots of virtual consultations, one thing I negotiated it with my supervisor was that I wouldn't do because at one point, I was doing quite a lot in one day, because you can just literally end the call and jump into another one (Ella, Interview 8).</p>
	Limitations of the technology	<p>Because you haven't got the same kind of visual cues in the same way, because you're looking at a tiny little person on the on the screen. So, you don't notice some of those details in the same way (Poppy, Interview 10).</p> <p>I think one of the things that's a bit less natural about like video consultations, is sometimes there might be just a tiny bit of a lag or you're not quite as it's not sometimes quite as obvious whether somebody's finished talking or something like that. And so, it's easy to jump in before somebody is finished. And I think that'sthat can really kind of switch you off or make you feel like somebody's not listening (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>And that is made worse by technical errors. So, things going wrong with the meeting. So, that can kind of also create a barrier to..... (Lily, Interview 4).</p> <p>I think you can still pick pick up on things technology allowing obviously without like cameras, freezing and those kinds of things (Luna, Interview 5).</p> <p>"I think technology can sometimes make it difficult. So, when I don't know if you've been in one of those,</p>

		<p>like a meeting, and both people are trying to speak at the same time and you are kind of online, it seems harder sometimes to kind of navigate that" (Luna, Interview 5).</p> <p>Andto sort of actively listen, I guess it doesn't always the only barrier, really, from my point of view, although you'd have to ask the participants as well, but would be issues with technology, you know, if there's like a Wi-Fi issue, and particularly with trainees who might not always have great access to Wi-Fi, because of where they're living or sharing with others (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>I've probably noticed with parents, they might have the biggest issues often with Wi Fi connection, and often are on phones. And it that doesn't seem so fair in sort of group consultation kind of context, maybe. Because sometimes they kind of, they can't really focus↑ properly (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>And, if it doesn't really work, like if Wi-Fi connection is awful, then I think it's best just to stop using that method and to try and phone call maybe or arrange to see each other in person if possible (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>I guess the waiting in this sort of leaving space is possible. But But I find it it's hard when the Wi-Fi connections not great. And you can interrupt, and you can interrupt in real life, kind of person to person (Grace, Interview 6).</p>
	<p>Degree of Experience with technology</p>	<p>I think we've all become quite skilled in remote consultations so that there isn't a huge amount that gets missed anymore. I think over time, we've developed that skill (Olivia, Interview 1).</p> <p>There are lots of issues, there's also to do with sort of technology poverty, if that if I've got the right phrase, you know, people who actually don't have access to things (Poppy, Interview 10).</p> <p>If people are already used to the platform, that helps enormously. So, you know, nowadays, all my discussions with staff in schools that are on teams, they all use it, they all have experience of it..... Right at the beginning, people didn't know how to connect, they didn't know how to use the different features (Poppy, Interview 10).</p>

		<p>At first the technology I had, and the team's sort of like online version, there were times when you couldn't even see everybody you were talking to, so you were trying to run a consultation, but you could only see the person that was talking. So, if somebody didn't say anything, it was hard to almost notice whether they were paying attention and sort of draw them in kind of thing. And I think it also affected the sort of relationship building (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>Maybe parents might feel less confident to say their views if they're not used to virtual consultation, or maybe some people might say stuff so more confident to say stuff that they might not say, in real life, if you will have to kind of be in the room together when you are finished (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>I think that's just useful that we, I suppose, recognise that this will be a way of working. I imagine it'll be part of my practice now (Luna, Interview 5).</p> <p>I would say with young people, I wonder whether and I have asked them, it might actually be a preferred means of contact in terms of interpersonal communication, and I'm just thinking of a case sort of in the pandemic, and it was a young person who was having quite a tough time and was sort of in his bedroom. And sort of quite anxious boy, and he, he would not have let me into his space to talk face-to-face whereas he felt that he was able to sort of talk to me if I think it was Teams, his mum was sort of next door kind of listening but not ... not in there. And I think actually, we may be connected better because he was really into computers, and he sort of liked that (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>With children, I found that it was almost like entering into their interpersonal space that they're really familiar with. So, they actually had a lot of skills knowledge I felt of virtual interaction, and they seemed quite comfortable in that space. And I know, in terms of attunement, hmm we actually had quite a lot of fun (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>I think it was probably quite hard for some assume that parents had good technology. So, I think it was important for schools to ensure that the parents didn't feel. I suppose not included if they didn't have the right equipment (Sofia, Interview 9).</p>
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		<p>I think somethings were limited working remotely I wonder if it's more successful with the adult than the child because of the kind of adults can manage possibly..... the screen time they are sitting still, and talking to a new person in this, whereas if you're with a child in school, I think you might be with them with their friends to start with (Sofia, Interview 9).</p>
Relationship	Levelling out the power dynamic	<p>I suppose with a phone consultation, there is that levelling of that power dynamic, because now you're having a phone conversation, or you are having a video conversation, and potentially, you're at home (Tom, Interview 2).</p> <p>And the reason I think that's good for attuned interactions is because you're maybe more present, and there's less, you know, kind of stepping back in a way from that moment of interaction and thinking about the context around the person that's in the interaction (Daisy, Interview 7).</p> <p>There are some parents and children who still prefer to work in that way, which I think is really interesting. I think. I've noticed that for some children, it is kind of balances out the power a little bit because I think one child said to me that they could just turn it turn it off anytime they wanted, which I think was really well, it's a really powerful statement, I think, because it shows that by us being online that they could choose to end that in a more comfortable way, if it wasn't kind of it's just more authentic consent, really, I think (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>And so yeah, with parents, I think there's definitely that and also that power, again, I've been able to turn the mic off, turn the camera off when they needed (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>I feel like there wasn't this additional worry or expectation of what (.) else they might have needed from me, but actually just a, what's the word a lost in the process almost, because that was a lot more about about that process than anything else that they might want from the EP, so I think it may be a bit more present because we were actually having a try harder to be very much focused on the dialogue and focused on each other..... (Ella, Interview 8).</p>
	Existing relationships with the service users	<p>It depended on whether you had like a relationship with somebody before working with them virtually. Yeah, and it gets much easier if you already know someone and they know you. And, they can almost particularly feel</p>

		<p>them working with parents, they can almost kind of refer to the fact that we've worked together before and that we've got a relationship kind of thing to try and build a bit of trust (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>I guess, already having like that prior relationship, where you've met in real life, perhaps because you kind of knows each other, you know each other, like how you communicate. So, you're more able to leave space when you need to kind of do that gentle questioning and guiding and it's more likely to go down better (Lily, Interview 4).</p> <p>Kind of moving further receiving initiative in developing attuned interactions. I again, I think that that is possible online. I think I think I do do it. I think like I said, I think it is easier perhaps when you I find it may be easier when there's some kind of existing relationship there (Luna, Interview 5).</p> <p>I think it depends it depends on the relationship that I have, if we're sort of moving further down, and looking at the bottom ones The deepening of the discussion, and the guiding, sometimes can feel a little bit more difficult. Attuned interrupting is a favourite phrase of mine (Poppy, Interview 10).</p> <p>And I find sometimes with parents who it can be difficult to keep on track because they view you as someone that they can offload to. And for some parents, it can be a really big thing meeting the educational psychologist, even though I kind of forget that, as a professional, that it can be more difficult to kind of guide the conversation about the information that I need because it's more difficult to have those cues (Lily, Interview 4).</p>
	<p>A lack of rapport building</p>	<p>I think one of the things about remote consultation that I think I'd be my practice is the kind of missing the little bit before the meetings and the after the meetings. So, for example, if I'm kind of going to someone's home, or going to someone's place of work, or school or an office, what have you, there'll be a bit of small talk naturally, before you kind of sit down to have the conversation, like, you know, like you offer a drink or you know, whatever it is you check in how someone's doing. Afterwards, as well, when the kind of meeting finished, you might walk to the same place together, just kind of, again, close the conversation a little (Luna, Interview 5).</p>

		<p>When I'm working with schools I haven't worked to before like SENCo might come and meet you before, you might see the parent in reception. And you can do a bit of that kind of incidental, like, Oh, how's your morning been? Or I like your shoe, just that kind of stuff where they can build a bit of trust with you. But I think virtually, you tend to just wait for everyone to get there and then sort of jump in? And I don't know, I feel like people were a bit more like not as invested a bit more like who who are you, like we're just here for a purpose rather than that kind of more like holistic approach (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>In terms of, I think, something that I do find quite hard, but I guess it can happen in person as well, as is knowing what happens when you leave the consultation, and sort of how is the person and like, if it's a trainee, for example, if you're having supervision, and you think things are okay, and then you press leave, and then you don't sort of, you know, that kind of incidental stuff where you're kind of about to leave, but you sort of walked down the stairs together, and they're like, Oh, actually, just one more thing. You know, like, so is that last minute. Same with teachers (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>When I'm online, there's almost a pressure of like, coming up with something and needing to say something a little bit more, because people can't physically see that you're interested (Lily, Interview 4).</p> <p>I think online that can feel different because sometimes you kind of adjust, we've got an hour, we need to get stuck into the conversation. And we'll just both click off when we're done (Luna, Interview 5).</p>
<p>The EPS model of service delivery</p>	<p>The different types of consultations</p>	<p>There were also pressures in our service to focus just on statutory assessments at times. So, I have a bit of experience of both statutory assessments being virtual consultations, as well as some SLA work that was delivered, but that was kind of on and off, depending on the demands - the statutory demands (Olivia, Interview 1).</p> <p>I tried to really engage and really think about things. But of course, parents and teachers are all different. They'll have different personalities. They'll have different ways of approaching things and I think that's where and the problem is you can never know these things beforehand, because my consultations are usually initial consultations (Tom, Interview 2).</p>

		<p>So, sometimes, and there's been a few occasions where I felt that having the remote consultation, there is a bit of a gap between us, I'm not able to feel as connected as usual with the other consultee (Tom, Interview 2).</p> <p>And probably during that first year of kind of remote working, our service was mostly doing sort of statutory work. So, there was a lot there were lots of kind of statutory information gathering meetings, which, because we weren't doing as much other work we tried, we tried to use as a bit of a consultation, where possible, to try and do some of that problem solving and get to what the sort of provision could look like (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>I guess it can be harder to build those relationships, especially with parents. I find with statutory work, so writing psychological advices, when you're doing the information gathering, I think it's easier for parents to join virtually because they can be at work and they can take a break, they don't have to take a day off, which kind of maybe helps them feel a bit more at ease. But I think it's difficult, it can be difficult to kind of show those that like attuned interactions, I guess (Lily, Interview 4).</p> <p>I think, am I actually making time to do those things. And if I'm doing statutory work, so writing those psychological advices, I'm information gathering, for the most part is how I look at it. So, I'm not going to be really doing that guiding because we're not trying to get to, we're not problem solving (Lily, Interview 4).</p> <p>It's something when I'm picturing how I use attuned interactions. A lot of it is within problem solving, kind of consultations. And those are normally face to face with school staff in school. So, it's making me wonder how much I use it online, which is probably not as much as I should (Lily, Interview 4).</p> <p>The purpose of online doesn't tend to be problem solving so much. Trying to think if I did have if I've done anything recently. And I think, I think it's like the active listening (Lily, Interview 4).</p> <p>And, and maybe also depends on how many people are on the screen. Because if it's one-on-one consultation, I wonder if it's a bit easier to sort of, comment, like, Oh, I wonder how you're feeling or or somebody, you</p>
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		<p>might notice something in their eye, or they might lean forward or something (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>That can be difficult when there's lots of people. I found it harder to manage the the nonverbal communication within this space. So, sometimes you'll be in the room of someone and you'll just say you'll you kind of say Oh, I'm feeling a lot of anxiety, you know, I'm wondering if that's what you know, the child is experiencing? (Daisy, Interview 7).</p> <p>I worked in a service that was a consultation service delivery model. So, I'd say 90% of my role in that service was delivering consultation. And by consultation, I mean, kind of a psychological process consultation in terms of helping people and feel empowered to solve their own problems and solve additional problems they face in the future, and really understand the dynamics and the conversation of how narratives are being constructed about certain people and what the constructions of the problem might be (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>I don't feel like that was made as obvious to me as it is that actually they do want a bit of information giving. And they do want you to kind of I don't go into consultations anymore without a few things in mind that I can suggest because otherwise, you just get to the end, and they're like, Oh, what should we do? (Daisy, Interview 7)</p>
	<p>Clear expectations of EPs' remote consultations</p>	<p>I think everything about virtual consultations just make trying to make it as kind of explicit as possible and make sure there's not too much kind of unsaid because I think that can sort of fester a bit in like a virtual space (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>I think some school stuff, and parents obviously would much prefer you to be in school, serving the child and working with them. And so, I think making sure everyone had a clear understanding of the expectations, and the logistics are probably really helpful (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>So, I suppose what I always do at the beginning of any consultation is to talk about how the consultation will go. And I would always explain that, although we're interacting, there might be times when I look away from them to write something down. So, I think by explaining that, you know, that's important to know why you, you</p>

		<p>wouldn't perhaps be fully attentive, seeming attuned all the time (Sofia, Interview 9).</p> <p>With the different participants is maybe just being open about the fact that it's virtual and discussing maybe together what limitations might be and what strengths might be and sort of asking people how they feel about it (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>I think encouraging initiatives is really hard. I think that people do a lot of trying to weigh and people are thinking really hard about don't interrupt them, or, you know, I think you have to be a lot more explicit in a digital space that you want their initiative like, Oh, I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on that, rather than almost trying to notice them, because you can't pick up on those phatic cues so easily, you need to be more explicit (Daisy, Interview 7).</p>
Experience	Experience of working as an EP	<p>I think it's really honed our consultation skills because it's likely that your involvement was mainly based on consultationattuned interactions..... I think it's more similar than you might have thought before (Sofia, Interview 9).</p> <p>The younger the trainees, the younger EPs said, there's a big difference between remote there's a big difference between in person you don't feel as connected. But interestingly, the much older much more experienced EPs said that there wasn't that much of a difference. So that was interesting for me to kind of reflect on so perhaps it's more about your skills as an EP your skills of consultation, your interpersonal skills that you bring that's the important thing, and it's less about perhaps the medium in which it is conducted (Tom, Interview 2).</p> <p>When I was training, sometimes my supervisor would watch the consultation as well. And I think it was a combination of her being way more experienced and knowledgeable, but also being kind of like an onlooker, she could often sort of notice, oh, that person was kind of not as engaged or this person looked a bit upset (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>In terms of interpersonal skills, it's really interesting, because some of the people I've never met in real life, but we had met on the screen, in supervision. And I think, pretty much..... I felt able to connect almost as well on the screen than in person. I guess the, I think it's possible to sort of attune to somebody fairly well on a</p>

		<p>screen, and in supervision sort of context, to kind of leave kind of pauses (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>I would still I don't think I've changed, it'd be really interesting because I've not looked at myself on a recording of a consultation that's remote. That I would hope that I am very good at showing the earlier building blocks of attuned interactions (Poppy, Interview 10).</p>
<p>The virtual environment</p>	<p>A comfortable environment</p>	<p>If the EPs is not had to get up at seven o'clock to drive an hour and a half to the school for an hour's meeting, then they are probably able to be a bit better at their job (Daisy, Interview 7).</p> <p>I think with parents, I think work with parents, the I think the interpersonal interaction was kind of enhanced in terms of they offered kind of a bit more or the neutral basis (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>I have noticed when the parent enters a room and you are like, do we shake hands? What's the what's the advocate here, whereas online I felt, I got a feeling that parents were a little bit more comfortable because there was less of that. And less of demand for advocate, I think? in terms of who is this person? How do I interact with them? How do I interact with the professional in this space, and actually, they were just able to kind of click on and we were, it was more about the conversation than anything else that was going on (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>You do an in-person consultation, you might be in the school, and parents might come to that consultation already feel a certain way about school. And it adds a level of contextual complexity. And whereas when it's virtual, like I say, it is really about being present in that moment of the dialogue, and enjoying that dialogue between each other and kind of that, almost like a back and forth tennis match of give, given and receive and each other with, with questions and responses and humour as well (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>The only thing that I haven't spoken about is when I've worked with autistic children. And when I did my research with them, one thing that they mentioned was that the virtual interaction really was a lot more accessible for them. And it, kind of eased the social interaction. And it made me think about attunement principles in a kind of an adapted way really in that actually. And I'm just, I've got the attunement principles in front of me, actually (Ella, interview 8).</p>

		<p>I think So So maybe that platform was was better for him than in the face to face..... I think he may be seemed more comfortable (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>I kind of prefer virtual consultation in some senses, if I'm facilitating because you can sort of I don't know how to phrase this. I kind of in kind of....., I don't want to use the word manage or control, because it doesn't sound very nice, but sort of structure things a bit better, because you can, sort of really, it can maybe enhance how democratic the spaces because you can sort of say that people can be on mute, and then someone can raise their hand and then you can sort of suggest that they that you sort of receiving their hand up, and then they they're sort of talking and you can receive that and deepen the discussion (Grace, Interview 6).</p>
	Environment distractions	<p>When you're talking, you're not really sure if anyone's listening, or sometimes you're the one that's trying to check an email while listening to something. And I think you have to almost exaggerate your cues to show that you are listening (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>I think I quite like virtual consultation. And I know that it's sort of a two-way process or it's about what are the people in the in the participatory kind of process prefer but I actually feel that I can sometimes attune with people more than if I'm in a busy space and thinking of other things and there's children running around and like I just think if if there are some practical things, then actually that could still definitely still be attunement and you can still build relationships and move forward" (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>Always really conscious, for example, in remote consultations and things to switch like emails, close it off completely. Or actually, I've stopped things from popping up on my computer, because, I mean, there is nothing worse you can tell when someone kind of glancing at something else (Luna, Interview 5).</p> <p>And you know, things like, for example, the lighting where you are, appears to suddenly change, and every now and then your face becomes in semi darkness, and then you come lights up again. So, if you were talking to me about something really, really difficult and painful as a potential client, I might have missed some of those cues (Poppy, Interview 10).</p>
Non-verbal communication	Receiving with small gestures	<p>I think I've probably really tried to kind of lean in and like, make sure I'm looking at the camera. And even</p>

		<p>though you can't really make eye contact with people trying to almost say like, oh, I'm listening, I'm looking at you in the top corner or kind of, I guess just more signposting of the fact that you're listening (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>I think it's still achievable in remote consultation. Like, like, for example, we're speaking now, and you're just not nodding, and you'll give me X. And it helps. It's all those kinds of things that help (Luna, Interview 5).</p> <p>It could be easier because you literally just see someone's face all the time. And so, you can, you can see your own face, too. So, you can see how you look, what kind of facial expressions you are making, what gestures you are making, it's almost it is real time feedback. So, you can kind of adjust how you are responding or appearing (Olivia, Interview 1).</p> <p>I'm working with a parent who's very upset, and he's having a difficult time, or who has experienced some very difficult things in their past and talking about the difficulties of the child brings those things up. It might be like, they're dyslexic, their child has a literacy difficulty, and they weren't supported, but the child now is being supported. Being physically in the room, it's much easier for me to provide support emotionally, it's not I'm not gonna give them a hug or anything, because that will be too much. But I think small gestures, and just being in that physical space can be really helpful for consultants when they do feel sad, or they do feel upset, or maybe even a bit triggered by what we're talking about (Tom, Interview 2).</p> <p>An angle where in person consultation has that benefit because you can be physically present and just a small thing of like handing someone a tissue or like a tap on the arm or something like a soft touch on the arm or something that can be a small gesture like that can be quite powerful for showing that you care and that you're empathising with them. And so, I think that could be something that (Tom, Interview 2).</p> <p>Being physically in the room, it's much easier for me to provide support emotionally, it's not I'm not gonna give them a hug or anything because that will be too much. But I think small gestures, and just being in that physical space can be really helpful for consultants when they do feel sad, or they do feel upset, or maybe</p>
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		even a bit triggered by what we're talking about (Tom, Interview 2).
	A lack of wider body language	<p>I think you can still receive initiatives by looking at facial expressions, I guess..... Obviously, you can't see sort of the whole body. But I wonder if it's about being explicit about that (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>But I think some other challenges are sort of the wider body language, you don't get such a feel for that because you only see a certain part of their body. Some people who join on their phones, you only see their forehead (Olivia, Interview 1).</p>
	Having fun	<p>I use things like a virtual classroom, and they just, I remember that there is one boy just really laughing that we were using characters on the on on this shared space (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>I think you can have fun and often quite a bit of fun on-screen during the consultation might be around kind of how inept people are on screen and like, changing the backgrounds and you know, you can't really you can't see the wider stuff, though. Like, you can sort of comment on people's backgrounds, like what's in the house. And that's a nice way of connecting, maybe having a bit of fun (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>I think probably using a bit of humour, particularly like if people were at home and like their cat wandered in, or I don't know, you could see that (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>If you with a mum or something, and there's a little one kind of playing in their sort of looking, or there's a dog or something like that, that can kind of just make it a bit more of a relaxed space (Grace, Interview 6).</p>

Table 8 Research question 2: Table of themes, subthemes and supporting quotes

Theme	Subtheme	Supporting quotes
Receiving initiatives	Receiving with body language	<p>Looking for initiatives, yeah, looking for ways in which the other person is trying to give you information is super important. That could be like through the language that they use the body language, like you can quite often see, especially in a video call, if someone is becoming a bit tired or a bit like you're losing them a little bit, or there's something they want to say they quite often show that in their face (Tom, Interview 2).</p> <p>Really important receivable by body language. I think that's also quite important. I will quite often, this is something I picked up before but during my training, I started when I was having video conversations, I started getting loads of thumbs ups. So instead of saying stuff, I'd be like, oh, like, oh, like I smile loads and that sort of thing. And I don't know, I think that's well received (Tom, Interview 2).</p> <p>And yeah, just showing interest being attentive. And I think that relates to probably how I am as a person and everything. I've kind of, you know, trained and thought of as well, but I'm even I'm conscious of that in any interaction, to be honest, is to try and pay attention to whoever I'm with (Luna, Interview 5).</p> <p>What What is quite interesting is I wonder whether the friendly posture and the is a bit more exaggerated on a screen, like, I was fitted I facilitate to sessions at uni or during the pandemic, and that was all virtual (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>I don't know sometimes I guess it's a bit harder to feel kind of the energy that you might get in a session with a group of people in a consultation or a group of trainees in a training session or something. So, I'm wondering whether I'm maybe it's a bit forced my friendly posture, when I'm doing consultation online (Grace, Interview 6).</p>

	<p>Reframing</p>	<p>I probably did do a bit more scaffolding of people's responses. So, because it feels in a way, not very concrete, or being in like a virtual space. So, sometimes tried to share my screen and use, like a template of the multi element model or something. Maybe type into it, or direct people's attention to it, to try and just give us a bit more structure and, like draw people back in, I suppose, and get a bit more of that feeling of sort of collaboration (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>And because actually, it's about thinking about what that person might need from that interaction, which is I think that reframing is a really key part of my practice as an EP. So, it's actually offered a framework to do that (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>That can get kind of ties in with scaffolding as well that you can use your psychological knowledge to ask questions or give promise not to lead them because you didn't want to put words in their mouth. But we but sometimes there can be something that we want to talk about. But not tell them about if that makes sense. So, it could be like, so I know that the students I'm working with has had difficulties with harmful sexual behaviour. And so, we can ask questions in a way that kind of lead us to that topic. So, they can then talk about it and give their views rather than me putting words in their mouth (Tom, Interview 2).</p>
<p>Encouraging initiatives</p>	<p>Active listening</p>	<p>It's sort of those active listening skills, isn't it that are relevant to the attuned interactions, and that these are the things that I try and incorporate into all of my consultations and interactions with colleagues, with staff members at school with parents (Olivia, Interview 1).</p> <p>Yeah, the listening and waiting, which is so much part of our job as far as if I was to define our job. Sometimes I think it's just sitting with people, you know, metaphorically sitting, and just listening to what what they want to talk about or get off their chest, a lot of it is people don't have an understanding of what you know, they might</p>

		<p>be a bit scared about coming to consultation (Sofia, Interview 9).</p> <p>Listening actively, probably the most important thing of doing a consultation. And this is true for in person and remote, especially remote, because that's, especially if it's like a video call or a phone call or something. That's what you are then just exclusively doing, you're just listening to them. And you're really listening to what they're saying. And you're picking out on the words that they choose and words that they say because sometimes or quiet often, there'll be times where they'll use language (Tom, Interview 2).</p>
Guiding	Solution-focused	<p>So that's a lot of reflecting back and using scaling, and checking in, which I guess fits with the principles of attuned interaction quite nicely..... Yeah, and I've just reflecting now that it's really difficult to do (Lily, Interview 4).</p> <p>This was about a year or two ago, where it was getting really heated. And they had to say, Okay, let's pause for a minute. Let's take five minutes let's go outside, have a breath of fresh air, and then come back to this, to then go on, because it was just getting to the point where it wasn't helpful anymore, it was just kind of the consultation was breaking down. And so, he paused it, and then they came back, and then it was more productive. So, I think that could be naming that conflict and allowing, ensuring that the consultation didn't go completely off the rails (Tom, Interview 2).</p>
	Being considerate	<p>I think, you know, have giving, like, extra turns and that kind of thing. Checking that other people are understanding you, you know, I always try to do that. To be honest, in my VIG practice, that's something that I'm trying to get better at (Daisy, Interview 7).</p> <p>Also, how I then support others in their interactions with other people, too, in terms of school staff, and parents. So, I think it's really helped me slow down and ask questions that are more about people.....</p>

		<p>like reflecting on their own interactions and things like that (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>I'm trying to think of an example that I've done recently about attunement, but I try and explain words of attunement in my consultations too have have, we actually really sat down and followed that child's lead and shown a genuine interest and guided and supported that child by offering choices and seeing which way they go (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>It takes it away from that it's about kind of the two, two or more people in interaction with each other and how they both have a role to play in that rather than it just being necessarily all about the child who needs to change (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>Since doing the VIG training, it helped me think about relationships in a more in-depth way and the to the roles that both the child and adult play and also the impact that can have on the child's behaviour and in ways that we can attune to people in a more authentic way in terms of my practice, but also in the practice that I'm supporting when working with parents and teachers too (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>But I guess as EPs we were in different contexts all the time, and we're adapting to sort of different things and trying to be as person centred as possible (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>I think sometimes my focus, I have to think carefully about that deepening that discussion. And gently moving people on, I think that's where I get bit stuck is sort of if someone's talking lots and lots and lots, and I can't sort of jump in and go. Oh, just sort of wanting to focus a little bit more on this and kind of moving them away. But yeah, no, I think I use these principles every day in my work (Olivia, Interview 1).</p> <p>Yeah, giving the other person space is so important. And quite often that does mean</p>
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		<p>asking a question waiting for a response. But also, when another person when another person has been speaking for a while not immediately responding, letting the silence hang, and nine times out of 10, the other person will continue talking, they'll take that as a sign that they can continue talking, and they'll fill that space up (Tom, Interview 2).</p>
<p>Little influence</p>	<p>Subconscious</p>	<p>I hadn't consciously connected up what I know about attuned interactions and online consultation because I was sort of would hope that my interactions are pretty attuned anyway (Poppy, Interview 10).</p> <p>I think it just kind of became embedded generally. So, I don't know if I specifically thought about VERP. Whilst I was doing remote consultations, but I think it's all a part of that training we've had in order to make sure we are engaging in attuned interactions. And I think naturally, as a psychologist, you're wanting to know more. And through having knowledge of what those principles are for achieving interactions, and conciliation skills and all of those kinds of things (Olivia, Interview 1).</p> <p>Suppose if we think of attuned interactions, which is, I think VIG. It's like what we do and a little bit more besides. So, I think all that attuned kind of framework that you showed there is very much part of my practice (Sofia, Interview 9).</p> <p>I think that a lot of this knowledge is tacit knowledge, rather than kind of declarative or procedural knowledge. I think the more time you spend being an EP and training to be an EP, the more that it becomes like second nature, rather than I'm explicitly doing this, you know, you just find yourself doing these things (Daisy, Interview 7).</p> <p>I think that a lot of this knowledge is tacit knowledge, rather than kind of declarative or procedural knowledge. I think the more time you spend being an EP and training to be an EP, the more that it becomes like second nature, rather than I'm explicitly doing this,</p>

		<p>you know, you just find yourself doing these things (Daisy, Interview 7).</p> <p>Guiding? Yeah, I'm not I think I probably do a lot of guiding; I think this is in a consultation, you naturally probably are stacked towards the end of that. Those principles anyway because although we say, you know, you're in a consultation, and, you know, just go with the flow and like they need to feel listened to and, you know, all of that you think there should be all of that early stuff (Daisy, Interview 7).</p> <p>I'm not having to hold in mind the structure that I need to get through because there is an inherent structure to a consultation to get something out of it. So, I'm not having to hold that in mind, which enables me to be able to think a bit more about how I'm being and how other people are being and actually what they're saying (Daisy, Interview 7).</p> <p>I think a lot of EPs feel this way, who do VIG that it makes you a better educational psychologist because it's being more thoughtful about how we're interacting with parents especially? (Lily, Interview 4).</p> <p>I think it just kind of became embedded generally. So, I don't know if I specifically thought about VERP. Whilst I was doing remote consultations, but I think it's all a part of that training we've had in order to make sure we are engaging in attitude interactions. And I think naturally, as a psychologist, you're wanting to know more. And through having knowledge of what those principles are for achieving interactions, and conciliation skills and all of those kinds of things (Olivia, Interview 1).</p> <p>I think it was just so embedded throughout our course that I'm continuously thinking of those things. And trying to put them into practice, too..... (Olivia, Interview 1).</p> <p>I hadn't consciously connected up what I know about attuned interactions and online</p>
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		<p>consultation because I was sort of would hope that my interactions are pretty attuned anyway (Poppy, Interview 10).</p> <p>I think because of my experience and skill set, I'm hoping that it is. I'm not I can do it with it's an unconscious competence. It's something that I can I hopefully, reveal, and show and demonstrate without consciously having to think about it. It's part of how I interact with people in my work (Poppy, Interview 10).</p> <p>It's kind of an organic thing. It wasn't a conscious thing. Oh, I need to make sure I'm, I'm thinking about attuned interactions when remote working (Poppy, Interview 10).</p> <p>Suppose if we think of attuned interactions, which is, I think VIG. It's like what we do and a little bit more besides. So, I think all that attuned kind of framework that you showed there is very much part of my practice (Sofia, Interview 9).</p> <p>I suppose the aspect is that you might be a bit more of a facilitator because of your role. But I think all that attuned interactions are very much there as part of practice (Sofia, Interview 9).</p>
	<p>No opportunities to implement VERP and VIG</p>	<p>But it's that kind of classic thing of it was great when I did it on the training, but I haven't had the time or the space to be able to implement it into my work just yet (Tom, Interview 2).</p> <p>I feel so fortunate as an EP with the current context, around our role. And all of the pressure with statutory advice, I feel so fortunate that I work in a service, where they make time for people to do stuff like that, you know, and where I'm able to spend time going to a house and working with the family over time, I feel really fortunate (Daisy, Interview 7).</p> <p>I think I do because I try and use it all the time. But I guess it's more, it's more difficult. And sometimes I just feel under pressure to kind of solve the meeting, solve the</p>

		<p>problem, decide the next action, and then move on to the next thing (Lily, Interview 4).</p> <p>And I wonder if I didn't work in my service, where it so easily supports VIG how accessible it would be. And especially if you train somewhere like X where they use COMOIRA and that's it. That's how they train with the principle of attunement for the internet (Lily, Interview 4).</p>
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Table 9 Research question 3: Table of themes, subthemes and supporting quotes

Theme	Subtheme	Supporting quotes
Before remote consultations	Information sharing	<p>I might have sent a list of things that we might talk about beforehand. It just feels it It's more structured, which is not necessarily a bad thing. It could be quite a good thing (Poppy, Interview 10).</p> <p>Send in some of the principles and thinking about, I've not done this, but it's something I could think about doing and thinking about kind of ways that I might be responding to them, and using it as a bit of a modelling framework to see kind of what helped them feel comfortable? (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>It might be how we talk, it might even be using some of the VIG resources and looking at how we interact ... I think probably of the time↑, I mean, I'm just thinking, sometimes, we might bring things in like if it is with a parent and a child (Sofia, Interview 9).</p>
	A self-introduction	<p>I send them ... stuff about me before I could make one of those one-page profiles, you know, with emojis and stuff, which I think helps (Daisy, Interview 7).</p> <p>I send like maybe a video of myself beforehand or like a one-page profile. And so that when I came on the screen there, you've maybe already seen the way I interact or read a little bit about me (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>An introductory resource that I share with young people. And I can share something similar with parents as well, which gives them a guide of what to expect, it's got my picture on it, so that they're kind of they know who they're expecting to see (Olivia, Interview 1).</p> <p>So, I've had an opportunity to introduce myself, see what the purpose of the consultation is, and give a sense of who I am a little bit that like (Tom, Interview 2).</p>
During remote consultations	Clear guidance	<p>I would say shared conversations about what attunement means with ... with the</p>

		<p>people you're working with, because sometimes I am guilty of using the word attunement because it means so much to me, but maybe not sharing from the outset what that is with the people I'm working with, and so using kind of achievement frameworks and things like that to reflect on, interactions together (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>I think some of that preparation work is really important, and with staff as well, I think it's really helpful to talk through again, preparation work, even if it's just a telephone call to talk through what consultation actually means (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>Whereas if you kind of do some work beforehand, of just chatting through what I mean by consultation, and what they hope for a conversation. And I think that helps kind of the most common into that space ready to be reflective together (Ella, Interview 8).</p> <p>Making sure you're really clear about what's going to happen, because for some people, you know, remote consultations, are quite scary, some people find it very uncomfortable (Olivia, interview 1).</p> <p>Laying the groundwork for what the consultation will be about, you know, it's just a subtle, this is the things we're going to talk about, and also giving an indication of what you're like (Tom, Interview 2).</p>
	<p>Equal opportunities</p>	<p>I guess trying to just think of things from the participants point of view of like, actually, would they like a little break or sometimes like, I think I'd be bored if I didn't have a chance to say anything. So maybe even if people don't have specific things they want to contribute, I think if ... if you can get everybody to say something early on, they're probably more likely to then say something else later down the line (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>Management of multiple people in a remote consultation, because you're not in a room there. They find can find it difficult to pick up</p>

		<p>on those little subtle cues of when someone wants to talk. And so, sort of managing that to make sure that you hear from everyone. And that you can sort of say, Oh, if Hold on a second, I think Susan or you know, whoever just has something that she wants to add (Olivia, Interview 1).</p> <p>I try and be very willing to work around their schedule and be very flexible (Tom, Interview 2).</p>
	<p>Good internet connections</p>	<p>Eah, I think that's probably the main thing and then just having a good grasp of the technology, like, silly, but that just has such an impact if things are laggy or someone can't hear or it just completely kind of ruins like the flow of it, I suppose. I guess like attunement is kind of flow (Alice, Interview 3).</p> <p>If it doesn't really work, like if Wi-Fi connection is awful, then I think it's best just to stop using that method and to try and phone call maybe or arrange to see each other in person if possible (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>And definitely I've said like Wi-Fi, I would say that's the main thing. Wi Fi and whether people have a laptop or a phone (Grace, Interview 6).</p> <p>I think other things that are really psychologically based on having a good internet connection. Having the technology there to make it as efficient as it can be. I think it's also important to have little scripts in mind, related to the technology (Olivia, Interview 1).</p>
	<p>Interactive</p>	<p>I think sometimes like you just had ... like having something shared to look at. Again, I think that relating the in-person consultation as much kind of having a shared tool to help us prompt our discussion (Luna, Interview 5).</p> <p>I do really like about virtual consultations is ... like you how he shared the screen. And quite like using like getting a document on the screen and sort of putting things on it</p>

		<p>together. So, it's like a shared space, where it's kind of you can kind of take notes as you're talking or get if somebody can say, oh, have you heard of this? (Grace, Interview 6)</p> <p>I've prepared kind of a framework that we're going to follow and I've pre-populated some things that I've screen shared, kind of sometimes I've done it like on a PowerPoint, and I've made notes on screen sharing as we've gone through (Daisy, Interview 7).</p> <p>Certain types of interactions, and whether actually, like, for example, like offering choices and turn taking in attunement, that can be adapted virtually in ways that might be a little bit more accessible for children with additional needs. For example, I did like a virtual sorting card task together virtually in a consultation with an autistic child (Ella, Interview 8).</p>
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Appendix L

Risk assessment

Guidance: A comprehensive guide to risk assessments and health and safety in general can be found in [UEL's health and safety handbook](#). A comprehensive guide to risk assessment is also available on the [Health & Safety Executive's website](#). An example risk assessment (for a wellbeing conference/event) is presented below, please replace text in RED with your own/study specific information.



UEL Risk Assessment Form

Name of Assessor:	Law Wai Wa	Date of Assessment:	18/02/22
Activity title:	An exploration of EPs' views on the impact of remote consultations on attuned interactions	Location of activity:	Microsoft Teams
Signed off by Manager: (Print Name)	[REDACTED] Janet Rowley	Date and time: (if applicable)	Anytime between 24/02/22 to 22/04/23

Please describe the activity/event in as much detail as possible (include nature of activity, estimated number of participants, etc.). If the activity to be assessed is part of a fieldtrip or event please add an overview of this below:

A doctoral thesis with the aim of interviewing 6-8 EPs and TEPs online through Microsoft Teams.

Overview of FIELD TRIP or EVENT:

The interviews will take place online.

Guide to risk ratings:

a) Likelihood of Risk	b) Hazard Severity	c) Risk Rating (a x b = c)
1 = Low (Unlikely)	1 = Slight (Minor / less than 3 days off work)	1-2 = Minor (No further action required)
2 = Moderate (Quite likely)	2= Serious (Over 3 days off work)	3-4 = Medium (May require further control measures)
3 = High (Very likely or certain)	3 = Major (Over 7 days off work, specified injury or death)	6/9 = High (Further control measures essential)

Hazards attached to the activity

Hazards identified	Who is at risk?	Existing Controls	Likelihood	Severity	Residual Risk Rating (Likelihood x Severity)	Additional control measures required (if any)	Final risk rating
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<p>Participation – or its after-effects – may have been challenging, distressing or uncomfortable in some way.</p>	<p>EPs and TEPs who have been participate in the interview.</p>	<p>The researcher will minimise the discomfort during the interview by reminding the participant of their right to withdraw at any time, creating friendly and welcoming atmosphere and develop rapport with the participant. The following information is in the debrief sheet: https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/ is a free UK charity supporting the mental health and wellbeing of education staff in schools, colleges and universities. Free helpline 08000 562 561.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>1-2</p>	<p>Participants are welcome to contact the researcher or researcher’s supervisor for any specific questions or concerns.</p>	<p>1</p>
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The researcher's computer could be attacked by hackers, and interview recordings and transcripts could be stolen.	EPs and TEPs who have been participate in the interview.	The researcher will minimise the risk by using UEL secure platform and store all interview recordings and transcripts on UEL OneDrive.	1	1	1-2	The researcher will seek help from the UEL IT support service if necessary.	1

Review Date

Appendix M Sample Transcript

R = the researcher I = the interviewee Interview 1 Olivia

Question 1	R	I think we are recording.
	I	I did. Oh yeah, recording and transcription have started. I didn't realise that it could transcribe what you're saying.
	R	Yeah. Well, I think I clicked the wrong one maybe I should stop transcribing. I'm not sure how to stop transcription. Yeah. Okay. But I think we're still... Yeah, started recording. Yeah, that's fine. All right. So um, well, first of all, um, can you firstly, tell me a little bit about yourself and also your current role within the service?
	I	Yeah. So, I am an educational psychologist, I have been working in this service for almost two years now since I qualified. So, I trained at X university, and then started in X in the September after qualifying, and although I am starting X on Monday, so I am going to be having a bit of a break. But yeah, so before that I was a X schoolteacher as well.
Question 2	R	Yeah. All right. Thank you. Well, it's great to hear more about the EPS service and also about yourself. So, now I will ask a few questions about remote consultation. I would like to know, what is your experience of remote consultation?
	I	Um, quite a lot. Because when I qualified and started as an Ed psych full time, we were in the middle of the pandemic. So, we weren't allowed to go into schools at that time, we were solely working from home. So, there was a lot of remote consultations being completed, we use teams just like we are using now. And there were also pressures in our service to focus just on statutory assessments at times. So, I have a bit of experience of both statutory assessments being virtual consultations, as well as some SLA work that was delivered, but that was kind of on and off, depending on the demands - the statutory demands. So yeah, I would not be able to count how many virtual consultations I have conducted.

	<p>R Yeah. All right. So um, I wonder, is it okay to talk a little bit more about interpersonal interaction?</p>
	<p>I Yes. So, I think the interactions that you have online, are different. I think the sort of conciliation skills that we were taught at university do apply, but some of them are more tricky to utilise. And I think there's a number of different reasons for that, I think, partially, in some ways, it could be easier because you literally just see someone's face all the time. And so, you can, you can see your own face, too. So, you can see how you look, what kind of facial expressions you are making, what gestures you are making, it's almost it is real time feedback. So, you can kind of adjust how you are responding or appearing. And then you are permanently looking at the faces of the other people. So, you are kind of consciously aware of how they are feeling through their own facial expressions if they do produce those expressions. But I think some other challenges are sort of the wider body language, you don't get such a feel for that, because you only see a certain part of their body. Some people who join on their phones, you only see their forehead. And, you know, people who aren't technologically skilled in that way, aren't able to adjust it so that you can get the most out of it. But you still get the tone, you know, you still hear them, their tone of voice, their question style. I think I have had to be a little bit more explicit in some of the things that I say to make sure that people are very clear on my thoughts and what I'm doing and if I'm taking notes, sort of just letting them know that I'm doing that because they might see me looking down. So, you have to be quite aware of what can be portrayed through the screen and what can't be which I think is quite interesting. I think many of my schools say that they prefer in person consultations to remote consultations. However, that being said, I think we've all become quite skilled in remote consultations so that there isn't a huge amount that gets missed anymore. I think over time, we've developed that skill.</p>

		<p>And so sometimes remote consultations are now more convenient for both parents and the school to fit things in. And we're sort of working in a bit of a hybrid way now. So, we might do in school stuff now that we can, and we might do remote stuff, because it just makes more sense. Sorry and uses the time more wisely and effectively. But equally, I don't feel like I get to make those relationships with people which I kind of pride myself on a little bit. It sounds a bit snobby. But I like to develop good relationships and working relationships with the people I work with. So, it does feel like that is slightly hindered by the remote screen aspect.</p>
Question 3	R	<p>Sure. Okay. Well, thank you so much for your reflection. That's very helpful. Um, next, I want to ask questions regarding the Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) or Video Interaction Guidance (VIG). So, um, can you tell me about a little bit about your experience of VERP /VIG Training?</p>
	I	<p>So, at X university, we did VERP. And for a period of time, we were given guidance from some EPs in X service, actually, they came in and talked to us about, you know, what it involves, and set us tasks to go off and record some of our consultations or meetings with kids or whatever it might be, obviously, with all the consent, and then we came back together. And in small groups, we watched the videos over and over, picking out the positive parts of the interactions. And so, the one because I know I did two or three, but one that sort of sticks, in my mind was my interaction with a teaching assistant in a meeting learning more about a young person. And I remember some of the positive things that were picked out from that, which felt really nice, where that I was kind of mirroring her body language. And she would say something, I would say something, there was a lot of mirroring going on, there was a lot of gestures that were similar. We were sort of both looking at each other clearly wanting to know each other's information and sharing that and checking</p>

		<p>out. Well, I was checking out, but I understood what she was saying and kind of responding appropriately. So yeah, if I'm honest, I didn't enjoy the process, usually, because I find it a bit uncomfortable watching yourself back and having someone there to pick out the positive aspects of that interaction and praise you for that that was lovely. So that's kind of my experience. I haven't really done much else.</p>
	R	<p>Yeah, yeah. So, I wonder, do you know like, do you think like, do you have any kind of like, things you would like to talk about on VERP, like the impact of interaction with other?</p>
	I	<p>Sorry, could you just say that again?</p>
	R	<p>I think, Yeah, so like, VERP training - the impact of interactions with adults?</p>
	I	<p>And yeah, well, I think there is probably a link between what I was saying earlier, where you kind of have that real time feedback of the video in terms of like, I can see myself right now. I guess it is, I guess there is a link there in terms of sort of the VERP process, but it's real time instead. I mean, that separate to this real time feedback, taught me the things that people value that support a really good interaction with others. That was in person so obviously, it's a little bit different, but I could see myself on the screen I could look at where if I was smiling, if I was looking interested or you know, but I think interaction. Generally, I like to show interest in others I find that comes quite naturally in some ways. But with VERP it just becomes really explicit and then it sorts of in your mind of the things to focus on, and whether you're using clarification questions, and perhaps what else you could do. I know VERP is more focused on the positives, it doesn't pick out things that you didn't do quite so well. But yeah, so I think it sort of made those things obvious and explicit to me, even if I was already doing them, but then I can focus on them more, then with kind of remote consultations. Like I said, at the beginning, there's some aspects of that, then</p>

		<p>become quite tricky, because you don't have all of that feedback. She only sees a certain part of somebody, but you do have feedback on yourself. And so, you can kind of VERP yourself in the moment. And, yeah, adapt and respond based on how you can see yourself coming across, as well as the sort of emotions, facial expressions, tone of voice and language being used by the person in the meeting. So, I think there's a lot of links there. I think I still use my experience of VERP to shape my consultations now. Just sort of keeping an eye on how it's going. And it can be a bit exhausting, particularly on the screen because you don't usually have the back on yourself like that. But I think it can be really helpful as well.</p>
Question 4	R	<p>Yeah. All right. Thank you. That information is really helpful. So now, I would like to ask you about online consultations and attuned interactions. So um, I will ask the questions, and I will show you a picture of attuned interactions principle. So, I would like to know, during online consultation, what is your experience of applying the principle of attunement? So, let me share my screen. Oh, here we go. I hope you can see it. Yeah, so that's the principle of attuned interactions, and then I would like to know.</p>
	R	<p>So, the question is, you're gonna see, what is your experience of applying the principle of attunement?</p>
	I	<p>Um, so yeah, I think we were shared these principles during VERP as well. And so, sort of that the being attentive, is sort of part of what I was talking about in terms of are you looking at the other person? Are you sitting quite open? All those kinds of things? Yeah, it's, it's sort of those active listening skills, isn't it that are relevant to the attuned interactions, and that these are the things that I try and incorporate into all of my consultations and interactions with colleagues, with staff members at school with parents. I think I feel generally quite confident that I can make sure in most interactions, I am completing all of those sort</p>

		<p>of different bullet points on the side. I think sometimes my focus, I have to think carefully about that deepening that discussion. And gently moving people on, I think that's where I get bit stuck is sort of if someone's talking lots and lots and lots, and I can't sort of jump in and go, Oh, just sort of wanting to focus a little bit more on this and kind of moving them away. But yeah, no, I think I use these principles every day in my work.</p>
<p>Question 5</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>Okay. All right. I will stop sharing now. Okay, so um, so, do you think you have put into practice like any of the VERP training during remote consultation?</p>
	<p>I</p>	<p>Yeah, I think it just kind of became embedded generally. So, I don't know if I specifically thought about VERP. Whilst I was doing remote consultations, but I think it's all a part of that training we've had in order to make sure we are engaging in attuned interactions. And I think naturally, as a psychologist, you're wanting to know more. And through having knowledge of what those principles are for achieving interactions, and conciliation skills and all of those kinds of things. You just you, you draw upon them because you realise that they work to help others feel comfortable to give you the information that's going to ultimately make a positive step, you'll be able to use it in some way to support everyone. So, I think it might not always be conscious. But that might be because it was so well embedded in my training, that you utilise all these skills, and we practice them with our fieldwork tutors present. So, we had sort of fieldwork tutors, year one, and supervisor year two and three, and, you know, they would be offering us feedback in sort of in person consultations, as well. So, it's kind of like VERP except, you know, you're not videoing yourself in that sense. So, I think it was just so embedded throughout our course that I'm continuously thinking of those things. And trying to put them into practice, too. Because that because I know that they work, I know that it uses a good outcome, I know that it makes other</p>

	<p>people feel happy and comfortable. And that's what I'm there to do really. So, I don't know if it's consciously in my mind, sort of, Oh, I did VERP and I did that. And I should do that now. It just kind of is part of everything.</p>
R	<p>Okay, so thank you for the information. And now finally, I would like to know what else has support attuned interactions during remote consultation?</p>
I	<p>That's a good question. What else supports that? I think part of it is setting up the meeting. So, it's not in the moment, what's supporting the interaction as such, but actually, when you're setting it up and preparing other people for it, making sure you're really clear about what's going to happen, because for some people, you know, remote consultations, are quite scary, some people find it very uncomfortable. And so, I think part of setting that up in someone's mind talking them through it, I have a, like an introductory resource that I share with young people. And I can share something similar with parents as well, which gives them a guide of what to expect, it's got my picture on it, so that they're kind of they know who they're expecting to see. And its kind of gives them expectations of what kind of things I'm going to be asking or getting them to do. And I feel like that sets the whole meeting up so that they feel a little bit calmer when they arrive. And then you continue to use all of those principles that you sort of shared with me a moment ago, which then continues to support a successful interaction, I think other things that are really psychologically based on having a good internet connection. Having the technology there to make it as efficient as it can be. I think it's also important to have little scripts in mind, related to the technology. So, I said earlier, like, if I was taking notes, I'd make sure at the beginning, I would say, Oh, is it okay? If I take notes whilst we're talking? Because in person, it's obvious you're taking notes in a remote style, it's not, then it can look a bit rude. And so, you need to be very aware of how</p>

		<p>you're coming across in a video when other people can't see the context around you. And I'm trying to think if there's sort of anything else, I think, management of multiple people in a remote consultation, because you're not in a room there. They can find it difficult to pick up on those little subtle cues of when someone wants to talk. And so, sort of managing that to make sure that you hear from everyone. And that you can sort of say, Oh, if hold on a second, I think Susan or you know, whoever just has something that she wants to add. And being really gentle but really explicit. Again, there's a lot of stuff that you have to explicitly say that you wouldn't naturally do when you're all together. So, I think that's been a bit of a learning curve for me to make sure that those interactions go as well as they can, and everyone feels like they've been able to contribute.</p>
	I	<p>Is there anything else I can think of off the top of my head?</p>
Question 6	R	<p>No worries, no worries. All right, thank you for your honesty and reflection. It has been great talking to you. Last, just wondering, is there anything we haven't talked about today that you think might be helpful to mention?</p>
	I	<p>I'm just that the kind of share amount of dependence we've had on remote consultations over the last little while because we haven't been able to meet, it sorts of threw us all into it. And we all kind of lumped together. And I feel like that was helpful because if Mistakes were made, if we realised, we needed to be explicit, and we hadn't been, it was all kind of understood, because everyone was in the same boat of learning. I wonder if going forwards. Actually, explicit training on using remote consultation as opposed to in person might be a little bit more necessary because people have been doing this for a couple of years now and have become quite well adept at it picked up naturally on the things that they need to do or say, to make it go well, and have learned through trial and error really. But moving forwards, if people don't have that experience that they've picked</p>

	<p>up naturally, whilst everyone else was learning. It might be a bit uncomfortable in some of those interactions whilst they're learning but everyone else is already kind of got to that point of being quite experienced being quite skilled in that. So, I just I just sort of thought I'd reflect on that a little bit because yeah, it's not something that VERP was really in my training to do remote consultations but VERP was and I think VERP can be used to facilitate that even further and actually, recording a remote consultation is much easier than going off and setting a camera up in a room and recording. That could actually work really, really well. So yeah, I just think it might be worth noticing that training specifically on remote consultations might well be necessary to support that going forwards.</p>
	<p>R All right, well, thank you so much. Oh, I will stop recording now. Stop recording.</p>

Appendix N

Excerpts of the reflective diary

24th April 2022

I started my research participants' recruitment process today. I did not receive any responses yet. I can't conduct any interviews in person due to concerns about COVID. However, I am glad that the interviews can be conducted remotely because many EPS services are far away from London, and I don't really have the time to travel. It is really great that EPs from all over the country can participate in my interview, and I can't wait to hear their views.

9th May 2022

I conducted my first interview today. The participant was lovely, and she tried her best to answer all of my questions. It was sad to hear that she does not have time to further develop her attuned interaction skills due to other commitments, and I wonder how this feeling might influence the data transcription and also the data analysis process. I was also unsure whether the participant answered my questions fully, and should I try to ask follow-up questions when the participant shared information that I found interesting? Or should I just listen to what they said?

I am happy that the first interview went pretty well, and it seems like there is some good information already. I am planning to send a few more emails to different EPSs and I am hoping to receive more responses.

2nd August 2022

I conducted my last interview today, and this is not part of my plan. Originally, I would like to recruit newly qualified EPs as my research participants because they may have more recent experience participating in VERP and VIG training. However, I do think that the participant has a point that I should not limit my research participants to newly qualified EPs because EPs with more experience may also have recent training experience in VERP and VIG.

The interview went well, and the participant said that she was glad that I listened to her views and included her as one of the research participants. I was unsure whether the participant answered the questions fully, and she seemed to be off-topic when answering some of the questions. In the future, I will need to develop better guiding or leading skills and make sure that the participants understand and answer the question fully.

10th August 2022

I found 10 participants for my research, and I think some good information has already been collected. Therefore, I have decided to stop looking for participants and start transcribing the interviews. I found a useful paper written by Byrne (2022), and this paper really inspired me on how to present the six-phase analytical process clearly and also how to create thematic maps. I have decided that I will be spending a few more days reading this paper.

20th August 2022

Some of the participants have expressed that they were overwhelmed by the EHC assessment, and they have no access to the VERP or VIG training or delivering

VERP and VIG. It is also interesting to know that there is a team of EPs delivering VERP and VIG in some EPSs, and the participant who is part of the team shared some really useful insight about interacting with service users remotely and her training experience in VERP and VIG.

Some of the participants described their remote consultation experience positively, and they shared that it is possible for them to remain attuned to service users during remote consultations. I kind of agree with that and find their experience really related to mine, although I am also wondering how this might influence my data analysis.

17th November 2022

I have finished my tutorial with my supervisor. I am glad that I made progress on my draft chapters, although there are still lots of things that I need to consider. I am feeling positive that I will be able to edit the draft chapters and submit them on time.

Appendix O

University of East London request for title change to an ethics application



University of
East London

School of Psychology Ethics Committee

REQUEST FOR TITLE CHANGE TO AN ETHICS APPLICATION

For BSc, MSc/MA and taught Professional Doctorate students

Please complete this form if you are requesting approval for a proposed title change to an ethics application that has been approved by the School of Psychology

By applying for a change of title request, you confirm that in doing so, the process by which you have collected your data/conducted your research has not changed or deviated from your original ethics approval. If either of these have changed, then you are required to complete an 'Ethics Application Amendment Form'.

How to complete and submit the request

1	Complete the request form electronically.
2	Type your name in the 'student's signature' section (page 2).
3	Using your UEL email address, email the completed request form along with associated documents to Dr J�r�my Lemoine (School Ethics Committee Member): j.lemoine@uel.ac.uk
4	Your request form will be returned to you via your UEL email address with the reviewer's decision box completed. Keep a copy of the approval to submit with your dissertation.

Required documents

A copy of the approval of your initial ethics application.	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--	---

Details

Name of applicant:	Law Wai Wa
Programme of study:	Prof Doc Educational and Child Psychology

Title of research:	An exploration of Educational Psychologists' views on the impact of remote consultations on attuned interactions
Name of supervisor:	Dr Janet Rowley

Proposed title change

Briefly outline the nature of your proposed title change in the boxes below

Old title:	An exploration of EPs' and TEPs' views on the impact of remote consultation on attuned interactions
New title:	An exploration of Educational Psychologists' views on the impact of remote consultations on attuned interactions
Rationale:	A change of plan

Confirmation

Is your supervisor aware of your proposed change of title and in agreement with it?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Does your change of title impact the process of how you collected your data/conducted your research?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Student's signature

Student: (Typed name to act as signature)	Law Wai Wa
Date:	11/04/2023

Reviewer's decision

Title change approved:	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:	The new title spells out the acronyms. The title change will not impact the process of how the data are collected or how the research is conducted.	
Reviewer: (Typed name to act as signature)	Dr Jérémy Lemoine	
Date:	11/04/2023	