Promoting the voices of Children and Young People who have experienced Domestic Abuse.

Siobhan O'Leary

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of East London for the degree of Doctor of Psychology.

April 2024

Abstract

This research was set within a local and national context of increasing reports of Domestic Abuse (DA) and legislation which positions children as 'victims of DA'. A systemic literature review carried out to explore children and young people's (CYP) experiences of DA revealed literature which involved CYP by interviewing them about their experiences of DA. The beneficence of this type of involvement was questioned and there were concerns about the misrepresentation of child voice due to adult interpretations of data. To address this research gap, emancipatory research was undertaken which invited children who have experienced domestic abuse (CEDA), to become involved as co-researchers to explore matters of importance to them. The research employed a participatory research (PR) approach to involve three children aged 10-12 years old, who proposed the research question "How can adults support children who have experienced abuse between parents, to express themselves?". The co-researchers developed the interview schedule and semi-structured interviews were facilitated by the lead researcher. Data was analysed in collaboration with the co-researchers using Reflective Thematic Analysis. The findings suggest that CEDA have expectations about support being readily available and individualised based on their needs. There is an indication that trusting relationships with adults are key to CEDA being able to express themselves and that support is most effective when designed in collaboration with CEDA. The power threat meaning framework is used to interpret the findings and the researcher reflects on the strengths and limitations of the PR approach. Implications for EP practice and multi-disciplinary professionals are outlined, which focus on the importance of increasing the participation of CEDA in research and practice, to position them as autonomous, competent and capable.

Table of Contents

List of tables

List of figures

List of appendices

List of abbreviations

BPS	British Psychological Society
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Heath Service
CEDA	Children who have experienced Domestic Abuse
CODA	Children Overcoming Domestic Abuse
CYP	Children and Young People

DA	Domestic Abuse
EP	Educational Psychologist
HCPC	The Health and Care Professions Council
IPA	Interpretive Phenomenological analysis
LA	Local Authority
LR	Lead researcher
PTMF	Power-Threat Meaning Framework
PR	Participatory Research
RTA	Reflexive Thematic Analysis
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
TA	Thematic Analysis
UEL	University of East London

Acknowledgements

I would like to start by thanking the incredible children who participated in this study. This research would not have been possible without your experience, knowledge and dedication. I admire each of you for the resilience you have shown and the bravery it took for you to share your powerful voices.

I sincerely thank my tutor, Dr Miles Thomas, who has encouraged me to believe in myself during every step of this research journey. Your approach to tutorials and shared passion for empowering those we work with has enabled me to persist even when things felt so challenging. Thank you for instilling these values in me as I start my career as an Educational Psychologist.

I will be forever grateful to cohort 16, a group of remarkable peers who have been by my side during the ups and downs of the Doctoral journey. I couldn't have wished for a more supportive group and what a privilege it has been to experience this together.

A huge thank you to my family and friends who have spent many hours cheering me on. Thank you to my husband-to-be for not only waiting two years for a wedding, but for your unwavering support through the challenging times and for sharing moments of joy and success. And last but by no means least, thank you to my mum and sisters who continue to inspire me every day to use our lived experience to help others.

Chapter one: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to chapter

This chapter begins by outlining the researcher's position, with references made to key interests, experiences and personal values which have led to the development of the research topic. Relevance of the research topic to the EP role is made and following this, key terminology around Domestic Abuse (DA) are defined. Through exploration of current legislation and both the local and national socio-political context, a rationale for the study is highlighted. Finally, the theoretical standpoint of the research is introduced and justified as providing a unique contribution to the research field.

1.2 Researcher position

1.2.1 Lived experience and personal values

The lead researcher (LR) has a lived experience of DA, which led to a personal interest in children's experiences of DA. During the Doctoral training course at the University of East London (UEL), the LR came to understand the strongly implemented value of social justice, which in the context of Educational Psychology (EP) practice has been defined as EPs positioning themselves to support children to not be disadvantaged by circumstances of their birth (Fox, 2015). The LR felt that this had powerful ramifications for those children and young people (CYP) born into or raised within DA contexts, given the known impact of DA on child development. A further interest in working with marginalised groups developed, which the LR understands as groups of individuals who experience oppression within society. Marginalisation across

diverse groups varies and it is interesting to consider that before the ratification of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), children who have experienced DA (CEDA) were not formally recognised as ‘victims’ in their own right in the UK. There is an argument therefore that CEDA have been rendered ‘invisible’ within UK legislation and DA discourse (Gallagher, 2010).

1.2.2 Professional placement experiences

During two and a half years of professional placement within an inner-city London local authority (LA) EP Service, the LR has been exposed to the varying impact of DA on CYP. Having become involved with many CEDA, the LR noticed that in their requests for involvement, schools often indicated difficulties in the areas of Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). For some of these CYP, other agencies such as Social Workers or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) were involved. However, for many, DA was non-disclosed until the point of EP involvement or the CYP hadn’t met the criteria for further intervention. Thus, experiences of DA and their possible impact had not yet been explored.

The LR has experience of working directly with CEDA and systemically through parents and school adults. Psychological theories such as the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1992) and attachment (Bowlby, 1988) have provided a useful backdrop to consider the impact of experiences of DA on CYPs development and well-being. The LR often enlists a children's rights perspective (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989), a conceptual standpoint which is promoted throughout the UEL training course and provides a rationale for seeking the

views of CYP on their current situation. This positions CYP as experts by experience of their own lives and has often contributed to a unique perspective on what CYP need to experience positive change. Underpinning this way of working is the SEND COP (Department Of Education, 2014), which advises that EPs must have regard to the views, feelings and wishes of CYP. Fox (2015) argues that to do so, EPs must reposition themselves to advocate for values of social justice, beneficence and autonomy when supporting CYP, which can occur at an individual or systemic level.

On the other hand, paternalism occurs when professionals make assumptions about what is best for service users without taking their views into account (Fox, 2015). More recently, EPs have further defined social justice as being centrally concerned with power, privilege and oppression and bringing about fairness is described as a cyclical process which requires continual reflection and adaptation within unique socio-political contexts (Kuria & Kelly, 2023).

During casework with CEDA, the LR has regularly used approaches such as Person Centred Psychology (Rogers, 1963) to increase the participation of CYP in planning areas for change. This has been particularly helpful in creating more accurate shared understandings around what a C/YP is communicating through their behaviour. The concept underpinning this approach is that children should be viewed as competent decision makers in matters affecting them, which led to a further interest into how participation of CYP within research can be enhanced.

1.2.3 Interest in participatory research

The LR took an interest in participatory research (PR) approaches during the doctoral training course at UEL. Given its roots in collaboration and aims to redress power imbalances, the PR approach mirrored the LR's value of promoting social justice and respecting the views of CYP in casework. PR is defined as an approach which allows for the consideration of power and control (Bagnoli & Clark, 2010), which the LR felt to be essential when working with CYP who have previously lacked a 'voice' in legislation and DA discourse. PR is described as an approach based on principles of promoting voice and increasing collaboration and inclusion of vulnerable or marginalised groups in topics which involve them (Aldridge, 2017). The need to capture children's experiences of DA and use their voices to develop new knowledge is prevalent in the literature (Miranda et al., 2021; Øverlien, 2013). However, the claim that children are active in contributing to new knowledge through elicitation of voice in research is challenged, with the argument that epistemological tensions and power relations which operate within research methods can contribute to the continued marginalisation of vulnerable groups (Spencer et al., 2020). This consolidated the LRs' thinking around the need for a research approach that engaged CEDA as active participants to discover what they feel is important to focus on within the research sphere.

1.2.4 Competence

The participation of children in research is closely linked to the question of competence to make an informed decision about participation (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015). Historically, competence has been closely linked to chronological age (Morrow & Richards, 1996), but challenges to this approach include it's universal

application to diverse groups of CYP. More recently, competence has been considered in relation to the individual experiences of children, with the assertion that CYP can demonstrate increased competence within the context of familiar adults and contexts (Cocks, 2006). This has implications for research which include the need to differentiate information and explanations according to CYPs developmental level and to seek on-going consent from children involved in research. The argument that competence should based on individual experience has been central to the development of this study and will be discussed further alongside ethical decision making in section 3.7.

1.3 Relevance to the EP role

EPs are often invited by schools to become involved with CEDA, as a result of presenting difficulties in their learning or well-being. There is increasing recognition of the negative impact of DA on CYP and EPs are well placed to work with this group, particularly given that CEDA may not always meet the criteria for involvement from external agencies such as social care or CAMHS. It has been argued that EPs have an essential role in raising the visibility of CEDA through increasing awareness of the impact of DA on children (Cort & Cline, 2017). There are suggestions that EPs can use their knowledge of psychological research and theory to support individual children and families to reflect on the impact of their experiences of DA and recognise their strengths and resiliency factors to foster recovery and healing (Cort & Cline, 2017). Therefore, EPs are also well placed to consider issues of power when working with CEDA, by working collaboratively to increase their participation and voice in both research and practice.

1.4 Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse (DA), has statutory definition from the UK government:

"Abusive behaviour of a person (A) towards another person (B), if they are both aged 16 years and over and are personally connected to one another" (Domestic Abuse Act, 2021).

The UK government recognises that 'abusive behaviour' includes physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, emotional, or other abuse. It is important to note that other countries, as is historically the case in the UK, refer to DA as Domestic Violence (DV) and/or Interpersonal Violence (IPV). These terms may be used interchangeably throughout this paper when quoting existing literature. However, in line with the current UK legislation, the LR has adopted the term 'Domestic Abuse' for consistency.

An important change reflected in the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) was the move towards recognising CYP who are exposed to DA, as victims in their own right. Exposure to DA is defined as,

"A child (up to the age of 18 years old) who may see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse and is related to (under the parental responsibility of) person A or B" (Domestic Abuse Act, 2021).

In the existing literature, there has been much debate around the use of 'exposed' and 'witnessed' as terms to describe how CYP are involved in the context of DA. They have been contested due to positioning children as passive in situations of DA (Lloyd, 2018) and instead, many authors have argued for a move towards describing

children as ‘experiencing’ DA. This is thought to more accurately capture CYPs active involvement in DA situations whether it is seen, heard, or felt, given the known impact of DA on development and well-being (Callaghan et al., 2016). Throughout the rest of the study, the phrase ‘Children who have Experienced Domestic Abuse’ (CEDA) will be used, to reflect this nuanced understanding.

1.5 Background and rationale

1.5.1 Legislative and political context

The ratification of the UK Domestic Abuse Act in 2021 re-positioned CEDA as victims in their own right (Domestic Abuse Act, 2021). Other important changes to the act included the acknowledgement of emotional and economic abuse which can occur in isolation from physical violence, and the extension of the coercive and controlling behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse. It is important to note that campaign groups such as StepUpMigrantWomen Campaign UK (2022), refuted legislative gaps within the act, pointing out discrimination against migrant victims of DA who may be unable to seek support from their LA due to the risk of deportation. The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) however was passed without implementing special measures for victims of DA with insecure migration status, meaning that information about migrant victims seeking support can be passed on to Immigration Enforcement. It is suggested that migrant victims of DA are currently unprotected by UK law and therefore at a higher risk of DA due to abusers being able to threaten victims regarding migration status (StepUpMigrantWomen Campaign UK, 2022). Therefore, CYP from migrant families in

the UK may also be at a higher risk of DA due to limitations placed on their ability to disclose DA and seek support from school adults or other services.

1.5.2 National Prevalence

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) was ratified during a time of increasing concern for victims of DA in the UK. During 2020/21, there was an 8% increase on the previous year in referrals made to social care by the police for issues of DA (NSPCC, 2022). This data was explained in part as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Office for National Statistics, 2023), with the major increase in 2020 coinciding with the easing of lockdown measures which could have reflected a 'safer' time for victims to seek help. Since this time, data shows that there has been a slight decrease in reports of DA in the UK, with around 5.1% of adults, aged 16-59 years of age, reporting experiences of DA in the year ending March 2023, compared with 5.7% of the population reporting having experienced DA in the year ending March 2022 (Office for National Statistics. 2023). It is important however to interpret this declining data trend with caution, due to a reported error made in the survey which led to only collecting 8 months of data in the year 2023. In addition, the ONS data only reflects instances of DA which have been reported to the police. Therefore, the number of victims experiencing DA is likely to be much higher, due to the nature of DA often being a hidden crime that is not reported (Office for National Statistics, 2023).

There is currently no official data in the UK which reports how many CYP may have experienced DA. However, by multiplying the statistics of adult reports of DA (Office for National Statistics, 2023) with the average dependent per household in the

UK (1.77), it has been estimated that there are around 827,532 children who may be living in households where DA has occurred (Foundations, 2023). Nevertheless, it is important to consider that these statistics may under-represent the actual number of children living within DA households due to confounding variables such as lack of reporting of DA. It could be argued that the number of children who are living in DA households is likely to be much higher.

1.5.3 Local prevalence

In the inner-city London borough where this research was carried out, the statistics also reflected a steep rise in the prevalence of DA during 2020-21, with calls from residents to the National DA helpline being measured as significantly higher than many other London boroughs. Local statistics reflected the concerning national increase in reports of DA during the national COVID-19 pandemic. There was evidence which suggested that DA cases were also escalating into complex and serious cases more quickly, with higher levels of both psychical violence and coercive control. From June 2019 to May 2020, there were over 9,500 reports of DA within the LA, with around 1,448 referrals made to a local service for supporting residents experiencing DA. In response to the concerning increase of reports of DA, the LA also commissioned a service developed specifically for CEDA, given the known impact on their development and well-being. Anecdotally, the LR is aware of the over-subscription to this programme for children overcoming DA. The long wait list itself reflects the increasing need for support for CEDA.

1.5.4 Impact of Domestic Abuse on CYP

Over the past two decades, research concerning CEDA has seen a move towards positioning children as more directly involved in and impacted by DA. There is suggested to be an irrefutable link between the presence of DA and the occurrence of child abuse, given that abuse and violence between parents can spill over into parent-child relationships (Buckley et al., 2006). As well as becoming involved in violence through trying to intervene, it is considered that children in DA households are at risk of not having their needs met due to compromised parenting (Johansen & Sundet, 2021; Swanston et al., 2014). There is thought to be a range of psychological, physical, behavioural and emotional impacts on CYP living in DA households, which may present differently in relation to gender, age, level of abuse, and the support available to the child (Buckley et al., 2006). Reported difficulties for CEDA include:

- Physical injuries
- Aggression
- Introversion
- Secretiveness
- Self-blame
- Running away
- School difficulties
- Bed wetting and nightmares
- Eating difficulties
- Self-harm, depression, suicidal ideation attempted suicide
- Social isolation, poor social skills
- Developmental delay

The wide-ranging impact of DA suggests that not only are children actively experiencing DA, but that DA can play a large role in shaping their developmental experiences (Buckley et al., 2006). This is a group of children whose experiences of DA, and existence within the current socio-political climate create marginalisation in many forms, including the potential for not having their needs met by their parents, the inability to seek outside help, a lack of sufficient support services and lack of authentic voice in the existing literature.

1.6 Theoretical and conceptual framework

Much of the psychological theory used to explore children's experiences of DA in existing literature focuses on developmental, cognitive and discursive perspectives (see section 2.4). These approaches have provided a very useful context for unpicking the impact of DA within a relational context and exploring the meaning that CYP ascribe to their experiences. This has supported increased understanding of children's agency within their lives and has led to a suggested heterogeneity of both experience and impact of DA. The LR interpreted this as a rationale for the exploration of the operation of power within children's experiences of DA and has embedded the research within a critical psychological approach (Crenshaw, 1989; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018).

1.6.1 Power Threat-Meaning Framework

The Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF) (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018), offers a more critical view with which to explore psychological distress than approaches such as attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988). Although recognising that relationships are integral to emotional safety, the PTMF goes further in suggesting that other

environmental factors relating to the operation of power, such as social inequalities created through language, can impact emotional security. This is interesting to consider in light of the labelling of children as ‘victims’ of DA (Domestic Abuse Act, 2021). The PTMF argues that individuals are agentic in the way in which they perceive threats within their environment and respond to protect oneself. Through also considering the social, political and cultural landscape, the PTMF offers a more holistic explanation of emotional distress, which places value on both personal meaning and the operation of power. The PTMF is argued to have helpful applications within the mandatory UK education system, in which CYP wield very little power and can experience many threats such as behavioral systems and sanctions which can disrupt ones sense of belonging (Bodfield & Culshaw, 2024). Further, Milligan (2022) found that when EPs use the PTMF in practice, CYP feel empowered through the utility of hearing new and helpful stories about themselves which can increase a sense of personal agency. This fits well with the current research which was designed to seek authentic voice from CEDA by positioning children as experts by experience.

1.6.2 Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality is a theory which describes the multiple identities of individuals, which can bring forms of advantage and/or oppression (Crenshaw, 1989). This fits well with the current study, due to the aforementioned legislative and socio-political context which suggests that CYP and migrant victims of DA are marginalized within the UK. Due to the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) not offering protection or support for victims with insecure migration status in the UK, it could be considered that CEDA from migrant families face multiple layers of disadvantage. It was also found that CYP from diverse

backgrounds lack a voice in the existing literature (see section 2.4). Further, with the suggestion that meaning made about experiences of DA varies amongst children (Buckley et al., 2006), Intersectionality theory provides a rationale for promoting the voices of a diverse group of CYP in this research, to consider how intersectional identities may interact with experiences of DA.

1.6.3 Children's rights

Given the legislative re-positioning of children as victims of DA and the marginalisation of CYP in the current socio-political context, this research was grounded in a Children's rights perspective (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989), which promotes the rights of freedom of expression. Article 12 infers that children have the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them and that these views must be considered and taken seriously. Further, Article 13 argues that every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions. This provides a rationale for selecting a PR approach to seek CYPs' views, thoughts and opinions about how the research should be conducted. Alongside this, the research was designed with Article 3 in mind, which argues for the best interests of the child within decisions taken. This is discussed in more detail alongside ethical considerations which underpinned the research methodology (See Chapter three).

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter began with an exploration of the researchers' position and factors which contributed to the development of the research topic, including personal values, experiences and relevance to the EP role. Key terms were defined and a rationale for

the study was set within a legislative and socio-political context. The research is set within the PTMF and Intersectionality Theory and the aims of the study will be introduced in the methodology chapter. The next chapter will outline the available literature relating to CYPs experiences of DA.

Chapter two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a systematic review of the literature relating to CYPs experiences of DA. The chapter begins by outlining a scoping review which provided a starting point for the full systematic review. The systematic search strategy is identified and describes how the relevant studies were selected and critically appraised. There were three themes which present the studies by the findings and critical analysis. Gaps in the current literature are identified, which sets the context for the relevance and appropriateness of the current study. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the literature.

2.3 Scoping review

A scoping review, which is described as a preliminary assessment of the potential size and scope of relevant literature (Booth et al., 2016b), was carried out from October 2022 - November 2022. The focus of this scoping review was to explore ‘What is known about children's experiences of domestic abuse?’, and it revealed several studies which explore CYPs experiences through adults (Arai et al., 2021; Buckley et al., 2006), or adults over the age of 26 years looking back on their experiences in retrospect (Band-Winterstein, 2014; Suzuki, 2009). Although the findings are interesting, it could be argued that these studies lack credibility, due to recall bias and inaccuracies which stem from the lens of adults. These findings were a major contributor to embedding the current study in the theoretical lens of children’s rights (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

2.3.1 Literature search strategy

Between June - July 2023, a systematic review was carried out to review the question: 'What is known about CYPs' experiences of DA?'. As already outlined, the literature search was embedded in Article 13 of the Conventions of the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), that children should have the right to freedom of expression. Therefore, specific attention was paid to articles which explored the voice or views of the CYP.

2.3.2 Identifying relevant literature

EBSCO was used to search the following six databases:

Table 2.1

Database search

Database	Justification
Psychinfo	Relevance to the field of Educational Psychology.
Academic Search Ultimate	Interdisciplinary database (the topic of Domestic Abuse is closely linked to the field of social work).
Child Development & Adolescent Studies	Focus on CYP.
British education index	Focus on CYP within the education system.
ERIC	Focus on CYP within the education system.

Education Abstracts.	Focus on CYP within the education system.

The literature search used a keyword search based on the LR's background knowledge as developed through the initial scoping review. The use of key terms including 'child', 'experience', and 'domestic violence', yielded 979, 938 results, which was deemed unhelpful. Instead, each database was then searched individually for articles which included 'child*' and 'young person' and 'domestic violence' as major subject terms, which provided more relevant articles. Some databases did not list 'young people' in their subject terms, so instead, the terms 'young adults', 'teenagers' or 'adolescents' were used interchangeably. Searches on individual databases yielded between 25 and 3,145 results each and the LR began by setting automatic limiters which removed literature that were not academic journals or written in English, which left 694 articles.

2.3.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Titles and abstracts of articles were then screened in relation to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, which were as follows:

Table 2.2

Literature inclusion and exclusion criteria

	Inclusion criteria	**Justification**	**Exclusion criteria**	**Justification**

Population	CYP (0-25yrs)	Relevance to the research question. Relevance to EPs (who with CYP aged 0-25 years old).	Adults.	Not relevant to the literature review question.
Focus	Collecting the experiences / stories of Domestic Abuse from the voice of the C/YP.	Ensures relevance to the research question.	Experiences / stories told by others. Research focusing DA alongside another phenomena (such as assessment, interventions, policies).	Not relevant to the literature review question.
Language	English Language	Accessibility	Research not in English	Accessibility
Source type	Peer reviewed articles (journal articles)	Studies will have a higher methodological quality.	Book reviews and guest editorials, unpublished theses, non-peer-reviewed journals Articles which rely on secondary data (meta-synthesis / systematic reviews).	Lower methodological quality. These do not provide a first hand account of experiences.

Key terms	child / young person / young people / young adults / adolescence / teenagers / Experience / Domestic Violence	Relevance in subject index as per each database.

After screening titles and abstracts, 29 full texts were assessed for their relevance to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Duplicate articles from across databases were removed. This led to a further 23 articles being excluded, with 6 articles selected for further review. A table which depicts the full search strategy, including reasons for exclusion, can be found in Appendix A.

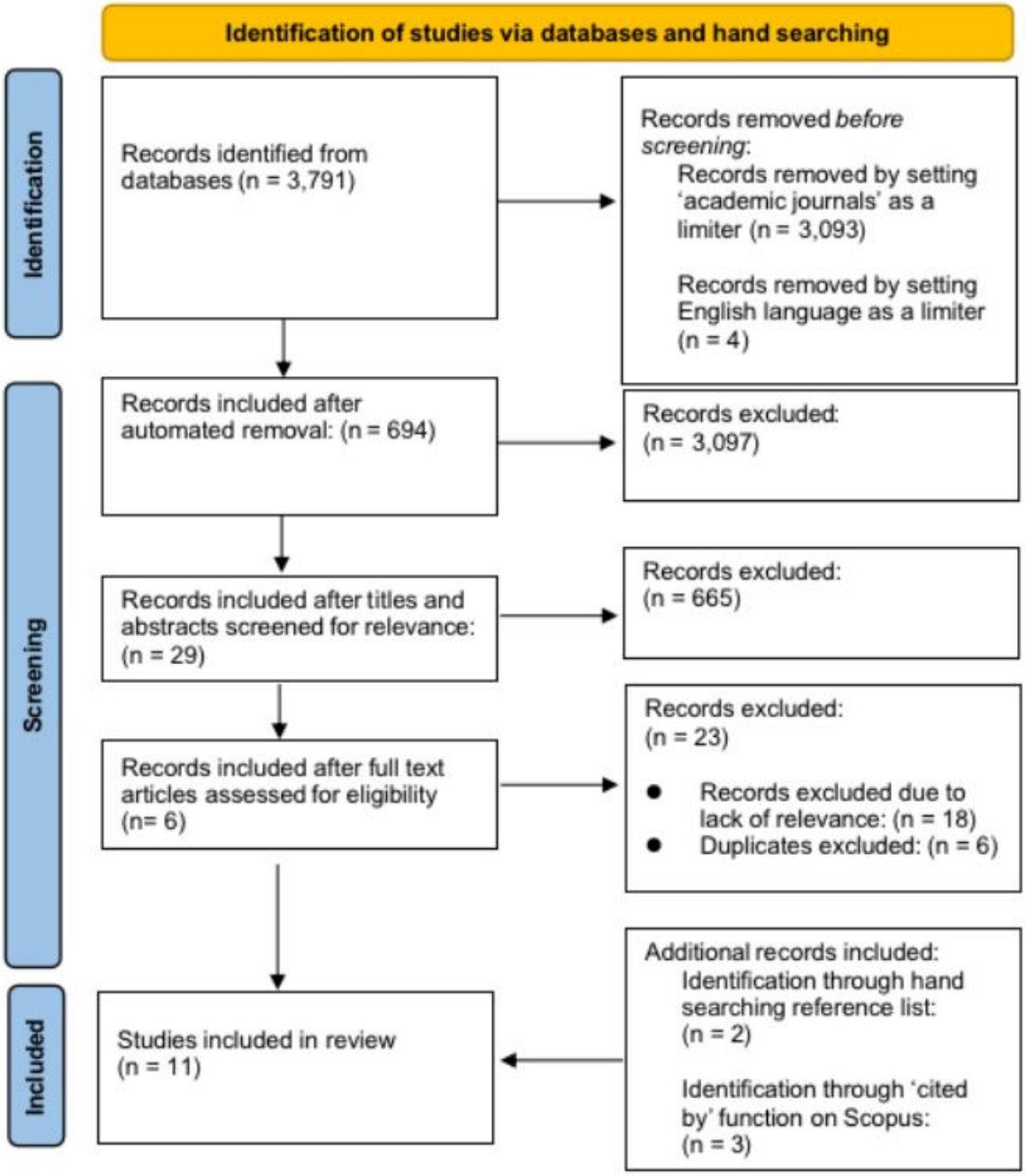
2.3.4 Hand searching and citation searching

A systematic review is described as adopting an “exhaustive” approach to the search process (Booth et al., 2016, p125). Therefore, ‘hand searching’ was also employed, as there is evidence that this can lead to the discovery of relevant articles which are not correctly indexed in subject databases. This is particularly helpful in the context of this review, given that ‘Domestic Abuse’ is often indexed as ‘Domestic Violence’ (DV) or ‘Intimate Partner Violence’ (IPV), meaning that some relevant articles may have been missed during the subject index searching stage. The reference lists from the 6 relevant studies found in the initial review were hand searched, which led to the discovery of a further 2 relevant studies. Next, the researcher used the ‘cited by’ function available on Scopus, a curated abstract and citation database, to search for citations of the 8 relevant studies, which provided another 3 highly relevant studies. The

total number of studies included in the literature review was 11 (see Figure 2.1 for a PRISMA flowchart reflecting the literature search process). The LR chose not to include grey literature in the systematic literature review due to this being of potentially lower methodological quality than published, peer-reviewed articles. However, it is acknowledged that this could mean that some of the literature on CYPs experiences of DA may not have been collected.

Figure 2.1

PRISMA flowchart


Identification of studies via databases and hand searching
Identification
Screening
Included
Records identified from databases (n = 3,791)
Records removed *before screening*:
Records removed by setting 'academic journals' as a limiter (n = 3,093)
Records removed by setting English language as a limiter (n = 4)
Records included after automated removal: (n = 694)
Records excluded:
(n = 3,097)
Records included after titles and abstracts screened for relevance: (n = 29)
Records excluded:
(n = 665)
Records included after full text articles assessed for eligibility (n= 6)
Records excluded:
(n = 23)
Records excluded due to lack of relevance: (n = 18)
Duplicates excluded: (n = 6)
Studies included in review (n = 11)
Additional records included:
Identification through hand searching reference list:
(n = 2)
Identification through 'cited by' function on Scopus:
(n = 3)

2.3.5 Appraisal of studies

Critical appraisal refers to a process of quality assessment which aims to discover whether the methods and results of a study are valid (Booth et al., 2016a). Checklists are considered a useful tool for guiding the process of quality assessment in qualitative literature and can be thought of as assessing four key concepts: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Booth et al., 2016, p. 161). The researcher used a Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist to quality check the included 11 studies.

2.3.6 Literature synthesis

Trafford and Leshem (2008) suggest that there are four stages of a literature review, including: summarise, synthesise, analyse and authorise. Having already summarised and synthesised the key findings of the literature, as well as having facilitated a critical analysis of individual studies, the LR began to map the sources in terms of their relationship to one another. During the 'authorise stage' which is described later during section 2.5, conclusions are drawn from the existing literature, to locate this current research in terms of the theoretical and methodological basis.

2.3.7 Characteristics of included studies

Of the final 11 studies included in the literature review, all but 3 used semi-structured interviews to elicit the voices of CYP about their experiences of DA. Two opted for supplementary child-centred methods which included family drawings, photographs and spatial maps (Callaghan et al., 2015, 2016), whilst another study

facilitated kinetic family drawings which supported children's talk in interviews (Swanston et al., 2014).

Only 5 of the 11 studies were conducted in the UK (Callaghan et al., 2015, 2016; Chester & Joscelyne, 2021; Collis, 2009; Swanston et al., 2014). The researcher chose to include studies conducted outside of the UK, as it is clear that some of the earlier research conducted in Norway and Sweden has made major contributions to the field of study. Two studies were conducted in Sweden (Cater & Sjögren, 2016; Georgsson et al., 2011) and two in Norway (Johansen & Sundet, 2021; Øverlien, 2013). One study was conducted in Ireland, (Naughton et al., 2019), and one study took place in Chile (Miranda et al., 2021).

All of the 11 studies included in the literature review were designed using a qualitative methodology, which is thought to enable a richer insight into experiences by allowing participants to describe what they have lived through in ways specific to them (Miranda et al., 2021). The findings of these 11 studies have been categorised into three themes below, to answer the review question: 'What is known about CYPs experiences of Domestic Abuse?'.

2.4 Themes

A thematic synthesis was carried out, which is an approach to identifying a range of factors which are significant for understanding a particular phenomenon (Booth et al., 2016b). The LR began by creating codes which encompassed the main research findings of each study before organising these into related areas (see Appendix C).

Codes were then developed into more abstract, analytical themes: Acute experiences of Domestic Violence, The relational impact of Domestic Violence, and Coping with Domestic Violence, which are presented below along with sub-themes.

2.4.1 Theme: Acute experiences of Domestic Violence

This theme explores descriptions of acute violence, which in the first sub-theme are presented as 'persistent and life-threatening'. The second sub-theme describes that for many CEDA, living in fear is described as 'lifelong', until after having left the perpetrator of abuse.

2.4.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Violence is persistent and life-threatening

Øverlien (2013) facilitated semi-structured interviews with 10 CYP aged 8-20 years old in Norway, in the hope to capture new knowledge about children's experiences of living with DV. Participants were recruited from a larger study of CYP who were either currently living at or had previously lived at women's shelters for abused women. Of the 10 participants included in this study, 5 were described as having 'other ethnic backgrounds than Norwegian', and all were living away from the perpetrator of DV. The theoretical standpoint of this study was the Sociology of childhood (Hutchby, 2005), which is described as a paradigm within which children are positioned as active constructors of their social world and therefore should be involved in research as participants whose voices are used as the basis for analysis. The study was also grounded in a typology of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) (Johnson, 1995, 2011), which is a framework that seeks to distinguish between different forms of DV,

namely, ‘common couples violence’ and ‘patriarchal terrorism’. The former refers to single episodes of violence which can be severe and life-threatening but do not involve a pattern of coercive control, unlike the latter, which involves a significantly high level of coercive control and emotional abuse (Øverlien, 2013).

The researcher worked with women's shelter staff to identify participants based on age, psycho-social situation and security issues. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with CYP and no interview guide was used. Instead, the interviews were guided by the main question about CYPs’ actions or absence of actions during violent episodes. The interviews were analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which is well suited for reporting experiences and allowed for data to be explored in a way that described patterns. Six themes were generated inductively by the researchers, who found that psychological violence was made up of threats and coercive control and that physical violence was severe, life-threatening and repeated. The DV is described as permeating everyday life and therefore leaves CYP in a constant state of ‘fear’ and ‘readiness’ when they are at home, e.g. “when I get home I am afraid she will have been killed” (Øverlien, 2013, p.7). It is suggested that for many CYP, intervening in the violence is perceived as being too dangerous, e.g. “I started to cry, there wasn’t much I could have said, I didn’t dare to” (Øverlien, 2013, p. 6). Several participants felt that only when they live away from the perpetrator of DV, can they experience a change to their reality, e.g. “If we don’t live with him life will be nice, fun, really nice”, (Øverlien, 2013, p. 8).

In line with the sociology of childhood paradigm (Hutchby, 2005), the CYP in this study were able to articulate their experiences of DV and form insights about what it is like to live with severe DV over long periods. Øverlien (2013) concludes that all professionals working with CYP should work to distinguish what 'type' of violence CYP have experienced, to offer the most appropriate support. However, it is noted that the state of 'embodied' fear that the CYP experienced had an impact on the interview situation, with most interviewers finding that CYP tended to speak about an ongoing and pervasive experience of fear, with little room for any positive experience. Although there is some information given about how interviewers were attentive to CYP not wanting to answer questions or needing a break, it could be important to consider what immediate benefit the participants gained from taking part in the interviews. Another limitation of the study pointed out by Øverlien (2013) is a lack of population differences and additional factors which could have contributed to the extreme findings, such as that half of the participants had also experienced physical abuse from their fathers/stepfathers and all had experienced violence extreme enough that families had fled to a women's shelter. Therefore, the findings could lack transferability to other populations of CYP.

2.4.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Violence is experience as lifelong

In another study conducted in Chile, Miranda et al. (2021) aimed to explore the lived experiences of adolescents growing up in the context of IPV. A constructivist epistemology is employed, which assumes that humans actively construct their reality through the meanings that they ascribe to it. It is suggested that acknowledging the agency of CYP to share their experiences can provide a more holistic view of IPV and a

research gap is identified in using CYP as ‘active participants’. Purposive sampling was used to identify 10 adolescents aged 12-17 years old, who were all attending a psycho-social treatment programme in Santiago. Of the participants selected, there were 5 male and 5 female and there are detailed descriptions given of other important variables, including the ‘type of exposure’ to IPV and other forms of victimization (including child and sexual abuse).

Semi-structured interviews were facilitated using an interview guide developed specifically for use with CYP in IPV contexts (Callaghan et al., 2015). Data was analysed using Thematic Narrative Analysis (Riessman, 2002), which is considered a useful tool for supporting access to the content of a narrative and therefore the meaning that participants attribute to their experiences. Similarly to Øverlien (2013), the results of the analysis found that adolescents described IPV as chronic and ongoing, regardless of whether it was experienced directly or indirectly. The violence is described as being ‘life-long’ and starting from before their birth, e.g.” …My dad... hit my mum when she was pregnant... my mum was pregnant with me.” (Miranda et al., 2021, p. 8). In line with findings which suggest that intervening in violence is too dangerous (Øverlien, 2013), several of the participants expressed experiences of being abused themselves when trying to intervene and protect their mother. In contrast to references of abuse being solely perpetrated by fathers/stepfathers against CYP, Miranda et al. (2021) found that adolescents were sometimes exposed to abuse from their mothers or other family members.

This study is useful in contributing to the knowledge gap regarding what is known about CYPs' experiences of IPV in Chile. It is helpful that the researchers provide a table which reflects the characteristics of the participants in the study, as this offers clarity into the transferability of the results to other populations. Although, it is important to note that many participants were also subject to other kinds of victimization or child abuse. The interview guide developed by interviewers and used in this study reflects an adult-centered agenda, which could impact the credibility of CYPs voices. In addition, the themes developed were not checked back with participants, which could suggest that the participation of CYP in this study could be viewed as 'transactional', rather than 'active'.

2.4.1.3 Summary of theme 1: Acute experiences of violence

These studies suggest that DV can be experienced by CYP as persistent and lifelong and highlight the relevance of encouraging clinical, health and social care practitioners to facilitate a holistic assessment of emotions and experiences of DV so that interventions can be adapted accordingly to meet CYP needs (Miranda et al., 2021). However, both studies are conducted outside of the UK and use samples of CYP who have accessed specialist DV support services, which means that these findings may not be generalisable to CYP in the UK, or those who have not accessed specialist support. Although CYP are positioned as 'active agents' whose voices are valued, there is evidence to suggest that taking part in interviews may have caused distress and therefore a gap exists in thinking about the beneficence of CYP participating in research.

2.4.2 Theme: The relational impact of Domestic Violence

Of the four studies which explore the relational impact of DV, there are two which clearly describe a diminished trust in adults. This relates to adults' care-giving abilities, as well as their ability to listen to, validate and respond to disclosures of DV. The further two studies consider the impact of DA purely on the parent-child relationship and reflect how CYP can experience an emotional distance between either or both parents.

2.4.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Diminished trust in adults

Swanston et al., (2014) conducted a study in the UK, which aimed to capture the perspectives of school-aged children and their mothers to develop a richer understanding of children's experiences of DA. The perspectives of the children and mothers are analysed separately and only the perspectives of the children are reported in this review.

Purposive sampling was used to recruit 5 children from a DA charity, which included 2 boys and 3 girls, aged 8 - 13 years old. The ethical considerations involved in working with these children are presented and the researchers developed a bespoke approach to talking interviews by facilitating Kinetic Family drawings (Kaufman, 1972), which is thought to support children in talking about difficult experiences. The interviewers asked CYP questions about their pictures and followed the child's lead before asking their own questions relating to experiences of living and coping with DA. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith et al., 2009) was used to analyse the

data, which enabled the researchers to search for meaning in each transcript individually before looking for patterns across cases.

One of the main findings was that children described the loss of a 'normal childhood' due to their needs not being met by their parents, e.g. "I wasn't being looked after properly and cos I didn't know what to do, I used to have to look after (younger brother) when he was a week old" (Swanston et al., 2014, p. 8). Further to this, several children describe their diminished trust in professionals to protect them, e.g. " I told the school and they didn't do anything", (Swanston et al., 2014, p. 8). For some children in this study, leaving the violent situation often led to a brighter outlook on life due to an increased sense of safety, however, others still reported difficulty in trusting adults and relied on coping mechanisms which seemed to distance themselves from parents, e.g. "[When feeling sad] My teddy, this helps me ... It cuddles me and then it makes me feel a bit better ... It's the only thing that helps me" (Swanston et al., 2014, p. 9). In contrast, when teachers or school friends made them feel heard after sharing information, this was considered supportive in helping them to cope, e.g. "It helps cos I know I got people at school that I can go to" (Swanston et al., 2014, p. 9). This suggests that re-building trust with adults across contexts is very important for CEDA.

Through focusing their questions on 'what helps', Swanston et al. (2014) convey that trusting relationships are important for CEDA. The adoption of child-friendly data collection methods increases credibility of the findings, although it is important to note that interpretations of the data were not checked back with participants and were therefore interpreted through an adult-centric lens. The research findings are discussed

in the context of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988), which conveys the significance of the mother-child relationship and responsive, consistent care-giving. However, a criticism of this theoretical approach is that it can appear blaming on behalf of mothers who also experience victimisation. Participants in the study were all White British and therefore findings may not be transferable to diverse cultural contexts, as it does not take into account cultural differences within care-giving relationships or experiences of DA.

In a more recent study, Johansen & Sundet (2021) aimed to represent and understand children's experiences of DV as perpetrated by stepfathers in Norway. The researchers were interested in exploring how children narrate their own and others' actions and positions. Secondary data was used, which came from judicial interviews which were gathered as evidence for a courtroom. Interview data belonged to 3 children aged 10-12 years old, who agreed to take part in the study with their parent's consent. Of this sample, there were 2 boys and 1 girl who had been interviewed using the 'Dialogical Communication method' (DMC). This is an approach which encourages free storytelling, and all interviews were facilitated by trained police officers. Interviews were analysed using Narrative Analysis (Bamberg, 1997; Labov, 1967), an approach which emphasises that children are experts in their own lives and therefore each story is valid and meaningful.

Findings from this study are presented across three main themes, with the first presenting how children show fear of violence and its unpredictability, aligning with findings from (Øverlien, 2013). It is suggested in the second two themes that mothers

have little power and similarly to Swanston et al. (2014), some children report feeling let down by their mothers, e.g. “I’d told her that I’m very scared and upset, but she doesn’t really care too much about that”, (Johansen & Sundet, 2021, p. 12). This diminished trust in adults to offer protection is described as a key factor which motivates CEDA to take action to protect themselves. CYP are described as developing “creative strategies” to cope with the violence and minimise the damage of DA. The findings suggest that CYP position themselves as active agents in which they make assessments around protecting their mothers or younger siblings, whom they have simultaneously positioned as vulnerable, e.g. “I thought he is too strong, so I went downstairs again”. (Johansen & Sundet, 2021, p. 13). The psychological impact of DA is described as the loss of a caregiver, for example when asked about what the ‘worst part’ of their experience was, one participant answered “that he didn’t give a shit about me.” (Johansen & Sundet, 2021, p. 16).

This study considers the many ethical dilemmas of involving CEDA in research and proposes a reduced risk to CYP through using secondary data. There are important implications for police and social workers relating to how CEDA experience care-giving relationships following experiences of DA. However, the credibility of the research must be questioned, not only because interviews were translated from Swedish to English which could mean that children’s authentic expression may have been lost, but also because the interviews used were not originally intended for answering the research question. Further to this, it is reported that CYP were advised not to speak with their parents or professionals about their experiences of violence before the judicial interviews were facilitated, which means that it could be difficult to transfer these

findings to other studies whereby the same conditions were not met. Finally, all participants were of white Norwegian ethnicity, which means that the findings lack generalisability to diverse populations.

2.4.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Parent-child relationships

Georgsson et al. (2011) conducted a study in Sweden which aimed to describe how children talk about and relate to their experiences of violence. Similarly to Swanston et al. (2014), this research is embedded within attachment theory (Howe et al., 1999), which is concerned with how early interaction between a child and their parents is significant in developing a 'secure base' and place of safety.

Purposive sampling was used to recruit 14 children between the ages of 8 - 12 years old. There were 8 males and 6 females, all were Swedish and had engaged in a treatment programme for CYP who have witnessed IPV. The researchers facilitated semi-structured interviews where questions covered different topics relating to experiences of IPV, as well as the child's present school and home situations. The questions asked were developed in collaboration with treatment staff and were designed to be used in a child-led way, which enabled follow-up questions. The data was analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which enabled the researchers to identify, analyse and report patterns relating to CYPs' experiences of IPV, which were then presented across three overarching themes.

The children in this study reported witnessing violence both directly and indirectly, although children's ability to describe their experiences of abuse varied in coherence, detail and length. In contrast, most children were able to describe their actions during IPV events, e.g. "Uh, I went to my bed to hide" and "I tried to stop him when he hit mum but, no, then he hit me instead" (Georgsson et al., 2011, p. 8). The differences in storytelling are explained through attachment research which suggests that parents being positioned by CYP as threatening, frightened or helpless can be difficult to deal with and therefore avoiding such difficult memories can be a coping strategy. In terms of the parent-child relationship, several children reported concern for their mothers' vulnerability and would 'protect' their mothers in general day-to-day life by a reluctance to express their emotions in front of their mothers, e.g. "Uh, I don't like it because, like, when I'm sad then she gets sad again too", (Georgsson et al., 2011, p. 10). These findings align with the suggestion from Swanston et al. (2014) that CEDA feel unable to seek comfort from their mothers following experiences of DA. However, instead of feeling 'let down' by their caregiver, the CYP in this study describe the relationship breakdown as relating to not wanting to burden their mothers.

These findings support an understanding of the impact of DV on the parent-child relationships. Several CYP reported difficulty in talking about their memories of the violence, which the researchers interpret as being related to 'disorganised attachment'. However, it is important to consider that the CYP were interviewed by unfamiliar adults, which could suggest that incoherent storytelling was related in part to the research activity itself. This again brings into question the direct benefit of CYP being used as transactional participants who recall and describe their experiences of DV to unfamiliar

researchers. Further, the interview schedule was designed by adults and the findings were not checked back with participants for sense-making, which could pose a risk to the credibility of CYP voice.

Another study conducted in Sweden aimed to develop an understanding of CYPs' experiences of IPV (Cater & Sjögren, 2016). Using purposive sampling to recruit children who were living in women's shelters, 10 participants aged 8-12 years of age were selected to take part in semi-structured interviews. Of the 10 participants, 3 were female and 7 were male, though little other demographic information was given apart from that they all spoke Swedish well enough to be interviewed. Similarly to Øverlien (2013), this study was embedded in a typology framework which aims to distinguish between types of IPV (Johnson & Leone, 2005). This framework informed the interview guide, which aimed to uncover descriptions of violence to support theoretical development. It is reported that after describing their experiences of violence, all children were invited to recall a positive family experience to end the interview with.

Data analysis followed a Directed TA (Shannon & Hsieh, 2005), in which the typologies suggested by Johnson & Leone (2005) were used to identify and develop themes. The findings categorised the experiences of violence into three 'types' and within each type, the functions and consequences of the violence, fathers' characteristics and fathers' role in the family are considered. The first type of violence named 'obedience demanding' is described as violence being closely connected to CYP complying with fathers demands to be obeyed, meaning therefore that violence is situational. The children that reported experiences of this type often referred to their

fathers' being 'passively' involved in their lives, with most being able to recall 'nice' moments which serve to maintain the violence, e.g. "The best thing, I suppose, is that he's nice sometimes", (Cater & Sjögren, 2016, p. 6). The second type of violence named'Chronic and mean', depicts the belief held by CYP that violence is a personality trait which is impossible to avoid. The impact of this type of violence on children includes their difficulty with defining their fathers' place in the family, alongside little to no desire to interact with or develop a better relationship with their fathers. This reflects the emotional distancing of children and their parents described previously by Swanston et al. (2014). The third type of violence named 'Parent-hood embedded violence', describes the violence as specifically relating to the fact that the perpetrator is the father of the participants. IPV behaviours are most often described in neutral terms such as fathers being "stressed" and CYP have difficulty in explaining why the violence occurs. These children express the desire to spend more time with their fathers, which the researchers suggest could be explained by the desire for a loving and present parent. There is reflection from the researchers that none of the children in their study described their fathers as a 'protector', which could have additional implications for professionals who support contact between children and their fathers, following separation.

These findings are helpful in exploring how CYP can make meaning around IPV as based on the relational context of the perpetrator, which suggests that typologies should be adapted to consider this relational element. However, the limited participant demographic information provided means that it is difficult to consider what cultural factors may be involved in the descriptions of parent-child relationships. The findings

therefore lacks transferability to diverse populations. The dependability of the findings must also be questioned due to the fact that interviews were translated from Swedish to English, which may have risked loss of meaning within children's words. Finally, the use of a deductive TA and lack of member-checking with participants during analysis may have obscured the voices of CYP due to a preconceived, adult-centric agenda.

2.4.2.3 Summary of theme 2: The relational impact of Domestic Abuse

Studies within this theme frequently use attachment theories to suggest that CEDA develop disorganised attachments with adults following experiences of DA. This is of vital importance given that social support can also be a protective factor when experienced in what a C/YP perceives as a trusting relationship. However, this interpretation of findings may not be culturally responsive or transferable to diverse populations given that participants samples are mostly reported as White European CYP. These studies highlight the complex ethical dilemma of interviewing CYP about their experiences of DA and have attempted to reduce the risk of re-traumatisation through facilitation of child-led interviews, drawing methods, or using secondary data. However, the use of such methods could still be contested as there is little evidence of CYP being given the choice around *if* or *how* to share their experiences. Therefore, there is a research gap around the way which CYP are invited to participate in research.

2.4.3 Theme: Coping with Domestic Violence

In thinking about how CEDA cope with DA, sub-theme 1 presents two studies which consider how CYP use agentic decision making to resist DA. In sub-theme 2, a

further two studies consider the meaning that CYP make of their experiences, which is discussed as having implications for the way that CYP cope after leaving the abusive situation. Finally, the study presented in sub-theme 3 considers how CYP embody hopefulness, which can contribute to them seeking help and moving on in the future.

2.4.3.1 Sub-theme 1: The use of agency

Callaghan et al. (2015) conducted a study in the UK to explore how children experience domestic violence and abuse (DVA). This research was embedded in the UK theoretical and legislative context at the time, where there was to be imminent policy change regarding the integration of 'coercive control' into legislation. The researchers suggest that seeking the voices of marginalised groups in society, such as CEDA, is crucial to develop policy which is fit for practice. Purposive sampling was used to select 20 children aged 8 - 18 years of age from another project, 'Understanding agency and resistance strategies' (UNARS) (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015). The researchers then facilitated interviews with children, which consisted of 12 girls and 9 boys (with one interview containing two brothers). To support talk during interviews, participants were asked to produce spatial maps and family drawings. The researchers then transcribed the interviews and used Interpretive Interactionism (Denzin, 2001) for analysis. This approach enables exploration of life stories, whilst considering how they are situated within social and political contexts. The data was then coded deductively, with a focus on the overarching theme of how CYP cope with DA and their capacity for agency and resistance. The researchers discuss reflexivity, a process in which they considered how

the research relationship facilitated the co-creation of meaning. Ethical considerations were of high importance in this research and several steps were taken to attempt to reduce the risk of traumatisation of participants, which included giving them a copy of the interview questions beforehand and looking out for signs of distress during interviews.

The findings are presented across three main themes, throughout which it is suggested that children use their agency to adapt and change at home to accommodate the control, e.g. “I’d always think ahead of what I was saying” (Callaghan et al., 2015, p. 13). Other children also spoke about monitoring their self-presentation and self-expression, as well as developing strategies for assessing spaces in the home, e.g.”Why did they (the rooms) feel safest? Isabel: Because they’re places that he hardly ever goes” (Callaghan et al., 2015, p. 14). This is comparable to findings from Cater & Sjögren (2016) who describe how CYP manage obedience-demanding types of DA by adapting their behaviour. Callaghan et al. (2015) suggest that CYP take on many roles as active agents to either de-escalate incidents of DVA or seek help. It is suggested that CYP may recognise the power that they hold, e.g. “...like I knew he wanted like information for exchange, but ((.)) at the end of the day, I have the information, he doesn’t so I could technically control it so” (Callaghan et al., 2015, p. 17). This suggests that CYP use their agency to support them to cope with the behaviour of the perpetrator.

This paper adds to the growing body of literature which suggests that CYP are actively involved in and therefore directly impacted by DA. Although the researchers

employed several data collection techniques which are considered to be child-centred, the children's voices in this study may have been impacted by other factors including the use of a deductive analysis which could have missed crucial interpretations, as well as the fact that data analysis was not checked back with participants for meaning. Another disadvantage of this study was that the sample only included CYP who have accessed specialist DA support and therefore findings may lack transferability to other populations.

A year later, Callaghan et al. (2016) conducted another study in the UK which aimed to explore children's accounts of their experience of emotional and physical pain in situations of DV. This research was embedded in a Systemic model (Ugazio, 2013), which suggests that experience is always contextual, embodied and relational. Participants were once again recruited from the UNARS project (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015), and interviews were facilitated with 17 girls and 11 boys aged 8-16 years of age. Talk interviews were supported with family drawings, photographs and spatial maps, approaches which are said to alleviate some of the difficulty of expressing complex experiences. Data was then analysed using interpretive interactionism (Denzin, 2001), which was thought to offer an avenue to exploring experiences of pain and resistance within the social and political context.

The findings from this research were presented across two main themes and generally dispute theories which suggest that those who experience pain through violence and coercion cannot reason and reflect on the world (Scarry, 1988). Instead, it is suggested that employing a systemic model allows CEDA’s experiences of pain and

violence to be considered within the complexity of context. It is suggested that CYP are aware of the impact of their experiences on themselves, e.g. Lizzy: ((.)) Yeah. ((err)) ((.)) I don't really know, I just hoped that it wouldn't happen and when it did, then I'd just go into my panic, and then I'd do whatever I do every time…". (Callaghan et al., 2016, p. 12). This represents how the participant used their agency to 'block the violence out' which enabled them to continue with daily life. Additionally, it is suggested that CYP have a capacity for resistance to violent control through their actions, e.g. "Paul: I got very angry. And I went upstairs. And I climbed out of the window" (Callaghan et al., 2016, p. 14). CYP may also use the material spaces in the home to help them manage and escape the DV, e.g. Lizzy: Yeah, ((.)) but ((erm)) if he was here ((points to entrance)), then we'd have to wait till he goes around and then quickly run up, and…" (Callaghan et al., 2016, p. 18). This aligns with findings from (Callaghan et al., 2015), who suggest that CYP often seek out safe spaces in their homes as a coping strategy.

The findings from this research are important in considering how the use of a systemic perspective can support the viewing of CEDA as agentic beings within a relational context. However, the trustworthiness of this study may come into question, given the lack of detail around interview schedules used to facilitate conversations. There is a selection bias given that participants were all selected from a previous study and had accessed specialist DA support, meanings that the findings may not be transferable to other populations. Although the findings do confirm those from Callaghan et al. (2015) that CYP use their agency to resist violence, it is important to consider that both studies used deductive analysis, which can limit the scope of interpretations made about findings.

2.4.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Making meaning from experiences

Naughton et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative study in Ireland, which aimed to investigate how young people construct their childhood experiences of DA. Participants were recruited through self-selection following involvement in a quantitative study where they indicated their interest for taking part in further research. There were 13 participants aged 18-26 years old, with no further demographic information provided. Semi-structured interviews were facilitated using a schedule, the process of which is described as being open-ended and designed non-intrusively. A discursive psychology method was employed (Edwards & Potter, 2005), which is described as an approach that is tied to and associated with the epistemological stance that sees peoples' talk as data which exposes how people construct and negotiate events and situations. The researchers used TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to develop two broad themes which were felt to answer the research question. This was followed by a discursive, in-depth analysis of 4 of the 13 interviews, which enabled a deeper understanding of the context between the researcher and the interviewee.

The findings suggested that CYP sometimes find it difficult to make sense of DA, which is related in part to difficulty with assigning roles to family members. The participants were unable to clearly label either parent as a victim or perpetrator, which resulted in them feeling caught in the middle, e.g. "you're kind-of just stuck in the middle and your perception of them is constantly skewed about what the other is saying about

them, and you don't know what to believe", (Naughton et al., 2019, p. 4). This social reality confirms findings from studies which discuss DA as being embedded in a relational context (Georgsson et al., 2011). Even without clear labels, some participants positioned their mothers as emotionally vulnerable, which prevented them from instigating conversations about the DA, e.g. Sally: I try to stay away from talking about how it was when I was younger () 'cause 4 it makes her so upset (Naughton et al., 2019, p. 7). For several participants, their difficulty with recognising and talking about DVA was also related to a lack of physical violence, which suggests that psychological violence is more challenging to understand and make sense of given its invisible nature. One participant explained how he felt he could only seek help after a physically violent episode which was "so extreme", but that "before that I, I, don't know if there was anything that anybody could have done". As well as physically violent episodes being positioned as the catalyst for help-seeking, many participants reported that these events often led to more open conversations with mothers about the DA.

This study usefully introduces the idea that CYP may find it easier to recognise DA in its physical form than in a psychological form, which has implications for understanding CYPS help-seeking behaviour and disclosures of DA. However, this refutes findings from studies which propose that CYP do disclose psychological DA but can find themselves not taken seriously (Swanston et al., 2014). This discrepancy in findings could suggest that the real issue for CEDA is a lack of voice among professionals. An advantage of this study is that CYP are interviewed retrospectively in their early adult years, which could be seen as a more ethical approach. However, the

findings represent the voices of a small homogeneous group of White Irish catholic young people, and therefore findings may not be transferable to other populations.

Another study conducted by Chester & Joscelyne (2021), aimed to explore the meaning that adolescents give to their experiences of DA in the UK, and consider how this may relate to the impact of their experiences. The research was embedded in the Cognitive contextual model (Grych & Fincham, 1990), which seeks to explain how an individual's appraisals of events can affect their adjustment. There was a predetermined focus on exploring whether reflective rumination, when an individual engages in adaptive problem solving (Stockton et al., 2011), was present in CEDA. Participants were selected based on rigorous ethical considerations such as having left the abusive home for at least one year and having current access to CAMHS. Using purposive sampling, 5 participants aged 14-18 years were recruited to take part. Of these, 3 were female, 2 were male and all were of White British origin. The researchers facilitated semi-structured interviews to gain a detailed account of CYPs' experiences and applied IPA (Smith et al., 1999) to analyse the data.

The findings are presented across three overarching themes which focus on experience, coping and impact of DA. The findings align with other studies which suggest that CYP intervene in the violence even though it can be dangerous (Miranda et al., 2021), e.g. "If I tried stopping it then my dad would chuck me across the room" (Chester & Joscelyne, 2021, p. 14). It is suggested that incidents such as these could lead to a sense of 'learned helplessness', which may correlate with longer-term depression, self-blame and consequent internalising behaviours in participants, which

supports claims made by the cognitive contextual model (Grych & Fincham, 1990). The researchers also suggest that protective factors for CYP include having positive relationships with other family members and accessing therapeutic support, e.g. “seeing [therapist name] helps, talk to someone.” (Chester & Joscelyne, 2021, p. 18). It is gently suggested that there can be some positive impacts of DA on CYPs’ development, such as the meaning they ascribe to their experiences of coping with DA which can shape their outlook on life. However, this is presented with the *caveat* that at the time of the interviews, many of the participants were accessing significant mental health support and some displayed symptoms related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

This study supports an understanding of how CYP experience and cope with DA, and provides useful implications for practice in how CYP should be supported based on the meaning they make from their experiences. The researchers benefit from taking a reflexive approach throughout the data analysis process, which increases the credibility of the findings. However, it is important to consider that findings were not checked back with participants for meaning and interpretations of meaning are developed through an adult-centric lens. Intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1991) of the participants were not provided, so the suggestion that self-blame can lead to internalising behaviours should be generalised with caution. The research suggests that the use of trauma models can be a helpful way of considering the needs of CEDA, however, this approach can be victimising and risk the reduction of the complexity of CYPs experiences. It is also important to note that trauma models could be less helpful for CYP from diverse cultural backgrounds who may ascribe different meaning to their experiences of DA.

2.4.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Remaining hopeful

The final article reviewed was a study by Collis (2009), which was conducted in the UK and aimed to collect and analyse young people's stories of DV to enable 'a discovery of knowledge in the sense of understanding'. The study was embedded in hermeneutical methodology (Blaike, 1993), an interpretive approach based on sense-making, and used a relational ontological position (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998), to understand and make sense of experience. Collis (2009) recruited 5 children aged 12-15 years old, all of whom had received professional support relating to their experiences of DV. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants and the data was analysed using hermeneutical methodology (Blaike, 1993), which focuses on concern for the individual through a process which is idiosyncratic and complex. The first step taken by researcher was to draft an overall outline of each story by focusing on the significant experiences. The second step taken was to deconstruct the texts according to their intimate, social and cultural relationships, before finally focusing on the researchers' reflexive reactions and subsequent reflections brought on by each interview. The researcher acknowledges how the relationship between the researcher and participants shapes the inquiry and therefore analysed their emotional responses at each stage of the analysis.

The findings were presented across two themes, the first of which encompasses the idea that each participant described their experiences of DV as an 'emotional

journey'. This journey was unique for each participant and encompassed common emotional themes of bitterness, aggressiveness, fearfulness, compassion, hopefulness and peacefulness. Some of these categories were described as dis-empowering e.g. "I had lots of worries. Not very happy ... worried, miserable ... angry. I usually got shouted at or I got threatened. I had to see my mum getting hurt or something. Horrible [home]" (Collis, 2009, P.4), which correlates with findings from Chester & Joscelyne (2021) who suggest that CYP can feel helpless during experiences of DA. However, it is suggested that transcending this temporary powerlessness is a sense of hopefulness which was detected in all of the participants' descriptions, e.g. "When I was young, I used to think to myself this isn't going to be forever cos as soon as I'm old enough I can leave…" (Collis, 2009, p. 4). This aligns with findings that CYP experience feelings of hope when leaving the abusive situation (Øverlien, 2013). The second theme focuses on the agency which facilitates help-seeking behaviour and hope for a better future, e.g. "I was upset because obviously I love my dad but I just knew that it was the right thing", (Collis, 2009, p.11). This fits with other research which presents CYP as agentic beings who make decisions to cope with DA (Callaghan et al., 2015, 2016). For other participants, it is suggested that a deeper sense of spirituality helped with developing a new vision of themselves e.g. " I think I cope just by staking in there basically, having faith and stuff because I am a Christian. So I pray and stuff like that and things" (Collis, 2009, p. 12). Keeping his faith helped this participant to cope with his experiences of DA, which is described as a feeling of empowerment in the belief that things would get better.

This research suggests that holding onto hope and harnessing spirituality were both facilitators to coping with DA. However, there is a lack of trustworthiness of the

findings given the limited information about recruitment strategy or interview procedure. The study lacks reliability and rigour and offers little information about ethical considerations or research processes. The researcher discusses the impact of their emotional responses on interpretation of findings, which fits well with the relational ontological approach, but they do not check the data analysis back with participants, therefore the findings may lack dependability.

2.4.3.4 Summary of studies focusing on coping

The studies which focus on how CYP cope with DA are largely positive, with the assertion that CYP harnesses hope and agency which enables them to seek help. However, samples lack diversity and a consistent limitation across all studies is that findings are not checked back with participants for meaning. There is a clear research gap in the way that CEDA are involved in research, including participation in research stages such as data collection and data analysis, which is likely to impact authentic voice.

2.5 Summary of literature review

The literature identified in this review revealed three interconnecting themes relating to the experience of DA: Acute violence, The relational impact, and Coping. Only five of these studies were conducted in the UK and of these, most included only White British CYP, or failed to describe the demographic information of the sample. Therefore, the heterogeneity of experience is not likely to be well represented and the findings cannot be generalised across cultures, which highlights a gap in the literature.

The studies included in the review do however represent the start of a re-positioning of CEDA in both literature and policy. Researchers discuss the rationale for involving CYP as active meaning makers who are capable of sharing their experiences to improve understanding. However, the relatively low number of studies included in this review suggests that there are other voices which are still often valued above CYPs. Of the papers excluded from this review at different stages, several discussed CYPs' experiences from the perspective of adults. Moreover, the voices of CYP included in the studies are often obscured due to interpretations of data not being checked back with participants for authentic meaning. This can create a power imbalance and positions the knowledge of adult researchers as superior to that of CEDA. Therefore, there is a research gap around how CEDA's voices are promoted in the literature.

Including CEDA in research decisions would not only promote the positioning of CYP as knowledgeable, but could also develop a new approach to ethical dilemmas. Although ethical processes were explained in detail in many of the studies, it is interesting to consider that none of the studies report what immediate benefit CYP gained from participating, with some even referencing the difficulty of recalling experiences of DA. Article 12 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) suggests that children should be involved in decisions about them, therefore including CYP in research stages from design to dissemination is well justified. Groundwater-Smith et al (2015) suggest that CYP who are considered to be 'vulnerable' are viewed as in greater need of exercising their rights and therefore a participatory approach to designing the current research could improve the immediate benefit to CYP.

2.6 Chapter summary

This chapter provided a detailed recollection of how the systematic literature review, critical analysis and synthesis of findings was carried out. The findings were represented across three themes which reflected a variety of theoretical, conceptual and psychological frameworks with which to interpret CYPs' experiences of DA. The methodological limitations have provided a rationale for the development of the current study, which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with a statement of the research aims and purpose, before outlining the methodological approaches. The assumptions made about knowledge and psychological and conceptual theories which underpin the research are explained and justified. With a focus on children's rights and the operation of power, a PR methodology was used. The transformative perspective was realised through sharing key decision-making with co-researchers, which increased ownership of the project. Key to the research process were ethical considerations, which are discussed later in the chapter along with a detailed explanation of the research stages. The extent to which co-researchers were involved is presented and reflexivity is visited throughout. The chapter concludes with an examination of the trustworthiness and impact of the study.

3.2 Aims and purpose

The introductory chapter explored the current context around the positioning of CEDA as direct victims of DA, who may see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse (Domestic Abuse Act 2021). The systematic review reflected CYPs' experiences of DA, but the selected studies lacked diversity and data were analysed through adult-centric perspectives. Thus, it could be argued that the voices of CEDA are lacking in the literature. There is also little evidence of if and how the participants in the reviewed studies benefited from taking part, with some researchers even stating that CYP found it difficult to recall their experiences of DA (Georgsson et al., 2011).

3.2.1 Aims

Based on the limitations of the existing literature, the current study aimed to:

1. Empower CEDA to become co-researchers who are involved in research design, data collection, data analysis and dissemination.
2. Use a participatory approach to explore what matters to CEDA.

3.2.2 Purpose

The current study had an emancipatory purpose and aimed for participants to present something of themselves as narrators, thus avoiding the risk of misrepresentation or misinterpretation (Aldridge, 2017). As a Trainee EP, the LR was interested in understanding how research can be conducted in a way that releases CYP from the current power structures that tend to position their knowledge as inferior (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In the short term, the LR aimed to increase beneficence to CEDA by sharing decision-making with them. The long-term goal of this research was to contribute towards a paradigm shift within literature and practice in the way that CEDA are viewed as autonomous, capable and competent.

3.3 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is described as the “building blocks” of research (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015, P.20) and is based on questions such as:

- What is the form and nature of the social world?
- How can what is assumed to exist be known?
- What procedures or logic should be followed?

- What techniques of data collection should be used?

3.3.1 Ontological position

Ontology is understood as the nature of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) and all research is situated in a set of ontological ideas. The ontological position of research frames the choice of methods to be used to create knowledge. Some research paradigms are suggested to be incompatible with the values espoused by PR (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015). Positivism, for example, an ontological approach that seeks to discover the science or laws of human behaviour, will adopt tools that are unique to this quest. This approach is unlikely to accommodate PR, which in contrast claims to honor and value the multiple perspectives of those who take part. A relativist approach, which was selected by the LR, can better accommodate the values of PR (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015) as it describes reality as a finite subjective experience, meaning that there are multiple realities (Levers, 2013). This enables the view that CEDA are not a homogeneous group and that there are multiple ways to promote their voices, views and ideas about matters of importance.

3.3.2 Epistemological position

Epistemology is a way of understanding knowledge and therefore looks at the relationship between the knower and the knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The epistemological stance of the current research is Social Constructivism, which assumes that knowledge is created from the subjective experiences of people. Therefore, to find knowledge, researchers must use broad and open-ended questions to construct knowledge with research participants. Creswell & Poth (2016) suggest that we cannot

separate our interpretations from our background and therefore researchers aim to make sense of other people's meanings that they hold about the world. This too fits with the qualitative PR design that was selected for this study.

3.3.3 Transformative element

This research was also designed in line with the transformative paradigm, which acknowledges that knowledge is not neutral and instead reflects the power and social relationships within society (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In the existing published literature, CEDA are often positioned as transactional participants who share their experiences, which are then interpreted by adults. In the transformative paradigm, research is conducted *with* CYP rather than *to* them, which is achieved through CYP becoming active collaborators in inquiry. Approaching research in this way can reduce inequality by empowering the voices of those who have historically been marginalised. The transformative paradigm fits well with the social constructivist epistemological assumption that there are many realities. It goes one step further in suggesting that individual viewpoints are situated in a political, cultural and economic value system. By situating perspectives within these contexts, researchers can begin to understand the differences between perspectives (Mertens, 1999).

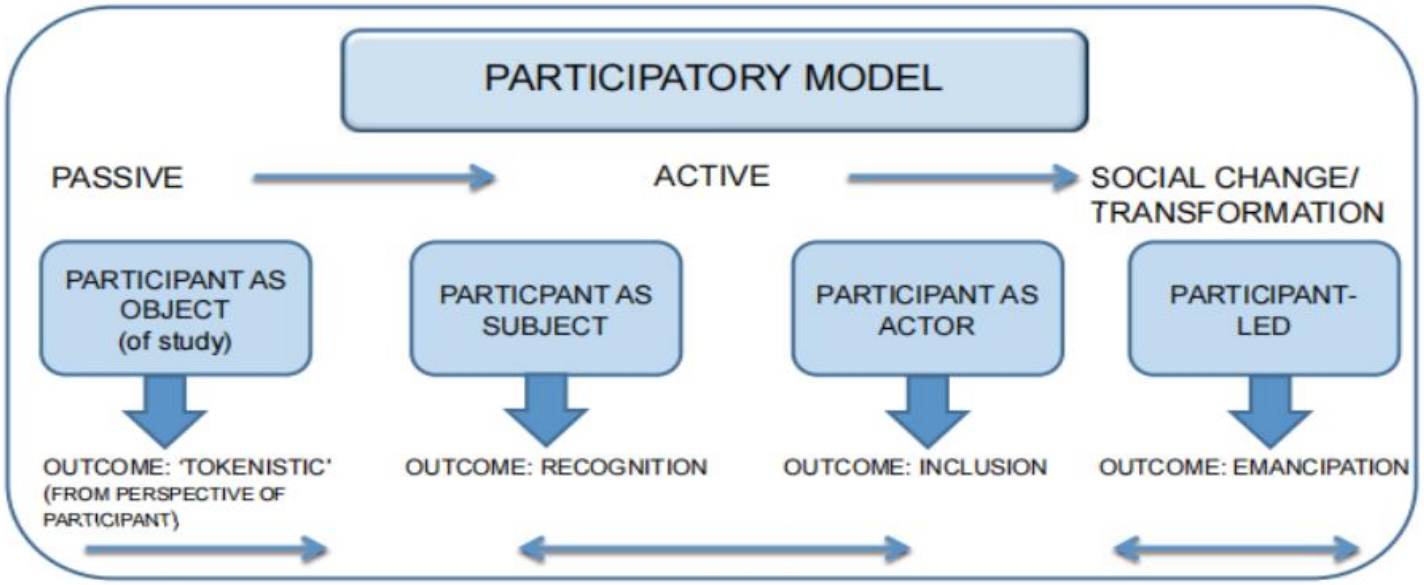
3.4 Participatory qualitative approach

A participatory approach was selected with the view that children have a right to be involved in decisions made about them (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). PR engages CYP as active, informed and informing agents and aims to disrupt dominant discourse (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015). Incorporating

PR techniques is thought to enable the inclusion of groups that have been previously marginalised from studies, which was appropriate given the possible misrepresentation of CEDA's voice in existing research. PR can take many forms and it is argued that what makes research participatory is not the design, but the involvement of the participants themselves (Aldridge, 2017). In this way, participatory approaches consider issues of power and control between the researcher and the researched (Bagnoli & Clark, 2010). There is not one rule or formula to designing PR, but rather, a set of principles that can be applied flexibly (Aldridge, 2017). Most important is the need for transparency about the extent to which research is conducted across participatory domains, with the aim of limiting tokenistic inclusion and supporting the advancement of PR. The involvement of the co-researchers in this study will be described using Aldridges' (2017) participatory model (see figure 3.1)

Figure 3.1

Participatory model (Aldrige, 2017)



3.4.1 Limitations of participatory approaches

PR is not without its limitations and some studies fail when the limitations of PR are not made clear. It is suggested that limitations of PR include issues related to power, ethics and practical considerations (Wallace & Giles, 2019).

3.4.1.1 Power-related issues

Power relationships are a key issue within PR and this can include power imbalances between the researcher and co-researchers, or between the co-researchers themselves (Horgan, 2017). Such power issues may be related to the context or process of the research, or the institution in which the research takes place. To limit this impact of this, a 'critical reflexive approach' (Spyrou, 2011) to power imbalance was taken during the current study, which enabled these issues to be to recognised and addressed.

3.4.1.2 Ethical issues

Ethical issues in PR mirror those of traditional research approaches and are magnified by the contradiction between needing to seek ethical approval before commencing the study and needing to collaborate with CYP on study design (Wallace & Giles, 2019). There is no universal framework for ethical guidelines in PR with CYP, although Smith et al. (2002) highlight several ethical dilemmas including the exploitation of a vulnerable group, the value of research, child protection and confidentiality (see section 3.7).

3.4.1.3 Practical considerations

There is a suggestion that PR should be scrutinized for methodological issues concerning how CYP are autonomous in collecting and analysing data and disseminating research findings (Kellet, 2005). The LR used peer supervision as a space to reflect on these methodological challenges and considered several ways in which to promote the inclusion of co-researchers across all stages of the research, in balance with time constraints. Groundwater-Smith et al, (2015b) suggest that an important element of PR is flexibility and the LR found that giving the co-researchers options at each research stage helped with managing practical issues that arose.

3.5 Thematic analysis

TA is a method which enables patterns to be identified and interpreted across a qualitative dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2022). TA is thought to be an accessible and robust method of data analysis for beginners and Kellet (2005) outlines a process of coding and memoing which can enable CYP to participate in this process. Multiple versions of TA have been recognised and expanded on in recent years but the common features are an interest in patterns of meaning which is developed through the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The current research used Reflexive TA (RTA), which is an approach that involves critical reflection on the role of the researcher in making meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The six stages of RTA include:

1) Dataset Familiarisation

2) Data coding

3) Initial theme generation

4) Theme development and review

5) Theme refining, defining and naming

6) Writing up.

3.5.1 Reflexivity

Denzin & Lincoln (2005) suggest that all research is interpretive and guided by the researcher's set of beliefs or feelings about the world. Within qualitative research, these are used as tools for analysis. In RTA it is assumed that the researcher is a situated, insight-bringing component of the analysis and therefore researcher positioning cannot be ignored. Braun & Clarke (2022) suggest three distinct areas for reflection, including personal, functional and disciplinary reflexivity.

- Personal reflexivity: The impact of the researcher's values and how this can shape the research and knowledge produced.
- Functional reflexivity: How the research design, including methods and paradigm, can shape the research and knowledge produced.
- Disciplinary reflexivity: How knowledge can be shaped by academic disciplines.

The LR kept a research diary to reflect on their assumptions, expectations, choices and actions throughout the research process. Co-researcher reflexivity is discussed in section 3.9.7.

3.5.2 Why reflexive TA

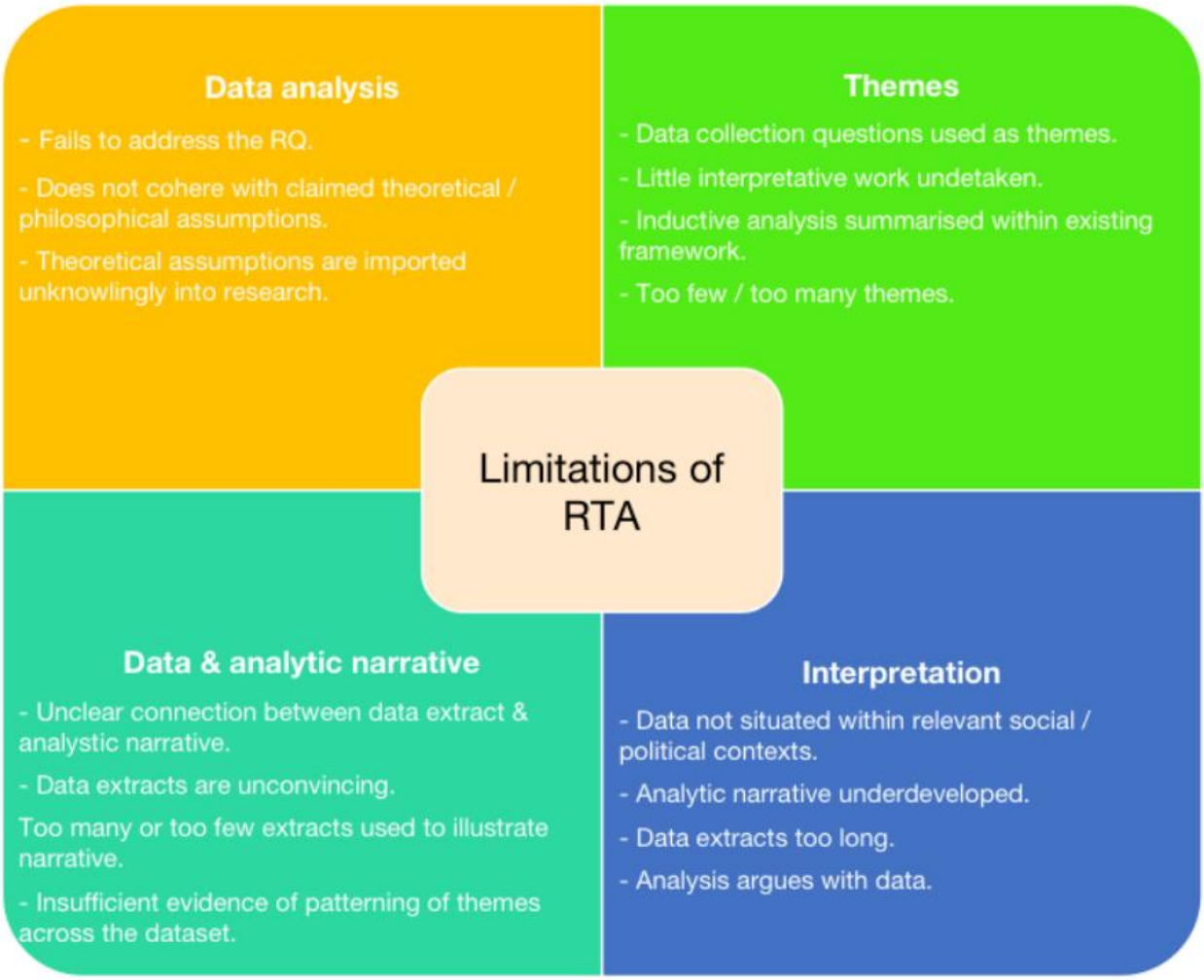
RTA was chosen to promote accessibility and inclusion, as is thought to work well with community research designs where participants contribute to data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Participation can include direct involvement in coding or ‘member checking’, a process in which co-researchers are invited to reflect on initial coding by the LR. RTA is argued to be flexible in terms of theory, data collection methods, dataset size, generation strategy, and analytic orientation. This flexibility enabled the LR to start from a point of ‘not knowing’ and invite the co-researchers to collaborate on research design. RTA allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data (Braun and Clarke, 2022, P.261), which aligns with the transformative paradigm which suggests that knowledge is situated in social contexts.

3.5.3 Limitations of reflexive TA

It is important to identify potential problems in RTA, so that they can be avoided (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 260). Common problems include analysis not being fit for purpose, weak or underdeveloped themes, weakness of interpretation, or the relationship between data and analytic narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Some of these are presented below in figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2

Limitations of Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022).



3. 6 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

3.6.1 Children's rights

The current research was situated in a Children's Rights perspective (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989), which in article 3 states that the

best interests of the child should be a primary consideration. This research had an emancipatory purpose for CEDA, a group who have been marginalised through transactional involvement in research which offers little direct benefit to them. Further, the United Nations (1989) stipulate in Article 12 that children who are capable of forming their own views should be given the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting them. This provides a strong rationale for the PR approach used in which CEDA were offered the chance to become involved with research design, data collection, analysis and dissemination.

3.6.2 Power-threat meaning

The current study was embedded in the PTMF, a meta-framework for recognising patterns of emotional distress as a response to perceived threat (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018). In the current literature, CEDA are described as victims presenting with attachment difficulties and post-traumatic stress disorder. It is suggested that diagnostic labels such as these can harm people's lives and identities by offering a narrow lens through which individuals are seen by others and themselves (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018). The PTMF enables an individual's behaviour to be viewed within their relational and social environments, which is helpful in accounting for the differences seen across CYPs' experiences and perceived impact of DA. The PTMF fits well with a social constructivist epistemology by assuming that human beings are active meaning-makers of the world who reflect on and learn from experiences through social conditions (Reavey et al., 2013). This extends the message in the current literature that CEDA should be viewed as agentic (Callaghan et al., 2016; Callaghan & Alexander, 2015). Fitting with the transformative paradigm, the PTMF assumes that explanations of

emotional distress are not socially neutral and instead, highlight the operation of power, which reflects the labelling of CYP as victims (Domestic Abuse Act, 2021). The PTMF provides a useful alternative view of what change must occur at a systemic rather than individual level to support CEDA. This change is realised in the current study by giving CEDA a platform to have their voices heard in a way that reduces the risk of misrepresentation.

3.6.3 Intersectionality

Crenshaw (1989) developed the term 'Intersectionality' to describe the double discrimination of racism and sexism faced by black women. Over recent years, the term has expanded to recognise structures of unequal power and suggests that people are shaped by membership of multiple, interconnected social categories. An intersectional approach requires that individuals from marginalised groups are included in research so that their voices can be heard. The current research is grounded in Intersectionality theory to allow for the heterogeneity of experiences of DA and to give a platform to diverse groups of CEDA whose voices are not reflected in the existing literature. Intersectionality theory could suggest that CYP experience and perceive their experiences of DA differently due to a variety of cultural norms and values. The positioning of CYP from a societal level is also likely to impact the way in which CEDA feel able to disclose, seek help or share their experiences of DA.

3.7 Ethics

Involving CEDA in research raises complex ethical issues and before the research commenced, ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee at UEL

(Appendix E). In addition to this, ethical guidelines including The Health and Care Professions Council's (HCPC) Standards of Conduct (Health & Care Professions Council, 2016), The British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Conduct and Ethics (British Psychological Society, 2018) and UELs' Code of Practice (University of East London, 2013) have guided this research.

3.7.1 Informed consent

3.7.1.1 Parents

In line with the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2021), parental consent was sought due to participants being under the age of 16. The LR reflected on the ethical dilemma of seeking parental consent from the perpetrator of DA, which Cater & Øverlien (2014) discuss could pose potential risk to CYP or the other parent if the perpetrator were to perceive the topic of research as blaming. However, inclusion criteria in the current study meant that DA was historic and the main purpose was to promote the voices of CEDA rather than to directly explore their experiences of DA. CYP and their parents were assessed participating should pose a threat to participants. Informed consent was sought from either parent with parental responsibility and neither participants nor their parents were expected to hide the research from any family members, including the perpetrator of DA.

3.7.1.2 Children and Young People

Accepting a blanket approach to consent from parents can leave CYP feeling powerless and without a voice (Powell & Smith, 2009). To reflect the theoretical orientation of the study, the LR assumed a level of competence (Cocks, 2006) in CYP to be empowered to give or withdraw their consent during each stage of the research process. The co-researchers received a developmentally appropriate information sheet ahead of the research commencing (Appendix K) signed a consent form before the research began (see Appendix L). There is a risk that CYP can feel pressured to take part in research against their will (Morris et al., 2012), so the LR monitored behavioural signs such as body language or facial expressions which may suggest dissatisfaction (see Appendix F).

3.7.2 The right to withdraw

On-going assent was sought from the co-researchers as a way of reducing the risk of psychological harm and distress caused by the research (Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2021). Assent is described as being sensitive towards CYPs' attempts to communicate non-verbally (Cater & Øverlien, 2014) and is essential when working with CYP. The LR facilitated an emotional ‘check-in’ at the start of each research session using developmentally appropriate resources (see Appendix O), as a flexible and creative way of seeking consent to start the session. The co-researchers were reminded each week that they could choose to participate in or withdraw from any of the activities without consequence.

3.7.3 Duty of care

Engaging CEDA in research can pose the risk of re-traumatisation or the breakdown of familial relationships due to reasons such as disclosures of child abuse (Mudaly & Goddard, 2009), or dissatisfaction from the perpetrator of DA about the context of the study (Morris et al., 2012). It is suggested that risk assessments of CYP and the parent with parental responsibility are facilitated to determine the potential risk of participation (Alderson & Morrow, 2020). In the current study, risk assessments were carried out with parents during the initial meet-and-greet session to determine the level of risk for participating in the research (see Appendix D). The LR developed this risk assessment based on the one presented in the SARAH Project (Morris et al., 2012), with a focus on obtaining background information of the parent/caregiver which could increase the risk of harm. As the research commenced, co-researchers were monitored for behaviours suggestive of distress or discomfort (see Appendix F), to promote a higher level of protection (Morris et al., 2012). Following the emotional check-in during each research session, break cards were given to the co-researchers and they were encouraged to request breaks either verbally or non-verbally whenever they needed. The LR always scheduled a 15-minute break in the middle of each two-hour session, during which time participants were offered refreshments.

3.7.4 Debriefing

As already outlined, the LR took a longitudinal approach to seeking informed consent from the co-researchers, which was facilitated by regular emotional check-ins and following a protocol for managing distress (Appendix F). The LR also took a longitudinal approach to debriefing, following co-researcher participation in interviews. After the interviews were conducted, the parents of the co-researchers were contacted

within one hour and the debrief sheet was shared with them via e-mail (Appendix T). The debrief sheet was explained verbally to the parents and they were encouraged to make contact with the LR if they had any concerns regarding the co-researchers, such as noticing a change in behaviour following the interviews. The debrief sheet contained contact details for several local charities and services which support CEDA. The co-researchers continued to meet with the LR for research sessions after the interviews were conducted, which enabled the LR to continue to check in with co-researchers and their parents. None of the parents reported any concerns regarding the co-researchers, and the LR did not notice a change in behaviour in the co-researchers following the talk interviews.

3.7.5 Confidentiality

3.7.5.1 Data management

A Data Management Plan (DMP) approved by UEL was used in line with requirements from the Data Protection Act (2018) (see Appendix G). Obtained written consent from parents and CYP were stored on a secure UEL OneDrive file that only the LR and research supervisor had access to. Video recordings of interviews were saved on the researcher's password-protected laptop in separate folders. Interviews were then transcribed by the LR and transcriptions were uploaded to the secure UEL OneDrive, at which point video recordings were deleted. All co-researchers were chronologically assigned an anonymous ID number which was then stored in a pseudonymisation logbook in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and uploaded to a secure UEL OneDrive file.

The pseudonymisation logbook also indicated the participant's name, place and date of the interview, the number of pages in the transcript, and the text file name.

3.7.5.2 Anonymisation.

The LR was not known to any of the co-researchers before the study, which reduced the risk of the researcher having any additional information about the participants that they did not wish to share. Due to policies in the children's centre where the research was conducted, the LR was also accompanied by a colleague from the EP Team, who was also not known to the co-researchers before the study. To promote confidentiality within the group research setting, only first names were used and co-researchers were reminded to only share what they felt comfortable with. The co-researchers met with the LR on a one-on-one basis to record their interviews confidentially. Co-researchers were invited to become involved in data analysis, where they looked at each others' anonymised transcripts. Consent was sought for their transcripts to be shared anonymously in this context, with the *caveat* that other co-researchers may have ideas about whose transcript they were viewing, thus posing a threat to confidentiality.

3.7.5.3 Safeguarding

Confidentiality cannot be extended to safe-guarding disclosures, which Morris et al (2012) note is particularly important when working with CEDA because of the known correlation between DA and child abuse. The LR was transparent with co-researchers

about safe-guarding procedures before the research commenced and reminders were given at the start of each research session in a developmentally appropriate way. The LR followed the safeguarding procedures of the LA in which the research was conducted (see Appendix H).

3.7.6 Power

3.7.6.1 Power dynamics

The research was contracted in collaboration with the co-researchers, who shared what values they felt should underpin the research sessions (see Appendix N). The LR also explored how the research sessions could be made fun, as it is suggested that research with CEDA should be enjoyable to support a level of trust (Houghton, 2015). The power dynamic between co-researchers was kept in mind and the LR was reluctant to act paternalistically, which came up as a point of reflection throughout the research process (see Appendix I). The LR positioned themselves as a facilitator of the research through delivering information, facilitating discussion and involving the co-researchers in decision-making during each research session. Groundwater-Smith et al., (2015b) suggest that CYP often exercise power through action, so the LR actively responded to observable behaviours during the research sessions through noticing, naming and offering movement and refreshment breaks when necessary.

3.7.6.2 Accessible space

Research involving children is often conducted in power-laden settings such as schools Kellet (2005). In an attempt to redress the power imbalance, the decision was made to conduct the research in a local children's centre to move away from a school-like operation of power. The co-researchers all attended different schools, so it was also considered that the children's centre may promote a more equitable experience of power between the co-researchers. Creating an accessible space can involve practical arrangements such as providing snacks and recreational activities (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015b, P. 86), which the LR also provided.

3.7.6.3 Researcher Positioning

The LR's positioning with regards to this research was explored during chapter one. However, the LR did not disclose their lived experience of DA with the co-researchers or their families. This decision was made in light of understanding informant bias, where participants may be willing to share detailed personal information with someone who 'understands' (Fleming, 2018). The LR focused on upholding a duty of care and the right to confidentiality for co-researchers and their families, by remaining in a clear position of research facilitator.

3.8 Recruitment procedure

In March 2023 when the research was granted ethical approval, the recruitment process began. The LR was working in an LA EP Service as a Trainee EP at this time and discussed the research topic with the interim Principal EP, who suggested

contacting a local children's centre programme run for children overcoming domestic abuse (CODA), as a potential gatekeeper. The programme leader had agreed to support recruitment by late July or August 2023, but due to time constraints, this avenue was not utilised.

The LR telephoned the Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs') in six local schools to explain the purpose and nature of the research, along with the inclusion and exclusion criteria for recruitment. The SENCOs' were asked to consider any CYP who may fit the research criteria and were given a briefing on how to approach the parents to introduce the research topic sensitively. The purpose of this first contact between SENCOs' and parents was to ask if parental contact details could be shared with the LR who could provide further information about the research. The LR made several phone calls with SENCOs' over the following months to check for interest from parents and collect contact details of those who had agreed to be contacted for more information.

The LR then began to make contact with parents and carers who had showed an interest. Initially, a phone call was made to offer more details about the research and parents/carers were then sent a parental information sheet (Appendix J), a participant information sheet (Appendix K), and a consent form (Appendix L), via encrypted Egress e-mail. The parents/carers were encouraged to show the participant information sheet to their children and speak to them about the research before asking if they would like to participate. The LR planned a follow-up via phone call a week after this initial contact, to

offer a space for parents to ask any further questions and to arrange an initial ‘meet and greet’ session with the children who expressed an interest in participating.

3.8.1 Sampling and homogeneity

Purposive sampling was used to identify CEDA. The decision to use school SENCOs’ as gatekeepers was made because they follow professional codes of conduct, have received training in safeguarding and have experience in managing interpersonal relationships. The LR felt that it would be more appropriate for SENCOs’ to approach parents in the initial stages of recruitment, due to the existing trusting relationships in which DA had been disclosed. As part of their professional roles, school SENCOs’ are expected to be aware of who holds parental responsibility for CYP and they were reminded to approach only these parents. For families where parental responsibility was shared between two parents, the SENCOs’ were asked to use their professional judgement and understanding of the family history to decide which parent to approach.

A limitation of this sampling approach is that families who had not disclosed DA to their child’s school were excluded, which means that there could have been many CEDA who were not identifiable. The LR reflected on other recruitment challenges such as reluctance from SENCOs’ to make contact with several families due to preconceived ideas about how parents would respond to the research topic (see Appendix M). The LR validated these concerns and gently encouraged SENCOs’ to approach all families who met the inclusion criteria, as long as they felt that they could do so sensitively. However, it is acknowledged that this style of recruitment may have led to bias around participant selection as a result of of existing school-parent relationships.

3.8.2 Inclusion/ exclusion criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants is displayed in figure 3.1.

Table 3.1

Sample inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion	**Exclusion**
Children and young people aged 6-16 years old, who have experienced Domestic Abuse. **Justification:** Because there is research and legislation which suggests that sharing their views is beneficial for children of all ages (Children's Rights UNC).	CYP who fall outside of the proposed age bracket (younger than 7 years old or older than 16 years old), or who have not been exposed to DA. **Justification:** Because children younger than 6 years old may find it difficult to access the research sessions.
Experiences of DA can have occurred outside of the UK but the CYP must be living within the UK currently. **Justification:** CYP must be able to access research sessions in the UK.	CYP who are not currently living in the UK. **Justification:** CYP must be able to access research sessions in the UK.
Experiences of DA must be historic (e.g. there is no current child protection case open with social care). **Justification:**	CYP who have experienced DA but whose parents are deemed unsafe to take part in the parental risk assessment (E.g. fall into the high-risk category), CYP who have an open child protection case with social care.

To reduce the risk of causing psychological harm or distress.	**Justification:** To reduce the risk of causing psychological harm or distress.

Operational definitions:

Domestic Abuse (DA), refers to the UK government's definition: “abusive behaviour of a person (A) towards another person (B) if they are both aged 16 years and over and are personally connected" (Domestic Abuse Act 2021).

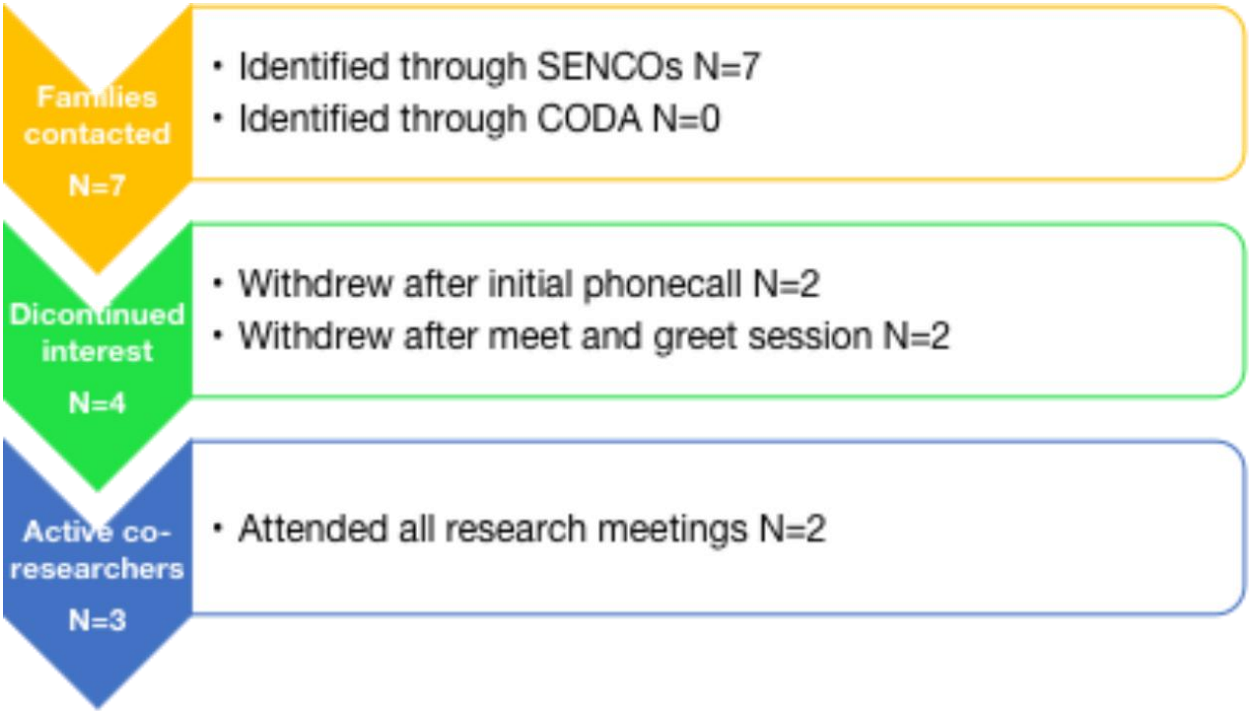
More specifically, this will be Domestic abuse between parents. Experience of DA is defined as a child or young person (up to the age of 18 years old) who may see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse and is related to (under the parental responsibility of) person A or B (Domestic Abuse Act 2021).

3.8.3 Sample Size

The LR contacted seven parents in total, of which, four parents shared that their children were interested taking part in the research project. Several parents chose for their child not to take part due to concerns that DA had not yet been named to them, or they were not deemed by their parents as being in a suitable emotional state to participate. Therefore, the LR acknowledges that the sample is skewed towards those children who may have already had some form of DA intervention, or those who have been deemed by their parents as having overcome emotional difficulties stemming from their experiences of DA. See Figure 3.3 for a flowchart which depicts the selection process.

Figure 3.3

Co-researcher selection process



3.8.4 Participant Characteristics

The LR shared with the co-researchers that existing research provides little demographic information about the participants. The 'Social GRRRAAACCEEESSS' model (Burnham, 2012) was introduced and the co-researchers were asked to think about what areas of their identity they felt would be important to share as part of the research process. The co-researchers were reminded that their names would not be presented which made them unidentifiable to readers. The co-researchers then completed the demographic table shown in figure 3.2 with the information they wanted to share.

Table 3.2

Demographics of co-researchers.

Name	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Religion	Additional Needs	School year
(Pseudonym chosen by co-researcher)	(Identified by co-researcher)	(Identified by co-researcher)	(Identified by co-researcher)	(Identified by co-researcher)	(Identified by co-researcher)	(Identified by co-researcher)
Ruby	10	Female	White British	Not reported	Not reported	Year 6
Unicorn	12	Female	Nigerian	Christian	Not reported	Year 8
Dog	10	Male	Nigerian	Christian	Not reported	Year 6

3.9 Research stages

3.9.1 Initial meeting with co-researchers

The initial meet and greet sessions were facilitated using Microsoft Teams video conferencing, as this was the preference of all parents over face-to-face meetings. At the suggestion of the LR, the co-researchers agreed to meet in a group setting for the following stages of the research. The level of co-researcher participation and description of each research stage is outlined below in table 3.3. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation used to facilitate the research sessions can be found in Appendix O.

Table 3.3

Research stages and level of co-researcher participation

Stage of research	Level of co-researcher participation
Stage 1: Developing the research question	• Co-researchers met face-to-face in a group (Attendance 2/3). • The LR suggested the area of interest and facilitated a reflective space for co-researchers who refined the question. • Aldridge model of participation: *Participant as actor.*
Stage 2: Developing data collection techniques	• Co-researchers met face to face in a group (Attendance 3/3). • The LR introduced several data collection tools. • LR facilitated a reflective space for co-researchers who decided on how to collect data. • Co-researchers developed the interview schedule. • Aldridge model of participation: *Participant-led.*
Stage 3: Data collection	• The LR met with co-researchers individually over Microsoft Teams and conducted interviews. (Attendance 3/3). • Aldridge model of participation: *Participant as subject.*

Stage 4: Data analysis	• LR coded interviews independently. • The LR met with co-researchers individually over Microsoft Teams to facilitate member checking of coded transcripts (Attendance 3/3). • Themes - developed by LR and refined with co-researchers who decided name of themes and agreed extracted quotes. • Aldridge model of participation: *Participant as actor.*
Stage 5: Dissemination activities	Not yet applicable.

3.9.2 Research stage 1

3.9.2.1 Objectives. The first research session lasted for two hours (1:30 pm - 3:30 pm). The main objectives of this session were:

1. To meet co-researchers and start contracting the research group space through a focus on values and shared decision-making.
2. To start activate the co-researchers existing knowledge and skills around research.
3. To start developing and refining the research question.

3.9.2.2 Contracting the research group

The first research session began with introductions to and from the co-researchers, followed by an induction to the research venue. It is suggested that PR

should not feel like school and therefore ‘fun’ activities that encourage team building should be built into research meetings (Houghton, 2015). The LR started this session with team games which gave the co-researchers time to settle into the space and build rapport. The LR followed the lead of the co-researchers’ readiness to start the research activities. The co-researchers were reminded about safe-guarding procedures and their right to withdraw before moving onto group contracting, which is suggested to be a vital step when forming any kind of group (Tuckman, 1965). During this stage, the co-researchers made important decisions about group values how they would ‘check in’ each week, to ensure ongoing consent (see Appendix N).

3.9.2.3 Developing the research question

The LR introduced the context of the research by informing them of the limited involvement of CEDA as active participants in the existing literature. The initial research question developed by the LR; ‘How can Educational Psychologists promote the voices of children and young people who have experienced Domestic Abuse?’, was presented. The co-researchers were invited to develop the research question, which Kellet (2005) suggests can lead to increased ownership of and motivation to engage in a study. The co-researchers were encouraged to consider what this question meant to them and suggest changes based on what they felt was important. The notes made from this discussion can be found in Appendix P. The research question developed by the co-researchers at this stage was: ‘How can adults who work with children who have experienced abuse between parents, help them to express their feelings?’. The LR used

supervision to reflect on the language chosen by the co-researchers to describe DA, which appeared to position children as existing outside of the dyad of abuse and potentially minimising the impact on them. Another interpretation of this language shared by the research supervisor was helpful in encouraging the LR to value the language chosen by the co-researchers (see Appendix Q).

3.9.3 Research stage 2

The second research session took place seven days after stage one and the main objectives were:

1. Co-researchers to refine the research question.
2. Co-researchers to learn about data collection methods.
3. Co-researchers to decide on and practice data collection methods for the current study.

3.9.3.1 Refining the research question

The LR re-introduced the research question developed the previous week and sought to refine this further by asking additional questions about the topic. This is described as a 'funnelling down' process (see discussion notes in Appendix R). The final research question proposed by the co-researchers was 'How can adults who work with children who have experienced abuse between parents, help them to express themselves?'.

3.9.3.2 Data collection techniques

There are a variety of data collection techniques that CYP may find easier to engage with, such as the Mosaic approach which encompasses multiple methods and tools to canvas the views of CYP (Clark, 2005). The LR introduced these ideas to the co-researchers and facilitated discussion around personal experiences of collecting data. The LR was aware that although the suggested novel techniques may be deemed more fun or accessible, it has been argued that they can promote tokenistic participation, rather than genuine participation (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015b, P. 13). Therefore, the LR encouraged the co-researchers to make the final decision about how data would be collected.

3.9.3.3 Semi-structured interviews

Although the LR assumed that the co-researchers may prefer a novel data collection technique, the co-researchers decided on 'talk interviews' as the best way to collect data. Interviewing people is thought to be a useful approach to determining people's preferences, thoughts and beliefs (Tuckman, 1972), which aligned well with the research question. The co-researchers decided on semi-structured interviews to allow the main topic to be explored in a flexible way. To ensure the co-researchers were informed, the LR provided additional information about how this may look and the co-researchers were clear that they wanted the interviewer to ask follow-up questions in response to interviewees, where appropriate. The co-researchers initially hoped to interview one another, but due to difficulties with aligning schedules and having to use Microsoft Teams rather than conducting face-to-face interviews, they ultimately decided

that being interviewed by the LR would be ‘easier’. PR can face limitations relating to practical considerations (Wallace and Giles, 2019) and the LR acknowledges that this situation impacted on co-researcher autonomy.

3.9.3.4 Developing the interview guide

The LR facilitated discussion about how the style of the interview must be appropriate to the research questions being posed, given that question types can impact interpretation and response (Kellet, 2005, P. 64). The co-researchers opted for open-ended questions to allow for a variety of interpretations to be made by the interviewees. The LR was aware of question bias, which Kellet, (2005) describes as a personal opinion about what questions should be asked. To minimise this, the LR did not offer input into the interview schedule, but did agree to ask additional questions during the interviews as per the semi-structured technique chosen by the co-researchers. The LR reflected on a personal view that some of the interview questions appeared to move away from the research question and move towards personal experience, but decided not to intervene given the aim of empowering the co-researchers to shape the study in ways important to them.

3.9.3.5 Ethical issues

There are several ethical issues related to conducting interviews, such as seeking informed consent, considering an appropriate interview venue, developing trust between the interviewer and interviewee and being aware of behaviour which could

suggest the need for a break (Kellet, 2005). Discussion was facilitated with the co-researchers to consider how these issues could be managed in the current study. A record of this discussion and the final interview schedule can be found in Appendix S.

3.9.4 Research stage 3

3.9.4.1 Data collection

The semi-structured interviews were facilitated by the LR using Microsoft Teams video conferencing. The Teams meetings were set up using the co-researchers parents' e-mail addresses and they were all conducted between 03/08/2023 and 15/08/2023. At the start of each video call, the LR greeted the co-researcher and spent between 5-10 minutes asking about their day before moving on to start the interview. The LR asked the co-researchers if they were sitting comfortably and offered a reminder that they could invite a trusted adult into the room, or access a quiet space in their homes. All co-researchers chose to join the interviews independently without a trusted adult present. When the co-researchers indicated that they were ready, the LR used the Microsoft Teams record function and started the interviews. The LR used the interview guide created by the co-researchers, along with follow-up questions when appropriate. At the end of the interviews, the LR stopped the video recording and asked the co-researchers how they were feeling and if they would like to share any reflections about the interview process.

Once the interviews ended, the LR made contact with the parents of the co-researchers within the hour, to share that the interview had gone well. No safeguarding concerns were detected during the interviews and all co-researchers reported feeling okay afterwards. The LR then e-mailed the debrief sheet to the parents of the co-researchers, which contained information about local services for CEDA (Appendix T). The parents were also encouraged to contact the LR if they had any additional concerns following the interviews. None of the parents made further contact with the LR regarding the interviews. To uphold anonymisation, the LR then transcribed all the interviews independently before deleting the video recordings.

3.9.5 Research stage 4

3.9.5.1 Data analysis

As per RTA guidance (Braun and Clarke, 2022), the data analysis followed six stages.

1. Dataset Familiarisation
2. Data coding
3. Initial theme generation
4. Theme development and review
5. Theme refining, defining and naming
6. Writing up

3.9.5.2 Dataset Familiarisation

To become familiar with the dataset, the LR read and re-read each transcript several times. Braun and Clarke (2022) suggest that this ‘immersion’ in the data takes place before critical engagement, when the researcher actively engages with data to make meaning. During the Familiarisation stage, there are several questions which a researcher can ask themselves, such as:

- How does the person make sense of whatever they are discussing?
- What assumptions do they make in describing the world?
- What kind of world is revealed through their account?

Unique personal experiences and motivations are thought to impact how a researcher responds to these questions, ultimately impacting the interpretation of data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The LR created memos during the familiarisation process (Appendix U), a practice which is considered a ‘best-known’ approach to harnessing reflexive validity in research before formal data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). These memos show transparent meaning-making based on the subjective knowledge and experiences of the LR. This reflexive process is thought to reduce the likelihood of developing a shallow analysis, by encouraging a researcher to consider alternative interpretations to the initial reactions to data.

3.9.5.3 Coding

Coding is described as a systematic process of working with data, whereby code labels are produced in direct relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke (2022),

Segments of data can be coded with multiple meanings and other segments may not be coded at all if they lack relevance to the research question. Meaning and patterning are made across the entire dataset, which is thought to lead to robust and detailed analytic interrogation. Braun and Clarke (2022) suggest that coding provides insight through close engagement with the data, meaning that analysis becomes deeper and can take time before themes are developed.

3.9.5.4 Inductive coding

Due to time constraints experienced by the co-researchers, the LR began a process of inductive coding independently. Inductive coding refers to the process of making meaning from the data, as opposed to semantic coding, which uses theory to make meaning. However, Braun and Clarke (2022) suggest that the two types of coding exist as a spectrum rather than a dichotomy, meaning that both can be used to analyse data. The LR used an inductive coding style initially, as it is suggested that using the dataset as a starting point for making meaning is an approach which can give voice to participants in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2022, P. 56). However, the LR also recognised that pure inductive analysis is impossible due to the researcher's insights which ultimately shape what is noticed (Fine, 1992).

3.9.5.5 Semantic coding

There are two ways to capture meaning through coding. Semantic coding refers to that which is participant-driven or descriptive, whereas latent coding is researcher-driven or conceptual, meaning that codes are often abstracted and refer to implicit

meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The LR used semantic coding because this process captures explicitly expressed meaning and stays close to the language used by participants, which aligned with the purpose of the study to promote the voices of CEDA. Latent coding is described as a process which can be somewhat abstracted from the obvious content of a dataset, which the LR tried to avoid, but later evolved during member checking. The transcripts were each read through and coded twice, which is thought to improve rigour (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

3.9.5.6 Member checking

Member checking has been suggested as a means of achieving rigour in qualitative research, through enhancing the credibility of interpretations made about data (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Member checking aligned with the social constructivist epistemological stance of the current study, which assumes that knowledge is created through subjective experience and therefore researchers construct knowledge through interaction with participants. The LR offered all co-researchers to individually to member check the code labels applied to their transcripts. Each co-researcher individually met the LR using Microsoft Teams video conferencing, where the screen share function was used to share the transcribed interviews with code labels attached. Each meeting lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour and 30 minutes. The LR began by explaining the process of coding and offering options to co-researchers about how to initiate the process. Each co-researcher requested the LR to read out the transcript and assigned code label, so that the co-researchers did not have to read everything themselves. The co-researchers were then invited to decide whether they felt the code labels reflected

the meaning they were making or edit the wording as they saw fit. A sample of a member-checked transcript can be seen in Appendix V.

3.9.5.7 Theme development and review

At stage four of RTA, Braun and Clarke (2022) describe an iterative process of theme development which shifts in focus to the micro details in the dataset and back out again to a wider lens. Themes are described as capturing a wide range of data that are united by a shared idea and backed up with evidence from across the dataset. At this stage, the label of ‘candidate themes’ is applied to support the view that the themes are not yet finalised. Braun and Clarke (2022) make a clear distinction between a theme and a topic summary, with the latter representing everything that participants say about a topic rather than reflecting shared meaning. A theme should instead ‘dig down’ below the surface and present ideas which aren’t necessarily obvious in the data and which tell a story about the dataset. At the request of the co-researchers, the LR began generating initial themes independently, by clustering patterns of codes across the data set (see Appendix W). The LR met with the co-researchers as a group using Microsoft Teams and shared the code clusters and candidate themes using the screen share function. The co-researchers engaged in discussion about the clusters and shifted some codes to different groupings. The co-researchers decided at this stage that they wanted the LR to complete the data analysis independently and check back with them once final themes were generated.

3.9.5.8 Theme refining, defining and naming

Phase four of RTA offers an extension to stage three and a ‘check in’ on theme development through re-engagement with the dataset. Braun and Clarke (2022) suggest that the purpose of this stage is to review the viability of initial clustering and to explore the scope for potential better pattern development. Researchers must determine the most relevant and important patterned meaning that speaks both about the data and the wider context. This is a process which is thought to be robust yet flexible and can be supported through the use of mind maps to enable nationalist of the relationship between themes. At this stage, the LR combined several candidate themes on the basis of shared meaning and refined the themes several times, which can be seen the in evolving thematic maps in Appendix X. The LR met with the co-researchers again who member-checked a list of quotes which the LR had pre-selected to support each theme and sub-theme. Support was sought from the LR's supervisor at this stage, which led to the production of the final thematic map which is presented with the findings in section 4.2.

3.9.6 Research stage 5

3.9.6.1: Research dissemination

A plan to collaborate with co-researchers around dissemination activities is discussed in section 5.8.

3.9.7 Reflexivity:

Research reflexivity in PR is described as 'checking in' with participants about their experiences of the research process (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015a). To facilitate this, the LR offered the co-researchers options around how to collect their reflections on the research process. The co-researchers decided to post comments into a comment box for the LR to read after each face-to-face research meeting, and to share verbal comments at the end of each virtual meeting (see Appendix Y for a sample of reflective comments).

3.10 Trustworthiness of the study

PR has been criticised for lacking credibility due to reduced trustworthiness and rigour (Lennie 2006). Although it possesses some desirable characteristics, the novelty and flexibility of qualitative research can pose questions concerning its credibility. Yardley (2000) suggests that there are four guiding principles which can be used to asses the quality of PR research, including sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence and impact and importance.

3.10.1 Sensitivity to the context

The LR was sensitive to the idea that the co-researchers were likely to have different experiences and understanding of DA. To date, some studies in this field have tackled this issue by adapting language used in interviews with children (Callaghan et al., 2015), however, this decision has often been made without consulting CYP on their preferred choice of language. The LR sought support on this topic from the leader of the local CODA programme, who gave shared some of the language they used, for

example ‘hurting and fighting’ instead of ‘domestic abuse’. The LR was concerned with not acting paternalistically, so instead of deciding on what language to use throughout the research, both terms were presented on the consent forms and this was brought as a topic for discussion in the first research session. This aligns with the suggestion that ethical symmetry requires us to acknowledge children’s competence, as well as their right to have a view on something which affects them Groundwater-Smith et al., (2015b).The co-researchers decided to use the term ‘abuse between parents’, as they felt this was a clearer way of describing inter-parental abuse within the home.

3.10.2 Commitment and rigour

Commitment and rigour were achieved in this study through the recruitment of three co-researchers who were involved throughout the research stages, including refining the research question, data collection, analysis and dissemination. The voices of the co-researchers were valued and the LR handed them several decisions to make, which is said to increase stakeholder representativeness (Lennie, 2006). During data analysis, coded transcripts were member checked by co-researchers and they collaboratively developed the final themes with the LR, which increased the trustworthiness of the study in representing the voices of CEDA.

3.10.3 Transparency and coherence

This study adopted an epistemological and methodological approach which was appropriate to the aim of promoting the voices of a marginalised group. The PR approach enabled CEDA to be involved in decision-making at different stages of the research in ways which felt agreeable to them. During the data analysis stage, the LR

followed a process of semantic coding rather than latent, which reduces the need for interpretation of CYPs voices which could risk misrepresentation. During the familiarisation stages of data analysis, the LR created memos about initial thoughts and insights, a process which is said to support the identification of bias when analysing data (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

3.10.4 Impact and importance

The concept of empowerment can be used to justify oppressive practices (Humphries, 2017), which is important to consider in PR which seeks to redress power. To minimise this risk, a critically reflexive approach was adopted to reflect on issues of power between co-researchers throughout the research process. The LR provided regular opportunities for the co-researchers to reflect on the research process, which is suggested to improve the evaluation of PR (Lennie, 2006). Yadley (2000) suggest that research value can be assessed through its ability to provide novel perspectives on an issue. This is achieved in the current research through the collaboration with CEDA to refine a research question which is important to them, rather than a pre-determined focus on their experiences of DA. This could lead to long-term social change in the way in which CEDA are represented, seen or spoken about in the literature, which currently positions them as transactional participants in sharing their experiences of DA.

Chapter Four: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the data analysis, which aimed to address the following research question:

"How can adults help children who have experienced abuse between parents, to express themselves?".

The data was collected via semi-structured interviews which were conducted by the LR. RTA was used to analyse the data and the co-researchers were also involved at this stage (see section 3.9.5.1). The data analysis produced three themes and ten sub-themes, which are presented below in figure 4.1.

4.2 Thematic analysis

Figure 4.1

Thematic Map

As displayed in figure 4.1, the theme 'Our right for support', which encompassed three subthemes, will be discussed first. Following this, the theme 'Developing trusting relationships' with its four subthemes will be presented. Finally, the theme 'Check with us' and its three subthemes will be discussed. Although the themes are presented in a linear order in figure 4.1, it is important to note that the themes are not linear. Instead, the themes can be viewed as interrelated in answering the research question, which is represented by the joint connecting lines in the thematic map. The co-researchers will be referred to by their chosen pseudonyms throughout; Dog, Ruby and Unicorn.

4.2.1 Theme: Our right for support

The co-researchers expressed that they have a right to be supported by adults in their lives. This is initially suggested in the interview question developed by the co-researchers that explicitly asked, 'What can adults do to help children to express themselves?' (see interview schedule in Appendix S). The question itself assumes a position that children require support and this concept is strengthened in the answers that the co-researchers gave throughout their interviews. The theme 'our right for support' is shaped by a recurring reference made to the difficulties that CEDA experience with expressing and managing emotions.

4.2.1.1 Subtheme: Expectations of support

Children had expectations of support, including what support should look like and how it should function in an ideal world. For example, when asked what adults can do to help children express themselves, Ruby suggested that adults are responsible for perceiving children's emotions and offering support accordingly.

> "...*if kids are like having a bad day or something and they look sad, the parent or a teacher or just any adult in general they could ask them, Are you okay? Do you need somebody to talk to?"* (Ruby, lines 7-9).

Ruby infers that that support should be responsive and offered on an *ad hoc* basis. There is an implication that the responsibility of supporting children lies with adults, which reflects a normative idea of parent-child relationships in the Western world. Further, there is an expectation that adults are attuned to the non-verbal communication

expressed by children, meaning that they can read and interpret facial expressions and body language. This expectation of support relies on the idea that children outwardly express their emotions in a way that is transparent and perceptible. This is further evidenced when Ruby later says,

> *"Umm. Well, with me, I like to express myself, like if I feel if I feel happy, I just I would be happy, if I'm sad. Uh, I would just look sad*" (Ruby, lines 131-132).

Ruby does not indicate an awareness of the possible ambiguity of interpreting emotions. It could be suggested that Ruby expects to receive support from adults who know her well enough that they can confidently pick up on subtle non-verbal communication cues and respond with accuracy.

Ruby is not alone in her expectation of support from adults and when talking about how adults can help children express themselves, Unicorn also shares,

> *"... if they [children] feeling upset or something, and you could like recognise it, like recognise what happened that could be possibly upsetting (Unicorn, lines 43-45).*

In this extract, Unicorn also suggests that adults should be able to recognise when children are feeling upset, which reinforces the expectation that adults must be attuned to children. Unicorn does not explicitly address how adults may come to know that children are feeling upset, though the omission of this fact could suggest that she expects adults to be aware of a child's inner emotional state. There is an additional suggestion that after adults have interpreted how children are feeling, they should use

this information to support children to reflect on what events could have led to the emotional state. Interestingly, Unicorn uses the phrase ‘recognise’, which implies that adults should base their interpretations on concrete, recognisable events, rather than making abstract inferences. There is an underlying assumption that adults should have a good enough understanding of individual children to enable support to be personalised according to their unique situation. By positioning adults in this way, there is an expectation that children should have access to adults who know them well and that these adults should use their skills to provide appropriate support.

4.2.1.2 Subtheme: Availability of individualised support

The participants highlighted the availability of support as being a crucial factor in supporting them to express themselves effectively. For some, this meant being able to independently access support at any time, so that they could express themselves in a meaningful way without causing significant disruption to their environment. For example, Unicorn says,

> *“... I had like something, called umm a feelings book, umm, where I would write down like how I was feeling, umm like, in lesson time, like let’s say we’re doing quiet w-, let’s say we’re doing quiet learning or like doing quiet reading, I could write it down quickly and continue with my work” (Unicorn, lines 108-111).*

For Unicorn, immediate access to her feelings book was a crucial component in perceiving it as an effective support tool. The emphasised context of a quiet learning environment in which this immediacy was important also indicates the need for support

to be discreet. Accessing a support tool which did not alert or disrupt her peers and enabled her to swiftly return to her learning task is implied as useful. This leads to the assumption that effective support is therefore contextual, with factors such as availability and subtlety making it successful.

The implied dichotomy between support which is readily available, as opposed to support which is not, is a pattern which emerges strongly across the dataset. For some children, this related to support in the form of a trusted adult being available to speak to.

> *"Umm, Like if I, like if I need to express myself, but the person that I want to speak to, either they're not in, or they're busy, like makes me a bit, it makes me a bit upset because then I have to wait until later on to speak to them" (Ruby, lines 206-208).*

Ruby implies that when support to express herself is not readily available, additional hardship can be encountered. Inherent in Ruby's extract is the suggestion that although children may know how to seek effective support, there are sometimes external barriers to doing so. Environmental factors such as a trusted adult not being readily available to speak to are implied as problematic, which also suggests that children have individual competency in reflecting on what makes support effective. This will be discussed further in section 5.7.

4.2.1.3 Sub-theme: Help, not pressure

It has been highlighted that the children in this study find it helpful to express themselves to an adult or through writing in a feelings book. However, the co-

researchers indicate that there is a line to be drawn between when expressing themselves is helpful, versus when there is a perceived pressure to share. For example, when asked how he feels about expressing himself, Dog says,

> *Dog: Uh, I feel good sometimes. Because I can let it out.*
> *Interviewer: Why only sometimes?*
> *Dog: Cus maybe like, cus like, when I express myself, and like, something personal, I feel like like, they're forcing me. That's why.*
> (Dog, lines 226-231)

This extract suggests that children may not always want to or feel able to express themselves in certain situations. Dog shares the message that expressing himself only feels 'good' when it has been his choice to do so, with an indication that expressing 'personal' information can be more difficult. Though it is unclear what 'personal' means to Dog, it could be considered that discussing personal experiences such as DA could be categorised as more difficult to speak about.

The idea that perceptions of support are not fixed suggests that free will has an important part to play in the effectiveness of adult support. It seems that children benefit from having access to a protected space to express themselves when they feel that this will be helpful. This is evident when Dog later says,

> *"Like, cus sometimes like you hold stuff, like that you wanna say. And then after when you do say it, like, it relieves you."*
> *(Dog, 250-251).*

The introspection demonstrated by Dog in this extract suggests a sophisticated awareness of how expressing himself can lead to the feeling of 'relief'. There is a suggestion that children have a good insight into when they may benefit from expressing themselves, thus meaning that support should be available to access but that children should not be placed under pressure to share information about their thoughts and feelings. This assertion of choice demonstrates an operation of power, which will be discussed further in section 5.5.1.

Undue encouragement placed on children to share their feelings about a topic when they have chosen not to is interpreted as forceful and unhelpful. This is also implied by Ruby when she shares her ideas about how an adult should respond to finding a 'worry' in a worry box in school.

> *Interviewer: ... Is there a specific way that they [adults] might approach the child or ask them questions?*
> *Ruby: Umm, so like, if the child needs somebody to talk to, they could maybe go up to the teacher and ask them "Can I talk to you outside?".*
> *(Ruby, lines 105 - 109)*

It is interesting that although Ruby is asked to share her ideas about what adults can do in this situation, she suggests that children should have the agency to approach an adult if they would like a private space to talk. This implies that the preferential situation is a child accessing support when they need it, rather than being directly asked by an adult to express themselves about a specific topic.

The situations in which children experience pressure to express themselves are nuanced, with the suggestion that additional contextual factors impact how children perceive support as either helpful or pressured. For example, Unicorn says

> *"...like when I was in therapy once, like I tried talking about how I felt at school and stuff and like they kept reminding me, umm they kept reminding me that this was about domestic abuse and that I had to talk about that. And I couldn't really express myself about how I felt. I feel like you should just let them [children] talk about it if they want to and if they don't then that's fine".*
> *(Unicorn, lines 400 - 407).*

This experience shared by Unicorn reflects a specific example of a space which has been designed by adults as supportive, but has been experienced by the child as forceful. The reflection shared by Unicorn that she "tried" talking about how she felt at school represents a willingness to engage with the support offered to her. However, the support provided was inflexible and prescriptive which presented a barrier to expressing herself. This suggests that paternalistic support, or that which pre-empts what will be helpful for children, could impede children from expressing themselves. The implication of not taking a child's view into account when devising support can lead to children experiencing further distress or pressure. This has implications for how support services are designed, monitored and evaluated and will be discussed further in section 5.7.

4.2.1.4 Theme summary

The children in this study all expected to be supported by adults and demonstrated individual preferences over how support should be facilitated. This

suggests that children are not only competent in this area, but that they benefit from having their views taken into account. Children expect to be supported by adults who know them well and can interpret their non-verbal communication and respond accordingly. Thus, the expectation is that support should be personalised in a way that suits an individual child's communication style and emotional needs. The right to support is shaped by the assumption that children are autonomous beings who are competent in making choices about when to express themselves, otherwise, support can be perceived as unhelpful or forceful.

4.2.2 Theme: Developing trusting relationships

The children in the study expressed that trusting relationships between adults and children are imperative for children to be able to express themselves. This was mostly implied through discussion around the specific relational conditions adults should create to enable children to express themselves comfortably.

4.2.2.1 Subtheme: Care and connection

Adults showing care and making the effort to connect with children was suggested to be an important factor in enabling children to express themselves. The expression of care sometimes related to physical and concrete actions which adults could take. For example, in discussion about how adults can support children to express themselves, Ruby said,

“Umm... if they look upset, you [adult] could get them, maybe a glass of water or give them a hug.”
(Ruby, lines 20-21)

This suggests that children place value on non-verbal actions which demonstrate care. Interestingly, Ruby once again referred to the idea that adults should interpret the emotions of children when she says ‘if they look upset’. Thus, it could be inferred that children expect attuned interactions with adults in which adults interpret body language and respond with care. There is a suggestion that adults may anticipate both the physical and emotional needs of children. For example, when asked how adults have helped Ruby to express herself before, she said,

“Umm, once I was really, really tired and uh, a bit upset. So my teacher, she took me outside of the classroom and she let me lay down in the book corner.”
(Ruby, lines 34 - 35).

In this extract, Ruby once again conveys the idea that her teacher was able to interpret her non-verbal communication and respond accordingly. The response from the teacher is seemingly non-verbal but demonstrates that care and compassionate actions are important to children as a precursor to expressing themselves. There is an indication that children value adults using their existing knowledge around ‘what helps’. For example, Ruby said, “she took me outside”, which suggests that this was the teacher's idea rather than an explicit request from the child. Ruby goes on to say “she let me lay down”, which implies that in order to accept adults in the role of a carer, children position themselves as having less power.

Similarly to Ruby but with a focus on verbal expression, Dog described how adults can support children to express themselves.

> *"Like, maybe, by asking them, like, personal questions to see like, to show like you're caring for them. Anything that calms you, or if you need help, ask for me." (Dog, lines 445 - 446).*

There is an explicit suggestion that adults should show that they are "caring" for children by asking them questions about themselves. This concept of care seems to move away from the meeting of basic needs and transcends into personal connection. The idea that adults should be able to ask children personal questions to show care and interest, implies that a supportive adult must know a child well enough to do so. The suggestion that adults should be aware of the ways that they can support a child to feel calm and reassured could also be described as having a well-developed trusting relationship.

4.2.2.2 Subtheme: Open communication

Open lines of communication between adults and children were valued by all of the co-researchers. For some, this was implied implicitly through their understanding of system policies which have been clearly expressed. For example, when Ruby was explaining the use of a 'worry box' in her school, she explained,

> *"Umm, if there's one that's a bit, that she [teacher] finds a bit disturbing, she would tell umm... She would either tell the office or Doctor [Headteacher] and then they could speak to either the child or the parent.*

(Ruby, 87 - 89)

It is implied in this extract that children find clear communication around policies and procedures helpful in understanding what to expect when expressing themselves. Ruby describes the 'worry box' procedure as a matter of fact and there appears to be little resistance to this policy being implemented. This could suggest that having a clear step-by-step process is containing for children in enabling them to understand what will happen if they express themselves. There is an explicit awareness from Ruby that the teacher will interpret what she reads and respond accordingly. However, Ruby later implies how a lack of open lines of communication could as a barrier to her expressing herself.

> *"Umm, I feel like if I've, like if I'm expressing myself to someone that I don't know, I feel like that they could, Like if I want to speak to someone that I don't know but that my mum does, and I don't speak to my mum, they could tell my mum."*
> *(Ruby, lines 301-303)*

This extract highlights how unclear lines of communication, for example, the breaking of confidentiality without consent, can deter children from expressing themselves. From this it could be inferred that adults should not make assumptions about what information can be shared with whom, without the permission of the child. There is an implication that children require some level of confidentiality agreement to feel safe to express themselves. This was also conveyed by Unicorn who shared ideas about how adults can help her to express herself.

“Mhmm. I did find it hard to talk to adults like, through a period of time like because one, umm, because once umm I got into like an argument with my mum and I told the school counsellor, [...] and she told my mum that and me and my mum had a talk about it”
(Unicorn, 317 - 320)

This extract indicated how a lack of communication around information sharing can deter children from expressing themselves to adults. Therefore, trusting relationships are contextual, fragile, and require continued maintenance to be perceived by children as a safe space in which they can express themselves. Equally, experiencing a rupture to a trusting relationship could act as a deterrent to children expressing themselves. However, it is suggested that trusting relationships can be repaired, which Unicorn continues to reflect on when she says,

“And now I understand why she, umm why she [school counsellor], and now I understand why she told my mum ‘cus I did say something that were a bit umm, that weren’t very nice. And some things that could like, make it seem like I was in danger, [...] I felt like they betrayed my trust, but now I understand why they had to say that.”
(Unicorn, lines 320 - 326).

In her reflection, Unicorn considered why the information had to be shared with her mother due to a risk of danger. This infers that to repair a rupture in a trusting relationship, children must be developmentally able to take the perspective of another, a skill which could be related to Unicorn’s older chronological age of 12. Although Unicorn can eventually reflect on why “they betrayed my trust”, it is pertinent to consider the impact that this had during the interim. When children feel that they do not have access

to a trusted adult, they may be unable to express themselves, which has important implications for schools (see section 5.7.2). Therefore, open lines of communication are particularly important in the context of developing and maintaining trusting relationships where children feel that their confidentiality is respected and that they are safe to express themselves.

4.2.2.3 Subtheme: Feeling understood

The co-researchers frequently implied that receiving a response which is perceived as appropriate, leads to children feeling understood. This concept emerged frequently when the co-researchers shared successful experiences of expressing themselves. Each of the co-researchers referred to having people in their lives with whom they prefer to express themselves to, based on experiences of mutual understanding. Although each co-researcher presented a different preferred person to express themselves to, the commonality was that each felt understood by their supportive person, through the responses they received.

For some, feeling understood by supportive adults was described within the context of school relationships.

> *"Because, my head teacher, um, she takes it seriously. And my teacher... um, my teacher cus... like, she doesn't like, she's like in the middle. So like she doesn't take it too seriously or like too umm, what its called again, you know like big..."*
> *(Dog, lines 331 - 333)*

This extract suggests that for an adult to be successful in supporting a child to express themselves, they must first consider what kind of support is being sought and respond accordingly. The use of measurement concepts “middle” and “big” could imply that there is a scale by which children judge the seriousness of their situation. Further, a supportive adult must interpret the situation in a similar way to the child, to provide a response which is felt to be appropriate. This rests on the assumption that adult responses to children should be fluid and based on the specific interaction between the adult and child, echoing the aforementioned idea that support must be responsive for it to be perceived as meaningful and effective.

Similarly, Ruby reflects the desire to be understood and responded to in a meaningful way when she explains why her Auntie is her preferred person to express herself to.

> *“...like at home if somethings gone on I would go up to her [Aunties] house. I would tell her whats happened and she would be like “You okay?” and I’d be like “Yeah I’m fine it’s just that somethings gone on”, umm, and then she’d come down and maybe see what it is”.*
> *(Ruby, lines 172 - 176).*

In this extract, there is a suggestion that the conversational exchange between Ruby and her Auntie is the important element, with Ruby’s Auntie responding in a way that makes Ruby feel understood. Although Ruby uses vague language when she explains “somethings gone on”, it seems to be received with appropriate seriousness, warranting a visit from her Auntie who is willing to investigate the situation. There seemed to be less of a focus on the specific language used to communicate, with the

value being placed on the appropriate response from the trusted adult. The way Ruby described this interaction implies that this type of response is something that she has come to expect and appreciate from her auntie, implying again that the familiarity of a trusted adult is an important precursor to expressing oneself.

Feeling understood by supportive people is a concept which is also implied to function within peer relationships. For example, Unicorn identifies her friends as the people with whom she prefers to express herself and explains why.

> *"They have like, things in common with me. Like, they understand how I feel sometimes, like I have quite strict parents and stuff, so we talk about things together, yeah".*
> *(Unicorn, lines 267-268)*

Feeling understood by her peers is conceptualised by Unicorn as having "things in common", or peers being able to understand and relate to problems, which enables Unicorn to feel comfortable in expressing herself to them. Unicorn says that she and her friends "talk about things together", which indicates supportive relationships which are based on reciprocal understanding. This could have important ramifications for when support is offered by adults in practice, given that children may be unable to experience the same level of perceived understanding. There is an underlying assumption that adults should consider who the child is most likely to feel able to authentically express themselves to, which could have implications for the way in which EPs support CEDA (See section 5.7.3).

4.2.2.4 Subtheme: Reciprocal relationships

The co-researchers regularly evoked values of acceptance and respect as important cornerstones of trusting relationships and this theme presents how acceptance and respect must be reciprocated between children and adults. In order to achieve this, some co-researchers suggested that adults must be explicit. For example, when asked what a 'trusted adult' may be doing to support them to express themselves, Dog said,

> *And like saying, like, 'you're not gonna get in trouble'. For like, expressing yourself.*
> *(Dog, line 80).*

The suggestion that adults must provide reassurance to a child for them to express themselves freely, relies on the idea that there is a power imbalance between adults and children. If children must assess whether they will get into "trouble" for sharing information about their thoughts or feelings, it is difficult to ascertain whether children can feel truly accepted by adults who are supporting them. This double consciousness implies that children are aware of the different, possibly reprimanding ways with which adults could perceive them. Therefore, the unequal power and absence of acceptance within relationships could act as a barrier to children expressing themselves. It is inferred that the power must be redressed in order for children to feel safe to express themselves freely to adults.

Similarly, when asked what it was about her school counsellor which enabled her to express herself, Unicorn discussed the conditions which made it possible.

> *"It's just that umm, umm, like they [school counsellor] kept it a secret and stuff and they didn't judge me when I talked about how I felt. Like, they didn't judge me at all. They just like told me ways like to not do that and still not shouting at me and asking me why I did it".*
> *(Unicorn, lines 308 - 311).*

As well as referring to the concept of confidentiality, it is implied that a non-judgemental, accepting response from adults is an essential component which enables children to feel safe to express themselves. There is an interesting implication that asking a child 'why' they have behaved or acted in a certain way is less helpful for children who are trying to express their feelings. Alternatively, adults responding through a non-blaming approach which focuses on managing future situations rather than dwelling on past incidents, seems to be more helpful. By redressing the power in this way, it is suggested that adults can transcend the support they offer by not only creating a safe space for children to express themselves but also equipping children with tools which could help them manage situations in the future. This may be particularly important for children like Unicorn and Dog, who identify themselves as being from a global majority background and thus have intersecting identities which may cause a lack of perceived power, which will be discussed further in the section 5.5.2.

4.2.2.5 Theme summary

The children in the study expressed a desire for adults to show them care and connection through their actions and words. Through the meeting of basic needs and spending time getting to know them, children describe how adults can enable to them feel comfortable enough to express themselves. Adults must respect the confidentiality of children and therefore procedures for sharing information must be outlined clearly, otherwise, trust can be broken and this can prove to be a barrier to children expressing themselves. There is importance placed on adults showing children that they have understood them, which is demonstrated through responding in appropriate ways to information shared by children. For some children though, understanding may come more readily from peers who experience similar contextual factors and thus adults must consider whom a child may feel most comfortable to express themselves to. The idea of a power imbalance between adults and children emerged strongly and to redress this, it is implied that adults must make a conscious decision to remove sanctions and judgments from their interactions with children, so that children can express themselves without fear of being reprimanded or judged.

4.2.3 Theme: Check with us

It was inferred by the co-researchers that support from adults to express themselves is most helpful when it is based on their expectations and preferences. To achieve this, adults must regularly ‘check in’ with children, which could include offering choices and avoiding support that is paternalistic or misunderstands the presenting problem.

4.2.3.1 Subtheme: Seek our views

This subtheme presents the common assertion from co-researchers that adults need to regularly seek the views of children. This is described as a regulatory concept with the idea that adults must regularly 'check' to see if the support they are offering is helpful. For some, this was suggested as being rooted within the aforementioned relational context. For example, when asked how adults should 'check in' with children, Ruby says,

> *"Well, like, for example, the adult could tell the child umm, like, how do you think - how do you think we're getting along? Do you think we're getting along well?". (Ruby, lines 349 -350)*

The indication that 'checking in' should focus on the state of the relationship rather than the content of the support is interesting. This suggests that adults may not always be aware of whether or not they have managed to create a safe, trusting relationship with children. Further, it could be implied that even when an adult feels they have achieved this, a child may hold a different view, which could impede them expressing themselves. The important concept here is that value must be placed on the child's view of the relationship, regardless of how the adult feels the relationship is going.

Furthermore, there is an indication that relational groundwork must be laid before support from adults can be perceived by children as helpful. When asked what kind of things adults can ask children to support them in expressing themselves, Dog said,

Dog: Umm. How are you feeling? Like, what's going through your mind?
(Dog, line 24).

The open questions proposed by Dog infer that adults should seek children's views to find out what will be helpful to discuss in the supportive space. This echoes the ideas presented in the sub-theme 'Help, not pressure', which highlighted the need for children to have agency in how they choose to express themselves. Children assume an expert position in knowing what should be discussed, which adults must hold in mind if they are to provide effective support. As well as enquiring into children's emotional states, the question "What's going through your mind" suggests that it could also be helpful for adults to ask children questions about how they are experiencing the present moment, which may indicate whether children are ready to express themselves. When asked what questions may be less helpful, Dog says,

Dog: Umm maybe like, if you just, firs me, first meet the children, like ask them about personal stuff.
Interviewer: Mmm. So you think start by asking them what, what kind of things they like, before going onto personal stuff?
Dog: Yeah.
Interviewer: Mm, that's a good idea. Is there anything else that you think adults shouldn't ask about?
Dog: Umm...I don't really know.
(Dog, lines 32 - 41)

Dog highlights the need for supportive adults to initiate conversations with children by seeking their views or finding out about their interests, before moving on to

what could be perceived as more challenging discussions about inner emotional states. It is implied that children may not be able to express themselves to adults if there is not an existing relationship. When Dog later says “I don’t know” regarding what questions adults should not ask children, it is implied that initial relationship building could be more important than the specific questions that should or should not be asked to children. Thus, if there is no rapport built, then children are unlikely to feel able to express themselves.

4.2.3.2 Subtheme: Create shared understandings

This sub-theme presents the idea of collaboration between adults and children as being imperative when creating a supportive space for children to express themselves. The co-researchers suggest that this includes seeking clarification around children’s communicative attempts and supporting them in developing their thoughts and ideas. The co-researchers presented this idea in different contexts, but each suggested that the important factor is for supportive adults to reach a shared understanding with the children that they are working with. Through the recollection of a negative experience of expressing himself, one participant described how he once felt misunderstood by an adult.

> *“Umm, It was like somebody, I think we were on Teams again, it was like, she was like you. And what’s it called again... Umm, she was asking me, um something, what’s it called again... I forgot what it was. And I like, I shook my head at it, cus, like, I was like, I froze cus it was something personal. I shook my head about it and she thought like, I shook my head like up and down, and stuff.*

(Dog, lines 174 - 178)

In parallel to the earlier theme 'developing trusting relationships', Dog explained how being asked a personal question by an adult he didn't know very well was something that he found difficult. Dog says "She was like you", which suggests that the adult asking the question was unfamiliar and therefore not someone who he has developed a trusting relationship with. Dog described how he 'froze' and reverted to non-verbal communication to answer the question, though this was misinterpreted by the adult. The fact that Dog recalls this experience as a negative suggests that being misunderstood by adults can hinder children who are trying to express themselves. He later goes on to explain that the adult was able to seek clarification on his answer.

Interviewer: "Oh. That's so difficult. What happened next?"
Participant 1: "Umm, I think she said 'is that a yes', and I said no. Like that (shakes head side to side)."
(Dog, line 186).

The clarification sought by the adult on this occasion seemed to be helpful for Dog, who implies that only then did they reach a shared understanding. There is a suggestion that not reaching a shared understanding with an adult can cause discomfort on behalf of a child and this could be particularly pertinent for children who rely on non-verbal communication. The implication is that adults must sensitively check their understanding with children who are expressing themselves. In a slightly different way, Unicorn also suggests that collaborating with children to reach a shared understanding is essential when offering support. When asked at the start of the interview what adults

can do to help children express themselves, Unicorn implies that adults should focus on creating a shared understanding with children about a plan of action.

> *Unicorn: Umm, they could ask them for ideas and stuff, or like going through things with them before doing something.*
> *Interviewer: Umm, yeah, when you say, ask them for ideas, what does that mean?*
> *Unicorn: Like, um like, if they want to do something with like the child yeah, like activities like fun activities, you can ask them what they want to do and how they want to do it.*
> *(Unicorn, lines 6-12)*

It is inferred that adults and children are likely to have different ideas and therefore the first step taken by an adult should be to reach a shared understanding with the child, which is unique to the given context. There is an implication that children are likely to feel more comfortable with expressing themselves if they feel they are in a situation in which they have some agency. Therefore, adults must redress the power imbalance by checking how a C/YP would prefer to engage with them, which may include freedom around activity choices or communication style,

4.2.3.3 Subtheme: Give us choices

The co-researchers all expressed the idea that children having choices about how they express themselves is integral. The name of this final subtheme, which was chosen by the co-researchers, positions children as lacking in power, with adults inevitably holding more power than children. To redress this imbalance, adults should empower children to make choices and experience a level of autonomy. For example,

when speaking about having a trusted adult present to enable him to feel safe to express himself, Dog said,

> *"Nah I might, I was saying that maybe somebody would think that the mum would be the trusted person, but it might just be someone else. So that's why, so like the child like should pick itself".*
> *(Dog, lines 102 - 103).*

By uncovering a potentially widely held assumption that a mother may be the trusted person for their child, Dog highlights the need for adults to ask children who their trusted person is. This is a strong point which represents the idea that adults may unknowingly act paternalistically. Although these assumptions may stem from good intentions, it is implied that to work in the best interest of children is to encourage them to have a voice and make choices. This mirrors implications of the previous subtheme around open communication, by suggesting that children require an understanding of the conditions of a confidential space. The underlying relationship between choice and confidentiality was also inferred by Unicorn when she explained how she managed the sharing of her 'feelings book' with adults.

> *"You can ask [to see the feelings book], you can, it's okay to ask and if they [children] say no then, then that's completely fine, unless like, unless it's like some really serious like, if the child has something serious mental issues or something like that, unless it's something that could put them in danger".*
> *"Unicorn, lines 85 - 85).*

In this extract, there is a suggestion that children should be enabled to demonstrate ownership over their inner emotional states and that expressing themselves to an adult is a choice they are welcome to but not pressured to make. The implication of this is that adults must both empower children to make these decisions and respect the final decision which is made. Interestingly, Unicorn recognised safeguarding contexts as a *caveat* to this autonomous decision-making, which could be related to the systemic institutions of which she is part. This mirrors findings from the earlier sub-theme of 'open communication', which implied that children can understand the need to break confidentiality when there is a perceived risk of harm. Further, it emerged that children benefit from adults empowering them to make their own decisions about what adult support should look like. It was implied that this can lead to children retaining a sense of autonomy and independence when expressing themselves.

> *"And that helped a lot and I could choose to show it to the teacher or I could choose to not so I could write private things in there and no one would look in there".*
> *(Unicorn, lines 117 - 118).*

The underlying factor of choice also emerged in a broader context. For example, Ruby spoke about seeking peer support in her school.

> *"...So when I go into year 6 I'm the school council. Umm, so if like, if people need to speak to someone but they don't wanna speak to an adult, they could come and speak to me".*
> *(Ruby, 390 - 392).*

Ruby described her position in the school council as a solution for children who feel unable to express themselves to an adult. This gave the impression that children need to feel psychologically safe to express themselves, which may be achieved through children feeling empowered to choose who to speak to. It is suggested that children seeking support are capable of making developmentally appropriate decisions which are in their best interests and also that children can enter the role of the supporter. Thus, adults must provide a range of opportunities for children to make choices about how to express themselves.

4.2.3.4 Theme Summary

This theme reflects the idea that children benefit from being given autonomy to make decisions about their support. Children are competent in making decisions at a developmentally appropriate level and for support to be received as helpful, adults must actively seek the views of children. The big picture implied throughout this theme was that children should be invited to work 'with' adults, rather than feeling like adults are doing 'to' them. The former includes adults reaching shared understandings with children, whereas the latter is based on adults acting paternalistically which can impede children from expressing themselves. It was inferred that the only *caveat* to autonomous decision-making was the potential risk of harm to children, a safe-guarding element which was accepted by some co-researchers and suggests that adults must remain attuned to risk.

4.3 Summary of findings

The data analysis led to the development of three themes and ten subthemes concerning the research question, *“How can adults help children who have experienced abuse between parents, to express themselves?”.* One theme explored the concept of children’s right to support, which included ideas regarding the expectations that children hold of support, the availability of support and the fine line between support which is helpful versus that which children perceive as pressured. This theme makes a reference to the operation of power within relationships, which will be discussed further in section 5.5.1. The second theme identified the need for trusting relationships between adults and children, which is conceptualised as adults needing to show care and connection, and provide open lines of communication which respect the balance between confidentiality and safeguarding. Children want to feel understood by adults through their responses and adults must maintain reciprocal relationships which are based on acceptance and respect for children. There were links made with Intersectionality, which will be discussed further in section 5.5.2. The third and final theme presented the idea that adults should ‘check in’ with children about what support should look like. This was conceptualized in several ways including the need for adults to seek children's views, create shared understandings and offer choices around how they would like to express themselves. There are links made throughout to psychological and conceptual theories, which will be further elaborated on in the following chapter.

4.4 Summary of chapter

This chapter presented the findings of the RTA. The themes and sub-themes were presented in a thematic map and then discussed in an analytic narrative, using

supporting evidence from interview transcripts. In the next chapter, the findings from this study will be discussed within the context of the existing research. The findings will be located in relation to existing relevant psychological theory and the strengths and limitations of the study will be explored. Finally, implications of the research will be discussed.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction to chapter

In this chapter, the findings of the study will be discussed in relation to the research aims, before moving on to locate the findings within the existing literature. The PTMF will then be used to consider the meaning of the findings, which will be discussed on a theme-by-theme basis to demonstrate how the operation of power is prevalent within each theme. The strengths and limitations of the study will be highlighted before moving on to consider implications for practice and suggestions for areas of further research.

5.2 Aims of research

A literature review carried prior to this study reflected a lack of participant cultural diversity, with participant ethnicity mostly non-disclosed. In the existing studies, data is analysed through adult-centric perspectives and there is little evidence regarding whether CYP benefit from participating in interviews about their experiences of DA. The LR therefore considered that CEDA may not have their voices authentically represented, and designed this research with the aims of:

1. Empowering CEDA to become co-researchers who are involved in research design, data collection, data analysis and dissemination.
2. Using a PR approach to explore what matters to CEDA.

The emancipatory purpose of the study was to allow co-researchers to present something of themselves with a reduced risk of misrepresentation by adults. The LR was interested in understanding how research could be conducted in a way that promoted the voices of the co-researchers. In the initial stages of the project, the research question developed by the LR was *'How can EP's promote the voices of CEDA?*'. The short-term aim of the study was to share decision-making with the co-researchers and the long-term goal was to contribute towards a paradigm shift in the way that CEDA are viewed as autonomous, competent and capable.

The findings will be discussed in the following sections concerning the final research question, which was developed and refined by the co-researchers.

Research Question: *'How can adults who work with children who have experienced abuse between parents, help them to express themselves?'.*

5.3 Overview of findings

RTA was used analyse the data and this produced 3 themes and 10 subthemes. At the request of the co-researchers, the LR lead on the RTA and the co-researchers were involved again during member checking of final themes, subthemes and extraction of quotes. In the first theme, the co-researchers outline their expectation of support from adults and address what they think this should look like. The data implies that support should be individualised and readily available, and is most helpful when children have sought to express themselves, but can otherwise be perceived as pressured and unhelpful. The second theme reflects the need for adults to develop trusting

relationships with children through showing care and meaningful connection. Relationships between adults and children should be rooted in open lines of communication in which adults remain attuned to risk and deliver information in developmentally appropriate ways to enable children to predict the outcome of interactions. Children expect meaningful responses from adults which are in line with their assessment of a given situation. The final theme presents the idea that adults must involve children in making decisions about their support through creating shared understandings and avoiding making assumptions or acting paternalistically.

5.4 Findings within the context of previous research

The findings of the current project will now be discussed in relation to the existing research. The literature review that was carried out as part of this project focused on exploring CYP's experiences of DA. The current project had a nuanced focus due to the co-researchers' decision to refine the research question, which focused on exploring how adults can support CEDA to express themselves. Therefore, only the findings from the existing literature which are applicable to the findings of the current study will be discussed. The findings will be discussed theme by theme, and similarities and differences to the existing literature will be highlighted.

5.4.1 Theme: Our right for support

The existing literature which explores children's experiences of DA discusses the pervasiveness of violence, which children perceive as life-threatening and chronic (Miranda et al., 2021; Øverlien, 2013). These studies represent significant progress in the way in which children are engaged and represented in research, through the active

involvement of children as participants. Øverlien (2013) placed their research within the sociology of childhood, describing children as active constructors of their social world. Having interviewed a sample of 25 children aged 8 - 20 years old who were living in shelters for abused women, Øverlien (2013) found that children expressed pervasive fear which was described as having impacted the interview situation by leaving little room for a positive experience. The LR questioned the beneficence of these children being involved as research participants. Similarly, Georgsson et al. (2011)
report that several of the CYP interviewed in their study found it difficult to talk about their experiences of DA. The idea that recalling experiences of DA may cause further harm aligns with findings from the current study, which conveyed that children sometimes found it distressing when asked to talk about their experiences of DA. The children in the current study recalled specific therapeutic experiences of being pressured to talk about or feeling forced to answer questions relating to their experiences of DA. This has serious implications for how CYP are empowered to invoke their rights relating to decisions made about their support, and will be further discussed as a threat response within the PTMF in section 5.5.

Thinking instead about what support for children should look like, Øverlien (2013) implies that professionals working with CEDA should aim to distinguish what 'type' of violence they have experienced to provide the most effective support. Drawing on a second theoretical framework known as the typology of intimate partner violence (Johnson, 1995), Øverlien (2013) concluded that children in their sample had experienced patriarchal terrorism, a high and long-lasting level of coercive control, and needed immediate safety measures to be put into place by first response professionals.

This differs from the findings of the current study, which suggest that CEDA expect support to be individualized based on their idiosyncrasies, such as adults being able to pick up on non-verbal communication cues that they want support to express themselves. The differences in findings are likely to stem from methodological differences, given that the current study interviewed children whose experiences of DA were historic and undefined in terms of 'type'. The claim that CEDA have their ideas about support however does align with another conclusion made by Øverlien (2013) that even within typologies of DA, children have their own subjective experiences of DA which can vary in impact and must not be ignored. Individual differences in experiences of DA and ideas about support could be further explained by Intersectionality theory, which will be discussed in section 5.5.2.

5.4.2 Theme: Developing trusting relationships

The existing literature suggests that CEDA make sense of their experiences within a relational context (Johansen & Sundet, 2021; Swanston et al., 2014). Using a narrative Psychology approach (Gergen, 2015; Vetere & Cooper, 2017), Johansen and Sundet (2021) explain how children's narratives facilitate the important function of creating meaning from experiences and developing self-understanding and identity. They found in their interviews with children that one of the main psychological impacts of DA is the perceived loss of a caregiver, which can relate to both the breakdown in relationship with the perpetrator of abuse and the lack of protection from the non-abusive parent. This provides a useful context with which to interpret the findings of the current study, which infers that developing trusting relationships is a vital antecedent for CEDA to feel able to express themselves. The co-researchers described the need to

feel genuine care and connection from adults who are supporting them. A narrative psychology approach (Murray, 2008), would suggest that this meaning ascribed by children could be explained as serving the function of healing from the perceived loss of one or more caregivers following their experiences of DA. Vetere and Cooper (2017) suggest that respecting narratives provides a foundation for enabling room for more optimistic futures, which would infer that children's ideas about relational support must be prioritized.

Thinking in more detail about the kind of relationships which children require, the current study suggests that open lines of communication with adults is crucial. Building trust within relationships is based on the idea that adults should not make assumptions about whom information can be shared and that adults must respond to children in a way which promotes genuine understanding of situations. This aligns with findings from Swanston et al. (2014), who in their interviews with children found that some felt unable to trust school adults due to previous disclosures of DA which were not acted upon or taken seriously. Other children reported distancing themselves from their parents due to a lack of trust that their needs would be met, which suggests that a perceived lack of understanding which affected children's future help-seeking behaviour. Swanston et al. (2014) use attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988), to explain these adaptive strategies employed by children as being a direct result of not receiving responsive and consistent care-giving. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988) provides a helpful perspective with which to interpret the current findings which imply that CEDA must first develop trusting relationships with adults before they will feel able to express themselves. The idea that

children develop adaptive coping strategies will also be further explained as a threat response in section 5.5.

The findings of the current study infer that mutual understanding and respect within relationships are protective factors which enable children to express themselves. For some children, this included talking to their friends who they felt could relate to a similar home context or speaking with therapists whom they experienced as judgemental and upholding confidentiality. This aligns with the existing literature which suggests that social support at school in the form of both peers and teachers (Swanston et al., 2014) and therapeutic support (Chester & Joscelyne, 2021) can help CEDA to cope. Chester and Joscelyne (2021) discuss their findings within the Cognitive Contextual Model (Grych & Fincham, 1990), which describes how an individual's appraisals of their experiences can impact the emotional difficulties associated with it. They found that following experiences of DA, some children would ascribe blame to their mother or father, or even to themselves, which could then impact help-seeking behaviour in the future. The ascription of blame could help to explain why the current study found that CEDA prefer to express themselves to certain people and express a reluctance to express themselves to others due to fear of getting into trouble. The co-researchers reported that speaking to supportive adults was only helpful when there was a non-judgmental environment and appropriate responses given. Although the cognitive contextual model (Grych & Fincham, 1990) provides a useful explanation for how children's decision making is impacted by meaning made from previous experiences, this suggested agency must be viewed within the context of unequal power relations between adults and children. It could be reductionist to suggest that

CEDA with intersecting identities hold an equal level of agency to express themselves, which will be discussed further in section 5.5.2.

5.4.3 Theme 3: Check with us

In the existing literature, CEDA are suggested to be active in their response to violence and Callaghan and Alexander (2015) found through interviews that children described their agency to adapt to, accommodate and seek help around DA. In another study a year later, Callaghan et al. (2016) expanded on this and found that children are aware of the impact of the violence on themselves and they employ their agency to protect themselves from further pain by blocking out the violence to cope with daily life. By employing a systemic model (Ugazio & Fellin, 2013), Callaghan et al. (2016) suggest that children's experiences are always contextual, embodied and relational, which explains the ability of CEDA to position themselves as agentic against the perpetrator of DA. In the current study, the theme 'Check with us' builds on this concept of children as agentic beings by suggesting that they also use their agency in deciding when and how to express themselves. The findings suggest that CEDA seek agency around how to engage with supportive adults and express themselves using a variety of non-verbal methods. A systemic model (Ugazio & Fellin, 2013) can help with understanding this finding, given the suggestion that discursive practices of families, or how interactions are embedded within a familial context, often provide a basis for future conversational partners. Therefore, CEDA positioning themselves as agentic within supportive adult relationships could be a discourse which reflects previous experiences of using agency to cope with DA. Further, CEDA seeking increased agency could also be described as a threat response to managing unequal adult-child power relations,

which will be discussed further in relation to the PTMF (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018) in section 5.5.

The theme ‘Check with us’ also highlighted the strong view that for support to be effective, children require adults to reach shared understandings with them. For some co-researchers, this meant being actively involved with decision-making around how adults can support them. One co-researcher shared a powerful recollection of being misunderstood in conservation with a professional regarding his experience of DA, which led to further distress. This aligns with an interesting argument in the existing literature where using a discursive psychology approach (Edwards 2012), Naughton et al. (2019) suggests that CEDA may lack the language required to describe what has happened to them and seek help. In their interviews with 13 young people, it was suggested that the occurrence of extreme physical violence facilitated help-seeking behaviour and CYP’s ability to talk about the occurrence of DA. On the other hand, when physical violence has not occurred CYP can feel dis-empowered and unable to talk about or name the DA (Naughton et al., 2019). This provides a context for the findings of the current study which suggests that children actively construct their social world through language which can sometimes be misunderstood by adults. It is implied that CEDA are aware of this and they can feel disempowered when they are not included in decision-making processes. The key implication therefore is that responsibility must be shifted from children needing to align their language and thinking with adults, to instead adults needing to relinquish their power through negotiating and creating shared understandings with children, which is discussed further in section 5.7.2.

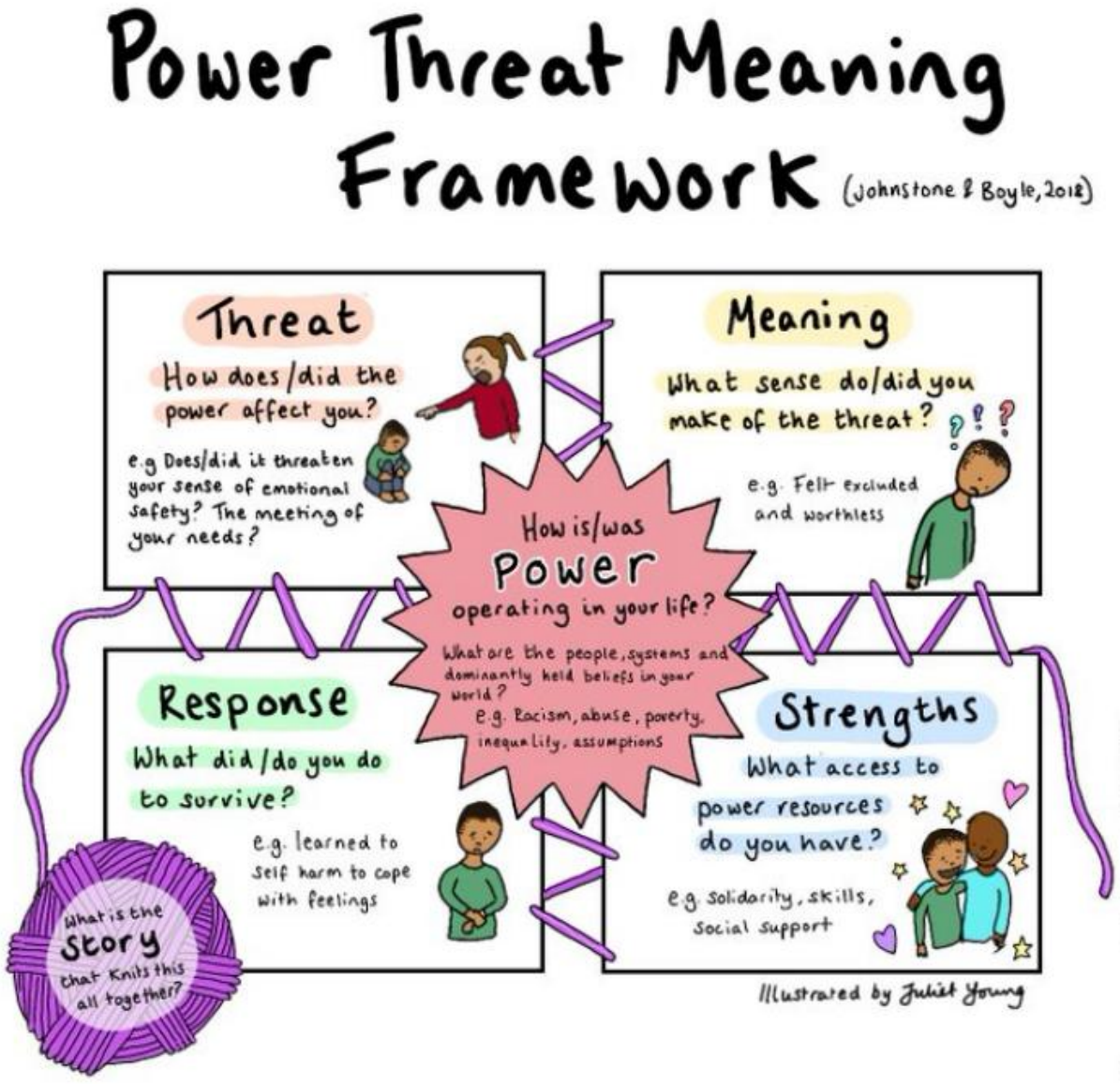
5.5 Findings within the context of Psychological theory

5.5.1 Power threat meaning framework

The PTMF suggests that explanations of emotional distress reflect the operation of power in society. With its roots in liberation and social justice approaches, there is a core assumption within the PTMF that those individuals in the world with power and privilege, work to maintain this through practices and processes which can be unjust (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018). It is proposed that emotional distress is a normal reaction to abnormal circumstances, which may be caused by biological, psychological or social factors. The framework offers an alternative to psychiatric diagnosis by aiming to make sense of the real problems that people face, whilst also encouraging them to claim a greater sense of control over their lives (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018). Perhaps most importantly, the PTMF conveys the importance of taking subjective experiences seriously, meaning therefore that service users should be positioned as experts by experience, with emphasis placed on their narratives (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018). Expression of emotional distress is viewed as coping and survival mechanisms which individuals engage in as a response to relational, social, cultural and material factors, which is illustrated below in figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1

Power Threat Meaning Framework illustration (Dr Juliet Young).



The PTMF aligns with the transformative paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2016), which suggests that some voices in society are marginalised. The issue of power

imbalances experienced by CEDA has been discussed previously and addressed in the current study through the use of a PR design. The findings of the current study resonate with PTMF and the co-researchers regularly implicitly refer to the operation of power as a mediating factor in being able to express themselves. The themes from the current study will now be discussed individually within the PTMF, with a focus on the relationship between the perceived operation of power and threat responses.

5.5.1.1 Theme: Our right for support

One of the strong ideas in this theme was the proposition that children have expectations about how adults can support them to express themselves. Children expect support to express themselves when they feel it will be helpful, rather than feeling forced to express themselves during therapeutic sessions or interactions with professionals. Several co-researchers recalled incidents of feeling pressured to talk about their experiences of DA, which suggests that paternalistic support can be perceived as threatening. The PTMF suggests that developing interventions from a narrow view can reduce one's psychological experiences into something which falls objective of the social world (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018). By focusing on ‘illness’, which in the context of the co-researchers could be viewed as emotional distress resulting from experiences of DA, the lived experience of the whole person is ignored. Downplaying the role of service user voice and personal meaning can lead to further marginalisation (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018). This emerges strongly in the findings when one of the co-researchers recalls wanting to use a therapy session to talk about

problems at school, but being re-directed to talk about her experience of DA. This presents an underlying assumption that the young person's emotional distress was a direct result of her experience of DA, rather than a more complex outcome of her experience of DA compounded by her current social and cultural environment. For the children in this study, a prescriptive approach to support offered by professionals sometimes led to further emotional distress, which provides a strong rationale for the inclusion of CEDA in decisions made about their support.

5.5.1.2 Theme: Developing trusting relationships

This theme implies that trusting relationships are non-negotiable and only when children feel care and connection are they enabled to express themselves. The findings were discussed in line with existing literature which utilised attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988) and the same ideas also underpin the PTMF, which highlights the importance of personal meaning and healing through relationships (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018). The picture however is more complex than this and findings from the current study imply that power must be more carefully negotiated between children and trusted adults for CEDA to feel empowered to express themselves. The co-researchers clearly expressed the need for open lines of communication relating to the confidentiality of therapeutic spaces and understanding of the system processes within which they exist. For some children, seeking social support from their peers was reflected as the option which enabled them to express themselves most freely. The PTMF would suggest that this is an adaptive response which decreases the threat to confidentiality. One co-researcher

spoke in detail about experiencing mistrust with professionals after having her confidentiality broken without warning, which led to her refraining from expressing herself in the presence of adults for some time afterwards. The co-researcher tells a story about a change in feelings of trust and interpreting this finding within the principles of the PTMF helps to justify why she adapted her behaviour to protect herself from further threat. The findings also suggest that when adults are transparent about safe-guarding procedures, children have the capacity to understand this and feel empowered to make a decision to express themselves due to the decreased threat to their confidentiality. This PTMF provides a basis for understanding how children use adaptive strategies to protect themselves from further threat or harm, which must be considered by a range of professionals who design support for CEDA.

5.5.1.3 Theme: Check with us

Children in the current study sought autonomy, which was expressed in terms of wanting to be given choices, share their views and create shared understandings with adults who were supporting them. This mirrors findings that children use agency to protect themselves from harm in situations of DA (Callaghan et al., 2015, 2016) and could be interpreted by the PTMF as a threat response. By drawing upon a variety of models, practices and philosophical traditions, the PTMF suggests that individuals act in intelligible ways to reduce the impact of the inequality of power and to reduce psychological distress. Therefore, children's need for agency could be an adaptive behaviour which serves the function of increasing a sense of psychological safety. One

of the co-researchers suggests that supportive adults should initially get to know a child by asking about their interests, which aligns with the idea from community psychology that to redress power imbalances, there should be a universal approach to people's experiences and strengths (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018). The co-researchers implied that adults can help children express themselves by asking them what 'fun' activities they would like to engage in, which could be viewed as allowing for a more balanced perception of power in interactions between CEDA and supportive adults. This has important implications for how CEDA should be involved in designing provision which aims to support them to express themselves.

5.5.1.4 Summary of findings within PTMF

The findings of the current study have been discussed in relation to the PTMF (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018), which allowed for a deep analysis of the operation of power present within each theme. This idea is also presented below in figure 5.2, which represents the power-threat response discussed in each theme.

Figure 5.2

Findings within the Power-Threat Meaning Framework (O'Leary, 2024).

5.5.2 Intersectionality and Critical Race Theory

Having discussed the findings in relation to the PTMF, an intersectional lens will now be used to explore the individual differences which became apparent amongst the co-researchers. Intersectionality theory was developed by Crenshaw (1989) to describe the double discrimination experienced by Black women. It is now widely used to refer to the multiple layers of advantage or disadvantage which individuals can experience due to differing aspects of their identity. Intersectionality theory provides a useful lens for this study which was grounded in a social constructionist paradigm, thus suggesting that there are multiple versions of reality which are socially constructed by individuals. Within the transformative element of the current study, it is also acknowledged that these

realities are shaped in part by existing power structures within society which can cause oppression. This too fits well with the PTMF which accounts for the heterogeneity of experience and threat responses as a function of individual adaptation.

As discussed previously, the co-researchers each identified individual adults and peers with whom they felt most comfortable expressing themselves to. It is interesting to note that one co-researcher who self-identified as having Nigerian ethnicity made specific reference to avoiding getting into trouble when expressing himself. Another self-identified Nigerian co-researcher expressed the need to not feel judged by adults when expressing herself and went on to state that she prefers to express herself with her friends who she feels understand her home situation best. The shared racial identity of these two co-researchers could explain their expression of a perceived lack of power and reluctance to express themselves to adults, which is not a theme which emerged in the same way in the transcript of their White British counterpart, who preferred to express herself to her auntie and teacher. The perceived lack of power experienced by the two co-researchers from a global majority heritage could be further explained by Critical Race Theory (Crenshaw et al., 1995), which argues that racial bias is inherent in many parts of the institutions within the UK. The two co-researchers referred to their experiences of school and therapeutic settings in their interviews, which may suggest that their lack of perceived power is an outcome of previously experienced institutional racism and unconscious bias. This carries vital importance for the need to consider heterogeneity of experiences of DA and professionals must consider the impact of intersecting identities when designing supportive provision, given that CEDA from Black

and global majority backgrounds may experience additional difficulties in expressing themselves in white-dominated institutions.

5.6 Strengths and limitations of methodology

5.6.1 Reflection on research aims

The current study took a PR approach and the involvement of the co-researchers has been represented through Aldridge's participatory model (Aldridge, 2017). Although it is suggested that participants should reflect on their involvement themselves, the current reflections (see table 3.3), belong to the LR due to awaiting evaluation of the study from the co-researchers perspective. The involvement of the co-researchers during each research stage would suggest that the first aim of the study - to empower CYP who have experienced DA to become co-researchers who are involved in research design, data collection, data analysis and dissemination - was met. The second aim of the study was to explore what matters to CEDA and to support this the co-researchers were involved in refining the research question. The LR acknowledges that the involvement of the co-researchers at this stage felt akin to the 'participant as actor' space (Aldridge, 2017). This could be seen as a limitation of the research, as the initial posing of a research question to the co-researchers could have influenced their thinking and decision-making process. However, the co-researchers did develop their unique research question which was used as a point of study throughout the rest of the project. It could therefore be suggested that the research did empower CEDA to share their authentic views, which aligns with the espoused values and legislative context of RP practice (Department Of Education, 2014a; Fox, 2015).

In line with the emancipatory purpose of the study, the LR reflected on whether the co-researchers benefited from taking part. The co-researchers chose to give their feedback to the LR at the end of each research session by writing an anonymous note and posting it in a box. During the online sessions, the co-researchers either shared their feedback verbally or wrote their thoughts in the chat box, though it was acknowledged by all researchers that this no longer allowed for anonymity. Some of the feedback received from the co-researchers included comments about enjoying the social space to make new friends, learning about research and having their voices heard in the interviews (See Appendix Y). This would suggest that the children did benefit from taking part in the research in ways unique to them.

5.6.2 Unique contribution

CYP's experiences of DA are well documented in the existing literature, with many studies highlighting the importance of involving CEDA as active participants to understand their experiences (Johnson, 1995; Miranda et al., 2021). The current study however is the first documented example of using a PR approach to involve children as co-researchers to focus on what matters to CEDA.

Involving CEDA in research is an ethically complex task due to the risk of re-traumatisation, but it could be argued that not doing so can lead to the further silencing and marginalisation of this group. Research which involves CEDA can deliver authentic findings which can inform otherwise adult-centric research, policy and practice initiatives (Morris et al., 2012). By involving CYP as co-researchers in each stage of the research,

it could be suggested that the views shared in this study provide a greater insight into matters of importance to CEDA. The co-researchers refined the research question and designed the interview schedule, which increased the likelihood that the questions used to collect data reflected the children's opinion about what was important to ask (Kellet, 2005). Yardley, (2000) suggests that providing a novel perspective on an issue can improve the trustworthiness of the study, which the current study has achieved by creating a platform to promote the voices of CEDA.

This critical psychology approach used to analyse the findings highlighted the importance of adults taking an intersectional lens (Crenshaw, 1989) and considering the operation of power and environmental threats (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018) when working with CEDA. The LR acknowledges that other Psychological theories such as Attachment (Bowlby, 1988) and Motivation theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) and Self-determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2022) would have also provided useful insights. The LR created memos during the dataset familiarisation stage of RTA (see Appendix U), where these initial psychological ideas which align with some of the existing literature were recorded. However, the RTA process supported the LR to consider alternative interpretations and by adopting a more critical stance, this study provides a unique contribution to understanding the field of knowledge regarding CEDA. The findings suggest that adults should draw on the individual competence and autonomy of CEDA to reduce threat responses and enable support to be viewed as helpful and effective. This has important implications for schools, EPs' and other professionals, which will be discussed further in section 5.7.

5.6.3 Integrity of the participatory design

Although the research has provided a novel perspective on the issue of promoting the voices of CEDA, there were several practical issues which may have impacted the integrity of the PR design. Due to time constraints experienced by both the LR and co-researchers, each research session lasted no longer than two hours, which usually left only 45 minutes for introducing a new research concept and 45 minutes for discussion and decision-making between breaks. This was felt to be developmentally appropriate for the co-researchers who were aged 10 - 12 years old, but could bring into question the level of understanding experienced by the co-researchers of each research concept.

Due to the limited availability of the co-researchers, several research sessions had to be re-scheduled which led to the loss of an appropriate face-to-face venue and a move to virtual meetings using Microsoft Teams. The co-researchers regularly reflected that they were happy using Microsoft Teams due to recent experiences of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, though the LR noticed that engagement was sometimes reduced, with the oldest co-researcher (age 12) showing signs of being more ready to engage in the online sessions than the youngest co-researchers (aged 10), who sometimes appeared to re-direct their attention elsewhere in their physical environments.

The final limitation which was felt to impact the integrity of the PR design was the compromise which the co-researchers had to make regarding data collection. Due to

conflicting schedules, the co-researchers were unable to interview each other and instead decided to be interviewed by the LR. This was a decision made unanimously by the co-researchers, though the LR reflected on the distance between this situation and the initial preference to interview one another. Semi-structured interviews being conducted by the LR may have impacted the authenticity of the data collected, as Kellet (2005) suggests that children interviewing children can lead to different priorities and issues being explored through the reflection of their unique knowledge. The LR was also aware of adult-child power dynamics which may have played out in the interviews and might have caused co-researchers to experience dis-empowerment or threat responses during the interviews. To minimise the risk of harm caused to the co-researchers, time was spent discussing an ethical approach to interviews which included discussions around children's right to not answer questions and to request breaks at any time (see Appendix S). The LR continued to follow the protocol for managing distress during interviews (Appendix F), though none of the co-researchers decided to take a break when offered.

5.6.4 Recruitment and retention

Although the findings of the current study provide a powerful insight into matters of importance to CEDA, these must be viewed within the limitations of the population sample. It was difficult to recruit for this study for several reasons, including the challenge of identifying CEDA. The LR relied on the self-identification of DA in families within local schools, information which must have also been disclosed to school SENCo's, given their role as gatekeepers. The LR reflected on several barriers to engaging with families due to SENCO's lack of confidence around naming DA or

perceptions about readiness to engage in research. For example, one SENCo spoke about a family where DA had been disclosed but she felt that the mother and child would not be willing to participate and therefore she did not feel comfortable broaching the subject with them. These barriers meant that the final sample was very narrow and may not represent a proportional sample of CEDA. Groundwater-Smith et al. (2015) suggest that although gatekeepers can often be seen as blocking access to research participants, they must also be seen as important facilitators who provide a trusting mediator between participants and researchers, which the LR felt was appropriate given the sensitive nature of the topic. The LR decided not to stray from this method of recruitment as it was hoped that the SENCO's knowledge of the cultural and social context of families would be beneficial in providing potential participants with a sense of psychological safety, and therefore increased willingness to find out more about the project.

In addition to recruitment issues, there were difficulties with retention which is reflected in figure 3.3. The LR acknowledges that only two co-researchers chose to be involved in the data analysis stage and this involvement was limited to member checking themes and quotes, which could limit the authenticity of the presented findings. However, Groundwater-Smith et al. (2015a) suggest that it is important for children to be able to assess and make changes to their participation throughout the research process. Factors which facilitated the co-researchers to assess and make changes to their participation included negotiation of involvement by following the five step model presented in figure 5.3. The LR also responded to behavioral signs displayed by co-researchers which may have suggested the need for a break (Appendix F) and used

regular check-ins (see Appendix O), which enabled co-researchers' regular opportunities to re-assess their level of participation.

5.6.5 Power relations

One of the dominant principles in PR is that participation should ensure greater equity in researcher-participant relationships. The LR conducted the research sessions in a local children's centre, a venue which was new to both the LR and the co-researchers and was hoped therefore to be less power-laden than a school setting (Kellet, 2005). However, the LR reflected on the perceived power of the co-researchers, particularly concerning their intersectional identities. The LR was White British and two of the co-researchers were siblings of Black Nigerian heritage. The LR reflected throughout the study on the unique lived experience of these two children and wondered if the third co-researcher, who was also White British, felt more able to identify with the LR and therefore more empowered to share her authentic voice.

During the research sessions, the LR witnessed arguments between the two siblings and reflected on the non-paternalistic position of a researcher. The LR often tried to take a step back and enable the co-researchers to work through their conflict but was sometimes asked by either sibling to become involved. The LR acknowledged that this dynamic may have impacted how able each sibling felt to participate authentically, particularly so for the younger sibling whom the older sibling often corrected if they perceived their contributions to the discussion as being incorrect.

At the first research session, the LR engaged the co-researchers in psychological contracting. This included discussion around how the co-researchers would treat each other, how breaks should be scheduled and how ideas should be recorded. The LR noticed that during the first session, the co-researchers were quieter and did not volunteer to scribe notes or request breaks. However, by the second and third research sessions, the co-researchers had begun to request breaks and additional games, more frequently chatted with one another and demonstrated increased ownership over notetaking to record their ideas. The LR reflected on this positively as a sign of increased feelings of perceived power and psychological safety within the group. However, this came with additional challenges for the LR, including frequently needing to gently re-focus the group on the research tasks, which felt like assuming a more paternalistic position. The LR found it difficult at times to balance the need to make research engaging and 'fun' (Houghton, 2015), and the time constraints placed on the LR due to the academic thesis deadline.

5.6.6 Ethics

Informed consent was sought from at least one parent with parental responsibility for each co-researcher, as well as the co-researchers themselves. This is thought to be best practice (Cater & Øverlien, 2014), however, the LR did wonder if any co-researchers felt under pressure from their parents to participate. To counter this, the LR reminded the co-researchers at the start of each research session that they could negotiate their level of participation. During the initial meet and greet sessions, two co-researchers expressed the preference of meeting in a face-to-face group setting and one co-researcher reported that he was reluctant to do this. Although the LR gave this

co-researcher a choice about whether or not to join the first session, the LR wondered if this felt possible for him due to his sibling attending the group and their mother bringing them to the research venue that day. Although the co-researchers all demonstrated that they were comfortable after the first research session - including the aforementioned co-researcher who concluded that he was looking forward to coming back - the LR reflected on his power over the decision to join the first group session.

The issue of anonymity was discussed in depth during chapter three and the LR encouraged the co-researchers at the start to only share what information they were comfortable with doing so. However, this appeared problematic due to the co-researchers asking one another personal questions such as “What school do you go to?”. The LR reflected on whether some co-researchers felt pressured to share personal information under these circumstances. Similarly, later in the research, when co-researchers were asked to complete a demographic table, one of the siblings announced to the LR that the younger sibling had a diagnosis of dyslexia. The younger sibling refuted this and chose not to record any additional needs, though the LR wondered if they felt that their confidentially had been broken due to undisclosed information being shared in the space.

The rationale for taking a PR approach to the current study was due in part to findings from the existing literature which suggest that recalling experiences of DA can be distressing for CYP (Miranda et al., 2021; Øverlien, 2013). Morris et al. (2012) argue that research with CEDA must cause no further harm and the LR hoped that involving CYP in decision-making processes would enable them to shape the research in a way

which avoids causing further harm. However, the LR acknowledges that the process of identifying CEDA as a marginalised group in this study could have caused a level of distress in itself. The LR followed a protocol for managing distress during research sessions and there were times, such as when discussing the meaning of the term DA, when some co-researchers displayed discomfort by looking away or asking to suddenly leave the room and use the toilet. The LR suggested taking extra breaks when these behavioural signs were noticed, however, the co-researchers often responded by refuting the need for breaks and asking to continue. This highlighted the importance of asking questions rather than making assumptions about observable behaviour.

5.7 Implications of research

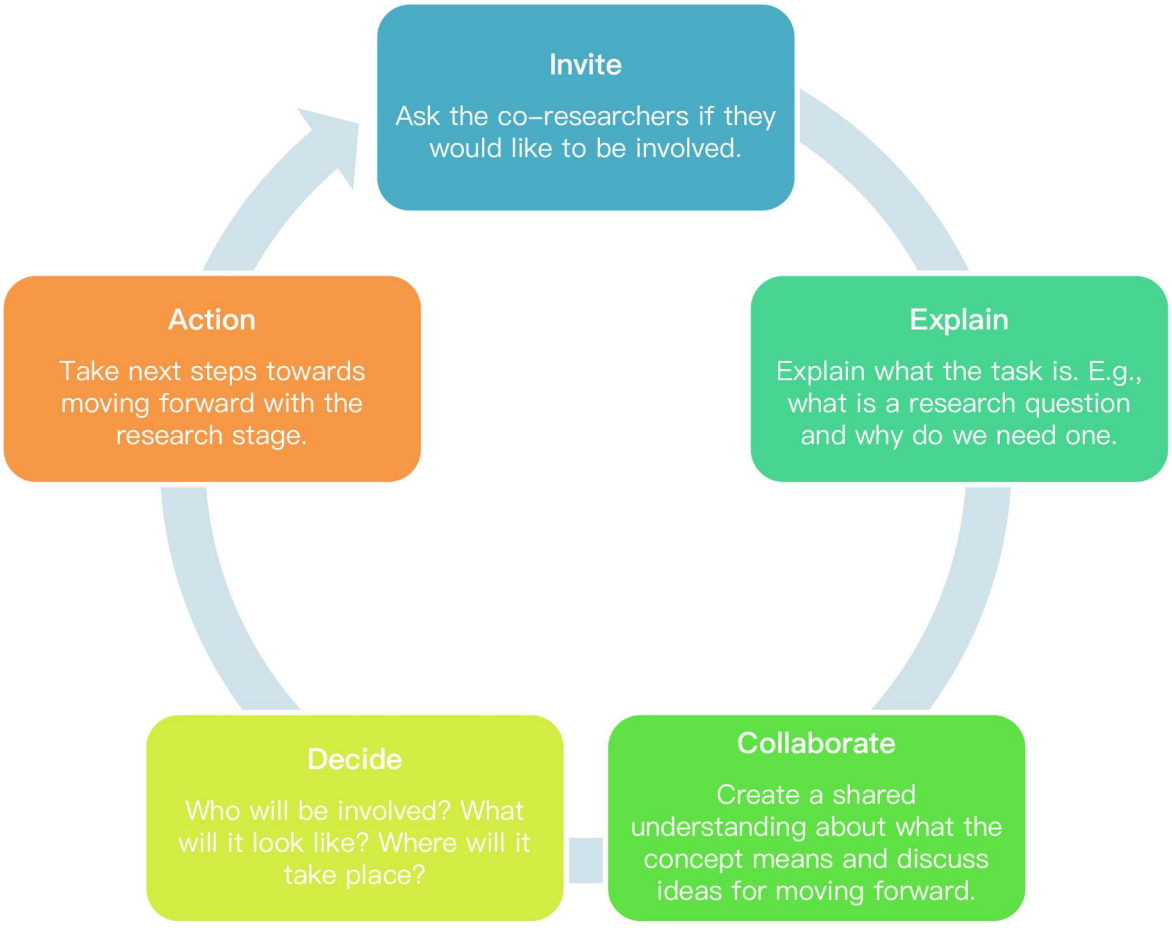
5.7.1 Involving children in research

The existing literature which focuses on children's experiences of DA suggests that children are active agents who use their autonomy to protect themselves against DA (Callaghan et al., 2015, 2016). Many authors also promote the involvement of CEDA in research, to support the exploration of authentic meaning (Miranda et al., 2021; Øverlien, 2013). The current study builds on this concept of autonomy by suggesting that CEDA should be invited to participate in research as active co-researchers, to explore matters which are meaningful to them. The current study reflected that co-researchers chose to be involved at different levels during different stages of the research. The LR found it helpful to follow a five-step process to promoting the inclusion of the co-researchers at each research stage (see figure 5.3). This may be a helpful model for researchers to use when considering how to involve children in different

research stages, including developing the research question, developing data collection techniques, data collection, data analysis, and dissemination activities.

Figure 5.3

Model for involving co-researchers in research stages (O'Leary, 2024).



5.7.2 Educational settings

Findings from the current study suggest that developing and maintaining trusting relationships with adults is key to CEDA being able to express themselves. This aligns

with findings from the existing literature which suggests that CEDA can experience a loss of relationships with caregivers (Johansen & Sundet, 2021), or a breakdown in trust with either parents or school adults (Swanston et al., 2014). Therefore, teachers must focus on delivering relational support to children, to enable them to feel safe, connected and understood. Teachers should be aware that CEDA may find it difficult to express themselves verbally to adults, and may prefer to communicate *via* other preferred methods such as through the use of a feelings diary or utilising peer support. Teachers must provide an empowering and non-judgmental approach to CEDA, which assumes that children can and should be agentic in making choices about how they prefer to express themselves in school.

CEDA benefit from being involved in making decisions about their care, which can be achieved through involving children in discussions about school support and interventions with their class teacher, SENCo or pastoral lead. Children are likely to demonstrate increased competence when working with familiar adults (Cocks, 2006), so instead of making assumptions about what a child needs, class teachers who know children well may be best placed to seek the views of CEDA and offer them choices about what provision they may find helpful. It is important for adults to create shared understandings with CEDA about their provision, which may require using the same language provided and understood by children, and transparency about what provision could look like and its confidentiality perimeters. Children must be made aware of safe-guarding procedures in developmentally appropriate ways, to reduce the risk of threat responses and ruptures to relationships. To promote non-tokenistic inclusion of CEDA, teachers should regularly check in with children to find out how they are experiencing

support in school and make changes where necessary. This aligns with the SEND Code of Practice which suggests that children's views must be taken into account when designing and reviewing provision (Department Of Education, 2014b).

5.7.3 Educational Psychologists

Findings from the current study suggest that CEDA benefit from interactions with adults with whom they share trusting relationships. Interactions with unfamiliar adults may pose a threat and can hinder CEDA from expressing themselves openly. Given the often short-term nature of EP work, EPs' must consider the impact of developing a short-term relationship with CEDA. EPs should take into account principles of competence, beneficence and participation within casework, which may be operationalised by offering CEDA the option to work with EPs directly or for EPs to work with adults who them well. This can be achieved through EPs facilitating multi-system consultations (Wagner, 2016) or supervision (Ledbetter, 2010) to support adults to support children within well-established, trusting relationships. Approaches such as parent coaching (Ellam & Palmer, 2006) and Video Interactive Guidance (Landor, 2014) which aim to empower parents may also be beneficial to supporting CEDA through their existing, trusting relationships. EPs may find it helpful to use the PTMF (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018) to support stakeholder understanding of CEDA's presenting emotional distress as a functional response to ongoing perceived threats. This could help support key stakeholders to view behaviour in a way that increases understanding and empathy, ultimately promoting social justice for CEDA as a marginalized group (Fox, 2015).

When working with CEDA, EPs should use an intersectional lens (Crenshaw, 1989) and Critical Race Theory (Crenshaw et al., 1995) to consider how differing aspects of a child's identity may combine with their experiences of DA to cause barriers to expressing themselves. Fundamental to this is the need for EPs to also reflect on their own unique identity and unconscious biases, which can be achieved through using the social GGRRAAACCEEESSS framework (Burnham, 2012) to consider areas of possible familiarity and blind spots (Sandeen et al., 2018), which must inform approaches to casework with CEDA.

5.7.4 Multi-disciplinary professionals

The PTMF was used to describe how paternalistic support can be perceived as a threat to CEDA, which provides a strong rationale for involving children in designing support services. EPs are well placed to deliver training to and work collaboratively with multi-disciplinary professionals such as Social workers, specialist DA support groups and CAMHS, which focuses on how to involve CEDA in designing, monitoring and evaluating interventions. This should be embedded within a Children's Right's context (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) and complement the SEND Code of Practice, which advocates for the co-production of provision alongside CYP (Department Of Education, 2014a).

5.8 Dissemination of findings

In line with the PR approach taken in this study, the LR will meet with the co-researchers to invite them to participate in disseminating the findings. The LR will follow the 5 step model (figure 5.3) negotiating participation with the co-researchers. It is

suggested that creative, multi-media approaches can be a useful way for CYP to share their interpretation of research findings and have their voices heard (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015b). However, the LR will offer a range of options and try to minimise influencing the decision by encouraging co-researchers to share their dissemination ideas. The LR will be holding in mind the ethical issue of anonymity and if the co-researchers wish to present something of themselves to professional services, this will be discussed further with the research supervisor and guided by ethics (British Psychological Society, 2018).

The LR aims to share the findings of the study within the local EP service through a PowerPoint presentation and executive summary during a team meeting. This may support an understanding of how EPs can use the PTMF to support colleagues to both increase the participation of and understand the needs of CEDA. In addition, the LR plans to share the findings in the form of an executive summary with the local CODA programme facilitators, which may inform a new way of designing, monitoring and evaluating their support programme.

The LR will share the findings of the study with university colleagues during the end-of-year conference whereby Trainee EPs present their theses. The LR may also share aspects of the research within the Participatory Action Research Interest Group (PARSIG), which is facilitated by colleagues at the UEL and aims to increase understanding of PR methods through the sharing of research methodology. The findings of the research may be shared within a PTMF interest group also run by UEL colleagues, to contribute to a developing understanding of how the PTMF can be used

with CYP. Finally, with the support of the research supervisor, the LR would like to publish the study in a relevant journal article, such as Educational Psychology Research and Practice, based at UEL.

5.9 Suggestions for further research

5.9.1 Enhancing the participatory approach

The current study focused on the participation of CEDA aged 10-12 years old. The research achieved its aims by empowering CEDA to become co-researchers who were involved at different stages of the project. Aldridge (2017) suggests that developing knowledge about participatory approaches is important and the current study shared the development of a 5 step participatory model (figure 5.3), which underpinned the inclusion of CEDA in research stages. However, it is acknowledged that this may be less appropriate for younger children or older young people. Areas for further research could include working with CEDA from other age groups who may negotiate their participation in research in different ways. It is also important to consider that children from other age groups may choose to focus on a topic unique to them and this too could be an area for further research.

5.9.2 Designing, monitoring and evaluating services

The findings from this study strongly suggest that CEDA seek autonomy regarding decisions made about their support. Paternalistic support is experienced by CEDA as forceful and can produce threat responses as a result of the operation of unequal power (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018). This aligns with important legislation such as

the SEND Code of Practice (Department Of Education, 2014b), which argues that children should be involved in decisions made about their provision and support. Therefore, further PR should focus on involving CEDA to develop support services. This has relevance to other agencies who support CEDA, such as Social Workers, CAMHS and specialist DA services who provide assessment and interventions to CEDA. These services are likely to benefit from engaging CEDA to contribute to the design, monitoring and evaluation of services in developmentally appropriate ways. To remain meaningful and promote authentic voice, PR approaches which involve CEDA as active co-researchers are likely to be most helpful. Using the 5 step model (figure 5.3) to support the involvement of co-researchers may be helpful to ensure that participation is based on competence and informed consent at each stage.

5.10 Conclusion

This study was set in the recent context of the COVID-19 pandemic, whereby both the national and local statistics presented a concerning increase in the number of adults and children affected by DA, which provided a rationale for engaging with this group. This research was set within a legislative context which for the first time in the UK has positioned CEDA as victims in their own right (Domestic Abuse Act, 2021). The known impact of DA on CYP was explored and relevance to the EP role was made, with particular reference made to an increase in requests for support for CEDA. The research was underpinned by professional values of social justice and beneficence, and was embedded within a children's rights context which assumes that children have a right to share their views.

The literature review highlighted a volume of studies which explored children's experiences of DA. This literature positions children as active meaning-makers of their world (Callaghan et al., 2015, 2016) and involves CEDA directly by engaging them in interviews to share their experiences and contribute to knowledge. Limitations of the existing literature were identified, which included a lack of ethnic and racial diversity and little evidence of the inclusion of CEDA within the research design. This implied a possible misrepresentation of CEDA voice and raised ethical concerns about what CYP gained from being involved in such research. The current study aimed to address this ethical consideration and gap in knowledge by adopting a PR approach which aimed to empower CEDA to become co-researchers and focus on matters of importance to them.

Following several research sessions in which the co-researchers refined the topic of focus, the proposed research question was "How can adults support children who have experienced abuse between parents, to express themselves?". The findings suggested that CEDA have their own expectations about support, which may relate to preferred methods for communication and possible intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1989) meaning that experiences and needs are not homogeneous. Paternalistic support was described as forceful and the PTMF was used to describe how these situations cause threat responses in CEDA. It was strongly suggested that trusting relationships are essential for CEDA to feel safe and able to express themselves, with specific importance placed on respectful, transparent and non-judgemental environments. This aligned strongly with the existing literature which explored the relational context of DA and suggested the need for strong attachment between children and adults (Johansen

& Sundet, 2021; Swanston et al., 2014). Finally, autonomy and choice were presented as largely important for CEDA and within these conditions, children's ability to express themselves to adults is heightened This mirrored findings which have previously highlighted children's use of agency (Callaghan et al., 2015, 2016) and was further explored in relation to the PTMF, which argues for the importance of exploring strengths and resources to redress power imbalances.

The research provided a unique contribution through the use of the PR approach which empowered the co-researchers to be included in all research stages from refining the research question to data collection and analysis. The extent to which CEDA were involved in this study was assessed through Aldridges' participatory model (Aldridge, 2017), and a model for including CYP in research stages was developed. Further to this, the use of the PTMF, Intersectionality and Critical Race Theory provided a novel perspective with which to interpret findings.

The strengths and limitations of the research were discussed, which largely related to recruitment challenges and the integrity of the PR approach. Challenges relating to time constraints and power issues may have impacted representation of authentic voice. However, reflections shared by the co-researchers suggested that CYP benefited from taking part and therefore provides a strong rationale for the use of PR to involve CEDA in further research. This has implications for the way in which CEDA are re-positioned as competent contributors to knowledge and thus EPs must support the participation and autonomy of CEDA in both research and practice. EPs are well-placed to use psychological frameworks such as the PTMF, Intersectionality and Critical Race

Theory when working with other professionals supporting CEDA. The LR hopes that this study will promote social justice in EP practice by contributing towards a shift in how CEDA are viewed, as competent, autonomous meaning-makers, rather than just victims.

References

Alderson, P., & Morrow, V. (2020). *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical Handbook* (Second). https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/the-ethics-of-research-with-children-and-young-people/book266581

Aldridge, J. (2017). Advancing participatory research. *Relational Social Work*, *1*(2), 26–35. https://doi.org/10.14605/RSW121702

Arai, L., Shaw, A., Feder, G., Howarth, E., MacMillan, H., Moore, T. H. M., Stanley, N., & Gregory, A. (2021). Hope, Agency, and the Lived Experience of Violence: A Qualitative Systematic Review of Children's Perspectives on Domestic Violence and Abuse. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *22*(3), 427–438. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838019849582

Bagnoli, A., & Clark, A. (2010). Focus groups with young people: A participatory approach to research planning. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *13*(1), 101–119. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260903173504

Bamberg, M. (1997). Positioning Between Structure and Performance. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, *7*, 335–342. https://doi.org/10.1075/jnlh.7.42pos

Band-Winterstein, T. (2014). The Impact of Lifelong Exposure to IPV on Adult Children and Their Aging Parents. *Journal of Family Issues*, *35*(4), 439–461. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X12472657

Blaike, N. 1993. Social enquiry. Oxford: Blackwell.

Bodfield, Kalum. S., & Culshaw, A. (2024). Applying the power threat meaning framework to the UK education system. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2024.2316589

Booth, A., Sutton, A., & Papaioannou, D. (2016a). *Systematic approaches to a successful literature review* (Second). Sage.

Booth, A., Sutton, A., & Papaioannou, D. (2016b). Taking a systematic approach to your literature review. In *Systematic approaches to a successful literature review* (Second, pp. 9–28). Sage.

Bowlby, J. (1988). *A Secure Base: Clinical Applications of Attachment Theory.* Routledge. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/the-british-journal-of-psychiatry/article/abs/secure-base-clinical-applications-of-attachment-theory-by-john-bowlby-london-routledge-1988-180-pp-895-pb/EFFF21E590D34C1ADFD19FEE28E56F1E

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic Analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publishing.

British Psychological Society. (2018). *Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018) | BPS*. https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-code-ethics-and-conduct

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1992). Ecological systems theory. In *Six theories of child development: Revised formulations and current issues* (pp. 187–249). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Buckley, H., Whelan, S., & Holt, S. (2006). Listen to Me! Children's Experience of Domestic Violence. *Children's Research Centre*, 94.

Burnham, J. (2012). Developments in Social GRRRAAACCEEESSS: Visible–invisible and voiced–unvoiced 1. In *Culture and Reflexivity in Systemic Psychotherapy*. Routledge.

Callaghan, J. E. M., Alexander, J. H., Sixsmith, J., & Fellin, L. C. (2015). Beyond "Witnessing": Children's Experiences of Coercive Control in Domestic Violence and Abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *33*(10), 1551–1581. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515618946

Callaghan, J. E. M., & Alexander, J. H. (2015). *Understanding agency and resistance strategies (UNARS): Children's experiences of domestic violence*. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.2509.2324

Callaghan, J. E. M., Alexander, J. H., & Fellin, L. C. (2016). Children's embodied experience of living with domestic violence: "I'd go into my panic, and shake, really bad". *Subjectivity*, *9*(4), 399–419. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41286-016-0011-9

Cater, Å., & Øverlien, C. (2014). Children exposed to domestic violence: A discussion about research ethics and researchers' responsibilities. *Nordic Social Work Research*, *4*(1), 67–79. https://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2013.801878

Cater, Å. K., & Sjögren, J. (2016). Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence Describe Their Experiences: A Typology-Based Qualitative Analysis. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, *33*(6), 473–486. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-016-0443-7

Chester, J., & Joscelyne, T. (2021). "I Thought It Was Normal": Adolescents' Attempts to Make Sense of Their Experiences of Domestic Violence in Their Families.

Journal of Interpersonal Violence, *36*(11–12), 5250–5276. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518802847

Clark, A. (2005). *Ways of seeing: Using the Mosaic approach to listen to young children's perspectives*. https://oro.open.ac.uk/17075/

Cocks, A. J. (2006). The Ethical Maze: Finding an inclusive path towards gaining children's agreement to research participation. *Childhood*, *13*(2), 247–266. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568206062942

Collis, S. M. (2009). The analysis of young people's experiences of domestic violence: Spiritual and emotional journeys through suffering. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, *14*(4), 339–353. https://doi.org/10.1080/13644360903293564

Cort, L., & Cline, T. (2017). Exploring the impact of domestic abuse on the mother role: How can educational psychologists contribute to this area? *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *33*(2), 167–179. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2017.1279127

Crenshaw, K. (1989). *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. *1*.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241–1299. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

Crenshaw, K., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., & Thomas, K. (1995). *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*. The New Press.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications.

Critical Appraisal Skills Programme. CASP qualitative checklist,https://casp-uk.net/checklists/casp-qualitative-studies-checklist-fillable.pdf (accessed 25 March 2024).

Data Protection Act (2018). Retrieved 2023, from https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted

Denzin, N. (2001). *Interpretive Interactionism*. SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412984591

Denzin, N., and Y. Lincoln. 1998. Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research, 3rd ed* (pp. xix, 1210). Sage Publications Ltd.

Department Of Education. (2014). *SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years*. GOV.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Domestic Abuse Act (2021). Retrieved 2023, from https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/pdfs/ukpga_20210017_en.pdf

Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (2005). Discursive psychology, mental states and descriptions. In H. T. Molder & J. Potter (Eds.), *Conversation and Cognition* (1st ed., pp. 241–259). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511489990.012

Ellam, V., & Palmer, S. (2006). Does parent coaching improve the quality of parenting and children's behaviour? *The Coaching Psychologist*, *2*(1), 34–37.

https://doi.org/10.53841/bpstcp.2006.2.1.34

Fine, M. (1992). *Disruptive voices: The possibilities of feminist research* (pp. xiv, 267). The University of Michigan Press.

Fleming, J. (2018). *Recognizing and resolving the challenges of being an insider researcher in work-integrated learning*.

Foundations. (2023). What Works Centre for Children and Families. https://foundations.org.uk/press-release/over-827000-children-estimated-to-have-experienced-domestic-abuse-this-year-with-concerns-of-increase-at-christmas-underscoring-urgent-need-for-stronger-support/#:~:text=Over%20827%2C000%20children%20estimated%20to,need%20for%20stronger%20support%20%2D%20Foundations

Fox, M. (2015). "What sort of person ought I to be?" – Repositioning EPs in light of the Children and Families Bill (2013). *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *31*(4), 382–396. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2015.1079700

Gallagher, C. B. (2010). *An investigation into how educational psychologists' conceptualise domestic violence* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Birmingham).

Georgsson, A., Almqvist, K., & Broberg, A. G. (2011). Naming the Unmentionable: How Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence Articulate Their Experiences. *Journal of Family Violence*, *26*(2), 117–129. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-010-9349-x

Gergen, K. (2015). Social Construction: From 'what is' to 'what could be'. In *An invitation to Social Construction.* (Third, pp. 1–33). Sage.

Groundwater-Smith, S., Dockett, S., & Bottrell, D. (2015). *Participatory research with Children and Young people*. Sage.

Groundwater-Smith, S., Dockett, S., & Bottrell, D. (2015a). A polocitcal ecology of access and cooperation. In *Participatory research with Children and Young people* (pp. 75–100). Sage.

Grych, J. H., & Fincham, F. D. (1990). Marital conflict and children's adjustment: A cognitive-contextual framework. *Psychological Bulletin*, *108*(2), 267–290. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.108.2.267

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1982). Epistemological and Methodological Bases of Naturalistic Inquiry. *Educational Communication and Technology*, *30*(4), 233–252.

Health & Care professions council. (2016, June 9). *Guidance on conduct and ethics for students* |.https://www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/guidance/guidance-on-conduct-and-ethics-for-students/

Horgan, D. (2017). Child participatory research methods: Attempts to go 'deeper'. *Childhood*, *24*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568216647787

Houghton, C. (2015). Young People's Perspectives on Participatory Ethics: Agency, Power and Impact in Domestic Abuse Research and Policy-Making: Young Survivors of Domestic Abuse Co-Develop Participatory Ethics. *Child Abuse Review*, *24*(4), 235–248. https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2407

Howe, D., Brandon, M., Hinings, D., & Schofield, G. (1999). *Attachment Theory, Child Maltreatment and Family Support: A Practice and Assessment Model*. Macmillan.

Humphries, B. (2017). *Re-Thinking Social Research: Anti-Discriminatory Approaches in Research Methodology*. Taylor & Francis.

Hutchby, I. (2005). Children's talk and social competence. *Children & Society*, *19*, 66–73. https://doi.org/10.1002/chi.858

Johansen, A.-K., & Sundet, R. (2021). Stepchildren's judicial interview narratives of experiencing domestic violence. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *18*(2), 183–203. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2018.1477214

Johnson, M. P. (1995). Patriarchal Terrorism and Common Couple Violence: Two Forms of Violence against Women. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *57*(2), 283–294. https://doi.org/10.2307/353683

Johnson, M. P., & Leone, J. M. (2005). The Differential Effects of Intimate Terrorism and Situational Couple Violence: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey. *Journal of Family Issues*, *26*(3), 322–349. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X04270345

Johnson, M. P. (2011). Gender and types of intimate partner violence: A response to an anti-feminist literature review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *16*(4), 289–296. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2011.04.006

Johnstone, L., & Boyle, M. (2018). The Power Threat Meaning Framework: An Alternative Nondiagnostic Conceptual System. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 002216781879328. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167818793289

Kaufman, R. C. B., S. Harvard. (1972). *Action, Styles, And Symbols In Kinetic Family Drawings Kfd*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203765531

Kellet, M. (2005). *How to Develop Children as Researchers.* Paul Chapman Publishing.

Kuria, E. K., & Kelly, C. (2023). Exploring social justice principles within an educational psychology service. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *39*(4), 403–

418. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2023.2226857

Labov, W. (1967). *Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience*. https://www.academia.edu/5908198/Narrative_analysis_oral_versions_of_personal_experience.

Landor, M. (2014). What is Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)? What is Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP)? *Educational Psychology in Scotland*, *15*(1), 9–9. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsepis.2014.15.1.9

Ledbetter, J. (2010). *Professional Supervision: Guidelines for Practice for Educational Psychologists.* British Psychological Society.

Lennie, J. (2006). Increasing the rigour and trustworthiness of participatory evaluations: Learnings from the field. *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, *6*(1), 27–35. https://doi.org/10.1177/1035719X0600600105

Levers, M.-J. D. (2013). Philosophical Paradigms, Grounded Theory, and Perspectives on Emergence. *SAGE Open*, *3*(4), 2158244013517243. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013517243

Lloyd, M. (2018). Domestic Violence and Education: Examining the Impact of Domestic Violence on Young Children, Children, and Young People and the Potential Role of Schools. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*, 2094. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02094

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychology Review, 50*(4), 370–396.

Mertens, D. M. (1999). Inclusive Evaluation: Implications of Transformative Theory for Evaluation. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *20*.

Milligan, E. (2022). *Exploring Educational Psychologists' views and experiences of the Power Threat Meaning* [University of Essex & Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust]. https://repository. essex.ac.uk/33470/

Miranda, J. K., Domedel, C., Crockett, M. A., Azócar, E., & Thatcher, K. (2021). Growing up in the context of intimate partner violence: Experiences and meanings for adolescents in Chile. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *120*, 105220. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105220

Morris, A., Hegarty, K., & Humphreys, C. (2012). Ethical and safe: Research with children about domestic violence. *Research Ethics*, *8*(2), 125–139. https://doi.org/10.1177/1747016112445420

Morrow, V., & Richards, M. (1996). The Ethics of Social Research with Children: An Overview1. *Children & Society*, *10*(2), 90–105. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1099-0860.1996.tb00461.x

Mudaly, N., & Goddard, C. R. (2009). The ethics of involving children who have been abused in child abuse research. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, *17*, 261–281. https://doi.org/10.1163/157181808X389920

Murray, M. (2008). Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences. In *Qualitative Psychology: A practical guide to research methods.* (Second). SAGE.

Naughton, C. M., O'Donnell, A. T., & Muldoon, O. T. (2019). Young people's constructions of their experiences of parental domestic violence: A discursive analysis'. *Journal of Family Violence*, *34*(4), 345–355. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-018-0013-1

NSPCC (2022). *Record numbers of children affected by domestic abuse leads to call for*

Better Recovery Support. NSPCC. Retrieved November 20, 2022, from https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2022/record-number-children-affect
ed-domestic-abuse/

Oates, J. (2021). *BPS Code of Human Research Ethics*. The British Psychological Society.

Office for National Statistics. (2023). Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2023. https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseprevalenceandtrendsenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2023#main-points

Øverlien, C. (2013). The children of patriarchal terrorism. *Journal of Family Violence*, *28*(3), 277–287. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-013-9498-9

Powell, M. A., & Smith, A. B. (2009). Children's Participation Rights in Research—Mary Ann Powell, Anne B. Smith, 2009. *Norweigan Univserity of Science and Technology*, *16*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/090756820810169

Reavey, P., Cromby, J., & Harper, D. (2013). *Psychology, Mental Health and Distress*.

Riessman, C. K. (2002). *The Qualitative Researcher's Companion*. SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412986274

Rogers. (1963). *Toward a Science of the Person—Carl R. Rogers, 1963*. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/002216786300300208?journalCode=jhpa

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2022). Self-Determination Theory. In F. Maggino (Ed.),

Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research (pp. 1–7). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69909-7_2630-2

Sandeen, E., Moore, K. M., & Swanda, R. M. (2018). Reflective local practice: A pragmatic framework for improving culturally competent practice in psychology. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *49*(2), 142–150. https://doi.org/10.1037/pro0000183

Scarry, E. (1988). *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford University Press.

Shannon, S. E., & Hsieh, H.-F. (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Sage Journals*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687

Smith, J. A., Jarman, M., & Osborn, M. (1999). Qualitative Health Psychology: Theories and Methods. In *Qualitative Health Psychology: Theories and Methods* (pp. 218–240). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446217870

Smith, R., Monaghan, M., & Broad, B. (2002). Involving Young People as Co-Researchers: Facing up to the Methodological Issues—Roger Smith, Maddy Monaghan, Bob Broad, 2002. *Qualitative Social Work*, *1*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325002001002

Smith, J., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*. SAGE. https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/interpretative-phenomenological-analysis/book25013

Spencer, G., Fairbrother, H., & Thompson, J. (2020). Privileges of Power: Authenticity, Representation and the “Problem” of Children’s Voices in Qualitative Health Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*, 160940692095859.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920958597

Spyrou, S. (2011). The limits of children's voices: From authenticity to critical, reflexive representation. *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research*, *18*(2), 151–165. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568210387834

StepUpMigrantWomen campaign. (2022, April 29). Domestic Abuse Act: One year on. *Step Up Migrant Women*. https://stepupmigrantwomen.org/2022/04/29/domestic-abuse-act-one-year-on/

Stockton, H., Hunt, N., & Joseph, S. (2011). Cognitive processing, rumination, and posttraumatic growth. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, *24*(1), 85–92. https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.20606

Suzuki, S. L. (2009). The experiences of adults exposed to intimate partner violence as children: An exploratory qualitative study of resilience and protective factors. In *Children exposed to violence: Current issues, interventions and research.* (pp. 98–115).

Swanston, J., Bowyer, L., & Vetere, A. (2014). Towards a richer understanding of school-age children's experiences of domestic violence: The voices of children and their mothers. *Clinical Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, *19*(2), 184–201. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104513485082

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC_united_nations_convention_on_the_rights_of_the_child.pdf

Trafford, V., & Leshem, S. (2008). *Stepping stones to achieving your doctorate: Focusing on your viva from the start*. Open University Press ; McGraw-Hill.

Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, *63*, 384–399. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0022100

Tuckman, B. W. (1972). *Conducting Educational Research*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Ugazio, V. (2013). *Semantic Polarities and Psychopathologies in the Family: Permitted and Forbidden Stories:* Routledge. https://www.amazon.co.uk/Semantic-Polarities-Psychopathologies-Family-Valeria/dp/0415823072

University of East London. (2013). *Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees*. Graduate School and Quality Assurance & Enhancement.

Vetere, A., & Cooper, J. (2017). Children who witness violence at home. In *Narrative Therapies with Children and Their Families.* (Second). Routeldge.

Wallace, F., & Giles, P. (2019). Participatory Research Approaches in Educational Psychology Training and Practice. *Educational Psychology Research and Practice*, *5*(1).

Wagner, P. (2016). Consultation as a Framework for Practice. In *Frameworks for Practice in Educational Psychology, Second Edition: A Textbook for Trainees and Practitioners* (pp. 194–216). Jessica Kingsley Publishers. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uel/detail.action?docID=4749123

Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology and Health*, *15*, 215–228. https://doi.org/10.1080/08870440008400302

Appendices

Appendix A: Literature review search strategy

Database	Psychinfo
Search item	(((child*) OR (young person) OR (young people)) AND (DE "Experiences (Events)")) AND (DE "Domestic Violence")
Limiters	Peer-reviewed (journal articles) English language
Results	54
Articles selected after title screening.	5 Article titles: 1. Hope, agency, and the lived experience of violence: A qualitative systematic review of children's perspectives on domestic violence and abuse. 2. Young people's constructions of their experiences of parental domestic violence: A discursive analysis'. 3. Using Drawing Following a story technique for processing the child's exposure to IPV in a group intervention framework. 4. Young people living with parental alcohol misuse and parental violence: 'No-one has ever asked me how I feel in any of this.' 5. Children's experiences and needs in relation to domestic and family violence: Findings from a meta-synthesis.
Database	Academic Search Ultimate
Search item	(((child*)) OR (DE "YOUNG adults" OR DE "ADOLESCENCE" OR DE "CHILDREN" OR DE "TEENAGERS")) AND (DE "EXPERIENCE")) AND (DE "DOMESTIC violence")
Limiters	Peer-reviewed (journal articles) English language
Results	145

Articles selected after title screening.	13 Articles 1. Children's Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence: A Qualitative Interpretive Meta-synthesis. 2. Lifting the Domestic Violence Cloak of Silence: Resilient Australian Women's Reflected Memories of their Childhood Experiences of Witnessing Domestic Violence. 3. The ambivalent visit: Children's experiences of relating with their fathers during staying in shelters for women survivors of domestic violence. 4. Children Fleeing Domestic Violence to Emergency Accommodations: Education Rights and Experiences 5. Children's experiences and needs in relation to domestic and family violence: Findings from a meta-synthesis. 6. Hope, Agency, and the Lived Experience of Violence: A Qualitative Systematic Review of Children's Perspectives on Domestic Violence and Abuse. 7. 'All Over Now?' The Ongoing Relational Consequences of Domestic Abuse through Children's Contact Arrangements. 8. The children of Patriarchal Terrorism. 9. Children's experiences of domestic violence and abuse: Siblings' accounts of relational coping. 10. The Impact of Lifelong Exposure to IPV on Adult Children and Their Aging Parents. 11. Heterogeneity Within Domestic Violence Exposure: Young Adults' Retrospective Experiences. 12. Towards a richer understanding of school-age children's experiences of domestic violence: The voices of children and their mothers. 13. Witnessing and experiencing domestic violence: a descriptive study of adolescents.
Database	Child Development & Adolescent Studies
Search item	(child*) AND (DE "experience") AND (DE "DOMESTIC violence")
Limiters	Peer-reviewed (journal articles) English language
Results	24

Articles selected after title screening.	6 Article titles: 1. The ambivalent visit: Children's experiences of relating with their fathers during staying in shelters for women survivors of domestic violence. 2. *Children's experiences and needs in relation to domestic and family violence: Findings from a meta-synthesis. 3. *Children's Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence: A Qualitative Interpretive Meta-synthesis. 4. *Children's experiences of domestic violence and abuse: Siblings' accounts of relational coping. 5. 'All Over Now?' The Ongoing Relational Consequences of Domestic Abuse through Children's Contact Arrangements. 6. Towards a richer understanding of school-age children's experiences of domestic violence: The voices of children and their mothers.
Database	British Education index
Search item	((child*) OR (young person) AND (experience) AND (domestic violence))
Limiters	Peer-reviewed (journal articles) English language
Results	251
Articles selected	2 Article titles: 1. 'If you look, you have to leave': Young children regulating research interviews about experiences of domestic violence. 2. The analysis of young people's experiences of domestic violence: spiritual and emotional journeys through suffering
Database	ERIC
Search item	(DE child*) AND ("experience") AND ("DOMESTIC violence")
Limiters	Peer-reviewed (journal articles) English language
Results	135
Articles selected after title screening.	0

Database	Education Abstracts
Search item	(DE child*) AND ("experience") AND ("DOMESTIC violence")
Limiters	Peer-reviewed (journal articles) English language
Results	156
Articles selected	3 **Article titles:** 1. Beyond “Witnessing”: Children’s Experiences of Coercive Control in Domestic Violence and Abuse. 2. *Children’s Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence: A Qualitative Interpretive Meta-synthesis. 3. "I Thought It Was Normal": Adolescents' Attempts to Make Sense of Their Experiences of Domestic Violence in Their Families.
Total number of Articles included in review: N =7	

KEY:

Blue: Article removed due to focusing on CYP experiences of Domestic Abuse alongside another phenomenon.

Purple: Article removed due to the focus on children’s experiences/stories/assessments made of CYP by others.

Red: Article removed due to experiences being told in retrospect by adults who experienced DA in childhood.

Orange: Article removed due to not representing a first hand account of experiences, which means reliance on themes created by previous researchers.

Green: Duplicate article already found in another database.

Appendix B: Table of reviewed literature

Author and year	Title and country	Aims and research questions	Theoretical & conceptual orientation	Participants & sampling	Study design & methodology	Summary of main findings	Critical analysis (based on CASP).
Naughton, O'Donnell, & Muldoon. **2018**	Young people's constructions of their experiences of parental domestic violence: A discursive analysis'. Ireland	To employ a discursive psychological (DP) approach to investigate how young people construct their childhood experiences of DVA.	Discursive psychology Epistemological position not stated.	13 young people ('White Irish') 18-26 years old Self-selected.	Semi-structured interviews & discursive analysis	CYP struggle to understand the Psychological aspects of DVA, though it was recognised that behaviour between parents was not 'normal'. CYP perception of mothers impacted whether or not they had conversations about DVA. Physical violence most often placed responsibility with fathers and led to conversations with mothers about DVA.	Research Questions not explicitly stated. Does not account for how YP may directly benefit from participating in the research. DVA is clearly defined and Qualitative methodology is used appropriately to capture a rich insight. CYP were interviewed retrospectively. Interview questions created by the researchers, which could've obscured participant voice. One interview was unable to be transcribed due to audibility issues. Themes weren't checked back with participants. Intersectionality not considered.

Carolina Øverlien ***2013***	The children of patriarchal terrorism. *Norway*	To develop and expand on what is known about children who experience DV by shedding light on children living at shelters for abused women. RQs: What are the violent experiences of these children? What, from the children's perspective, is the nature of the violence?	Sociology of childhood/social studies of children Typology of intimate partner violence Epistemological position not stated.	10 children 8-20 years old 5 of them 'had other ethnic backgrounds than Norwegian'. 5 were living in women's 'shelters and 5 were living in secure accommodation, away from perpetrator of DV.	Semi structured interviews thematic analysis.	Physical violence is embedded in a pattern with a high degree of coercive control. Physical violence is severe and/or life-threatening and repeated. Physical intervention during the violent episode is perceived as too dangerous. Violence permeates everyday life. CYP live in a constant state of readiness and with strong fear. CYP can only 'start living' post separation.	No discussion of the direct impact of engaging in the research, e.g. risk of re-traumatisation. Interviews were guided by the main research question but are described as mostly 'child-led'. Participants were selected following a thematic analysis to pull out the participants who expressed the most 'fear', which was subjectively defined. Researchers attempt to measure severity of DVA, but this doesn't necessarily account for intersectional experiences. Unclear ethnic backgrounds. Limitations of the study were outlined clearly.

Swanston, Bowyer, & Vetere **2014**	Towards a richer understanding of school-age children's experiences of domestic violence: The voices of children and their mothers. *UK*	RQ1: How do school-aged children make sense of their experience of domestic violence? RQ2: How do mothers perceive their school-aged child's experience of domestic violence?	Attachment theory Qualitative paradigm	5 children 2 boys : 3 girls Aged 8 - 13 years old. Recruited through a DV charity. Purposive sampling used. 3 mothers interviewed.	Semi structured interviews and interpretive phenomenological analysis.	Domestic violence is severe and pervasive and unpredictable. CYP are aware of the violence and try to predict it. CYP have a diminished trust in adults. CYP want support services to hear their voices.	Clear rational for the use of qualitative design and community based samples (e.g. children not in refuges). Mother perceptions are explored in and presented as separately to children's perspectives. Ethical issues well considered and documented. All participants were White British. Child friendly tools were used in interviews (kinetic family drawing). Semi-structured interview questions were produced by adult researchers. Researchers critically examined their own role in the research.

Collis **2009**	The analysis of young people's experiences of domestic violence: spiritual and emotional journeys through suffering UK	To collect and analyse young people's stories, with a view to 'a discovery of knowledge in the sense of understanding'.	Hermeneutical knowledge *(an interpretive approach based on sense making)* *Relational ontological methodology*	5 children Aged 12 - 15 (All had received professional support relating to experiences of DV).	Semi structured interviews Hermeneutical methodology	All YP have been through a emotional journey (including feelings of isolation, dis empowerment, hopefulness and empowerment). *CYP encompass spirituality, personal agency and resilience.*	Unclear recruitment strategy. Lack of demographic data. Little documentation of ethical considerations. No evidence of researcher checking the data analysis with participants, which could obscure participant voice. Limitations of the study are not discussed. No discussion around implications.

Callaghan, Alexander, Fellin & Sixmith **2015**	Beyond "Witnessing": Children's Experiences of Coercive Control in Domestic Violence and Abuse. UK	To explore how children experience domestic violence and abuse.	Policy and legislation	20 children 12 girls: 9 boys 8-18 years old Recruited through specialist DA services.	Semi structured interviews Interpretive interactionism (Denzin, 2001)	Children directly experience abusive control. Constraints (on space, self-expression and relationships) experienced by and used to manage DV. Children as agents - creating their own insights and intervening in the violence.	Participants recruited from a sub-sample of a wider study. Child centred approaches were used to support interviews. Data was coded deductively, which means that meaning could be lost. Rigorous data analysis stages. Reflexivity of researchers was considered. Ethical issues considered in detail. Important implications discussed for professionals offering DA services to children and families. No demographic information.

Chester and Josceylene **2018**	"I Thought It Was Normal": Adolescents' Attempts to Make Sense of Their Experiences of Domestic Violence in Their Families. UK	To explore the meaning that adolescents give to their experiences and how this may relate to the impact of their experiences.	Cognitive contextual model (Grych and Fincham, 1990) Reflective rumination (Stockton, Hunt and Joespeh, 2011)	5 adolescents 14 - 18 years old 3 female: 2 male All were receiving intervention from CAMHs	Semi-structured interviews Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith et al, 1999)	Experiences of DA are ever present and unpredictable. Several coping strategies were tried by children (although some attempts felt helpless). Protective factors: Social support. Positive impact related to building resilience.	Ethical considerations are detailed. White British sample doesn't take into account intersectional experiences. Interview schedules created by adult researchers. Researcher followed a reflexive processed during data analysis. Themes were checked with other professionals for validity but not the CYP themselves. Research implications are discussed in relation to clinical support. Direct benefit of CYP taking part in this study are not discussed. Limitations are discussed, including limited cultural applicability and short term snapshot (rather than longitudinal). Links made to PTSD symptoms.

Georgsson, Almqvist & Broberg **2011**	Naming the unmentionable: How children exposed to intimate partner violence articulate their experiences *Sweden*	To describe how children talk about and relate to their experiences of violence.	Attachment theory (e.g. Howe et al 1999) And cognitive theories (e.g. Grych) are introduced, but the article does not explicit embed the research in any theory.	14 children 8-10 years old 8 males / 6 females All had engaged in a treatment programme for CYP who have witness IPV.	Semi-structured Interviews Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).	CYP struggle to describe abuse of mothers. CYP can describe their own actions - agentic in decision making. CYP position mothers as vulnerable and are fearful of fathers.	All participants are European. No ethnicity data given. Ethical consideration around participation are discussed. Example of interview questions were given and these were developed with treatment personnel with regards to the children's background, to ensure ethical approval. Themes were not checked back with children. Links made to PTSD symptoms.

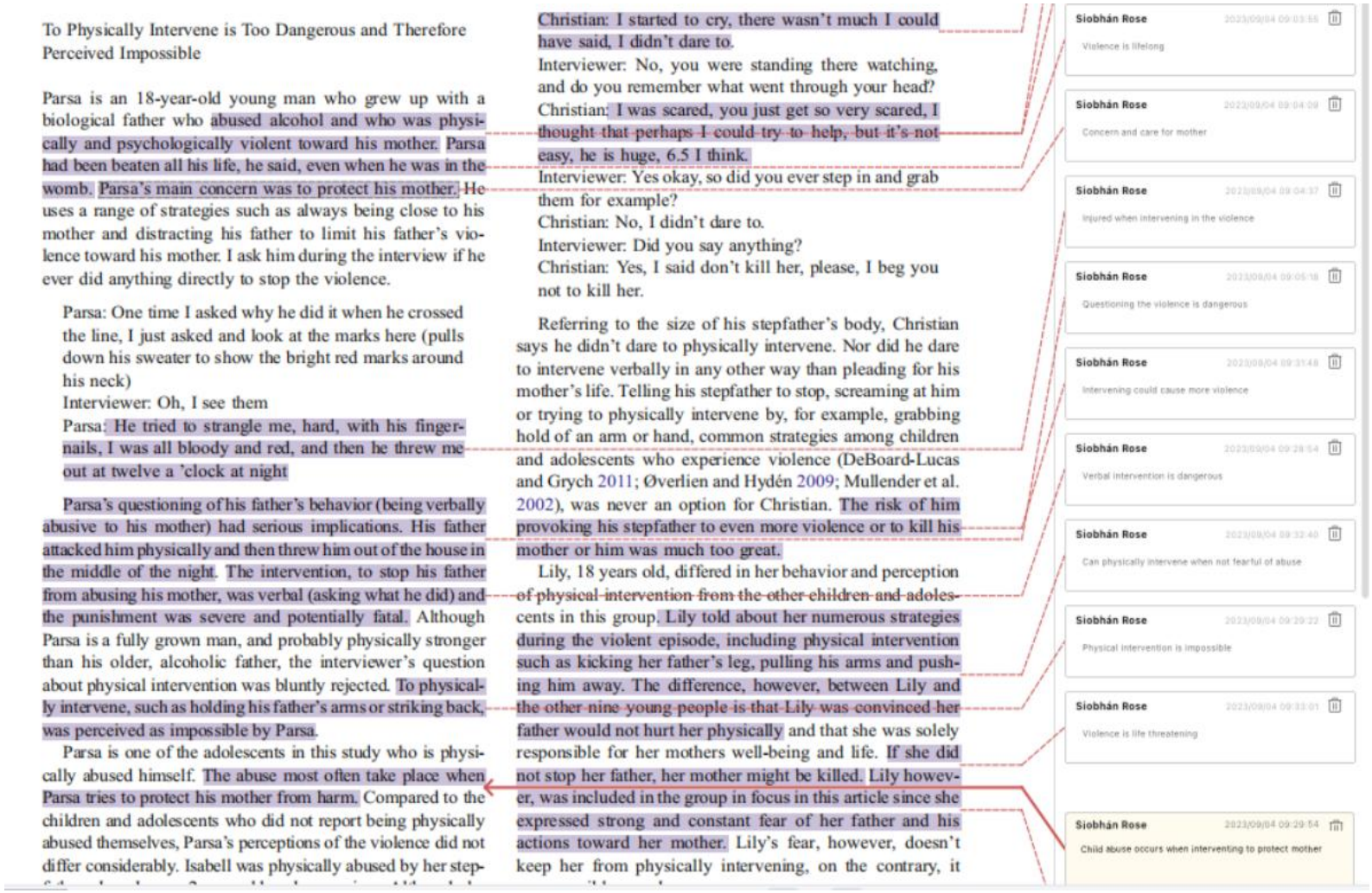
Cater & Sjogren **2016**	Children exposed to Intimate partner violence describe their experiences: a typology based qualitative analysis Sweden	To develop understanding of children's experiences of IPV.	IPV typology (Johnson & Leone, 2005)	10 children 8-12 years of age 3 female / 7 male All living in women's shelters - purposive sampling.	Semi structured interviews Directed thematic analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).	3 types of DV experience *Obedience-demanding violence*: e.g. children's behaviour is controlled by fear of violence. *Chronic and mean violence:* cannot be avoided and CYP wish to have no relationship with fathers. *Parenthood-embedded violence:* children want to spend more time with fathers, even though there could be negative consequences for themselves.	Impact of participating in the study was acknowledged. Interviews were ended with positive talk and a chance for children to comment on the interview process. Interview agenda focused on theoretical development so could obscure participant voice. Questions were built on responses given by the children about their understanding of the subject. Deductive analysis sets a pare-conceived agenda for interpreting experiences. Data is translated from Swedish to English. Themes are not checked back with CYP. Children's opinions are discussed as interior, e.g. children not knowing what is in their best interests, (wanting contact with fathers). Ontological position not stated.

Callaghan, J.E.M., Alexander, J.H., Fellin, L.C. 2016	Children's embodied experience of living with domestic violence: ''I'd go into my panic, and shake, really bad'' UK	To explore children's accounts of their experience of emotional and physical pain, in situations of DV.	Systemic model (Ugazio, 2013)	27 children 8 - 17 years old 17 female / 11 male Recruited through specialist DA services.	Interviews, family drawings, photographs and spatial maps. Interpretive interactionism (Denzin, 2001).	Experiences are characterized by emotional and physical pain and control. Children aware of the affect of pain on their body and can articulate this experience in retrospect. Children resist violence through their agency.	Ethical issues around the risk of re-traumatisation are addressed. There is little evidence of if / how children directly benefited from taking part in the research. Creative, child centered methods are used to support interviews. Themes are not checked back with the participants. Demographic data of participants not provided. Little discussion of limitations or areas for future research,

Miranda, J.K., Domedel, C., Crockett, M.A., Azócar, E., Thatcher, K. **2021**	Growing up in the context of intimate partner violence: Experiences and meanings for adolescents in Chile *Chile*	To explore the lived experiences of adolescents growing up in the context of IPV and the meanings they construct about the phenomenon.		10 adolescents Aged 12-17 years 5 female / 5 male All attending psycho-social treatment programmes.	Semi-structured interviews Thematic, narrative analysis (Reissman, 2002).	IPV is chronic and on-going and impacts whether experienced directly or indirectly. Children experienced abuse when trying to intervene IPV starts at birth, and is life-threatening. CYP feel not seen by their parents.	Constructivist epistemology is made clear Participant characteristics table is provided Interview guide was designed by adults, for use with children in IPV contexts. There was triangulation during data analysis but this was not checked with participants. Limitations and areas for future research is highlighted.

Johansen & Sundet	Stepchildren's judicial interview narratives of experiencing domestic violence Norway	To represent and understand children's experiences of DV perpetrated by stepfathers.	Narrative psychology (Labov and Waletsky, 1967 & Bamberg, 1997)	3 children 1 male / 2 female (Children's houses interviews used for court proceedings)	Judicial interviews Narrative analysis (Labov and Waletsky, 1967 & Bamberg, 1997)	CYP show fear of violence and it's unpredictability Violence experienced with all senses Mothers have little power Children use agency to avoid the violence	Dialogical communication method used for interview encourages free story-telling. Interviews used were recorded for another purpose (for court proceeding). Interviews were conducted by trained police officers, which could have contributed to a power imbalance. Interviews were translated into English, which could have obscured some words used by children. All children were of white, Norwegian ethnicity.

Appendix C: Sample of thematic synthesis coding



To Physically Intervene is Too Dangerous and Therefore Perceived Impossible

Parsa is an 18-year-old young man who grew up with a biological father who abused alcohol and who was physically and psychologically violent toward his mother. Parsa had been beaten all his life, he said, even when he was in the womb. Parsa's main concern was to protect his mother. He uses a range of strategies such as always being close to his mother and distracting his father to limit his father's violence toward his mother. I ask him during the interview if he ever did anything directly to stop the violence.

> Parsa: One time I asked why he did it when he crossed the line, I just asked and look at the marks here (pulls down his sweater to show the bright red marks around his neck)
> Interviewer: Oh, I see them
> Parsa: He tried to strangle me, hard, with his fingernails, I was all bloody and red, and then he threw me out at twelve a 'clock at night

Parsa's questioning of his father's behavior (being verbally abusive to his mother) had serious implications. His father attacked him physically and then threw him out of the house in the middle of the night. The intervention, to stop his father from abusing his mother, was verbal (asking what he did) and the punishment was severe and potentially fatal. Although Parsa is a fully grown man, and probably physically stronger than his older, alcoholic father, the interviewer's question about physical intervention was bluntly rejected. To physically intervene, such as holding his father's arms or striking back, was perceived as impossible by Parsa.

Parsa is one of the adolescents in this study who is physically abused himself. The abuse most often take place when Parsa tries to protect his mother from harm. Compared to the children and adolescents who did not report being physically abused themselves, Parsa's perceptions of the violence did not differ considerably. Isabell was physically abused by her step-

> Christian: I started to cry, there wasn't much I could have said, I didn't dare to.
> Interviewer: No, you were standing there watching, and do you remember what went through your head?
> Christian: I was scared, you just get so very scared, I thought that perhaps I could try to help, but it's not easy, he is huge, 6.5 I think.
> Interviewer: Yes okay, so did you ever step in and grab them for example?
> Christian: No, I didn't dare to.
> Interviewer: Did you say anything?
> Christian: Yes, I said don't kill her, please, I beg you not to kill her.

Referring to the size of his stepfather's body, Christian says he didn't dare to physically intervene. Nor did he dare to intervene verbally in any other way than pleading for his mother's life. Telling his stepfather to stop, screaming at him or trying to physically intervene by, for example, grabbing hold of an arm or hand, common strategies among children and adolescents who experience violence (DeBoard-Lucas and Grych 2011; Øverlien and Hydén 2009; Mullender et al. 2002), was never an option for Christian. The risk of him provoking his stepfather to even more violence or to kill his mother or him was much too great.

Lily, 18 years old, differed in her behavior and perception of physical intervention from the other children and adolescents in this group. Lily told about her numerous strategies during the violent episode, including physical intervention such as kicking her father's leg, pulling his arms and pushing him away. The difference, however, between Lily and the other nine young people is that Lily was convinced her father would not hurt her physically and that she was solely responsible for her mothers well-being and life. If she did not stop her father, her mother might be killed. Lily however, was included in the group in focus in this article since she expressed strong and constant fear of her father and his actions toward her mother. Lily's fear, however, doesn't keep her from physically intervening, on the contrary, it

Appendix D: Participant and family risk assessment

This risk assessment has been developed by the lead researcher and is based on the risk assessment used in an Australian study of Domestic violence (The SARAH project), which is discussed in Morris et al. (2012). It is designed to be used with parents who have sole custody (e.g. when the other parent does not have parental responsibility), to determine whether the risk to their current safety is high, medium or low.

High risk factors:

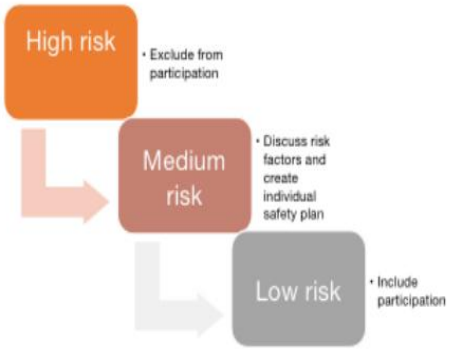
- Parent with parental sole responsibility still feels afraid of the ex-partner;
- History of weapons;
- Perpetrator of Domestic Abuse has broken intervention orders;
- Any other relevant information about the family's social, psychological or medical history which could impact on the child/young person's participation in the project.

Medium risk factors:

- Some contact with the parent who does not hold parental responsibility, (relationship, parenting arrangement) but parent no feels longer afraid or threatened;
- Current orders in place (intervention order or child protection order);
- Potential for safety issues;
- History of mental health issues or substance abuse;
- Current/past legal issues; financial or housing issues;
- Limited networking supports (formal or informal).

Low risk factors:

- Parent with parental responsibility no longer afraid of the perpetrator of Domestic Abuse; or Minimal or no contact with ex-partner;
- Stable health, housing, finances, legal;
- Networking supports in place (formal or informal).



Appendix E: Ethics decision letter

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:	**Emma Buck**
Supervisor:	**Miles Thomas**
Student:	**Siobhan O'Leary**
Course:	**Professional Doctorate in Child & Educational Psychology**

Title of proposed study:	Promoting the voices of children and young people who have experienced Domestic Abuse.

Checklist (Optional)			
	YES	NO	N/A
Concerns regarding study aims (e.g., ethically/morally questionable, unsuitable topic area for level of study, etc.)	☐	☒	☐
Detailed account of participants, including inclusion and exclusion criteria	☒	☐	☐
Concerns regarding participants/target sample	☐	x☐	☐
Detailed account of recruitment strategy	☒	☐	☐
Concerns regarding recruitment strategy	☐	x☐	☐
All relevant study materials attached (e.g., freely available questionnaires, interview schedules, tests, etc.)	☒	☐	☐
Study materials (e.g., questionnaires, tests, etc.) are appropriate for target sample	☐x	☐	☐
Clear and detailed outline of data collection	☒	☐	☐
Data collection appropriate for target sample	☐x	☐	☐
deception being used, rationale provided, and appropriate steps followed to communicate study aims at a later point	☐	☐	☒
data collection is not anonymous, appropriate steps taken at later stages to ensure participant anonymity (e.g., data analysis, dissemination, etc.) – anonymisation, pseudonymisation	☒	☐	☐
oncerns regarding data storage (e.g., location, type of data, etc.)	☐	☒	☐

oncerns regarding data sharing (e.g., who will have access and how)	☐	☒	☐
oncerns regarding data retention (e.g., unspecified length of time, unclear why data will be retained/who will have access/where stored)	☐	☒	☐
If required, General Risk Assessment form attached	☐x	☐	☐
Any physical/psychological risks/burdens to participants ıave been sufficiently considered and appropriate attempts will be made to minimise	x☐	☐	☐
ıy physical/psychological risks to the researcher have been sufficiently considered and appropriate attempts will be made to minimise	☒	☐	☐
required, Country-Specific Risk Assessment form attached	☐	☐	☒
If required, a DBS or equivalent certificate number/information provided	☒	☐	☐
If required, permissions from recruiting organisations attached (e.g., school, charity organisation, etc.)	☒	☐	☐
All relevant information included in the participant information sheet (PIS)	☒	☐	☐
Information in the PIS is study specific	☒	☐	☐
Language used in the PIS is appropriate for the target audience	☒	☐	☐
All issues specific to the study are covered in the consent form	☒	☐	☐
Language used in the consent form is appropriate for the target audience	☒	☐	☐
ıll necessary information included in the participant debrief sheet	☒	☐	☐
Language used in the debrief sheet is appropriate for the target audience	☒	☐	☐
Study advertisement included	☒	☐	☐

Content of study advertisement is appropriate (e.g., researcher's personal contact details are not shared, appropriate language/visual material used, etc.)	☒	☐	☐

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 BEFORE 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. 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.
NOT APPROVED - MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED	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. 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.

Decision on the above-named proposed research study	
lease indicate the decision:	APPROVED

Minor amendments
Please clearly detail the amendments the student is required to make

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 ☒	NO ☐
	f no, please request re-submission with an adequate risk assessment.	

If the proposed research could expose the researcher 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.	☐
MEDIUM	Approve but include appropriate recommendations in the below box.	☐
LOW	pprove and if necessary, include any commendations in the below box.	☒
Reviewer recommendations in elation to risk (if any):	lease insert any recommendations	

Reviewer's signature	
Reviewer: **(Typed name to act as signature)**	**Emma Buck**
Date:	**13/03/2022**
This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology 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 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

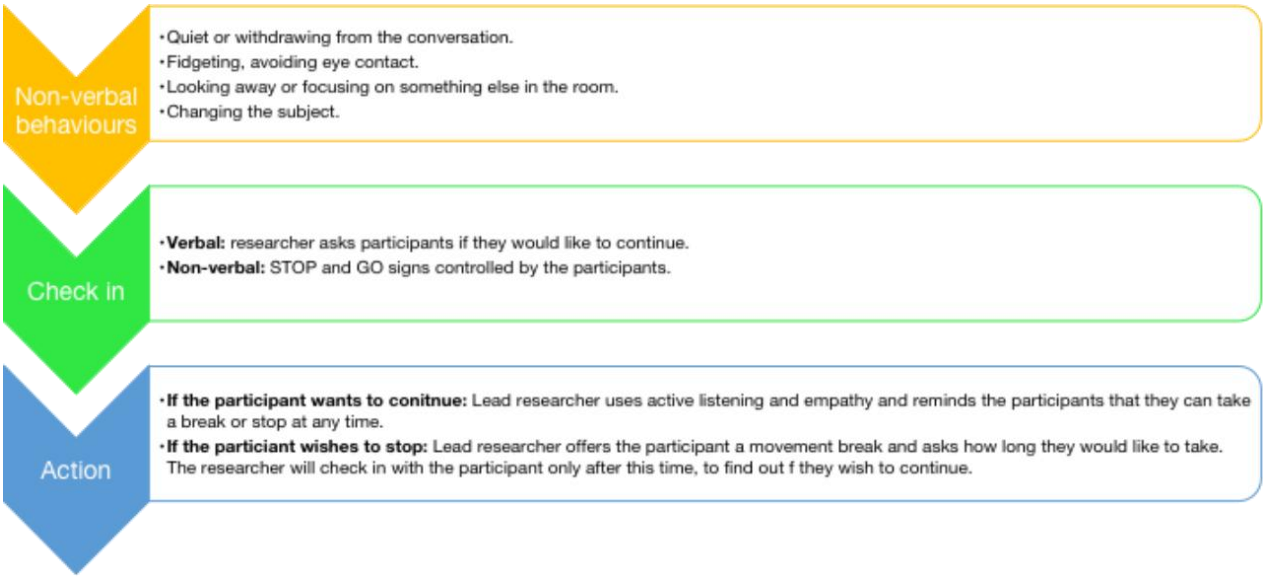
(Student to complete)

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)**	**Siobhan O'Leary**
Student number:	**U2190387**
Date:	**22/03/2023**
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 F: Protocol for monitoring distress

Responding to Psychological distress

The LR will be responsible for continually reflecting and taking appropriate action on the non-verbal behaviours displayed by the participants which could indicate distress. The following list of behaviours are not exhaustive and this protocol will be used alongside professional intuition on the part of the LR.



Appendix G: Data management plan

UEL Data Management Plan: Full

For review and feedback please send to: researchdata@uel.ac.uk

If you are bidding for funding from an external body, complete the Data Management Plan required by the funder (if specified).

Research data is defined as information or material captured or created during the course of research, and which underpins, tests, or validates the content of the final research output. The nature of it can vary greatly according to discipline. It is often empirical or statistical, but also includes material such as drafts, prototypes, and multimedia objects that underpin creative or 'non-traditional' outputs. Research data is often digital, but includes a wide range of paper-based and other physical objects.

Administrative Data	
PI/Researcher	Siobhan O'Leary
PI/Researcher ID (e.g. ORCiD)	S O'Leary: 0000-0002-4212-1324
PI/Researcher email	U2190387@uel.ac.uk
Research Title	Promoting the voices of children and young people who have experienced Domestic Abuse.
Project ID	N/A
Research Duration	Proposed end date: April 2024

Research Description	The research aims to directly involve children and young people (CYP) who have been exposed to Domestic Abuse, in determining how their voices can be promoted by Educational Psychologists. This research has the potential to have a positive impact which extends beyond the immediate research context, with the main purpose being to promote beneficence for the CYP who take part. The study has one research question thus far which is: 'How can Educational Psychologists promote the voices of children and young people who have been exposed to Domestic Abuse?' As per the participatory research design, there may be further research questions which are developed with the participants. CYP partaking in the study will be invited to support with key decision making around defining the research questions, selecting the methods used to collect and analyse data and how to approach research dissemination.
Funder	N/A – Part of professional doctorate
Grant Reference Number (Post-award)	N/A
Date of first version (of DMP)	27/01/2023
Date of last update (of DMP)	
Related Policies	N/A

Does this research follow on from previous research? If so, provide details	N/A
Data Collection	
What data will you collect or create?	6-10 research meetings/talk interviews, voice recordings, .mp3, 1gb 6-10 handwritten notes, transcribed to .docx 6-10 consent forms containing personal data, PDF files Pseudonymisation logbook containing interview transcripts which are given an interview ID in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, indicating participant name, place and date of the interview, the number of pages in the transcript, and the text file name.
How will the data be collected or created?	Meeting notes will be saved as file format: .docx. And stored with the following file-naming convention: [ProjectCode]-[InterviewerInitials]-[ParticipantNumber]-[Location]-[Date].Ext. If interviews are conducted and recorded remotely (due to participant choice), they will use Microsoft Teams installed on the interviewer's UEL-managed laptop, with the resulting .mp4 files transferred to OneDrive. If interviews take place face to face, they will be recorded using a digital audio devide. Recordings will be stored with following the file-naming convention: [ProjectCode]-[InterviewerInitials]-[ParticipantNumber]-[Location]-[Date].Ext Recordings will then be deleted, and transcriptions saved in .docx, and stored in UEL OneDrive. An interview ID will be recorded on excel in .XLS. The file (or files?) will also be stored in UEL OneDrive and named using acronyms (Int = Interview // V.1 = version 1 // Det = Details). Int_det_V.1_date (YYYYMMDD).
Documentation and Metadata	

What documentation and metadata will accompany the data?	Participant information sheets, consent forms, debrief sheet. Audio files and transcripts of interviews.
Ethics and Intellectual Property	
How will you manage any ethical issues?	In line with the DPA 2018, written consent from both parents and children and young people themselves will be obtained for all participant interviews. Participants will be advised of their right to withdraw from the research study at any time without being obliged to provide a reason. This will be made clear to participants on the information sheets and consent forms at their individual developmental level. If a participant decides to withdraw from the study, they will be informed that their contribution (e.g. any audio recordings and interview transcripts) will be removed and confidentially destroyed, up until the point where the data has been anonymised and analysed. I will notify participants that this will not be possible more than 3 weeks after the data collection, due to the data having already been anonymised and unable to be linked back to the participants. Interview recordings will need to be handled securely, so access will be restricted to the PI and supervisor, stored on UEL-managed services, and deleted after transcripts have been checked. Transcription will be undertaken only by the LR, in order to protect confidentiality of participants. In line with the ICO code of practice, participants will be anonymised during transcription to protect confidentiality. No full names will be used in hand written or typed notes and pseudonyms (e.g. P1) will be used instead.

	No other names (e.g. of schools or local authorities) or any other identifiable information will be used in transcriptions.
How will you manage copyright and Intellectual Property Rights issues?	There are no concerns around copyright and Intellectual Property Rights issues because all participants will have given consent to share their views.
Storage and Backup	
How will the data be stored and backed up during the research?	Consent forms will be stored on a secure UEL OneDrive file, that only the LR and research supervisor will have access to. The LR will have access to the raw data and anonymised data via secure OneDrive links. Portable storage devices (an encrypted external hardrive), will be used to hold participant data temporarily in the field (in the absence of an internet connection). It will be password protected and only handled by the LR. At the earliest opportunity, data from the memory stick will be downloaded onto the secure UEL OneDrive and then deleted from the portable device.

How will you manage access and security?	Audio recordings and transcriptions will be saved on the researcher's password protected laptop. The laptop is a personal, non-networked, laptop with a password known only to the LR. Audio files and transcripts will be saved in separate folders. Each audio file will be named with the participants' initials and the date of the interview. Each participant will be attributed a participant number, in chronological interview order. Transcription files will be named e.g. "Participant 1". The researcher will transcribe all interviews and the LR, supervisor and examiners will have access to the anonymised transcripts via OneDrive secure links. Recordings from the digital recording device used during talking interviews and exchanges will be uploaded onto the researcher's password protected personal laptop immediately after the interview has ended. Recordings will then be deleted from the device. Audio files will be saved in a separate folder on the researcher's laptop and titled as follows: 'Participant initials: Date of interview'. Data stored on OneDrive is encrypted, access is limited to me and secured through Multi-Factor Authentication. I will share data with my supervisor upon request using OneDrive secure links. My password-secured laptop will be used to access UEL storage, but no data will be stored locally on the laptop itself and syncing of files will be deactivated. Consent forms will be scanned and uploaded onto the LR's laptop immediately after the meeting. They will then be transferred to the secure UEL OneDrive in a password protected file that can only be accessed by the LR (using the researcher's password). Once uploaded, electronic copies of the consent forms will be deleted from the laptop. Paper versions will then be destroyed using the confidential means (paper shredding) provided by the Local Authority.

Data Sharing	
How will you share the data?	Extracts of transcripts will be provided in the final research write up and any subsequent publications. Identifiable information will not be included in these extracts. Anonymised transcripts will be deposited via the UEL repository. The transcripts are of potential interest to researchers in the field. They will be anonymised before deposit to the ISO27001 certified secure UEL Research Repository at project end alongside appropriate documentation & metadata, assigned a DOI, and shared under a CC BY 4.0 license. Participants will be involved in making any decisions around dissemination. Potential audiences for dissemination include teachers, Educational Psychologists, charity specialists and other professionals who work with Children and young people who have experienced Domestic Abuse.
Are any restrictions on data sharing required?	The data will not be shared outside of that which is anonymously written into the final thesis and deposited in the UEL repository.
Selection and Preservation	
Which data are of long-term value and should be retained, shared, and/or preserved?	Anonymised interview data underlying publications will be retained and shared on the UEL Research Repository so findings can be validated and for use by other researchers. Video and audio recordings are not suitable for sharing and will be destroyed at close of project.

What is the long-term preservation plan for the data?	After the research project has been completed and assessed and any dissemination activities (including publication) have been undertaken, meeting notes will be deleted from the secure UEL OneDrive, by the research supervisor. Consent forms will be retained for one year after the project end to allow the PI to share results with participants as outlined in the Participant Information Sheet. Anonymised transcripts and thematic codes will be stored on the PI's UEL OneDrive for 5 years and backed up on SharePoint, after which they will be reviewed for further retention or deletion.
Responsibilities and Resources	
Who will be responsible for data management?	The LR named on this plan (Siobhan O'Leary).
What resources will you require to deliver your plan?	An encrypted digital audio recording device. An encrypted portable storage device (external hardrive).
Review	**Storage and back up section to be updated to reflect advice on storage of personal identifying data in a completely separate location from anonymised data with encryption used. Exact location on UEL servers to be included (e.g. OneDrive for Business or H: Drive as applicable)**
This DMP has been reviewed by:	
Date: 27/01/2023	Signature: Joshua Fallon Assistant Librarian RDM

Appendix H: Safeguarding protocol

SAFEGUARDING PROTOCOL/FLOW CHART

SAFEGUARDING DISCLOSURE IN A SETTING OR FOLLOWING A PHONE CALL OR EMAIL CONTACT
Discuss with Setting Safeguarding Lead - *hand write or email record of agreement*

TEP to contact Supervisor to discuss the issue
EP and TEP to COMPLETE SAFEGUARDING RECORD – copy to Setting, to supervisor & to Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
..\Safeguarding record.doc
TEP & Supervisor/EPT Safeguarding lead discuss
Review issues; actions, reflect on and challenge any assumptions or omissions; explore feelings.

TEP to update Safeguarding Record following discussion with Supervisor/

TEP TO FOLLOW UP (with support from supervisor) WITH THE SETTING WITHIN 24 HOURS, TO REVIEW AGREED ACTIONS (or other timescale as agreed with the Setting Safeguarding Lead)

TEP to record review outcomes on Safeguarding Record Form (link above) & email to Supervisor & DSL

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

EPT DSL TO UPDATE SAFEGUARDING SPREADSHEET TO END STEPS SAFEGUARDING INVOLVEMENT OR TO ADD FURTHER REVIEW DATE(S)
Further EP involvement to be continued as required, following review(s) or involvement to end, following discussion with setting, EPT safeguarding lead,

No Further Action

Continue review process

Other Action
e.g. refer to Children's Social Care

Appendix I: Reflective diary extract

Date:	***Description:*** *What happened?*	***Feelings:*** *What were you (and others), feeling before, during and after?* *Hot/blind/soft spot?*	***Evaluation:*** *What went well* *What could've been better* *Inclusion and diversity?*	***Analysis:*** *What sense can you make of the situation?* *Why did things go well or not?* *What have I learnt?*
26.07.2023	Research session 1	I was feeling nervous and excited before the first session. It felt like a blind spot to be leading a research workshop, given that I have little experience in doing so. I felt like contracting the group was more of a soft spot and familiar due to delivering a group intervention earlier in the year.	**Group dynamics:** Both enjoyed playing Jenga at the start and wanted to play multiple times, I had to resist moving them on and asked how many games they would like, to which they suggested three full games. I felt that this helped to reduce the power imbalance between us, but did also find that it conflicted with what I was hoping to get done in the session. Older sister tried to correct younger brother on several occasions, I tried to stand back and see how they could work it out. I tried to always ask both children for their thoughts when I noticed that one was being more quiet than the other. Both children had lots of ideas around values for the group and explained what these values would look like during our sessions. There were some things that the children could not agree on and they were unable to vote due to only being two - they decided that some items would be voted on next week if more children arrived, and other things were settled today through negotiation.	

Appendix J: Parental information sheet

PARENTAL INFORMATION SHEET

Promoting the voices of children and young people who have experienced Domestic Abuse.

Contact person: Siobhan O'Leary

Email: u2190387@uel.ac.uk

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like your child to take part or not, please carefully read through the following information which outlines what their participation would involve. Feel free to talk with your child and 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 using the above email address.

Who am I?

My name is Siobhan O'Leary. I am a postgraduate student in the School of Psychology at the University of East London (UEL). I am studying for a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology. As part of my studies, I am conducting the research that your child is being invited to participate in.

What is the purpose of the research?

Over the past few years, there has been a rise in the prevalence and reporting of instances of Domestic Abuse (Office for National Statistics 2020). The Domestic Abuse Bill (2021) discusses the known impact of Domestic Abuse on children and young people, and therefore it is important that we give these children and young people a platform to have their voices heard, which can have a **transformative** affect on them.

The aim of this research is to directly involve children and young people in exploring how their voices can be promoted by Educational Psychologists. There is a hope that in doing so, this will:

- **Empower the children and young people** who take part in the study, by offering them a platform to have their voices heard.
- Support Educational Psychologists to **understand what is important to children and young people** who are affected by Domestic Abuse.

Why have I been invited to take part?

To address the study aims, I am inviting your child to take part in my research. Your child is eligible to take part in the study if they are:

- Aged 7 - 16 years old.
- Have been exposed to Domestic Abuse (e.g. through seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of the abuse).
- Have had Domestic Abuse 'named', which means that they understand what has happened and have received or are awaiting specialist support.
- Living in the UK.

For the purpose of this research, 'Domestic Abuse' is defined as "abusive behaviour of a person (A) towards another person (B), if they are both aged 16 years and over and are personally connected to one another" (Domestic Abuse Act 2021).

It is entirely up to you and your child/young person to decide whether they will take part or not; participation is voluntary.

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

If you agree to take part, yourself and your child will be asked to

- Meet with me for an initial discussion about the research project and ask me any questions that you/they may have. During this meeting, we will carry out a risk assessment to clarify whether or not it will be safe for your child to take part in the research project. If you/your child decides to take part, I will ask you to sign a consent form. This initial meeting will take around 1 hour.
- I will meet with your child/young person in an educational setting (e.g. a local children's centre or your child's school). There will also be flexibility to conduct these meetings online using Microsoft Teams or Zoom if this is a preferred option for you and your child.
- This research project will follow a participatory design. This means that if your child/young person takes part, they will help me to make key decisions about what should happen next and how many times we should meet.

- My aim is to find out how I can promote the voice of your child/young person. To achieve this, I am likely to ask them questions such as:

    - ❖ What they wish to share during the research process.
    - ❖ What they do not wish to share during the research process.
    - ❖ What they feel is important to them.
    - ❖ What they feel they would like help with (if anything).
    - ❖ How they would like to communicate with me (e.g. talking, drawing pictures, taking photographs, making a collage, etc).

- The meetings will be pitched at your child/young person's developmental level, with the option of frequent breaks. I hope to make the sessions fun and engaging. I will also be considering what reasonable adaptations will need to be made throughout the research process, to meet your child/young person's needs.

Please note that due to the sensitivity of the research project, you or another trusted adult will be invited to attend all research meetings along with your child / young person, if it will help them to feel safer.

Can I change my mind?

Yes, **you can change your mind at any time** and withdraw consent without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. If you would like to withdraw from the research then you can do so by letting the researcher know that you no longer wish for your child to take part. This could be shared via e-mail, phone call or face-to-face. If you withdraw, your data will not be used as part of the research.

Separately, you can also request to withdraw your child's data from being used even after they have taken part in the study, **provided that this request is made within 2 weeks of the data being collected** (e.g. 2 weeks after each meeting with the researcher). After this point, the data will have been anonymised and analysis will begin, so withdrawal will not be possible).

Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

There may be disadvantages to your child taking part in this study, though they will be minimised through completion of a risk assessment and following rigorous Psychological safety protocols during the research meetings. Potential disadvantages could include:

Psychological harm or distress:

- Your child / young person may find it difficult to speak about matters relating to Domestic Abuse during the research process.
- This will be minimised by the LR following your child/young person's lead regarding what they would and would not like to talk about in the research meetings. Participants will be offered multiple breaks throughout the research meetings and I will follow a protocol for responding to behaviours that may be indicative of distress.
- At the end of the research, you and your child/young person will receive a debrief document which will include information on services which can offer you further support if required.
- You will have access to my contact details should you need support for yourself or your child. I will be able to offer signposting at any point during the research process should any concerns arise.

Breaking of confidentiality:

- It is important to understand that I have a duty to safeguard which means that confidentiality may be broken if your child makes a disclosure about anything that causes me concern over their own or another persons safety and well-being.
- I will explain the safe-guarding protocol to you before the research begins.
- Other than potential disclosures, the research activities will remain confidential.

What will happen to the information that my child provides?

- Your child/young person's participation will be safe and confidential. Their privacy and safety will be respected at all times.
- Participants do not have to answer questions asked of them and can stop their participation at any time.
- Any meetings that are held virtually may be recorded and later transcribed - with your and your child's consent. Any notes taken in the research meetings will be written on paper then typed up and stored on a secure university drive that is password protected and only the LR (myself) and the research supervisor (Dr Miles Thomas) will have access to. Hand written notes will then be shredded as soon as the data is backed up online.
- Any identifying details (names of places/people) will be anonymised during transcription to ensure confidentiality. Pseudonyms will be applied to all participant names (e.g. 'P1' instead of your child's name) and P1's mother (instead of family members names).
- If you give consent, the anonymised data will remain on the UEL repository for 5 years after the study has concluded. After which time there will be a review to decide whether the data will be kept, erased or moved.
- You will have 2 weeks from the date of each research meeting to withdraw the data that your child has provided. Please contact me if you would like to withdraw your child's data.

- It is unlikely that confidentiality will need to be broken, but the LR retains the right to report any safeguarding issues to the appropriate professionals in the case that there is a risk of harm to any individual.

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. Findings will also be disseminated to a range of relevant audiences (e.g. professionals such as teachers, domestic abuse specialist support workers and Educational Psychologists). In all material produced, you and your child's identity will remain anonymous, in that, it will not be possible to identify you or your child personally, e.g. children will be given pseudonyms such as 'participant 1'.

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 by Dr Miles Thomas for a maximum of 5 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: Siobhan O'Leary

Email: u2190387@uel.ac.uk

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

Email: m.thomas@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 K: Participant information sheet

Participant information sheet

Promoting the voices of children and young people who have experienced Domestic Abuse.

My name is Siobhan, it sounds like Shiv-orn.

I am learning to be an Educational Psychologist.
I would like to know if you would like to help me with my **research.**

I would like to understand how Educational Psychologists can listen to children and young people who have experienced *Domestic Abuse.*

Domestic Abuse means when one parent has hurt or bullied another parent.

I would like to ask you some questions to help me to design my research.

This is because I know that **you know best** what I should ask you about.

When you meet with me, you can have lots of breaks and I'll ask you how I can make our meetings more **fun.**

You can bring your parent or another adult along **if you want to.**

23

I will ask you questions like:

"What would you like to talk about during the research?
"Is there anything that you *would not* like to talk about?"
"Is there anything important that I should ask you about?"
"Is there anything I *should not* ask you?"

When we meet, we might spend time talking, drawing or making things.

I will ask you what you would prefer to do.

If you ever feel like you don't want to talk to me or take part anymore, **that's okay.**

You can tell me or your parent and we will stop.

I will ask you if you would like to share what you have told me, with other people.

This could be people like your teachers or other trusted adults who help you and your family.

Helping with my research could help you to feel good.

It could also help other children by improving the way that adults listen to them.

It is important that children and young people's voices are heard.

Appendix L: Consent form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Promoting the voices of children and young people who have experienced Domestic Abuse.

Contact person: Siobhan O'Leary

Email: u2190387@uel.ac.uk

	Parent **(Please tick to indicate consent)**	**CYP** **(Please tick to indicate consent)**
I confirm that I have read the participant information sheet dated XX/XX/XXXX (version X) 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/my child's participation in the study is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time, without explanation or disadvantage.		
I understand that if I withdraw my/my child during the study, my child's data will not be used,		

I understand that I have 2 weeks from the date of each research meeting to withdraw my / my child's data from the study.		
I understand that the talking exchanges will be recorded using a recording device which the researcher will listen back to and later transcribe.		
I understand that my own and my child's 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 / my child's data may be used in material such as conference presentations, reports and articles in academic journals resulting from the study and that these will not personally identify me/my child.		
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 me / my child taking part in the above study.		

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……

Participant's Signature

……

Parent's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……

Parent’s Signature

……

Researcher’s Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……

Researcher’s Signature

……

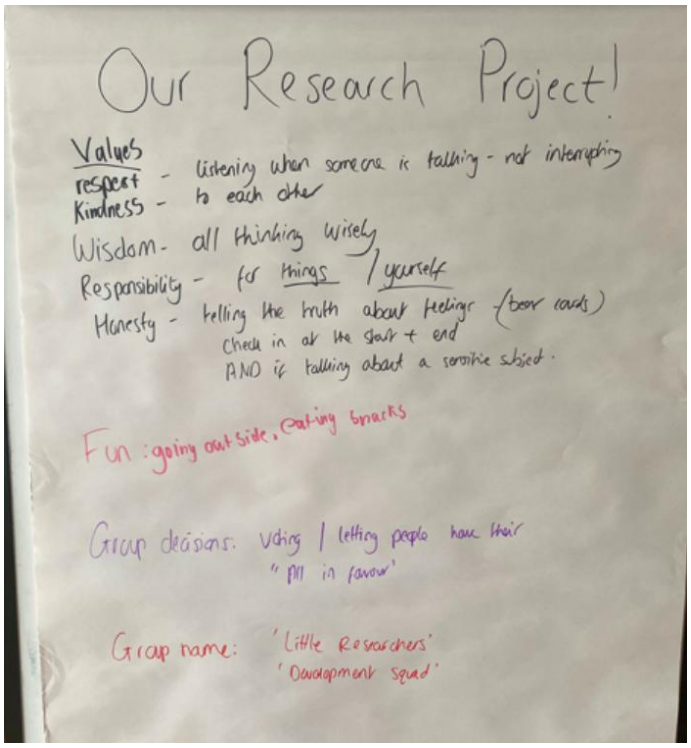
Date

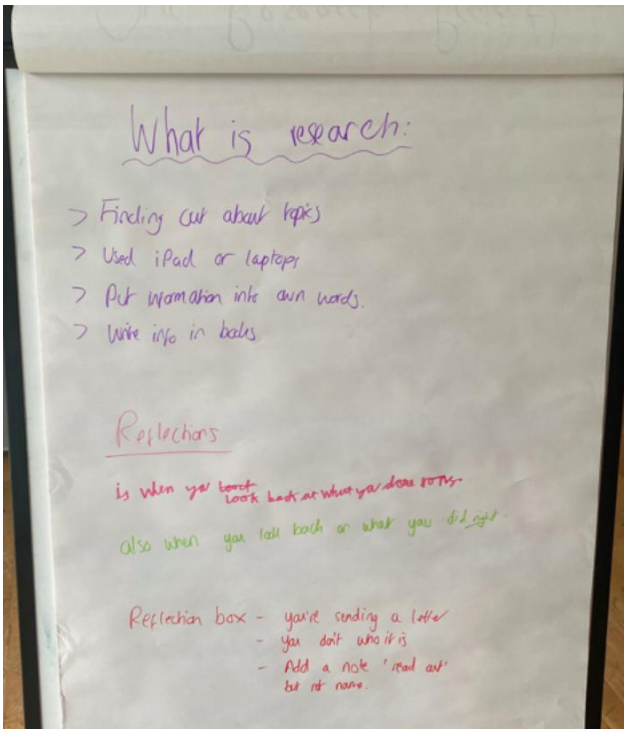
……..……

Appendix M: Reflective diary extract

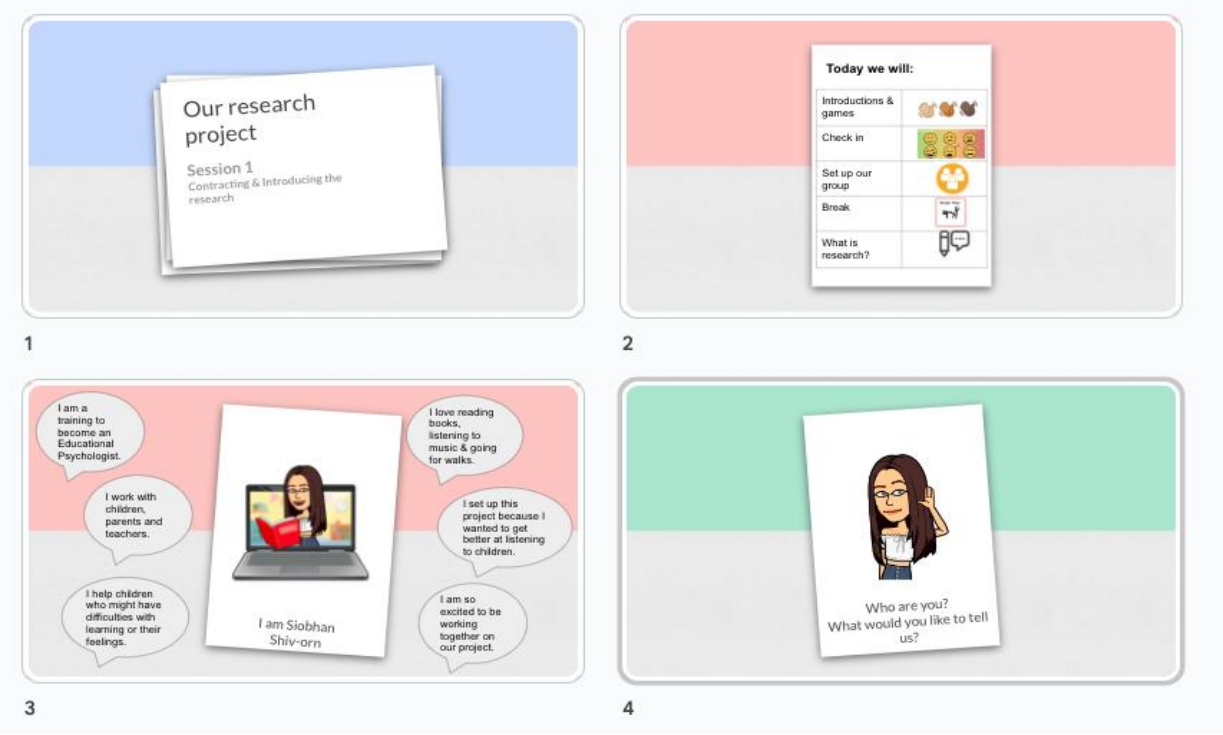
Date:	***Description:*** ***What happened?***	***Feelings:*** ***What were you (and others), feeling before, during and after?*** ***Hot/blind/soft spot?***	***Evaluation:*** ***What went well*** ***What could've been better*** ***Inclusion and diversity?***	***Analysis:*** ***What sense can you make of the situation?*** ***Why did things go well or not?*** ***What have I learnt?***	***Conclusion:*** ***What did I learn from this and what do I need to work on?*** ***Action Plan:*** ***If it arose again- what would you do?***
05/05/2023	Call with SENCO	I felt hopeful about this phone call, given that the school disclose having a large community of DV survivors. I felt grateful that LN could think of several children who meet the criteria.	It went well to explain the criteria of the research project as well as ask if LN had any initials thoughts or concerns. It was helpful to re-frame her language and thinking from 'parents don't engage' to 'some parents might not be at the point in their journey yet to engage on this topic'.	LN shared that she wasn't sure how to approach these parents due to the DA not being disclosed or spoken about either with the parents of the children. It was helpful to talk about how it could be better to approach parents who have themselves disclosed this information to the school and also reflect on who would be best to speak with them, e.g. family support worker rather than SENCo/headteacher.	I've learnt that a huge barrier to this work is the fact that many families do not disclose DV and processionals equally do not feel comfortable about discussing this. This aligns with the narrative that the group are 'invisible' and makes me feel very motivated to gain these children's voices. **ACTION PLAN:** - Send LN the briefing and check in within a few weeks regarding potential participants.

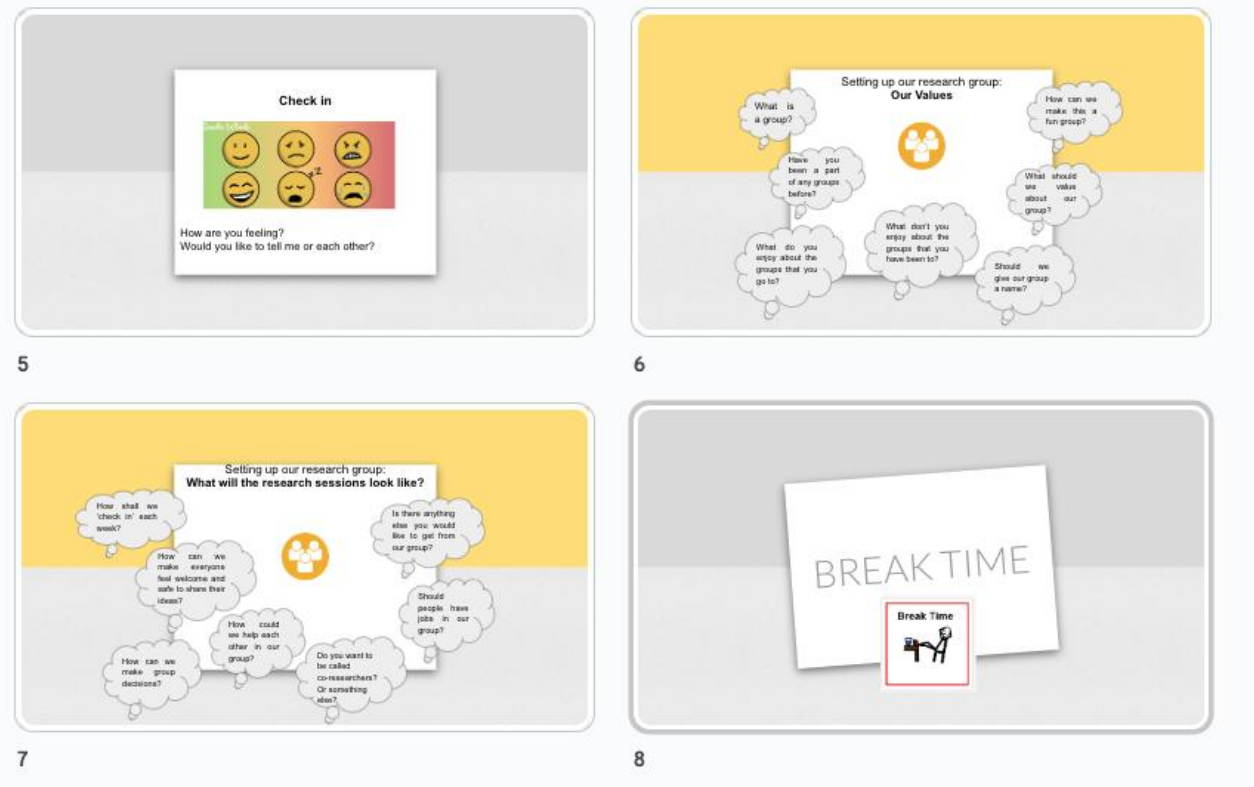
Appendix N: Contracting the research group





Appendix O: Research PowerPoint presentation

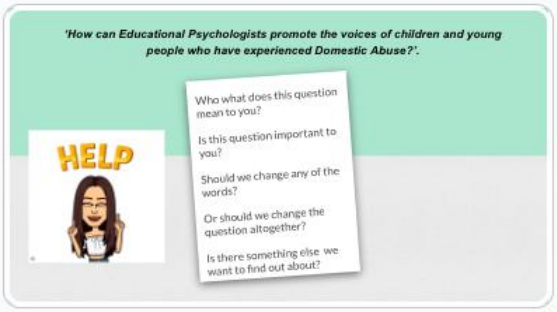




9

10

11



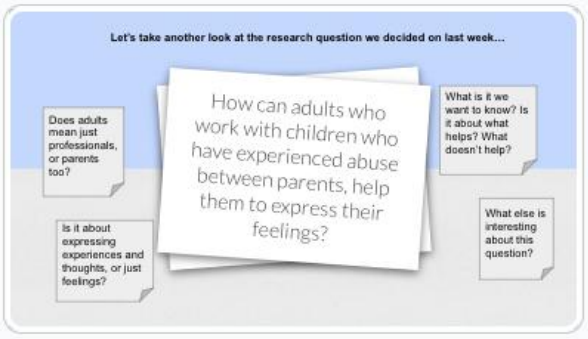
13

14

15

16

17



18

19

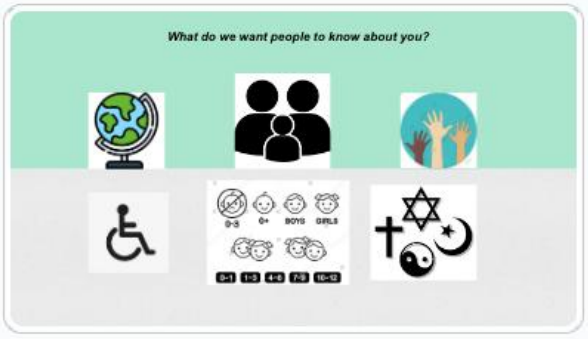
20

21

22

23

24



25

26

27

28

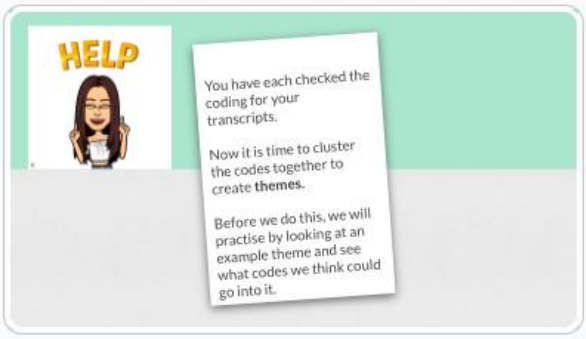
29

30

31

32

33



34

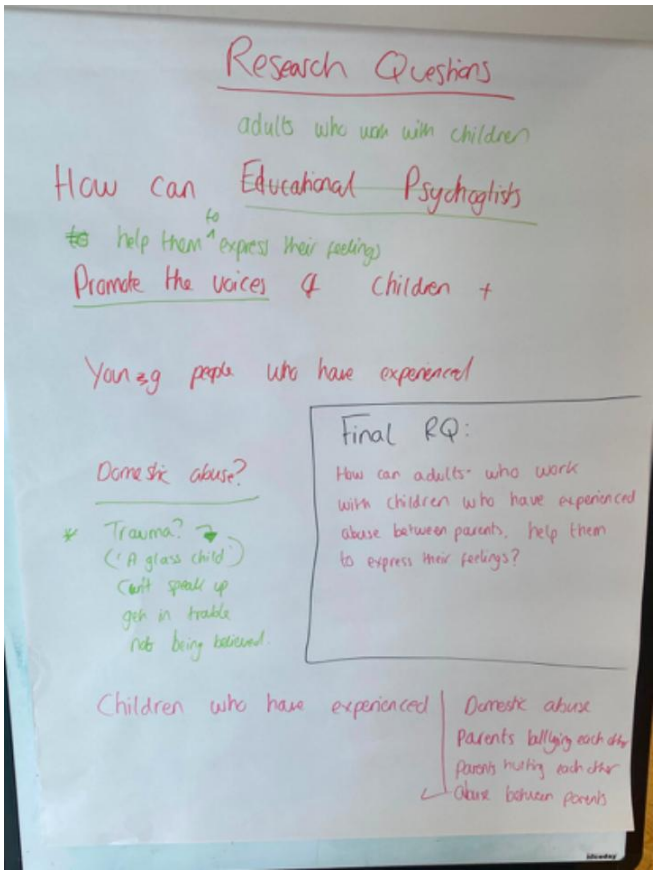
35

36

37

38

Appendix P: Research question notes



The main changes that the co-researchers made to the research question were:

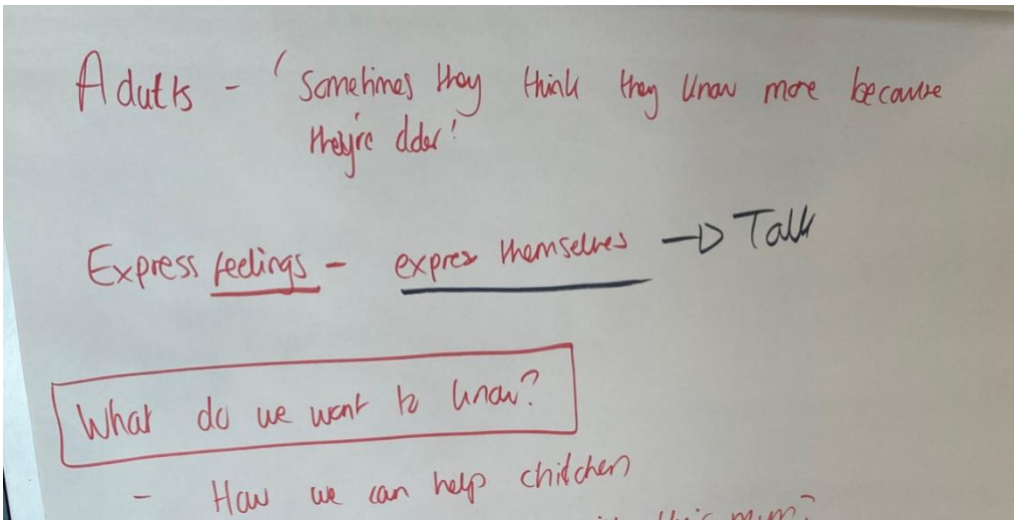
1. The co-researchers felt that the question should encompass all adults who work with children, including parents and teachers.
2. The phrase ‘promote the voices of children and young people’ was changed to ‘help children to express themselves’.
3. The co-researchers felt that the term ‘Domestic Abuse’ was confusing and that it wasn’t clear who this involved. Instead, they decided on the phrase ‘Abuse between parents’.

Appendix Q: Reflective diary extracts

			Both children engaged with refining the research question and spent some time coming to a shared understanding of DA. They asked me what it meant and I explained based on the Domestic Abuse Act definition, but replaced words with 'hurting and fighting'. They asked if DA included 'abuse against children' and after I said no, they decided to change the wording from 'domestic abuse' to 'abuse between parents', to make it more understandable and clear. I considered that this minimised the perceived impact of DA on children, but also wondered if this was a way of the children compartmentalising or understanding the term 'DA'. Both children thought that more professionals than EPs should listen to children, and that the RQ should reflect this because many adults work with children. One child asked if they could 'do something' whilst working and he he began drawing, this helped him to remain on the discussion focused. The other child enjoyed doing her crochet whilst we chatted. I wondered if this behaviour was a way of coping with the difficult discussion around conceptualizing 'DA', however, they both refused a break when I offered them one. This suggested to me that they were engaged but required strategies to help them focus or cope with
			the discussions. The older child engaged more in refining the RQ and offered terms such as 'trauma', which suggested a higher level understanding of the topic.

31.07.2023	Tutorial	It was interesting to hear a critical perspective which I had not yet considered,	SO shared with MT the discussion around how the participants had chosen to describe DA as 'abuse between parents'. MT reflected that a critical view to
		particularly as this idea links back to what is reflected in the research.	this could be that the impact of DA on CYP is missed, however, that it will be important to value this language as chosen by the participants. MT wondered if this language supports CYP to compartmentalize the DA and helps them to cope with and talk about it.

Appendix R: ‘Funneling down’ process

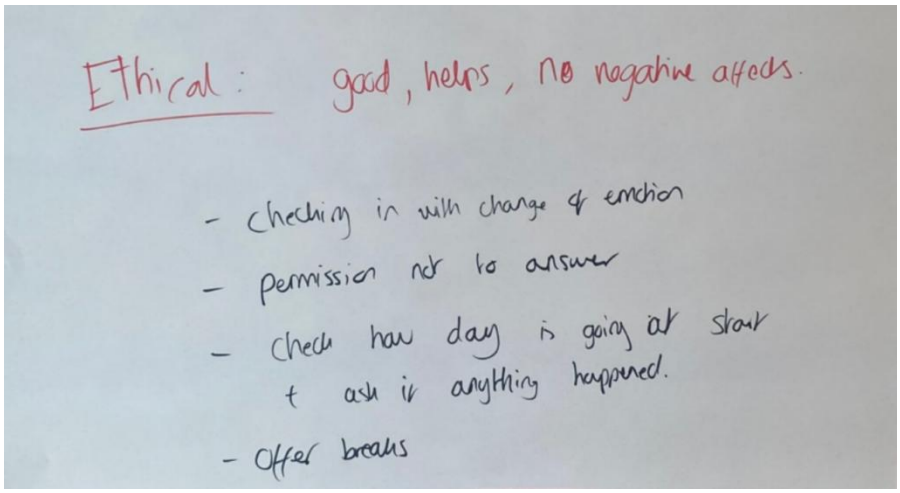


The co-researchers were asked to consider what it was about the research question that was interesting to them and the use of a think sheet (Kellet, 2005) was suggested to capture ideas. However, the co-researchers preferred to share their thoughts within the group and appointed a scribe to record the ideas. Participants defined ‘adults’ as anyone who interacts with children and one co-researcher commented that adults “sometimes think they know more because they’re older”. This was a motivating factor for co-researchers' desire to ask children themselves about how adults can help them. The co-researchers expanded on ‘expressing feelings’ to ‘express themselves’, which was felt to encompass stories or incidents in which children may not wish to share their feelings. The co-researchers felt that the main purpose of the study was to find out ‘How we can help children (to express themselves)’.

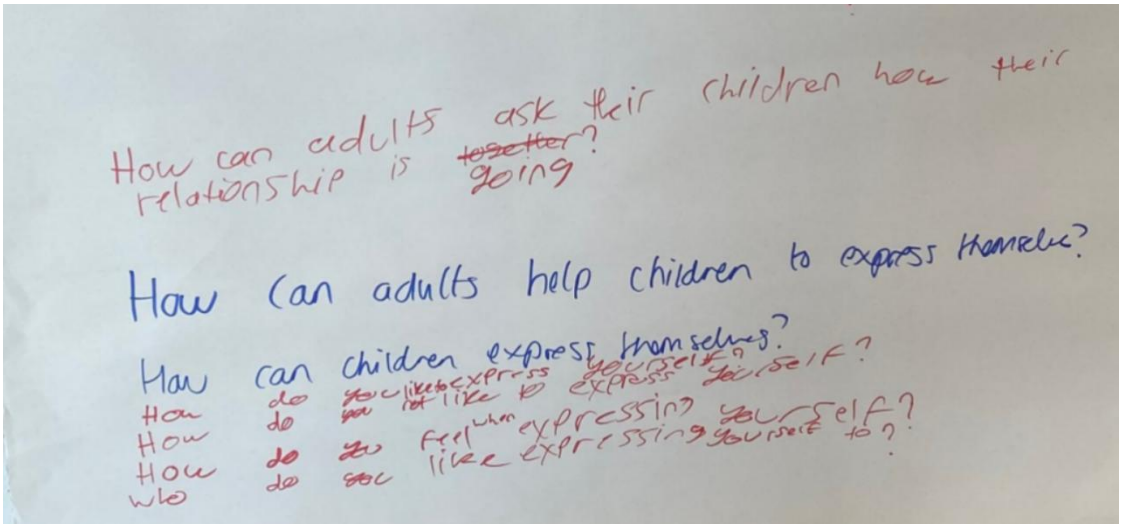
Appendix S: Ethical considerations and final interview schedule

The co-researchers nominated a scribe and captured their ideas, which are presented below in the photograph. One of the co-researchers shared their interpretation of an ‘ethical interview’ as being one that “Good, helps the interviewee and causes no negative effects”. The co-researchers decided that the interviewer should:

- Check-in with interviewees if a change of emotion is detected.
- Give interviewees permission not to answer any question.
- Check how the interviewees' day is going at the start of the interview and ask if anything has happened in their day which has impacted their desire to take part in the interview.
- Offer the interviewees breaks during the interview.



The co-researchers all contributed to the development of the interview questions. One co-researcher nominated herself as scribe and captured their ideas, which can be seen in the photograph below.



Semi-structured interview schedule:

How can adults help children who have experienced abuse between parents, to express themselves?

Ethical check-in

- How is your day going?
- You have permission not to answer any question that is asked of you
- Would you like any breaks? Shall we organise now, or will you let me know?
- I might ask you prompt questions after each question, so that I can better understand what you are telling me. Don't worry about this because there is no such thing as a wrong answer!

Semi structured interview questions:

1. How can adults help children to express themselves?
2. How can children express themselves?
3. How do you like to express yourself?
4. How do you not like to express yourself?
5. How do you feel when expressing yourself?
6. Who do you like to express yourself to?
7. How can adults ask their children how their relationship is going?

Appendix T: Debrief sheet

Participant debrief letter

Thank you for participating in my research study on

"Promoting the voices of children and young people who have* experienced *Domestic Abuse".

This letter offers information that may be relevant in light of your child/young person having now taken part.

What will happen to the information that your child provided?

- All spoken data that has been recorded and transcribed has been stored on a secure university drive that is password protected and only the LR and research supervisor (Dr Miles Thomas) will have access to.
- Hand written notes have been written up and then shredded as soon as the data has been backed up online on the secure university drive.
- Any data that included photographs of hand drawn pictures, photographs or artefacts from the home have been scanned and stored on a secure university drive that is password protected that only the LR and research supervisor (Dr Miles Thomas) has access to.
- Identifying details such as names have been changed to Pseudonyms, e.g. P1 instead of your child's name.
- You have *three weeks* from the date of when data is collected to withdraw the data that your child has provided.

What if I or my child has been adversely affected by taking part?

It is possible that you or your child may have been adversely affected by taking part in the research, though all reasonable steps have been taken to minimise distress or harm of any kind. Nevertheless, it is possible that your child's participation – or its after effects – may have been challenging, distressing or uncomfortable in some way. Some things to look out for in your children include:

- A change in their usual behaviour *(e.g. becoming more withdrawn / more hyperactive and struggling to relax / high irritability / more demanding / more clingy).*
- Asking questions about the other parent or family members more than usual.
- l Stopping playing or playing repetitively (e.g. playing out the same sequence linked to an event).
- Difficulties with sleep or bed wetting.
- A change in appetite or eating patterns.
- Physical symptoms such as complaining of tummy aches or headaches.
- Temper tantrums or problems in school.
- Poor memory and concentration.
- Older children may truant or not want to go to school.
- increased risk taking.

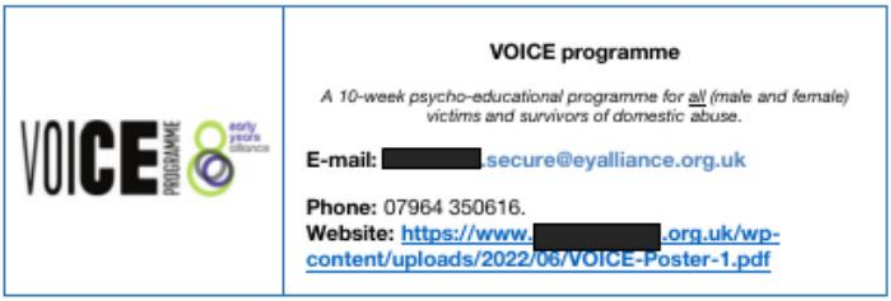
If you have noticed any of these signs in your children, there are several things that you can do, including:

- Talking to your child about how they are feeling. Ideas around conversation starters can be found at: https://www.youngminds.org.uk/media/yewavutz/young-minds-conversation-starters_final-003.pdf
- Activities to reduce stress and support your children's well-being such as breathing exercises and special/calming activities. For more ideas please search: https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-mental-health/#Activitiesyoucandowithyourchild
- Seek extra mental health support for your child:
  - ❖ The Mix: Support for anyone under the age of 25 years old: https://www.themix.org.uk/
  - ❖ Childline: Support for anyone under the age of 19 years old: https://www.childline.org.uk/
  - ❖ Ollee: a virtual friends for 8-11 year olds: https://app.ollee.org.uk/#/welcome
  - ❖ Tellmi: a free app for teenagers aged 11-25 years old: https://www.tellmi.help/
- Talking to the school: Your school SENCo is a good person to speak to about your concerns, as they will be able to offer support in school. This will include interventions which they already run and could include referrals made to a range of other professionals.

You may also find the following resources/services helpful in relation to obtaining information and support:

National services

Refuge For women and children. Against domestic violence.	**Refuge** *Outreach programmes, independent advocacy, group/community support, refuge accommodation and a specialist service mostly for women and children.* **Free, 24 hour helpline:** 08008 2000 247 **Website:** https://refuge.org.uk/
Respect Men's advice line	**The Men's Advice Line** *A specialist provider for men experiencing domestic abuse.* **Free, 24 hour helpline:** 08008 2000 247 **Website:** https://refuge.org.uk/
galop	**GALOP** *Helpline to and support services for LGBT+ victims and survivors of sexual violence and abuse.* **Free, 24 hour helpline:** 0800 999 5428 **E-mail:** help.galop@org.uk **Website:** https://galop.org.uk/get-help/support-services/



Contact details:

You are also more than welcome to contact me or my director of studies if you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted.

Siobhan O'Leary - u2190387@uel.ac.uk

Dr Miles Thomas - m.thomas@uel.ac.uk

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

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 U: Dataset Familiarisation memos

After reading through the dataset multiple times, I started to notice that children have a range of ideas about how to express themselves. I began to consider the psychological theories which could back up such interpretations and have noted these alongside the ideas below:

- Children have a preference for non-direct methods of expressing themselves, e.g. writing down their worries, use of a diary or drawing.
- Children like speaking to other children for support (Equal power relations / social capital).
- Children sometimes express themselves through facial expressions or body language and hope for adults to interpret this (possible link to Attachment theory / co-regulation?)
- Children cope by reaching out to family members or friends, though children often have a preference of people that they wish to speak to (possible link to Self-Determination Theory?)

Another pattern that emerged for me as I went deeper into the data, was the idea that there are facilitators to children expressing themselves. From a critical psychology lens, I began to consider that these facilitators were more important than any specific 'form' of communication.

- A routine which feels safe (always seeking an auntie to talk to if there is a problem at home).
- Adults meeting physiological needs first - offering food / drink / hug, before moving onto talking about feelings (Maslows' hierarchy of needs)
- Adults giving children choices about how they wish to express themselves and making this fun, e.g. through drawing or activities (Possible link to person-centred Psychology/PCP).
- Adults regularly checking in with children about how they are feeling (secure base model?).
- Adults trusting children to engage in coping mechanisms which help and not judging them, this could include children expressing themselves through their behaviour.
- Adults should allow children to feel autonomous, e.g. allowing the use of a feelings diary which may be private unless the child wishes to share with an adult. Although some children did recognise the the concept of safe-guarding.
- Adults to validate children's feelings (children want to be accepted).
- If speaking to an unfamiliar person, having a trusted adult present is important. This person should be chosen by the child (PCP and attachment).
- Adults should create a trusted space with children by being non-judgemental, use active listening and offer reassurance to children about opening up.
- Adults should create a positive environment of affection and fun, making sure that children feel good, calm and comfortable.

- A feelings diary can empower CYP to cope themselves / develop resiliency and therapy can support with developing coping strategies.

There seem to also be barriers to children expressing themselves, which include:

- Children don't like having to hold feelings in but this is compounded by instances such as when their preferred person for expressing themselves to is not available.
- Children don't like to express themselves to unfamiliar people (Attachment theory?).
- Some children don't like to express themselves to their parents.
- There is a lack of trust in unfamiliar adults, which is related to a potential lack of privacy, e.g. if these adults share information with the child's parents without consent.
- Adults shouldn't shout (Link to Power Threat Meaning framework - shouting causes a threat response).
- Language used by adults is important, they should start with asking 'how are you feeling,' not 'why are you feeling this way' - (Bruce Perry three R's?)
- Power imbalances are present between adult and child, the adult often holds power and demands change from child which leads to disengagement (PTMF).
- Children feel that adults often look for negatives, which increases emotional distance and distress in children (a lack of unconditional positive regard).
- Adults need to follow the lead of CYP and they may not want to talk about DA. Being asked questions about DA or other personal topics can feel forced and uncomfortable for children.
- Children feel there is a risk of miscommunication if non-verbal communication is used.
- Children worry about the outcome of expressing themselves, e.g. getting into trouble, crying in front of others which feels uncomfortable, or not having their feelings accepted.

The ideas that occurred to me in the above points come from a place of being a Trainee EP who regularly uses these theories in placement work. What surprised me were some conflicting statements, which related to individual differences between participants but also sometimes within participants which evolved throughout the interviews:

- Children express their preference for autonomy and being given choices, but still position adults as having power in terms of safe-guarding. For some, this meant that they understood why their parents would have to be told information, but for others this was difficult to accept.
- Although talking to unfamiliar people is largely seen as difficult, one participant found talking to their school counsellor very helpful, which could be due to

developing a trusting relationship with them. However, this counsellor did once have to break the trust by sharing information with the parent.

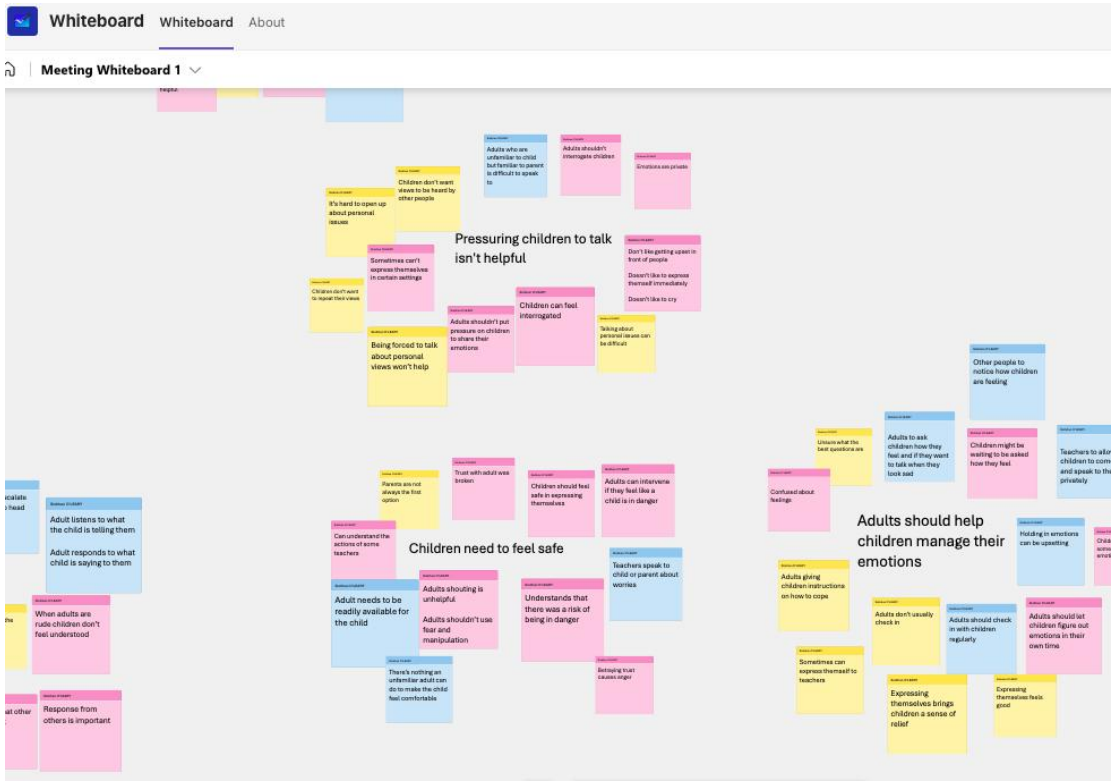
- Although children have preferred ways of expressing themselves, they can worry about what other people think and may adapt to fit in with the environment or imposed expectations (e.g. not expressing themselves through behaviour or body language).
- Although children identified several ways of expressing themselves (e.g. writing / drawing), none of them suggested using this as a method of data collection and relied only on talking with researcher.
- Some children felt more comfortable in the presence of a parent and this supported them in expressing themselves. However, they chose not to have a parent present during their interview.

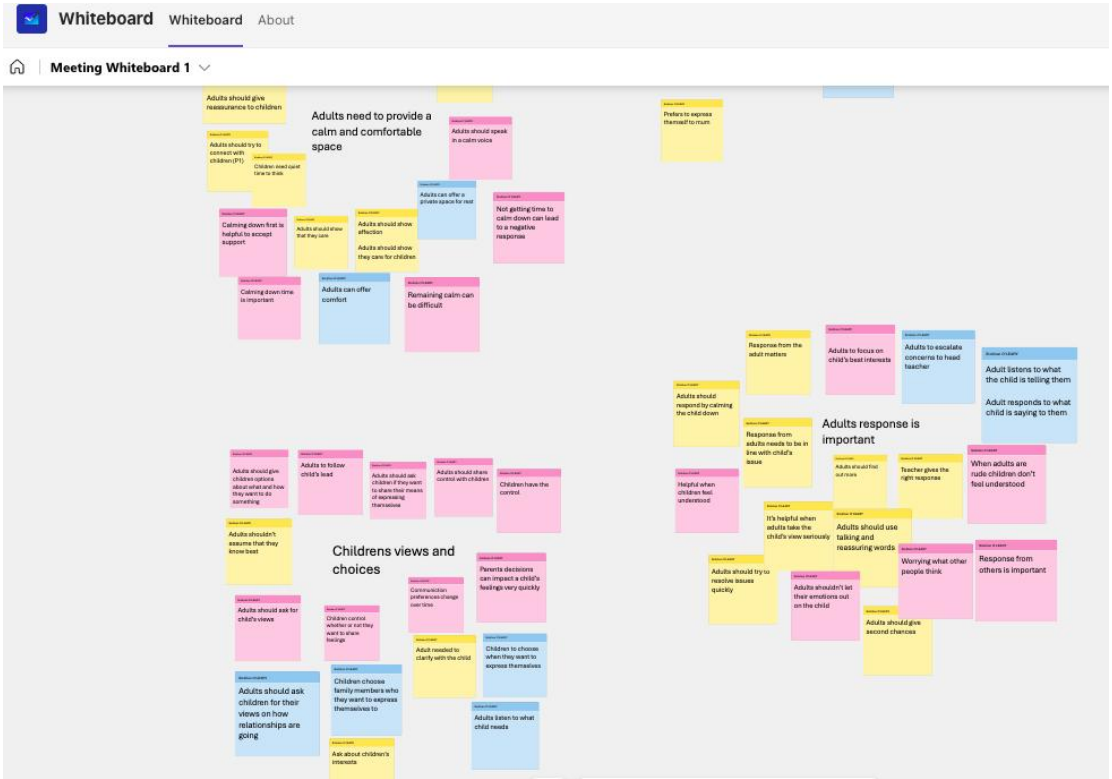
Appendix V: Sample of interview transcript with member checked code labels.

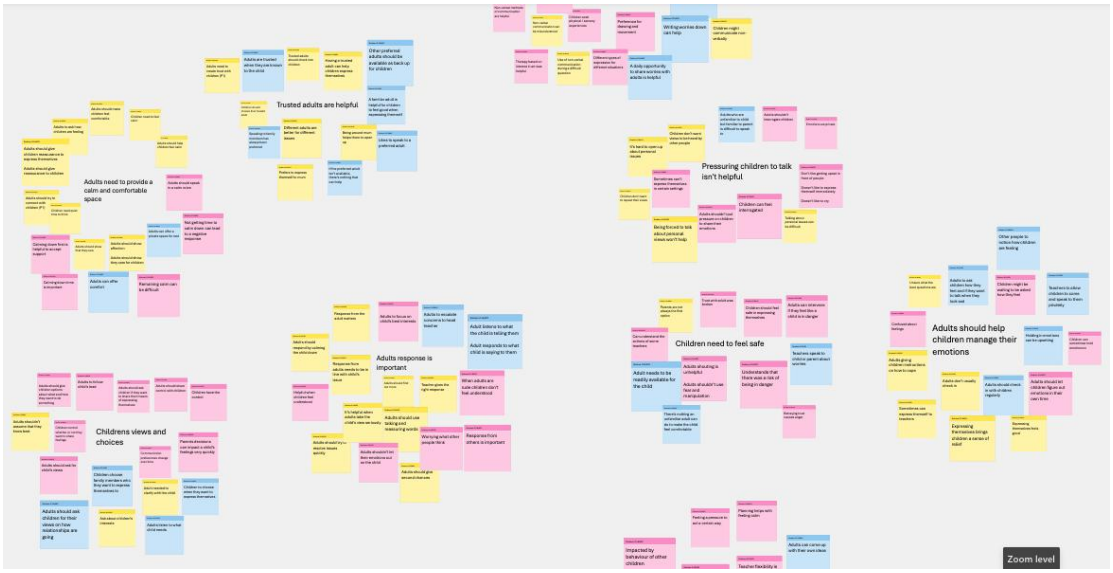
Transcript What was said	**Code** What is the participant telling me? Blue: coded by lead researcher Green: added by co-researcher Red: Code by lead researcher to be deleted
Interviewer: So the first question is, how do you think adults can help children to express themselves?	
Participant 2: Umm, they could ask them for ideas and stuff, or like going through things with them before doing something.	Adults should share control with children
Interviewer: Umm, yeah, when you say, ask them for ideas, what does that mean?	
Participant 2: Like, um like, if they want to do something with like the child yeah, like actvities like fun activities, you can ask them what they want to do and how they want to do it.	Adults should give children options about what and how they want to do something
Interviewer: Yeah. So it sounds like maybe giving them choices?	
Participant 2: Yeah.	
Interviewer: Yeah that's a good idea. And what was the other thing that you said?	
Participant 2: Umm, I can't really remember it now.	
Interviewer: That's okay, giving them choices is a really good idea. Is there any particular ways that adults should speak to children or anything that they should ask?	
Participant 2: Like umm, when you speak to them, they should always like have like a neutral tone. Like, and if like they're angry they	Adults should speak in a calm voice

should like have like a firm tone like not be shouting. 'Cause it's like you're telling someone off, if you're telling someone off and you're shouting, they only gonna be focused on the fact that you're shouting and not that the thing they done something wrong.	Adults shouldn't let their emotions out on the child
Interviewer: Yeah, that's such a good point. So when you say neutral tone, you mean just like a lower voice and not shouting. Yeah, yeah that's a good point. Is there anything else?	
Participant 2: Umm, that, umm, like... when they ask someone how they feel they should like, like um... like, 'how do you feel' or not 'why do you feel', 'cus it's hard to explain your emotions sometimes	Adults shouldn't put pressure on children to share their emotions Emotions are private
Interviewer: Yeah, that's such as good point. So instead of asking why you feel that way, just asking how, and that's enough. Hmm. Is there anything could help like, if like, children could identify how they were feeling, is there anything that could help them think about why or explain why?	
Participant 2: Umm, if like, unless you ask them, like go back on what happened that day, like umm, if they feeling upset or something, and you could like recognise it, like recognise what happened that could be possibly upsetting. Like if someone is like not used to being upset and like they get upset then they could block it out and then it will come up later and then they start crying about it later.	Help needed to work through emotions Adults should let children figure out emotions in their own time Children can sometimes hold emotions in
Interviewer: Mmm. Yeah that's a good point, so, trying to support them to think about what it was that happened on that day, to make them feel that way. Yeah, I really like that, it's a good idea. Umm, so the, oh and another question, so you already spoke about that adults shouldn't	

Appendix W: Code clusters

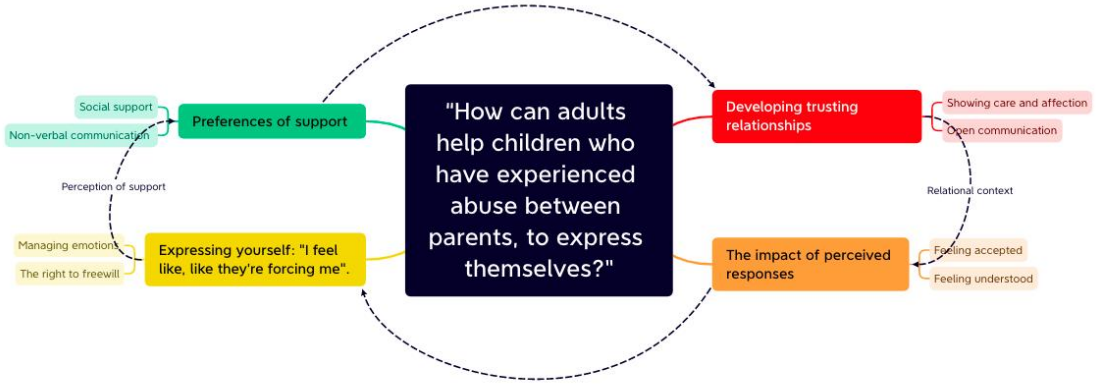




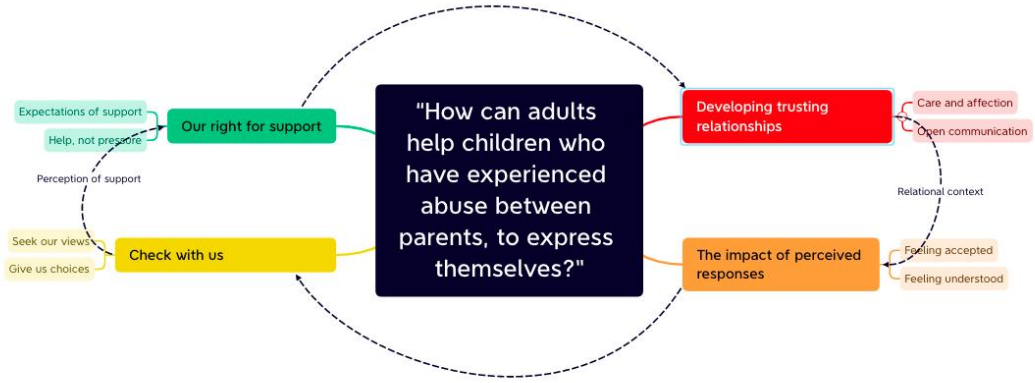

Trusted adults are helpful
Adults need to provide a calm and comfortable space
Childrens views and choices
Adults response is important
Pressuring children to talk isn't helpful
Children need to feel safe
Adults should help children manage their emotions
Zoom level

Appendix X: Thematic Maps

Mind map 1

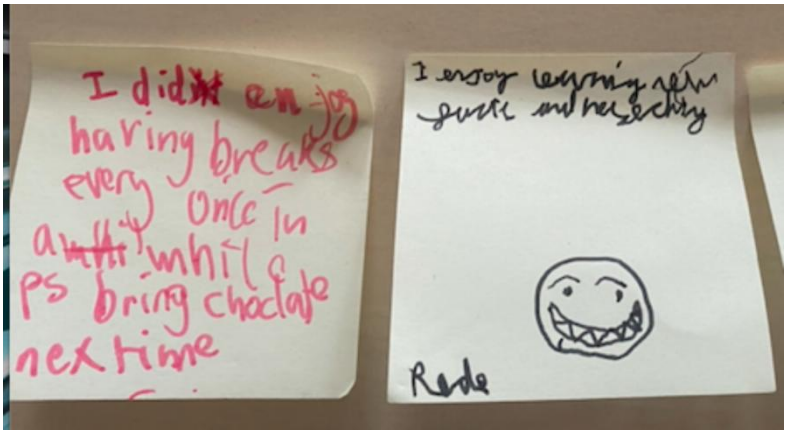


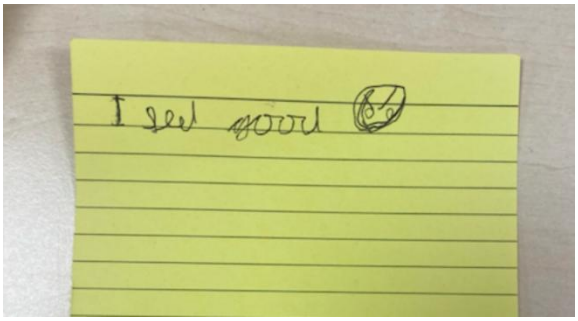
Mind map 2

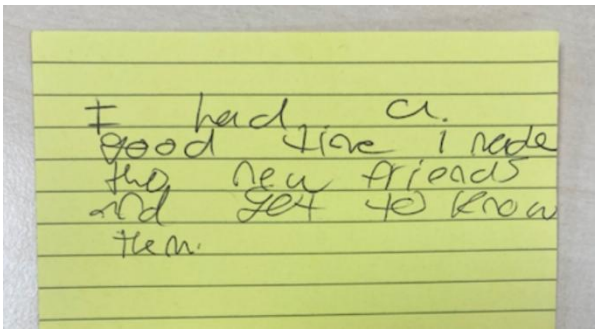


Appendix Y: Reflective comments

In-person comments:







Virtual comments:

"The Interview went quick"
"It didn't feel that bad but like it felt good to have people ask me how I feel, adults especially"
"It was okay answering the questions. Good".