



**A Community-based Experience of Being Permanently
Excluded from Secondary School:
An Existential Reflection**

A Thesis Submitted to
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Valerie Landenberg

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**A Community-based Experience of Being Permanently Excluded
from Secondary School:**

An Existential Reflection

using

Structural Existential Analysis (SEA)

and

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

The Research Question

“What is the experience of being excluded permanently from secondary school?”

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents, Vivian Norda Black (né Abramsky) and Cyril Kenneth Black, who started it all by ushering me through my beginnings in life with great love and care, imagination and fun. In your inimitable ways you both taught me to face the world, believe in the impossible and recognise miracles. I miss you both so much.

Statement of Authorship

This thesis is written by Valerie Landenberg and has ethical clearance from the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling and the Psychology Department of Middlesex University. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling and the Psychology Department of Middlesex University for the Degree of Doctor of Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy. The author is wholly responsible for the content and writing of the thesis and there are no conflicts of interest.

Abstract

This research explores the lived experience of being permanently excluded from secondary school. Government statistics indicate that over forty pupils are excluded daily across schools in England; over thirty of these pupils are from secondary schools. Nearly 8,000 permanent exclusions were recorded in England for the academic year 2018/2019. The economic, social, educational and political profile of the excluded pupil is well documented but what has not yet been understood is the lived experience of the permanently excluded pupil in terms of the human condition, their lifeworld and existential predicament. This research provides an existential perspective to begin to address this lacuna and generate a new and much needed dialogue between professionals and excluded youth.

Seven participants between the ages of 17-23 were interviewed in the community using semi-structured interviews. The data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, J., Flowers, P., and Larkin, M., 2009) and Structural Existential Analysis (SEA) (van Deurzen, 2014a, 2019). Five major themes were identified which described each participant's lifeworld surrounding exclusion. The first theme highlights the impact of growing up with hostility, violence, abuse, neglect and oppression at home. The second theme describes the problems and issues participants encounter at school. The third theme describes the transition of participants through a period from giving up on themselves and their world to regaining their will to flourish. The fourth theme is about participants constructing a new sense of self and fruitful direction in the world. In the final theme, participants look back and make sense of the behaviour which led to exclusion.

SEA brought many major attributes of existential philosophy to the analysis of the data. It was used to examine different facets of participants' experiences including space, time, emotion and paradox. It enabled a deep excavation into the felt experience of participants across the four dimensions of existence. Blending two such heuristic, phenomenological devices enabled the richness of the data to reveal itself with strength and clarity. The findings indicate that the ontic nature of participants' lifeworlds is a major factor leading to exclusion and that discussion about exclusion

should involve an existential understanding of these youths' experiences in the world, including the harrowing and fearsome experiences they endure in their home environments, their relationships across the four worldly dimensions, their enduring universal values and the uniqueness, tenacity and fortitude of their will to thrive.

Keywords

Exclusion, home, school, Jewish ultra-orthodox, community, existential philosophy, lifeworld, being-in-the-world, violence, abuse, neglect, trust, the four worlds, emotions, relationships, psychotherapy.

Transcript Conventions

[comment] comment inserted by author

[] missing words from text

..... missing words from quote

Italics illustrate a *light emphasis* on word or phrase in text

Bold illustrates a **heavy emphasis** on word or phrase in text

Glossary

AP	–	Alternative provision
BPS	–	British Psychological Society
CAMHS	–	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CE	–	Council for Europe
CSJ	–	Centre for Social Justice
DfE	–	Department for Education
DHSC	–	Department for Health and Social Care
GSRU	–	Government Social Research Unit
HC	–	House of Commons
IPA	–	Interpretative phenomenological analysis
IPPR	–	Institute for Public Policy
NEET	–	Not in education, employment or training
NRC	–	The National Research Council
OFSTED	–	Office for Standards in Education
ONS	–	Office for National Statistics
PRU	–	Pupil referral unit
SEA	–	Structural existential analysis
SFR	–	Statistical first release
UNESCO	–	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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KERR ON THE CANE; OR CANE AND CURE.

"Strict discipline must be insisted upon, even to the extent of corporal punishment. No punishment is so economical of time, so deterrent, and so stimulating as the cane."—J. S. Kerr's Essay (delivered before the East Moreton Teachers' Association) on "The Teacher and his Position."

1. The Background to This Research

1.1. Introduction

Discipline in schools has come some way since government records began in the 1990s. Historically, corporal punishment used in schools to deal with misconduct, was thought to improve moral character (Greydanus, Pratt, Greydanus & Hoffman, 1992). Its immediacy allowed miscreants to be dealt with on the spot so they could get back to their studies quickly. In 1982 the European Court of Human Rights declared that corporeal punishment in schools violated children's rights if the punishment was against parent's wishes (Gandhi, 1984). Soon after, British state funded schools outlawed corporal punishment following another ruling by the European Court of Human Rights in 1998 (Council of Europe, 2007; Elgar, Donnelly, Michaelson, Gariépy, Riehm, Walsh and Pickett, 2018) but it took many years for schools to implement changes and the nation is still not in agreement about the prohibition of physical punishment of children by their parents (Bunting, Webb & Healy, 2010). In 2001, Article 17 of a revised European Social Charter required prohibition by legislation of corporeal punishment against children at school (Council of Europe, 2007, p 13). Exclusion then began to take its place in officialdom. The Education Act 2002 and the Education and Inspectors Act 2006 defined its new parameters and the issue began to merge into the milieu of human rights and social, political and economic concern. As awareness spread of the multi-faceted predicament of the excluded child, serious and popular writing on the subject mushroomed. Every so often, what now seems like an apocalyptic case of child abuse blasts into the public domain and government rises to meet the needs of the 'hard to protect', as in the case of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry, with the emergence of the initiative Every Child Matters (Lord Laming, 2003) and as happened in the aftermath of the 'Baby P' inquiry in 2007. These occasions serve to remind us of how far we have come in our communal care for the young, the reality of how far we have to go, the sad and ugly maltreatment that might surround exclusion from school and how vigilant and involved schools need to be in their pupils' lives. Now, with the facility of the internet, school exclusion has everyone's attention. On 'Mumsnet', a teacher wrote about school punishment: "The kind of kid bad enough to warrant corporal punishment would these days be likely to kick your

head in if you tried” (Mumsnet, 2017). This intimates that there is a ‘certain kind of kid’, detached from ‘any kind’ of circumstances. Thankfully, a large body of professional opinion disagrees with such thinking and the literature review here illustrates the multidisciplinary concern for the welfare of the excluded pupil and a shift away from blame. This week the subject of exclusion and illegal alternative provision sites has hit the headlines again with various councils across the UK being found liable for their lack of care of excluded children (Coughlan, 2019). Just like some parents, these very people entrusted with the care of the pupils have so badly let them down.

Psychological theories have developed to map the pathway to violence in youths, and social interaction theories, alongside attachment, neuroscience, trauma and developmental theories, explain the effects of growing up in violent or disturbed circumstances. However, this study finds that exclusion from school is the result of a path littered with relational problems as well as harrowing experiences, while in the care of those who are supposed to protect. As such, excluded pupils deserve to be understood as a multi-dimensional collective composed of unique individuals, greatly suffering in their relationships in the world. This study aims to capture individual experiences, to shed an existential light on the sense and meanings young adults in the community make of being excluded from secondary school, to find and convey their emotional struggle and to give excluded youth a voice and presence that is, as yet, not fully heard.

The financial cost of exclusion is high and local boroughs try not to send pupils to Alternative Provision outside their school borough as this increases costs. In 2010, the cost of one child to be educated in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) was approximately £14,000-£15,000 per year. In 2019 the cost can be over £25,000 (Ogg & Kaill, 2010; Haringey London, 2017). If the decision to exclude is flawed the school has to pay an additional £4000 to the local authority (Department for Education (DfE), 2016b; DfE, 2017c). The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) estimated the lifetime cost of permanent exclusion to be £370,000 in education, healthcare, benefits and criminal justice, and the yearly cohort cost to be £2.1bn (Gill, Quilter-Pinner & Swift, 2017). Government statistics show that 40% of 16-18-year-old pupils excluded from school, end up ‘not in employment, education or training’, commonly known as NEET (Brown, 2016). In 2015 there were 5,000 exclusions in England and an estimated 26 pupils

excluded permanently per day. The figure for 2016/17 stands at over 40 pupils excluded daily and the total cohort increased to 7,720 (DfE, 2018a). The numbers of excluded pupils are still increasing. The annual cost of conduct disorder related crimes in England stands at £22.5bn, a staggering estimated cost of £1.1- £1.9m per individual and the potential savings from early intervention is estimated at £150,000 per child (Bonin, Stevens, Beecham, Byford & Parsonage, 2011). Government figures, Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and other policy reports indicate that these figures are only the tip of the iceberg.

School exclusion numbers far surpass those documented. Statistics are inaccurate and there is an “alarming increase” in schools hiding pupil exclusions through manipulating registration figures (House of Commons 342, 2018: 4). Also, off-rolling, referrals, part-time timetables, managed moves, persuading parents to home school, moving pupils to undocumented or illegal alternative provisions are all country-wide sources of inaccuracy (DfE, 2015a, 00117; Gill et al, 2017). Sometimes it appears that schools respond to bad behaviour by blaming pupils rather than understanding them as some schools now use consequence rooms forcing pupils to sit isolated in a cubicle, facing a wall, and these are growing in number (see appendix 9). The increasing use of isolation as punishment provoked a recent government response to a select committee report to state that schools have a lack of moral accountability (DfE, 2018b).

The personal cost to the excluded pupils is also high and far-reaching as long-term negative outcomes prevail from lifetime loss of earnings, social isolation, recreational isolation, school drop-out, substance abuse, unemployment, mental health issues, attempted suicide, gang affiliation, and excluded pupils are more likely to be incarcerated as adults (Epstein, Roberts, Sedgwick, Finning, Ford, Dutta & Downs, 2014; DfE, 2018c; ONS, 2018; Howard and Rabie, 2013; MAC-UK, 2019) with 58% of young adults in prison having been excluded from school (HC 342, 2018; Gill, Quilter-Pinner & Swift, 2017; Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), 2018). These figures are grim but only the tip of the iceberg and the rising numbers of exclusions indicate the inability of schools to meet the needs of these vulnerable pupils.

Statistics indicate that 62% of schools offer counselling to their pupils and 70% of these services are in secondary schools (DfE, 2015). There have been many attempts to initiate and develop counselling programmes in schools and to understand the needs of pupils and teachers from such services (Cooper, 2005, 2006; Michail, 2011; Obsuth, 2017; Valdebenito, Eisner, Farrington, Ttofi, & Sutherland, 2018), yet statistics show that numbers of excluded pupils are continuing to rise.

This research hopes to add an existential perspective to the current dialogue. There is no current research which investigates the existential experience of secondary school permanent exclusion. This research begins to fill this gap. It does not postulate theory, instead, it moves towards improving our understanding of the lifeworld of these young adults as an important contribution to therapeutic provision and our professional knowledge to help tackle the issue.

1.2. The Development of My Interest

Working towards my doctorate while in placement as a school psychotherapist for nearly two years with Kids Company¹, I came across pupils repeatedly excluded from class as a reaction of the teacher to their behaviour. This behaviour was experienced by the school as offensive and by the teacher as disruptive and challenging beyond her or his capability to handle. These pupils were then excluded from class and told to reflect upon their bad behaviour and catch up on missed work while they sat closely supervised in a specifically delegated room for the remainder of the day. While their peers played and enjoyed their breaks and lunchtime hot meal choices, these youths were served cold sandwiches to their desks. Usually these were the pupils who, I believed, most needed the hot meal and time in the playground.

In all the time I worked at this or any other school I never came across any young person who experienced such punishment as being of benefit or conducive to feelings of regret or a desire to improve their behaviour. On the contrary, it stirred up feelings of isolation from the very people who were supposed to teach them, anger towards

¹ Kids Company, a registered charity closed 2015, provided support and counselling in schools to inner city deprived children.

other pupils who were involved but escaped punishment, frustration towards the teacher who they felt singled out and hated by and alienation from the school system which they felt rendered them insignificant. Many pupils hid their upset behind a façade of nonchalance while others became more unmanageable and at the mercy of their tumultuous emotions. In therapy, feelings to do with injustice, anger, powerlessness, hopelessness, lack of support and being alone in the world were frequently expressed. Exclusion also stirred up difficulty in the family. Parents already floundering in their relationships with their child became alarmed and confused and it seemed they had few skills to challenge their child's exclusions or be emotionally supportive. Some young clients went on to be excluded permanently from school and in the wake of exclusion embarked upon a new set of problems that only compounded those already existing. One of my clients was hospitalised after being stabbed in a fight. I was not allowed to visit him in hospital and he did not return to school. I never saw him again. Unable to influence the trajectory of failure that these young people became caught up in, I witnessed their contradictory feelings, emotional flux, unsuccessful efforts to respond to the problems that engulfed them, and always, their sadness, anger and distress. When temporary class exclusions escalated these young adults were trapped in a maze of emotional turbulence, family, social and cultural difficulties and school punishment.

This research does not intend to prove or disprove any existing theory about violent behaviour or minimise or criticise any existing attempts to alleviate the exclusion problem. It is my intention to provide an understanding of the issue in a way which is not yet part of the language of exclusion. I wished to discover about the lived experience of exclusion and the meaning and sense these youths make of it so that we all may share their insiders' view and hopefully, play a better part in redirecting this dismal trajectory.

1.3. Relevance to Counselling Psychology: The Need for This Research

Children throughout history have been no strangers to heartless treatment (deMause, 1974a,1974b; Payne 1916; Lord Laming, 2003) and it is well documented that young people who have been excluded from school due to their aggressive behaviour already

live in a world of troublesome, fragmented and often volatile relationships as well as hardship and uncertainty. They respond with challenging behaviour that inflames the existing toxic situation (Eastman, 2011; Mullender, 2002; Garbarino & Gilliam, 1980, 1986; National Research Council (NRC) U.S., 1993; Sidebotham & Heron, 2003). This behaviour reflects the worlds they live in. We now know that how we are nurtured shapes our perceptions, our subjective experience and our emotional wellbeing (Stern, 1998, 2002; Crenshaw & Garbarino, 2007). Although there are many models through which we can make sense of behaviour, counselling psychologists and psychotherapists have one clear and unifying belief: that ultimately, through the therapeutic encounter, we may have the opportunity to bring about repair and change. The conflicts encountered by these young adults within the educational system and their wider environment are representative of both inner psychic and emotional turmoil and external relational discord between that young person and the world they live in. Sadly, this usually pivots around their families (Cozolino, 2010; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

This research intends to inform the profession of an existential approach to this issue. Counselling psychology is specifically and competently suited to address these potentially life-shattering conflicts as it elevates the importance of relationships and one's own agency in constructing meaning, and none more so than an existential approach. It highlights the impact of our subjective experience in relation to ourselves and others (van Deurzen, 2010). It draws attention to relationships and the "sphere of "between"" (Buber 2002, p. 241) as a vital component of the process of making meaning and offers it as the "starting point" for psychotherapy to bring about repair (ibid, p. 243). It places us each in the context of the world around us. Van Deurzen describes four dimensions in the world through which we relate, tracing them back to Binswanger and Heidegger (van Deurzen & Arnold-Baker, 2005). These are: firstly, to the world of others (Mitwelt), secondly, to the physical world around us (Umwelt), thirdly, to our own internal, personal world (Eigenwelt) and finally to the spiritual world of ideas and values (Uberwelt). Thinking together about these dimensions often provides a client with new perspectives on themselves and their relationships (van Deurzen, 2015). The therapeutic encounter sheds new light on the same issues, discovering new meanings which have hitherto been hidden. I wonder if these different meanings and perspectives that become revealed through dialogue indicate the

existence of a fifth world, one that has not yet been discovered, which could be called the 'Unentdecktwelt', or the 'Undiscovered World', as with the help of therapeutic dialogue these meanings are waiting to be discovered and understood.

The fresh understanding of habitual reactions, thoughts and feelings, changes our relationships and enables us to make more positive choices and regain a flow of energy and movement in our lives where they had previously become stuck (van Deurzen, 2010). The therapist may well be the very first person these young people find themselves able or willing to think *with*.

Having prematurely left school, excluded youths may move to a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or disappear into the community, morphing into what is commonly known as hard-to-reach youth (Baruch, 2001, 2010; Bevington, Fuggle & Fonagy, 2015; Durcan, Zlotowitz & Stubbs, 2017). Distrustful of formal services (Eastman 2011) they drift, sometimes sleeping rough, sometimes joining gangs, living in the gap between child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and adult services (Eastman, 2011; Singh, Paul, Islam, Weaver, Kramer, Belling, White & Harley, 2010). If they are lucky they will be helped by a charity in the community and offered therapeutic support. Two such charities were where I met my participants.

Existential counselling psychology has the tools to understand these young peoples' needs and support them non-judgmentally, enabling them to create new and better relational skills and self-understanding, all of which contributes towards building a more solid, happier and well-functioning life (Spinelli, 2005). It also has a clear philosophical compass which provides a map through the complexity of associated issues, empowering individuals to recognise their autonomy and move towards change.

1.4. The Place of The Counselling Psychologist

The counselling psychologist is beholden by the ethics of the profession to embody a "phenomenological model of practice and inquiry" alongside a "firm value base grounded in the primacy of the counselling or therapeutic relationship" (British Psychological Society, 1998, p. 3).

In practice, we must be able to work in multi-disciplinary teams (Douglas, Woolfe, Strawbridge, Kasket & Galbraith, 2016; BPS, 2014) and grasp the size, complexity and multi-perspectival nature of the issue (Larkin, Shaw & Flowers, 2018). I believe this should include keeping in mind the historic advancement of adults' attitudes towards children (Payne, 1916), the evolution of the education system and the influence of culture and power relations (Cooper, 2002; Foucault, 1977).

In research, we are required to explore the subjective experience of the individual rather than the observed, assumed, inferred or deduced meaning behind their behaviour, in other words: "to respect first person accounts" (BPS, 2014). The first-hand experience of being excluded from school from a retrospective view from the community has not yet been investigated. This research is a response to that omission. Ultimately, counselling psychology recognises the importance of developing dialogues with other professionals and working in multi-disciplinary teams as well as with the individual so that appropriate services and support may be directed towards this vulnerable group and others concerned.

Exclusion is always a hot topic and in 2012, Schools Minister Nick Gibb publicly acknowledged the problem of maintaining pupils' education in spite of exclusion, and the impact of exclusion on their future life chances when he stated:

"... we support head teachers who permanently exclude those children who persistently disrupt the education of others...yet we need to ensure, however, that exclusion does not lead those children to abandon education. The quality of education for permanently excluded children is so poor that scarcely any achieve the minimum level of qualifications they need to succeed. Many of these children are the most vulnerable in society" (Gibb, 2012).

In October 2018, Damian Hinds, the Education Secretary claimed the right of the excluded pupil, not only to an equality of education but also to an equality of ambition (Hinds, 2018).

These hopes endorse the need for this research. As yet there is a consistent failure to understand that provision *can only* be successful *if* it addresses excluded youths within their lifeworlds. The greatest body of school exclusion research focuses on risk factors

and situational factors which contribute to failure of achievement and pupil dropout. I believe we need to discover and understand the emotional factors and relational impediments which prohibit access to education and that such knowledge would help professionals and thereby increase the possibility of a successful school career for those who are vulnerable. This is also the aim of this research.

1.5. Facts about School Exclusion

1.5.1. Definition of Terms

Education is, by law, inclusive. The Equality Act 2010 states that it is unlawful for any educational provider to discriminate against any child on grounds of 'protected' characteristics such as race, gender, disability, pregnancy and maternity, belief, religion or sex. All children are required to go to school. This research focuses on young adults who were purposely excluded from mainstream school as a direct result of their violent or disruptive behaviour.

This research uses both the Cambridge and Webster definition of exclusion in the following terms

Cambridge Definition:

Exclusion: a noun: the act of excluding someone or something (dictionary.cambridge.org, 2019)

Webster Definition

Excluded: verb past tense. to deny (someone) access to a place, group, or privilege

Excluded: to prevent something or someone from entering a place or taking part in an activity (Merriam-webster.com, 2019)

Department for Education Definition

A pupil who is excluded and will not come back to that school unless the exclusion is overturned (DfE, 2016c).

1.5.2. Types of Exclusion

- Fixed period exclusion: A fixed period exclusion is when a child is temporarily removed from school. A pupil may be temporarily excluded for up to a maximum of 45 days in any one academic year. After this period, exclusion is permanent (DfE, 2017a, b).
- **Permanent exclusion** means the pupil is expelled and is not allowed to return to school at any time thereafter (ibid). Traditionally, the local council is required by law to arrange full-time education from the 6th school day of being excluded if the pupil is of statutory school age. For the purposes of this research I will **only** be referring to pupils who have been **permanently** excluded and picked up by community services, as they otherwise become known as 'NEET', which means: not in education, employment or training.

1.5.3. Who has the Authority to Exclude a Pupil?

Head teachers have the power and authority to exclude pupils temporarily or permanently and can only do so on disciplinary grounds (DfE, 2012a, 2017b). The Government considers that good behaviour in schools is essential to ensure that all pupils can benefit from the opportunities provided by education.

1.5.4. Pathway to Exclusion

Physical assault is the most common behaviour leading to permanent exclusion. This is true across state-funded primary and secondary schools as well as special schools (DfE, 2012). The following list summarises the frequency of behaviour leading to exclusion, starting with the most frequent.

- Physical assault against a pupil
- Physical assault against an adult
- Verbal abuse/ threatening behaviour against a pupil

- Verbal abuse/ threatening behaviour against an adult
 - Bullying
 - Racist abuse
 - Sexual misconduct
 - Drug and alcohol related
 - Damage
 - Theft
 - Persistent disruptive behaviour
 - Other
- (DFE, 2014/15)

1.5.5. The Exclusion Profile

The following characteristics succinctly describe the consistent profile of pupils excluded from secondary school since records began (DfE 2016c).

- Boys
- 13- and 14-year olds
- Pupils with Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Travellers of Irish Heritage, Black Caribbean and Gypsy/Roma ethnicity
- Persistent disruptive threatening behaviour or verbal abuse
- Poverty as indicated by FSM, entitlement and disadvantage

Overall the rate and number of permanent exclusions has risen each year (DfE, 2018a) and more than 83% of permanent exclusions occur in secondary schools. Government statistics show that over half of all permanent exclusions occur in the national curriculum year 9 or above and boys are over 3 times as likely to receive permanent exclusion than girls. Pupils with special educational needs are 7 times more likely to be excluded permanently and pupils eligible for free school meals are over 4 times as likely to be excluded permanently (DfE, 2015). Records are incomplete, as discussed in the introduction above.

I will now review literature which, alongside the issues previously mentioned, provides the reader with an even broader overview of the complexity of related perspectives on exclusion. As my focus is on permanently excluded pupils who are now being educated in the community, I then review therapeutic help available in the community and its theoretical underpinnings, in order to ascertain whether this provides us with a better understanding of the personal lifeworld and experience of excluded youths. Finally, I identify the gap for an existential perspective, its relevance and benefit.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Setting the Context

Carving out a literature review is a daunting task for any researcher. This is particularly so when combining the broad responsibilities of a counselling psychologist with the specific needs of a psychotherapist whose primary focus, being existential, is the excluded pupils' four worldly dimensions and their unrealised possibilities waiting to be discovered safely in the therapy room. With these overlapping, fluid and complex perspectives in mind, I felt that my first vantage point discussed in the introduction, had to be a broad perspective to root this work, and the reader, in the historical, cultural, political and social heritage of attitudes towards children. I believe it's important to keep in mind that the attitude of adults today towards children and their education, has risen up through years of challenging cultural changes and that the ghosts of these changes make an indelible footprint. Our schools are multi-cultural and so these ancestral shapes are varied but still, they navigate amidst the school walls, most often unseen. From acknowledging this historical perspective I then discussed the cost of exclusion both to the individual and society. I now turn to look at the many faces of permanent exclusion, each of which have been found to influence the trajectory of excluded pupils. Politics, economics, social policy are but a few of the discourses I mention to bring to the reader's attention the important and broad multi-perspectival concern for the issue. I then focus on the limited characteristics that school statistics use to define the profile of excluded pupils, such as gender, ethnicity and violence. After this I turn my attention to the classroom to understand the many variables affecting pupils behaviour as it is in the classroom that the majority of behavioural challenges occur with pupils at risk of exclusion. It is also in this space that the teacher defines the quality of pupils' behaviour and shapes its consequences and outcomes. I next discuss services available in school that offer pupils emotional support and which try to alleviate their problems before they fall into the abyss of exclusion. Following the route of the permanently excluded pupil I then look at therapy available in the community, its underlying rationale and what it can contribute to our knowledge about excluded youths as the focus of this research is the experience of permanent exclusion from the vantage point of youths being educated in the

community. The participants in this research have been unsuccessful in making use of any school-based services offered to them and have been found, after exclusion, in the community. My quest to discover the lifeworld of excluded pupils must be recognised as co-existing alongside these dialogues, however, it necessitates its own route toward understanding the sense and meaning excluded pupils make of their experiences. With this in mind, I contextualise the issue in existential terms.

I started with a Summon search on the word 'exclusion' which brought forth nearly 1.5 million results. I then added the word 'school' and searched google scholar, JStore, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, ResearchGate, government policies and government statistics. I carried out a search of doctoral theses from the Tavistock Institute, the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families and various university education and psychology department repositories. The sheer volume of results pertaining to school exclusion indicates the breadth and penetration of the issue and its importance in our everyday lives. My next search focused on 'exclusion from school', using google scholar, EBSCOhost and Summon, as well as those mentioned above. It returned over a half a million articles indicating the wide impact of school exclusion and its related discourses, such as: social policy (Razer, Friedman and Warshofsky, 2013), politics (Levitas, 2005; Hayton, 1999; Leathwood & Hayton, 2002), power (Carlile, 2009; Briggs, 2010) poverty (Fernqvist, 2013), violence (Carlile, 2009), substance abuse, fragmented family relationships (Bancroft, Silverman & Ritchie, 2012; Bishop & Swain, 2006), discrimination, justice and law (Harris, Eden & Blair, 2000; Trepanier & Rousseaux, 2018), ethnicity, discipline, psychology, education and related policy (McCluskey et al. 2016, Devereaux, 2017), transition stages in education (Trotman, Tucker & Martyn, 2015), social welfare, special needs (Devereaux, 2017), aggression, the discrepancy in exclusion practises across schools (Maag, 2012), negative life outcomes, criminality, the "school-to-prison" pipeline (Pesta, 2018, p,1489) and so much more. Each of these are important in its own right and provides the reader with a sense of the breadth and weight of the issue in today's society. My search also brought to my attention the intermittent scrutiny of related issues in the popular press and government programmes such as the London Education and Inclusion Project and other interventions through different government related agencies and charities, such as Catch 22, MAC-UK and REACH, all trying to support permanently excluded pupils. As ways to understand school exclusion, all the

above are deserving of investigation as they impact upon the daily life and social milieu of the excluded pupil, aptly described by the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children as a “polyvictim” (Radford et al, 2011, p.12). They are also reflected in the socio-economic and cultural profile of exclusion illustrated by government statistics, however, all of these discourses still render the excluded youth anonymous. They also leave us far from clear about the lived experience or emotional hardship at home or in school and the concomitant impact of such life circumstances. Parsons (2008) describes this lack of awareness as society’s communal neglect of excluded pupils. Eastman (2011) suggests that family breakdown, parental education, unemployment, parental addiction, parental mental health, whether a child is a young carer, is in need, or is looked after, are more factors which should contribute to our exclusion statistics. It is beyond the scope of this research to address all of the above. The purpose of this research is to bring the personal and emotional world of the excluded youth to the forefront of the picture, liberate their voices and strengthen their place in the academic dialogue. I hope the knowledge garnered from this research will inform professionals across all relevant fields and ultimately improve the school career of those at risk, vulnerable and excluded.

2.2. Focusing on The Excluded Individual

Having acknowledged and reviewed the wider context of exclusion, my focus now narrows to look at the excluded pupil’s profile in an attempt to come closer to understanding these young adults as individuals. As poverty, gender, ethnicity and violent behaviour are cited as the most common characteristics of the excluded pupils by government statistics year on year (DfE, 2012, 2015b, 2016c, 2017a, 2018a), I now turn to consider these, looking to shed light on the experience of the individual. I then review factors affecting teacher/pupil relationships in the classroom as it is in this space that behaviour leading to exclusion most commonly arises (UNESCO, 2010).

2.3. Violence

One in five children will experience domestic violence and we know this can have a serious detrimental and long-term impact on child development and behaviour; “severe maltreatment is associated with poorer emotional wellbeing, self-harm,

suicidal ideation and delinquent behaviour” (Radford et al. 2011, p. 6). Violence begets violence and children learn from, as well as suffer from their parents behaviour (Laury and Meerloo, 1967; Eastman, 2011; Delker et al, 2014). Children of alcoholic parents (COA) are more likely to experience violence, have learning difficulties, reading problems and may generally perform less well in school than their peers (Clever et al, 2011). COAs are more likely to have lower social competence from an early age, experience higher levels of peer rejection and lower levels of self-esteem. These inter-dependent characteristics exacerbate aggressive behaviour and are more likely to result in psychopathology as they mature (Hussong et al, 2005; Leonard et al, 2000). Getting ready for school in a morning amidst violence or screaming, feeling lonely, frightened, neglected, or having witnessed abuse in some way, all have detrimental effects on the individual (Schafran, 2014). Going to school does not mean getting away from upset and these vulnerable youths can find that home circumstances dominate their thoughts during their day in school, adversely affecting their ability to concentrate in class or relate to their peer group (Bancroft et al, 2012; NRC, 1995). The detrimental effects of abuse, as in the form of “fear conditioning” can be as bad for those who grow up exposed to it, as those who are the direct recipients (Schafran, 2014, p. 34). The impact is so great that Schafran uses the word “exposure” to violence rather than “witness” of violence as the latter implies a passivity which she says is a misnomer as the child is “deeply engaged” with the family environment (ibid, 2014, p. 33). Victims of abuse can be so focused on survival they are unable to reach out to others.

Government statistics document that 49.9% of children in need in school, had domestic violence identified as a factor in their mental health assessment (DfE, 2017, SFR 61; DfE, 2017a). The clinical assessment of Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), although increasingly sophisticated and complex, has been challenged as unrepresentative of the experience of many victimised children (Van der Kolk et al, 2007). The toll of emotional trauma on a child’s behavioural repertoire has been shown to result in emotional dysregulation and lack of impulse control as a direct precedent to volatile behaviour (D’Andrea et al, 2012). However, understanding brain activity in relation to emotions still renders the sense and meaning of these experiences in this child’s lifeworld, unknown.

The above review gives an outline of the existing research on exclusion in relation to violence but does not illuminate the lived experience. In contrast existential research of excluded youths reveals how they live their everyday, what inhibits their potential autonomy and what feelings shape their behaviour in school. I now continue to review poverty.

2.4. Poverty

Children experiencing poverty are four times more likely to be excluded from school (DFE, 2018a). Free school meals, used as an indication of poverty for pupils, are provided when a parent or carer's yearly income falls below £16,190 (Department for Work and Pensions, 2013). Special educational needs (SEN) and social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) vary to include a wide array of characteristics including disadvantage (DfE, 2016d). Children living in poverty are at a higher risk of social, emotional and cognitive impairment as well as behavioural difficulties and their family experience tends to be characterised by "chaos, lack of control and high levels of stress" (Morris et al, 2017, p. 389) These children are more likely to fend for themselves at a young age, eat alone, be home alone and live in noisy and substandard housing (Evans et al, 2005). Excluded pupils also often live in harrowing emotional and physical circumstances (Carlile, 2009; Eastman, 2014; Baruch, 2010) and we know that our developmental environment critically impacts our psychological development (Schafran, 2014; MacMillan et al, 2009). Children living in poverty are more likely to be maltreated than their more affluent peers and experience major depressive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder, both of which can exacerbate aggression (MacMillan et al, 2009) and be difficult to detect (Fitzgerald, 2011). Carlile (2009) and Parker et al (2016) highlight the importance of understanding the personal environment of each pupil when dealing with their aggression, although to do this seems to be as much of a challenge to the teacher as the behaviour itself. Although all these factors are important, they still tell us nothing of the felt experience of the excluded youth. In fact, as Levin (2012) importantly points out, poverty does not preclude a state of emotional well-being, a point which is corroborated by the Gallup Millennium World Survey on happiness (Spogárd, 2005, see Appendix 5). Bearing in mind that "Happiness is a mood, not a project or an end goal" (van Deurzen, 2009a, p. 82) and that what matters most to people is having good health and good family

relationships not material wealth (Levin, 2012; Spogard, 2005) is very important when discussing poverty and exclusion. Aggression and violence indicate unhappy emotional states, which further supports the need to look beyond poverty to the everyday lives of excluded youths to fill this void in our understanding of the personal experience which influences behaviour and leads to exclusion from school.

2.5. Gender

Statistical bias in the exclusion of boys is clear (DFE 2012, 2015a, DFES, 2007) and the relationship between gender and anti-social behaviour is well researched (Osler et al, 2001). McCluskey et al (2008) and Osler et al (2003) identify that girls are overlooked and under-represented in the exclusion discourse. Leoni (2015) suggests that in growing up with extreme violence, girls “leave their victim role at home and, like the boys, projected and transferred their feelings through the persecutor role when they could” (ibid, 2005, p. 255). School statistics do indicate that more boys are excluded, however, this research is about the experience of exclusion not the prevalence of, or statistical representation of gender differences. Girls are clearly as capable of violence and aggression as their male counterparts even although they are stereotyped as victims and “dominant understandings of femininity do not associate girls with violence” (Leach & Humphries, 2007, p. 56). Osler et al (2003) find that teachers and pupils expect girls to be less confrontational and more conforming. In this research the shared and unique meanings these excluded youths make about exclusion are investigated, not the differences in gender, meta-psychic workings of the mind, cultural influences (Hvistendahl, 2012), developmental processes (Baptista et al, 2018; Melander & Tyler, 2010) or power issues between genders (Chaput, 2009). For this reason, I put the question of gender aside. I believe both genders are entitled to be understood in their construction of meaning in relation to the experience of being excluded and therefore both are represented in this research. Leoni’s (2005) suggestion that gender roles dissipate under extreme stress supports the inclusion of both male and female participants and was corroborated in these findings. Girls’ behaviour was found to be as violent as their male counterparts.

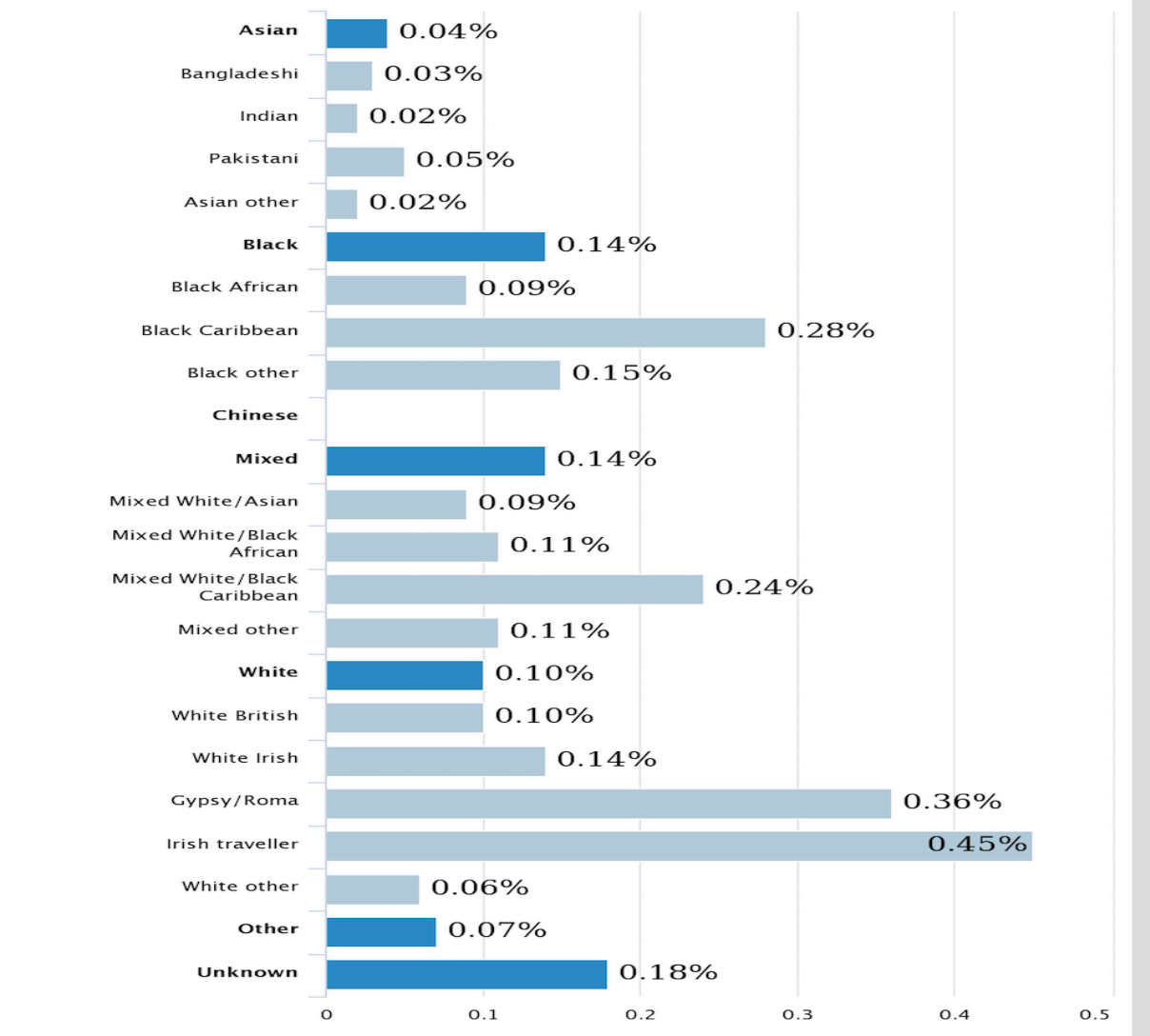
2.6. Ethnicity

The exclusion profile (pictured below) shows that pupils of Black Caribbean, Black other, Mixed and Gypsy/Roma ethnicity have the highest exclusion rates. They also have the highest negative life outcomes and the highest frequency in the “school-to-prison pipeline” (Pesta, 2018, p. 1489). Other ethnic groups such as Chinese and Asian pupils, show miniscule numbers of exclusion, so, clearly the differences in the lived experience of the relationship between ethnicity and school exclusion needs to be understood. Such an inquiry is beyond the scope of this research but the reader should hold in mind that the subject is vast and also fraught with prejudice (Biggart, O’Hare & Connolly, 2013; Vincent & Tobin, 2011; Zembylas, 2011).

Zembylas (2015) identifies emotion as a site of potential “conflict and peace” (Ibid, p, 5) in the creation of ethnic and racial identities in the classroom. Emotions have the power to escalate conflict or, if skilfully directed, create harmonious environments. Importantly, the emotional perspective of teachers influence the collective dialogue and may easily create barriers to peacebuilding and peace education as their ensuing actions may or may not be inclusive. Racial or ethnic bias can be so formless and indirect that it would be impossible to identify as visibly manifest in pupils or teachers behaviour. Such tensions can be very subtle but nevertheless the effect is deeply impactful (Henze, 2000) so it is crucial that teachers understand the reach and impact of their attitudes and actions. Parenting styles and cultural differences (Hill, 2000; Frankham, 2007), identity and belongingness (Biggart et al, 2013; Moore, 2009) are more factors on an endless list of possibilities which can be associated with exclusion and ethnicity. In this research I did not use ethnicity, gender or poverty as selective factors for participation as my focus was on the lived experience of permanent exclusion, not demographic characteristics about who was experiencing the exclusion. As Smith et al (2009) say: “Participants are selected on the basis that they can grant us access to a particular perspective on a phenomenon under study. That is, they ‘represent’ a perspective rather than a population” (ibid, p. 49). It so happened that my participants were white British and three were of Jewish origin, which might be viewed as an ethnic minority. This is discussed further in the following chapters. The findings of this research show that participants were deeply in touch with the existential experience of their ‘humanness’, which was not even thought to be mitigated by any

interfering characteristics or descriptions which separated or differentiated them, such as poverty, gender or ethnicity (see chapter 6). The following table describes permanent exclusion by ethnicity.

Title:Percentage of permanent exclusions within each ethnic group. Location: England. Time period: 2016/17. Source: Department for Education| Ethnicity Facts and Figures GOV.UK



2.7. The Classroom

The classroom is a potential minefield for teacher pupil relationships. Teachers use discipline not only as punishment, deterrent, retribution and rehabilitation (Parsons,

2005; Foucault, 1977) but also to convey the need for safety and orderliness for all concerned. However, research indicates that prevention is much more effective than punishment (Massar, McIntosh & Eliason, 2015; Gage et al, 2018) and that punishment doesn't guarantee respect (McManus 1995). Teachers can easily feel over-burdened by class size and under equipped to deal with extreme behaviour as they might juggle over 35 pupils' needs at any one time (Wood, 2016; Ramvi, 2012). Removing difficult pupils may make the classroom situation better but repeated suspensions are more likely to lead to exclusion (Welsh & Little, 2018). Teachers' moods are variable, affecting how they relate to pupils and their levels of tolerance on different occasions (Osler, 2003). Relationships between teachers and pupils are hard to clarify (Nye & Hedges, 2004; Barrett & Toma, 2013).

Pupil performance is also linked to student background (Coleman & Hopkins, 1966; Gorard, Taylor & Fitz, 2013) and class size is another important variable in the mix. Under pressure teachers are disinclined to take time to discuss emotions behind a pupil's behaviour (Littleton & Howe, 2010). Peer collaboration as a method of learning can be upsetting for vulnerable pupils (Rojas-Drummond, 2009). Pupils' aggressive behaviour can derail a teacher's ability to think (Asen et al, 2016) and teachers are not trained to deal with clashes in the classroom. When overcome with emotion and intimidated by aggression, teachers would need special training to handle a potentially explosive situation in a positive, calm or nurturing way (Corrie, 2002; Bevington et al, 2015; UNESCO, 2010). The after-effects of distress and elevated emotions can spill beyond the classroom permeating staff relationships as the unseen toxicity of violence and aggression spreads throughout the school (Malberg, 2008). Violence in the community can also infiltrate the school atmosphere (Maring & Koblinsky, 2013; Parker et al, 2016). Ultimately, the teacher defines and characterises pupil behaviour (McManus, 1995) and definitions of harmful behaviour in school change over time (McCluskey et al, 2011).

All these issues discussed so far broaden our understanding of the challenges some pupils face in their daily lives. If these pupils are able to access counselling at school, there is a good chance that they might receive the support they need to thwart their exclusion trajectory so I now turn to look at mental health service provision in school.

2.8. Mental Health Services in Schools

Surprisingly there are currently no government recommendations or directives to ensure that schools establish mental health policies for their pupils (DfE, 2018c). Seventy percent of secondary schools across the UK provide counselling services (DfE, 2016a) which are one of the most prevalent forms of therapy for children and young people in the UK. Over half of adult mental health problems start by the age of 14 and increase to 75% by the age of 18 (NHS England, 2015). Two main advantages of counselling offered in schools is that firstly, no clinical diagnosis is needed to access services and secondly, most services enable pupils to self-refer as well as be referred by staff, which lessens potential stigma of mental health issues (DfE, 2016a). Although improvements to services are consistently sought (YoungMinds, 2014; Fox & Butler, 2009; Lynass, Pykhtina & Cooper, 2012) availability fluctuates depending on geographical location (Cooper, 2013), nevertheless government describes its commitment to providing mental health services for children and young adults as a “national ambition” (NHS England, 2015, p 15). Such services are invaluable and improve the mental health of young people with an average of 70,000- 90,000 episodes of school-based counselling being delivered yearly (Lynass, Pykhtina & Cooper, 2012; Daniunaite, Cooper & Forster, 2015). Despite continued government and individual school efforts to provide counselling and wider consultation support (Larney, 2013) there are many gaps in provision which are increasingly filled by charitable initiatives. The Place2Be and Young Person’s Advisory Service (YPAS) among others are two such services. Kids Company, which closed in 2015, was also successful in supporting young vulnerable people and created its own educational institution, the Urban Academy, within Sherborne Boy’s School to help excluded pupils obtain GCSE’s (Kid’s Company Annual Report, 2013). Initiatives like these play an important role in promoting wellbeing and mental health in schools, providing thousands of pupils with much needed professional mental health support. Founded in 1994, the Place2Be now has approximately 300 footholds in schools across England, Ireland and Wales. It offers three types of support for pupils; individual therapy, group work and a drop-in Place2Talk as well as support for families and teachers (Thompson, 2013) and its outcomes illustrate its success (Lee, Tiley & White, 2009; Little, 2018; Daniunaite, Cooper & Forester, 2015). However, with all these services in place and despite their progressive expansion there are still increasing

numbers of pupils who are not able to benefit from services in schools and these pupils continue on the exclusion trajectory. Sadly, not all pupils excluded prematurely from school move straight into continued provision. For some children “there is no school where they fit in. There is no school bell, no timetables, no lesson – no education. And that often means no friendship either” (Anne Longfield, OBE, 2019). Many pupils fall through the cracks and without the help they need they make their own way forward as best they can. Some join gangs, others roam the streets and some get picked up by local charities that provide support in the community (CSJ, 2014). There are many potential pathways for excluded pupils, however, as the aim of this research is to better understand the lifeworld of pupils who have managed to find support in the community I now turn to look at therapy available in the community for excluded pupils.

2.9. Focusing on Current Therapeutic Provision

Following the movement of the excluded youth after exclusion, beyond the school and alternative provision, my literature searches turned to focus on community, psychotherapy, hard-to-reach youth and exclusion, in a search to deepen our understanding of the experience of excluded youths and the therapy most available to them. The most widespread therapeutic intervention across the UK was identified as Adolescent Mentalisation Based Integrative Treatment (AMBIT) which partners with the NHS to provide support to excluded youths in the community.

AMBIT locates aggressive, violent and non-compliant behaviour in the context of neuropsychology and attachment theories, elevating the inner psychic workings of the mind, missing the importance of individuals’ relational aspects of being-in-the-world. This omission further illuminates the gap for an existential therapeutic perspective, but I first review what these dominant perspectives contribute to our understanding of excluded youth before turning to look at the relevance of an existential perspective.

2.10. Neuropsychology and the Impact of Trauma

The types of disadvantage and family circumstances these young people are born into is known to impact on the primary caring relationship (Marmot, 2010; Stern, 2002; Bowlby, 1951; Broughton, 2014; Delker et al, 2014). Research shows that parenting styles affect the development of our brain function and ultimately the infant’s current

and future behaviour in critical ways (Broughton, 2014; Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1979; Gerhardt, 2004). Children develop physically and emotionally within their family environment. As discussed, many of these excluded childrens' families have been abusive and neglectful and because of this the brain of the abused and neglected child is described as having been socialized in such a way that it could be handicapped in the management of feelings and subjective interpretations. (Gerhardt, 2004; Baradon, 2016; Schafran, 2014; Cozolino, 2010; Delker et al, 2014). We no longer perceive of the brain as an isolated organ to which things happen, instead we understand it as an interactive organ inseparable from its experiences in the world. Neuroscience links brain function and development with surrounding environmental factors (De Bellis et al, 1999). The way a baby is handled, treated, loved or abused is paramount in influencing the baby's brain development (Newman et al, 2015; Lyons-Ruth et al, 2017). Our physiological and mental systems evolve in relation with others. In the early years, the human baby learns about itself and the world from its main carer; it is "an interactive project" and this can be seen in brain development. (Gerhardt 2004, p. 19; Brazelton et al, 1975). The baby relies on mother to manage her emotional and physiological states as she cannot yet process her feelings. Gradually, with help of the adult, meaning emerges for the baby and this is reflected in baby's behaviour. For good development, parents need to be helpful carers (deMause, 1976). Parents who are neglectful, disturbed, unresponsive, violent, angry, inconsistent or abusive, may not act as intermediaries in a good enough way (Winnicott, 1988; Bowlby, 1969). Their babies develop a warped understanding of themselves and the world around them and become socialized through distorted and damaging experiences (Bronfenbrenner & Evans 2000). The quality of our early relationships can also impact our ability to understand and mediate our own emotional responses throughout our lives (Baptista et al, 2018). Spinazzola, van der Kolk & Ford (2018) suggest that the impact of trauma is so far reaching that it merits its own separate title of Developmental Trauma Disorder (DTD) to reflect the continued devastation which can ensue. Abuse or even deficit in early care shapes the developing nervous system and determines how stress is interpreted and responded to in later life (Cozolino, 2010; Schafran 2014; Gerhardt, 2004).

The impact of emotional trauma across the lifespan is complex and a vast spectrum of dialogues continue to contribute to our understanding. The subject of trauma,

although deeply concerned with its effects on the brain, also raises issues about our social responsibility to care. Although this research takes an existential pathway towards understanding living with trauma it shares Van der Kolk's position that we have a shared responsibility to meet the needs of victims and to understand what trauma means and how it presents itself (van der Kolk, 2016; D'Andrea et al, 2012). I hope this research will contribute to this understanding.

Historically, socially unacceptable behaviour leading to exclusion from school has been evaluated in the context of the moment, with the perpetrator carrying full blame. This is slowly changing. We now understand that trauma; "the tyranny of the past" (van der Kolk et al, 2007, p. 4) can for some, impact their daily lives forever. Given that the cornerstone of existential philosophy is the relational immutability of the human condition, this research aims to shed an existential light on the impact of living with abuse, neglect and violence in the every-day relational experience of the excluded youth.

2.11. Attachment Theory

Neuropsychology is very closely allied to attachment theory. Both look to understand the effects of the relationship between the infant and the primary carer; they just look in different places. Like existential psychotherapy they also recognize the immense impact of the other. However, attachment theory describes and defines relationships by their functional and observable qualities rather than felt experience ((Mikulincer & Florian, 2000; Mikulincer, Shaver & Pereg, 2003). Attachment theory supports the need for intervention and the idea that we can understand our behaviour in the wider context of the primary caring relationship but does not concern itself with the importance of agency or existential growth or with the lived experience of this primary relationship. Identifying relationships in terms of being 'good enough' (Winnicott, 1989) attachment theory does not look further to the ontological nature of human living.

Bowlby's theory of attachment, derived from biology and ethnography, focused on the immediate and long-term negative impact of impoverishment of the mothering relationship in early infancy and childhood. Bowlby highlighted this deprivation as "playing a leading part in determining" later delinquent behaviour and personality

disorders (Bowlby, 1997, p 345). Bowlby's theory developed through observations of mother and child separations and the ensuing consequences in later life. The attachment function leads the infant to seek protection and care from the primary carer at times of threat and stress and is a mutually resonant relationship based on interaction (Broughton, 2014; Bowlby, 1979; Stern, 2002). In healthy relationships the caregiver will provide appropriate empathy enough of the time to maintain congruence between the baby and the world around, and a growth of trust in the primary relationship (Greenberg, 1999). In attachment disordered relationships the carer does not react with appropriate reflective function and the infant is left with overwhelming feelings to be disposed of without the help of the empathic adult to create positive channels (Baradon, 2016; Broughton, 2014). Babies naturally perform behaviours innately designed to maintain and instigate attachment reactions in the mother at times of need (Bowlby, 1979). If the mother is not appropriately responsive the baby's initial effort to re-establish the attachment becomes negatively adjusted and the interaction becomes stressful (Baradon, 2016). This leads to chaotic, disorganised and unattuned behaviour in the infant, which, at its extreme, descends into profound despair and depression. When the attachment pattern is activated later in life the same reaction will ensue, thus explaining the excluded young adult's behaviour. This initial attachment response that originated as a "psychobiological core of attunement between mother and child" (Wylie & Turner, 2011, p. 6) has an enduring impact on the emotional development of the infant and its capacity for intimate relationships throughout life. Bowlby stressed this connection between impoverished relationships between mother and baby and the consequent thwarted development of the child's personality, leaving him with a legacy of inappropriate behaviours that ultimately do not fulfil their original goals. This, he says, is because the mother², who is the infant's psychic organizer (Bowlby, 1990), was not able to organize the infant's instincts and emotions adequately. Without her help the infant does not have the opportunity to learn how to self-organise. This, Bowlby says, leads to "instability of character" (ibid, p.14) in later life. This instability would, for these pupils who face exclusion, present itself in chaotic, aggressive, disruptive behaviour that is difficult for any teacher to mediate. The participants in this research could be seen as exemplary models of

² The term mother refers to the primary care-giver.

attachment disorders, yet, such labels are inadequate to furnish an understanding of lived experience and fall far short of shedding any light on their worldview. Labels also diminish a person's likelihood to find their own agency, instead they promote a description and sense of pathology and disregard the wealth of knowledge a person has about themselves.

2.12. Adolescent Mentalisation Based Integrative Therapy (AMBIT)

AMBIT is a psychotherapeutic psycho-educational treatment for adults and children with behavioural, emotional and relationship difficulties recognised by the National Health Service (NHS). Its popular roots emerged from neuropsychology, developmental psychology and attachment theory. Today it is used across the mental health spectrum in communities and in mental health wards for in-patients and out-patients, from borderline personality disorders, anti-social behaviour problems to parent-infant dyads. AMBIT programmes have been specifically developed by the Anna Freud Centre together with University College London to reach young adolescents who are chaotic, vulnerable, troubled and socially and educationally excluded. Currently there are over 200 UK programmes aimed at hard-to-reach youth across the UK. AMBIT focuses on teaching people to restore their thinking, which is lost at times of heightened affect. It encourages the restoration of a sense of self and other in the context of the immediacy of emotions, *not relationships*.

Keeping in mind an understanding of another person's mind and our own mind is the basis of mentalisation. Originally known as 'theory of mind' (Meltzoff, 1999, 2005), this mental activity is part of what humans do naturally in our everyday thinking without even realising. People who have suffered from social deprivation, abuse, parental neglect and other harmful developmental relationships tend to be inappropriately reactive when emotionally aroused. Rather than being thoughtful, inquisitive or speculative, they lose the ability to think from an 'other' perspective (Fuggle, Bevington, Duffy, & Cracknell, 2016; Bateman, 2011; Meltzoff, 2005) and their development of a theory of mind is severely compromised (Brazelton, Tronick, Adams, Als, & Wise, 1975, Hughes et al, 2005). AMBIT promotes imaginative thought about oneself and others. It promotes perceiving and interpreting behaviour in terms of

intentional states, for example, needs, feelings, desires and goals. It teaches individuals how to make sense of another's behaviour and one's own (Cooper & Redfern, 2016). Existential therapy takes very seriously the goal of helping the client to retrieve themselves from the other in one's own mind, to be able to think for themselves, not to hide behind what they think other people think or expect of them. Learning to separate oneself from others is part of the therapeutic process for existential and mentalisation therapy. However, existential therapy takes a much deeper, more inquiring position, putting the client in the richness of the philosophical context of the human condition with a respect for the a priori need for relationships without ignoring the client's own agency. It promotes a search for meaning, passion and potential. Mentalisation seems one-dimensional by comparison, concentrating on changing behaviour. Existential psychotherapy not only encourages a fluidity of mind but celebrates our ability to change and shift perspective, and acknowledges the potential for one's very being to flourish and grow so that passion and vibrancy become part of one's daily living (van Deurzen, 2015).

Mentalisation, attachment theory and neuropsychology are behaviour oriented. These theories leave a huge void in the therapeutic understanding of the excluded individual. They describe mental process without acknowledging that an individual's life must be firmly rooted in the ground of being human. They exclude a philosophical understanding of the human condition and the importance of values, morals, meaning and choice in our everyday lives. They forget that the world we find ourselves in "is not there as a mere *world of facts and affairs*, but, with the same immediacy, as a *world of values, a world of goods, a practical world...with value characters*" (Husserl 1931/ 2012, loc 2311). This gaping absence is the home ground and strength of existential philosophy, and just the place where it focuses in supporting these young people in their relationships in their lifeworld. It helps them to examine the meanings they construct in their everyday lives, their potential to create themselves, their pathways and their agency while all the while keeping in mind the normality of universal anxieties of the human condition.

2.13. Focusing on an Existential Perspective of Exclusion.

Existential psychotherapy is unique as it is deeply rooted in a philosophy which questions, scrutinises and offers ontology as the context within which individual responses to the human predicament of living should be viewed. It focuses on relationships in all four worldly dimensions (van Deurzen, 2002), how meaning is created and how these meanings influence and shape our world view. It also has the lofty goal of eudemonia rather than a state of well-being, like so many of its therapeutic counterparts.

We come into this world because of the actions of others. Our understanding of our world is initiated by others. Our lives are inextricably woven into the fabric of social relationships whether we realise or not. This need to be sociable is an 'a priori' characteristic of the human species which, if unmet, we fail to flourish. The statistics discussed illustrate that the highest category of excluded children come from impoverished backgrounds and unstable relationships. Exclusion exacerbates difference, promotes instability, jeopardises education and disrupts any sense of belonging (CSJ, 2011, Moore, 2008; Herd, 2016). It also threatens our need for security (Lally, 2013). It totally disrupts and depreciates the natural importance of relationships.

Exclusion typically describes the group who are excluded, however, it equally **says something about the group who do the excluding**. It can foster an 'us and them' mentality on both sides (Lowe, 2013) and indicate deeply underlying but unacknowledged fears (Landeau, 2012). In the late 1900's, Nietzsche succinctly describes this underlying schism between those in positions of power and those who refuse to conform to the rules they have established:

"Behold the good and just! Whom do they hate most? Him who breaketh up their tables of values, the breaker, the law-breaker..." (Nietzsche, 1967, p.77).

One and a half centuries later, the Prime Minister of Britain, in his famous speech about the rioters in response to the London Riots, reflected this abhorrence that Nietzsche described:

“If they break the rules in our society, then society will punish them for it...And it is obvious to me that we’ve got to be tough...we’ve got to score a clear line between right and wrong...I am determined, the government is determined, justice will be done and these people will see the consequences of their actions” (P.M. David Cameron, 2011).

Cameron’s words show that we are no further ahead over a century later. They signify a ‘non-clusion’, a separation between the good and the evil, a blaming of the other (Lowe, 2013). The punished pupil in exclusion is forced out, banished, made to feel distanced and bad. Exclusion then, is an extreme form of discipline and a covert form of blame emanating from power. It is like Cameron’s powerful “fight back”, it objectifies an individual, separates the person from the paths that have brought him to the point of needing discipline and pressures him to accept that he is in the wrong (Foucault, 1978). Existentially it is not discipline that this individual needs, instead, it is an intervention which understands, values and prioritises his alienation from himself and others, helping him back to the fold through discovering his own agency and creating his own possibilities. These youths need an intervention which understands that they have “landed in dystopia, depression or despair” and recognises that this is exactly when their “resolve and valour are tested and a much wider range of abilities and insights are needed to come into play” (van Deurzen, 2009a, p.152). School exclusion ignores the importance of this relationship with the self and the other and also forgets the near impossibility for a person who is feeling angry or hostile to maintain a sense of the other, their value and worth in a “feeling of union” (May, 1994, p. 93). A feeling of wanting “to keep the other person out” (ibid, p. 93) takes over and a sense of isolation from the other becomes dominant. Exclusion then, is this pushing out, at its extreme and is the antithesis of the natural healthy state of the relationship between pupil and teacher, pupil and school; an establishment that should “awaken in young people the courage to shoulder life and recognize that discipline and order too, are starting points” (Buber 2002, p.137). Van Deurzen (2010) describes her client’s withdrawal from others as a reaction to their despair and sadness about not finding trusting relationships. Is this pushing-out in exclusion a similar fearful withdrawal by the school? Buber (2002) talks about being in relation to another in such a complete way that the whole of each other’s being is ‘included’, in what he calls a “dialogical relation” (Buber, 2002, p.115). Is the school then forgetting about the ‘whole’ of the

individual? If man's natural existence is *in relation*, then being excluded must bring forth deep feelings of isolation and threat. This research uncovers such experiences as only an existential approach maps out these more refined and subtle philosophical nuances. These youths' lives become entrenched in repetitive and damaging lifestyles imposed by others. Extricating themselves from the hold of the other, from the attraction of the familiar or the safety of the family, in spite of its toxicity, is an enormous ask of any young person, and as this research shows, the wrench apart, even under force is all but unbearable. As the Eagles so eloquently encapsulate:

"You can check out any time you want, but you can never leave" (Eagles, 1976).

To leave of one's own volition, in "moral self-affirmation" would require great courage, not just of an ontic nature but as an "ontological concept" (Tillich, 1952, p. 49).

2.14. Conclusion

Existential philosophy inquires directly of the individual. The greatest body of research on exclusion focuses on socio-economic and demographic factors which blur our understanding of the lifeworld of the excluded individual. An existential approach retrieves the individual from the body of literature, from the sea of multi-faceted interest and gives each individual back responsibility for themselves, clarifying their sense of self. It challenges excluded youths to come out from the herd and encourages them to face their own facticity, anxieties and dilemmas of living, with courage and authenticity. More so, it values fluidity in one's sense of self, making place for deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning, for the importance of integrity and growth of self, in action and being.

3. Methodology

In this chapter I review my research process. I begin by identifying my research question. I then clarify my stance on what truth is, how I believe knowledge is discovered and thus the best way for it to be built through research to best answer my research question. I then discuss grounded theory, conversation analysis and narrative analysis as potential research methods and explain my choice of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Structural Existential Analysis (SEA). I then describe the process of my research including my choice of data collection, participant selection, ethical issues, data analysis, reflexivity, validity and finally potential dissemination of the research.

3.1. My Research Question

The aim of this research is to answer the following question:

‘What is the experience of being permanently excluded from secondary school?’

All research is rooted in assumptions about the world whether the researcher makes these “philosophical orientations” explicit or not (Creswell, 1998; 59). To show a clear path from my research question to my research method I now elucidate my personal ontological position so that my chosen methods makes sense.

3.2. My Ontology and Epistemology

My ontology reflects my beliefs about reality, about what I think truth is, whether truth exists and what is true. What I think reality is, will shape what I think I can know about reality. Consequently, research depends on the researcher’s ontology as much as the research question. For the purposes of this research I identify two schools of philosophical thought relating to reality: realism and relativism, although the study of truth is vast in its own right, the following will enable the reader to understand my research choices.

Realists believe that one truth exists and that this truth will be consistent across varying situations and independent from them (Willig, 2010). Realists advocate objective methods to find out what the truth is and believe that once we know the truth we can generalise it. This is also called objectivism. In these instances the researcher will take an etic approach, believing she can stay far away from the research and that the results are totally independent of her (Killam, 2013). Taking up my position as a relativist, in keeping with Husserl's phenomenological stance, I believe that there are multiple versions of reality, each reflective of the individual's experience and existing at the same time (Willig, 2010; Zelic, 2007). I believe that what is real is dependent on the meanings attached to truth and truth only exists because of the meanings given to it. Thus, truth can change and evolve as meanings change and evolve. This is also called constructivism and allows truth to be "discovered" (Husserl, 1906/07, p. 64). My epistemology directs me to choose a qualitative method of research to gather new knowledge. I do not believe that knowledge can be obtained objectively. I believe in an emic approach: that is, that I am a part of the research process and that my interaction with people is required to understand what truth means to them (Killam, 2013). It is my belief that only through dialogue can we understand another person's world and the meanings they have created and come to know, as close as possible, what is true for them: "the data of actual experience" (Husserl, 1927, Draft A p. 126), as even what is "known in common is known in different ways, is differently apprehended, shows different grades of clearness" (Husserl, 1931, p. 64). As meanings are constructed and reconstructed from experiences (Creswell, 1998) they require the use of dialogue to come as close to these experiences as possible, hence I use in-depth interviews.

To this end, I am aware of my involvement in the research, as I am investigating a world to which I also belong. I try as much as possible to record and acknowledge that I have my "natural standpoint" (Husserl, 1931, p. 64) while at the same time applying phenomenological rules of eidetic reduction, epoche and critical reflection to minimise it. My research method of choice reflects this position.

3.3. Choosing A Research Method

The pivotal idea of existential counselling is that individuals are at all times embedded in the world around them and inseparable from it. This Husserlian view endorses that

the excluded young person cannot be objectified or even seen as a complete entity but needs to be understood as being in-relation-with their physical, social and spiritual environment as well as their own unique inner world. As Husserl asks: “what other method could help us achieve clarity than the interrogation of our inner experience and an analysis carried out within its framework?” (Husserl, 1937, p. 94).

Focusing on lived experience and sense making allows me to find out what meanings these individuals make of their experience of exclusion and its felt impact in their everyday lives. I therefore turn away from quantitative research, or a mixed methods approach or ‘big data’ research (Mills, 2017; Hoy & Adams, 2015) as these focus on the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, rather than staying close to the lived experience. I considered the following methods of research.

3.3.1. Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is often used to study process between “action and interaction” (Nolas, 2011, p.17) and the “reciprocal effects between individuals and larger social process” (Charmaz, 2008, p. 83). The researcher categorises data as it is collected, refining and pursuing what she feels is the most “promising theoretical direction” during the data collection, returning to the data to validate the developing theory (ibid). Grounded theory is a constructivist approach as researchers “actively construct their data with study participants” (ibid, p. 86), returning to the data collection incorporating the new knowledge after every interview. The thought of using the first interview as a base to build on did appeal to me, repeatedly constructing knowledge in this way but I was concerned to skew my perspective before a broad enough understanding of the data had emerged. I did not want to “integrate and streamline data collection” (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008, p.2) in this way. I wanted to leave data to emerge as untampered as possible, allowing participants to maintain and lead me through ‘their expert position’ on the subject throughout the interviews, minimising my ‘interference’. Willig (2010) describes that “the aim of grounded theory is to produce theories” (ibid, p. 48). My aim is to understand subjective lived experience, construct meanings not theory and identify themes from participants’ experiences. Specifically, grounded theory relies on moving back and forward between data gathering and analysis while the researcher’s involvement in this movement is explicit and aimed at developing theory (Charmaz,

2011; Strauss & Corbin, 2011). I was also aware that my access to participants was precarious (see paragraph 3.7) and could not be assured and so I would not be able to rely on achieving this research process within what I felt would be an acceptable length of time.

3.3.2. Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis is what Drew describes as a type of discourse analysis (Drew, 2008). This was another possibility which I investigated and rejected on two grounds: firstly, it was initially developed for naturally occurring interactions such as phone calls or group gatherings (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2017) where the researcher was more likely not be present. Creating or finding this scenario naturally arising with participants who were not used to communicating, sharing and exchanging feelings would be a tall order. Secondly, originating as a method of understanding “talk as a form of action, the focus is on what people *do* with talk, rather on what they just say” (ibid, p. 3). This latter aspect directs the focus of research away from feelings and experience towards the structure of “talk-in-interaction” (ibid, p. 3) and, given the reason for the expulsion of these participants, it seemed possible that physical action took precedence over talk in their lives and therefore they may be less practiced at talking and sharing through language. Historically concerned with “social functions and the significance of speech factors” (Reisigl 2013, p. 2), often focusing on units of language and bound up in cultural, political and socially constructed relationships, conversation analysis moved away from the felt experience I was searching to understand and I felt it may be more suited to a phenomenon which already had a history of discourse.

3.3.3. Narrative Research

Narrative research rests on the belief that truth is relative, that we each construct meaning according to the reality we experience and that this can be conveyed through the stories we construct (Squire, Davis, Esin, Andrews, Harrison, Hydén & Hydén, 2014). On the surface, storytelling is a common form of communication, simply conveying content, but narratives can reflect different intentions of their protagonists, such as validating reality and enabling the protagonist to create a sense of self (Riessman, 1990), and the narrative can be analysed in different ways. Murray (2000)

describes four analytic levels of narrative in health psychology. Firstly, at a personal level the narrative may have therapeutic value as the telling of the narrative may include elements of self-care, secondly at an interpersonal level as meaning can be constructed between people in the telling and exchange of narrative, thirdly there is a positional level of analysis where the narrative reveals differences in social position between the person narrating and the person who listens, and fourthly, he describes a societal level of analysis where the narrative is reflective of communal meaning. Using narrative to explore the meanings and sense these youths made of their lives appealed to me as I agree that we live in a world that we endlessly story and especially that meanings are enhanced through the exchange of stories. However, in my work with young deprived adults I found they did not easily story their experiences and I believed this could present an obstacle to obtaining data. Murray describes that a “narrative can be defined as an organized interpretation of a sequence of events” (cited in, Smith, 2008, p. 113) and Josselson (2011) highlights that narratives are created from “ordered accounts from the chaos of internal experience” (ibid, p.227). However, research indicates that young adults who have been excluded for reasons of repeated anti-social, threatening and disruptive behaviour are unlikely to be able to structure their thinking in such a way (Kelly, 2017) and have themselves been influenced by chaos (Evans et al, 2005). For these reasons I felt that using narrative research may be more complicated with these participants and therefore less suitable. My own experience of these interviews supported this decision as participants frequently jumped from one topic to another, forgot their train of thought or found their feelings difficult to articulate. It was clear that they were not used to sharing their thoughts and for some, chronic substance abuse had also impacted their linguistic fluidity. Murray (2015) points to the underlying fact that narratives are shared with others, giving them a feeling of having been organised and made sense of as the protagonist works meanings out through the repeated narration. Although these participants are describing retrospective experience, they have not shared these intimate experiences before or ‘honed’ their stories around plots (Gabriel, 2004). At the end of the interview several participants said they had never before talked about their experiences in this way and I understood that this lack of familiarity with this kind of self-reflection, combined with their social fears, had made it challenging for them to express their thoughts.

3.3.4. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

My chosen research methods are IPA and Structural Existential Analysis. I will now discuss IPA, which is based on Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and enables a "spelling out" (Husserl, 1927, Draft B, Part 1, p. 155) of the detail of the phenomenon being explored. It can be described as having three fundamental qualities. Firstly, in the way it gives attention to the particular it is a perfect match to investigate small groups, single case studies and issues of personal sensitivity as the interviewees, steeped in the phenomenon under inquiry should feel held and valued throughout the investigation, and deeply understood on reflection. Secondly, it demands an exacting practical application which I discuss later in detail, and thirdly, it has rigorous philosophical foundations based on phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography, which I will now discuss.

3.3.4.1. *Phenomenology*

Husserl (1927) founded phenomenology as a scientific method of inquiry to move away from the Cartesian status quo which stated that science could investigate any phenomena objectively. Husserl posited that our direct experience of the world is only knowable from our position of being already immersed in and surrounded by the phenomenon of the world that we know. The reality of our experience is thus subjective, not objective, and our immersion in the world comes before our knowledge of it. Consequently, we are already in a relationship with anything to which we turn our attention. This turning of attention is a fundamental axiom of the phenomenological approach. It is this that allows us to see things which were previously unseen, this enables something to appear which previously "lies hidden in contrast to that which proximally and for the most part does show itself" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 59).

Applying this perspective to the investigation of phenomena in the world requires attending to ourselves as the perceiver who is doing the inquiry, as well as the phenomena we turn our attention to, and the relationship between both positions. For Husserl our conscious experience is our lifeworld. It is the totality of lived experience and incorporates all phenomena such as events, emotions, relationships and objects

that we encounter in our everyday lives. It can be critically examined by returning to the original experience: “the perceived as such, the remembered as such, the thought and the valued as such” (Husserl, 1927, Draft A, p. 126).

In further breaking down this subjective position, Husserl describes consciousness as having an intentional arc going from ourselves as subject, through a process of meaning making, to something beyond, which becomes an object. He describes that all our mental processes “have an *intentio*, they refer to something, they are related in this or that way, to an object” (Husserl, 1970, p. 43). For example, if I am fearful of the dark days ahead, then my fearful self is the subject and the object of my consciousness is the dark days ahead, whether or not they actually exist. If they are the object of my consciousness then they are my reality. The arc of consciousness is the process between these two points: my fear and the dark days ahead. This arc is the focus of the analysis in IPA and where the art of interpretation, through the hermeneutic process, engages “in the dynamic of conceal/reveal, making manifest what may lie hidden” (Shinebourne, 2011, p. 47). For this inquiry of a phenomenon and process of investigation to meet a true scientific standard, Husserl states that we must put aside our natural attitude, our unthinking everyday stance which is “unconcerned with the critique of cognition” (Husserl, 1964/1970, p.13) Instead we must make use of a phenomenological reduction as the necessary method to understand acts of consciousness. It is this reduction which enables the researcher to make sense of the data that emerges from the interview as it “leads us back to the source of the meaning and existence of the experienced world by uncovering intentionality” (Schmitt, 1959, p. 240). These acts within the research process are no longer to be understood as simple descriptions but as transcendental processes. Husserl separated the process of consciousness (*cogitatio* or *noesis*) from the objects of consciousness (*cogitationes* or *noemata*) and from the subject of consciousness (*nous* or *cogito*). He then stripped them of everything factual or empirical, through phenomenological reduction or *epoche*, to get at the essence, or eidetic meaning of things themselves. This utilises the act of equalization which means that all phenomena are treated equally, none being given priority over another. I too tried to bracket my assumptions and prejudice to get to ‘the things themselves’ in my analysis of the data. Adhering to these principles enables the researcher’s “gaze” to make something comprehensible “out of the

essential structures of particular kinds of lived experience” (Husserl, draft B, 1927, p. 152).

3.3.4.2. *Hermeneutics*

Hermeneutics, emanating from the work of Schleiermacher (1998), has been defined as an “infinite task” (p. xxx). This alludes to its inherent complexities, not only pertaining to the retrieval of the individual from the universality of the language, the latter being the “organ of the person in the service of their individuality” (ibid, p. xxx) but also because we can only come, and keep trying to come, ‘as close as possible’ to original meaning. Making sense of the data is understood to be subject to both the participant’s and the researcher’s interpretations and meaning making processes, which is described as a “double hermeneutic” (Smith, 2008, p. 53). The participants, having engaged with the original phenomena have created meaning and sense of it and it is this new sense that the researcher wishes to “invite the participants to share” (Smith, 2018, p. 1956).

The interview itself is the beginning of the sense-making process and Mishler (1991) points out that the “internal history of the developing discourse” illustrates the continual and mutual reformulation of “context-bound shades of meaning” (p. 53). Carpenter (2009) also elevates the importance of the interview and says that as participants have to first make sense of the research questions this process could be described as a “triple hermeneutic” (p. 2). Interpreting the phenomenon enables meaning to be made and this interpretation can only be done through the interpreters existing knowledge and understanding. We connect to this presently-existing impact of the past through a mode of “historizing” (Heidegger 1962, p. 427), which actually goes before us in every moment, tainting our experience. Thus, any meaning we make of things is already “always done under the guidance of a point of view, which fixes that with regard to which what is understood is to be interpreted” (p.191). In other words, we must be aware of our multi-modal self which we bring to the research, encompassing not only our own present self, but also that of our past and future. Hermeneutic exploration of meaning recognises this fluidity of the human context, as Schleiermacher (1998) states, “language determines the progress of an individual in thought. Language is not

just a complex of single representations but also a system of the relatedness of representations” (p. 9).

Bound within this meaning-making process there is a continual and repeated referral back to words as they appear in the text. This is done in a cyclical process of reference and re-reference where the word is understood in its own right, then as a part of the wider sentence, then in its relationship to the complete text, then to the overall research project and finally to the totality of meaning its very existence creates. The dynamic circular nature of this continual iterative process seeks to create an interpretation which accrues meaning which emanates from the text and the researcher’s relationship with it. This ‘hermeneutic circle’ is a keynote of IPA (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

As a result of this intricate process, IPA accepts that it is not possible to research a phenomenon and yet still remain outside of it (Creswell et al, 2007; Smith, 2015; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2013) and so our awareness of this difficulty, our methodological effort to face it and our consequent reflexivity goes some way to diminish its impact (Etherington, 2004). Smith acknowledges this relationship between the text and the researcher as a second “dynamic” hermeneutic circle where the interpreter is “irretrievably changed” each time by the new interaction with the text (Smith, 2007, p. 7). Husserl also identifies this difficulty, saying we must be aware, firstly of our own psychic life which he calls the “egological reduction” (Husserl, 1927, Draft A, p. 128) and secondly, the inescapable relationships which we are, a priori, embedded in “because every self stands in a nexus of empathy with others” (ibid, p. 156).

3.3.4.3. *Idiography*

IPA was originally developed to conduct research in health psychology, to investigate and understand the personal needs of people with health issues. For this reason an idiographic approach enhances the study of individual unique experiences and captures the nuances of these experience in all their different forms, shades and levels of emotion and intensity. This detailed analysis brings movement and colour to the findings, providing the reader with a deep feeling for the issue being explored, as well as knowledge. Methodologically, the idiographic quality of the research provides clear

guidelines for the analysis of each interview, ensuring the researcher keeps close to the original data, finding the deepest levels of sense and meaning that participants make of their worlds. This requires scrutiny of participants' verbatims as if with a magnifying glass. This concern with detail is what makes it suitable for research of sensitive material, individuals or small groups. It should also make the outcome a memorable, informative, interesting and reliable read. An idiographic approach is a perfect partner for an existential understanding of the phenomenon of being excluded from secondary school as the latter also searches for the deepest of understandings, including the exploration of the nature of the being who has all these experiences.

Heidegger created Dasein as a representation of all mankind which became an "alternative vision of human nature and the tasks of living" (van Deurzen, 2009, p. 34). Phenomenological investigation of experience links Dasein as a "worldly and relational phenomenon" with Dasein's position as an embodied and unique individual (Smith et al, 2009, p. 29). As such, Dasein represents the universality of humans in their everyday being, while recognising individuality and the adumbrations of perception, it gives a clear context to Dasein's experiences in the world, and his relationship with it. Clarifying these distinctive profiles and postures of Dasein, as universal and individual, as relating and experiencing, is also why attention to detail is so important.

Reflecting on this broader cultural context, Shinebourne describes IPA as a middle ground, describing experience as situated between social constructionism, including sociocultural and historical processes, and discursive narrative approaches which describe the stories we tell ourselves when we story our lives (Shinebourne, 2011). Aside from how it is positioned as an analytic tool, IPA aims to provide the reader with a felt understanding of the phenomenon, as if they were in the shoes of the participant, conveying the experience as if still "in its own essential form" (Husserl, 1927, p.150).

In conclusion, Husserl's original phenomenological quest was to get back to things themselves, to use what Moran describes as a "regressive-historical" method (Moran, 2012, p. 58), thus enabling an analysis of subjectivity itself. This subjectivity cannot be separated from the world we are born into, as, having been born into it we find it becomes our frame of reference and our context and it must be reflected in the research findings. So, IPA is well matched to existential research and keeps true to its

epistemological heritage, remembering the shared as well as individual human context and recognising that “this totality of life of individuals in possible communities makes up the whole field of the pure psychic” (Husserl, 1927, p. 152).

3.3.5. Structural Existential Analysis (SEA)

With the application of Husserl’s method of phenomenological reduction to Brentano’s concept of intentionality (Ricour, 1967; Husserl, 1927) existential philosophy gained a simple yet sophisticated concept of the lifeworld for research into the everyday lived experience of individuals (Husserl, 1964). Van Deurzen has developed SEA (van Deurzen, 2014a, 2014b, 2019) as a model to help stimulate and sharpen our focus on lived experience and extend our thinking, pushing the reach of our inquiry to a deeper reflective encounter with the participant’s lifeworld. Van Deurzen refines Husserl’s method further enabling the researcher to grasp more closely and easily “the way in which a person is situated in the world and takes account of context, text and subtext of her life, her history, her intentionality, her project and her pathway” (van Deurzen, 2014a, p. 71).

Van Deurzen (ibid) describes six main spheres of focus to be worked with to hone the structure of the research, bringing the researcher closer to the participant’s lifeworld.

The first sphere of focus is on the reductions which describe three ways to reflect upon the method. Firstly, the phenomenological reduction requires looking at the process of consciousness: the noesis or cogitatio. This involves the researcher suspending or bracketing her assumptions to the best of her ability, about what is happening. This bracketing is termed ‘epoche’. This reduction ensures that data is described not interpreted, that all data is considered equal and that the limit and context of our observations are acknowledged. This latter focus is called horizontalization. Here the researcher also verifies and checks her process continually. The second reduction which the researcher adheres to is called the eidetic reduction, where the objects of consciousness, known as noemata or cogitationes, are clarified and the object is understood in all its facets ensuring that nothing is ignored. This involves understanding that life and our knowledge of it, is fluid and changing. Finally, the transcendental reduction is applied to our thinking self, trying to go beyond our personal

ego to our observing self and this involves clarifying the subject of consciousness, the *nous* or *cogito*, which is our own response to things. Ultimately, while researching, we are also trying to master ourselves in the world.

The second sphere of focus is the interview dialogue. Founded upon hermeneutics, phenomenology is a regimented search for meaning. In dialogue, meanings are gently peeled back to reveal how they are constituted and how essences can be clarified. Every aspect of consciousness is freshly reflected upon to ensure the highest level of clarity, moving as close as possible, towards the truth (van Deurzen, 2014a). Both researcher and participant become more finely tuned in their relationship with each other as they become more conscious, articulate and reflective of the subject matter. Here “the quality of the contact with participants matters greatly” (ibid, p. 73). Only with trust and respect will a participant feel safe and willing to join in an excavation of her lifeworld, to unravel the meanings so precious to the research.

The harmony of the interview comes from the meeting of two beings in openness, respect and a searching dialogue on both sides; from genuinely being oneself, rather than a concern to create an impression. The researcher’s training evokes a “sharpened capacity for consciousness” (van Deurzen, 2014b, p. 74), an ability to suspend her own reality and bracket her assumptions as best as possible, and to be able to meet the participant in the “reality between” (Buber, 2002, p.117) which is “ever and again reconstituted with men’s meetings with one another” (ibid, p. 241), and guide the participant so that they are both immersed in the data as they penetrate further.

The third sphere of focus is bias. Working with bias is an integral part of the fabric of phenomenological investigation. Bias is something seen and unseen and can forcefully shape perception, attitude and emotion. In IPA the researcher must be aware, and reflect on, the many aspects of her own bias as well as those of the participant.

The fourth sphere of focus is the four world model and in these worldly dimensions we find existential tensions (see appendix 7). Humans exist in space and time, so, using a four worlds model allows us to organise the research data more systematically and thoroughly, using these dimensions to find emotion and relationships (van Deurzen, 2013, 2014a). These worlds in which we experience ourselves, others and the world

around us can be categorised as follows: firstly, in the Umwelt, we have the practical concrete physical relationship to ourselves and the world in which we are embedded. We move around in space, interacting in distance, knowing and experiencing ourselves as embodied beings. We describe this by way of sensations, likes, dislikes, actions and things we encounter. Secondly, in the Mitwelt, we relate to each other as social beings in a social world. For Heidegger's Dasein "there is an essential tendency towards closeness" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 140); meaning, closeness to others. Although Dasein can choose whether to relate by closing off or by being open to the other, Dasein has no choice but to relate to the world spatially, in time and through relationships, as Heidegger describes: "knowing oneself is grounded in Being-with, which understands primordially" (Heidegger, 1962, p.161). In this dimension Dasein recognises emotions, feelings of belonging, feelings evoked in relationships and feelings evoked through communication. Thirdly, in Eigenwelt, we relate inwardly to ourselves, our personal world. We may choose to keep this inner world private or make it public, and we relate to it involuntarily as well as voluntarily. This world has many facets of its own and greatly impacts the experience of our worldview. How we see and experience ourselves shapes everything we do, not only in the present moment but also in our relation to the past and also our aspirations and expectations of our future. We are greatly affected by our internal personal world. In some states of mind this inner personal world can even turn against us, becoming persecutory and unpredictable. In spite of this personal world existing a priori to the meanings we each create, we may have little knowledge or understanding of it; we can even feel far from ourselves, and, like a stranger in our own home, live "away from" ourselves (Heidegger, 1962, p.223). Finally, in the Überwelt, we live our lives on a spiritual dimension, furnished by conceptual thinking. Here we create values and beliefs; we experience intuitions, purpose and meaning in everything we relate to.

The success of SEA depends on the researcher's ability to access the meanings in the lived experience of the participants across these four dimensions, to identify the participant's felt experience and to remain flexible in the pursuit of understanding (Van Manen, 1990). The information gathered from these dimensions provides a comprehensive framework to organise the data collected. These worldly dimensions of existence are not separate in everyday experience and are far more complex and overlapping than their simple identification on paper. They also elicit tensions that

require exploration within the paradoxes of human living. Although the individual experience is unique, these tensions are universal and predictable, so they provide another solid frame to the structure of the research.

The fifth sphere of focus is working with time. For Heidegger time is a major influence as we move from birth to death, facing the immutable paradox that death is what makes life so valuable. Heidegger also describes that ontologically we are embedded in our history. For these young adults their personal history is an important aspect of their being-in-the-world. We live our lives forwards but understand life backwards, we create ourselves in an ongoing direction and “context is as important as subtext” (van Deurzen, 2013, p. 155). The dimension of time is paramount for excluded young adults as the process of school education is linear and progressive and holds the possibility of creating new ways of being-in-the-world towards the future. In the conventional school experience time flows freely as children progress and develop as they move through the system but for these young adults, as the findings show, this flow is grossly interrupted.

The sixth realm of focus for research is the movement between emotion and values. As humans, our daily lived experience is accompanied by emotions, which, when understood, enable us to more fully investigate participants ever-changing connection to the world around them. Our emotions work to maintain a feeling of equilibrium and whether or not we are aware, they are manifest in our ‘ever-present’ mood (Heidegger, 1962). Van Deurzen (2009, 2019) developed an emotional compass to enable more detailed understanding of emotions allowing them to be understood as representing a lack or a fulfilment and moving towards or away from a value (see Table 12a, Table 12b and Appendix 6).

As a heuristic device SEA opens up wider perspectives, pushing the reach of the researcher’s curiosity deeper into the data. In this research I use both IPA and SEA in a blended approach to investigate the lived experience of exclusion. Their similarities make them excellent partners and their differences enable my investigation to span the subtleties and range of human experience.

3.4. Choosing The Semi-structured Interview

The semi-structured interview is in keeping with my epistemological stance as explained at the beginning of this section. Maintaining practical congruence with my philosophical orientation will ensure that my research project, throughout its evolution, will always have coherence and integrity (Yardley, 2008). In spite of my belief in the semi-structured interview as the right vehicle to enable the best phenomenological excavation into my participants worlds, I initially explored other ways of obtaining data which I shall briefly summarise here.

Initially I thought about conducting a focus group, but I quickly concluded it was not appropriate. Although it would have meant that I could obtain the data from all participants at the same time (Burke, 2014) and I would have had the advantage that seven experts on the subject might surely bring forth a great deal of information quickly, a group is a complex phenomenon in itself. Individuals can gain or lose position and might form sub-groups and relate to each other from different and complex aspects of the group, while sharing their subjective experiences (Bion, 1961). I would also have had to negotiate my own position in the group; wanting participants to lead the discussion, yet having to steer and enact boundaries, be inclusive and task and relationship oriented (Northouse, 2016; Greenleaf, 1970; Morgan, 1997). Ultimately my purpose in the interview was to 'feel into' the other (van Deurzen, 2014a), a goal which I felt I was much less likely to achieve in a group. Both IPA and SEA call for a dialogical interview, a full-bodied, mutually resonating, dynamic exchange of understanding where the interviewer immerses herself in the creation of a shared experience which emanates from the interviewee (Van Deurzen, 2014a). The possibility of achieving this type of relationship in a focus group whose main advantage is to observe a large amount of interaction (Morgan, 1997) would clearly be impossible for a novice interviewer in any reasonable time scale. I also felt that putting vulnerable participants together in a group to discuss extremely sensitive issues would be an unwise risk and would definitely have required more than one follow up to ensure their ongoing safety. That would have complicated my research beyond its scope.

I had also contemplated using narrative interviewing as I agree that we story our lives and that the stories we tell to ourselves and others are invaluable in helping us to make sense of our worlds (McDonald, Pietsch & Wilson, 2010; Murray, 2000; Squire et al, 2014). However, this research is not looking to understand narrative, it seeks instead to understand the phenomenon of experience and through that, to shed light on the lifeworld of excluded pupils. Narrative interview embodies a clear purpose closely related to narrative analysis giving the researcher and participants space to select and order events and looks specifically for connections between events (Ayres, 200). Atkinson (2011) describes narrative as needing internal consistency so that one part of a narrative should not contradict another part; that there should be “internal coherence” (ibid, pp 7). An existential and phenomenological view holds that much of our lives does not make sense and experiences are often felt to be inconsistent. “Telling narratives is a major way that individuals make sense of disruptive events in their lives” (Riessman, 1990, p. 1199) and it is clear that these young adults have clearly experienced many turbulent events which they have not yet made sense of. Kartch (2017) and Chase (2005) highlight that the narrative interviewer would be primarily seeking to understand how meaning is constructed through discourse. This search for sense and meaning inspires all qualitative researchers to forage deeply into the data to find previously hidden meaning. Narrative interviewing looks for a sense-making story, hoping “to end up with a flowing narrative”(ibid, pp 3) but my search was for themes and experience no matter how fragmented or nonsensical, and to accrue an understanding of the issue within the philosophical framework of being-in-the-world. Making sense of participants’ experience is ultimately the aim of all phenomenological research and in so doing the research may well be seen as the voice and performance of the researcher, as much as the participants, as she assembles and constructs her research in time, culture and history (Chase, 2005).

The interview is the tool that enables the researcher to experience events in another person’s life as though she herself had been there. It gives her a window to the interviewee’s world of relationships on all four dimensions; her physical world, her personal world, her social world and her spiritual world. It makes available to her the sense and meanings participants have made. A good interview creates a bridge for the interviewer to feel, as far as she possibly can, into another person’s lifeworld at that moment in time. Both IPA and SEA call for a dialogical interview, a deeply explorative,

mutually resonating, dynamic exchange of understanding where the interviewer immerses herself in the creation of a shared experience which emanates from the interviewee (Van Deurzen, 2014). The semi-structured interview also provides a solid and bounded base for dialogue yet remains open enough to ensure that researcher and participant can co-create a space together where there is spontaneous and flowing exploration of experience (Smith et al, 2009).

I chose not to use SEA to actively shape the structure of the questions but instead to inform my inquiry afterwards. I felt this was less directive and stayed true to the loose nature of the interview process allowing the interviews to remain participant led. Initial questions covered experience around being excluded from school and moved to important topics brought forward by participant as they arose (see section 3.6). While identifying fundamental areas of focus the semi-structured interview leaves space for flexibility and sensitivity to what the participant is saying allowing the language of the participant to be incorporated into the dialogue. This helps foster a good rapport and a feeling of being understood which is so important and especially with this participant group who have felt at odds with others all their lives (van Deurzen, 2014a). This stance also allows for participants' priorities to emerge naturally. Interview questions merely act as guides to facilitate covering topics without straying or forgetting (Eatough and Smith, 2017). Developing these questions also ensures that the researcher thinks about their impact, the kind of response they might elicit and her reasons for asking them.

3.5. Setting the Scene

To help participants to feel relaxed, interviews were held in the charities informal areas which they were already accustomed to using. After ensuring the participant felt comfortable, I introduced myself and the research, confirming that they were still happy to be interviewed and aware of what they were getting into. No one cared to read my carefully prepared information sheet, leaflet or sign consent (see Appendices 2,3,4). I explained that I could not go ahead without their signed consent to the interview and recording and so they were all helpful and agreed. Participants were unconcerned about anonymity, even wanting others to know their stories. I explained that anonymity would not affect the interview content and they agreed to go ahead.

I was aware that these youths have experienced adults as untrustworthy and threatening and that this may impact our time together. For this reason, I wanted to begin the interview with a broad question which gave participants freedom to choose the direction of conversation. I was still prepared to be directive when required. Accordingly, the questions and subsidiary prompts below, made their appearance at different times and in different ways throughout each interview.

3.6. Questions and Related Prompts

- I'd like you to tell me as much as you can about being excluded from school.
- So, what was happening then, what was going on?
- Can you remember how you found out that you were excluded, and why you were excluded?
- What do you think led you to do all those things that got you excluded?
- Can you tell me more about your behaviour?
- How do you make sense of it all?
- What was that like for you?
- What were your relationships like with the teachers?
- What were your relationships like with the other pupils?
- How do you see your future?
- Do you think your life would have been different if you had not been excluded?
- Who played the biggest part in your being excluded?
- What do you feel has been the biggest impact of being excluded?
- Can you describe how you see yourself now compared to then?
- If you could make things different in any way about anything we have discussed what would you wish to be different?
- Is there anything else you think is important that we haven't discussed?

3.7. Participant Inclusion Criterion

- Permanent exclusion from secondary school due to aggressive, disruptive or violent behaviour
- Aged between 17 – 25 years old
- No mental health illness diagnosis at the time of exclusion

I chose to research this age group for several reasons:

- Participants would have moved beyond the school setting and alternative provision
- I felt that by researching retrospective experience the material would be richer in content as a more 'whole' phenomenon could be looked at in the context of time passed
- I thought that the time passed after exclusion would have helped the youths settle emotionally and their maturity would enhance our communication
- I believed participants would have had more time to react to their exclusions
- Existing research on exclusion from secondary school centres on pupils still at school or in alternative provision.

3.8. Finding Participants

Participants for IPA are selected "purposively" because of the insight they offer into the phenomenon being investigated (Smith, 2009, p. 49). As the aim of IPA is achieving rich and bountiful data, the quality of material yielded outweighs quantity. Even one in-depth case study could be adequate to make a valid study. Smith suggests that eight participants is maximum for doctoral research (ibid). Blending SEA and IPA requires repeated in-depth analyses of data, and taking the advice of my supervisors, I settled on seven participants.

I contacted government schemes, youth organisations, colleagues, other students in placements and I explored all my placement contacts. Having worked with Camden and Islington NHS psychological services, St Anne's Hospital, Homerton Hospital mental health services and the Anna Freud Centre, I believed I would have the possibility of reaching excluded youths through various services that I had come across in my work, that had close ties with excluded youths and gangs. I contacted probation services, gang projects and transition team services, MAC-UK, Mind The Gap, AMBIT and other interventions and services which had been set up specifically for hard-to-reach youth. With permission, I put flyers (see Appendix 2) on notice boards in youth clubs, charities, different organisations and specific outreach programmes.

The response I received was extremely disappointing. I encountered many brick walls. I was shocked that so many people closely involved with these youths seemed so passive, acting I felt, like security attendants, as intent on keeping me out, as the youths in. 'Hard-to-reach' took on a new meaning. Eventually, realising that I could not rely on gatekeepers or introductions, I took to the streets where I found and spoke to a group of young adults who had been excluded from school. They were polite, pleased to hear what I had to say, interested in my goals and willing to help. I found them extremely lively, likeable, interesting and approachable. Some phoned their friends to enlist their help, others advised me to set up a Facebook page and offered to do so for me. We exchanged contact details and they took my leaflets to read and distribute in their residential home. Later, the manager of the home refused to allow these boys to speak to me, disregarding their desire to do so. I immediately went in person but was not even allowed inside. I phoned many times and wrote letters to that manager, his boss, the local council and head office; all to no avail. The continually unhelpful responses to my requests to access excluded youths was baffling. I felt unprepared for this difficult situation and I agree wholeheartedly with Abrams' (2010) assertion that there is not enough "discussion among qualitative scholars about sampling hard-to-reach populations" (p. 537).

In my continued search for participants I contacted Adele Eastman, a Senior Policy Specialist and author of *No Excuses: A review of educational exclusion* (CSJ, 2011). She was warm-hearted, concerned and very helpful and put me in touch with the Centre for Social Justice whereupon I was successfully introduced to a UK secular community outreach charity where I met Bea, Peter, Carly and Mary. I also came across a non-secular outreach charity for Jewish boys who had been excluded from school, where I was very warmly received and introduced to three participants: Chimi, Harry and Lazer. As discussed, the homogeneity of the sample is based on participants having had the experience of permanent exclusion from secondary school (Smith et al, 2009). Six of my seven participants had been excluded more than once, some several times. I considered this experience homogenous enough to warrant their inclusion (ibid) and I discussed it in supervision. Unexpectedly, the findings revealed that the circumstances which led to exclusion were very different between Chimi and Lazer and the rest of the participants. This is an important point which I refer to throughout the following chapters.

3.9. Ethical Considerations and Potential Problems

Having an ethical compass (BPS, 1998, 2014) is crucial when entering another person's inner lived experience. The consistent moral and ethical stance of this research is to care for and protect the wellbeing of each participant, keeping in mind potential difficulties for both participants and researcher (see Appendix 1).

From the first point of contact all participants were fully informed about the aims of the research and the method by which it would be carried out. I assured participants of the integrity and confidentiality of the work. The BPS guidelines (2014) also state that the dignity and welfare of participants be continually kept in mind in a sensitive and caring way and to this purpose, I explained that I would stop to ensure participants were happy to continue throughout the interviews. I offered each participant an opportunity to read their own transcript and have a copy if they so wished. I then gave clear explanations of what will happen to the transcripts, for how long and where they would be kept and what would happen to them afterwards. I also considered the inherent bias of participants willingness to participate which I discuss later in chapter seven (Etherington, 2004).

3.10. Sensitivity

In considering the ethics of my research, I anticipated that discussions with participants could bring forth sensitive material so I made time to discuss the Participant Information Sheets (Appendix 4) and the Consent Form (Appendix 3). While giving assurance that interviews could stop at any time without giving a reason, I also pointed out that there may be gains from the interview process. Although participants were already engaged in therapy, I made arrangements to meet any therapeutic needs that might arise from the interview processes. I remained aware of the sensitivity of the material throughout the interview and I used my therapeutic skills to monitor my participants' and my own wellbeing.

During the interviews I was aware of the fine line between being a therapist and being an interviewer, my desire to elicit rich material, keep close to the data and remain true to the requirements of phenomenological research (Etherington, 2004; Fleet et al, 2016). The potential blurring of boundaries and the impact of hearing such heart-

breaking stories was frequently discussed with my supervisor and in personal therapy. I felt my training and experience working in both schools and hospital services with severe and complex trauma contributed to my ability to foster a stable and thoughtful interview-alliance with my participants.

The experiences which participants shared with me were deeply personal and their willingness to share them very humbling. Shadows of power dynamics, intimacy, emotion and relational differences hovered throughout and as we talked, I continually remained reflective of my position as an ethical researcher.

3.11. Debriefing

After the interview the debriefing allowed time for feedback and any issues that arose. Although no participant wanted to take the debrief form (see Appendix 10). I suggested they take it to have the opportunity to refer to at any later point in time.

3.12. Primary Researcher's Welfare

As advised in the BPS guidelines (BPS, 2015) I paid attention to my own safety as well as that of my participants. Throughout the research I was supported by my supervisor and personal therapist to discuss the disturbing nature of these interviews and other issues. To this purpose I kept a research diary to use in personal therapy or supervision.

3.13. Collecting and Storing Data

I asked for permission to record the interviews and explained that the data would be password protected and stored until 6 months after my research was complete and then erased. I then placed my iPhone recorder at a reasonable distance between us, in full view, and began the interview.

3.14. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is naturally an integral part of the phenomenological process. It is about critically holding in mind the relationship between myself, the research, the subject and the process and also being aware of the impact that I bring to the study and that the

study has on me (Etherington, 2004; Husserl, 1927; Finlay, 2002). The very nature of the phenomenological reduction requires a continual process of the researcher reflexively “managing the intrusion of pre-understandings” (Finlay, 2011, p. 74). It is not enough for me to remain grounded in my theoretical paradigm and sure of my philosophical stance; I was aware that I must continually enter into a reflexive relationship, working out these positions between myself and my work. Transparency, accountability, responsibility and clarity are important research goals and also modes of being with the research. These can only be achieved through a reflexive attitude towards choice and knowledge throughout the research process. Reflexivity ensures that I acknowledge and account for my personal bias and work using the methodological reductions to ensure that I stay open to receive participants meanings without my own pre-judgements shaping the data, as much as possible. It demands that I consider the multitude of thoughts and feelings that continually resonate in myself from the data (Goldspink & Engward, 2018). Thus, reflexivity is a perpetual and complex necessity throughout the whole research process.

As phenomenology places each of us at the centre of our world, this world can only arise in as much as it emanates from us. Knowing I can never be truly separate from the subject of my inquiry demands the highest level of commitment to the integrity of the data and my authenticity as researcher, while maintaining my philosophical and theoretical position. Knowledge built throughout the research accrues through a constant process of reflective action which in itself validates its truth and the findings can only be the result of this as I struggle to meet myself inside and outside the data (Finlay, 2011).

One such struggle where I continually reflected on my position in forming the shape of the data was in choosing quotes from each participant. Of course, the story I tell about how my participants experienced exclusion from school and the way they engaged with this experience across all four worlds, must be my interpretation of their experiences, which always emanated from the data, but what about the frequency with which I chose quotes and the interpretations I made of these quotes? Did I hear some participants more than others? Would I be able to convey each participant’s experience equally? Would I live up to the responsibility of creating the window through which readers would view and come to understand participants’ experiences? Sometimes I repeated a quote

to ensure that I created continuity for the reader from one section to the other. An example of this is in section 4.5.3, to describe Harry's experience of feeling 'different, diseased, lonely and apart', I used the quote "*I'd stay awake until like six in the morning and then I go home and sleep all day*" 524. I felt that this statement conveyed Harry's tremendous experience of separateness and loneliness when he chose to wander the streets all night instead of being home in bed. I then used it again in section 4.6.1 to remind the reader of the importance of this terrible despairing state across all four worldly dimensions, and that being unable to approach any other person for help contributed so greatly to Harry's descent even further into the isolation and the meaninglessness he experienced in the theme "Giving Up" (see section 4.6.1). This is an example of using quotes to seamlessly re-link themes and develop the narrative over the analysis as Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) describe.

Smith, Flowers & Larkins say that "there is not a single right way to write up an IPA analysis" and "there is significant variation" in representing the themes to the reader (2009, pp108). More than this, researchers are encouraged to be "imaginative and flexible in the design and execution" (Eatough & Smith, 2017, p.206) of their study. Ultimately the research is about conveying layers of meanings and I believe that using quotes in different ways to point out these layers, helps deepen our understanding without "severing the threads which connect the various possibilities of meaning and the account itself" (ibid, p. 200) . Of course, there still has to be rigour. In the main body of findings I ensured that each participant's experience was represented equally across all the findings but there were some few times where I also felt that a quote had value in being used twice. Rather than disregard these quotes in deference to keeping them equal in numbers, I decided to add them in as 'extras' to illustrate different aspects of experience, or to make a point that I thought was important. In this way I felt that nothing was lost from my participants' experiences but everything was gained in conveying more about these experiences to the reader. Sometimes the same quote conveyed different concepts. For example, in the theme 'A Change of Heart', section 4.6.2. Chimi's statement "*[There's] no parents to fight with, there's not much violence in my life. I'm out of the war, the war is over*"¹⁰²⁷ explains a point of divergence between Chimi and other participants. Here I describe how the other participants come to a realisation from a renewed perspective in their personal worlds, but how Chimi came to his new realisation differently; because his social world had changed. Husserl's

phenomenology brings our attention to the fact that the meanings we create are specifically rooted in our perceptions and so using this same statement twice enables different facets of the same experience to come to the reader's awareness in different ways.

Holding myself accountable and to ensure my own reflexive process, I kept a journal, logging my thoughts, questions, uncertainties and important points for discussion and exploration. I also kept in contact with my supervisor and personal therapist as I came to terms with the difficult experiences participants shared. I also joined an IPA group, listened to other researchers and exchanged views while learning together. I met with colleagues to read and discuss our transcripts, examining ourselves and our work along our research pathway. As my knowledge grew, so did my ability and as I changed, I saw deeper levels of experience in my participants scripts, waiting to be interpreted (Smith et al, 2009). Slowly, very slowly, I became a reflexive phenomenological researcher. My learning has not only impacted the choices I made but is reflected in the knowledge which I have gained. One place where these changes become obvious is when I return to the IPA groups and discuss research with colleagues; now I find I have so much more to offer.

3.15. Validity

Validity is a value judgment and thus varies depending on the origin of the appraiser. Each method has its own protocol. Variances within methods reflect the flexibility of the process and individuality of the researcher, both precious core values of qualitative research. This is a benefit of the method as we contribute our personal investigation, through a communal language, to the growing body of qualitative research. Generally, validity is held to be an assessment of the end product of the research, made by looking through the process from inception to the development and execution of the whole piece of work. It refers to the fulfilment of the research intentions. So, the question is, did the research do what it set out to do, in the ways it specified that it would? As Polkinghorne (2007) explains; "It is the readers who make the judgement about the plausibility of a knowledge claim based on the evidence and argument for the claim reported by the researcher" (p. 484). In this research many details pertaining to validity have been demonstrated throughout and the following is a brief summary of Yardley's

(2008) four concepts which Smith et al, (2009) identify as suitable benchmarks for phenomenological research:

Firstly, sensitivity to context. This requires sensitivity to participants socio-cultural background, relevant literature and information which has been obtained. I believe this has been demonstrated repeatedly throughout the identification of the process and pathway I took to develop the research. It includes awareness, analysis, philosophical integrity, intricacies of technique and choices which I have described, which affect the research shape and direction.

Secondly, Yardley talks of commitment and rigour. This includes all aspects of ethics, method of analysis, integrity towards participants and the material they have provided. I believe commitment should include an honest and sustained effort to reveal non-explicit aspects of research dynamics, for example, if the researcher's past foreshadows her choices; if any dynamics in the interview continue to affect analysis and interpretation, for example, the impact of disturbing material. These issues were discussed with my supervisors and personal therapist whose close contact was maintained throughout the research.

Thirdly Yardley talks of researcher transparency and coherence enabling the reader to follow a clear, detailed, logical trail of the research development from inception to completion. Finally, Yardley describes impact and importance, meaning that the research should bring new insight and knowledge to the reader.

Transferability of the findings is also a reflection of the quality and validity of the research. I believe this research contributes many new ideas to the field and that these findings are transferable and relevant to deepen our understanding of all pupils who are at risk of exclusion, or already excluded. There is no other existential research on pupils excluded from secondary school, nor from the community. These findings bring several issues to light which have hitherto not been part of the exclusion dialogue. Firstly, the unequivocal importance of the existential context; the lifeworlds of these pupils. The pathways that these participants chose mirrored existential issues at every twist and turn without any intervention or guidance. I believe this shows the natural fit and enormous benefit to be found in an existential perspective and

existential therapy for these and other pupils experiencing emotional hardship. Secondly, understanding the magnitude of disrupted relationships across all four worldly dimensions has opened a new arena within which to place these life changing difficulties. This is also relevant well beyond the boundaries of this research. Thirdly, recognising that a child or young adult may be specifically and directly targeted by an adult or family member and that this abuse can be persistent, long-standing and hidden. The fourth issue is the link between violent behaviour and blocked access to values has been laid bare. The fifth issue which this research illuminates is the misunderstanding which participants felt their behaviour created in others. They wished that their disruptive and violent behaviour could be understood as if it was a language, in place of words they did not have, and to express emotions for which they had no words and by which they were completely overwhelmed. It is my opinion that although these participants were found in the community, these factors could all apply to pupils still at school but at risk of exclusion and are clearly transferrable well beyond the issue of school exclusion. We cannot say that all pupils on the exclusion trajectory experience the same circumstances or even respond in similar ways to similar experiences but I believe it is fair to say that these findings provide subtle and nuanced insights which penetrate deep into the emotional experiences of these excluded pupils. They are heavily laden with rich, complex, interesting and thought-provoking interpretations and provides the reader with “new ways of thinking about” (Eatough & Smith, 2010, pp 193) this very issue and related others. They offer an extensive fathoming of “things that seem impenetrable, obscure and profound” (van Deurzen, 2014, pp 75) and also specifically offer existential perspectives to conceptualise human suffering, which of course are relevant beyond this specific issue to many others.

Validity is an implicit and explicit intention of this research, but ultimately, the reader is the judge of its success.

3.16. Method of Data Analysis for IPA

Smith (2009) describes concise guidelines for the analysis of data. As a novice I wanted to follow them systematically and with attention to detail. As I became more

familiar, I added to the format to support my own needs. The following is a representation of my analysis as I followed Smith's six prescribed stages.

3.16.1. Reading and re-reading

Although Smith identifies this stage as the beginning of the analysis, I found that the transcription process had already planted seeds of familiarity and perspective within the terrain of the data. Each time I made a transcript, which took me many hours and often days, I continually renewed my sense of the dynamics of each participant's lifeworld and how the terrain of the interview changed. I noticed where the energy flowed or became stuck and how it represented different feelings and how those parts made small pictures in their own rights yet came together to present a bigger picture (see Appendix 8, pilot transcript). As I read and re-read, I was struck by words that repeatedly conveyed something intense. I circled these as they appeared. Individually they conveyed an important experience, cumulatively they were like binoculars capturing a direct first person account of each lifeworld. I tabulated them and named them Keywords and I present them in the findings as an idiographic introduction to each participant.

During the initial readings, words and phrases took on values. I became more and more familiar with the data, noticing nuances, outstanding features, writing these down or highlighting them, as Smith advises, so as to help let go of them, "bracket them off" thus allowing my focus to remain with the data (Smith, 2009, p. 82). I also noted laughter, pauses and remembered hand gestures. In these readings I was able to see connections between the general story and more detailed thoughts and feelings, as Smith describes. I made two columns, one either side of the transcript, with emerging themes on the left and initial comments on the right. I numbered the lines. In the re-readings, I highlighted various content that stood out, for example, rage and violence was red, things to do with family became green, the mention of school blue and a whole host of colours began to emerge.

3.16.2. Initial noting

Throughout this part of the analysis I noted descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments on the right-hand side. (see Box 1 below). Descriptive comments focused on the direct experience of the participant, linguistic comments captured their impact and emotion, conceptual comments reflect my “interrogative” and inquiring position revealing issues and concepts of importance as they emerged (Smith et al, 2009, p. 84). I used colour to highlight and link types of comments so that I could visually connect my comments across the page. All the while I was reading deeper into meanings in the text and referencing back and forth to check that I was interpreting correctly. Working on later transcripts I also introduced icons as flags to enhance my visual representation of the data and facilitate location of meanings. I used bold to illuminate concepts, language, feelings and meanings. At the beginning of the analysis I was at odds with the work, awkward and doubtful about every move, everything felt strange. I found the process rigorous and painstaking, scrutinising each word and sentence, continually questioning and checking the data to ensure that my understanding emerged directly and transparently from it. Eventually I noticed a flow and felt the ‘process’ of analysing. I noticed the idiographic detail, the recurring bracketing of myself, the hermeneutic circle as it impacted the data revealing sense and interpretation. The words come together fitting like a jigsaw bringing new meanings and images as they connected. This is illustrated in Box 1 below.

Box 1. Initial noting: descriptive, linguistic, conceptual.

Transcript	Description= plain Language= <i>italics</i> Concepts = <u>underlined</u>
<p>Andre - <u>em</u>, <i>I weren't feeling well, I didn't, <u>emm</u>, I couldn't take people. I used to <i>hide</i> in the toilets <i>most</i> of the time that's also why because I just couldn't take people. I just couldn't be around people in general. That's what I mean. <i>I didn't know at the time</i>, but, obviously there was nothing... it's not just, that, as well, sometimes I was bullied <i>because I was different because of the life I'd lived</i>, where I was, in care and stuff. I was different to everyone else and for that reason I suffered a lot of bullying, not bullying <u>bullying</u> but, I didn't feel comfortable or welcome. I just did <i>everything I could to get kicked out or sent home</i>.</i></p>	<p>he's aware of a difference between an unwell self and a well self <i>most</i> → overcome ? he wasn't able to be with others . <u>others were threatening, scary and he could not relate to them at all</u> <i>he understands something now that he didn't before</i> living in care, not having a family made him so different to the others he got bullied <u>what was different?</u> <u>he could not bear to be at school</u> so different from everyone no social relationships never felt comfortable or accepted by others, <u>welcome</u> feels like wanted and <u>warm</u> , so <u>unwanted, caste out by others?</u> bullied wanted to leave <u>feelings of alienated so great he was overwhelmed and always had to leave to go home or hide in the toilets these actions gave him power</u></p>

3.16.3. Developing emerging themes

Having read the transcripts many times, garnered words or phrases, analysed, re-analysed and documented, I finally interpreted and then collated themes (Smith et al, 2009). I moved to the left-hand column, organising data into themes, eventually clustering existing themes (see Box 2 below). After this point I started to write themes on a separate piece of paper. I made star diagrams connecting superordinate themes to subthemes, changing the positions of the words as I searched for their fit. I moved them around and back and forth and I made lists of themes. Quotes often fitted more than one theme and I returned to the transcript, retraced my steps and re-read the detail until I felt certain of their rightful place.

Box 2. Themes emerging and moving to clusters.

School is complicated	Moving school many times	Megan – the first time I think I was 13 I'm originally from North Yorkshire and I went to a place called Nabers College, which is like a school for people who had been kicked out. Then I went to Leicester	She chooses the words I think like they soften the edges of being kicked out, or maybe it was a blur of different episodes of being kicked out as she talks of many different schools.
Unsafe living with violence	Excluded often Going to another special school	grammar. it's like a big grammar school in Lancaster and, emm, everything was fine, and then, I had a lot of trouble at home , which compacted with school and I didn't want to go to school , I didn't want to leave my mum and things like that , so, and then when I went to school I didn't go to any classes, and then, they just kicked me out of there. And then I stayed at home for about seven	<i>going to school is not about school its about, leaving mum and 'things like that' indicating so many deeper issues. Do others know about the severe issues at home are the teachers aware of the hidden agenda she has in not being in school?</i>
Alone, disliked and alienated	Trouble at home Didn't want to go to school	months. Then I <i>said to my mum I wanted to go back to school and learn, I didn't really want to go, but (laugh) I needed to.</i> I went to a place called Salby high school.	But they kicked her with reference only to her behaviour not to what was going on in her home life? <u>did they know about her reasons for wanting to go home?</u> <i>the word just indicates a flippancy in the kicking out, is it felt uncaring attitude towards her?</i>
	School was much less valuable than home And.. they all...like I was there for quite a long time and then me an' the head teacher... Basically he was <i>calling me a liar...</i> so... I like, <i>got really angry</i> and I threatened to hit him and then obviously I got permanently excluded from there. And then I went to a school, there was a school just up the road called Britain high school, then that's where, I went there. She and the headmaster fought, she threatened to hit him. <i>A war at school</i> <i>She thought it was reasonable to expect that she would be kicked out for threatening the head. "obviously" She had some shared values</i>
	Friction at home		She had a reason for being violent, she needed help because she was being bullied
	Fights at school		<u>Did the teachers know she was being bullied? Bullied at school and beaten at home.</u>
	Friction at school		
	Going to school = leaving mum		
	Prioritising her	Then I got kicked out of there because I was getting bullied and no one was sorting out.	

3.16.4. Searching for connections across themes

In this stage, as shown in Boxes 3 and 4 below, the themes that have emerged were grouped according to the meanings that they had in common. This stage is where I chose what I thought of as 'landmark' ideas, anchored in participants scripts, that reflected key aspects of their experiences. As these similarities were drawn together through themes, the structure which emerged conveyed new deep and powerful meanings which I could never have been previously identified. Some themes gravitated towards each other, while others lay waiting for me to decide what to do with them. It was hard to let go of some ideas that neither conveyed a similar pattern strongly enough nor stood out in their own right.

I felt in awe of the process as I watched more connections of parts emerge and saw how this deepened my interpretation of the whole. Using the process of "abstraction" and "subsumption" (Smith, 2009, p 96) I linked emergent themes or re-positioned a theme to take on a superordinate role. Now, moving the data around, writing out different theme headings on paper and repositioning them again, a more definite form

emerged which consolidated the deeper meanings and concepts which I felt were of the greatest significance.

Box 3. Example superordinate themes with subthemes

1. School is complicated

- a) Relationship to education changes
- b) Violence – she becomes violent and aggressive, physically and through language at school
- c) No support – she’s treated separate to her context, only one teacher in the whole school supports her.
- d) A battleground – She must defend herself ; The headmaster withdrew her only much needed privilege
- e) Going to school means leaving mum at home
- f) Mind elsewhere , at home, on need to protect or care, on inner world
- g) GCSE’s out of reach
- h) Alienated by no value of school for the future, behind in class
- i) Education becomes important and school has a shared value
- j) Education is the key to future

2. Trouble at home

- a) Violence, living in violent relationships, dad beats mum and beats the kids and threatens to kill mum
- b) Emotional abuse, language at home is violent
- c) No support in life at home, mum is unreachable in her own depression, dad beats everyone and has an affair and moves out; emotional and physical; living with violent relationships
- d) no love , neglected
- e) a protector and carer, needing to look after mum
- f) broken family
- g) life threatening
- h) fearful

3. Being Rescued

- a. New connections
- b. Education becomes an active goal
- c. Religion appears
- d. A new me

3. An Inner world ; a Struggling Self

- a) Not feeling valued by others
- b) An assertion of self- (value)
- c) A misunderstood self
- d) Living in an emotional void
- e) A knowing self and not- knowing self
- f) A caring self, she cares for mum and develops care for self
- g) A protecting self, she protects herself and her mother
- h) An angry self
- i) A loss of self
- j) A confused self
- k) A secret self and hiding self
- l) An isolated self
- m) A terrified self
- n) A detritus, waste, trash, disregarded , unwanted, object/ thing- self
- o) A shifting experience of self in the world
- p) Behaviour is a language of self
- q) A reproaching self

4.. Time changes everything

- a) the old me – how I was
- b) the new me – how I am
- c) the future me – how I want to be

Box 4. Example of developing superordinate themes, line number and words and phrases

20 SEXUAL ABUSE

971. He was very abusive. He sexually abused me when I was 12 years old

979 My dad, he's a horrible person a pedo, what else... was physically abusive, verbally abusive, emotionally abusive and ahh...

1019 "and like he told me to sit down on his lap and then like there was a little bit of the fight and all the time is still saying something like now you're my flesh and blood, here my son, of course I love you. And I'm very overwhelmed, and I am 12.....

1041 "as he's doing that taking his hand there, trying to slide it down towards my groin and I'm like, so I remember I put one hand down on top of it, and he's obviously older and stronger so his force was stronger so then I put both hands and like, I just, I couldn't stop it ..."

21 NEGLECTED/ NO PARENTAL RELATIONSHIP/ MALEVOLENT HOME/ MALEVOLENT SCHOOL

598 "Yeah all the time, throughout my whole childhood [HE'D HIT ME]."

1290 "The headmaster, he was like, the head of institution, he was like, you should have seen the smile on his face, he was so happy that he had gotten rid of me".

645 "so that's just what kind of person she is. She is in her own world".

but she's not very responsive 651

like people they can say words and they can see meaningful words and deep emotional words but it doesn't actually mean anything to them. 668

"She's very superficial so it's all very fake and she got her own agenda, she just wants to do her own thing and that's all that matters to her" 674

"that's what she would say but do nothing about it, so that means she was very superficial. She would say things but mean nothing 730

So it was just like, you can't...these people can't relate to you, they're just in a different place, they're just somewhere else". 749

1063 "actually in the middle of it all a family friend walked in, made eye contact with me, made eye contact with my dad and just walked out

1131 "she actually asked Rabbi, she spoke to Rabbi about it [his dad sexually abusing him] the next day or something and he said 'yeah just forget about it and it will all be okay'. And that, that's what she did

1076 "No one is ever spoken to me about it, like if a man, especially your dad, touches your balls, or your penis, no one spoke about it it's just so unheard-of, no one spoke about it.

22 CULTURAL/ SOCIAL VALUES

"And all that matters to them is the **reputation**. 754

"Yeah if they were to report that they knew that the teacher was abusive, *they'd get a bad name* and that *means* that nobody would want to affiliate themselves with them and *no one* would to *do business* with my dad and, like, like you know what I mean, it would just escalate from *bad to worse*. 768

23. GOALS AND TOWARDS A DIFFERENT FUTURE

44. "so obviously my education isn't as good as it meant to be but I'm working on that now".

1243 "Music I like music and I'm working on recording music. I'm *actually* doing it in the studio here. So that's *obviously* one of my goals. Life coaching, it's one of my goals as well"

3.16.5. Moving to the next case

At first I found it difficult to bracket the influence of the previous case. Similarities pulled my mind back to the first case like magnets. As Smith describes "you will inevitably be influenced by what you have already found" (Smith, 2009, p. 100), however, as I stuck closely to the detail and rigour of the method and repeatedly went over the words and

language of the next case, I found points of divergence as well as convergence which assisted me to 'leave the first case behind' to the best of my ability and each analysis took on its own shape, enabling "new themes to emerge with each case" (ibid, p.100). Critical but constructive discussions with my supervisor and colleagues helped me work through this process. I analysed each case and organised them into superordinate themes and subthemes, accumulating great stacks of paper as I wrote, re-wrote and shuffled themes around until they made complete sense.

3.16.6. Looking for patterns across cases

Carrying out the same process I completed my analysis for all participants and then organised them into overarching themes and subthemes. Themes began to emerge as "higher order" concepts (Smith, 2009, p.101). I moved back and forth between the whole and the particular as I used quotes and returned to the text to ensure that I was "grounded" in it and that I had not "imported" any interpretation (ibid, p.105). The following Box 5 illustrates superordinate themes for all participants.

Box 5. Superordinate themes for all participants.

Malevolence At Home

Chimi- "Yeh, like growing up, there had been a fight for years... Yeah, he had been violent, there had been lots of physical violence" (193)

Mary- "My mum told my dad to be quiet or something and my dad was cutting up some food with a really sharp knife. My dad pinned my mum to the wall and threatened to stab her while us kids were sat there." (117)

Harry – "My dad is a narcissistic paedophile who raped my sister and got away with it and this all came out, my sister went to the police" (196)

- "between the ages of six and 11, and when I didn't go to learn with him he usually got quite angry and he would pick me up and threw me on the ground, kicked me, punch me, smack me, hit me with his belt, everything in the book" (1091)

Peter - "between me and my mum, at 15 years old, it was chaotic, it was horrendous, I don't really want to talk about it, that much. all I'm going to say is it was really horrendous, they had the crisis team out," 498

- "my sister had a different dad and she didn't, she never saw him and I grew up and I had a father but he, he weren't well...he was messed up on drugs and all kinds of things, then he passed away" (199)

Bea – "I got taken off my parents when I was, like, two. Mums got mental health problems and she's an alcoholic as well, she's basically forget she's got a kid in the house. I was basically neglected, my dad was in prison my whole life so I never got to see him anyway (160)

Lazer – "They didn't want me as part of the family, they, yes you are part of the family but you can be like a family friend and come and visit every once in a while but you're not really part of our family are not what we want you're bad influence for the rest of the kids" (316)

Carly – "... neglected and not fed and stuff like that from my mum and my mum was always like, doing drugs, and, umm, sleeping with different men and not really taking care of me" (92)

"I used to just like, hide myself away. Into cupboards and stuff like that and I'd stay in there because I used to get scared or I'd run under the bed. Any time that I heard like someone coming up the stairs" (173)

Chaos At School

Chimi - "The headmaster, he was like, the head of institution, he was like, you should have seen the smile on his face, he was so happy that he had gotten rid of me" (712)

Mary - "Then I got kicked out of there because I was getting bullied and no one else was sorting out"

Harry - "Well, I never got along with any of the teachers, really even my uncle was one of the teachers, I didn't get on with him he hated me as well. I don't know why I don't... a lot of the things I got in trouble for I didn't actually do" (30)

Peter - "I had no heart or desire to do anything in class, I didn't feel... the only way for me to be comfortable was to get excluded, to get sent home because I didn't wanna be at school. I needed a reason to go home" (80)

Bea – "she made this massive issue about me being adopted and she picked up a whiteboard and threw at me so it smacked me in the eye and I've got a scar here from where it smacked me and I flipped. I ran across the table at her, just started punching her and punching her, the teachers come to get me off and I thought it was a student right, so I thought I don't care get off me, punched them as well" (206)

Lazer – "he was king of the class, whatever he said that's the way it was so he used to bully me a lot and because he bullied me everybody else bullied me and then I tried, I started stealing money from my parents, from my dad, I used to buy a lot of candy and I tried, like, to bribe the kids to be my friends" (210).

"At school they were violent. I had a teacher threatened me, to throw me out of the window, to throw me down the steps, I had teachers that used to hit me with sticks a lot, or just punish me

for no good reason. And I wasn't a bad boy I just didn't pay attention in class because it didn't make sense (495)

Carly – “ I used to grab like girls off the chairs that I didn't like, even if they wasn't looking at me and I thought, felt like they was looking at me, my anxiety might start playing in, and then I would basically get up and I would smash their head” (78)

The Shift

Chimi - “I was taking pretty much anything, I was just trying to forget about all the pain and stuff. (906) - So you have to invest the energy that you want, like invest the effort that you want them to change in yourself “(930)

Mary - “Because I'm thinking that if I'm able to sit there and look after somebody and concentrate on what they need I should be able to sit and concentrate on what I need. That's what it was and that's what kicked me in the backside basically” (281)

Harry - “The fact that I've always wanted to have a life, and have a family, I ended up telling myself I have to get hold of this somehow” (497) “

Peter – “and I was purposely breaching my youth offending order, purposely pulling off my tag, purposely not turning up, because I actually understood that while I'm still 17, umm, I can get locked up, get used to eating properly, get the education because it be there, get the support I needed so I purposely at the time, got myself locked away because at the time the stability there was better than it was for the out” (550)

Bea – “And then, in August I moved in with this foster placement and now my life is just finally going up a little bit, but it's still like, my head is still spinning with everything I've been through, but, it is getting there slowly” (519).

Lazer – “everybody needs family and everybody wants their family to accept them but at the moment I'm at the point where I realise there's nothing I can do about it so I might as well just carry on my life and be happy with the times I do see them and just not cry about it because what's the point. Yes I can be a druggie and I can, I can try to run away from it, but I decided to try and deal with it, just learn how to not care (288)

Carly – “last year, I was 16, that's when I got put into hospital and basically I don't know I just changed. I felt like I needed to change because I couldn't be putting myself back in hospital like that” (543)

Under Construction: A New Me

Chimi – “So, yeah I'm quite ashamed of because it's wrong but that's in the past”.

Mary- “I changed my life so much. Like before I was going out drinking all the time and now it's like, if a man talks to [me] I'm like “you do know that there is no sex before marriage” “859

Harry- “I built up grew a lot, started studying, feeling less angry, feeling less upset, learning how to deal with things” (511)

Peter – “So right now I’m still in a tug of war but I’m trying to sort myself out, but I’ve come magnificently far” (958)

Bea – “And then, I sort of think, yeh, now, I have had that sort of a past, but what’s to say... the futures going to be different. Now, fair enough I’ve had seventeen years that’s such a bad life, but what, I’ve got another 83 years possibly? ... “My mechanism is punching someone in the face, which I do need to deal with (1120)

Lazer – “it left me with a lot of social anxiety to deal with which was really hard to overcome ... because I’m afraid. Now the past few weeks I’ve been trying to work on that to start talking to people and everything, that’s why, a few weeks ago I would never have talked to you, honestly, just a few weeks, but now I’m, I’ve decided, I’m, no matter what, I’m working on it to talk to people and try to work on my social, social issues” (1072)

Carly – “I feel I can make something in my life and then I didn’t. I used to feel like there’s nothing there for me but now I feel there is something, I’ve got a goal and I’m gonna make it that’s how I see it” (720)

Looking Back At My Behaviour

Chimi - “Before I was just existing, a reactor” (1035)

Mary- “I had a lot of trouble at home which compacted with school and I didn’t want to go to school, I didn’t want to leave my mum, and things like that, so, and then when I went to school I didn’t go to any classes, and then, they just kicked me out of there (25)

“And my dad... it [the violence] was what I was used to” (430)

Harry – “I’ve just adapted to life. I’ve just grown, I guess, because from what I did then, I’ve now grown to who I am now. It was a learning curve ... I feel if I had the knowledge that I had now and I was 11 and I was put in that situation I feel I could have dealt with it a lot better (1348)

Peter – “I’d built up, due to everything that happened, you know when it’s over a certain number of years, it’s all built up, it’s still in your head and it’s not been let out, that’s where everything just comes from... [I always thought] stupid, my fault. I’m weird, it’s all my fault, I’m disgusting, I shouldn’t have the chance to live, those sorts of things.” 702. “there’s nothing worse than not being cared about” 842

Bea – “I wouldn’t have all this anger, because If she’d gave me the right attention that the child’s supposed to have, I wouldn’t have gone to school getting mad because I had such a bad night at home with my mum. I’ve got to take it out on someone, and then someone’s pushed my buttons, because that is what it is, a bad day, go home have another bad day, go home coming to school next morning and I’ve not forgotten what happened last night, it’s still in my mind and I want to take it out on someone else” (1172)

Lazer – “Because they rejected me, and because of the rejecting I used to get “you’re not worth anything” so I might as well just party and enjoy life and do nothing ... they anyways think I’m worth nothing, I might as well do it, no one is anyways expecting anything from me so I might as well do it, why should I work on, on giving them things” (529)

Carly –“ I still look at school now and I think school couldn't help me as much as this place this place understands me an' that place didn't understand me, it didn't accept my needs, it didn't accept the fact that I went into care, the fact that I tried killing myself the fact that...”(781)

4. The Findings: IPA

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I present an illustrative analysis of the findings in the following order:

- a summary table of participant's demographic information sourced directly from the interviews
- an overview of the five IPA superordinate themes and sub-themes
- a description of the background differences between secular and non- secular participants
- an idiographic description of each participant's lifeworld through keywords
- an overview of blending IPA and SEA
- a detailed analysis of each participant's lifeworld using superordinate and subordinate themes

Table 1. Demographic summary of participants

Name & Age of Participant	Bea 17	Carly 18	Mary 18	Peter 18	Chimi 21	Harry 17	Lazer 18
Next of Kin	Social services	Social services	parent	Social services	parent	parent	parent
Forced to leave home	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Living With	Foster carer	Foster carer→Self	Mum & siblings	Foster carer→self	Self	Mum & Sibling	Self
Suicide attempted	yes	yes	yes	yes	N/A	N/A	yes
Physical abuse at home	Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Sexual abuse at home	no	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
Neglect at home	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Approximate exclusions	4	4	5	3	unclear	2	3
Main abuser	mother	mother	father	mother	father	father	father
Secular school & community background	yes	yes	yes	yes	/	/	/
Non-secular school and community background	/	/	/	/	yes	yes	yes

Table 2. Overview of Themes

SUPER-ORDINATE THEME 1 MALEVOLENCE AT HOME	SUPER-ORDINATE THEME 2 CHAOS AT SCHOOL	SUPER-ORDINATE THEME 3 THE SHIFT	SUPER-ORDINATE THEME 4 UNDER CONSTRUCTION: A NEW ME	SUPER-ORDINATE THEME 5 LOOKING BACK AT MY BEHAVIOUR
Living with Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Oppression	Terrible Relationships with Teachers	Giving Up	New Relationships with Myself and Others	Behaviour: A Sign to the World
Forsakenness, Abandonment and Loss	Hell is Other Pupils	A Change of Heart	New Plans	
Trust is an Issue	Different, Horrible, Alone, Apart		The Future: A Life Worth Living	

4.2. The differences in background between two of the three ultra-orthodox Jewish participants and the other participants

Unexpectedly the findings revealed that the circumstances which brought Chimi and Lazer to the point of exclusion were different from other participants from secular schools and charities, and from Harry who also belonged to an orthodox Jewish community.

Chimi and Lazer were at the mercy of what Lazer described as religious “cult”³ behaviour of their schools and communities and the acute intolerance of religious deviation from their families’ norm. Their pathways to exclusion were due, like all other participants, to their relationships with their parents, but unlike other participants there was the added phenomenon of religious rules which had to be adhered to, at all costs, even if it meant the loss of the children from the families. Chimi and Lazer had exhibited curiosity and openly questioned the religious rules which their families followed. The development of their refusal to conform ultimately led to exclusion from their families. In spite of these differences, the analysis of the data revealed that their emotional experiences of exclusion followed similar expressions and patterns as the other participants over time, space, the four worlds and their tensions and polarities. These points of convergence and divergence were elucidated through the quotes and discussion throughout the analysis.

These differences were striking in that they were extreme, and they were unexpected because the phenomenon of being evicted from home and ostracised and excluded by ultra-orthodox Jewish community schools had not appeared in the literature. In fact, on my return to the literature after analysing the data and writing the findings, my search still found nothing on exclusion from ultra-orthodox community schools. I did come across one paper about the ultra-orthodox Jewish community’s reluctance to seek mental health help from professionals outside of the community (Loewenthal, 2006), a book written as result of a doctoral thesis on Chasidic Jews and their search

³ Lazer interview Line 525

beyond the unhappy restrictions of their communal lives (Winston, 2005) and a smattering of newspaper clips including one on an ultra-orthodox women being banned from driving due to the religious rules of the community (Faredi, 2016).

I feel it is important to clarify these differences and similarities a little further as they were an important background to both Lazer's and Chimi's stories, although, rather than diluting or diminishing their places in the themes, they strengthened them. For all participants it emerged from the findings that the origins of their exclusion behaviour were in their abusive and dysfunctional family situations and the effect of this was played out in the school environment and across participants' worldly dimensions.

Lazer and Chimi's families were united in their embrace of the religious rules of the communities and the schools, and they and the schools, enforced these rules and their reverence for religion on the two participants. This oppositional stance was to the detriment of their relationships with their children, Lazer and Chimi, ending in their eventual expulsion from their families, schools and communities.

Harry, the third Jewish participant, did not have the same circumstances regarding conformity as Lazer and Chimi, although he experienced, as did all participants, ostracism from his extended family, and, like Chimi and Lazer, from his community. However, Harry's ostracism from his religious community was due to the reaction of his community to his father's rape of his sister, which had become public. Harry's community did not want the circumstances to become public and so they took the side of the majority of Harry's family, which was to shun his sister, his mother and himself, rather than acknowledge the sexual misdemeanours of the father. It emerged from the data that these Jewish participants were ostracised from their communities as they were felt to be a threat to the religious integrity of the community or a threat to the public religious image of their families. These non-familial but coercive and binding religious relationships not exist for any participants from secular communities.

Notwithstanding these differences, I believe the congruence and fit of the themes that emerged for all participants supports the fit of this phenomenological approach to research and illuminates the importance of understanding emotions and their link to one's values, rather than to the situation one finds oneself in.

Smith et al, describe two ways of presenting IPA findings, firstly by presenting the “case within theme” (Smith et al, 2009, p.109) thus taking the theme first and then using data from participants to support the theme, or secondly by taking the “theme within case” where the researcher prioritises the participant and presents the themes for each participant together. I have chosen the former, illustrating each theme separately as Smith says this presents a more organised and easier to read representation of the data. Smith also encourages the researcher to be creative in her process and presentation, to find her own way to do justice to the data and to make use of the “considerable variation” (ibid, p. 109) which such a project offers. This flexibility inherent in IPA, highlights what Eatough and Smith (2010, p. 179) describe as the “dynamic nature of the research process”. To this end I present ‘keywords’ as idiographic representations of each participant. I begin my presentation of the findings with these tables of keywords for each participant. I then present each theme with its related subthemes using quotes to illuminate and support the discussion of the themes.

In the world of school, behaviour tends to be received at face value and treated separately from the lifeworld of the pupil. My findings point to the fallacy of such an approach. I hope that this analysis will enable the reader to feel like an insider, familiar with the detail of participants’ experiences and able to get a feel for their lives, while gaining an understanding of the emotions that motivate participants’ behaviour as they live them.

In response to my first open question about exclusion, participants very quickly started talking about their home life and it soon became crystal clear that their exclusions were less about school and more about their everyday lives at home that brought them to the point of exclusion.

Mary’s teacher asked her why she was crying: *“What are you crying for?”*

And Mary tried to explain *“and I used to, like, tell em”*

Mary’s teacher said *“I told you what’s just gone off at home, is at home. When you come here it’s a different place” 524.*

And Mary explained to me: *“Yeah, but like, that thought is still there” 526.*

This research endeavours to do what Mary's teachers advised her against. To bring to light those hidden home lives and their shattering impact so that the reader may fully understand what really accompanied these participants to school.

4.3. Keywords: Idiographic Representations

Below I present tables of words from each transcript which I call Keywords. These illustrate, at a glance, each participant's lifeworld growing up at home and school. They explicate in a simple way the intense predicament driving the behaviour of the participants. Each table presents a picture which is made up of many parts, affording the reader a panoramic view of the participant's life. By using individual words, my intention is specifically *not* to restrict the readers imagination, nor at this stage, define or interpret participants' experience.

I felt that the meanings construed from reading the words conveys a wholeness of their experience that participants do not have the possibility to portray to others in their everyday lives, for example, people at home cannot understand the participant at school, teachers cannot understand participants' lives at home, etc. In reality the influence of parental relationships seems to remain partially, if not wholly, hidden, yet here, the table of keywords allows the reader to grasp and intuit connections between the lifeworld and behaviour of the participants.

The tables emerged as I engaged with each transcript, time and again trying to capture essences during the initial stages of analysis and exploring concepts. "Qualitative analysis is inevitably a personal process" (Smith, 2008, p. 67) and while following Smith's (Smith et al, 2009) steps of analysis I found these keywords gave me clarity, highlighting and organising the noemata, or objects of consciousness (Husserl, 1937) and at the same time fusing them to create an idiographic presentation of each participant (Smith et al, 2009). They helped me grasp intentionality (Husserl, 1927) in the participant's lifeworld and essences of relationships across all four worlds of existence bringing me closer to participants' emotions and existential tensions (van Deurzen, 2009, 2014b, 2019). As a collection of words, they gave depth and form to my first understanding of the participants in their "own proper mode of being" (Husserl, 1931, loc. 1498) thus nurturing an insight which "is itself not to be understood as

empirical but as essential possibility” (ibid, loc.12). For these reasons I offer them to help the reader know each participant.

Table 3. Being Bea

Bea growing up	hospital	no trust	knocked out	father	youth offending
neglected	social services	living in care	battered	teacher	school bad
adopted	abuse	no friends	won't stop	alone	unsafe
beaten	broken bones	separate	jumped me	flip	going mental
uncontrollable	crutches	arrested	feeling different	police	moving schools
retribution	anger	overpowered	dad gone	trapped	giving up
disappointment	hopeless	pushed downstairs	wanting attention	scared	bully
survival	death	unwanted	danger	father prison	I'm damaged
dad beats mum	crying	worthless	bad self	rejected	overdose
unworthy	black inside	cruelty	strangling	scars	punching
unwanted	cold hearted	alcoholic mum	behaviour	loss	stabbing

Table 4. Being Mary

Mary growing up	moving school	trouble at home	moving home	bullied	no help
rubbish behaviour	hospital	running home	dad beating mum	witness beatings	knives
stabbing	throwing chairs	school is prison	can't concentrate in school	threats to kill us	dad set house on fire
dad beats mum	mum unstable	care for mum	violence at home	dad threatens to kill mum	getting a beating
hiding under the bed	beat them up	pinpointed with blame	slaps teachers	punches others	no understanding
teachers don't care	punishment	social services	lash out	verbal violence	I'd threaten to kill
talk to no one	isolated	no trust	abuse is secret	arguing with mum	violent anger
men are trouble	bad and sad self	horrible anger	neglected by mum	beaten by dad	feels small
shit upbringing	no one understands	running out of class	self-harm	suicide	overdose
scars	hurt	anger	upset	beat my dad	keeping silent

Table 5. Being Peter

Peter growing up	different from others	social care	children's home	neglected	giving up
in care	excluded	top worst	always in trouble	overall life bad	needing help
off the rails	running round and round	changing schools	no stability for me	no one cared	hide from people
bullying	left out	anxiety	left alone	police	custody
hopeless	mum didn't bother	no support	different dads	messed up family	anger
uncontrolled	breaking things	causing harm	throwing stones	desperate to be cared for	my fault
no food	dad drug addict	dad hit mum	mum in crack house	can't speak, no words	smashing things
violence	hitting me	survival	setting fire	no sleep	suicide
hurting staff	isolated	lonely	hurting others	crisis	homeless
mum put me in care	missing school	youth offending order	no help	drugs	alien at school
emotional distress	threatening to stab	shame	I'm disgusting	everything my fault	I'm a monster

Table 6. Being Carly

Carly growing up	taken into care	lost all hope	I'm nothing	feeling trapped	scared of people
dad attacks mum	swearing	violent	aggressive	hated school	fighting
ugly me	not fed	kicking off	beating people up	throwing chairs	smashing their heads
neglected	beaten child	hospital	mum arrested	head smashed	horse whipped
mum sick weirdo	mum disabled	drugs	different dads	mum in a bubble	different men coming home
witness violence	hiding under bed	shouting	screaming	social services	attacked mum
sexual abuse	police	prison	wrecked life	disowned	evil me
slap everyone	slap teachers	no care about anything	hated people	bully others	moving care homes
violence	drugs	foster homes	got arrested	petrol-bombed	police records
alcoholic parents	violent mum	dad cheating on mum	mum cheating on dad	tied up	rebellion
lose my temper	suicide	isolated	alone	jumped from high	abusive relationships
	no trust	emotional hurt	broken family	hopeless	loss of grandpa
self-harm	wanting to die	rape	juvenile prison	no one listened to me	worthless me

Table 7. Being Lazer

Lazer growing up	moving yeshiva ⁴	kicked out of home	kicked out of community	forced to leave home	begging to be accepted
school is jail	surveillance	closed community	have to conform	kicked out for hair style	bad influence
go from home	rejected nowhere to go	rebel	taking drugs	no family	isolated at home
can't come back	suicide		running away	smoking	teachers bullied me
I'm worthless	I'm bad influence	I'm unloved	I'm a piece of shit	living by rules	no choices
ashamed of me	stay away from community	punished in the next world	shame on the family	teachers beat me	mum sick
mum not there	mum in hospital	years alone	dad cares for others	neglect	no adult home
not knowing what's wrong	where's mum	suicide	religion extreme	don't understand religion	religion doesn't make sense
leave the family	school unsafe	home unsafe	bribing kids to be friends	all alone	desperate to belong
needing friends	sad life	no one to talk to	neglected	family not respect for me	family not accept me
abnormal life	going to hell	locked in	trapped	no escape	starve to death
thief	lies	no friends	violent teachers	alone at school	the end of everything

⁴ Yeshiva is a religious Jewish school

Table 8. Being Harry

Harry growing up	humiliated by teachers	hated by everyone	"I didn't do that"	not wanting to go to school	alone
not understanding	always in trouble	teachers hated me	looking guilty	"leave now"	I'd sit on the end
dad paedophile	refused to teach me	no friends	couldn't communicate	problems at home	violence
beaten and thrown	unsafe home	unsafe school	sleepless	sister raped	sobbing
running away from school	trapped in school	kids joked about rape	police	horrible world	forced to grow up
alienated by community	angry state of mind	destructive self	hide in bed	done for forever	smoking weed
drinking	screaming mum	nobody cared	can't listen	see red	can't hear
violent anger	explosive temper	no boundaries	dad beat me up	throw me	punch me
belt me	smack me	violence is normal	locked out	homeless	hiding from dad
hide what's wrong	cutting loose	very stuck	enraged	angry	go mad with anger

Table 9. Being Chimi

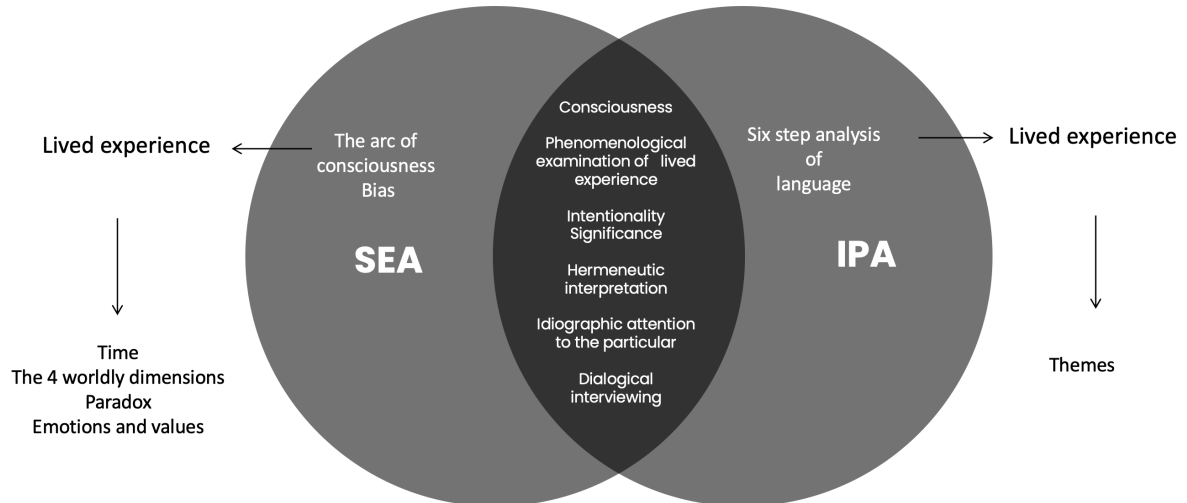
Chimi growing up	mad fights at home	intense at home	overwhelmed	leave home now	unsafe at home and school
extreme religion	religious school	moving school	i was different	they looked down on me	i question why
homeless	dad keeps beating me	black sheep	knives protect	fights all the time	violence second nature
hurt you badly	beat everyone	ashamed	unconscious	ballistic	no friends
police	community	ambulance	rage	hatred	being ignored
i'm the strongest	mum lives in a bubble	please don't hit me	mum is fake	teachers slapped my face	teachers abusive
community pretend	no emotional support	hiding the truth	reputation important	antagonise everyone	rebellion
bullies	enraged	sexually abused	confused	religious education forced	no phone allowed
people cheat on you	paranoid	dad is gay	mum has affairs	nowhere to go	lots of drugs
keep separate from family	sleep all day up all night	lost	war with family	don't follow the rules	kicked out of home

Table 10. Blending IPA and SEA

In this chapter I present my interpretation of the data using IPA and in the following chapter I present my interpretation using SEA.

Although I have discussed these two methods in detail in chapter 3, I set out below in the following diagram, the similarities and differences between these two methods. I hope that this visual representation of the overlapping and separate facets involved will enhance the readers understanding of the similarities and differences between the processes carried out within these two methods and their different articulations of the data.

Research Methods



4.4. Superordinate Theme1- Malevolence at Home

4.4.1. Living with Violence, Abuse and Neglect

Malevolence describes the overarching theme of what it was like for these participants to be living at home. Understanding synonyms for malevolence provides the reader with a wider perspective of what these participants endured growing up in their families: this includes malice, spite, ill will, bitterness, venom, rancour, maliciousness, malignity, ill nature, vindictiveness, cruelty and nastiness (Oxford dictionary, online). For each participant at least one or both parents' behaviour fell within this descriptive category and the intensity and duration of the behaviour was overwhelmingly disturbing to them. This behaviour impacted participants to their very core and its consequences were manifest across all themes.

The word home refers to a physical place where one lives. The association that generally goes with it is that home is a place to relax and feel comfortable, a place where a person can expect to feel safe. For these participants, home was neither a place of sanctuary nor refuge, for some it threatened their very survival and for all, it restricted their personal development, impeding their relationships on all four worldly dimensions. Participants' homes were, as Peter described, plagued by "*domestic family problems... an unsettled environment...not somewhere I can live*" 145 Peter.

Bea was born into a violent and neglectful home life and had been taken away from her birth mother when she was two:

"Somehow, we still don't know to this day how I fell down the stairs, but I fell down the stairs and the social services seen it as an alcoholic woman, kids falling down the stairs, she's got anger problems and mental health problems, they seen it that she pushed me down the stairs, so they took me off her" 400 Bea.

She was then put into a foster home but her life with her adoptive mother also turned out to be one of violence and abuse:

"Yeah I got punched in the face last night because I was five minutes late for home," 614 Bea

And she felt her mother sometimes attacked her out of the blue:

"I had a fight with my adoptive mum because basically I was just sat here one time, she ran at me, like to the point where she'd smack my head off the radiator, she'd snap a part of a bed, put it at my throat and tell me she's gonna kill me with it..." 237 Bea

It was not until she was sixteen that the police caught her mother in the act:

"As soon as I walk through the front door my mum is obviously there, she ran at me, sort of strangling me in front of the police officer saying she was going to kill me" 263 Bea.

And the police discovered the extent to which she had been abused: *"they've looked over my whole body and I'm covered in cuts and bruises"* 258 Bea. After that, at the age of seventeen her best friend's family took her in while social services looked for another family for Bea to go to. After this, she had finally been found a foster family where, for the very first time in her life, at seventeen years old, she felt accepted, happy and safe.

Mary's home life was also plagued by violence, abuse, neglect and fear. Her mother was mentally ill and unstable but it was her father who was violent and abusive:

"My mum is mentally unstable. We've had drama after drama, my mum has depression, schizophrenia, bipolar and borderline. My dad has bipolar so it's just been an up-and-down family and like, for the past, like, since 2001 really" 262 Mary.

Mary had a brother and sister of the same parents and a half-sister with the same father. Dad would beat mum and the children. Mary was often made to watch her father beat her mother:

"My dad was beating my mum and we had to sit and witness that so, like, the first time it happened I was about three or four...if we didn't sit there we got the belt, if we moved, we got the belt" 104 Mary.

Her memory was etched with fearful images of her father's violence:

"We were all in the kitchen eating our tea and my mum told my dad to be quiet or something and my dad was cutting up some food with a really sharp knife. My

dad pinned my mum to the wall and threatened to stab her while us kids were sat there” 116 Mary.

And the times when his violence was directed towards her, she used to try to run away and hide:

“...within thirty seconds he came up with a leather belt and he hit me round the head with it because that’s the only place he could get to because I was hiding under the bed... and he just slung it under, under the bed. I’ve got like a scar, I’ve got no hair on one part of my head where he, you can tell where it’s happened, because he hit me with the metal end, it went in my head, and then my mum had to lie and say that I jumped on the sofa and say that I’d cut it that way because he said if she ever told the truth then she’d know about it” 355 Mary.

Peter grew up in a broken and abusive family. His mother was a drug addict and had lived in a crack house before he was born. His father, who was also “messed up” (201) on drugs, used to hit his mother and sister: *“he used to hit my mum and stuff and my sister” 323*. Peter put his dad’s violent temper down to the effect of drugs: *“my dad started to go crazy because of the drugs” 359*. When Peter was nine his father died from drug misuse and he missed him terribly. His absence was exacerbated by his mother’s hostile behaviour which Peter felt targeted him as the cause of all her problems. She would constantly tell him: *‘oh you’re just like your dad’ 1340*, and she hit Peter incessantly. He was scared of her anger and violence towards him and tried to protect himself:

“She used the belt and stuff.... I would say that I had it severe and I got scared and that’s all I’m gonna say...I used to run behind the table, umm, at one point I got so angry I pulled a knife out. I can’t remember how old I was. I threatening to stab my mum and my sister but I didn’t and obviously that was just to get them away” 676 Peter.

Peter believed his mother always wanted rid of him as each time they fought she would call social services: *“I didn’t have an intimate relationship, never got on with my mum, always had problems with my mum” 206*. Desperate for his mother’s love but cornered in a world of violence because of her volatility, Peter became destructive. One day he was playing with matches and set a tissue on fire, his mother smelled burning:

“She tried to say that I attempted to burn her kitchen, I really didn’t, and then as soon as social heard that they came rushing back in and took me away basically and put me in the care” 417 Peter.

Carly also grew up in a household deeply affected by drugs, violence, sex and neglect. Her father left home in a violent way when she was four: “[Dad] walked out my life, he petrol bombed my house, like, my mom’s house when I was younger and got arrested and started a new family” 415 Carly.

After dad left, mum turned to drugs and other men and Carly and her siblings were abused and badly neglected:

“I used to get beat up as a child, and I got neglected and not fed and stuff like that from my mum and my mum was always like, doing drugs and umm, sleeping with different men and not really taking care of me and my brother and my sister” 92

Carly was terrified of her mother and of her mother’s boyfriends, who often hit her. She was also sexually abused:

“I’ve had my head smashed off tables, I’ve had it smashed off like door frames (small laughs), that smacks! She used to have a whip thing she’d burn and strip, like the like ends of it, like a horse whip and she used to hit me with that.” 111 Carly.

“Any time that I heard like someone coming up the stairs which wasn’t my sister and my brother because they used to, they’ve got like, they used to walk normally, you could hear when he was walking up the stairs and it was loud and shouting and screaming and that’s just how it was, I used to, I just hid... I used to hide myself away because I knew...” 175 Carly.

“I got sexually touched up by my mum’s ex-partner when I was little as well” 241. Carly was moved into care but the abuse continued:

“I used to get beat up. When I first moved into care they move me from violence. Get this shit, they move me from violence and put me back into violence ok, so, I got moved by violence and drugs and the place that I moved into was, the people was beating up and smoking weed” 306 Carly.

Chimi grew up in an ultra-orthodox Jewish family feeling he was the “black sheep” (94) because he questioned the strict religious regime continually wanting to understand why the rules had to be followed so strictly. He preferred to be more relaxed in his approach towards the daily prayers instead of going to pray at fixed times of the day like the rest of his family:

"...so go pray, I'll go late, I don't want to go now. I was like, if God's there it doesn't matter if he's there, he's there the whole time, no?" 121 Chimi.

"If I'm told to do something...I won't just go along with it, I will be, like, 'what is this for? How can anyone benefit from this? No, I'm not going to follow, just string along, no...and I think that's what it was" 98 Chimi.

He presumed that his relaxed approach towards prayer was the reason his father was so violent and antagonistic towards him. *"I was very chilled about it I just wasn't taking it to the intensity that they were. I was very easy-going about it"* 119 Chimi.

He felt his father singled him out from his siblings and he was confused by the extent of his father's perpetual and prolonged hostility towards him: *"It doesn't matter if we have different beliefs, if we have different ways of seeing the world, it was, like, it's okay, you know we're still father son"* 134 Chimi.

"Now you would think that a guy would lose momentum and stamina, you know, after an hour, angry furious, like it just doesn't make sense, like how does this work, this is your kid" 257 Chimi.

But his father would not allow dissension and tried, through violence to quash his lack of obedience:

"... literally mad fights, like, people called the police the whole time, and the people in the community were called the whole time and they had to try and break it off. It was very intense" 201 Chimi.

Chimi tried to avoid the violent fights by going out at night and sleeping all day: *"I thought it would be peaceful, better for everyone, because you know we wouldn't see each other"* 225. When he was about twelve, his father told him he loved him, while sexually abusing him. Chimi had never been told he was loved and wanted to believe him:

"As he's doing that taking his hand there, trying to slide down towards my groin and I'm like, so, I remember I put one hand down on top of it...I couldn't stop it and then like, the same time he's telling me all this stuff which I've never heard before. I'm confused and overwhelmed and yet happy and sad about it, I'm really confused. So that went on for about ten minutes, eventually got down to my balls and started messing with my dick and stuff..." 587 Chimi.

His mother witnessed the years of violence and he thought she also knew about the sexual abuse from a family friend who had fleetingly entered the room at the time, but she never supported Chimi or spoke to him about that or anything else:

“She lives in her own world, she lives in a bubble if you like, it's just, like, she's a very submissive person she's very submissive to my dad, so, she doesn't really have much of a say and that, she's just, not here. It's very difficult to describe” 335 Chimi.

Unexpectedly one night when Chimi was seventeen, his father refused to allow him into the house, forcing him to leave home: *“He was ‘no, you're affecting your younger siblings, your older siblings, you can't have this, this is wrong...you must go now’”* 137 and Chimi had to leave right then.

Harry also grew up in an orthodox Jewish environment suffering severe beatings because he did not want to conform to the religious rituals and rules that his family practiced:

“[my father] usually got quite angry and he would pick me up and throw me on the ground, kick me, punch me, smack me, hit me with his belt, everything in the book” 1078 Harry.

When he was younger Harry believed the beatings were normal because his father told him so: *“He would say this is nothing compared to what I used to get when I was a kid. At the time I was thinking, okay whatever, this is normal”* 1098. Later, reacting to all the problems, he became involved with drugs and what he called *“bad stuff”* 386 Harry, and, like Chimi, he tried to hide from the daily violence by staying in bed and turning day into night. His parents divorced and he and his sister stayed with his father for weekends. His father continued to beat him. When Harry was nine years old he remembered his father locking him in synagogue one night after a beating:

“we went to shul [synagogue]on Friday nights and he wanted me to learn and I didn't want to, he said ‘fine, don't come home’ and he locked me in. I had to climb out of the window...and...I hid upstairs” 1137 Harry.

When Harry's sister was sixteen years old, she revealed that their father had been sexually assaulting her for many years. Harry's father was then given a restraining order and the violence finally stopped. Harry was full of rage and upset. There were

many past events which previously had made no sense and which now fell into place. Harry believed his beatings were inconsequential compared to his sister's abuse. He stopped sleeping and spent his nights tormented, recalling years of incidents that had never made sense until now:

"when it came out I connected it straight away, which, there was quite a lot in my mind, I didn't sleep, I had insomnia for quite a while. I still do. I just deal with it now, I sleep about four hours a night... just thinking of that, connecting all the dots and stuff" 244 Harry

Lazer grew up in an ultra-orthodox Jewish Charedi community where any deviation from the norm was not tolerated. Lazer's mother had been ill from an early age and was often absent from home with no explanation. His father would leave early in the mornings. Lazer recalls from about five years old being left to look after his siblings:

"They wouldn't talk to us. All you know is you wake up in the morning and your mum is again in the hospital...it was kind of messed up. You wake up in the morning, you're a small kid, you have no one to make breakfast for you, my dad...he used to run out a lot, so we had to take care of ourselves" 193 Lazer.

Lazer remembers living in fear that his mother would die:

"I remember thinking the whole time to myself that my mum might die any time and I just might not have a mum at all, umm, it was pretty sad, it was really sad" 230 Lazer

Every time he questioned religious rules he was bullied and threatened by his family that the angel of death would come to him in the next life:

"He says when the Meshiach [Messiah] comes I'll get Malcos [beatings] for every time...I'm a shame to the family and I should remember where I came from because umm, I come from good places and I'm destroying it all, all the hard work they put in" 165 Lazer.

When Lazer was excluded from school, his father, who believed he was a bad influence on his younger siblings, forced him to leave home, sending him to a very strict religious school in New York:

"[it was] like a jail, it was really tough, they would never let us out of the place, we were under 24-hour surveillance, umm, we had cameras in the bedrooms,

even while we were showering there was a guy standing and watching us” 8 Lazer.

4.4.2. Forsakenness, Abandonment and Loss

In this theme title I include the word forsaken as well as abandoned because to forsake a person includes leaving them when it’s wrong to do so: when the person you leave needs you and wants you to stay (Cambridge Dictionary, online). This critical nuance encapsulates a hidden soul-wrenching experience being faced in the everyday lives of the participants:

“Whenever I called them and I wanted to come back home he just told me ‘no, just try a little bit more, just try a bit more, push it’, until it came to a point where [I] just couldn’t any more...and it was already the second time I tried to attempt suicide” 382 Lazer.

Feeling forsaken, unwanted, abandoned and unloved, struck deep to the core of each participant. They also experienced feelings of loss: loss of home, loss of belonging, loss of family who had given them up. No matter how tenuous, tattered and threadbare the strings that attached the participants to the place they call home, their suffering from being pushed out was immense and they were ill equipped to cope. Understanding these experiences gives us a fuller picture of the emotions that accompany these participants to school.

Some participants also experienced loss from the death of a loved one: Megan lost her grandmother and Peter’s father passed away when he was 9 years old. There were, importantly, hidden losses, for example, a loss of self, loss of trust, loss of confidence in people and in any possibility of their lives working out:

“There were times that I thought that there was something wrong with me if not wanting to be like that. And I thought about myself that I’m bad and actually let the bullshit that they were telling me come to me, that I’m worthless, (big sigh) even when I was looking to see for another way I was feeling bad about myself because of what they used to hammer into my brain” 869 Lazer.

Participants lost a feeling of connection with others, especially with family who used to be close. Harry described :*"I had a big family, and now I don't have a family, which is also very painful"* 369 Harry, and Bea explained: *"I was literally on my own in a house, just me, my whole life was just me, I had to depend on myself for everything"* 268 Bea.

These events and experiences all had to be faced alone, with no support from family, friends or teachers, instead, they were surrounded by adversity. These situations evoked feelings of grief, shame, anger and sadness in all participants and contributed to the destructive behaviours which resulted in their exclusion.

Bea's adoptive mum was violent and manipulative throughout her childhood and teenage years. Her adoptive mother, who she had been living with since she was two, had also kept her birth mother's attempts to get in touch a secret, and Bea always thought her birth mother had given her up, never wanting to see her again. She only found out this was untrue when she moved back into residential care at the age of seventeen and was told by a social worker:

"My adoptive mum hadn't told me that my real mum wanted any contact with me, so I am there thinking even my real mum doesn't want me, that's how bad it was, when it was just a lie, she was hiding it from me." 436 Bea.

Bea constantly felt her adoptive mother did not want her and that she was a nuisance. In addition to her violence she would tell Bea how awful she was. One time her adoptive mother took her to the doctor insisting that Bea was schizophrenic. The doctors assured them she was not, and Bea saw this as another attempt to get rid of her *"basically, she wanted me to go there so she didn't have to ... put up with me anymore"* 344 Bea.

One day, after another beating, Bea decided to leave home and recalls the hurtful words of her adoptive mother: *"I've gone to pack a bag and she said, 'right then if you wanna leave, leave, you're not my kid anyway it doesn't matter'. That's how deep it was"* 684 Bea.

Later Bea's adoptive mother told her she missed her and asked her to come back. When Bea returned in the hope that things would be better, they argued again about Bea being able to see her birth mother, and Bea found out why her foster mother had really wanted her to come home:

"It turns out that the only reason in the first place that she wanted me to come home was so she could get her child benefit back. So that literally broke my heart. Like I thought my mum wants me home and then no she wants the money for me so she can have me home, she wasn't bothered about me" 690 Bea.

Bea's father was in prison for most of her life, but some months before I met her, she had been in contact with her father as he had been released. She felt that he was the only person in the world who understood her. Shortly after seeing him again he was involved in a brawl and sent back to prison for attempted murder. Bea felt broken-hearted:

"I must have spent seven months with my dad, my real dad, because he's always in prison and the seven months I have spent with him, that the connection I had with him, is like he's my best friend. He understands me like nobody else understands me. It is really weird. And obviously when he got taken away from the police I was literally so depressed, like, literally, I felt like my life wasn't complete. My dad meant everything to me and he's gone" 458 Bea.

When Mary was little, her mum suffered from depression, schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder and as a result had withdrawn into a world of her own. Mary felt her mother was never able to meet her needs as a child or while she was growing up. Her mother seemed to be an absence throughout her life:

"Like if I ever tried to speak to her in the past, it went through one ear and out the other" 1097 Mary.

Recently Mary had a difficult miscarriage and spent time in hospital but again, had been unable to share the loss with her mother: *"my mum wouldn't have been able to support me, she has mental issues"* 384 Mary.

Two years ago Mary had to abandon her home, where she had grown up for fifteen years, because her family had received death threats from a boy who had previously run over her sister with his motorbike while she was crossing the road with her baby:

"It just impacted our lives massively. We lived in that town, like, fifteen years!"
221 Mary.

She found it sad to reflect on how much she had suffered and what she had lost because of her father's abuse throughout her life:

"I've basically had a shit upbringing, that's what it feels like. Do you know what I mean? Like I've never had my real dad to support me and then when he was there to support me, he supported me in the wrong way, since I was five, I've never had my real dad" 1157 Mary.

Peter's experience of neglect lay like a deep fault line underlying his emotions and affecting him daily: *"my mum didn't understand how to show all that love inside, all that emotion or thought because she didn't have it herself"* 376. His experience of growing up in different care homes had left him with a sense of abandonment:

"Being put in care, being pushed around, it's going to make you feel like you're not cared about and stuff" 650 Peter.

He always believed his mother did not want him and every time he had come back to live at home, she kicked him out. Until, finally when he was sixteen, she kicked him out for good:

"And, umm, when I came 16, my mum couldn't wait for that because then she knew I could legally live independent" 502 Peter.

Peter was tormented by the loss of his mother's care and love. She had refused to be his next of kin:

"They [Youth offending] were the next of kin...because there was not contact with my mum, she wasn't responsible for anything, well she was, but she didn't take none" 177 Peter.

The only person who Peter felt connected to was his father, whom he had lost when he was nine: *"and then that's the one person who has to pass away"* 336 Peter.

Carly was taken into care during her first year of secondary school. At that time, she was completely overwhelmed by the total collapse of her world and the loss of

connection to all that she had. She found the wound of being given up was insufferable, and her behaviour became insufferable for her teachers at school:

*“Well, I got took into care and at that point, I lost all, to cope, like, anything to care about anything, to be honest and I used to hit people, so I was a lot violent, I used to argue with the teachers, swear at the teachers, I kept getting excluded and then one day it was like ‘right I can’t take any more of you, you’re getting permanently excluded’. So I got permanently excluded from that”*¹⁴ Carly.

Utterly shattered by being put in care, she had literally lost her own mind:

*“The fact that it used to bother me, that’s when I got diagnosed with like, I had schizophrenia at that point because that’s when I used to lose my mind, I used to hear things I used to like see things, when I went into care, and it wasn’t obviously there but I don’t have schizophrenia now so that’s good because I don’t want it. Well, like, it was just harsh”*¹⁹³ Carly.

Despite the abuse she endured from her birth mother, Carly still grieved at the loss of her mother when she was taken into care. In her loyalty to her, she attacked her new foster mother when social services put her in a foster family:

*“I’m one daughter, I’m not, nobody else is claiming me and that’s how it felt like, she was claiming me”*³²⁸ Carly.

When she was put in care, Carly’s family had also turned against her. Feeling that her world had been taken away from her, she believed she had been forsaken by everyone.

*“Like my grandad, my grandad just didn’t want to know me anymore. That’s my mum’s dad, my Nan, my mum’s mum, anybody my mum’s side just didn’t want nothing to do with me even my auntie, before that, me and my auntie was so close we could do anything together, but now, she doesn’t care”*⁷⁶⁹ Carly.

Chimi, evicted from his own home, had lost his family. He was forced to leave home even although he desperately didn’t want to. He pleaded with his father to let him stay. In Chimi’s mind they should have been able to weather their religious differences and continue to live together as a family. He told his father:

*“It doesn’t matter if we have different beliefs, if we have different ways of seeing the world, it was, like, it’s okay you know we’re still father-son”*¹³⁵ Chimi.

Callously and suddenly, late one night, Chimi's father forced him to leave home:

"I opened the door and I had the key in my hand and then my dad opens it and says you can't come in. I said what you mean, and he says you just can't come in, just go. And that was it" 161 Chimi.

Chimi had always had a sense of his father's deep anger towards him and that there was something wrong with their relationship. He could never understand why his father was so ferocious and nasty towards him:

"I was literally chased round the house on a Friday afternoon for an hour, an hour, for an hour, an hour... it just doesn't make sense, like how does this work, this is your kid?" 256 Chimi.

Chimi was left with this unanswered question about his dad's feelings towards him, and the pain of his whole family cutting him off and being unable to speak to them anymore: *"There is no relationship with my parents or my siblings"* 129 Chimi.

When Harry learned about his father's rape of his sister, he recognised the sudden sharp loss of the innocent child within him. In that instant he felt far away from that child, and that he would never return:

"It's also because one second you're a kid and the next minute you're forced to grow up into a horrible world that we live in, which is never a good thing" 350 Chimi.

Harry was deeply hurt about the loss of his family, who had chosen to support his father:

"My Mum is one of fifteen, I speak to three of my uncles and that's it, so out of twelve other siblings I speak to three because the rest chose my dad's side, they thought he was innocent and my sister was making up rubbish, they all picked his side. I had a big family and now I don't have a family, which is also very painful" 364 Harry.

In Harry's religious circle the delineation between community and family was blurred, giving community the power to dictate how individuals should behave. After hearing about Harry's sister's court case against her father, Harry's community responded to the publicity of the accusations by ostracising Harry, his mum and his sister:

*"It's not just that, my whole community believed in my dad that he was innocent, they hated my family, my sister"*³⁶² Harry.

The loss of his dad combined with his father's incestual behaviour, and the repudiation Harry experienced by the family and community, had another impact: Harry became displaced from his normal religious values. The anomaly of a religious man whose job it was to perform religious duties for the community every day, turning out to be a paedophile, made him question the fabric of his religion as he faced the contradictions in his religious life:

"Not sure how that works. I'm pretty sure rape is against the Torah." 673 Harry

Lazer was excommunicated by his whole family. They united as a group against him and they were ashamed of his rebellious behaviour which they found threatening. He was deeply distressed and bereft by their ostracism of him:

"They didn't want me as part of the family, they, yes, you are part of the family but you can be like a family friend and come and visit, every once in a while, but you're not really part of our family, you're not what we want, you're bad influence for the rest of the kids" 315 Lazer.

He carried a deep loss of self, shame and worthlessness by the continual denigration from the family and their threats that the angel of death would punish him. They told him:

"Every time you shave it [your side burns] you're going to get 'Malkos'⁵, umm, every time you shave your beard you're going to get five times and every time you shave your head, umm, two, times, that's one of them, and then he told me he is ashamed of me. I'm, I'm a shame to the family and I should remember where I came from because, umm, I come from good places and I'm destroying it all, all of the hard work they put into it" 159 Lazer.

The pain of his family not choosing him over the community was a profound deep sadness that weighed heavily. It was palpable in the deep breaths he drew inwards

⁵ "It's not death, it's like a beating of 39, 39 times beating until you're almost dead and then you recover and then again they do it" 174 Lazer

trying to control his emotions, in his slow efforts to explain and in the repetition of his words as we talked together. His greatest loss was the love of his mother:

“She grew up completely brainwashed so, it's harder for her to understand and accept. She's really ashamed of what her friends think about her having a son like this” 1126 Lazer.

He was engulfed by his grief at her desertion:

“And I wish, I wish I could be her friend, I want to be, I want to be, I want to be my mum's child but there's not really much what I can do” 1131 Lazer.

4.4.3. Trust is An Issue

Trust is a basic requirement for healthy, reciprocal and fruitful relationships. It nurtures a confidence that people are well-meaning, reliable and honest and therefore safe to be with. Without trust there is always a lurking fear of jeopardy. Hostility at home engendered an expectation within my participants that people are not well-intentioned and this anticipation transmits itself beyond home to school and the wider social world. Being under attack, neglected, or having one's personal worth unacknowledged, affected participants' confidence and self-esteem leaving a deep rent in their emotions, affecting their ability to trust or feel safe with anyone. It also fostered a suspiciousness of the intentions of others and a fear of letting others become emotionally close.

Vulnerability is a common feeling to hide, so much more so for those who have grown up under attack. Participants' capacity to relate to others was severely damaged. Lack of trust was not only directed outwards but also inwards and participants had great difficulty believing in, or trusting themselves.

Bea had lived with so much aggression and hostility directed towards her that she felt she could not trust anyone. Her fights with her foster mother had been so violent that at times Bea believed she had tried to kill her. Her mind constantly wandered to think of the harm others might do her, just as her mother and her friends had done in the past:

"I can't trust people because the woman who raised me tried to kill me so I cannot trust anyone...what's to say they're not going to do it as well?" 3797 Bea.

She would try to talk herself through situations to calm her anxiety:

"I keep having to tell myself I can trust them it's fine and tell them this but there's always going to be a part of me that's like, I don't know if I can trust them" 714 Bea.

Whenever Bea told her adoptive mother about her problems at school, her mother had blamed her for causing them. Bea expected everyone else to blame her too, just as her adoptive mother had done:

"I just feel like people use it against me, the stuff that I tell them..._everything I told [mum] that happened at home or school she'd be like, 'I'm not surprised that is happening at school look at the massive mess you are'. So I am scared that a friend is gonna do that to me. I have just got really bad trust issues" 719 Bea.

Bea was also betrayed and seriously hurt by her friends. In a previous incident, her close friendship group, who she had trusted and spent her time with, had turned on her and attacked her, breaking her leg so badly she spent six months in hospital. This incident in particular made her very nervous of being in groups. In her mind everyone was a potential enemy and might suddenly turn against her.

"I can't trust big groups of people" 3797 Bea.

"In my head it is so badly damaged, I can't trust people, I don't like being with lots of people, that's because my own friends all eight of them put me in hospital" 374 Bea.

Bea recognised that not being able to trust people, enjoy going out with them or share her feelings, resulted in her isolation and loneliness:

"It makes me feel a bit like, shit, because I am so used to pushing people away now and I don't want you in my life ... I would generally go like two weeks and I'll be in my bedroom without leaving... seriously I've got no friends" 985 Bea.

Lazer had similar feelings because of all of the abuse he had endured at school. His classmates had always ganged up on him, but their hostility was further endorsed by his teachers who were also extremely abusive and denigrated him in front of the class.

This united his classmates in hostility towards him, and, led by his cousin who wanted to ridicule him the most, Lazer experienced extreme bullying:

“As a kid I went through bullying because the teachers were bullying me and telling me I was a piece of shit in front of the other kids in the class” 202 Lazer.

Lazer was aware of the hostility the teachers engendered against him:

“Because, [my classmates] kept on hearing I was a bad boy, my cousin who was the king of the class didn't like me and he convinced everybody to fight me. I became, like, I was just being bullied. That's it” 1062 Lazer.

He was unable to defend himself and instead, he retreated, becoming more and more frightened to speak out:

“It left me with a lot of social anxiety to deal with which was really hard to overcome and I still haven't overcome it” 1068 Lazer.

When I met Lazer he was in the process of making a determined effort to recover his ability to express himself. He trusted no one, avoided groups of people completely and individuals only slightly less. Like Bea, the bullying he was subjected to caused him great social anxiety:

“I didn't want to make any friends because I know that friends are just going to backstab me, so what's the point and, because I've got this inner anxiety and fear, if it's going to be more than one person I'd fear they're going to make fun of me and put me down, I know I have nothing to be ashamed of and I don't care, but still, bullying has a bad effect” 1091 Lazer.

Mary's anxiety came from different concerns. She had always been unable to tell her friends about her life at home because she was scared of repercussions from her father: *“because I knew what, like it would cause at home”* 709. She could not trust her friends not to repeat stories about her family that might damage her in some way: *“if I shared with them they would go and say it to somebody else”* 751 Mary.

Mary also believed that no one else could ever understand the ordeals that she had faced, so there was no point in sharing her pain: *“No matter what you tell somebody, no one will ever understand how hard it is or how painful it is to go through that”* 1318 Mary.

Harry felt betrayed by his friends because of their cruelty and insensitivity. When they found out that his father had raped his sister, they made jokes about rape in front of him. This caused him to draw further back from his friendship group: *“when you think about it, people who do that aren’t really your friends”* 415 Harry.

A more hidden aspect of trust that participants suffered from was a loss of trust in their themselves. They knew that they could become overwhelmed with emotion, usually rage or anxiety, and could easily “flip” 541 Bea.

Chimi often found his emotions easily spiked out of control:

“I get flashbacks and stuff in the middle of the job it causes me to do the most irrational stuff. I’ll scream at someone or attack someone or do something to someone that you’re not supposed to do” 950 Chimi.

He felt so demoralised and frightened that it affected his willingness to be with others. His solution was to keep himself separate: *“So, it’s just like, I’ll avoid it”* 813 Chimi

Chimi also felt that the ethos of his school nurtured distrust, fraudulence and a *“twisted”* 891 dishonesty. In his school, secular studies were only taught when Ofsted inspectors came to inspect. The teachers would cover the walls with English work, bring in English books and make the children speak in English, instead of their daily Yiddish. He felt it deeply affected his ability to trust others and organisations:

“Children are very vulnerable to their environment and they are very, they’re like a sponge, they take everything in, so if you put them in a bad environment there will grow up to be bad people” 647 Chimi.

“[We] were raised from a young age that we have to pretend or con other people” 899 Chimi.

Peter’s experiences of abuse obliterated his ability to trust that anyone had any good feelings towards him at all: *“I had it in my head that everyone hated me”* 804. His mother told him repeatedly that he was the cause of all the problems in the family and he believed her: *“I did feel guilty but it was always being me that was blamed. The pressure was always on me, it was always my fault”* 718 Peter.

When Peter looks back to living in care, he remembered his friends used to goad him to behave badly for their own enjoyment, laughing at him and taking advantage of him:

"The friends I did have were the ones peer pressuring me into doing bad things. I didn't know at the time but they were using me, like, just for laughter" 827 Peter.

He had no confidence that there was any good feeling between himself and other people at any of the schools he attended:

"I didn't feel comfortable or welcome. I just did everything I could to get kicked out or sent home... I couldn't attend, it's like a cycle over the years and it's happened for year and then year and then year and it's just messed my life up" 94 and 161 Peter.

Peter had the same lack of trust in intimate relationships, unable to believe that any girl could accept him or like him, so he would repeatedly ruin the relationship:

"So, I already had the pain and hurt feelings from other things so when I got with a woman, I was even worse. I just damaged it. So, I knew I couldn't ... just that I couldn't, I kept doing my stupid same thing that I was doing" 906 Peter.

While Peter felt he could not trust himself to behave well, Chimi felt he could never trust that his girlfriends wouldn't cheat on him. Sometimes he had been driven to phoning his girlfriend in the middle of the night to make sure she was not with someone else. He reached the same conclusion as Peter and decided the best thing was to avoid the problem altogether by not having close relationships, although Chimi knew it was not a realistic solution:

"It's just like, because you think, because you're paranoid and therefore if you assume every girl you're with is going to cheat on you...So, it's just like I'll avoid it" 811Chimi

Ultimately, he had no trust in anyone: *"I think that people will cheat" 830 Chimi.*

For Harry, finding out that his father had sexually abused his sister over so many years, not only caused the loss of so many relationships and the innocence of his childhood but also seeded his questioning his own religion:

"I was interested to find the answers I was looking for. I was questioning my religion rather than just saying I don't care if I'm doing something wrong, I was questioning if I am actually doing something wrong" 648 Harry.

"The thing I don't like is that most people don't know why they're religious, they don't question what they're doing, because that is how they were brought up, it's the culture." 662 Chimi.

Whilst growing up Carly had been subjected to such extreme physical, sexual and emotional abuse at home and in care that she too trusted no one. In her opinion everyone was a potential threat. She seemed to have no boundaries concerning the level of violence she reacted with, nor did she temper her violence depending on who she was relating to: *"Anybody that looked at me, anyone even tried being nice to me...I'd beat them up"* 287. When she was at school she would have a go at the teachers as easily as she would the pupils: *"Even teachers like, the teacher would get a slap because I just didn't, I just didn't like people"* 292 Carly.

Carly's mother, like Bea's, Mary's and Peter's, had manipulated the family into believing that she was the problem and together they had ostracised Carly and held her to blame:

*"My mum is manipulating and gets into people's heads and change it round as it's my fault...they don't want anything to do with me"*651 Carly.

She reacted by closing herself off from the world, refusing to trust everyone and rejecting anyone who tried to come close for fear that she would be so terribly hurt again: *"No, I got hurt too many times so I was like, I didn't want to be hurt again"* 627 Carly.

4.5. Superordinate Theme 2 - Chaos at School

4.5.1. Hell Is Other Kids

This theme is about the total dearth of good or meaningful relationships between participants and their peers. All participants experienced, in varied degrees, hostility from their classmates on a daily basis. Mary, Carly and Chimi, the three most violent participants, felt they had learned this behaviour from home, that its origin was a reflection of the violence they had been subjected to and witnessed, rather than a trait which originated in themselves. As Mary and Chimi explained: *“It was what I was used to, and my dad used to tell me, all this time, like if anyone bothers you just beat them up”*. 429 Mary.

“At home I would just get beaten up and that was all that happened, so it's all I knew, I didn't know anything better.” 243 Chimi.

Chimi used violence to assert his own sense of value among his peer group because he felt it was all he knew:

“Like even in school violence was my whole thing. Like, that's all I knew, that's all I cared about, that's all that mattered. If I wanted a sense of value for myself, it was violence, like beat everyone up, show everyone that you are the strongest, the fittest, whatever, that you can fight anyone. As a matter of fact (laugh) I had a list of boys that I made them cry from punching them in the face” 236 Chimi.

Bea had very violent relationships at school. There was an atmosphere of hostility between herself and her classmates and they seemed to use every opportunity to be hateful towards her. In one such incident Bea recalls when her adoptive mother miscarried twin babies:

“I had a fight because one of the kids turned round to me and said you should've been one of them kids to die. So I put this girl in hospital, like, I broke her nose, broke her leg” 219 Bea.

Her anger rocketed quickly and feeling so antagonistic towards others, she was always ready to spring into a fight: *“If a student would look at me at school I would argue with them and say what are you looking at? Is there an issue?”*192 Bea.

Bea, like Lazer, had a cousin in the class who bullied her and rallied the other pupils against her: *“My cousin...knew...’Oh! Bea’s adopted’ and she...used that as a getaway card to get more people to like her”* 162

Mary, like Bea and Carly, erupted into violence at the slightest hint of a look from other pupils: *“If any of the students there, that used to sit and annoy me I used to just lash out at them”* 140 Mary.

Bea’s inability to hold her temper meant her relationships in school were always dominated by violence. She, like Carly and Mary, had no qualms about how much damage she would cause when she was angry:

“Well, this boy in my class was sat behind me and he kept pulling my strings from behind, strangling me with them, so I said carry on, go on, I dare you to carry on, and he did and I flipped, picked the chair up, it was like one of these and smacked him in the face with it (she punched her fist into the other hand) and it broke his nose and he didn’t just drop there and then he got up and wanted to fight, so we had a fight about it” 77 Bea.

Her classmates mocked her for being adopted and joined forces against her:

“So everyone at school was making out it was such a bad thing I was adopted. And then my whole friendship group turned against me and I was walking home one day from my nan’s, and my group of friends, I didn’t have a clue it was them, jumped me, to the point where they had got my hair and they were smacking and smacking my head on the corner of the curb to the point where it knocked me out completely” 164 Bea.

“I was getting notes written on my pages like, ‘go kill yourself’, proper deep horrible stuff, getting messages on Facebook, on fake accounts, like, ‘no wonder your parents gave you up” 187 Bea.

Lazer also felt ganged up against by his peers:

“I used to have to fight off twenty kids in a class at the same time. They used to punch me kick me and everything” 983 Lazer.

Mary felt continually agitated in the classroom. Her mind was constantly occupied with thoughts about protecting her mother from her father’s beatings. She would behave

badly on purpose so that she would be sent home. All of her exclusions and absences compounded her confusion about her schoolwork. With all these worries she would lose control at the slightest provocation:

“If any of the students there, that used to sit and annoy me I used to just lash out at them. I used to throw things, I punched a window and broke it” 141 Mary.

When her classmates bullied her, Mary found that the teachers didn't help so she would take matters into her own hands: *“then I got kicked out of there because I was getting bullied and no one else was sorting [it] out” 35 Mary.*

Peter had a different kind of bad time at school. For him, having trust or confidence in anyone was an impossibility and being with his peers was unbearable as they represented all the things that he was missing in his life: *“I was in care. I felt different, I couldn't work in the class” (56).* His difficulty with other pupils was so extreme that he could not be in the classroom at all: *“I couldn't take people, I used to hide in the toilets most of the time” 86.* He felt that he and the life he lived, were so different he had no common ground to relate to others at all: *“I couldn't talk, people were ‘come on, just speak’ and it was like ‘What will I say?’” 852.* Peter's emotions were so chaotic that he experienced a constant state of anxiety. The very presence of the other pupils intimidated him so much he was unable to stay in class:

“I'd literally go in school, straight out of the back doors and jump over the fence, wait for my mum to go to work and go home” 147 Peter.

Peter and Lazer wanted desperately to make friends and they were easily manipulated by the other pupils:

“People were...the friends I did have, were the ones peer pressuring me into doing bad things, but they were using me, like, just for laughter 829 Peter.

“I didn't have no real friendship” 838 Peter.

Lazer's situation was worsened by his popular cousin who rallied the class against him:

"I had my first cousin, was in the class, he was king of the class, whatever he said that's the way it was, so he used to bully me a lot and because he bullied me everybody else bullied me" 210 Lazer.

Although Lazer had tried to get help from his parents they also denigrated him, and he was left to help himself however he could:

"I tried, I started stealing money from my parents, from my dad, I used to buy a lot of candy and I tried, like, to bribe the kids to be my friends, so in the day I would bring them candy or something, will be my friend, and on a second day if I didn't have it, it would be like 'just get lost' " 213 Lazer.

His popularity was short-lived, and he continued down what he thought was a more attractive path to achieve some place for himself among the other pupils:

"So, I decided I'm going to try and be, like, cooler than them so I started smoking cigarettes when I was ten years old, umm, in the beginning everything was like 'what, you're smoking cigarettes' and then I got a few friends. I had just two friends from then, till I got kicked out" 216 Lazer.

Peter was thwarted by his anxiety as it made it impossible for him to be around the other children. Caught between his fear of others and his need to be with others, his behaviour became chaotic and totally uncontrollable:

"I was just off the rails basically...I was in the detention room every single day" 57 Peter.

When Carly was taken into care, her ability to relate to others was totally disrupted. She felt so bereft and alone at having lost everything in her world that she gave up caring about relationships at school. For three years she could not bring herself to go to school, preferring to keep apart, exiled in her own bed, protecting herself from all the children who she felt were worlds away from her:

"Because I was in care, I still had a lot of issues going on so I couldn't cope with everything that was going on in my head and with other things ... I wouldn't have gone in, I'd rather like, stay in bed" 62 Carly.

When Carly did go to school, she was so upset by her situation that she could not control her anger. Her violence could be catastrophic:

"I used to grab, like girls off the chairs that I didn't like, even if they wasn't looking at me and I thought, felt like they was looking at me, my anxiety might start playing in, and then I would basically get up and I would smash their head on their table" 73 Carly.

Every time she returned to school, Carly's violent behaviour kept getting her excluded: *"when I did go in I used to be violent again so (laugh) they didn't want me" 127.* Carly's laugh hinted of an underlying depth of sadness, a grief that had no words and no recognisable face.

Educated in an ultra-orthodox school, Chimi was constantly reprimanded and marginalised for his discrepant religious views. He had nothing in common with his classmates who united in disdain against his flagrant breaking of the rules. Receiving no answers, no support and only abuse from his father, teachers and peers, he resorted to rebellion. In his school, mobile phones were banned and they were also frowned upon in the community. This was the same in Lazer's community where people were also prohibited from contact with the secular world. Chimi, flaunting his disapproval of the rules, brought a mobile phone to school and played music from it so loudly that the other pupils could hear. He felt denigrated by their reaction to him: *"They would be looking down at me, like, I listen to such stuff, like, it's some form of sin" 76 Chimi.* His classmates stuck together, warning him of the treacheries that awaited him if he allowed the secular world to enter his life: *"they were, like, "no you have to be secluded, you have to keep yourself to yourself " 79 Chimi.* Between his breaking of the religious rules and his violent behaviour, the other pupils gave him a wide berth:

"Some of the kids from primary went with me to secondary school so they were in my class and stuff, so they, I don't know, I guess they heard that I was violent and stuff, so they just didn't want to bother" 495 Chimi.

Harry, like all the other participants, felt that he had never belonged to any friendship group, instead he was an outsider on the edge, alone, and yet he seemed to reject them as much as he felt rejected:

"It didn't go so well with friends. I didn't get along with most people, usually I found the stuff that people did just to be immature and stupid...just the way teenagers act, I never found that to be a normal thing" 132 Harry.

When his peer group heard about his sisters rape by his father, he found their mockery and insensitivity brutally hurtful:

“Kids when they find out something like this, they probably don't deal with it the best way either, making jokes about rape, so on and so forth, they make sure to do it in front of me” 411 Harry.

He did his best to pretend to his peers that it didn't bother him:

“I was just trying not to think about it when they were doing that, I knew there was nothing I could do about it, there was twenty of them I'm not going to start fighting twenty of them, so just move on” 418 Harry.

4.5.2. Terrible Relations with Teachers

At school, not only did participants have difficulties and bad relationships with their peers, but they also did with their teachers. Between them, these participants had attended more than twenty-seven educational institutions, yet, only Mary, Harry and Chimi reported one good encounter with a teacher. They felt unsupported by teachers and that their teachers were more interested in their schoolwork being completed than helping them with any personal problems or hearing about their troubles. Mary had frequently tried to enlist her teachers' help and even although it was obvious that she was in distress, no help was forthcoming:

“All the time, like, I used to go to school and sometimes I would just cry and they'd be like, what are you crying for and I used to, like, tell 'em and they'd be like, I told you what's just gone off at home is at home, when you come here it's a different place” 529 Mary.

In an effort to help Mary, in one of the six schools she had gone to, she was allowed special dispensation enabling her to leave the class when she felt overwhelmed by frustration or anger. At those times, she was allowed to visit the one teacher in whom she had found a sympathetic ear, and to whom she felt she could relate:

“That was my favourite teacher, we look so much alike and everything, and we understood each other from both points of view, like if I ever needed her, I used to have a card saying I'm off to see Mrs” 530 Mary.*

One day Mary was stopped by her headmaster as she was on her way to this teacher. He said she was overusing the privilege, this caused an argument between them, as Mary immediately exploded in anger. The headmaster retaliated by withdrawing her special privilege and then Mary threatened him:

"I, like, got really angry and I threatened to hit him and then obviously I got permanently excluded from there" 31 Mary.

Chimi also had altercations with his headmaster who he felt disliked him:

"He just told me, he was like, he said "Chimi, me and you, we're done. The headmaster, he was like, the head of institution, he was like, you should have seen the smile on his face, he was so happy that he had gotten rid of me" 713 Chimi.

Carly too felt her needs were ignored:

"It [school] didn't accept my needs, it didn't accept the fact that I went into care, the fact that I tried killing myself the fact that I, anything happened, it was just like 'Right you've gotta work here, you've got to do it'" 728 Carly.

For Bea there seemed to be confusion as to how the schools should best deal with her needs, sometimes the school tried to be helpful, but the type of help they offered made things worse:

"Next day gone into school black eyes, bruised arm everything, all because school had asked her [adoptive mum] 'have you been beating your child?' That just made it worse" 302 Bea.

"So school, like, they dealt with it badly for like involving the police and not understanding what was actually going on at home. They just thought I was this kid that was messing around causing all this trouble" 539 Bea.

And Bea felt her needs were completely ignored:

"I got put into shared accommodation, but this was when I was in year 11 so I had to do my exams without any family, nothing. I was literally on my own in a house, just me, my whole life was just me, I had to depend on myself for everything" 263 Bea.

"School didn't bother to chase me up, like, get me, don't ring me to see stuff, they just 'she's not coming in today it doesn't matter '. Whereas if a kid's not

turning up at school it should be your priority to help them, especially if it's a 16 year old girl living on her own." 1226 Bea.

And at other times, she, like Peter and Laser, was told by her teachers what a failure she would be:

"School were complaining how you are never at school, you not gonna do this, you not gonna get anywhere in life" 273 Bea.

"You're worth nothing, you'll never be anything, you're piece of shit" 125 Lazer.

Participants knew they were difficult for their teachers to handle and that teachers were scared of their violent behaviour. Mary, Carly, Peter and Bea were the most violent towards the teachers:

"they didn't feel comfortable with me being a student at the school, because of the danger...I 've always been a badly behaved kid" 88 Bea.

"I was a nightmare child. I used to like, throw chairs at teachers" 140 Mary.

"When I did attend, obviously because of the stuff I was doing like running round, kicking off, pushing the staff and stuff" 110 Peter.

"Actually, it was mainly hurting the staff" 452 Peter.

"I punched the head teacher in the face (laugh) so that's what the police had to come for" 77 Bea.

Bea and Mary were very impatient and would not wait for their teachers to sort out any problems they had:

"I'd just get angry really easily, people aren't dealing with the situation how I would deal with it, I am dealing with it myself. Like if I am sat in the class and someone is looking at me and they're saying stuff to me if I say to the teacher they're doing this and the teacher just ignores it, saying just ignore it, I will go over to the students and confront them about it ...I used to get really violent" 768 Mary.

Bea used to get into such rages that she could not even distinguish between the pupil she was having the fight with or the teacher who was trying to sort out the trouble. In her mind they became a collective attacker:

"The teachers come to get me off and I thought it was a student right, so I thought 'I don't care get off me', punched them as well" 200 Bea.

Carly was also uncontrollable at school. Having been subjected to nearly nine years of relentless abuse she was burning with rage and her emotional disarray, combined with her anger, obliterated any possibility for her to control her emotions:

"I used to hit people, so I was a lot violent, I used to argue with the teachers, swear at the teachers" 4 Carly.

No one escaped her fury:

"Anybody that looked at me, (laugh) anyone even tried being nice to me, I wouldn't, na, I wasn't budging for nobody, basically I was just evil. I was manipulating and I was evil. I used to take things off people, I don't know, if they didn't give it to me I'd beat them up or if they didn't say stuff, I'd beat them up or I don't know, even teachers, like, the teacher would get slapped because I just didn't, I just didn't like people" 267 Carly

Peter's teachers had no idea what to do other than resort to continual punishment by detention:

"...running round and round out of school on a daily basis, I was in the detention room, every single day, and then it got to a point where they were just literally letting me out of school when I wanted" 64 Peter.

It seemed that, although the very thing he was desperate for was to be held, to belong and to feel wanted, what he experienced was to be continually cast out and let go and unwanted:

"If I went to the office [and] said 'open the door I'm going home', they would" 70. Peter.

This reaction by the staff inflamed his underlying feelings of being worthless, causing him to feel certain that he was totally beyond the reach of any teacher's genuine care or concern:

"They were told to do their job and have a bond with me, it wouldn't be real because deep down they couldn't be bothered" 1186 Peter.

Peter's difficult and disruptive behaviour meant he was continually out of the classroom and missing his work. His teachers felt that his education was doomed:

"I remember one time my teacher said 'you might as well just leave, you're going to fail anyway'" 1193 Peter.

This made him further remove himself from the other pupils and he slid deeper into his own bubble of worthlessness: *"If I turned up there was no...I was just a person there that didn't matter"* 76 Peter.

Bea and Carly also expressed feelings of worthless, feeling invisible and dismissed by their teachers, who would not take their points of view seriously:

"Because I'd not been there from year seven, if I misbehaved, like one student told them one story, that is the story they're gonna believe. My story doesn't mean anything." 1157 Bea

"They just didn't care, I felt that they didn't care" 542 Carly.

While participants from secular schools felt their teachers were disinterested and unsupportive of their personal needs, only caring about their academic progress, participants from ultra-orthodox Jewish schools felt their teachers were actively abusive and bullying, concerned only about their religious obedience and religious learning. Nevertheless, the two situations engendered similar feelings in the participants. Although Harry went to a Jewish school it was not ultra-orthodox and his difficulties stemmed from the very poor quality of his personal relationships with teachers and peers, as well as the impact of his family problems.

"I never got along with any of the teachers, even my uncle was one of the teachers, I didn't get on with him, he hated me as well " 30 Harry.

Lazer felt very alone and oppressed at school. The teachers would denigrate him in front of the class whenever he asked questions about religion:

"I had questions on religion and they said I'm an Epikoros⁶, I, umm, like, don't know how to say it in English, it's like someone who doesn't believe in God and wants to disturb religion, which wasn't true, I wanted to understand, I wanted to

⁶A Jewish non-believer who will not have a portion in the world to come

know, why would I believe in something that I can't understand, it doesn't make sense, why should I believe in it" 205 Lazer.

The teachers behaviour would incite bullying from his peers:

"I went through bullying because the teachers were bullying me and telling me I was a piece of shit in front of the other kids in the class" 204 Lazer

Lazer's teachers threatened him and he felt they hated his desire to understand the reasons behind the religious rules:

"At school they were violent. I had a teacher threatened me, to throw me out of the window, to throw me down the steps, I had teachers that used to hit me with sticks a lot, or just punish me for no good reason, and I wasn't a bad boy I just didn't pay attention in class because it didn't make sense. I always, whatever they spoke about religion, I like taking things what people say and analysing it, analysing it and making sense of it on my own" 501 Lazer.

Lazer, like all the other participants, had no one to turn to, at home or school, for help, understanding or support:

"At school there was a lot of violence and no one did anything about it because the teachers hit us as well...I didn't feel comfortable complaining to the person who tells me I'm a piece of shit," 1061 Lazer.

Harry also felt there was no adult at school to turn to after the news of his father became public. He was not helped or supported at school, even his extreme distress did not attract the kind of support or comfort he needed from his teachers:

"I didn't want to speak to anyone, I just wanted to be in my bed. I was just sobbing...they made me, I had to go to school" 291 Harry.

"They never asked you what you want them to do, what you feel like you need" 338 Harry

After his first exclusion, Lazer was sent to in Israel but again he was treated as if he was a disturbance. The head teacher punished him and forbade the other boys to talk to him because he asked questions, wanting to understand the meaning behind the rules he was being taught to follow:

"At one point I was locked in a room for seven hours, no food, no window, by myself because... he found out I had a phone" 996 Lazer.

“The principal told the whole rest of the yeshiva they [were] not allowed to talk to me because I’ll [be a] bad influence. It felt so lonely, so worthless, then we were threatened, like if we talk to each other we’ll get kicked out” 1008 Lazer.

When Lazer was expelled from his first school, his teachers continued to create problems for him. In his religious community, deviant behaviour was mercilessly expunged and his younger siblings were not only warned to keep away from him but also told by their teachers what a bad person he was. It was a source of great pain to him:

“Because they [his siblings] keep on hearing at school that this is, like, the worst thing you can do is leave a community and that leaving the community means that you’re like a criminal so they don’t know what to think about me and they think I’m a bad person, which is sad, really sad.” 1152 Lazer.

Harry also went to an orthodox Jewish school and for as long as he could remember he had felt he was hated by his teachers. Unlike Lazer, he could not understand why:

“I don’t know why I don’t...a lot of the things I got in trouble for I didn’t actually do. I had a guilty look. So it was ‘It’s always me, it’s always Harry, it’s always Harry’...I remember I had my year six teacher, she hated me, like, completely hated me” 52 Harry.

From one school to the next, he was treated in the same way by the teachers:

“I can understand if the teacher’s getting u in trouble it’s because they, they are trying to help you but if they refuse to teach you it’s obviously they don’t like you...if I’m getting in trouble so you don’t do it again, to help me be able to teach you. I can understand, but if they refuse to actually teach you in the class, they are obviously not liking you very much, especially if you are not actually doing stuff wrong” 87 Harry.

4.5.3. Feeling “Different”, “Diseased”, Lonely and Apart

It seemed that participants’ lives at home or in care were in such stark contrast to their peers that they cast shadows over their every thought and moment, shaping their actions and relationships. In school an outward expression of isolation was easy to see as they were often targeted by their peer group or kept themselves apart from others at break times, as Harry described: *“It’s just like, I’m with a group of friends and*

I'd sit on the end" 145, but the inner feelings of disconnection, sadness and being different, lurked, deeply and painfully hidden within.

Making friends seemed to be impossible. They felt so different from other pupils that these feelings festered and gnawed at them, infecting the space between them and other pupils, as evidenced in the fights, bullying, or simply in the physical separation they kept between themselves and their peers. Loneliness and an awareness of their differences were constant companions.

Unless Lazer had sweets to offer his classmates they refused to play with him. When he tried to join the group, they would cruelly tell him to *"just get lost"* 216. Repudiated by everyone he was very lonely *"I anyways didn't have any friends whose houses to go to"* 232 Lazer.

Lazer was not only rejected by his family, friends and teachers, he also felt distanced from his community, never having had anyone who would discuss or be nurturing about his questions about the religious practices he had been taught:

"I was trying to understand their point as well but there's no way how to justify a cult. The whole Hassidic world is one big cult. I think that anybody that puts thought into it and tries to understand how the system works will agree with me" 524 Lazer.

It was only in Lazer's late teens that he experienced his first friendship. He was invited to a friend's home for a meal and this was the very first time in his life he felt wanted, connected to someone that cared, and not totally alone:

"I met this guy on the street and, I don't know we started talking for some reason and he told me I should come for Shabbat. It was the first time I felt welcome any place, I felt like I had a family, I had someone to rely on" 72 Lazer.

The emotional distance that participants felt between themselves and other people was like an awning chasm, and in that void, in the very between, they had all sorts of unpleasant feelings about themselves and how their peers and teachers viewed them. They imagined that they were bad and unwanted, that they had something wrong with them, something flawed inside that others could see. These feelings contributed to their sense of isolation and their emotional distress on a daily basis.

Bea had always felt she was different from the other pupils and that they did not like her particularly because she was adopted: *“the kids just didn’t like that, the fact that I wasn’t like them and I was adopted”* 148 Bea.

She also felt the teachers did not like her because of her bad behaviour: *“I got chucked to the bottom and ‘I’m a bad behaved kid, get rid of her, we don’t want her”* 1192. Bea also became violent when her peers were nasty about her mother not wanting her:

“I smacked her in the face with a pole because she talked about my mum. I wanted to kill her, I actually just wanted to strangle her” 1195 Bea.

She made sense of everything that happened in school by continually evaluating the differences between herself and everyone else. Bea described why she imagined another girl in the class thought so badly of her:

“Her mum and dad love her to pieces: she has everything she could ever want and she was basically one of them snotty little bitches, like, if I didn’t have that then I’m an issue” 1321Bea.

Bea, Peter and Carly each felt terrible about themselves, they felt that they were awful people with an awful inner defect that set them apart from everyone else:

“it was basically like I was a diseased child” 143 Bea.

“[I was] stupid, my fault, I’m weird, it’s all my fault. I’m disgusting. I shouldn’t have a chance to live” 701 Peter.

“I was just evil. I was manipulating and I was evil” 289 Carly.

Chimi had a lackadaisical approach to religion which was very different to the punctilious attitude of his family, teachers and peers. At school it separated him from everyone else. He saw himself as being so different that he was beyond comparing:

“I felt I was different, very different. I wasn’t like all the other kids. I wasn’t the same, I was very different. We were just on two different pages, frankly we were on two different books. That was how I felt” 83 Chimi.

Mary believed the void between her life and everyone else’s was insurmountable. She believed that no one could understand her pain and the trauma she had experienced:

"No matter what you tell somebody, no one will ever understand how hard it is or how painful it is to go through that" 1320 Mary.

Mary, like Carly, and Harry, unable to reach out to others or make friends, found ways to keep herself apart. They never shared their feelings with anyone:

"No, it makes me, like, feel small, if you know what I mean. It makes me feel like, bad, like sad in myself so I just don't talk about it. If I need to cry, I will cry to myself, like, there's some days that I would just sit and cry in my room, because I know what happened in the past" 1147 Mary.

"No, I didn't want to I wanted to be on my own I still want to be on my own, I don't like friends...I didn't have nobody, once I was in care basically that's how it was" 614/ 674 Carly.

However, as much as participants kept themselves separate and pushed people away there were times when they did try to reach out, but were pushed away by others, as Carly described: *"I was so alone because my family didn't want to see me, as much as I tried,"*537 Carly.

*"I've always tried, I want to be with friends, I want to be part of my family, family is really important to a person, but my brothers Bar mitzvah was like two weeks ago and he didn't want me to be there"*152 Lazer.

Harry started taking drugs and was unable to face the shame of his father's behaviour and the mockery from his classmates. Keeping apart was a way of avoiding the terrible clashes with his mother or a life with no friends and he would roam the streets at night alone: *"I'd stay awake till like six in the morning in the streets and then I go home and sleep all day"* 524 Harry.

Carly was devastated that her life in care was so very different to that of her peers, but she also felt that the way she looked was different. She hated her body and herself because of the differences, allowing them to set her apart from her peers:

"I used to hate myself, I used to think I was fat I used to not eat because I just felt I was ugly because the, sometimes that's what I used to get told, like, I was ugly and I'm not worth anything....and I'd feel like nobody wanted to be my friend, and like, what is the point of being friends with anybody because I don't trust anybody for starters and then I don't feel like I can have friends because I'm ugly that's what I used to think about myself" 1127 Carly.

"I'll feel horrible about myself and then I'll self-harm" 1169 Carly.

Trying to negotiate a life while always feeling different, aware of being adopted and feeling there was something wrong with her, Bea was aware that she had caused much of her isolation:

"sometimes it makes me feel a bit like, shit, because I am so used to pushing people away now and I don't want you in my life...If I'm arguing with someone the first argument we have...I won't speak to you again, I don't need you in my life. So, I have pushed that many people away I'd lost that many people because I can't trust anyone, I can't rely on anyone, that sometimes I would generally go like two weeks and I'll be in my bedroom without leaving. I won't come to college, nothing. And I just think to myself who have I actually got" 984 Bea.

4.6. Superordinate Theme 3 - The Shift

4.6.1. Giving Up

Participants had not grown up with anyone supportive and trustworthy to turn to. They had no one to discuss their worries with or the upsetting situations they found themselves in every day. Their feelings of being unwanted, lonely and isolated were overwhelming and constant. They felt trapped by their problems. Their way of coping with the turmoil of emotions within was in the form of violence, drugs, alcohol, crime, self-harm, sex and isolation. The situations they faced in their daily lives seemed impossible to change and although they tried in their own ways to deal with them, they could not find a way out. In the face of these challenges participants braved on but could only envisage the future as a repetition of the past and decided that was not for them. Some attempted suicide, others tried to reach oblivion in more insidious ways through sex or substance abuse. They were all desperate to be free of their struggles.

Having no safe place to go and no one to turn to for help, Harry and Chimi slept all day and stayed out all night becoming more and more despairing and stuck in a negative cycle:

"I was smoking weed, drinking, sleeping. I wasn't sleeping in the streets. I'd stay awake until like six in the morning in the streets and then I go home and sleep all day" 524 Harry

"The idea was that I should be sleeping while they are awake and when they are sleeping I'm awake so we don't have to see each other and it would be easier, he wouldn't have the energy to fight with me." 219 Chimi.

Although Peter found it impossible to be with his peers during the day at school, he also could not bear to be alone at night. In residential care, he did everything he could to get the staff out of bed so he would have company while he was unable to sleep: *"I was staying up all night and kicking off at the care home"* 430. Up all day and night, Peter had to be moved to a unit with 24-hour care *"to support the night time situation I was struggling with"* 436. Some years later social services deemed that he could return home, but again, his mother was abusive and kicked him out, rendering him homeless. He began to surrender to what he felt was a hopeless situation.

Eventually all participants reached a point where they were worn out by their struggle and they did not want to care about anything anymore. They didn't even want to fight. They became submerged in a desire to give up and it seemed their will to live withdrew. The return of Bea's dad to prison sparked off a downward turn for her:

"My dad is gone I don't care about anything else why should I care about my school? What have I got to even fight for anymore? Nothing" 472. Bea

Aware of her emotions changing, Bea felt herself becoming hardened: *"So it's just moved me into this cold closed [place] in my mind and I don't care about anything anymore" 469 Bea*, and in the midst of this cold feeling of loss and disconnection she stopped eating:

"Then I got like a really bad eating disorder April this year, just before my exams so I gone into hospital because of it, because it was making me fit, and like, this one time I was just walking up the road and I just dropped, just randomly dropped. I didn't have a clue what had happened and when I woke up, I was in a hospital bed" 474 Bea

Bea tried several times to take her own life:

"When I take the tablets and I think this is it, this is me doing it, I think to myself, finally, I can go and do what I need to do. I don't need to be in this world anymore. I don't need to put up with this shit anymore" 1494 Bea.

For Bea, the only way she could think of to get rid of her misery and pain and the difficulties of the life that she was leading, was by choosing death. Although it seemed not to be death itself that she sought, but an end to her suffering, a way out of the pain:

"Then when I wake up in a hospital bed and I'm still awake, it hurt, because I don't want to be awake. I want to be gone. I don't want to be on this earth because I'm just trapped in a cycle that I can't get out of" 1498 Bea.

Bea and Mary acknowledged that trying to commit suicide or harm themselves in various ways was part of a repetitive cycle in their lives that would not go away:

"You get happy and then it fucks up and then it's shit again and then you can't deal with it. It's been like this my whole life" 1503 Bea.

Mary echoed the same feeling, that she expected her struggle in life to be endless: *“I still overdose all the time now. I’m not going to stop”* 1374.

She often turned her anger inwards and blamed herself for the way her life had been: *“I took it out on myself, everything that happened I took it out on myself.”* 1372 Mary. Until finally she reached a point where she wanted to let go of her life: *“I couldn’t take any more”* 138. She turned to alcohol, *“drinking all the time”*, and sex: *“I’ve never had any diseases though, touch wood”* 875 Mary.

Believing that no one in the world could help her, Mary overdosed and self-harmed frequently. She found when she cut herself, it absorbed her attention and brought her relief: *“I overdosed a hell of a lot. It’s not how I wanted it, everyone manages different”* 1374. *“It just makes me feel better. I feel relieved”* 1389 Mary.

Peter’s mood began to spiral downwards after returning home one day to find his mother had left his packed suitcase sitting on the doorstep waiting for him: *“my bags were packed already and I was just put into YMCA, the hostel”* 505 Peter. In the YMCA he was drawn to all the wrong kinds of people: *“people that are going to lure me in trouble”* 595. He got involved in crime, turned to drugs and alcohol. He stopped eating, stopped sleeping and his state of mind began to deteriorate. He felt completely deflated, like the life had been squashed out of him by the weight of its burden:

“I’d lost everything, lost family...that’s when I started getting into trouble with the police. I’ve never been a violent person. I don’t know why. I just...I haven’t been a violent person but as time went on, I got ill, then I stopped eating, then I was smoking loads of weed...it all come down on me like a ton of bricks” 524 Peter.

He gave up and *“let everything go flat”*. He began to self-harm and have suicidal thoughts, seeing no way forwards, only a downward spiral ahead:

“I thought I’d never make it anywhere in life, I used to feel like the person that was never gonna get nowhere” 1268 Peter.

“I used to wake up every day, and think, I want to die, I want to die, every day, every day I wanted to die” 1281. Until finally he attempted suicide: *“I cut my wrists, and, yeh, I cut my wrists”* 1288 Peter.

Carly, like the other participants, had found no positive way to deal with her circumstances and no person to turn to for help or support. Overwhelmed with grief, loneliness and frustration, she could not take any more:

"I feel I wanted to die. I felt like nobody could help me, anything, I just felt like I was so alone because my family didn't want to see me, as much as I tried, yeah, as much as I tried" 535 Carly.

She had always reacted violently to situations in her life and she responded in the same way in her effort to bring about her death. Several times she went to a certain point on a nearby road where she thought the cars would be going too fast to stop:

"I used to lie in the road for a car to come and I was hoping one time that a car was coming fast enough that I'd get run over, but the car just stopped" 758 Carly.

When that didn't work, she tried running in the road, and in further attempts she would jump from high places:

"I'd try and run in the road and get hit, or, lie in the road, and I don't know, loads of things" 751 Carly.

Chimi, having been kicked out from home and school had nowhere to go. After a lifetime of abuse from his father and never having support or love from his mother or siblings, he turned to drugs and alcohol:

"I was just trying to forget about all the pain and stuff...anything I could get my hands on... started off with cannabis...went on to, like ketamine, ecstasy, cocaine etc, just see what worked what did the best" 908 Chimi.

He also turned to sex but instead of finding comfort it added to his problems:

"I can sleep with a lot of them as well, but I need to keep changing things up, I get bored and fed up really fast" 771Chimi.

Turning to drugs and alcohol, he tried to numb his emotions and he lived in confusion:

"Like someone who is lost and just doesn't know where they're going...like, a blurred picture, an extremely blurred picture where you can't make out anything, it's just a blur" 1005 Chimi.

Harry's decline had a different kind of energy. He became rebellious and determined to go against absolutely everything and everyone:

"I'm going to do what I want...whether it's drugs, alcohol, trying to do everything illegal, against the rules under the sun, that they can do, to show look, I'm invincible and I can do if I want and you can't tell me what to do" 476 Harry.

He felt he was out of control, but he couldn't stop himself: *"You keep digging yourself into a deeper, deeper and deeper hole" 485.* He was so full of rage it seemed like he wanted to obliterate the world as well as himself. Like Carly, he took risks with traffic and used other people as potential objects of violence towards him, as he toyed with his fate and his own possible destruction:

"If I wanted to cross the road had just crossed the road, if there was cars coming, who cares?" 469 Harry.

Lazer became suicidal after his father sent him away from home to a "prison" yeshiva. He had been sent out of the country a few times and each time he was desperate to go home but no matter how much he begged, his father would not yield: *"I was really upset, I was begging him please accept me 413.* In spite of the repudiation from his father and family, he could not tolerate the separation or rejection: *"I thought that's it, that's the end of it, the end of everything." 522 Lazer.*

For Lazer the rejection was catastrophic, and he, like Peter, Harry and Chimi, turned to hard drugs, which sucked him deeper into a world which he felt had no meaning:

"Because they rejected me, and because of the rejecting I used to get "you're not worth anything"" 528 Lazer.

"I just saw everything black, I didn't see a meaning in life, I didn't, (deep breath) I couldn't see any enjoyment in life and I couldn't see any reason why to live, and I couldn't see a future to myself and I just felt like a piece of shit and I just felt that dying is the only option there's no other way out of it, there's nothing I can do about it, so I might as well take it" 544 Lazer.

"I couldn't take the depression anymore and it was already the second time I tried to attempt suicide...the first time I made, like a gallows, I wanted to hang myself, the second time I was planning to starve myself to death" 388 Lazer.

"I thought it's the end either way so I might as well take my life and throw it away because why would I just wait for someone else to do it, to completely finish me off, when I can do it without having anyone else do it for me" 557 Lazer.

4.6.2. A Change of Heart

In coping with repeated exclusions, extreme social and family problems and finding no pathway to change, a desire to give up and opt out of life had emerged. Yet, as participants negotiated this life-threatening route, aware that they were heading towards their ruin, they also experienced the polarity of their emotions and the contradictions in the life they were leading. In this very tension within the paradox that death is what makes life meaningful, they found inner resources to change their future. Peter remembered the feeling that what was happening was the opposite of what he really wanted:

"I wanted to live with my family, I wanted to live like every other kid. I didn't want to be on drugs I didn't want to be half anorexic. I didn't want to be smoking. I didn't want to be living with adults. I didn't want to be walking about the streets. I don't want to be, you know what I mean?... yes, there's a big scroll of things I could talk about... I didn't want to be in trouble with the police" 1106 Peter.

Harry, recognising that he was on a destructive path, recalled how he felt at the time: *"I don't want to die yet" 1458*. He had been approached many times by a mentor from a local charity but he had not taken an interest until after nearly a year later, still wandering the streets at night smoking weed. That last time he was approached had happened to coincide with his realisation that he did not want to continue down the damaging path he was pursuing. The mentor had offered him a job at the charity's eBay company and Harry accepted. This time he was able to engage with the offer of new possibilities and saw how lucky he was to have been able to change direction instead of carrying on the same destructive path: *"I think I'd have still been, I think I'd have been past weed by now, giving up, yes, so I'm lucky they found me" 1504 Harry.*

Peter, Carly, Chimi, Mary and Harry, also all had a realisation that they were on a self-destructive path that would lead to no good. At that moment, they saw a new way they could relate in the world. A meaningful image of themselves emerged which they had

previously not noticed. This discovery set them on a new course. They turned their backs on the destructive path and embarked on a positive, efficacious and creative route forward.

This very shift, like the turn of a lighthouse, shed light on a sense of their own agency. Now the possibility of good things began to appear in their future. They perceived hope and realised they had the freedom and power to create meaning. This re-routed their intentionality and their energy began to flow forward. It seemed against all odds, but now their minds became filled with ideas about different ways they could be in the world and they were able to receive help from others. An example of this is Mary's experience. Her mother, highly dependent due to mental illness, had been cared for by Mary's grandmother. The grandmother had died, leaving the role of caring to Mary and her sisters. One day, Mary suddenly realised that if she could care for her mother she should be able to care for herself:

"I've had to care and that's why my attitude has changed because I've had to be a carer for my mum...because I'm thinking that if I'm able to sit there and look after somebody and concentrate on what they need I should be able to sit and concentrate on what I need. That's what it was and that's what kicked me in the backside basically" 268 Mary.

At this time, Mary happened to be approached in the street by someone who worked for the charity where she now attends: *"He said 'you need help, you need help with schooling', he used some big words, I don't even know what he was saying" 289 Mary.*

He offered Mary a place at the charity, saying that he could understand the hardship she had been through and he knew she needed help. Feeling she could trust him she agreed to join the programme:

"I said, 'Yeh! I'll come. I knew that how he was being with me, I knew, you could tell how supportive it was, like, when I told him, he was like gobsmacked when I told him like what I've been through the past, what, sixteen years" 312 Mary.

Peter had been in regular trouble with the police and had been kicked out of the YMCA. While awaiting trial on a youth offending order he had a sudden realisation about the consequences of turning eighteen. He knew he was entitled to education through juvenile services while he was seventeen and that this support no longer be available

after his next birthday. Now, faced with the insight that he needed help and the realisation that the only place he could receive it was in juvenile prison, and only until he was eighteen, he decided to go to prison:

"...purposely pulling off my tag, purposely not turning up, I actually understood that while I'm still seventeen, umm, I can get locked up, get used to eating properly, get the education because it be there, get the support I needed. So I purposely at the time, got myself locked away because at the time the stability there was better than it was out" 553 Peter.

Five months in prison gave Peter time to rest and think and he moved another step forward and closer to a future that he hoped to have: *"What happened was that all that time I had a way to think about things, what I wanted in life" 561 Peter.*

Carly woke up in hospital after attempting suicide. She had been badly injured after jumping from high railings. Recuperating in hospital, suffering the pain of her injuries, she realised that ultimately, nothing good at all had come out of her suicide attempts:

"I've lost the situation because I felt like I had no hope and then I hurt myself which didn't make me feel any better and then that's it, yeh, I put myself in hospital and that's it" 551 Carly.

Waking up in hospital Carly realised that the only thing that had changed after her suicide attempt was that she had been physically injured, so in fact, she had given herself more problems than she had before. Not wanting to put herself through that possibility again she decided she would seek a different way forward:

"I can't be like, thirty-three and twenty-three and still misbehaving to people, and, I felt like I needed to change because I couldn't be putting myself back in hospital like that." 544 Carly.

When Chimi's father kicked him out of his home, he was deeply distressed and unsure what to do with his life. He stayed with a friend for the first few nights and then moved to a new city where he became involved in drugs, which he later realised *"obviously didn't help"*909. Signing up for benefits and earning from odd jobs he met someone who worked for the charity where I later met him.

Unlike other participants, Chimi did not have a sudden revelation. Instead, being away from the hostility and violence of home and confronted with a chance meeting with a mentor from the charity, Chimi was able to reset his course. He described how his situation had changed:

"[there are] no parents to fight with, there's not much violence in my life, I'm out of the war, the war is over" 1027 Chimi.

With less tension surrounding him, he was able to gain some clarity to see how different his life was now, away from the perpetual violence, distress and tensions of his home life:

"I've got more of a sense of direction...more of a sense of life purpose... it's more like finding myself and I didn't know I was lost, I didn't know I was looking for myself, and now I know. So it's just like, the clarity is so completely different, like, a blurred picture, an extremely blurred picture where you can't make out anything, it's just a blur and then all of a sudden, it's like you zoom in and the pixels come together and you think oh that's a house that's a car you know, I can see more objects if you like. And that's how I feel. I feel that everything's become more clear. And more straightforward as well so, because there's no big nonsense, there's no big beliefs, there is no big clouds in the way of my judgement" 1010 Chimi.

Bea, like Chimi, had embarked on a new and better path. Feeling happy in her new foster home with a supportive and caring mother, Bea was able to communicate her feelings with words instead of violence. One day, returning from a fight at school, she shared how upset she was about all the problems she faced at school and for the first time in her life, she received a response of love and support. Her new foster mother jumped into action, made appointments and helped her change college so that she could continue her education and spend her days in an institution that supported her needs:

"So me and my mum came here for an interview on Monday, yeah my foster mum, and she said this college does sound good, and they said to us, like, we want to help you with this, it is not fair that you've been through all of this and your college have just gave up on you because you have problems going on. We're gonna help you sort it out." 824 Bea.

When Lazer first decided he wanted to take his own life he built gallows to hang himself from. At that time, he spoke to a friend on the phone who sent him some music, which filled him with hope and he changed his mind.

“The first time I made like, a gallows, I wanted to hang myself, my friend sent me a song from my favourite singer which was that you can carry on, without even knowing that I, (deep breath) had a problem at the time, or, I decided to give it another try” 403 Lazer.

Giving life another try but not changing anything about the way he lived, culminated in a second attempt at suicide; Lazer decided to starve himself. This time, another friend got in touch at the right moment and bought him a ticket home, paid off his debts, and took him in. This friend gave Lazer the support he need and realising his own ability to bring about change, he decided to confront his father. Tackling so many painful issues in this relationship, Lazer made courageous changes and set himself on a new path forward:

“If not for this friend which helped me out of my debt and paid my ticket to London and sorted me out I would have starved myself to death. I went three days without eating any food, I drank a bit of water and after three days, after that phone call I decided I'm going to eat food and I'm (deep breath) going to come back home and have a normal life...and I told my dad there's no chance of, there's nothing he can do, I'm coming back and I'm still not eighteen and you have to provide me a place where to sleep. So, we came to a deal that he will pay my apartment as long as I don't come into his area” 425 Lazer.

4.7. Superordinate Theme 4 - Under Construction:

A New Me

4.7.1. New Relationships with My Self and Others

Participants' despair and hopelessness dissipated as soon as they started to move forwards in their lives. They no longer felt empty or that their worlds held no meaning. An emotional void had begun to fill with newly emerging values and this was accompanied by newfound hope. This shift in attitudes brought new and meaningful relationships which they found enjoyable and rewarding. This included being involved in the charities where I met them. Importantly, this change in perspective not only affected their relationships with others in the social world but it also embodied a new feeling towards themselves in their own personal worlds. They looked at the hurdles they had overcome, saw the hard times they had pulled through and their feelings of worthlessness were replaced by feelings of pride in their achievements.

"But what I've realized is, even if all those things had of been in place, it makes no difference because, the fact is, even that they haven't been in place and I've come far makes me proud" 309 Peter.

"I've done pretty darn well for a boy that has to take care of himself and he's only 18 years old. I'm proud of myself" 837 Lazer.

I can change the thing that's happened to me. Well I think I've changed things already myself to be honest" 217 Carly.

This positive change opened up possibilities in participants' spiritual worlds and they began to create new values in their lives. For some it was as though they were meeting themselves for the first time and finding a different sense of themselves to relate to:

As Chimi , Lazer and Carly described:

"it's more like finding myself and I didn't know I was lost, I didn't know I was looking for myself, and now I know" 1007 Chimi.

"I believe everything happened to me, it just built me in life, it made me the person I am today, I believe I'm unstoppable, nothing can stop me ever, ever" 449 Lazer.

"When I was younger, I was the thief I was a huge liar, I didn't know exactly what I wanted in my life, nowadays I sorted myself out. I built my life on my own" 464 Lazer.

"I look back at it and I think 'what the hell' and that's not me now so I can't really imagine myself being like that now because it was me then" 512 Carly.

Participants felt empowered and in control of their lives in ways they had never experienced before. At the charities they now engaged with opportunities, stopped shying away from contact with other people and found a sense of belonging with people who welcomed them in and began to account for themselves:

"I think I was a very immature, stupid, little kid, who messed up a lot of opportunities, like school...I'm like this because of this, I'm like this because of this, fine, but if you want to change it you've got to change it yourself, you can't rely on others to change things for you" 710 Harry.

"Things started to come together. I attended here. I still had a little bit of issues, but I'm working on them. This is the place for me, me personally ...I'm around good people...had love and support around me for the very first time" 613 Peter.

"So yeah that's how I got to know them all. I think it's a great institution I think it's doing a great job and it's helping a lot of kids. I'm not working currently and I'm trying to get my head sorted out and trying to get the right therapy that I need" 939 Chimi.

Bea had only just begun to attend the charity where we met. Feeling heard, supported and that the immediacy of her needs was being met, her willingness to control her behaviour had already reaped benefits. Now, instead of reacting with violence when she was upset, which she knew would lose her place at the charity, she was prepared to ask for help because she appreciated being there and the good things that she expected would ensue. She also had the confidence that everything will be fairly dealt with, like an incident the morning we met:

"I've told Lucy (the manager) and Lucy did sort it...because they've said that it's (violence) not tolerated and if she (the other pupil) was to carry on the way she was then I would lose my place because I would flip, so it's not fair" 869 Bea.

Bea's relationship with her new foster mother was also completely different to that of her last. When Bea spoke about her, she demonstrated her ability to be understanding,

patient and empathetic as she explained how difficult it was for her foster mother to understand her: *"It is hard for her to understand my problems"* 903 Bea.

"She is supportive but there are some problems that she really doesn't understand like, the way my mind works" 912 Bea.

Bea had also become more caring, kinder and up-beat towards herself and there was a sense of coming to terms with her past:

"I know I'm not the real perfect person in the world, but like, sometimes I just think to myself 'do you know what, I'm gonna do my makeup, I'm gonna make my makeup nice and I feel comfortable with myself. So I'm gonna walk out of the house this morning with this massive attitude that no one is going to knock me down and everyone looks at me and they genuinely think, this girl can't have any problems going on, look at the smile on her face look how strong she is being to everyone" 1273 Bea.

Bea had also chosen to take responsibility for herself and her actions and what she makes out of life, no longer relying on anyone or anything, even God, to help:

"As I've grown older, I thought to myself if there is a God why have I been through all of this bad stuff? Like, God is supposed to be the saviour, this person that helped you, where is the help that I have needed for the past how many years? Even school didn't help me, so like hoping there is a God out there...there is no God. So, I just think life is what you make of it if you give up, you give up, that's your fault. People are always going to try and knock you down" 1050 Bea.

Similarly, Mary had also begun to establish and value new relationships with the charity where we met.

"It's been excellent, they've helped me with stuff at home and things like that, like I've had a recent miscarriage and like, Anna sat at the hospital all night whilst everything got done, the suction and all that" 763 Mary.

She now enjoys an inner feeling of pride which she had not previously experienced, although, like Bea, she was tentative about her new relationship with herself and the contradictory positions she held:

"Sometimes, I feel good in myself about how I've turned myself around but sometimes I feel that bad because I still have the anger in me and stuff like that" 1048 Mary.

Having support and good trusting relationships with people she feels have her best interests at heart, has brought out a surprising ability for Mary to be less confrontational, as she acknowledged: *"I have calmed down a hell of a lot!"* 510 Mary.

Differently to Bea who turned away from God, Mary and Peter turned towards God. They began to go to church where they found a sense of belonging, made new friendships and found meaning:

"I became a Christian, and umm then that's when a lot of things changed in terms of my friends" 585 Mary.

"I had love and support around me for the very first time" 621 Peter.

Peter seemed to take something beyond love and support from his new relationship with God. It was as if his religious learning had given him a blueprint and confidence for living that he could rely on:

"It's a gift in a sense to be able to have it is a gift, to be able to use it is strength. You can't have faith without work, if you don't work or try for something, you can't just sit there, and have faith that everything's gonna be alright. You have to get up and do something about it. That's what people get confused with faith. It's, it's nice to feel safe that someone is watching you, it's just a nice feeling when you can rest your hope in something, better that, than nothing and looking at the world and just thinking 'oh gosh, I'm done for'. I don't know about you, but I'd rather trust in something than in nothing" 1071 Peter.

Mary also found religion a great comfort:

"It's more that I feel like I've got someone to talk to...It's like I'm talking to someone I can trust, that can help through my life...that's what I needed" 930 Mary.

Mary's newly found relationship with God and her religious community changed her values and impacted the type of intimate relationships she wants to have in the future:

"Now it's like, if a man talks to me, I'm like, you do know that there is no sex before marriage" 875 Mary.

Lazer worked out a new and completely different relationship with God that suited him better than his previous one imposed by his father, school and old community:

"You have to have a connection to God in your own words, what do you feel like. Instead of going to a therapist I talk to God I tell all my problems, yes, I don't hear him answering me, but I feel it, it's like a type of meditation" 678 Lazer.

So, I consider myself religious, I don't keep Shabbat and I don't keep almost anything, because I talk to God I consider myself religious, because I believe in God" 721 Lazer.

When Peter reflected on how his life had changed, he put it down to the participation of God in his life:

"I saw all these new things happen in my life, I said: surely that's from who that's above" 979 Peter.

He greatly values these changes, the new relationships he has made since going to church:

"I'm around good people, the Christian Association. People can look at it what they want to. I don't care. Since then everything was opening up for me. The people I'm hanging around with were good positive people and I was being looked after in a very nice way. I had love and support around me for the very first time" 619 Peter.

Peter's new relationships helped him choose different ways to deal with his problems:

"Especially being a Christian. I needed to be able to forgive and understand and put those times in the past" 687 Peter.

He saw the other person's perspective. Instead of continuing to battle with his mother, Peter was open to talking and patiently working out their relationship in a caring way:

"My mum is...she's finding it hard because she has to be able to speak, and comfortably. It's not just me that's to work on things, it's my mum as well" 1344 Peter.

For the first time in their lives, participants were also able to work happily with authority figures to discover what was best for them, organise and choose the courses they wished to join and how to create a way forward:

"I just wanted to do my maths and English...you're doing employaty, empl, employatability skills, and then you've got your personal development and then

your ITC on top of that but you've still got your maths and English and I was like, yeh I don't mind as long as I get my maths and English" 301 Mary.

"I think it's a great institution I think it's done a great job and it's helping a lot of kids ... I'm not working currently, and I'm trying to get my head sorted out and trying to get the right therapy that I need" 943 Chimi.

"It's much better the way they do it. They don't treat you like a little kid. They treat you like 'you want to learn? ok, I'll teach you' " 158 Harry.

"I think...if the charity hadn't found me and helped me, I think I would have been on a completely different path going the opposite way than I am going but I think actually because I was helped, found, that was a good thing, for me. It's taught me a lot. It's taught me who I am. It's taught me how to act, how to behave, how people act in certain situations, and how to deal with a lot more things than most people can" 1471 Harry.

"This place you can talk to anybody and they'll listen, like, that's what you need. You just need someone being that you can cry on their shoulder or you can just talk or like if you've got an issue, it can be solved, and that's what you need, this is this place, like, this place is just amazing" 786 Carly.

The support, trust, friendship and guidance has created huge changes in participants' relationships, their behaviour, their feelings towards other people and importantly it has encouraged them to question themselves:

"I used to hit people just for the sake of hitting people, now I look back at it and I think 'what the hell' and 'that's not me now.' Well I'm just seeing things in a different way, like why do I wanna be like that? 511Carly.

"I listen to people's sides more than, I didn't used to give people a chance and now I give a chance, that's how I see it" 709 Carly.

"Now, when I smoke weed, every now and then, instead of hiding it from my mother I'll go to her and I explained to her while smoke weed. Why I do this or why I do that, and then she's not going to go mad at me because we got to the point where we can understand each other" 1381 Harry.

Instead of keeping herself isolated and apart or feeling submerged by shame, Carly is now able to face her issues and her own ways of relating to others. She is willing to talk about her violent behaviour and discuss incidents she encounters. This gives her the opportunity to hear other people's views as well as receive support:

“I got arrested last night and then, I had to come here this morning, soon as all that was, I came here, and I spoke to Sue and Sue was just like, well ‘sit down and we’ll talk about it’, and like, ‘if you want to talk I’ll shut up’, she like, ‘I’ll listen to whatever problem you’ve got’, and that’s how it always is” 840 Carly.

Previously participants had shied away from social contact feeling isolated, different and too untrusting of others to allow anyone close. Now, they are creating new relationships with people at the charities and they have joined programmes to work towards achieving their goals.

“Those are my two main friends and that’s pretty much all I need. I’ve got more friends, but I call them all acquaintances” 907 Harry.

Carly is also enjoying a good relationship with a new boyfriend, the antithesis of her last relationship where she was raped and abused:

“I’m now with someone who is treating me right. He doesn’t ever hit me or anything. If anything, he treats me like a princess, and that’s how I want to be treated for the rest of my life” 602 Carly.

4.7.2. Using Skills and Making Plans

Since experiencing a change of heart, participants no longer felt tied to repeating the past. Their perception of the life that lies ahead of them looks very different to how they used to imagine it. They actively ponder over their possibilities with a positive and hopeful attitude and this impacted their relationships on all four worldly dimensions (see section 5.4). Each participant began to look kindly at themselves and their lives and found inherent value in their past experiences and the skills they had developed over time. A more positive sense of self emerged alongside new likes, dislikes, desires and hopes, as they planned their pathways to their future. They began to move forward, willingly engaging with education, GCSE classes, self-development courses offered by various charities and hobbies. Participants also spoke about wanting to work on their relationships with others and themselves.

Plans to do with education:

Participants' plans took many forms. Education was a central route to achieving each of their goals. Time became an important way to measure what they had lost. They looked at how their peers had gone ahead and already completed their GCSE's and they felt that they were lagging behind. They compared themselves to their peers and the position they felt they would have been at, had they not been excluded. They wanted to make up for lost time and build foundations for their futures:

"I never used to want to do education, but it's going to bring me better, I can do better things with my life. I could have owned my, by now I could have been working, stuff like that, quite a few of my old friends are working, they're in full-time work you know" 976 Mary

"I just want to get my education" 306 Mary.

"I'm starting doing my English and maths and getting my GCSEs done and then I'm doing that business management course and an IT course, see, and working to things" 986 Chimi.

"The goal is to get a couple of GCSEs. English is helpful in writing emails and stuff, maths is helpful in working things out, so I'm doing the two main ones that I need and that's it" 1429 Harry.

A mentor at Harry's charity had been trying to persuade Harry to join it for many months. Having left school at fifteen he had been roaming the streets spending his days taking drugs and drinking. After his change of heart, Harry agreed to attend the charity if they would help him achieve his goal of joining the Israeli army. That goal did not work out and instead the charity offered him a job, which he was happy to take. Now he was able to hold the conflicting feelings of having wanted one thing and found success with another, and reflect on his personal growth:

"I wanted to go to the army, so he was trying to find something like a yeshiva, which would be preparation for the army so once you turn eighteen you can go straight to the army, meanwhile you're training but that didn't work out unfortunately or thankfully, I'm not sure which one, but ...on the same day he gave me a job at this [charity] e-bay. I built up, grew a lot, started studying, feeling less angry, feeling less upset, learning how to deal with things" 509 Harry.

As well as studying for his GCSE's Harry had daily sessions with a mentor. He wanted to make sense of his religion and the contradiction between his father's religious behaviour and his father's sexual abuse of his sister:

"I was interested to find the answers I was looking for. I was questioning my religion rather than just saying I don't care if I'm doing something wrong, I was questioning if I am actually doing something wrong, which is what I was learning with him" 647 Harry.

Plans with skills that already exist:

Another aspect of each participant's construction of new relationships with themselves in their personal world was that they felt able to harness their experiences and turn them into skills which they could use to help others who had suffered similar abuse, as Chimi described, *"to give back"* 695 Chimi.

"Yeh because obviously with a lot that I've seen and I've had done to myself, it's like when people come up to me and say I've been beaten by my parents, I now know how to understand what they've been through because I've been through it" 376 Mary.

"Because people, people like have had, like me myself I've had a bad upbringing but that's why I want to help people because I know how it feels. I don't know everybody's situation, but I know how it feels to some, to some extent, like, I think I could help" 486 Carly.

"I've got a structured plan now. After this I've got an apprenticeship waiting for me, a painting and decorating one, because that's what I desire to do, that kind of a thing, now there's plans in place, there's people around me" 869 Peter.

Carly was not going to be put off if she did not achieve her qualifications. She believed she had all the skills she really needed to work with other young people who had been abused:

"I've got no qualifications and I'm trying to get my maths and English because I need it to work in a children's home by the same time it's not a big part of my life because you don't really need that ... as long as you've got a loving heart and you can accept people for who they are, and help them out as best you can, like, to your best, like, your best way of doing...I just want to help people" 480 Carly.

She was so determined to help other young people and so deeply moved by their sad stories that she felt she would work unpaid:

“Because that's how, I don't care for get paid for it, because that's, I just want to help people” 496 Carly.

Harry had already been encouraged to use his experiences to help other young people at the charity he attended:

“I was speaking to him for about an hour and I managed to calm him down and get him to listen to reason a little bit, but it takes a lot of time. And there's only some people who can do it, and if you've been through it you can speak to people like that because they understand what they've been through” 774 Harry.

Peter also felt he also would be able to give back to society:

“[I] see myself impacting other people's lives, maybe taking on apprentices myself, being a mentor, an example for younger people that may face similar issues I have, in order to, because I've come to my own understanding of how the world is. I can use that knowledge on other people” 893 Peter.

Plans to do with relationships:

Participants wanted to take their time and make use of the help that was offered to them, to figure out how they would move forward and work to repair their relationships. Speaking to mentors they shared their problems and anxieties. Having people who were dedicated to listening to them for the first time in their lives, fostered their creation of good relationships and calmer emotions not only towards others but also themselves:

“If I can understand why other people are upset, you can't understand why other people are upset unless you can understand why you're upset so, if I understand, when I'm feeling upset, I take a step back. Why am I upset, what's going on, is it going to help for me to sit and sulk? No, right fine just deal with it” 1248 Harry.

“There's been opportunities for me to go away and get some head clearing space...I've moved to another house in ... The neighbour I live with there has an allotment, so sometimes I work with him on the allotment. You see all these things have been opened up and the opportunities. Life's never been better than at this point in my life. In a lump sum, this is the first year, since I've been eighteen where everything's come together and been fair” 631 Peter.

Some participants worked on making old relationships better as well as making new ones. Peter and Lazer recognised that there were destructive relationships they needed to let go:

“And I had a lot of close friends that I had to let go as they were not really a good influence on me, they wanted me to be a druggie like them and I’m still friends with them but I wouldn’t consider them good friends any more as I used to” 773 Lazer.

“When I left [prison] I had planned, everything... I had everything in place. I had a structured plan of what’s going to happen to build things with my mum...The family’s coming together. There’s a lot of people that have drifted out of my life, in a good way because I don’t need them no longer” 583 Peter.

As well as focusing on relationships in the present, participants were able to think about new relationships they hoped to make in the future. They also thought about the different ways these would make up for what they had missed in the past, as Lazer described:

“You make friends for life, you have fun, you have a good time...so part of the army when they take you on the three day run through the desert and you live on tuna and water and sleep on rocks it’s part of the experience, even although it’s uncomfortable at the time afterwards you remember it and you laugh about it and you have good stories about it, it’s like an experience for life, and you can share it with other people. You belong. I don’t have a community that I belong to. I don’t have a school that I have friends from, and I can say yes I belong to this and that” 652 Lazer.

And Carly described her future plans to move home in order to be closer to her boyfriend’s mother:

“I’m moving to Cornwall and I’ve got everything, I’ve got everything that I want, so, I wannabe near the seaside for one, because it’s more fresh air down there, my boyfriend’s mum lives down there, so it’s close to his mum. I don’t really have any fond of place....to be honest because everybody else disowned me” 259 Carly.

Plans in the physical world:

Another way that participants began to make plans was through engaging in sport, going to the gym, or training to improve their physical fitness. For Carly the draw to the gym was not just to lose weight but for fun. Lazer began to focus on his physical health in the hope that it would help him when he joined the Israeli army. Chimi had a more serious concern to build himself up so that he would be able to teach other people to protect themselves:

"I love dancing. I don't go to the gym yet but, because I'm going on holiday ... over Xmas with my partner, so I'm a bit like I can't be bothered at the minute (she laughs). It's Xmas and there's loads of like goodies to eat and stuff so I'm gonna work out probably when I get back because I'm gonna start street dance again. Have you heard of Step Up 2? It's proper street dance, it's cool" 1005 Carly.

"I do fighting classes and self-defence. If I have to attack someone [I] should also be able to do that and I shouldn't, no one should be able to bring me down, I shall always be the one, the last one standing" 725 Lazer.

"In the short-term I want to become a Krav Maga instructor so I'm practising that now, and like, I'm really passionate about it I think it's really important for people to know how to fight..." 686 Chimi.

Like Lazer, Chimi, also began training in Krav Mega to get into peak health and fitness as part of working towards his goal of joining the Israeli army. However, Chimi's main concern was to improve his emotional stability as he felt very much at the mercy of his explosive reactions: *"it's not being able to control myself"* 957 Chimi. Unable to hold down anything more demanding than part-time work he planned to make appointments with doctors and therapists in order to overcome his PTSD.

"Memories of my dad, my dad, my mum, my family, just haven't gotten over, it's just it triggers...my mood to flip. I'd actually go and beat the living daylights out of someone" 539 Chimi.

"I've got my appointment with the GP...so that's what I'm gonna do, then when my therapy's done, gonna think about getting a job and everything. I'm just gonna take things slow. I'm not gonna rush into anything so then when I get back into a job and I get flashbacks and stuff in the middle of the job it causes me to do the most irrational stuff so, it's not being able to control myself and be more at ease and peace" 948 Chimi

4.7.3. The Future - A Life Worth Living

Previously, the thought of the future had been limited to an anticipated repetition of the past, like a black cloud forecasting only gloom. Now, having safely navigated away from rock bottom and the lonely experience of giving up, participants enjoyed a feeling of excitement and hopefulness. Encouraged by their new relationships and plans, they felt that they could look forward to the future with confidence:

"I've got a loving partner...I've got my brother and sister in my life. I'm getting engaged at Christmas so that's a good positive thing to look forward to...So I feel I've got everything that I need" 226 Carly.

Peter described how he imagined himself going back to show the staff in his old residential care home how well he had done:

*"I'd love to see the school now, I'd love to see my teachers and say, Look! guess what, I'm this and that, I've got this far and I'm successful now, so I want to be able to show people that"*1213 Peter.

Participants imagined themselves involved in the world in ways that would bring them success. Lazer described: *"Now I feel good about myself, I believe I can do anything I want"* 596. They thought about work, family, hobbies, homes, desirable things and various relationships they wished to achieve for themselves over the coming years. Having joined programmes, committed to GCSE classes, self-development courses and feeling supported by people they could trust, their attention was free from the hostility and difficulties that used to surround them. Chimi explained: *"Yeah no parents to fight with, there's not much violence in my life, I'm out of the war, the war is over"* 1027 Chimi. Now they were focused on bringing their plans to fruition and enjoyed choosing how they would live:

"Why should I live a fake life? That's not really me. That's not me and I don't like that lifestyle and I hate that lifestyle in fact, and I don't want to be part of that lifestyle. I believe in freedom. Everybody should do how they feel it's a free world out there and...The only correct thing is to do [what] you feel like because there is only one you in this world" 344 Lazer.

“Now I live by myself I can have whoever I want in my apartment, umm, do what I want, have a free normal life, and also it taught me to take care of myself 442 Lazer.

Bea also believed that good things lay ahead, but she experienced emotions mixed with determination, newfound courage and apprehension, when she looked ahead:

“I'd get to the point where I'd say alright then, I am not going to get anywhere so I give up believing in my future. We'd have career days at school and they'd ask me what I want to do, and I'd say I don't know because my mum's telling me I am not gonna get anywhere in life, so I don't even think that far ahead, yeh. Now, I have had that sort of a past, but what's to say, the future's [not] going to be different? Fair enough I've had seventeen years that's such a bad life, but what, I've got another eighty-three years possibly? So what's to say they're gonna be another eighty-three years of what I've just had? No. Just got to believe in something I guess” 963 Bea.

Mary was impatient to catch up with her peer group and begin her working life: *“I just want to get my education. I want to get into work” 781 Mary*

4.7.4. The importance of commitment and work

Having turned to embrace a happier future and create their own paths forward, participants knew their goals would require hard work, commitment and determination. They were also aware that moving forwards brought new tensions and contradictory feelings, as Harry, Bea, Chimi and Mary explain:

“I want to have a family, I want to have a good life, I want to make a decent amount of money, I want to own my own property, want to own my own company. So I know...I need to work very hard and smoking weed every day won't get me there at all, but smoking weed every three months, on a weekend I think it's perfectly fine...maybe in the future I might want to get a business degree but not yet I don't have the patience to start getting a degree” 1415 Harry.

“Yes, but...there is so much negativity and... so little positivity... negativity overtakes the positivity.... there is always going to be a good thing in the day but because there's so much bad stuff that's happened...The negativity will always take over, but, like, when you think about it, throughout life you can have good days and bad days” 1112 Bea.

“I'm like eighteen now, and I should be in like, university and I'm still doing college, at my level 1 college, it's affected my life so much” 150 Mary.

"I've still got to keep cracking on, you know, you can't just stop and be all upset and miserable about the past when you can't change it. So you have to invest the energy that you want, like invest the effort that you want them to change in yourself" 929 Chimi.

4.7.5. The importance of religion

Religion played a significant role in all participants lives. For Bea, God had turned out to be a disappointment. She was facing a future with the realisation that she alone would be the architect of her own life:

"God is supposed to be the saviour, this person that helped you. Where is the help that I have needed for the past how many years? Even school didn't help me, so like, hoping there is a God out there? There is no God. So I just think life is what you make of it, if you give up, you give up, that's your fault" 1048 Bea.

Whereas Peter, remembering the times that he used to go to church with his mother when he was younger, found himself drawn back to, and comforted by, his faith:

"I just read the Bible loads in prison...I was sucked into it, I was drawn to it. In the past I used to go to church, my mum used to go to church anyway...it was more natural for me to read it...I was quite open about it in prison...I looked nowhere but to have faith in what I believed. I looked nowhere else. Since then it's worked and I am standing firm in what I believe and, you know what I mean?" 1055 Peter.

Harry was brought up in an ultra-orthodox family, but he decided to adopt the rules he liked and discard those that would not suit the life he planned to have:

"I think one day I'll be religious not because it's something I believe in, but because it's something I believe is healthy for a family, as in Shabbat, it's extremely healthy family time, get away from technology. Not now, but I think I will when I'm older" 655 Harry.

4.7.6. The importance of family

Each participant had endured the destruction of their family in one way or another. Of all seven participants, only Harry and Mary remained living at home. Lazer and Chimi had been forced to leave home by their fathers whilst Peter, Carly and Bea had been

removed from their parents for their own protection and grown up in care. Yet, in spite of so many fractures, family relationships were still important, and each participant had hopes of creating their own family in the future.

Peter imagined how his life with his family should have been and he was hoping to repair his relationship with his mother. *“I wanted to live with my family, I wanted to live like every other kid”* 1104 Peter. With the support of the charity Peter now believed he could tackle the problems that lay ahead,

“Things started to come together. I attended here. I still had a little bit of issues but I’m working on them. This is the place for me, me personally. I’m working on my family, the family’s coming together” 615 Peter.

Carly’s parents and aunt had “disowned”²⁶⁷ her refusing to have any contact with her at all. Turning her attention to newer positive relationships had helped her cope with her losses and she was happily planning to move to live with her boyfriend so they could both be close to his mother:

“I feel like I’ve got more of a connection with my partner’s mum and family because they feel like they’re part of, like, my life. They accepted with me for who I am, not for somebody that I’ve got to be” 270 Carly.

In spite of some difficult hurdles, Carly was also determined to start her own family.

“Unfortunately, I got told I can’t have kids but there’s other ways...I still do get upset because I wanted my own children...but now I see it as a good thing because I’m not really fussed about my own child or an adoption child but it wouldn’t be an adoption child for me, it would be my child” 726 Carly.

Chimi, although concerned about his unstable emotional reactions, still hoped to become a family man. He intended to work and achieve financial stability after sorting out his emotional problems:

“I’m thinking I’ll settle down when I’m forty, thirty-five, when I reach a more financially stable, emotionally stable, at this point I don’t think it’ll be a good idea” 540 Chimi.

For Lazer, marriage and family were a big part of his future plans:

"I hope I will find a girl there [in Israel] that I can eventually marry and build up a family, umm, it's kind of the reason why I want to go" 625 Lazer.

4.7.7. The importance of helping others

All participants wanted to use their experiences to *"try to help other people"* 944 Lazer, or to *"give back"* 695 as Chimi described. Peter hoped to become a painter and decorator, to start his own business and use his success as an avenue to help other young people who had been through similar experiences to himself:

"[I] see myself impacting other people's lives, maybe taking on apprentices myself, being a mentor, an example for younger people that may face similar issues I have. In order to, because I've come to my own understanding of how the world is. I can use that knowledge on other people" 891 Peter

"I'd help them out...like, your best way of doing, like doing with it, because people, people like have had, like me myself I've had a bad upbringing but that's why I want to help people because I know how it feels" 485 Carly

"I can help people I just know I can. Yeah, because I've been in that situation" 471 Carly

Chimi, aware of his current emotional limitations wanted to take things slowly. Finding his emotions uncontrollable, he was nervous to take on new commitments in case he behaved badly or let someone else or himself down: *"I'm not gonna throw myself in there and then get out, it just doesn't look good on me"* 980 Chimi. The legacy of his father's brutality had deeply impacted his life. He, like Lazer, wanted to learn Krav Mega, but Chimi wanted to use it professionally. He was passionate about teaching women to protect themselves from menace.

"I see menace, I think for every woman a man is the biggest threat. Imagine a small little girl, just five foot three, like a cute little pretty girl and a massive guy, it's frightening. I want to cater specially for women and I'm passionate about it and it will boost their confidence and if they go on a night out they know they can defend themselves and I think that's good" 688 Chimi.

4.7.8. The importance of developing one's self

Peter felt he needed to understand “*the massive crushing*” 2018 that had happened to his family and himself. His mother had constantly told him “*you’re just like your dad*” 1340, and her accusations, in combination with her refusal to look after him, had given him the feeling that he carried some deep and terrible character flaw inside himself. He wanted to find out how he fitted in to the family and understand in what ways he was similar to his father:

“I’m still finding out about my dad. There’s still a lot of things I’ve still got to find before I can get to the bottom of everything. I need to dig deep into it” 1318 Peter.

Within the last few months, social services had found Bea a new home. She was now living with a kind and supportive foster mother in a family she was happy to be part of. No longer surrounded by hostility, she had the time, support and peace of mind, to turn her attention to herself and had begun to think about what she wanted out of life. She was discovering that she could make good things happen, like her relationship with her new mother and her new relationships at the charity. She had the realisation that, having successfully negotiated such difficult times in the past, the future lay before her, waiting for her to create it:

“I have wanted to give up, but no that wasn’t my chance of dying, I am still here because, something, I am on this planet for a reason, I have got a reason to be living, there’s something, I have a purpose I have just got to find out what it is, it is just going to take me a few years to believe it properly” 1080 Bea.

Lazer, like Bea, was aware that his life will need worked out as time goes on. Planning to join the army and have a family, he has created his own moral compass, in opposition to the morals he was raised by:

“So I believe that as long as I keep on trying to be the best and as long as my limits higher than they might actually be and when I reach that limit put it even higher, I’ll be living a normal life, as long as I don’t do bad to other people, I try to be happy with myself and try to help other people be happy and I try to help my friends I’ll be successful in life, that’s what I believe” 927 Lazer.

4.7.9. The importance of hope

Having now turned their lives around, participants began believing in themselves and felt there was now hope that life would work out well.

"I feel I can make something in my life and then I didn't. I used to feel like there's nothing there for me but now I feel there is something, I've got a goal and I'm gonna make it that's how I see it" 720 Carly.

"I have been in hospital, I have wanted to give up, but no that wasn't my chance of dying, I am still here because, something, I am on this planet for a reason, I have got a reason to be living, there's something, I have a purpose I have just got to find out what it is." 1072 Bea.

"I'm pretty sure, I don't know how it will end up, but I'm pretty sure it will end up well, I'm not worried" 826 Lazer.

"There are possibilities for everyone. But sometimes you just can't see them because you're that damaged yourself. Like my head is that fucked up, that I, I can't, my mindset is, no, there's no out of this, but in reality, I know there is an out of this, I know that there will be like ten years from now I could be living in a nice house have a family be working and a good job" 1056 Bea.

Mary was aware of the negative impact that being excluded would have on her future employability, but she was also full of hope that she could put it behind her and create a better path ahead:

"That's the downside because when you come to job interviews and like, 'what's the past been like?' And you're gonna have to tell them that you've been excluded, they're are going to think well 'we don't want you here'. That's what it's going to be like...The past is the past, now it's the future. That's what I like to look forward to seeing" 1072 Mary.

4.8. Superordinate Theme 5 - Looking Back:

Behaviour Is A Sign to The World

4.8.1. The Underlying Issue

Growing up deeply embroiled in conflict situations at home, school or in care, participants had no one with whom they could safely share their feelings and problems, as Bea explained *"I just literally want someone to look at me and say: 'I understand how you feel, but it's not like that'"* 127. With no opportunity to explain or discuss their feelings they wished their teachers could have seen beyond their behaviour and understood the help that they needed:

"I used to go to school and sometimes I would just cry and they'd be like, 'what are you crying for?' and I used to, like, tell 'em and they'd be, like, 'I told you what's just gone off at home, is at home, when you come here it's a different place'" 525 Mary.

"I was being a fool, that's how I see it, but it's not, it's not, if you know what I mean, I was doing it for help really, it's for help really, but I wasn't telling them" 992 Mary.

"Yeh...there's other things in the world that's going off, they've got no right to discriminate, sometimes it's because they don't know any different" 1367 Peter.

"Like they need to understand sometimes with the kids not behaving wrong because she wants to behave like that, it is because sometimes there's a reason for everything, like, she just wants attention, or she's got so much trouble she doesn't know what her emotions are. There are so many different reasons to bad behaviour, but they just think you are behaving badly, you are an issue they don't think about the issues to make you behave badly." 584 Bea.

"[School] didn't accept my needs, it didn't accept the fact that I went into care, the fact that I tried killing myself the fact that I, anything happened, it was just like 'Right you've gotta work here, you've got to do it'" 783 Carly.

Some participants were desperate to get away from school and go back home. Although they had different reasons for causing disruption, or for wanting to go home, participants all wished that their teachers could have understood them and recognised or take into account what motivated their behaviour. Harry and Peter could not bear how awful they felt when they were with other children or to stay in school:

"I didn't actually want to go to school, so ok, I'm going to be here but I'm going to get myself in trouble" Harry 41.

"The only way for me to be comfortable was to get excluded because I didn't wanna be at school, I needed a reason to go home" Peter 82.

Mary had tried many times to tell her teachers she was having trouble but found they would not listen to her. Constantly fretting for her mother's safety, she would behave badly in order to get back home:

"I had a lot of trouble at home which compacted with school and I didn't want to go to school, I didn't want to leave my mum and things like that" 25 Mary

"Then, when I did go, I'd go in in the morning and sign in, and then go home and then after two go home...obviously with all the drama that was going on at home, I just didn't want to be there" 90 Mary

Chimi used his behaviour in a rebellious way to challenge the authority of the teachers and show his resistance to the ethos of the religion, community, family and friends who had let him down so badly:

"I was very rebellious, and I still am and a lot more today but, yes, so I had a phone. The moment they found out that they chuck you out. And that was that" 56 Chimi

"I've got even more [rebellious] now, I've got a rebels page, designated for rebels. It's like, I'll show you. (takes phone out) This is my page, it's all about all white sheep and one black one, it's about leaving the community with all its rules and regulations. There I was for the highlife, videos, pictures, this religious woman on Shabbat and [there] I was filming her, Yiddish, rock, yeah, so it's rebellious because anything I do, like Friday nights going out, anything and everything rebellious" 749 Chimi

Harry and Carly, oppressed and abused at home, rallied against being told what to do:

"They never asked you what you want them to do, what you feel like you need. They just say 'this is what you need. Do this, do this, do that'. And when you're in this state of mind when someone tells you to do something you say 'no, I don't want to do that, I'm not going to do that" 339 Harry

"I felt like, I was like...getting hold back from what I was wanting, from like, what I want to do, and I didn't want nobody to do that to me" 374 Carly

Lazer was also oppressed by his father and community and bullied by his teachers and peers. He felt as if he was “*locked in a box*” 339. Knowing that his family, school and community did not support Israel, Lazer had chosen to join the Israeli army to get back at them:

“For me it will be like a revenge on my past so it will help me overcome my past which I still have not overcome although I was once part of that community” 620
Lazer

The rules of his religious community did not allow men to cut their sideburns or beard and his family, trying to stop him from cutting his hair, threatened him that if he did, he would receive lashings from the angel of death in the next world:

“And then I stated rebelling. It was one of my proudest moments of my life. And then I tried to become a gangster. I love my pictures, I dyed my hair and I took such haircut I'll find you a picture, and I did this, I took two piercings this is how the back looked and then one day I just cut it all off” 900 Lazer

5. Blending in SEA

5.1. Introduction

In section 3.3.5 I described in detail the benefits, protocols and philosophical orientation of Structural Existential Analysis (SEA). In this section, I interpret the data using SEA. SEA is a research tool which elucidates and clarifies research data by bringing many major attributes of existential philosophy to the analysis of data. It looks at the different facets of experience including space, time, emotions and paradox. These facets specifically guide the researcher to excavate deeper into the territory of the felt experience of the participant. The contribution of SEA to this research is invaluable as it lays bare the inherent spectrum of human emotions experienced by participants. In this chapter I will continue my analysis using SEA to deepen our understanding of the findings.

The first aspect which I will explore is the concept of time in relation to the themes and stages in life through which the participants have progressed. I then continue to look at participant's emotions as the pointers to their values, how participants expressed themselves across the four dimensions of existence and the paradoxes they encountered.

5.2. The Concept of Time in Participants Lives

Participant's relationships to time could be captured as a collective (see Table 11 below) as it followed the same course for each participant across the themes. As participants looked back over time they clearly expressed changes in their ways of being-in-the-world as they grew up, became excluded from school and moved beyond their exclusions. I will now illustrate how the concept of time emerged from the data by considering how participants spend it and were oriented towards it in their everyday lives. As there is no specific prescription of how to use these major concepts, I was free to reflect how I absorbed the way they emanated from the data and create my own way to convey this to the reader.

Participants' experience of time showed itself to me in six salient ways which I call their 'mode of being' (depicted by X Axis). I felt these modes captured their "Cognitive mental processes" (Husserl 1964/ 1970, p. 42). Experience involves consciousness of something, thus these participants' **modes of being** embodied perceptions which were "intentionally related to something" (Moran, 2012, p. 64) **this something** being not an object of physical reality of "genuine (*reell*)" (Husserl, 1964/ 1970, p. 43) but rather a mental state or experience which was concerned with "what is *immanent in the intentional sense*" (ibid). I now explain the ways in which these six expressions of time appeared to me, I then present them in a table, after which I discuss the ways in which participants engaged with them through the lens of the themes:

1. *Sense of self*: Participants experienced a clear change across time in their sense of self as they described their retrospective experiences of exclusion up until the present day. At home their sense of self was hugely diminished and paltry. In school they experienced a diseased and flawed self, a comparative and lacking self. In the theme Giving Up they lost a sense of self altogether and it only re-emerged and began to grow as they found their will to thrive and experienced a 'Change of Heart'. Moving on and making better choices encouraged recognition of their creative and fluid sense of self.
2. *Worldly dimensions*: Moving across each theme in time participants tended to relate to themselves and others from one dominant worldly dimension. The physical world dominated at home or in care. Their negative personal world was of greatest importance throughout their school years as they struggled with the differences between themselves and the other pupils and grappled with their rejection by their families. The physical world took precedence in the theme Giving Up as they focused on using their surroundings to relieve the pain they felt. Experiencing a Change of Heart, participants' spiritual worlds then began to blossom, generating an inviting and benevolent social world. When this happened, participants became involved with all four worlds equally, caring for themselves and engaging with others.
3. *Intentionality and orientation in time*: Intentionality at home was blinkered and fixed in response to the abusive ways in which others behaved towards participants and for this reason they were oriented towards looking back, always expecting that the present and future would become like the past; all

aspects of time were viewed through the past. At school they looked across, towards others, to define themselves. In Giving Up, they stopped looking at the other or themselves, no longer looked outwards or inwards, and unable to move forward or back, they wanted to stop time. In a Change of Heart and Constructing a New Me, participants intentionality became directed outwards towards the world and their new possibilities.

4. *Emotions and behaviour*: At home participants expressed their emotions through repetitive behaviour and at school by turning away. In the theme Giving Up they wanted to surrender to inertia. Moving forward in time they consolidated themselves as individuals in the present and incorporated the future into their worldview. Here they opened their emotions to others and to possibilities instead of remaining closed and fixed. They began to make different meanings in the world.
5. *Energy flow*: How participants expressed their energy changed over time. At first it had been stuck, cyclical and repetitive, after which it became depleted and moribund, but then it bloomed with new hope and became invested in gaining values and finding ways of creating and building a future. In the Change of Heart and Construction of A New Me, participants gained an appreciation and desire for the values which they had lost, or which they felt had been out of their reach and their energy soared and began to flow.
6. *Value of education*: While participants were suffering abuse at home the value of their education was absent. Wrapped up and engrossed in their problems at home, even while spending time at school, they were too distracted for education to hold any meaning. As they progressed beyond school and out of their family environments or out of residential care, their desire and appreciation for education and the rewards it would bring them blossomed and grew.

I found it helpful to envisage the flow of time as the **Y** line on an axis (see Table 11 below) to show the chronological movement from childhood through the present day and into the imagined future, from left to right.

I plotted each theme horizontally along the **Y axis** in clear stages, giving evidence to the changing nature of the participant's engagement with the world around them as they move through time. On the **X Axis** I have plotted the ways in which I felt the

participants expressed themselves. I was particularly struck by these modes of being (Heidegger, 1926) and how these changed over time. See Table 11 below.

Table 11. Changes in Self, World, Orientation, Action, Energy and Value of Education Over Time, Moving Across the Themes

M o d e O f b e i n g	Theme 1. Malevolence at Home	Theme 2 Chaos at School	Theme 3 Giving Up	Theme 3 Change of Heart	Theme 4 Constructing A New Self
	Self as harmed	Self as different, diseased	Self as lost	Self emerges	Self as Responsible Adult
	Self -shrunk ignored and violated, surviving	Self -stuck, not understood, alienated, alone	Self - unsuccessful to be gotten rid of	Self -flowing, becoming meaningful, can belong	Self -expanding, creating
	Dominant world physical world	Dominant world personal and social world	Dominant world physical world	Dominant world personal and spiritual	Dominant world spiritual, personal, social, physical
	Orientation in Time Looking back	Orientation in Time Looking across to others	Orientation in Time Not looking, stopping time	Orientation in Time Looking around at the world	Orientation in Time Looking forward to the future
	Action protective, hiding, repetitive	Action repetitive, running away, fighting	Action moribund Surrender to oblivion	Action accumulating values	Action exploring, building, meaningful, moving forward
	Energy Stuck and confined	Energy Comparison, lacking	Energy Moribund, declining	Energy Investing in self	Energy Reaching out to others
	Education absent	Education meaningless	Education Gone, empty	Education participant	Education creative
	Time passing orienting towards the future → Y Axis				

Interpreting participants' experiences over time through the lens of the themes, we can see that in the first superordinate theme, Malevolence at Home the essences of childhood emotion, like wonder, discovery and playfulness in relation to the physical world were absent. In relation to parents, in the social world there was an absence of expressions of love, tenderness, empathy and closeness for all participants except for Harry whose mother did try to help him after the news of his father's sexual abuse of his sister became public. At home these and many other ways of being a child and being related to as a child, had been ignored, and in its place participants' attention was on the physical world as they faced violence, abuse, neglect, or oppression from their parents. Participants' emotions focused mainly on fear, hunger, shelter, survival or establishing a sense of self. Participants' behaviour centred on self-protection, survival and their physical reactions to abuse and neglect. Their thoughts were overwhelmed by their circumstances at home and because of this they had no interest in education. There was no mention of any meaningful, friendly or supportive relationships. The sense that the world conveyed was through violence and a need for protection of one's self or a family member, as Mary explained: *"I didn't want to leave my mum...I stayed at home for about seven months"* 25 Mary

At home their sense of self was limited as it had been oppressed by their relationships and a shrunken sense of the personal world emanated from this time in their lives as their mode of being was mainly confined to expressing the impact of their difficulty at home. I use the word shrunken to describe the movement away from the world by the participants. They moved away from the potentiality of their growing child-selves in the face of their denigration, neglect or abuse as they had no other fruitful or nurturing place to go. The lack of alternative places and ways to express themselves, resulted in the repetitive and stuck nature of their behaviour. This can be seen as an expression of their confined space and lack of a sense of possibilities.

Continuing onwards in time across the themes, participants' social relationships are represented in the superordinate theme Chaos At School and here their lack of connection to education is manifest. Instead of school being a place where they could flourish, make friends, enjoy their creativity and experience success, it was a place

they were desperate to get away from; a place full of confrontation with pupils or teachers who made them feel belittled and unwelcome. Here, their behaviour was misunderstood. Participants expected that it would convey their underlying anxieties and fears, but instead it conveyed an 'otherness', a not belonging; it conveyed rejection and aggression and it caused chaos, fear and anxiety. Peter described the chaos he created: *"I just was off the rails basically, running round, running round, running out of school on a daily basis"* 63. Participants were unable to focus on school because their minds were on their problems at home instead of their personal development or possibilities in their experiences at school, as Harry reflected *"I don't wanna be here"*475.

Here too, the intentionality of participants was towards comparisons. It faced outwards into the social world and when reflected back it magnified the differences between themselves and others. In this reflection they experienced a negative sense of self, an abused self and a self that could only reciprocate in aggression, violence or withdrawal. Carly described her fear of others: *"Anybody that looked at me, I'd beat them up...even teachers"* 287. In this reflection, they found themselves lonely, lacking, rejected and isolated and again they spent their time oriented towards repetitive ways of behaving, feeling alienated from others and also 'doing' the alienating to others. I felt that Carly's laugh signified a possible attempt to recover a part of herself and that she had lost, perhaps "an underlying truth" (van Deurzen, 2015, p.195) and although she alone was responsible for herself, her project to recover herself was wholly contingent on others, at that moment, myself.

In this phase in time, education was felt to be obstructive as participants wanted to get away from school, to escape the many problems and unpleasant relationships they faced there. Those in mainstream schools felt disconnected from teachers and peers and lost in their work as a result of the little amount of time they had spent in class learning, as Mary described: *"when I went to school I didn't go to any classes"* and as Bea said, her prolonged absences rendered her insignificant at school:

"because I'd not been there from year seven, if I misbehaved like one student told them one story, that's the story they're gonna believe, my story doesn't mean anything." 1157

Those in religious schools felt distanced and angry as they disagreed with the religious values that they felt the other pupils and teachers forced upon them, or the way the teachers treated them. They also still had to contend with the abuse they received at home. I describe participants sense of self here as 'stuck' in the respect that they spent their time again repetitively battling against their home life, teachers, and classmates. Participants seemed to communicate through their behaviour, *"if anyone bothers you just beat them up"* 431 Mary. Lazer found that no matter how much he tried to express himself, at home or school, he was never successful and nothing changed: *"they [his parents] wouldn't talk"* (194) *"however many times I tried"* 305 and he felt stuck *"in a box following laws and following rules and all these things where the rules are like a code where everybody has to do the same thing"* 354. Lazer's parents seemed to be neglectful and derisory, whilst his teachers were denigrative and physically abusive. Participants' volatility seemed to be about the frustration of not being able to find any way out of the destructive cycles in their relationships. This meant that they experienced a sense of personal diminishment, feelings of worthlessness, a lack of opportunities to discover something they were good at, or could take pride in, all of which had a devastating impact on their personal world.

Moving across to the superordinate themes, The Shift, and Giving Up, participants intentionality shifted further inwards to their personal worlds. Experiencing only negative and destructive images, they descended into a dark time where the pull of non-existence seemed more desirable than living. It was as if there was no inner space that was safe and no way to stand in the world with any kind of confidence. Feeling hopeless, exhausted and having no meaningful place in other peoples' lives, they found themselves of no worth and wanted to be freed of themselves. Grieving from such loss and disappointment their energy became moribund, searching for oblivion. Trying to get away from their emotions, they became more engrossed in the physical world, reducing themselves to a body to be gotten rid of through drugs, sex, alcohol or suicide. They could find no other way to get away from their problems. They had become lost in the world and having reached this point, they felt empty. Neither they, nor their worlds, held value.

In this lowest point, they make a surprising shift through a Change of Heart, which is the name of this theme. Here, it seemed that at one specific moment they came out of

their despair and moved towards a newfound vision of hope. For some this profound change came from an unexpected awareness of a different possibility, as Mary explained, she suddenly saw herself caring for her mum and realised she could care for herself: *“I’m thinking that if I’m able to sit there and look after somebody and concentrate on what they need I should be able to sit and concentrate on what I need and that’s what kicked me in the backside”* 280. Using the word “kicked “ emphasises the unexpected and sudden nature of this change in perception. Carly had tried to commit suicide and woke up in hospital with the realisation: *“I needed to change because I couldn’t be putting myself back in hospital”* 544. Whereas, for Harry there had been a vision of worth and a perceived possible loss of that potentiality: *“The fact that I’ve always wanted to have a life, and have a family, I ended up telling myself I have to get hold of this somehow”* 497 and he was suddenly faced with his own temporality when he saw that time will not wait for him: *“If you don’t get out of it in time, you’re basically done for life”*487.

This different future now perceived, motivated participants to spend their time thinking about new possibilities and other ways they could relate to the world. In this change there was a loosening of the hold of their negative childhood experiences. The entrapment of these past experiences seemed to weaken in comparison to the new possibilities which had suddenly opened before them and participants responded by letting go of the destructive grip of the past.

This small movement enabled a shift in focus and caused their attention to turn to fruitful engagements in the social world. Now their experience of time prompted a desire to use it in a better way. There was now a feeling of a self that was beginning to flow, and their personal worlds also began to flourish. Participants’ energy became invested positively in planning new ways of being, they joined charity organisations and began to make plans for their future. Repetitive behaviour ceased and they move forwards into new relationships. Time now appeared limited. Previously it had seemed endless and they had wanted to stop it. Now, aware of their temporality and experiencing the tension between life and death they pushed themselves to search for meaning and a new way forward. Their intentionality now expanded to include a spiritual world.

Participants relationships grew to encompass a spiritual world full of values, goals and hopes. This phase exists in the theme called 'A Change of Heart'. Here wider social values like education, belonging to social groups, gaining skills, jobs, and for many, religion, all become meaningful. As participants opened up to the social world, they approach it with a new sense of freedom, no longer feeling stuck they started expressing themselves and their personal worlds bloomed. Here, time took on a quality of being a commodity, the use of which allowed them to move towards a desirable self and a worthwhile future.

Finally, as time was spent enjoying the benefits of their new relationships in the world, they moved to different ways of being-in-the-world. This is described in the next theme of 'Under Construction, A New Me'. Here the future became accessible through positive images. Of course, it could only be grasped in terms of emotions, imaginations, dreams and visions but it now contained hope. This future powerfully beckoned to all participants, who, no longer relating from their inner feelings of shame, began feeling proud of their achievements. For Bea it's call was the weakest as it was less defined with a more feeble image of the good things it would bring. For the others, it's call was loud and clear. As participants engaged with time in this phase, they reached out to other people, joined groups and institutions and oriented themselves towards values that lay ahead. Education and other social structures became a worthy means to invest energy and ways of creating a sense of self, building their dreams and developing a sense of belonging. Reflecting on their new determination to be sociable some participants said they would have been unable to talk to me just a short time ago.

5.3 Changing Emotions and Values

Existentially, emotions are an essential facet of our existence as we pivot on them to face, or turn, from the world. They map our values reflecting the choices we make, our likes, dislikes, fears, pleasures and anxieties (van Deurzen, 2002, 2005, 2015, 2019). Understanding emotions helps us get to grips with ourselves. Always existent, they are the "glue between our worldview and a particular situation" (van Deurzen, 2005, p. 7). We can express them, ignore them, hide them and even hide *from* them but we cannot get rid of them.

Emotions give us orientation in the world, as Bea described, her feelings of worthlessness affected the way she saw her future: *I am not gonna get anywhere in life, so I don't even think that far ahead*" 962. They can help us find direction and our way ahead. Sometimes we get stuck in them and they cause us to stop moving, for example, if we are taken over by a "mood" (Heidegger, 1962, p.173). Chimi recognised that being continually stubborn with his father kept their relationship at a standstill: *"we're both very stubborn so it just didn't, it didn't, there was no flow"* 195. Even if participants recognised their moods, they did not necessarily understand why they felt the way they did, as Heidegger describes: "The pure 'that it is' shows itself, but the "whence" and the "whither" remain in darkness" (ibid, p. 173). Mary often felt stuck in a mood which she did not understand: *"like sometimes I just flip for no [reason], like, someone can say something so little "*1054.

Life circumstances had forced participants to focus on surviving rather than building a sense of self or getting to know things they were good at or developing their values. They had grown up in extremely difficult circumstances, swamped by whatever their parents demanded of them, neglected, abused and overwhelmed by emotions. The hostility of their daily lives was all they knew, and it seemed they repeated the same behaviour shown to them and because of this, they had limited emotional experiences. Mary described how anger was all she knew: *"my dad used to tell me, all this time, like "if anyone bothers you just beat them up"*430. By adopting her father's values, Mary allowed his world to dominate and diminish hers. The value participants perceived their parents had for them, was the same value they ascribed to themselves: as Carly said *"I felt like I was nothing anyway, so it wouldn't matter if I hurt myself"* 1142.

Carly's loss of meaning and permanent anger reflected her years of abuse and her life in social care. It is widely accepted that adults give meaning to childrens' worlds and then children use this knowledge to produce their own meanings (Schore & Schore, 2008; Stern, 2002; Bowlby,1969 ; Baradon, 2016). When we discover ourselves as the ones "who give meaning" to the world (Sartre, 2003, p.39) we discover our importance and our agency and most importantly, we discover who we choose to be. Sartre suggests that without meaning there is "nothingness", that we are empty slates, to be written up through our own actions. In this nothingness, "nothing can ensure me against myself" (Sartre, 2003, p. 39), against the emptiness inside me, except the

meanings I create. I believe that children and young adults, still maturing and learning about their emotions and values, have a right to expect adults to protect them from their own naive emotional selves; to “ensure” them against the incapacity of their youth and from this inner emptiness. It is the adult’s responsibility to help them navigate Sartre’s “nothingness”. When adults neglect to do this, the impact is far reaching and debilitating. These participants had been deprived of discovering so many different ways in which they could make meanings in the world and most importantly, how to recognise and express their emotions. Participants’ parents did not spend time teaching their children how to find themselves in the world or understand their emotions. Instead, they used the participants for their own emotional needs.

Childhood is the time when children need parents to allow them time to make their own decisions, practice having likes and dislikes and explore finding solutions to problems (Twerski and Schwartz, 1996). This is a time when parents, often unwittingly, help their children to differentiate themselves from others. They ask questions of their children; what they think as opposed to what their friends think, and what opinion they have about things, and their parents give feedback on what they say. They ask how their days at school are, things that happen there, etc. Parents give their children increasing amounts of responsibility and encourage them to ask questions. They utilise role play games, art and all kinds of play to stimulate their children’s imagination and develop their confidence, an understanding of others and sense of self (Ginott, 2003; Holt, 1970). Through these techniques children get a feel for themselves and the interesting effects they can have on the world; they begin to find their own unique, yet fluid, sense of self.

The participants in this research had no such support, help or loving input from their parents. Quite the opposite. These participants parents bullied them into submission when they expressed their own opinions, or questioned the status quo. Consequently, participants’ emotional development was stunted. They became carried away by the force of the others around them and lost in emotional chaos in everyday life having to succumb to the dominance of their parents. With no pre-set identity, no pre-set path to embark on and no emotional support, participants were stranded in a no-man’s land. Continually feeling alone in the world and swept away by their feelings they were unable to move forward, as Bea described: “*when I’m sad I am literally sat on my bed*

screaming, crying, and pulling my hair out, my body is boiling, but I'll be freezing cold, I can sit in the freezing cold and sweat and sweat because I'm so hot" 894.

Rebellion and aggression provided some limited avenues through which they could enjoy getting a feel for who they were: Lazer said *"it felt pretty good not doing what they want"* 855. Refusing to wear the customary garb of his family and religious community and cutting his hair in ways which were forbidden brought Lazer pleasure. Mary enjoyed these limited, albeit violent ways, which she had to express herself: *"It used to give me a happy feeling, I genuinely don't know why, when I was doing it, it felt good"* 630.

In school and at home, emotions were conveyed through anger and fear. Participants lived in a world of uncertainty, unable to discover positive values or aspirations, dependent on people who did not support them. As children, they had little choice but to be swept along by others. Peter described this falling in with others, he was *"drawn to the wrong people, missing school, doing drugs instead, staying at there, and then **blinded** to my actual life"* 521. Heidegger describes this quality of humans to be able to lose themselves in others as, he says: "becoming blind to possibilities" (Heidegger, 1962/1973, p. 239). Peter, by using the same word, "blinded", illustrated this very feeling of having lost himself, and shows the natural fit of an existential perspective as Heidegger describes.

Stuck in repetitive cycles, participants became worn down by despair and their unsuccessful attempts to relate to the world. At school and home, surrounded by friction and hostility, overwhelmed by the loss of their parents' care and their teachers' understanding, it seemed like they were always at sea. The differences between themselves and others combined with feelings of worthlessness, and they lost sight of any safe place to hold on to. They began to give up. Carly, Bea, Mary and Lazer tried to commit suicide, Chimi, Peter and Harry turned to substances, they all lost their will to carry on. Filled with despair and hopelessness they saw no possibilities ahead.

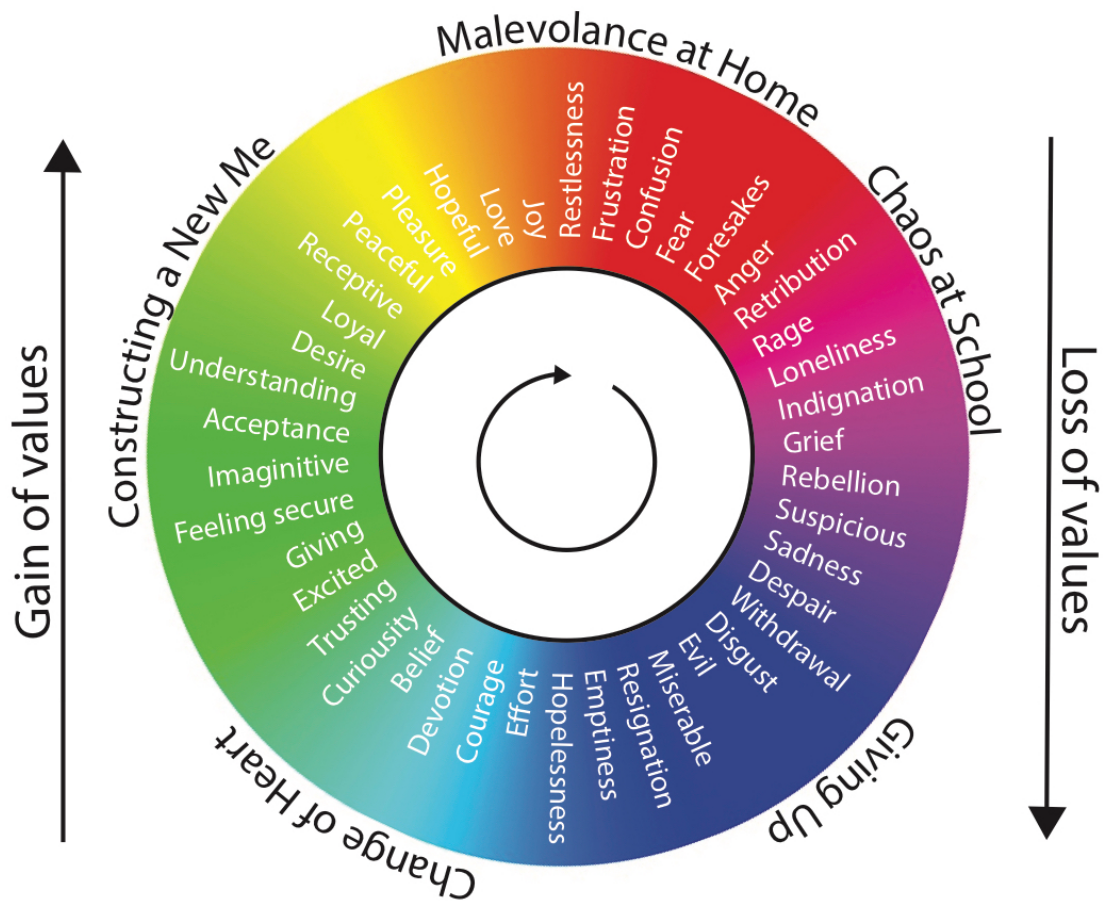
In the depths of their distress and emotional pain, when they hit rock bottom, they unexpectedly encountered the paradox that death is what makes life meaningful. In what seems like an almost miraculous shift, each participant suddenly found and took

hold of a good image of themselves, and this image pulled them forward out of their stagnant position where they had become moribund in loss, grief and impossibility. Each turned their mind to this new image, filled with potential, creativity and the possibility of their future success. In this moment, they seemed to experience what Heidegger (1926, p. 316) describes as the “momentum of a push – an absurd arousal” and they turned to focus on their needs, finding positive ways to move forwards with renewed energy and hope.

Released from the grip of despair they grasped new values which spurred them forwards. They took pride in themselves and ascribed their worlds with meaning as they made efforts to develop themselves and their interests in the world. As Lazer said to me: *“A few weeks ago I would never have talked to you but, but now, no matter what, I’m working on it to talk to people and try to work on my social issues”* 1080. In this renewal of themselves, values began to appear along the way, showing them direction, as Sartre describes happens when one becomes engaged in the world through freedom: “Values are sown along my path as thousands of little real demands, like the signs which order us off the grass” (Sartre, 1996;38).

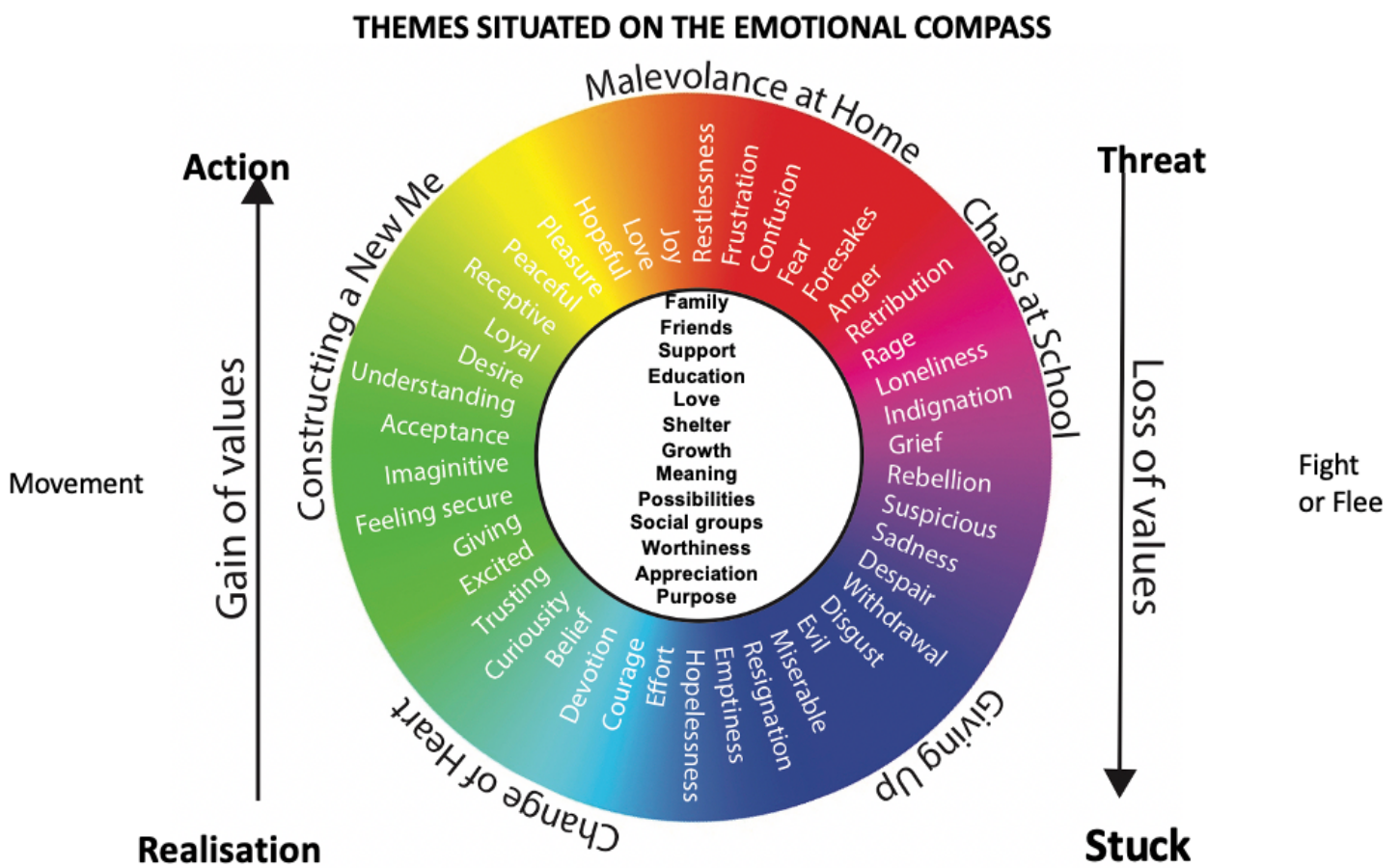
The following diagram is based on Emmy van Deurzen’s Emotional Compass (2019, see Appendix 6) and portrays the collective movement of participants’ emotions as they moved in time across the themes, from growing up and going to school, to their descent into despair and their re-emergence in the world, with hope.

Table 12a. Changing emotions as participants move away from and then towards their values as they progress in time across the themes.



Adapted from an original diagram, Emmy van Deurzen, 2019, see Appendix 6.

Table 12b. Changing emotions, loss and gain of important values



Adapted from an original diagram, Emmy van Deurzen, 2019. See appendix 6.

5.4 The Four Dimensions of Existence.

Building on the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger and the therapeutic philosophy of Binswanger and Boss, van Deurzen's model of the four worldly dimensions of existence brings further clarity and direction to understanding how we live in the world (van Deurzen 2019, see chapter 3.2.5, also Appendix 7). As part of SEA, this provides another map to chart the spectrum of relationships that participants experience.

These dimensions help focus the context of experience and may be understood as follows: the Umwelt is the natural, physical world participants find themselves in, including their relationship with their bodies. "An obstruction in this area usually has far-reaching consequences for the other dimensions of existence" (van Deurzen, 2002, p. 64). As the findings shows, a prevalence of aggression, violence and abuse during the growing up years at home blights relationships on every dimension. A dearth of love and security combined with abuse seems to press the participants into using the physical world as an emotional outlet, for example, Mary, Bea, Carly, Peter and Chimi consistently behaved violently towards objects in the world and treated people as objects. All participants abused their own and other peoples' bodies when overwhelmed by emotion, especially anger or sadness, the former of which frequently turned to violence. Carly used the physical world as a tool to relieve her anger in such a dramatic way that she would lie in the road waiting for an approaching car to run her over. When the car stopped, in her fury, she would attack the driver.

The Mitwelt, the social world, has a wider social context and places each participant in their family, social group, wider community and culture. This world is continually increasing as in this digital age people have access beyond their own community to other social and political realms. In this social world of relationships there is the potential to reach out to others, to feel we belong, that we are part of the group. Again, the impact of abuse rendered communicating needs and emotions to others, in acceptable ways, all but impossible, as Bea says "*it's because I don't really speak about my problems, I keep it all in. Who can I seriously talk to? So I just keep it all in*" 897. When the news of his sister's rape by his father became public, Harry was consumed by anger and unable to face his peers. His life *in* school constantly revolved

around trying to get out of school: *“when I was in school I climbed over the fence to get out of school, all sorts”* 297. His pain and anger directly curtailed his ability to relate to and be with others and he withdrew, like other participants, from his social world.

The personal world, *Eigenwelt*, is the world of beliefs participants have about themselves, it represents their selves, their nature and character, their feelings about themselves, their personal relationships in the world and their history. It is subjective and unique to them. The penetration of violence and hostility from others twisted participants' feelings about themselves depleting them of confidence and self-worth. It imbued them with negative feelings like being unwanted, different and disgusting. Carly said: *“with everything that was going on in my head... I'd rather, like, stay in bed... they didn't want me”* 61. Peter said: *“I had this thing in my head that there was something wrong with me...simple as that. Everything I'd been through: there must be something wrong with me”*765. Crucially, this attitude diminished their freedom to access all of themselves, to feel free to create themselves or explore their potential in the world. Participants suffered greatly from feelings of shame and belittlement, believing that others could see this terrible, unbearable part of themselves. Peter explained: *“I felt like a monster”* 753, *“I couldn't handle being with people, being in a class, I was so scared of how awful that I was”* 780. His feelings rendered him petrified to relate to others and unable to relate to himself.

The fourth world, *Uberwelt*, is the spiritual world. This is the realm of values, beliefs, hopes, potential, imagination and excitement, as Mary summed up: *“The past is the past, now it's the future. That's what I like to look forward to seeing”*1129. Here religious beliefs emerged. Those who felt religion had been imposed on them, let go of the rules their families and communities lived by, others, who did not have religion in their lives, turned to it and found comfort, guidance and social connections. Peter, having remembered his mother taking him to church when he was little, found pleasure in re-making old familiar connections. Relationships in these worlds can be reflected inwards through thoughts and reflected outwards through choice and behaviour. Here a person experiences freedom to make choices. A person practiced at living in this dimension has learned to cope with anxiety and even use it as a spur towards their values (van Deurzen, 2015). As participants moved on with their lives this world brought them a hopeful sense of self and their potential. Carly described this shift: *“I*

feel I can make something in my life and then I didn't. I used to feel like there's nothing there for me but now I feel there is something, I've got a goal and I'm gonna make it that's how I see it" 720.

Van Deurzen reminds us that the dimensions of existence “interlock, and interweave, mingle and mix” (van Deurzen, 2009, p98) and the boundaries are not clearly defined, for instance, intimate relationships “extend into the third personal dimension” (van Deurzen, 2002, p. 69), the Eigenwelt. For theoretical clarity we separate them.

The following tables describe participants experience across time in the four worldly dimensions of existence as it appeared to me throughout the themes.

Table 13 below: Worldly Dimensions 1. Adapted from an original diagram, Emmy van Deurzen 2019.

This table illustrates conflicts, challenges and paradoxes on the four worldly dimensions as participants move through theme 1, Malevolence At Home, theme 2, Chaos At School, and the first part of theme 3, The Shift, Giving Up.

Table 14 below: Worldly dimensions 2. Adapted from an original diagram, Emmy van Deurzen 2019.

This table illustrates conflicts, challenges and paradoxes on the four worldly dimensions as participants move through theme 3, ‘A Change of Heart’ and theme 4, ‘Under Construction: A New Me’

See Appendix 7. Van Deurzen (2016) Conflicts, challenges and paradoxes on four dimensions.

Table 13. *Worldly Dimensions 1*

	Umwelt	Mitwelt	Eigenwelt	Uberwelt
Experience of participant in the physical world	Nature: Focus is self-protection. Awareness of the natural world as potential harm. Needing warmth, food and shelter in the world Pain everywhere. No place to call home	Things: Focus is self-protection. Seeing all objects as potential objects of harm to others or for self-harm. Pain everywhere	Body: Focus is self-protection. Ignoring bodily needs, using body as vehicle for anger, not respecting body space of self or others, repetitive movements towards/ away from harm. Pain everywhere.	Cosmos: Causing chaos, no harmony with surroundings No connection to own place in the universe. Blinkered to see only part of the moment and the past. Hurt & Pain everywhere.
Experience of participant in the social world	Society: Focus is self-protection. No communication. Rebellion against public consensus. No regard for laws, rules, safety. Using body instead of language. Obliterate society for own needs. Hurt everywhere.	Others: Focus is self-protection. No respect for others or self or mutuality. Dominated by others. Trying to dominate others. Desperate for love. Desperate for attention. Hurt. Anger and indignation.	Ego: Focus is self-protection. Rejection of others. Rejection by others Distrust of other. Using violence and rebellion as a voice. Behaviour confined to anger, rebellion. Harsh. Forceful. Impatient Withdrawal Hurt everywhere.	Culture: Focus is self-protection. Repeating a negative history, being led by the past. Not belonging to the group. Isolation. Retribution towards the group. Hurt everywhere, and from history.
Experience of participant in the personal world	Person: Focus is self-protection. Filled with anger, hatred, guilt, No personal sanctuary. No inner feeling of safety (I'm not ok).	Me: Comparisons. Angst. Repetitive movement. Exaggerated differences I'm a Monster. I'm Flawed, worthless. The world is at my disposal to use how I want.	Self: Falling apart Diminution of self Disintegration of self Distrust of self. Self-harm Attempted suicides. Drugs, alcohol & violence Hurt & Pain	Consciousness: Unacknowledged self. Emptiness Fear Anxiety Chaos, cyclical thinking Hurt Silent grief
Experience of participant in the spiritual world	Infinite: Ignored Repetitive sense	Ideas: Focus is self-protection. Anger Fear Suspicion	Spirit: Focus is self-protection from pain, hurt. Destruction of existence and essence	Conscience: Shame Guilt Rebellion Disrespect Pain

Table 14. Worldly Dimensions 2

	Umwelt	Mitwelt	Eigenwelt	Uberwelt
Experience of participant in the physical world	Nature Looking outwards to the world with appreciation. Feeling sheltered, warm and fed. Making a home. Developing self to earn my keep.	Things Seeing objects in their proper place and respecting them. Learning skills. Creativity with objects, (music, gardening).	Body Respecting bodily needs. Trying to get sleep, food healthy routine. Cut down drugs and alcohol. Not wanting to cause pain or feel pain	Cosmos Trying to be calm and working towards harmony with surroundings Feeling connection to own place in the universe. Looking outwards beyond the moment. Body as a vehicle for expressing being.
Experience of participant in the social world	Society: Developing communication with others. Respecting rules. Keeping self and others safe. Using language instead of body and violence. Patience. Wanting to contribute from self.	Others: Reaching out to others Respect for others and self and mutuality. Ending domination. Giving and receiving love and attention. Recognising other's emotions. Joining others (dance, GCSE courses, learning)	Ego: Diminishing differences and stopping rejection of self and others. Wanting to trust. Self-development. Rebellion changing to authenticity and purpose. Taking a stance not a position. Curiosity about others. Humility. Enjoying others. Ability towards achievement.	Culture: Changing the history, knowing & accepting the past. Willing and desire to belong to the group. Meeting others. Effort towards the group. Helpful contribution.
Experience of participant in the personal world	Person: Building a sense of self, looking after self. Friendly. Enquiring. Creating a home, personal sanctuary	Me: Calm. My right to exist. Stable. Accepting help. Comparisons. Finding a sameness. Worth-full. Respect and awe for surroundings Exploring my productivity in the world.	Self: Bringing together of self. Willing to trust and forgive self. Reduce drugs, alcohol & violence Love Support Choice	Consciousness: Acknowledged self. Connection to self and others. Fear Anxiety Helpful constructive thinking Spoken grief Relaxed.
Experience of participant in the spiritual world	Infinite: Making meaning. Investing in religion. Looking beyond the present	Ideas: Creating values Organising routes to achieve goals	Spirit: More freedom of self. Feeling alive Looking for purpose. Creating a sense of self	Conscience: The past. The future Responsibility Choice. Effort Paradoxes. Truth

5.5. Conclusion

Using IPA and SEA enabled the data to be explored against the relational context of being-in-the-world. It revealed intricate details about participants thoughts, feelings, relationships, values and experiences, and enables the reader to 'feel into' the life of the participant, just as van Deurzen describes is the goal of the researcher (see section 3.4). Combining these methods allows the findings to be placed in the broad context of human living while maintaining a sharp focus on the particular. Salient perspectives which this illuminates are highlighted in the following discussion.

6. Discussion

6.1. Introduction

The subject of school exclusion is vast and has been researched from many different angles as discussed in the literature review. The majority of past research is on pupils either at risk of exclusion, still within the school system, or in PRU's. A fraction of this research is phenomenological and investigates the lived experience of the pupil (Herd, 2014; Lally, 2013; Moore, 2010; Wood, 2011). I was unable to find any phenomenological research which addresses exclusion from school, from the community or from an existential perspective, so this research assumes a unique position.

This research question asked participants about their experience of exclusion from school. Describing their home life and parental relationships was their main response even although the question asked about school and the word home was not mentioned. All participants responded by talking about their experiences in terms of the far-reaching impact of their difficult and sometimes frightening experiences at home. This response orients us immediately towards the most important experience for each participant: their relationships at home. Exclusion behaviour seemed to be experienced both as a consequence of their relationships at home and as an extension of life at home. These findings agree with the body of literature discussed, that the effects of these primary relationships have long-term consequences on their access to and pathway towards achievements. However, I believe that in contrast to previous research, they clearly indicate that the place to rectify these consequences is the participant's lifeworld and their relationships across all four worldly dimensions in the context of their existential understanding of themselves and the human predicament.

Unlike other research on school exclusion, participants were interviewed in the community. Here, through choices of their own, they were engaged in education, but now it was provided by the charity to which they were affiliated. Participants had also begun to engage with self-development programmes and special courses, like computer skills, to prepare themselves for work. In this sense, they were catching up on the past and working towards their future. This also gives this research a unique

perspective which is simultaneously retrospective and current; exclusion was just behind them yet still impacting their lives. Participants were committed to achieving English and Math GCSE's and they had invested themselves in programmes and skills training provided by the charities to help them move forwards. Successfully completing these courses, participants hoped they would become eligible for apprenticeships and be in a good position to reach future work goals.

This current position brought their hopes for the future into the present moment. This provided a continuity of experience, bridging school, exclusion and beyond, and thus, these findings offer a very different perspective to previous research: they offer a uniquely 'whole' picture of exclusion within a forward moving dynamic.

As poverty, gender and ethnicity are the three foremost characteristics used to describe the recurrent yearly cohort of excluded youths, I begin this discussion focusing on them. I then discuss issues which emerged from the themes, their similarities and differences, and perspectives that were new to the literature reviewed. As this research has intended to provide an existential perspective on the subject of exclusion from school, I offer existential concepts as valid alternatives alongside traditional viewpoints.

Finally, I review my own part in the process, some wider implications of the study and its limitations.

6.2. Looking Beyond Poverty

Circumstances of poverty have undoubtedly been connected to several of the participants' family situations. Bea, Carly and Peter had been taken into care. Social services had re-located Mary's family after they received death threats from a local youth who purposely drove his motorbike into Mary's sister. Lazer, Harry and Chimi had been forced to leave home and had used local community services. Chimi mentioned being on welfare benefit. Lazer spoke of how his father, who had "*quite a bit of money*" 51, paid someone to give him a place to sleep and food to eat after he forced him to leave home and then paid for him to go to a yeshiva in Israel. Harry lived at home with his mother. He had been sent to summer camp in New York and then

yeshiva in Israel after being excluded from school. After being excluded Chimi had been sent to a yeshiva in France then Israel. Regardless of financial circumstances, no personal experience was situated in or described in, terms of poverty or wealth. The ground for all discussion was emotions, comparisons between themselves and others, and relationships. For Bea, Carly and Peter, being looked after was clearly emotionally charged but it was expressed in terms of loss, relationships and differences, never material deprivation.

This supports Kallan's (1970) and Stevenson's (2007) assertions that the key problem is privation, not deprivation, as Stevenson describes of children in care: "they have lacked essentials for healthy development. 'Depri-vation' implies something has been taken away" (Stevenson, 2007, p.82). These findings depict experiences throughout childhood of a lifelong yearning for love, affection, validation and trusting, supportive relationships with participants' parents and wider family. For some relationships this was something that had once been and then was lost, and was hoped for again, for others, it had never been. Bea described her devastation when she found out her foster mother had only wanted her in order to get benefits. Chimi had lived in such fear of his violent father who sexually abused him, that he bought a knife for protection. Mary's mother was always inaccessible, living "*in a bubble*" and her father was violent. Carly was neglected, beaten and starved. Lazer was perceived as a threat and the angel of death was incited to avenge his transgressions. Harry was abused by his father, who had raped his sister, but Harry had managed to maintain, even although turbulent, a relationship with his mother.

These findings support Levin's (2012) claim that poverty itself does not result in aggression or violence. Levin's research informs us that Glaswegian youth, despite living with the highest levels of deprivation in Scotland, claim "a resilient sense of self-efficacy" (ibid, p.97) well beyond their Scottish counterparts. This enhanced well-being, in spite of their deprivation, says Levin, has long-lasting positive effects impacting on many dimensions of life such as career, health and relationships" (Ibid, p. 97). Interestingly, one of the measures used by the KIDSCREEN⁷ to indicate this

⁷The KIDSCREEN- quality of life questionnaires for children and adolescent's handbook. Lengerich: Papst Science: 2006.

feeling of well-being, was a self-evaluation question relating to whether or not the individual felt socially left out. The Glaswegian youths did not feel left out. In my research, feeling left out, different and unwanted was a core and terrible experience for all participants, which led to their alienation from others and themselves, and deep feelings of worthlessness.

When Heidegger says “that the ‘subject character’ of one’s own Dasein and that of Others is to be defined existentially – that is, in certain ways in which one may be” (Heidegger, 1962, p.163), he refers to the structure of each of us as an entity of being, called Dasein. Dasein is structured in such a way that his life is intertwined with others: he has an effect on them, and they have an effect on him. Heidegger states that “Being-with” is ontological in its nature. Thus, “Being-with is an essential characteristic of Dasein even when factually no Other is present-at-hand or perceived” (ibid, p.156). This ontological understanding explains why the other is an integral part of our being at all times. The other, then, is of the utmost importance. The other, as the natural vehicle through which we discover ourselves and the world around us, has the capability of destroying or enhancing our sense of self.

These findings support the existential position that we live our lives inextricably entwined with others. Of course we can be alone, but even this statement shows that we gauge our existence and our Being-alone by reference to the Being-with of others: “Being-alone is a deficient mode of Being-with: it’s very possibility is the truth of this” (ibid, p.157). So, the other is resident in our minds and emotions whether we are with them or not. Although we can change the way we are with others, “opening oneself up or closing oneself off” (ibid, p.161), we cannot change the existential nature of being-with-others as it constitutes the language and fabric of our very existence and is manifest in all our relationships. The findings from this research show that relationships are the key to understanding our emotions and thus our behaviour, regardless of the socio-economic environment, whether rich or poor, that we find ourselves in.

6.3. Looking Beyond Gender

Government statistics show that more boys are excluded from secondary school than girls. The findings of this research indicate no differences in gender *experiences* of exclusion. Unexpectedly, even in the recounting of extremely violent behaviour, there was no mention at all, from participants of gender related sensitivities. It must be noted that by the time a participant arrives in the community they have already travelled a deviant pathway for quite some time and their sense of self, which is fluid and ever-changing, may be different to that experienced previously. In my findings, gender identity seems a red herring, precluding the need to be recognised as a human being, which was of extreme importance. This aspect of these findings is of great importance, especially to an existential inquiry. Expressions of violence, disappointment, frustration and the sense and meanings participants made from it, emerged gender free. This research supports Leoni's (2005) findings that gender differences dissipate under the stress of abuse at home. These research findings illustrate very clearly that girls who were subject to extreme violence and who experienced unmediated rage were as violent as their male counterparts. Bea's behaviour was so violent that the police were frequently called, and her teachers told her that they "*don't feel comfortable*"⁸⁸ in her presence. Chimi described violence as his "*second nature*"²³⁴. Both genders equally expressed violence as 'all they knew'. These research findings point to the need for future research to explore both gender experiences equally and clarify the blur between what really happens in the classroom and what is perceived to happen do to our culturally learned gender bias.

Unexpectedly, these findings drew attention to a different, deeper and very important aspect of identity which had nothing to do with gender. Regardless of gender, participants' experiences related to what they felt was their *very essence of being human*. Carly explained, with reference to animals, how non-human she was made to feel by her mother. She described how adults tie up, starve and beat animals and then compared this animal-adult relationship to that between herself and her mother: "*Yeh because there's sick weirdos out there that do that, like my mum, but that's to a young **person**, not to an animal*"¹¹¹⁶. She experienced the abuse she suffered as an attack on her personhood, her right to be treated as a human, regardless of her gender. In announcing their quality of being human, participants are proposing that there is

something much deeper going on than gender identity. These nuances become imperatives which direct our attention, demanding that we listen more closely to the words and the feelings behind them. Knowledge of existential philosophy, of the importance of the structure and meaning of being, enhances our ability to listen and hear. It gives language more shades of meaning so that experiences may be understood which hitherto have gone unnoticed, such as the call of these participants to their quandaries of existence. For this reason, perhaps, such lamenting has yet been unheard?

As Heidegger elucidates, there is a huge difference between hearing, listening and harkening, the latter of which alone, provides understanding:

“Only when talking and hearing are existentially possible, can anyone harken. The person who ‘cannot hear’ and ‘must feel’ may perhaps be one who is able to harken very well” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 207).

Husserl brings to our attention the issue of intentionality which has been discussed in its relevance throughout this research. Even here, discussing beyond gender, intentionality again takes a lead role in helping the interpretation of participants’ feelings. As Warnock says:

“intentionality no longer describes the simple relation between our glance and what we glance at, it takes on a much more constructive...role” (Warnock, 1970, p. 28).

It becomes the arc of our consciousness, between something in ourselves and an object of consciousness. In this case, it is the very essence of Being-in-the-world, as a human, and the recognition of ourselves as such. Without an existential perspective, this issue, which is an issue for each and every human, is missed and may be clouded by the more popular issue of gender.

6.4. Looking Beyond Ethnicity

The DFE statistics describe the prevalence of exclusion as higher within certain ethnic groups. This research unexpectedly discovered that exclusion could also be a direct

result of differences **within** ethnic groups. There was no mention of Jewish youths who had been excluded permanently from their ultra-orthodox community schools in government statistics nor did I come across it in my previous or subsequent literature search. In spite of this shocking discovery it was then surprising to discover, through the analysis in this research, that the lived experience of what I would describe as 'inter-ethnic exclusion' presented in the same way, with all the same feelings and experiences of school exclusion as described through the themes. Lazer, excluded from his family, school and community expressed similar feelings to Carly, about the violation of his personhood: "*You have to, I understand, after all the, I am human, and I do have a **human** brain*" 319 Lazer. This crucial finding again points to the need to elevate the importance of the individual to their essential humanness, their shared qualities of being human, their shared experience of human existence and their shared way of finding themselves in the world, rather than characterise individuals by specific traits or group qualities. This finding also indicates the success of phenomenological research (Smith, 2009) as it shows how the "narrative account may engage several levels of interpretation...which may generate new insights" (Smith and Pietkiewicz, 2014, p. 13).

Lazer and Chimi attended closed community schools which taught and upheld community values. These communities were inflexible and inflicted shame, threats and exclusion on those who breached their rules. The shame of breaking the rules was so severe that families preferred to give up their children, or allow them to be beaten at school, than suffer the disgrace and isolation which may result from questioning the religion:

*"These people can't relate to you, they're just in a different place, they're just somewhere else. If they were to report the teacher they'd get a bad name and that means that nobody would want to affiliate themselves with them and no one would want to do business with my dad and...it would just escalate from bad to worse, and no one would respect them, so they wouldn't, they just wouldn't do it they'd rather...all the kids go through the ...same abusive teacher same amount of physical violence... as long as their reputation stays good. That's the way they see it, reputation first and then everything after"*412 Chimi

Harry's extended family and community wanted to conceal his father's paedophilic behaviour from the outside world and the publicity of a court trial, to protect their reputation. His community and extended family excluded him. Cooper (2002) explains

that “a child’s non-compliance is inevitably a rational response to conflict situations or personal difficulties” (p, 120) but because the system has an agenda which will not accommodate deviance, the behaviour is labelled as deviant or pathological and is interpreted as requiring punishment or specific treatment to correct it. Taking up Foucault’s idea that discipline is a “technique” (Foucault,1978, pp 140) for creating social control, Cooper (2002) highlights that the education system fosters “the production of docile bodies” (ibid, p 120) who will uphold the dominant regime. This seems to be exactly the same situation that I find in the religious closed communities and supports Cooper’s position. Participants were unable to share their trauma in any constructive way with the establishment or with their families, both had labelled their behaviour as deviant or pathological.

6.5. Living with Abuse: The Dissolution of a Sense of Self

I felt that the level of hostility that participants had grown up with was shocking. The connection between violence and school exclusion is widely recognised but the level of harm, insult and emotional injury which emerged from my findings seemed to be unrepresented by the literature. Possibly this reflects the young age of previous interviewees still at school who may be less articulate, or perhaps participants are fearful, like Mary, of the consequences of reporting abuse, or perhaps they have become inured to the violence categorising it as normal, like Bea, Mary, Carly, Chimi and Harry. Cox (2018) and Van der Kolk et al, (2007) identify that there may be an element of numbness and immunity due to the constancy of violence. Crucially, Bea, Harry, Lazer, Chimi and Mary wanted to tell their teachers but were not listened to. Mary and Bea also oscillated between telling and keeping silent due to fear of the consequences. Peter and Bea were also restricted from sharing their feelings by their internal feelings of shame. The issue of representation is complex (Pientrantonio et al, 2013) and dependent on teachers taking abuse seriously, being curious, understanding it’s effects and being able to recognise behaviour as “symptomatic of deeper-seated needs” (McAra & McVie, 2016, p.76). My research recommends that violent youths should foremost be understood as vulnerable even while offending, and victims not only perpetrators.

Harm, in its various expressions was so pervasive for these participants that it became both the background and foreground of participants' experience of exclusion. As everyday conduits of emotion, abuse was bound up in relationships at home as a constant background to their lives and used by participants to represent emotions in their daily lives at school, these feelings thus maintained a continual presence as foreground. This then, is the atmosphere that permeates participants' everyday lives.

Severe maltreatment is known to have negative outcomes for children's emotional wellbeing, delinquent behaviour and suicidal ideation (Radford et al, 2011) and is a strong predictor of violent and problematic behaviour in adolescents (Ben-David et al, 2015, Currie et al, 2012; Berlin et al, 2011; Lansford et al, 2012) Nevertheless, understanding the emotions and imaginations that motivate participants' feelings of anger needs to be prioritised over theory if they are to be helped. Engulfed by a fear to trust, overwhelmed by feelings of being forsaken, abandoned, angry, ashamed, feeling inferior and different, and having no solid sense of self to hang on to in the midst of turbulent emotions, these participants could do little else but repeat the behaviours they had grown up with.

Participants' feelings of distrust, of being different and disgusting, of having something terrible lurking inside, is not spoken about in the literature. These feelings should be recognised as an integral part of the experience of exclusion if a constructive way out of the emotional turmoil is to be found. There is little research on the issue of trust in abused children. Moore (2009) noticed that her participants showed a clear propensity to "overly perceive the intentions of others as negative" (ibid, p. 52) and the findings of my study suggest that the subtle differences in emotions and their consequent effects need to be eked out and understood in much more detail. This lack of trust disturbs each participant's ability to participate in relationships, create friendships and even just hang out with their peers, it is more than a propensity. The expectation that how they have been treated in the past will be repeated, overwhelms participants and keeps them apart. Negative self-worth and feelings of being different have a profound effect on their engagement with the world. Imprisoned in the past, they are fixed in their outlook and their morbid imagination imposes the past on everything they see in the present and future.

Knowing the physiological effects of abuse and that “the brain is a social organ innately designed to learn through shared experiences” (Cozolino, 2010, p. 11) should never become an opportunity to diminish participants’ accountability in the world or our inquiry of how that translates into everyday experience. Shouldering responsibility for our choices and behaviour is the potentiality of all humans, including children (age-appropriately), and helps define and consolidate our sense of self. Focusing on the physiological impact of violence belittles our existential nature. As Sartre reminds us, individuals are free to make choices: “man’s destiny is within himself...since it tells him that the only hope is in his acting and that action is the only thing that enables man to live” (Sartre, 1957, p. 36). Understanding that the pathway to a meaningful life is through learning to cope with our emotions and using them to guide us to our own values takes us beyond theory to philosophy, towards existential growth, towards our possibilities and a future with meaning (van Deurzen, 2015). Even small actions may bring immense changes in one’s personal world and can engender positive feelings of agency. The changes these participants naturally made in their lives, as shown in *The Shift* and *Constructing A New Me*, are exactly the kinds of existential changes which can be available to all youths who are on the exclusion trajectory.

Substance abuse is another known contributory factor to children’s social and cognitive difficulties both as a direct result from the substance and also as the substance diminishes parenting ability (Cleaver, 2012). This study revealed an underlying feeling of disconnection between participants and those parents using substances but also reveals that this feeling was present where no substance abuse was mentioned. Parents were found to be remote, neglectful and abusive, regardless of substance usage. Feelings and efforts to communicate were not reciprocated by any parents, other than Harry’s mother, and participants reported not being able to relate to their parents. Carly described her mother as “*in a bubble*”, Chimi’s mother was “*superficial*”, Mary’s mother was just “*in a world of her own*”. The meaninglessness that comes from being ignored and from not being engaged with is shown in my findings to be debilitating, undermining and even so impactful as to produce suicidal ideation. A sense of self-worth comes from seeing oneself being creative in a positive way and able to bring about positive outcomes in relationships. With no affirmation of one’s self, no sense of self becomes established. Instead, there is a void, an emptiness, and the child is left to feel a sense of nothingness, or invisible. James

(2012) described: “the cruellest bodily tortures would be a relief: for these that make us feel that, however bad might be our plight, we had not sunk to such a depth as to be unworthy of attention” (in Williams, 2012, p. 309).

Scalzo describes this intersubjectivity in the client- therapist relationship where “both parties become key” to emotional development (Scalzo, 2010, loc. 2462) and these findings identify the same intersubjective relationship between parent and child. These participants’ relationships with their parents did not engender growth, instead they were the antithesis of the healthy reciprocity that Scalzo describes. These findings elucidate the gravity and complexity of the human need to feel worthy, important, and related to, and illuminate this need as an integral part of the process of developing a sense of self. Being *related to* is equally as important as *being able to relate*. Being ignored, ostracised, neglected and abused inhibits a child’s ability to relate. Abuse renders relationships treacherous.

As described by Schafran (2014), participants preoccupation with home life resulted in an inability to concentrate in school. As Bea said “*I was the one they expected with A’s, A stars...but because of my behaviour and everything that is going on at home I came out with D’s*” 1137. When Mary was told by her teacher that school is not the place for emotional stories about home, she then said: “*Yeh, but like, that thought is still there?*” 528. In other words, she was left holding her upset with no help to work out what to do and of course, the problem stayed and preyed on her mind. These deeper reasons behind exclusion behaviour need to be explored. Understanding that human nature renders us inextricably enmeshed and absorbed by each other, enables the effect of such behaviour to be understood in its proper context, its “dialectical alternative”, rather than as disobedience or pathology (van Deurzen, 1999, p. 584). This preoccupation permeates all aspects of participants’ lives and impedes them venturing out into the world, making friends or testing out their possibilities. It keeps them confined, blinkered and living in yesterday.

6.6. Nowhere to Turn: Every Relationship Is Bad

Another striking feature of each participant’s lifeworld was the plethora of dysfunctional relationships. These findings agree with Asen & Fonagy, (2017) that maltreatment

must be understood against a background of already existing conflict. Harry's family turned against him. Peter's family disowned him. Carly's family cast her out. Her brother, whom she had been close to, had been taken in by the father who refused to accept Carly because she was so like her mother. Chimi's family turned against him and contact with any of his siblings was forbidden. Lazer, although desperate to keep in touch, was ostracised by family, friends and community. Participants also lived under the weight of broken interfamilial emotions from historic relationships. Attachment theory focuses on primary relationships as predictors of behaviour but these participants were surrounded by constellations of broken, dysfunctional and harmful family and interfamilial relationships which contributed towards the broader picture of school exclusion. Peter described this broken lineage of his family: "*My grandad doesn't even have a mum see ... there's big massive crushing, the whole family's just messed up*" 209.

In agreement with Schafran (2014) these findings show that witnessing abuse was as damaging as being a direct victim. Carly and Mary both described trying to hide when they saw their siblings being beaten. Mary continues to wake with nightmares remembering her father holding a knife to her mother's throat. Participants grew up with a constant fear of harm. However, the findings dispute Asen & Fonagy's (2017) claim that "most current intrafamilial abuse, whether emotional, sexual, or physical...is not the result of a parent deliberately wishing to harm or hurt their child" (p. 2). These participants experienced abuse which was directed towards them intentionally and in Lazer's and Chimi's families their siblings did not receive the same abuse. Whatever reasons are presented to explain motivation behind abuse, an existential position demands that the lived experience of the participant should be heeded with sincerity and respect as each person's lifeworld must be wholly taken as their reality in order to clear a successful pathway out of these painful dilemmas. As shown in my research, feeling unheard or ignored is extremely damaging.

These findings of this research also agree with Hellman et al (2018) that there is intergenerational continuity of abuse but offers an existential explanation for this. Lazer's father used to say after beating him: "*this is nothing compared to what I used to get when I was a kid*" 1095. While Hellman et al, point to social learning theory,

social economics or gender to make sense of this aspect of violence, my analysis attributes this continuity to the ontological nature of being in two ways.

Firstly, ontologically we are both drawn to others and we care about others in such a way that we are 'fascinated' by others (Heidegger, 1962). Thus being-in-the-world clarifies that we can *only* come to know ourselves through our relationships with others, as Merleau-Ponty (1968) describes: "We borrow ourselves from others" (ibid, p 159). Our existential task then, is to pull ourselves out of the herd, to distinguish ourselves as individuals with our own desires and values, to make ourselves our very own, not to blindly follow the path of another. It is **in** this very possibility of distinguishing ourselves, that we can find who we are and choose how to behave. This is portrayed in the first two superordinate themes where these participants have not yet come to build any good or separate sense of self. As children of course, it is through the adult we come to know ourselves and our world. Lazer's father had not yet, even as an adult, differentiated his own values from those of his father, hence the continuity between generations. This intersubjective relationship is so seamless that children take on the world as their parents present it to them, as Chimi said of his behaviour: "*I didn't know any better*". However, looking closely here, we can see that Chimi identifies his choices as emanating from his 'not knowing' self and he takes responsibility for his own behaviour. In Rouses' research on girls at risk of exclusion, he states: "acknowledging the poor choices they [participants] had made", referring to their behaviour. Here he attributes bad behaviour to *choice*, not *self* (Rouse, 2011, p 81) or *values*, thereby missing the relationship between the self, one's values and one's choices and one's behaviour, i.e., that choices are an expression of self *through* behaviour. An existential perspective compels us to interpret even further; to connect and differentiate the relationship between choice, the self, and the magnetism of the other. It is also *crucial* to recognise that being entwined with others, having unclear boundaries and a changeable sense of self is not pathological but rather, an inherent part of human nature, the human condition. As Heidegger explains, we are ourselves, but only in "subjection" to others can one's own being be "taken away". It is **in** this intersubjectivity that participants find themselves (Heidegger, 1962, p. 164) and the researcher finds the participant. Participants so clearly illustrated this existential shift which was bound up with their inability to move forwards; not until they had identified

their sense of self within all four worldly dimensions were they able to make free choices and in so doing, come to know themselves.

Secondly, Heidegger describes how we historicise, which means that our history goes ahead of us. Brought up in abusive relationships, we implant this past way of having been related to onto the present moment and we interpret our present through the past. Thankfully, neuroscience is catching up with this age-old philosophy, recognising the “a priori script” in the human brain (Otti et al, 2010, p. 143).

Consequently, the past will continue unless different choices are purposefully made. With different choices, the future, which has until now been set, becomes open to change.

6.7. A Hidden World: Pupils *and* Teachers

Given the harmful circumstances of home, participants' need for school to be a safe place was critical. Government research (Department for Health and Social Care, 2018; Government Social Research Unit, 2018; DfE, 2018b, 2018d.) consistently proposes prioritising the needs of vulnerable children at school but these findings exhibit a failure of teachers and staff to meet these intentions. At home participants were engulfed by fractious relationships which they did not have the resources to cope with. The harm that bullying and incurious teachers do is doubly impactful when home is unsafe, as for some pupils, school might be the last chance saloon.

Whilst agreeing with Twemlow et al (2006) that teachers who bully reveal an issue of “hidden trauma” in schools (ibid, p.1) the findings of my research suggest that the motivation behind teachers bullying is little understood and is a phenomenon needing research. Teachers are “critical in determining the school climate thus their attitude to power dynamics are extremely relevant” (Ibid, 2006, p. 189). Power relations were a frequent feature of participant and teacher relationships both in secular and non-secular schools. Teachers harshly stifled the voices of these participants, completely ignoring their needs. Severe bullying by teachers in Jewish closed community schools

was an accepted part of the establishment and specifically designed to keep students in line with the status quo.

There is little known about this unexpected finding and no mention in the literature. Lazer, Harry and Chimi all suffered physical and emotional abuse from teachers. Their teachers' behaviour not only permitted but also encouraged peer bullying. In one yeshiva, the head forbade the whole school to talk to Lazer for several days. Winston (2006) describes the many ways that social control is exerted over individuals in Hasidic communities and how contact with the outside world is forbidden. She reports that families must sign documents agreeing to having no phone, internet or television. Some Hasidic Jews, she says, secretly break the community rules and they are shamed or ostracised when caught. She describes neighbours secretly catching lawbreakers to reveal their deviant behaviour.

Again, this draws our attention back to the importance of examining Nietzsche's wise statement:

"Behold the good and just! Whom do they hate most? Him who breaketh up their tables of values, the breaker, the law-breaker..." (Nietzsche, 1867, p. 77).

Lazer and Chimi's families shockingly preferred to get rid of their sons than be shamed in the community. According to Landau (2012) this need to keep order is born from a fear of chaos, and chaos he says, comprehensibly leads to meaninglessness. If the status quo remains intact then so too do all the meanings which it supports. Thus, the world of rituals and rules, punishments and approvals, bring certainty, and adherence to values imbues life with meaning. This seems to be the paradoxical position held by these adults in the orthodox communities.

Victimisation can be seen as a way of keeping the threat of chaos and unpredictability away as Landau describes. Turning the rule-breakers into the enemy keeps the status quo safe. In closed communities any threat to this status quo must, for these reasons, be eradicated. Such concepts are the home ground of existentialism. Heidegger talks about Dasein as having "mineness" (1962, p. 68) and it is this very possibility of 'mineness' that enables Dasein to claim himself. Lazer, Chimi and Harry were not

allowed to claim their 'mineness' and their determination to live authentically resulted in their exclusion. The 'mineness' of the larger group was based on the diminution of the individual in exchange for the empowerment of the group. Living our lives in the "they" is an important existential concept as our individuality can only be found by reference to the other. Finding a good position, balancing between both, is an eternal existential quest, it is natural, not pathological.

Participants' voices were quashed and their home lives were kept at bay by the school; illustrated so clearly by what Mary was told; "*what goes off at home remains at home*" 524. I wonder what the teachers are trying to control when they refuse to attend to the emotional needs of their pupils. Perhaps it is not simply classroom decorum. Could there also be, like their religious counterparts, a need to maintain the status quo? Would hearing these pupils' stories threaten their personal worlds in some way? Are these stories too difficult to hear? Do they feel better by creating a divide between themselves and a traumatic story? Is it easier to blame the other and push away emotion? These questions require research to find their answers.

Parsons (2005) elucidates the complex nature of power relations in social, economic and political social structures. He identifies six interventions "reconfiguring discourse and policy options on school exclusions" (ibid, p. 207, fig 3.). There is no mention of the threat of existential meaninglessness. These findings are sympathetic to Parsons position but suggest that existential fear should be included to reveal it's force behind these systems of power and their related constructions of order.

Twemlow (2006) states that teachers who bully were more likely to have experienced bullying in the past. Existentially our past always and inescapably goes ahead of us, as only through a relationship with it, can meaning in the present be created (Heidegger, 1962). This should not be identified as pathological but recognised simply as part of our daily ontological map.

Recognising that humanity can never be cured of its difficulties or cleansed of its unappealing nature may eradicate any need for blame and enable morals and ethics, in place of fear, to lead the way forward.

6.8. A Darkness Within

"I was just evil" 289 Carly

Five out of seven participants were displaced from their family home. Carly, Bea and Peter were removed from their families because of the abuse they endured. Chimi and Lazer, were cast out from home by the fathers they loved, while their mothers and siblings stood by. Harry grew up *"in a horrible world"* 351 being beaten by his disapproving father. Carly's father left home after he *"petrol bombed"* 415 her house, her mother starved her and burned the ends of a horse whip so that she could use it to whip her. Chimi's father sexually assaulted him. These are all excellent reasons to believe there is something wrong with you if you are a child. Displacement is a known and complex correlate to suicide and depression (van Dulmen et al, 2011) but these findings reveal another aspect to the darkness of inner feelings.

My findings revealed something sinister about abuse that is not in the literature. There was a knowledge in the participants that they each are a product of these people who have done terrible things in the world. Harry said *"We usually take after our parents in some way"* 555. Mary acknowledged she was like her dad, the very person who beat her mother. Peter described that he came from a long line of abuse and broken relationships. Chimi said of his peers: *"we were just on two different pages, frankly we're on two different books"* 83 but of his father he said: *"I'm like my dad as well, we're both very stubborn"* 565. Recognising the effect of and similarity to the other within, the intersubjectivity of our relationships, is a key attribute of existential philosophy, as Merleau-Ponty captures when he says: "I borrow myself from others, I create others from my imagination" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 159).

Alongside this feeling of something bad lurking within, participants also had an ever-present distressing feeling of being unacceptably different. They were sure that others could also see this inner image they held of themselves. This validates the existential position that we are always concerned with the other as it is impossible to feel different, good or bad, without the presence of someone else, even when they are not actually present. The extreme importance of the other is a key insight that Sartre shares when he says: "Moreover the very notion of vulgarity implies an inter-monad relation.

Nobody can be vulgar all alone!” (Sartre, 1962, p. 222). Initially, feeling bad inside and believing that everyone in the world was against them made participants feel certain that their futures would be as bad as their past. These terrible feelings merged into hopelessness and seemed to nurture an inner darkness.

Accepting this ontological relationship between oneself and others is crucial to understanding how participants felt. Their feelings of inner deficit were of course a possibility for all humans, however they did not recognise them as such. To them, this felt unique and contributed to their alienation. It is this comparative a priori structure of being that paves the ground for such bad experiences and possibilities and it felt to participants like a “weakness which exposes me to the gaze of others” (Merleau-Ponty, 2007, p. xiv). This sensitivity to the other, though, is an extremely useful part of Dasein’s structure. When triggered, it has the possibility through activating emotions, to arouse an ability to change. As such it is this ontological structure of being that we must turn to, in order to map the way out of despair.

Understanding that comparisons are natural and simply a facet of the pathway towards existential growth generates calm instead of anxiety. Being aware of this as a universal truth opens a doorway to change, illuminates an inherent flexibility within human nature and becomes a useful tool, as “the Other is the indispensable mediator between myself and me” (Sartre, 1996, p. 222).

This knowledge gives the individual back their right to create themselves. Importantly, it also provides participants with the potential to understand themselves as embodying the nature of all man. This universal position counteracts alienation by grasping the sobering reality that feelings, such as belonging and worth, ebb and flow and do not need to define man. Instead they are part of a natural cycle, important to understand in their own right and something each one of us is subject to. Van Deurzen (2014) takes this perspective further handing each participant their own agency by acknowledging that “when we act in this world every action endorses and reflects a value as we chose to move towards things or away from them” (van Deurzen, 2012). Understanding our emotions as reflections of our values is paramount to achieving emotional stability and self-worth.

6.9. Falling Emotionally Sick

"I was just a person there that didn't matter" 77 Peter

Participants' feelings of being abandoned, abused and forsaken corroded any good connection to others and to their own sense of worthiness. Their desperate need to be with their families who had repudiated them, lent rejection such power that it depleted their sense of self. Being pushed out or being left, kindled, and then kept inflamed, a toxic divide between the excluded youth and others. The toxicity in this divide blocked communication. This supports the claim by Levi et al (2008) that when experiencing mental pain, difficulty in communication may be a predictive factor contributing to young adults attempts at suicide. For Levi, communication was impaired through mental illness or loneliness, in this study, participants' inability to communicate is due to abuse and also self-imposed prohibition, but the outcome is the same. Perhaps the words 'communication' and 'relationship' are interchangeable. If in the relationship, one finds oneself, then it must be that the converse is also true: it is also in the relationship, when they are bad and communication is blunted, one becomes lost. This echoes the experiences of ostracism discussed earlier (Williams, 2012).

Unable to fill this space between themselves and others with good emotions, it becomes a place of darkness where meaninglessness and dark imaginings reside, and participants seem to fall emotionally sick from it. In this sickness the participant interprets their place in the world as being wretched and trapped in this deep divide. Being alone, being apart, being unwanted, being different and flawed, becomes all that they are, and these feelings consume them. This dark lonely place is illuminated in the sub-theme Giving Up. Here, faced with hopelessness and feelings of loss, participants ontic reaction to their facticity and to their broken and fragmented selves was to 'give up' and relinquish control of their lives. This was an existential illusion, as they remained very much in control, repeating destructive patterns of behaviour. They had not yet learned of their own power to make different choices and change their circumstances.

Carly, Peter and Bea had been moved into care. Lazer and Chimi, forced to leave home, had made their own way in their communities. Anderson (2011) suggests that looked after youths are more likely to have suicidal ideation and depressive symptoms. She draws attention to the connection between out-of-home-placement, placement stability and suicidal ideation, identifying that increased instability in the home increases suicidal ideation. This study echoes her findings and suggests that we look to a deeper existential experience of the nature of being, manifest in this inner sickness, as I believe this explains so much more about why these participants were willing to let go of life. The rejection they experienced eroded their positive sense of self, obscured their values and kept them in a perpetual fog, where every day was “an extremely blurred picture where you can’t make anything out, it’s just a blur” 1012 Chimi. Participants, knowing only a limited and negative self through abusive relationships, sank with hopelessness and succumbed to despair.

6.10. The Downward Plunge

“I was taking pretty much anything, I was just trying to forget about all the pain and stuff” 906 Chimi.

The attempts by these participants to descend into the “great O”, as van Deurzen (2015, p. 39) describes oblivion, in order to be released from their perpetual suffering, demonstrates the severity of not having a good enough sense of self to relate to. Just as Winnicott, has drawn attention to the concept of the good enough mother; being able to recognise oneself as a good enough self, is extremely important in order to meet lifes’ challenges. These participants became tired and trapped by their struggle, they wanted to give up, there was no connection to anything meaningful to give them hope or pleasure, and when they needed to muster their deepest resources, they were unable to find a good enough self or relationship within, to keep going. As Bea said: “I don’t want to be on this earth because I’m just trapped in a cycle that I can’t get out of” 1399. Outsiders in their own homes, outsiders at school, having no place to feel safe, accepted or protected, it was as if they were each a “permanent stranger” (van Deurzen, 2015, p. 78). Feeling impotent and rejected they had lost any sense of their own value in the world. Their repeatedly destructive behaviour rendered them stuck. As Harry described: “You keep digging yourself into a deeper, deeper and deeper

hole, and if you don't get out of it in time, you're basically done for life" 486. Tillich describes this very state of existential displacement when he explains that to have spiritual affirmation as well as ontic affirmation "one must be able to participate meaningfully in their original creations" (Tillich, 1952, p. 43). These participants were not involved in creative acts, the kind of acts that *by their very* doing create a good feeling of agency within, and so they experienced emptiness and meaninglessness.

Tired from the hopelessness of their situations, participants faced their immutable existential nature, that "The human being cannot live in a condition of emptiness for very long: if he is not growing toward something, he does not merely stagnate: the pent-up potentialities turn into morbidity and despair, and eventually into destructive activities" (May, 1969, p. 28). May's words describe the impossibility of all humans to live in this situation, but sadly at this time, participants did not have the comfort of knowing that they are suffering, as all humans do. Instead, these feelings were taken as another sign of their inner sickness. Van Deurzen describes "to come to terms with our imperfection and incompleteness and to introduce our children to it and help them cope with it must be one of the main tasks in life" (van Deurzen, 2015, p. 34). Such understanding is crucial for participants to accurately assess the nature of many problems and emotions they face in life. School, as well as home, should be where children gain this understanding.

Participants' abusive relationships were accompanied by a lack of love, support and acceptance. This dearth of good feeling seemed to eat away at their sense of self until there was only a body to be done away with. Rejected by their peers, participants rejected their peers. Rejected by their families, participants rejected their families. Feeling unsafe and alienated at school, participants rejected school. Timmons et al, (2011) found that lack of belonging and feeling burdensome are experiences which characterise adolescents' suicidal ideation. These findings revealed the same. Timmons suggests that these feelings need to be accompanied by a familiarity with pain, fear and suffering, in order to take suicidal steps. In this study, Peter described just such painful feelings of self-disgust "*like someone living in a bin, in terms of disgustingness...the filth in how I was*" 737, and how this emotional pain was strong enough to kill him: "*I was having physical pain from stress. You may not know it, but you can actually die of your own stress, that kind of damage was there*" 746. Bea

characterised herself as a “*diseased child*” 149 expressing the magnitude of her horror at her own self. Each participant expressed feelings of alienation, of being broken, unwanted and horribly different. Peter felt like “*poo*” 760 and a “*guilty monster*” 753 and like the others, he became a self to be gotten rid of.

These findings echo Timmons’ et al and agree with Dulmen et al (2011) that there also need be an “ability to enact lethal injury” (ibid, p.789) but in these findings something more emerged: the importance of concomitant experiences of a diminished sense of self. In losing a sense of self, participants lost their ability to be creative in the world, or to feel their own sense of agency. Good feelings about themselves had quite literally been beaten out of them. Having each found their world full of destruction, destruction is what each participant had come to know about themselves. As Merleau-Ponty (2007) describes: “there is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself” (ibid, p. xii).

Carly captured the importance of this existential understanding when she described the terrible sense of self that she had come to know throughout her years of being beaten and neglected “*I was just evil*” 289. She then compared to this to her present sense of self: “*I've got a future, definitely and before I didn't used to*” 747, identifying the bolstering and rejuvenating impact of good relationships:

“You just need some being that you can cry on their shoulder or you can just talk or like if you've got an issue, it can be solved, an' that's what you need, this is this place, like, this place is just amazing” 786.

She pinpoints that in relationships where she experiences a good sense of self, life becomes happy:

“Before I would want to kill myself, like, I would jump off things, like I try and run in the road and get hit...but now I just don't see the point in that so it's either that or my mate here gives me a head massage and it cheers me up” 750 Carly.

6.11. An Indomitable Will to Thrive

“Selfhood might be best defined as the dynamic and ever-changing experience of being at the narrative centre of gravity of one’s particular world experience”
(van Deurzen & Arnold-Baker, 2005, p.160).

The prevailing tendency to label exclusion behaviour as pathological is to ignore the most inspiring aspect of human existence, the existential self. The central issue of dynamism and movement, identified in the above quote, is the same central issue troubling the lives of these excluded youths. Until they have found a way to move forwards their circumstances have rendered them stuck, and, as these findings have shown, their behaviour became repetitive and unchanging. For us humans, being stuck thwarts our possibility of change, yet, as life has no choice but to realise its dynamic energy, this energy becomes re-routed and as the findings show, descends in such cases towards morbidity and destruction. The statement above, is referring to realising one’s own agency in the world and taking responsibility for it. It is exactly the recognition of their selfhood which participants were deprived of as a result of abusive treatment growing up.

Participants exhibit, in *A Change of Heart and Under Construction: A New Me*, that they had an inner propensity to survive and to flourish, which was obvious in becoming the authors of their own lives. What they also demonstrated is that this proclivity is within us all and that even in the depths of hopelessness, a mere attitude change, turns the lifeworld into one of possibilities. As Tillich (1952) points out, once a person becomes involved in creative acts, he affirms himself and can come to love himself. Peter displayed just these feelings when he said: *“the fact is...and I’ve come so far makes me proud”*³¹⁰.

The changes that these participants exhibited illuminates that “the spiritual life [must be] taken seriously and that it is a matter of ultimate concern” (Tillich, 1952, p. 44).

At their lowest ebb each participant portrayed that they still had the power within to make a different choice from their previous choices. They did this through envisaging a relationship which held within it some good quality that they could emulate, and by

so doing, retrieve that quality from within themselves. When Carly woke up in hospital, she realised she could choose between an ill self with injuries, or a well self with no injuries. She also envisaged her new nephew being able to love her and her being able to love him. Through these new images of her potential self in-the-world she chose to change, to become loving and to be lovable. Mary saw herself as her mother's carer and suddenly realised she could also care for herself. This new way of relating to herself held new possibilities and she chose to be caring of others and to care for herself. Peter saw himself as a person needing structure and order. He saw that his present relationships were destructive. He purposefully put himself in prison as he felt the prison environment would provide him with the structure and order he needed and then he hoped to create this within himself. Each participant in their own way envisaged and engaged with a new possibility which would help them create a more meaningful self.

From this starting point they continued to make choices, all the while relating to images in their minds of their future selves. They chose to make relationships that would support them going forward and let go of those that would not. As their sense of self strengthened, a similar clarity emerged for each of them of other people's reality and identity, and participants demonstrated the emergence of what Laing (1960) describes as "primary ontological security" (Ibid, p, 42), evidenced by their improving ability to cope with the ordinary challenges of their everyday. These findings so clearly illustrate that possibility is a constant and unfaltering companion in life and that each individual has within themselves the ability to choose their own possibilities. They show that in each participant's approach to darkness and their return to the light, they were free to choose, and in these choices, either lost or found themselves. In support of Tillich (1952) these findings show that

"ontic and spiritual affirmation must be distinguished, but they cannot be separated. Man's being includes his relation to meanings" (ibid, p. 47).

In these findings, when meaninglessness descended participants exhibited their desire "to throw away one's ontic existence rather than stand the despair of emptiness and meaninglessness" (ibid, p. 48). This relationship between life and death and

meaning and non-meaning, illustrates the important benefit of understanding exclusion behaviour as a wholly existential crisis, instead of pathology.

Ascribing behaviour to pathology (Baruch 2001, 2010; Baradon, 2016; Broughton, 2014; DSM 5) then, is to overlook the simple normality of the human struggle and to forget our freedom to choose (Sartre, 1996). It is clear here that participants found that in choosing life, the difficulties they encountered become opportunities to make further choices, to assert their own values and consolidate their own sense of self. They had retrieved themselves from Heidegger's everyday 'they-self' (Heidegger, 1962) and instead become thoughtful and participative in creating a self they preferred.

6.12. Behaviour: A Sign to The World

"There is always a way to understand the idiot, the child, the savage, the foreigner, provided one has the necessary information. In this sense we may say that there is a universality of man: but it is not given, it is perpetually being made" Sartre (1957, p. 39).

These findings show that participants imagined that others could see their behaviour was due to emotional distress and confusion as Bea said: "*the only way I can make people realise...is by showing them how mad [angry] I am*" 1369. The problem was that they did not realise that in these instances their behaviour would not lead to understanding. As others reacted with "non-reflective consciousness" (Sartre, 1996, p 36) they were unable to fathom deeper meanings and instead, objectified the recalcitrant behaviour. In these situations then, "subjectivity must be the starting place" as "man is nothing else but what he makes of himself" (Sartre, 1985, pp.13,15) and for this reason only a dialogue will reveal the emotions and thoughts behind the behaviour and the meanings the pupil has made.

As the findings of this study show, participants and teachers were rarely able to communicate and for the most part a good rapport did not exist. It seemed that both sides were trapped, imagining their worlds were separate. Ontically, it was true, their worlds were far apart, but ontologically, the nature of being is such that our emotions are recognisable as shared. Through the sharing of these universal inner states,

bridges can be built between different worldviews. Ultimately, then, we can see we are not far apart after all. As Sartre says: “every configuration has universality in that every configuration can be understood by all men” (Sartre, 1985, p. 39). So, in this sense, the teachers in this study seemed to fail to acknowledge their understanding of emotional distress or take their position of being-in-the-world, the very position which these participants, in all their vulnerability, were appealing to.

Governments are held responsible for preventing and responding to violence against children and Pientrantinio (2013) identifies the need for health professionals to also play their part. This study supports this position and I believe that this responsibility should be repeatedly discussed, especially with teachers, as this would focus attention on the importance of their position as ‘being-in-the-world’, as Buber elucidates: “the genuine educator does not merely consider individual functions of his pupils [] but his concern is always the person as a whole” (Buber, 2002, p. 123).

7. Reflections on This Study

7.1 The Relevance of This Study

This study set out to explore the lived experience of exclusion from secondary school and to contribute to therapeutic knowledge and the counselling psychology community.

The findings show that an existential perspective can offer a new pathway into the lived experience of being excluded from school by placing this issue in its ontological context, and thereby giving existential philosophy access through therapeutic intervention. There are many psychological theories which contribute to our understanding of human nature, but it is my belief that theories should not become a distraction from looking “at human suffering [] in the light of philosophical wisdom” (van Deurzen, 2015, p. 263).

Applying existential philosophy imbues the inherent struggle that humans face in their daily lives with meaning and provides a map to find the intrinsic value of challenges, dilemmas and obstacles. Ignoring the existential nature of life also stops us from recognising the tremendous capacity within these youths to meet these problems, overcome them against so many odds, take authorship of their own lives going forward and find their own sense of self, as these participants ultimately did. An existential approach recognises and also celebrates the courage these youths exhibit, the values they de-construct and re-construct and the authenticity that they pursue in order to forge their paths and define themselves.

Of critical relevance to these stories of exclusion is understanding the existential concept of being-in-the-world, the recognition of our everyday mode of being-with, and the inescapable intersubjective nature of human relationships. It is clear from the findings that disturbances in the physical world lead to distortion of one’s personal world, one’s social world, and consequently one’s spiritual world (van Deurzen, 2009). It is also clear that while our emotions drive our behaviour and behaviour is purposive, the direct link between behaviour and emotions is often obscured for both the actor and the audience.

These research findings illustrate that exclusion behaviour is laden with meaning and conveys an internal state, overwhelmed by emotion and lacking in healthy relationships across all four worldly dimensions. Viewing this state from an existential perspective highlights the importance of autonomy in creating a self and the advantage of understanding the human condition as an inherent but unseen aspect of the moment. This knowledge provides excluded youths with an imperishable map to understand life and the importance of freedom, choice and courage in creating their values.

This study highlights the benefit of understanding excluded youths as ontological beings, subject to ubiquitous existential dilemmas while being absorbed by their facticity. It illustrates how these excluded youths successfully found their own way from despair to hope, through the quagmire of obstacles, dilemmas and challenges, to nurture a new sense of self and change the direction of their lives. They discovered that life was worth living in spite of the difficulties they faced as they consciously chose to alter their behaviour and embrace a more meaningful path going forward.

They freed themselves from the repetitive destruction of the past and chose to search for new values in the world. This search for meaning is what Frankl calls man's "primary motivation", his driving force (Frankl, 2004, p.105). Participants innately understood that they could *only* construct a meaningful route forward by creating positive relationships. Realising that they were the authors of their own lives engendered hope, authenticity and a sense of purpose. These participants showed clearly that the smallest shift in affirmation of themselves, the recognition of both the fluidity of their relationships and the evolutionary nature of their place in the world, brought about enormous beneficial changes in their everyday lives.

These changes, which occurred naturally and of participants' own volition, were the epitome of an existential journey. Crucially, this illustrates the very natural fit of existential psychotherapy to the lifeworld of the excluded youth.

Identifying relational experiences and a broad spectrum of negative emotions, such as lack of trust, inner shame, feelings of self-disgust, feeling unsafe, feeling threatened, being let down, abandonment by others and fear, all contribute more to

our understanding of the experience of exclusion from secondary school. These findings reveal the magnitude of harm, the profusion of destructive and broken relationships, the depth of despair, the many obstructions to communication, the secrecy and loneliness and the energy needed to survive; offering a deeply comprehensive understanding of the lifeworld of these youths.

These findings lay bare participants' vulnerabilities and the many fears behind their aggressive behaviour, showing how these relate to their life circumstances. They show the benefit of understanding the lack of agency, the passivity, the entrapment, the fear, the grief and the confusion behind the behaviour of these participants, rather than labelling, stigmatising or pathologizing it. They flag up the immutable and natural structure of humans, as Dasein, as being-in-the-world and as having an essence which yearns to be related to, with respect, acceptance and love.

Hitherto, an existential perspective of the issue of exclusion has been overshadowed by the importance of situational factors, individual characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background and aggression, or psycho-social or dynamic theories. Culture and age often loom as blocks between client and therapist. I believe these findings show the diminished importance of such characteristics and the limitations of such theories and in their place, illuminate the levelling nature of existential experience, of being human and being-in-the-world, thus making the lifeworld of children also accessible (Scalzo, 2010).

The effects of witnessing abuse have been shown to be as harmful as being a direct recipient of abuse, passive abuse has been shown as harmful as full-blown abuse (Schafran, 2014) but in this research the findings explicate that participants are the direct recipients of abuse. The connection between abuse, distrust and social fear was also a clear and important finding. The "multiperspectival" (Larkin, Smith & Flowers, 2016) nature of the issue of exclusion from school existence and the web of disturbed relationships these excluded youths find themselves embedded in pay tribute to the interrelated nature of human life. These pupils need to be understood within their worlds of relationships across all four dimensions of existence.

This study uncovers the natural indomitable spirit of mankind. It shows that within these participants is an a priori will to thrive and to embrace the world. Participants' routes to achieving this has been shown to have many bogus directions. Opposition, defiance, anger, retribution, rebellion, stubbornness and violence seem simply to be ways of expressing a self that is unhappy and which utilises these behaviours to protect or establish itself, in an effort to achieve something better. They were simply unsuccessful pathways.

7.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of this Study

I believe that some criticisms of IPA can also be its strengths. The small size of an IPA study, often cited as problematic, can be an asset as the intensity of focus and in-depth analysis reaps colossal amounts of useful data. Individuals can provide an endless wealth of information and so large samples are not necessary to provide richness of data (Larkin et al, 2018; Smith et al, 2009; Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). In this study the findings from seven participants cannot represent the general population of excluded youths, but instead, articulate something of "major significance" (Smith et al, 2009, p.3) about the experience, which contributes to the "professional and experiential knowledge" of the reader (ibid, p.4). Existentially humans are viewed foremost as relational and so it makes good sense for understanding to be sought about such important issues through close relational means.

The homogeneity of participants, defined by how meaningful the experience under investigation is (Smith et al, 2009, Larkin et al, 2018), is potentially a point of criticism. In this study, participants' family lives and cultural experiences were diverse but this did not hinder the emergence of strong and coherent themes. I believe participants' differences accentuated the strength of the findings and of IPA and SEA as excellent research methods showing that, despite the different backgrounds of participants, the analyses and interpretations which emerged were strong and conveyed a unified and truly significant story which strongly represented all participants in the themes. This diversity turned out to be a strength, bringing to light many unknown facets about permanent exclusion from school, including the importance of power relations between individuals and groups and issues of conformity, as found in the non-secular

school relationships. It also revealed the difficulties in recruiting hard-to-reach populations, the implications of which I will discuss in the next section.

The possibility that IPA's methodology can be used to provide insight into research areas without those researchers having a solid understanding of its philosophical roots has been recognised as a "potential source of incoherence" (Wagstaff, 2014, p. 12). I agree that this would cause a lack of integrity throughout the research as in my experience the underlying philosophy contributes a strong and coherent sense that shapes the findings. It would certainly be impossible to use SEA without a strong knowledge of its philosophical heritage.

Another difficulty which I came across was that the philosophical and phenomenological underpinnings of IPA, when taken seriously, render any investigation an endless piece of work (Husserl, 1990) as the analysis of data can never be fully complete. It can, however, be the best possible analysis at that moment in time and the best effort to come as close to the data as possible (Smith, 2019, personal communication). Another researcher may find different data from the same participants or at another point in time and I could also have looked at the data in a different way. Addressing these issues lends to the integrity of the data as these characteristics of the work, if made clear, do not detract from the success of its outcomes. In saying that, I also see this quality of IPA as a strength as it mirrors the natural ever-changing aspect of individuals values, beliefs and behaviour in the world, as they too, are always on-going, ever evolving projects. Thus, any investigation of human beings must, to be earnest in its pursuit of truth, reflect this changing essence of living a human life. In effect, producing a piece of IPA is like "persuading an octopus into a jar" (Kamler, 2014, p. 36).

Validity is always an issue for a scientific community. Yardley (2008) provides an accepted framework to assess and explicate sensitivity to context, transparency of process and commitment to rigour, all of which were previously discussed in methodology (see chapter 3). My reflexive process was also discussed throughout this work and this included tracking my process of the analysis (see chapter 4) in keeping with the demands of the method, contributing to its validity. Smith points out that a weakness of IPA research is that it is highly dependent on the skills of the researcher

as there is not “a direct route to experience” (Smith, 2011, p.10) and thus the quality of the interview “sets a cap on how good” the results can be (ibid).

Excluded from school and from alternative provisions and yeshivot, participants spent time on the street before joining educational and self-development programmes in their communities. This demonstrates that they have already made some sense of their experiences of exclusion and taken certain actions as a result. These findings may thus be seen to be limited in their application to such groups of excluded youths. I believe, however, that the process they have been through has positively contributed to participants’ experiences putting them in a unique position of being able to make broader and more meaningful sense, influenced by retrospection. It has given them an opportunity which they would not have had if they had been interviewed while still struggling in school or the exclusion process. It also releases them from worries about being afraid to voice certain opinions in case of detrimental consequences within the school. These findings offer a clear window into participants’ emotional and relational experiences and their shifting values surrounding exclusion and the understanding gained here, is, I believe, applicable to any part of the exclusion trajectory. I have discussed the issue of transferability in section 3.15, on validity.

Further descriptions of the impact and importance of this research are addressed in the discussion (see chapter 6). I hope that the influence of this study will be bountiful and professionals as well as excluded youths will reap benefits.

7.3 Implications for Research and Practice

This study has shed light on the need for further related research and the following is by no means an exhaustive list of potential topics.

As intersubjectivity in each participant’s lifeworld has been emphasised throughout this research it follows that the exploration of influential relationships in participants’ social worlds would clearly contribute towards a broader understanding of this issue of exclusion and the potential of an existential approach. Larkin et al (2018) highlight the value of taking a “multiperspectival” approach to phenomenological issues (p. 7) and comparing findings from various groups of individuals who would be able to

contribute important related perspectives. Understanding exclusion from secondary school from the lived experience of teachers, headmasters, parents, foster carers, social workers, psychiatrists and other professionals would help build deeper knowledge on the issue. The findings would then be of benefit to all related groups.

The degree to which these participants' parents appeared unwilling to be involved in their child's personal development is an issue which requires critical attention. Research shows parental relationships to be important in determining good relational outcomes for participants across all four worldly dimensions. Herd (2014), Lally (2013), Leoni (2005) and Moore (2009) highlight the need for parental involvement and sensitivity, which this research supports. Harris and Goodall (2006) identify that parents' "engagement cannot be a bolt-on extra to be successful, but has to be a central priority" and more than that, "they [parents] need to know they matter" (ibid, p.286). Six of these seven participants' parents seemed to have no concern about their children's' personal development. The non-secular parents seemed to prioritise conformity over learning, while the secular parents seemed to be unconcerned about their children's education. Consideration must be given to developing support and understanding for similar parents in ways that they feel they can turn toward and make use of.

Recruiting participants is an integral part of IPA and needs to be as considered as every other part of the process (Miles, 2008). How to access 'hard to reach' populations is a difficult issue and the choice of whether to use gatekeepers, snowballing or find one's own participants in the street, as I tried to do, has clear implications for the research outcomes (Abrams, 2010). As discussed earlier, I felt unprepared for the unhelpful reactions of colleagues, peers and contacts at the services where I had so enjoyed working. As previously discussed in this study, participants had already made their own way to access services, indicating some bias exists in these findings. Although this contributed to their homogeneity as a group, these issues should be given consideration in future research.

The concept of loyalty is also an aspect of these findings which deserves to be researched. In spite of Carly growing up beaten, abused and being put into care when she was twelve, she said: "*I don't like other people trying to claim that space because*

your mum is your mum you can't change who it is, yeah, whether she makes mistakes or whatever, I'm one daughter" 325. Why did these young adults not run away? Why did they 'take' the abuse that they endured? As I discussed in the themes, the wrench participants experienced when forced to leave their families was devastating and caused serious emotional decline. What is the experience of this paradox, to be beaten by the very people you love, need and depend on, to be so drawn to stay with your abuser?

So importantly, the findings of this research show that labelling participants' emotional mayhem and downward plunge as pathological, blinds us to the recognition that these difficult situations provide opportunities to "fully come into being" (van Deurzen, 2009, p. 72). Despite being rejected by their families and excluded from school, the value of family, school and education was never relinquished. Instead, education had just become a lesser priority, waiting to be re-located back to its rightful place as soon as the possibility emerged. Understanding this, could change teachers' interpretation of pupils' intentions, when faced with disruptive and challenging behaviour in the classroom. At the cross-road between choosing destruction or growth when participants' experienced hopelessness and despair, we saw by their dilemmas and choices their "uniqueness and individuality" (van Deurzen, 2009, p. 72) as and how, they rose to face the turbulence that surrounded them and forge a better path forward. This confirms the existential perspective that "the only way to discover about value is to discover about loss and degradation" (van Deurzen, 2009a, p. 47)

This finding is critical as it portrays three important factors: firstly, an aspect of these youths inner feelings which is little recognised - that their values and desires are in line with their peers and society even when their behaviour seems to suggest otherwise, secondly, that the problem was that access to their values was blocked, which meant that participants were unable to find a way forward, as illustrated in the themes leading up to the 'Change of Heart', and thirdly, this illustrates clearly the value of an existential approach to the difficult predicaments these youths found ourselves in, as van Deurzen (2009) describes: "Constraints are a means to my being born. Limits are not reductive, but maieutic: they give birth to me" (p. 72).

Passive abuse was another unexpected and impactful aspect which deepened our understanding of the lives of excluded youths. There were many people in each participant's daily life who shrank away from responsibility or action yet remained in full knowledge of the abuse which was carried out. For some participants, when their fathers were abusive, their mothers turned a blind eye. This research supports Nilsen's (2000) claim that parents with knowledge should be "liable for the resulting abuse the child suffers" (p. 262). This takes us back to the first page of this research, to my belief that all professionals and lay people involved in the field of education are beholden to understand exclusion from school in its broadest and historical context. As important as all adults being accountable, are parents' needs to be educated, but a difficulty which has emerged from these findings is the clear retreat of many parents into their 'own worlds', as described by Chimi, Carly, Lazer and Mary. Again, this is a matter of great importance and the scope of the topic is vast.

According to Valdebenitio (2018), schools are "important institutions of formal social control" (p. 9). The unexpected finding of abuse and power relations in the ultra-orthodox Jewish schools and communities has not been documented before now. Exclusion from ultra-orthodox Jewish schools and communities needs urgent investigation. Participants' expulsion and abuse originated in their quest to find answers about themselves and discuss their ideas on religion as they were growing up. Their questions were put to the adults whom they should have been able to trust most in the world. The emotional torment that they endured at the hands of their parents, the chronic strife and the casting out of the participants is clearly the tip of an iceberg. Lazer described: "*the whole Hassidic world is one big cult*" 525. That there are youths suffering such circumstances is tragic and deplorable. Services need to embrace these outcaste youths, understand their losses and anguish and gather and unite to meet their needs.

The relinquishing of parental rights, described by participants in these ultra-orthodox groups, to the larger more powerful community requires further research, as does the lack of understanding of the meaning and importance of parenting, which sadly seemed to be a common characteristic of all participants' parents.

Conformity, with all its complications, for pupils, teachers and parents, also has relevance to exclusion from school. Although this relevance appears more obvious for the ultra-orthodox Jewish participants, the “production of docile bodies” as previously discussed (Cooper, 2002, p 120; Foucault, 1977) and the influence of policy and institutions must be kept in mind. Awareness of these deep and hidden struggles and influences will obviously benefit the therapeutic relationship, the professional and lay community and ultimately the process of exclusion.

These youths found from within, a grit and steely capability, to transform their lives by grasping hold of a positive image of themselves in the future. Exploration of these remarkable moments of transformation and the creation of an imagined, positive, existential self would prove worthwhile not only for research but also in therapy. The number of youths who attempt suicide is vast (Schilling, 2014; ONS, 2017). The relationship between depression in teens and suicidal ideation is well documented (Anderson, 2011; Kroning & Kroning, 2016) and understanding more about what seemed to be ‘self-led’ intervention would clearly contribute to this major problem. When relationships at home are floundering, when vital signs of unhappiness are missed, school should be the safety net where young people feel valued and safe to express their emotional pain. Understanding more about participants’ ability to access a good part of themselves, even from the depths of emotional pain, and to move from the “fog” to the “clarity” (Chimi, 1010) would benefit these youths and their teachers, both in therapy and in their daily relationships.

The issue of culture has only been touched upon here in terms of transgenerational violence, power and religion, but clearly needs to be better understood in its impact on the transmission of behaviour and the value of secular and non-secular education among ethnic minorities. This should include the perceived position by parents as co-educators or by-standers in their childrens’ education. As discussed above, Larkin et al (2018) advocate that IPA should be used to understand multiperspectival aspects of school exclusion. It seemed that the ethnic minority parents of participants in this research had specific values relating to education and until now, unknown ways of relating to those values, which hugely impacted their children’s behaviour in school. The statistically disproportionate exclusion of black Caribbean and black African pupils suggests that in these groups also, there may be yet unknown parenting and

educational values which impact their children's behaviour. Knowledge of this would contribute to our understanding of exclusion variances and a broader perspective of pupils' lived experience.

Finally, thinking about research, I would propose an exploration of the experience of living with the absence of love, care and support. These findings show the terrible destruction that results from living with such absences. Although participants live by such close personal reference to others, they are nevertheless always searching for and trying to establish a sense of self. They have spent most of their lives in relationships void of love, care, support and encouragement, yet they have maintained a perception of the kind of care that should have been available for them, but was not. I believe this would be worthwhile exploring further.

These findings have shed light on the importance of including an existential understanding of these youths within any support provided for them. There are many services in schools (see chapter 2) which provide help for pupils at risk of exclusion but the rising numbers of exclusions and low success rates of interventions attest to some lack in current provision (Pesta, 2018; Gage et al, 2018; Baruch, 2001, Parsons, 2018). The glaring need for a different approach to therapy in schools cannot be ignored. We cannot ease our conscience by casting blame. We must not "hide in artificial techniques" or make it "look like their pathology rather than a human predicament" (van Deurzen, 1999, p. 584). These findings illuminate the relevance of existential philosophy and the natural fit for existential psychotherapy which would support, understand and challenge these youths in the context of their lived experience and the hardship of their circumstances, without pathologizing their behaviour or victimising their position. Such an approach may well be what has been missing.

These findings also highlight the need for teachers to be knowledgeable about existential philosophy, which the findings have shown, would improve their ability to relate to these pupils and handle challenging situations at school. Understanding difficult behaviour in terms of pupils' lifeworlds and their existential quest, would clarify opportunities for teachers to help these pupils from *within* their existing relationships.

7.4 Dissemination of This Research

Disseminating the findings from the research closes the gap between academia and clinical practice but also provides an opportunity for the researcher to reach other professions. I believe these findings would be of interest to educational psychologists, social workers and others in related fields. Knowledge of all the issues discussed would help teachers to meet the challenges pupils at risk present, and reveal what pupils look for in their relationships with teachers. When I worked as a therapist in schools, teachers frequently shared their difficulties and sought my help to deal with challenging behaviour in their classrooms. I believe these findings can begin a conversation with schools about developing existential programmes to help teachers and trainees cope with the relational challenges they face. I also believe these findings can be used to support parents and families. In the past I worked on government initiatives which provided free parenting support in schools. I believe these initiatives would greatly benefit from understanding an existential approach to the challenges of daily life and adding this knowledge to their dialogue.

The British Psychological Society provides a platform to deliver CPD sessions, webinars and workshops which would be appropriate outlets for discussing these findings. There are also many parent and family support organisations who would benefit from conversations arising from these findings. There are journals representing different professional fields, including counselling psychology and psychotherapy, education and social work, all of which would find the findings of this study valuable.

Without the generosity of excluded youths, their charities and the Centre for Social Justice, this research would not have been possible at all. After being interviewed several youths said they would like to know how the research turned out. I think that reflecting on these findings with excluded youths, whether in school, alternative provision or in the community, would be a very fruitful avenue to disseminate the results and explore so many related issues.

7.5 Looking back

When I began my research, I had read many books on the subject and I thought I knew what I was doing. I soon discovered that a theoretical understanding of research was

a different matter to executing its practical application. Starting out was the most difficult and seemingly endless process, feeling almost, as Storey describes, like “an impossible task” (Storey, 2007, p. 52). In chapter 4, I mentioned how I met with colleagues to scrutinise and question each other’s data analysis in our efforts to support our learning. On one such day after deliberating and debating over our transcripts I felt dismally unable to ‘get the hang of it’. It seemed I could help my friend so well but I did not feel the same confidence to help myself. Mulling over this discrepancy, trying to make sense of it, I suddenly saw myself from the ‘outside’. I witnessed myself in the process of researching, grappling with the idiographic and phenomenological protocol, with the hermeneutics of interpretation, with the data and my understanding. I understood I was, after all, immersed in the work, I suddenly felt that seamless edge where we, the work and I, met. I instantly saw that the work was, in itself, very difficult and it dawned on me that the days, weeks and months I was spending reflected my concern for my work and my nascent position as a researcher, not an inability within. This shift filtered through to analysing transcripts and soon I noticed that shapes of meaning were emerging that had not existed before. The process and the data began to make better sense. I understood, as the books described, that I was the instrument through which the findings were emerging. It was a happy and exciting moment. Alongside watching myself change I saw deeper levels of experience in my participants’ scripts (Smith et al, 2009). Slowly, as themes emerged, I felt myself becoming a reflexive phenomenological researcher. As researchers, our efforts are always to achieve transparency in our work and as best as possible to see our own bias and limitations but I believe it is an equally good goal to achieve transparency in oneself (Finlay, 2002; Vicary, Young & Hicks, 2016).

The different cultural background of my participants was continually in my mind. I strived to clearly document that although I discovered these differences, they did not affect the themes that emerged from the data, yet at the same time I wanted to be clear that these background differences existed and were important. I felt this unexpected finding was quite remarkable and of course, I was excited to have this in my research.

As my skills developed and my understanding and confidence grew, I saw that my ‘researcher identity’ was bound up within academic tradition and that my writing was a social act, conducted within my academic institution, but directed towards a wider

professional community. I hope I have changed from a student to a scholar who is not only developing but also producing knowledge (Kamler et al, 2014). Being a representative of the culture, values and practice of existentialism and of my school of study is, undoubtedly, a reflexive process. In this new position I look forward to continuing to be reflexive in an advocacy role and to providing others with knowledge that connects us meaningfully about this and other topics (Larkin et al, 2018).

7.6 In Summary

The investigation of the experience of being excluded from school is ‘mega-multifaceted’ and embraced by almost as many theories as parties who are concerned. An existential perspective focuses on the philosophical question of how we live, as the a priori relational humans that we are, in a world of others, yet still be able to find and hone our sense of self. The simplicity which existential philosophy offers, pulls together the lived experience of human emotions and the detail of human self-expression. In this research, it clarifies the community-based experience of being excluded from secondary school and places it in that invisible but acutely felt place, of the “reality between” participants and their lifeworlds on all worldly dimensions (Buber, 2002, p.117). This is the place of relationships. We make ourselves up from these relationships, we find ourselves out from them. They are our eternal frame of reference in our daily lives.

There is no other research depicting an existential perspective of exclusion from secondary school and so this research holds a unique position in three ways. Firstly, it embraces an existential understanding of the lifeworld of excluded youths, blending this with an interpretative phenomenological analysis. Secondly, it illuminates that their experiences and the sense and meaning they make from them are existential issues and best to be understood and treated as such, just as the participants themselves did to turn their lives around so successfully. Thirdly, it has brought to light the issue of school exclusion in the ultra-orthodox Jewish community and all the associated problems.

In this study I have shown how the harrowing and appalling predicaments that these excluded youths were forced to face in their daily lives, in combination with the

absence of loving, supportive, affectionate, robust or nurturing relationships, clearly accounts for their aggression and chaotic and disruptive behaviour in school.

I hope that I have conveyed to the reader how these youths, who are so often vilified and blamed as perpetrators, were merely trying their best to survive the terrible circumstances thrust upon them, and that they responded in the limited ways they knew how, within the confines of their circumstances. In fact, the powerful voices of my participants have shown that they always held on to and never let go of the educational, family and societal values that we all share. They have shown that with love, support, understanding and care, they were able to return to participate in these values and cared deeply to foster them in others. In so doing, they have exhibited their existential courage, the human propensity to thrive when life is meaningful and to fall into despair when we have no fruitful place among others.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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9. Appendices

9.1. Appendix 1: Ethics Approval

Middlesex University, Department of Psychology

REQUEST FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL (STUDENT)

Applicant (specify): D.C.Psych

Date submitted: May 2016

Research area (please circle)				
Clinical	Cognition + Emotion	Developmental	Forensic	Health
Occupational	Psychophysiological	Social	Sport + Exercise	
Other ____ Counselling Psychology_____			Sensitive Topic	----NO
<input type="checkbox"/>				
Methodology: IPA and SEA (Structured Existential Analysis)				
Empirical/Experimental	Questionnaire-based	<u>Qualitative</u>	Other _____	
<p>No study may proceed until this form has been signed by an authorised person indicating that ethical approval has been granted. For collaborative research with another institution, ethical approval must be obtained from all institutions involved.</p> <p>This form should be accompanied by any other relevant materials (e.g. questionnaire to be employed, letters to participants/institutions, advertisements or recruiting materials, information and debriefing sheet for participants¹, consent form², including approval by collaborating institutions).</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is this the first submission of the proposed study? Yes 				

- Is this an amended proposal (resubmission)?
No
Psychology Office: If YES, please send this back to the original referee

- Is this an urgent application? (To be answered by Staff/Supervisor only)⁸
Yes/No



Supervisor to initial here _____

Name(s) of investigator Valerie Landenberg

Name of Supervisor (s) Dr Charlotte MacGregor Professor Emmy van Deurzen

Title of Study: A Phenomenological Exploration of the Experience of Being Excluded from Secondary School

Results of Application:

REVIEWER – please tick and provide comments in section 5:

APPROVED	APPROVED SUBJECT TO AMENDMENTS	APPROVED SUBJECT TO	NOT APPROVED
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⁸ See Guidelines on MyUnihub

		RECEIPT OF LETTERS	
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SECTION 1

1. Please attach a brief description of the nature and purpose of the study, including details of the procedure to be employed. Identify the ethical issues involved, particularly in relation to the treatment/experiences of participants, session length, procedures, stimuli, responses, data collection, and the storage and reporting of data.

SEE ATTACHED PROJECT PROPOSAL

2. Could any of these procedures result in any adverse reactions? Yes

If “yes”, what precautionary steps are to be taken?

It is possible that the interview may evoke emotional experiences. Reflecting upon one’s personal experiences may cause a person to rethink the past and even change their relationship to. This has the potential to be experienced as positive or negative and so I will maintain sensitivity to each participant and be vigilant of his or her emotional state. I believe that my training and work to date will qualify me to do this in the appropriate manner. My knowledge of the BPS guidelines, Code of Ethics and Conduct, will support me in making appropriate decisions and actions. Detailed information about the research will be given in both written and verbal forms before proceeding with any interview. Participants will be addressed in ways that make sense to them. The purpose and design of this research will be clearly illuminated and the researcher will continually check to ensure that information is understood and that the participant is

comfortable to proceed with the interview. Any misunderstanding or query will be addressed with respect and sensitivity by the researcher. Participants will be reminded that they can stop the interview process at any time, to either end it or take a break, without needing to give a reason. They will be supported if they choose to do so. If they decide to terminate their involvement I will remind them that all data received from them will be destroyed. The debriefing will include giving information on where to go to get personal therapy to support them if they feel distressed by anything related to the interview, either at the time or up to a period of 4 months after. It will also include places to go where the participants will be able to become involved in helping other young people who have been in similar situations.

If third parties have recommended any participants, they will continue to be there to support them if a need shows and flag up any need for therapy.

If the researcher feels a participant is showing an emotional reaction to the process or data she will make the participant aware of this at the time and check that they are happy to continue. If the researcher believes that to continue would be damaging to the participant, the researcher will stop the interview, explain the situation and offer a referral for therapy.

2. Will any form of deception be involved that raises ethical issues?

No, the participants will only be allowed to enter into the interviews if they are in full knowledge and understanding of the proposed study, all expectations and risks thereof and have given consent to be recorded and the data obtained from the recording used by

NO

the researcher for the strictest purposes of the research. Often a person may be fully informed and feel they understand the process involved yet as they are going through it, it may not be what was expected. To counterbalance this possibility the researcher will check during the interview that the participant is happy to carry on and that the interview is within the limits of what was expected.

(Most studies in psychology involve mild deception insofar as participants are unaware of

the experimental hypotheses being tested. Deception becomes unethical if participants are likely

to feel angry, humiliated or otherwise distressed when the deception is revealed to them).

Note: if this work uses existing records/archives and does not require participation per se, tick here

and go to question 10. (Ensure that your data handling complies with the Data Protection Act).

4. If participants other than Middlesex University students are to be involved, where you intend

to recruit them? *(A full risk assessment must be conducted for any work undertaken off university premises)^{6,7}*

These participants will be recruited from NHS youth support services and local youth clubs. **See attached proposal. Risk assessment supplied.**

5a. Does the study involve:

Clinical populations NO

Children (under 16 years) NO

Vulnerable adults such as individuals with mental or physical health prot NO
prisoners, vulnerable elderly, young offenders?

Political, ethnic or religious groups/minorities? NO

Sexually explicit material / issues relating to sexuality NO

5b. If the study involves any of the above, the researcher may need
CRB (police check)

Staff and PG students are expected to have CRB – please tick

UG students are advised that institutions may require them to
have CRB

please confirm that you are aware of this by ticking here
_tick_____

6. How, and from whom (e.g. from parents, from participants via signature) will
informed consent

be obtained? (See consent guidelines²: note special considerations for some questionnaire
research)

Consent will be obtained directly from the participants. Some participants may be
introduced to the research through a third party who will know them well in their
professional capacity of psychologist, psychiatrist or mentor to the participants and
who will have assessed their suitability for the research. The researcher will not

know and never have met any participant prior to their involvement with the research.

7. Will you inform participants of their right to withdraw from the research at any time, without penalty? (see consent guidelines²) YES

All participants will be informed before the interview process of their right to withdraw from the research at any time during the interview or afterwards. Their decision will be respected and supported with an offer of therapy if they are withdrawing for such reasons that would benefit from therapy. Should any participant wish to withdraw a formal letter will be sent acknowledging this and thanking them for their time. The letter will also advise them that any transcripts will be destroyed immediately.

8. Will you provide a full debriefing at the end of the data collection phase? (see debriefing guidelines³) YES

9. Will you be available to discuss the study with participants, if necessary, to monitor any negative effects or misconceptions? YES

Interviews will be conducted in a neutral territory known by the participants that they feel relaxed and familiar with their surroundings in order to minimise stress. As part of

the of the research the participants will be asked to reflect on feelings re
to the

experience of having been excluded from secondary school some
earlier. This

may elicit strong emotional reactions as they share these experiences
researcher

will be monitoring for such affect throughout the interviews, using skill

professional therapeutic abilities developed in training and used

in her everyday work in the normal course of conducting professional th

Information about the project will be given in written and verbal formats, stati
purpose

and the design of the research before proceeding. Participants will be remind
they can stop the interview at any time and the debriefing procedure will inclu
offer of a referral for personal therapy if they should appear distressed
interview

If "no", how do you propose to deal with any potential problems?

10. Under the Data Protection Act, participant information is confidential unless otherwise agreed in advance. Will confidentiality be guaranteed?
(see confidentiality guidelines⁵)

YES

If "yes" how will this be assured (see⁵)

The researcher understands the importance of confidentiality and has read the university guidelines. Participants will not be required to give their names or any information that could be deemed identifiable. At the end of

each interview the recorded data and any subsequent transcripts will be kept under lock and key and no identifying information will be kept with them. Once transcribed the recording will be deleted. Any copies of transcripts will be destroyed post-transcription.

If “no”, how will participants be warned? (see⁵)

(NB: You are not at liberty to publish material taken from your work with individuals without the prior agreement of those individuals).

11. Are there any ethical issues that concern you about this particular piece of research, not covered elsewhere on this form? NO

If “yes” please specify:

12. Is this research or part of it going to be conducted in a language other than English? NO

If YES – Do you confirm that all documents and materials are enclosed here both in English and the other language, and that each one is an accurate translation of the other? YES/NO

(NB: If “yes” has been responded to any of questions 2, 3, 5, 11, 12 or “no” to any of questions 7-10, a full explanation of the reason should be provided – if necessary, on a separate sheet submitted with this form).

SECTION 2 (to be completed by all applicants – please tick as appropriate)

YES NO

13. Some or all of this research is to be conducted away from Middlesex University	x	
--	----------	--

If “yes” tick here to confirm that a Risk Assessment form has been submitted	x	
--	----------	--

14. I am aware that any modifications to the design or method of this proposal will require me to submit a new application for ethical approval	x	
--	----------	--

15. I am aware that I need to keep all the materials/documents relating to this study (e.g. consent forms, filled questionnaires, etc) until completion of my degree / publication (as advised)	x	
---	----------	--

16. I have read the British Psychological Society’s <i>Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Human participants</i> ⁴ and believe this proposal to conform with them.	x	
---	----------	--

SECTION 3 (to be completed by STUDENT applicants and supervisors)

Researcher: (student signature) Valerie Landenberg

_____ date April 17, 2016

CHECKLIST FOR SUPERVISOR – please tick as appropriate

	YES	NO
1. Is the UG/PG module specified?		
2. If it is a resubmission, has this been specified and the original form enclosed here?		
3. Is the name(s) of student/researcher(s) specified?		
4. Is the name(s) of supervisor specified?		
5. Is the consent form attached?		
6. Are debriefing procedures specified? If appropriate, debriefing sheet enclosed – appropriate style?		
7. Is an information sheet for participants enclosed? appropriate style?		
8. Does the information sheet contain contact details for the researcher and supervisor?		
9. Is the information sheet sufficiently informative about the study?		

10. Has Section 2 been completed by the researcher on the ethics form?		
11. Any parts of the study to be conducted outside the university? If so a Risk Assessment form must be attached – Is it?		
12. Any parts of the study to be conducted on another institution’s premises? If so a letter of acceptance by the institution must be obtained - Letters of acceptance by all external institutions are attached.		
13. Letter(s) of acceptance from external institutions have been requested and will be submitted to the PSY office ASAP.		
14. Has the student signed the form? If physical or electronic signatures are not available, an email endorsing the application must be attached.		
15. Is the proposal sufficiently informative about the study?		

Signatures of approval:

PSY OFFICE
received

Supervisor: _____ date: _____
date:.....

Ethics Panel: _____ date: _____
date:.....

(signed pending approval of Risk Assessment form)
date:.....

If any of the following is required and not available when submitting this form, the Ethics Panel Reviewer will need to see them once they are received – please enclose with this form when they become available:

- letter of acceptance from other institution
- any other relevant document (e.g. ethical approval from other institution):

PSY OFFICE

received

Required documents seen by Ethics Panel: _____ date: _____

date:.....

SECTION 4 (to be completed by the Psychology Ethics panel reviewers)

		Recommendations/comments
1. Is UG/PG module specified?		
2. If it is a resubmission, has this been specified and the original form enclosed here?		
3. Is the name(s) of student/ researcher(s) specified? If physical or electronic signatures are not available, has an email endorsing the application been attached?		
4. Is the name(s) of supervisor specified? If physical or electronic signatures are not available, has an email endorsing the application been attached?		
5. Is the consent form attached?		
6. Are debriefing procedures specified? If appropriate, is the debriefing sheet attached? Is this sufficiently informative?		
7. Is an information sheet for participants attached?		
8. Does the information sheet contain contact details for the researcher?		
9. Is the information sheet sufficiently informative about the study? Appropriate style?		
10. Has Section 2 (points 12-15) been ticked by the researcher on the ethics form?		
11. Any parts of the study to be conducted outside the university? If so a fully completed Risk Assessment form must be attached – is it?		

12. If any parts of the study are conducted on another institution/s premises, a letter of agreement by the institution/s must be produced. Are letter/s of acceptance by all external institution/s attached?		
13. Letter/s of acceptance by external institution/s has/have been requested.		
14. Has the applicant signed? If physical or electronic signatures are not available, an email endorsing the application must be attached.		
15. Is the proposal sufficiently informative about the study? Any clarity issues?		
16. Is anyone likely to be disadvantaged or harmed?		
17. If deception, protracted testing or sensitive aspects are involved, do the benefits of the study outweigh these undesirable aspects?		
18. Is this research raising any conflict of interest concerns?		

9.2. Appendix 2: Flyer



**HAVE YOU BEEN EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL?
I WANT TO HEAR YOUR STORY
RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY
VALERIE LANDENBERG
(COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGIST IN TRAINING)**

This research will explore what it is like to live through the experience of being excluded permanently from secondary school. The term excluded is used to refer to not being allowed to return to your normal everyday school at all, for any classes or to participate in any activities of any kind, from that particular time and onwards.

To participate in this study, you will need to have been permanently excluded from your secondary school due to aggressive or persistent disruptive behaviour. It does not matter what age you were when you were excluded, or what class you were in, so long as the exclusion was permanent. You also need to be between the ages of 17 years and 25 years old at the moment to be part of this research.

If you fit these criteria and would like to take part in this study you will be asked to come to a face-to-face, informal interview with the researcher. If you are interested in learning more about taking part, please contact:

secondaryschoolsexclusion@gmail.com
or telephone Valerie Landenberg on
07501827090

Thank you for taking the time to read this flyer and most of all for being interested to take part in my research. Even if you are unable to participate in my research but know of someone who you think would like to be part of it please forward this flyer to them.

This research project has received full ethical approval from the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling, and Middlesex University ethics panel. The research is supervised by: Dr Charlotte Macgregor (Admin@nspc.org.uk)

9.3. Appendix 3: Written Informed Consent Form



NSPC Ltd
Existential Academy
61-63 Fortune Green Road
London NW6 1DR



Psychology Department
Middlesex University
The Burroughs
London NW4 4BT

Title of study:

**The Experience of Being Excluded from Secondary School:
An Existential Reflection**

Academic year: 2016.

Researcher: Valerie Landenberg

Supervisor: Dr Charlotte Macgregor, admin@nspc.org.uk

* I have understood the details of the research as explained to me by the researcher, and confirm that I have consented to act as a participant.

* I have been given contact details for the researcher in the information sheet.

* I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, the data collected during the research will not be identifiable, and I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without any obligation to explain my reasons for doing so.

* I further understand that the data I provide may be used for analysis and subsequent publication, and provide my consent that this might occur.

Print name _____

Sign Name _____

Date: May 2016

To the participants: Data may be inspected by the Chair of the Psychology Ethics panel and the Chair of the School of Social Sciences Ethics committee of Middlesex University, if required by institutional audits about the correctness of procedures. Although this would happen in strict confidentiality, please tick here if you do not wish your data to be included in audits: _____

9.4. Appendix 4: Participant information about the research project



NSPC Ltd

Existential Academy



Middlesex
University

Psychology

Department

The Experience of Being Permanently Excluded from Secondary School

This research project is being carried out by Valerie Landenberg as a requirement for a Doctorate in Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy from NSPC and Middlesex University, May 2016.

You are being invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with family, friends and any other people if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

This study is being carried out as part of my studies at NSPC Ltd and Middlesex University. There is very little information available describing what it feels like to be excluded from school as a result of persistent disruptive behaviour. Most information available is quantitative statistics about who gets excluded rather than a description of individual felt experience. My study has been designed to understand what being excluded from school feels like for you. I believe that if the professionals involved know more about what it's like to be excluded from school then they will be better equipped to help pupils in this situation. This research gives young adults a place to speak about their experience of exclusion. You are being asked to participate because you have replied to my advertisement for 17 – 25-year olds who were excluded from school due to persistent disruptive behaviour.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME IF I TAKE PART?

You will be asked to attend one interview that will last for 60 – 90 minutes, at a time that's convenient to you. We will discuss your experiences, your thoughts and your feelings about exclusion from secondary school. This discussion will be confidential between us both. We will sit together privately in a room at *⁹, which is already familiar to you. I will ask you questions that guide us through the topic and invite you to answer them as you see fit. Whatever and everything you say is important and of interest as it helps me to understand you. There are no right or wrong answers: it's about how it was for you. Your information will be kept anonymous and confidential. I will use qualitative research to extract the main themes of what you and other people tell me about the experience of exclusion.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THE INFORMATION I PROVIDE?

Another person or myself may transcribe the interview. I will not use your full or last name in the interview and the person transcribing the interview will not know who you are. I will be recording the interview on a digital recorder and will transfer the files to an encrypted USB stick for storage. Then I delete the files from the recorder. All of the information you provide me will be identified only with a project code and stored either on the encrypted USB stick or in a locked filing cabinet. I will keep the key that links your details with the project code in a locked filing cabinet.

The information will be kept at least 6 months after I graduate and will always be treated as confidential. If my research is published I will make sure that neither your name nor other identifying details are used.

All Data will be stored according to the Data Protection Act and The Freedom of Information Act in the UK.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES OF TAKING PART?

Talking about personal experiences may cause distress. If so, please let me know and if you wish I will stop the interview. You are free to stop the interview at any time. Although this is very unlikely, should you tell me something that I am required by law to pass on to a third person, I will have to do so. Otherwise, whatever you tell me will be confidential. If you would like to talk about feelings that have come to light from the research discussion, I will direct you to places where therapy is available.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

⁹ The location of interviews is yet to be finalised.

There is no specific benefit intended for people who take part in this study. It is possible that the findings of this research will be helpful to people who have behaviour issues at school in the future. Some people may find this an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and could find this beneficial. When the results of the research have been published I would be happy to meet again to tell you about it, if that is something you would like.

CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this information sheet for your personal records and, if you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign the attached consent form before the study begins.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you decide to take part you may withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Whether or not you participate will not affect the relationship you currently have with the * (name yet to be finalized), or any of the services you are currently receiving there, in any way.

WHO IS ORGANISING AND FUNDING THIS RESEARCH?

This research is completely self-funded.

WHO HAS REVIEWED THIS STUDY?

All proposals for research using human participants are reviewed by an ethics committee before they can proceed. The NSPC research ethics sub-committee have approved this study.

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS INFORMATION SHEET

If you have any further questions, you can contact Valerie Landenberg, at

NSPC Ltd
Existential Academy
61-63 Fortune Green Road
London NW6 1DR
VL147@live.mdx.ac.uk

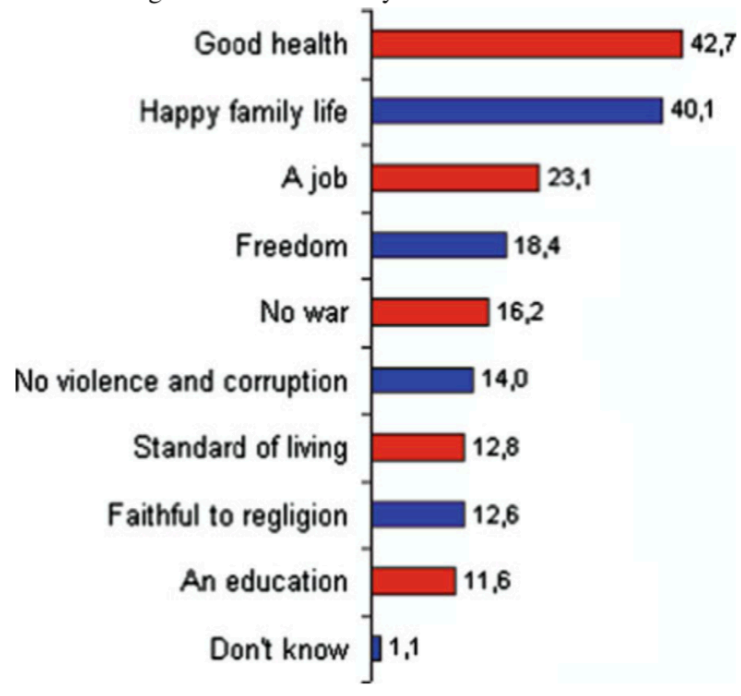
If you have any concerns about the conduct of this study, you may contact my supervisor:

Dr Charlotte Macgregor
NSPC Ltd
Existential Academy
61-63 Fortune Green Road
London NW6 1DR
Admin@nspc.org.uk
Telephone 0207 435 8067

9.5. Appendix 5: World Survey

Scheme 5 Perceived sources of happiness

Responses to question: 'What matters most in life? Tell me only the two things that matter the very most in life.'



Source: Gallup Millennium World Survey (Spogárd 2005)

World Survey (Spogárd 2005) found that a happy family life and good health are ranked high all over the world. See Scheme 5.

9.6. Appendix 6: Compass of Emotions. Original diagram

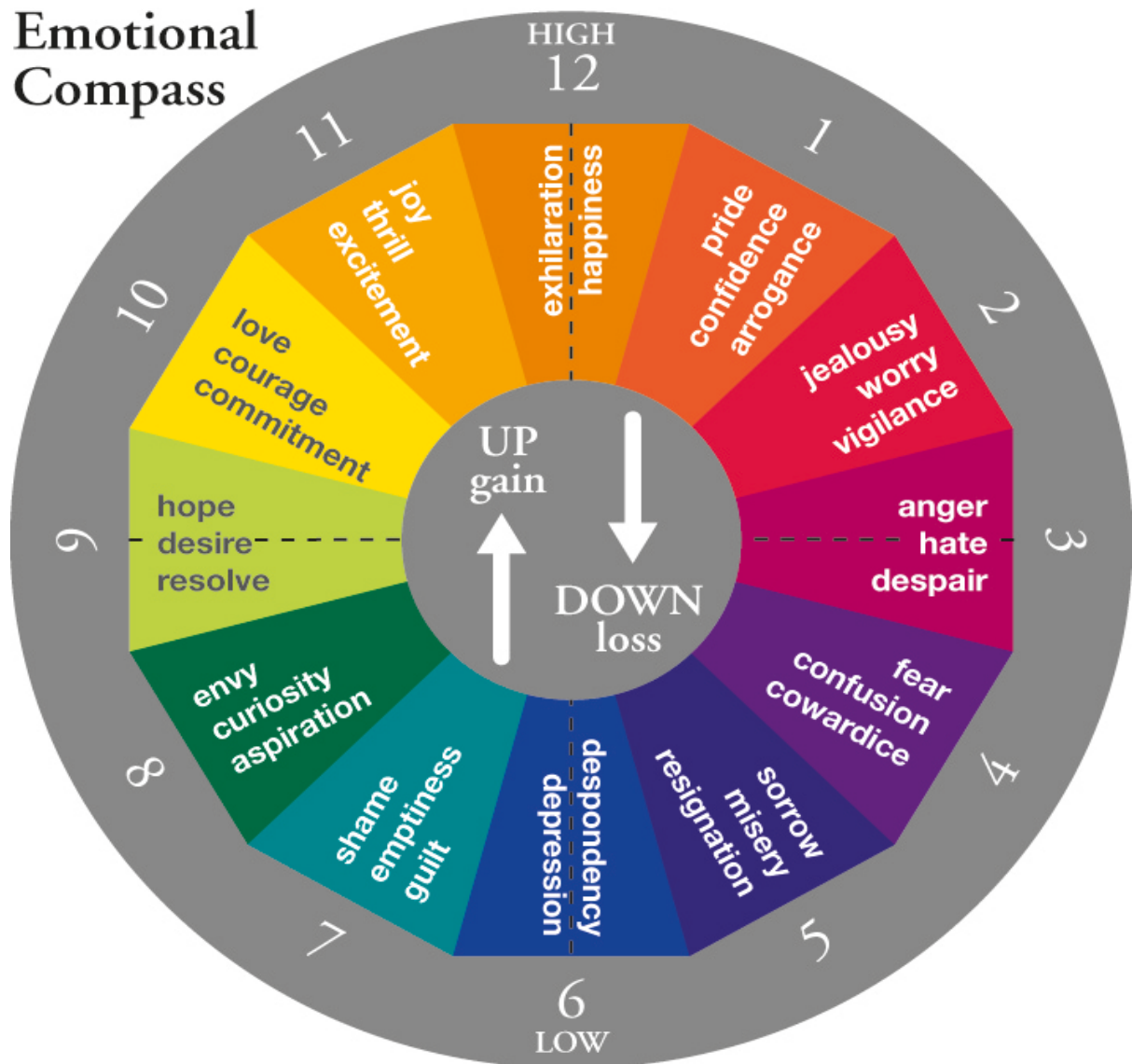


Diagram copyrighted by Emmy van Deurzen, 2019, personal communication

9.7. Appendix 7: Overview details of conflicts, challenges and paradoxes on four dimensions.

World	Umwelt	Mitwelt	Eigenwelt	Uberwelt
Physical	Nature: Life/ Death	Things: Pleasure/ Pain	Body: Health/ Illness	Cosmos: Harmony/ Chaos
Social	Society: Love/ Hate	Others: Dominance/Su bmission	Ego: Acceptance/ Rejection	Culture: Belonging/ Isolation
Personal	Person: Identity/Freedo m	Me: Perfection/ Imperfection	Self: Integrity/ Disintegration	Consciousness: Confidence/ Confusion
Spiritual:	Infinite: Good/ Evil	Ideas: Truth/ Untruth	Spirit: Meaning/ Futility	Conscience: Right/ Wrong

Original diagram copyrighted by Emmy van Deurzen, 2019, personal communication

Overview details of conflicts, challenges and paradoxes on four dimensions.

World	Umwelt	Mitwelt	Eigenwelt	Uberwelt
Physical	Nature: Earth, Climate, weather, seasons, animals, plants, shelter, hygiene, sleep, competence in facing a range of dangers. Materiality, birth and death. Sensory experience	Things: Care for objects, Crafts, technology, arts, bodily skills in handling instruments, objects, creativity, productivity	Body: Self-care, movement, comfort seeking, toughening, strength, appearance, sexuality, health, food, drink, elimination, hygiene, sleep. Body sculpting	Cosmos: Connectivity, patterns, solar system, universe, death and birth, creation myth, afterlife myth Understanding place in universe; deal with what is the case, in the present. Now.
Social	Society: Human world. Public demands of individual, laws, rules, regulations, administration, order, duties, responsibility, abilities of communication and language.	Others: Respect, care of others, love and hate, dominance/submission, competition, rivalry, collaboration, mutuality, generosity. Emotion. Space.	Ego: Strength of self presentation and representation, having a voice, achieving something for self and others, assertion	Culture: Past traditions established by others, personal contribution to culture, memes, things valued by the group, belonging. Deal with what humanity has established in the past. History.
Personal	Person: Private world, Personal sphere or hiding place of safety, intimate reality, sanctuary. Home. Managing aloneness and autonomy	Me: Feeling of <u>mineness</u> and authentic right to exist, a sense of inner reality, individuality and anxiety	Self: Authentic being, personality, character, selfhood, mastering strengths and weakness Thought, memory, imagination	Consciousness: Awareness, intentionality, mindfulness, capacity for contemplation and understanding and knowing. Sciences, Deal with what it is possible to imagine and create. Future
Spiritual:	Infinite: Ultimate reality, the principles Defining reality, ideology, the divine, the unsayable. Making sense of the world	Ideas: The meanings and values we attribute to life and the world, concepts, beliefs, principles to live by. Capacity for doubt.	Spirit: The spark of vitality or life energy, the core where we breathe: connection with all that is. Our essence or soul, that what matters	Conscience: Capacity of deciding, making meaning, by distinguishing between good and bad, right and wrong, transcending ourselves, transformation. Contemplation. Creativity, Options, <u>Freedom</u> . <u>Time</u>

Original diagram copyrighted by Emmy van Deurzen, 2019, personal communication

9.8. Appendix 8: Pilot Transcript

1 I got kicked out the middle of year 9" .
2
3 Yes (she pulls her jumper around her face)
4
5 Aha, you can't push your head down while we're chatting!
6
7 (she laughs) I need to
8
9 Because we have to be able to see each other.
10
11 I need to ` (small wee voice squeaky)... I can see you it's fine (stronger voice, deeper)
12
13 Alright, its **crystal** right?
14
15 Yeh
16
17 And how old are you **crystal**
18
19 17
20 So tell me your story about being excluded from school
21
22 Which one do you want, there's 3
23
24 Well maybe just start at the beginning, and I've got questions so if you don't talk about what I want I'll ask
25 you anyway
26
27 I think it be easier of you ask questions
28
29 Ok, so when were you first excluded?
30
31 In year 7, towards the end of year 7
32 So that's the end of primary, the first year of secondary school
33 Yeh
34
35 Were you permanently excluded ,
36
37 Yeh , I was removed from school straight away
38
39 What school was that
40
41 **Derby Moor**
42
43 Ok, and when were you next excluded?
44
45 May 2015, from **M.P.**
46
47 What age were you when you started there
48
49 Year 8, 13 / 14
50
51 So you were excluded in year 7
52
53 Then I didn't go back the rest of the year, then I started **Murray Park** and I got excluded again, I got kicked
54 out middle of year 9.
55 Ok, so, how did you find out you were being excluded from **derby moor**
56
57 They pulled me out of lesson, and I walked into the meeting in the head of years office and my mum was sat
58 there obviously didn't look very happy with me, then the police came in and I got arrested as well, so it was
59 all big at once
60
61 Yeh, that sounds major ...
62
63 Yeh
64
65 So what was happening, what was going on
66
67 So basically, you know on the hoodies, how you've got the strings?

68
69 Uhu,
70
71 Well, this boy in my class was sat behind me and he kept pulling my strings from behind, strangling me with
72 them, so I said carry on, go on, I dare you to carry on, and he did and I flipped, picked the chair up, it was
73 like one of these, and smacked him in the face with it (she punched her fist into the other hand) and it broke
74 his nose with it, he didn't just drop there and then, he got up and wanted to fight, so we had a fight about it
75 and I punched the head teacher in the face. (laugh) so that's what the police had to come for .
76
77 And what happened to the teacher
78
79 They said to me they don't feel comfortable with me being a student at the school, because of the danger
80
81 And was that the first time?
82 That was the first time it had happened in school?
83
84 Yeh
85
86 Mmm, so that was the first time?
87
88 Yeh
89
90 But was that the first time there had been an incident in school?
91
92 No I've always been a bad behaved kid.
93
94 Ok, so when did it start?
95
96 Probably ... ehh in reception. I had my first fight in reception, because my adoptive mum was pregnant yeh,
97 and one of the girls in the class told me that the kids gonna die and me being a little kid's gonna flip so I got
98 a Barbie doll and started smacking her on the face with it. Laugh. Then my mum had to come and collect me
99 for it and I got excluded for that and then as I've grown up my behaviours just escalated and it's gotten
100 worse and worse. To the point where I won't stop.
101
102 Won't stop what ?
103
104 I just won't stop fighting, if I get mad, you can't stop me, it's uncontrollable
105
106 So your adoptive mum was pregnant
107
108 Mmm, with her child, and then one of the students in the class
109
110 How old were you
111
112 This was just after my 5th birthday
113
114 So you were excluded from primary school, then where did you go
115
116 It wasn't permanent , it was for two weeks then I came back and eventually they moved me into a different
117 class but the first time I got permanently removed was year7
118
119 Right
120
121 Then I moved straight to Murray Park
122
123 Ok, so what's Murray Park?
124
125 It's another mainstream school , but when I was in year 8, like, further into it they realised that I'm really
126 badly behaved and they kept excluding me so eventually they put me on a part time timetable and I just
127 started not turning up for my part time either so they had to send a teacher to come and fetch me from my
128 house, and then it must have been at the end of year 8 start of year 9, everyone at school found out I was
129 this adopted kid and it was such a bad thing, a major issue , oh she's adopted.
130
131 Why was that bad?
132
133 I don't understand that, the kids just didn't like that, the fact that I wasn't like them, and I was adopted, it was
134 basically like I was a diseased child coz I was adopted, it was horrible and then, emm, I'd got this group of

135 friends.

136

137 So this is when you were in primary school?

138

139 No, this is in **Murray Park**. I got taken off my parents when I was, like, 2.

140

141 Why?

142

143 Mums got mental health problems and she's an alcoholic as well, she's basically forget she's got a kid in the

144 house, I was basically neglected, my dad was in prison my whole life so I never got to see him anyway. And

145 then I would say, when I was in year 9, my cousin started at **Murray park**, and she knew... oh Bea's adopted,

146 and she must have used that as a getaway card to get more people to like her. So everyone at school was

147 making out it was such a bad thing I was adopted. And then my whole friendship group turned against me

148 and I was walking home one day from my nan's, and my group of friends, I didn't have a clue it was them,

149 jumped me, to the point where they had got my hair and they were smacking and smacking my head on the

150 corner of the curb to the point where it knocked me out completely

151

152 How old were you

153

154 Must have been about 14 / 15, and they were smacking and smacking my head on the corner of the kerb

155 and then these cars pulled over. By the time I got to the hospital I'm not awake any more, completely

156 knocked out. And I must have been at hospital for about six months with it.

157

158 Six months !?

159

160 Yeh , I was like ... my leg was broke coz they'd stamped on my knee cap to the point where it had pressed

161 my leg to go like that --(she pushes her knee as if to bend it backwards) -- so they'd fully broke my leg.

162 These were my own friends. I hadn't got a clue at first. It wasn't till I came out of hospital the police were still

163 investigating it was still, like the investigation was still being carried out and I'd gone back to school and I'd

164 gone through all my books, just to do my work and I was getting notes written on my pages like, go kill

165 yourself, proper deep horrible stuff, getting messages on Facebook on fake accounts, like no wonder your

166 parents gave you up.

167

168 All of this horrible stuff happened and then my behaviour just dropped just like that and it went really bad. If a

169 student would look at me at school I would argue with them and say what are you looking at? Is there an

170 issue?

171 And then one of the girls just before I left, before I got kicked out of the park,' she made this massive issue

172 about me being adopted,

173 And she picked up a whiteboard and threw at me so it smacked me in the eye and I've got a scar here

174 from where it smacked me and I flipped. I ran across the table at her, just started punching her and punching her

175 the teachers come to get me off and I thought it was a student right so I thought I don't care get off me, punched

176 them as well and then my Mum's had to come in and collect me but literally then, I just ran away from my mom. I

177 was like, I am not staying at school I am not going with my mum, because my adoptive mum was so horrible to

178 me as well.

179 Was she ? She is horrible. I don't live with her anymore

180

181 But she adopted you?

182

183 Yes

184

185 So she wanted you?

186

187 Yes it's disgusting. She adopted me because she got told she couldn't have children so she thought

188 adoption is the second option. But then in 2003 she got pregnant. With twins. And they died. And this is

189 another reason why I had a fight because one of the kids turned round to me and said you should've been

190 one of them kids to die. So I put this girl in hospital, like, I broke her nose, broke her leg.

191 She had to go on crutches for six months it was that bad.

192

193 Were you not put in jail?

194

195 I was arrested, I must've been arrested three times. But each time I got off with restoraty of justice,

196 restoration of disposal and then, now I am just waiting on my youth offending to come through

197

198 Restoraty?

199

200 Of justice

201 What does that mean?

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That means you have like the victim gets to choose how you repay them. So obviously the teachers made me write a letter of apology for my actions and then I've been arrested as well because I had a fight with my adoptive mum I was literally just sat here this one time she ran at me like to the point where she smacked my head off the radiator she'd snap a part as a bed put it at my throat and tell me she's gonna kill me with it so I flipped. I'd picked one up as well, started fighting with her.

How old were you?

This was the start of this year. And, it all escalated. Obviously, My cousin heard me screaming because she lived at the back of our house. So she's rang the police, by the time the police have got to our house, got in our house, my mum is knocked out of the floor because I'd battered her that much, I was so mad, like, this woman's not my mum and she's abusing me, I'm not having it anymore, so I flipped and then I got arrested.

And where were you when the police came in

I was on my bedroom floor my hands were bleeding I was covered in cuts and bruises that they thought she'd done this to this woman and she's in the wrong. They arrested me to took me to the police station and then they've looked over my whole body and I'm covered in cuts and bruises, and bruises from like months ago because she's punched me and I would just take it, but anyway the police investigated and realised this is not a safe place for me to go but they've took me back to the house once they release me on bail to get some stuff to take into a foster care placement with me - soon as I walk through the front door my mum is obviously there, she ran at me, sort of strangling me in front of the police officer saying she was going to kill me in front of the police officer so the police officer arrested her for it and then obviously I got taken away from them then and I got put into shared accommodation but this was when I was in year 11 so I had to do my exams without any family nothing I was literally on my own in a house, just me, my whole life was just me, I had to depend on myself for everything.

And then, just before my exams school were complaining how you are never at school you not gonna do this you not gonna get anywhere in life so I started coming back to school and all the students started saying stuff like 'why does she live on her own? She's 16 that's weird', and then I was getting all, people were saying, 'are you lying about it? None of this has happened' and I was thinking do you want me to show you the scars on my body ? Like it was really bad. And then, I must have, literally, like I never really went to school because of all the problems like when I was younger in year seven I was really small so I was always bullied because I was so small and so slim and then as I've grown up people have just got so nasty, to the point where, I've just flipped over it and I just can't control my anger. And it's just got me into trouble with the police with school, with family, it's just been really mad.

Gosh, that's such a lot of violence.

Yep

And anger

Yeah

And Ok. So, where were you in the middle of all of that?

I have been referred to the hospital twice, because I OD'd because I literally was that point where I can I can't keep coming home to get abused for no reason and me not being able to do anything about it. I turned to school, when I was at **Murray Park** I told them about it, they rang my mum straightaway, and said – basically – asked her if it was true. And I am like, how can they ring the woman who is abusing me asking her if she's abused me, like she's gonna tell you? That's just stupid obviously I didn't know that they phone her to ask, got home got battered. Next day gone into school black eyes bruised arm everything all because school had asked her have you been beating your child off. That just made it worse, and then eventually I just thought I can't cope at school because of all the problems with my height, everything

All the problems with what?

My height, because I'm so small, because I was always a small child I was always the one that was pushed around because I'm so slim like when I was at primary school I had anorexia as well and obviously then people brought their into secondary school and used it against me to bully me even more like " you anorexic bitch". All these horrible things and, it must've been the start of year eight I just thought I can't do it anymore, I am sick of it, this has been my whole life everything is just gone wrong so I literally just came to the point where I just gave up, ended up in hospital and then I started having CAMS when theyit was at **Temple House** ..

269 (friend) that is where I'm at.
270 It wouldn't have been adult one it would have been the child's one.
271
272 Yeah it was the child's one and then, year nine towards the end of year nine the start of year 10 it happened
273 again. So then, when the hospital referred me they didn't refer me to CAMS, they referred me to a
274 psychologist, which is based in the NHS hospital, itself, which is in the child's department, it's got its own
275 section and I am, basically, it was like counselling and I had to explain to him what was going on and stuff at
276 home and, my adopted mum, she basically thought I can't cope with this girl living in my house anymore,
277 look how damaged she is. She basically would make out to everyone I was such a horrible child so she took
278 me to the psychologist and said and said I think my daughter is got schizophrenia. To the point where I was
279 having all these doctors saying to me right we're going to have to put you in this house for two weeks it was
280 like a special house where all these people with mental...
281 A special house world's mental health people were, that's the **Redbourne** unit
282
283 Which is like a mental health, like where all the people with mental health problems go. It's like...
284
285 A detox, Yeah, and she would, basically, she wanted me to go there so she didn't have to put up with me,
286 put up with me anymore. And, I said to them I don't think I've got schizophrenia because I would know, and I
287 think you as a doctor would know so just to prove to this woman wrong I want to do the test for
288 schizophrenia to prove it to her so I did prove it and it came back I have not got schizophrenia just got
289 severe bipolar
290 And, and, she'd always put these things in my head, like your crazy and...
291
292 Who?
293
294 My mum, like when she hits me like she'd turn round and make out that I'm tripping, that it is not actually
295 happening that I am so mad that I am wanting it to happen. But I am thinking if I am so mad and wanting it to
296 happen then how come these bruises are appearing , how come like, everything else that is going on? Then,
297 when I moved to **Little Over** I told them about it and they kept a close eye on the relationship between me
298 and my doctors mum and then the one time I got excluded from that school because I'd had a fight with one
299 of the boys. He was basically trying to come into the changing room which I thought was ridiculous, like why
300 is a boy coming into the changing rooms, so I ran after him and we just had a fight in the car park.
301
302 So my mum has had to come and get me and is soon as she seen me she grabbed my hair in front of my
303 head teacher and went to punch me in front of the teacher and everything and he said we're going to have to
304 contact social services, she's not leaving with you. And then, that's when the relationship broke down
305 because she knew she couldn't get away with it anymore. It must've been since I was about 10 years old I
306 have took all this abuse and then at 16 when it finally stopped
307
308 That six years. So I have literally in my head it is so badly damaged I can't trust people, I don't like being with
309 lots of people, that's because my own friends all eight of them put me in hospital so I've got, I can't trust big
310 groups of people I can trust people because the woman who raised me tried to kill me so I cannot trust
311 anyone, thinking like ... What's to say they're not going to do it as well? And that's why my behaviour 's so
312 bad because I don't like people being close to me I have you close to me I am going to push you away, like,
313 get off me and then they'll resist it, and then it will escalate so will end up in a fight and that sort of thing.
314
315 All that is a lot to hear, and that is a lot to have gone through.
316
317 Yeh
318
319 My goodness, so, your birth mom? And your birth dad? What happened to them?
320
321 Well, my birth mom she's got mental health problems herself but rather than asking for help for it she turned
322 to alcohol so then she became an alcoholic to the point where she was forgetting I was a kid in the house
323 right. The reason I got taken off my mum was because she was downstairs and I was upstairs with my big
324 sister and somehow we still don't know to this day how I fell down the stairs, but I fell down the stairs. And
325 the social services seen as an alcoholic woman, kids falling down the stairs, she's got anger problems, and
326 mental health problems, they seen it that she pushed me down the stairs.
327
328 So they took me off her because she, they thought she pushed me down the stairs.
329
330 And were you able to speak at that time?
331
332 I know, I must've been about eight months old I could barely even stand up.
333
334 Oh, you were a baby.
335

336 Yeah, and they thought that my mum has pushed down the stairs.
337
338 And your big sister was how old?
339
340 Oh, my big sister must've been about six or seven
341
342 And so you've got separated from her to?
343
344 Yeah, but I still had some contact with her because I've got other sisters and brothers as well so I had
345 contact with them but I wasn't really allowed contact with my mum at first. And then when I hit 11 she
346 contacted my adopted mum saying that she wants contact with me. And if it's okay with her and okay with
347 social services she'd like to see me.
348
349 Say that again
350
351 Social services had been contacted by my mum my real mum saying she wants to see her real daughter.
352 She wants to see me. But my adoptive mum hid that from me so my whole life I thought my mum doesn't
353 want anything to do with me. It was literally, it must've been last November when I got first put back into
354 foster care that social services said to me did you know your Mum's been trying to get hold of you? And I
355 said what do you mean? My adoptive mom hadn't told me that my real mom wanted any contact with me so I
356 am there thinking even my real mum doesn't want me, that's how bad it was. When it was just a lie she was
357 hiding it from me. And my dad he's always been imprisoned, so I've never really had the chance to meet
358 him. He was out this year but he's gone back in this year, he's got really bad anger issues. To the point
359 where even the police can't control my dad.
360
361 What did he do you know?
362
363 My dad is getting charged on 23 January for attempted stabbing because he was in town with someone and
364 obviously they pulled the knife out on him but it is escalated to the point where my dad's now got the knife so
365 the police have turned up and it's like my dad is about to start this person and when in all fairness it wasn't
366 like that. The guy came up to my dad.
367
368 How do you know what it was like?
369
370 Because I was stood next to my dad when it happened. My dad had, I have not seen him my whole life. And
371 then this year, and two years ago this is like how much time I have had with him, my whole life I must have
372 spent seven months with my dad my real dad because he's always in prison. And the seven months I have
373 spent with him, that the connection I had with him, is like he's my best friend. He understands me like
374 nobody else understands me, It is really weird. And obviously when he got taken away from the police I was
375 literally so depressed. Like, literally, I felt like my life wasn't complete. My dad meant everything to me and
376 he's gone. That's all I had left, because I was living in a shared accommodation, I had no other family other
377 than my dad, and then he got taken away as well. It feels like everything that I get attached to gets taken
378 away from me.
379
380 So it's just move me into this cold closed in my mind and I don't care about anything anymore and that's how
381 it was affecting me at school, I just thought my dad's gone I don't care about anything anymore, and that's
382 how it was affecting me at school. I thought my dad is gone I don't care about anything else why should I
383 care about my school? What have I got to even fight for any more? Nothing. And then I got like a really bad
384 eating disorder April this year just before my exams so I gone into hospital because of it because it was
385 making me fit and like, this one time I was just walking up the road and I just dropped just randomly dropped.
386 I didn't have a clue what had happened and when I woke up I was in a hospital bed. And then the hospital
387 said to me that I've got a support worker that came in to tell me that they had found me a foster placement.
388 And then, in August I moved in with this foster placement. And now my life is just finally going up a little bit,
389 but it's still light, my head is still spinning with everything I've been through. But, it is getting there slowly.
390
391 So who is in the foster placement?
392
393 There is me, my foster mum my, my first dad, my foster sister and my foster brother. There also fostered but,
394 if you was to look at the family, you think that they're their actually their children. Obviously, the dad is black
395 and the mum's white and the kids are mixed race so it just looks like a normal family. Where is, me, I am the
396 full white person in the family. And then we've got another two siblings but they're older so they don't have to
397 live at home. And they've got the grandchildren as well. There are quite a big family to live with but they are
398 really, really nice.
399
400 They seem good to you.
401
402 Yeh

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469

This is a big story. So what sense do you make of being excluded?
How do you mean?

Val well, when you are older you are doing stuff to be excluded why do you think you were doing those things?

Well my uncle always said to me that he feels the reason my behaviour is so bad is because, in a way it's a reason to get attention and because I never really had that attention at home he thinks I was behaving so badly to get attention from someone because I've never had attention from anyone. Like my childhood, I never really had a childhood. Like I must have been six when I first started cleaning pots. And then my adoptive mom has got her own real daughter now and she's nearly 12 and never once did she have to even pick up our sock off her bedroom floor. I felt like a slave in that house. I'd literally never had attention off anyone. Even at school, I was always, and I think it's sort of, my uncle is right in a way because I did get attention out of the behaviour, but at the same time it wasn't really the right attention that I wanted, but, yeah, I'm not really sure.

And so you make sense of it because you felt you were desperate for attention but what would the attention have given you, what is it about attention that you wanted?

I think it was that, I don't, if you're wanted, if somebody needed something doing, like your child is being treated like a slave, whereas at school I was just a kid that just got chucked about by everyone. So literally my home life and my school life was the same and if I couldn't get out of the home situation because I'd always said to them I wanna go into foster care I don't want to live here anymore. But that wasn't working I couldn't get out of it. Whereas at school, if I kicked off and I got trouble, like caused trouble, I had loads of people giving me attention. I'd have the police in or you need to have this, or counselling, like, I had, mmm, I'd had the school saying to me like you need help with your behaviour you need management with anger and stuff, whereas at home if I kicked off then I would get like a punch to the face or something thrown at me.

So, school like they dealt with it badly for like involving the police and not understanding what was actually going on at home they just thought I was this kid that was messing around and causing all this trouble but now that I'm older and I look back at it I can actually see maybe I did want the attention because I didn't get any attention

Because at home I didn't get that attention. I don't really know why I was so badly behaved.

Tell me, why do you think, or what do you think, would have happened if the teachers had been different?

If the teachers have been more supportive I don't think I would have been so badly damaged. I do been able to get out of the house situation, I do been able to get the right support at school, to the point where I would be able to look at someone and trust them I would be able to feel comfortable thing with big groups of people but because they didn't I can't be with more than two people. And even if my friends say something like "she's with me", I immediately say "oh, why are you telling who are you talking to? Why are you saying my name?" Because I am immediately worried going to set me up, I don't know who they're on the phone to... I don't know who you're on the phone too. That many people know my business because of Derby Park that, all this stuff is used against my name. Like, if you say my name in Derby it oh yeah or they tried to kill her. She's the one that got bullied.

All this stuff is used against me I have had so many chances world said to social services I just want to leave Derby I don't want to be in Derby anymore yeah

Well so what do you think they could they have done differently?

Well, rather than just assuming this kids behaving so badly you need to look into it more. They've just seen it as you know she's causing trouble she's a really bad kid we need to tell your off rather than saying to me is everything okay why are you behaving like this because you're not always behave like this? There must be a reason to it must be a reason for this. Because if they've done that I could quite easily and confidently have said to them this is why I'm behaving like this. Because I can't do anything at home. I just want some help. And you're not giving it to me. Because when I did ask them when I did turn to them, they rang my mum and told her holder. And it made it worse for me at home like if they hadn't made that phone call and told her I would've been able to phone social services myself and get myself out that house. But no they told her to the point where I almost died and I had to get the police to come and rescue me it was that bad. I just don't think school dealt with that properly, like they need to understand sometimes with the kids not behaving wrong because she wants to behave like that it is because sometimes there's a reason for everything, like, she just wants attention or she's got so much trouble she doesn't know what her emotions are. There are so many different reasons to bad behaviour but they just think you are behaving badly, you are an issue they don't

470 think about the issues to make you behave badly.
471
472
473 Where there any teachers that were helpful? Was there anybody? How was it in different classes? Different
474 subjects?
475
476 There was some teachers where they could tell I had problems going on at home. I'd have one person that
477 knew what I was going through at home. I'd be able to talk about it in class sometimes and because the
478 teachers are always walking around and there are quite nosy they would hear what I am saying so then
479 sometimes they pull me out of lessons and ask me that is everything okay at home and then I'd be able to
480 tell that teacher, whereas some teachers, they'd ask me and I tell them and they take it back to her head of
481 year then head of school and then it would be a phone call home to my mom. And then it would all kick off.
482 Where, some teachers you could genuinely tell them, and they would say, 'no sit down' and they would ring
483 social services and tell social services my issue, because last November I went into school and I've got a
484 massive bruise on my face and I covered up with make up because I didn't want to say to the school yeah I
485 got punched in the face last night because I was five minutes late for home, so emm, I'd covered up with
486 make-up and we'd obviously had PE so my make-up had come off and I was rubbing my face like that
487 because it was sore and they must've seen this massive bruise on my face and they took me out of lessons
488 straight away and my head teacher said to me are you gonna tell me what's happened. Either way they'd
489 have rang the police to tell them what's happened .
490 Because you're not leaving school till you tell us what's happened. Whereas if I was at **Murray Park** they
491 wouldn't have done that they would have let me just go home
492 The teacher was like, you are not leaving the school until you tell us why that bruise is on your face because
493 you left school yesterday it wasn't there you've come in this morning we've not noticed it and now we can
494 see it very clearly so either you've got it from today are you got it last night. I said I don't want to tell you I
495 don't want to tell you they said if you don't tell us we're ringing the police so you've got the choice so I had to
496 tell them.
497
498 Either way they rang the police to tell the police what happened. Then the police came and questioned me
499 about it under social services were involved and I was put into foster care.
500
501 When was this?
502
503 Just this last November, and then I just turned 16
504
505 Was that when you've just arrived at this new foster family that you are with now know
506
507 I moved in this year with them
508
509 So what happened with that foster care
510
511 That foster care wasn't official foster care it was literally my best friend saying I don't want crystal living at
512 home I don't feel she says she's ringing me every night in tears saying she wants to give up I want her living
513 with me I want her living here so I know she is safe until you've got a better foster place. So that's what I did
514 there. On social services said to adopt, my adoptive mother because she didn't end up living with you, you
515 can't have her child benefits so she said right okay then fair enough you can have that. So she was giving
516 me my child benefit and then in just after Christmas she sent me a text, a massive text, an apologetic text to
517 me. And I thought, maybe I should give her one last chance.
518
519 She's realised what she's done, she's texted me saying she's really sorry about it she wants me home. At
520 the time I just thought oh my god this is so good so I've gone home and then my real mum had rung me just
521 after New Year to say happy New Year. And then I started seeing my mum and my adopted mum wasn't
522 happy with it at all and she took my phone off me, and she took my iPad of me, any way to contact anyone
523 she'd taken off me.
524
525 Then this one day I woke up to go to school and I've looked at the time thinking oh my god it's so late for
526 school I need to ring the school to say I am going to be late. I ran to get the house phone but no house
527 phone just the plug for it, I felt that is weird. Then I went to find the keys to get out of the house. No keys, all
528 the rooms are locked, I can't get out the house. I was just literally able to get into the bathroom my bedroom
529 and downstairs, that's it.
530 I am thinking this is really weird. And then I'm hearing the phone ringing so I'm looking around the house,
531 like, where is this coming from and then I've gone into the big bedroom where I have got a safe, tried to open
532 it, it is locked. I put my ear next to it and the phone was ringing in the safe, so she's put the phone in there,
533 lock them in, the keys, I don't know how I'm gonna get out of the house. Anyway eventually I jumped out my
534 window went down the roof and jumped out that way and I got to school and told them about it. And then
535 that's when my friend said to them I don't want you living at home. That's not fair. Then I'd come home to get
536 some stuff, said to myself right I am not living here and anymore. I can't do this. You're trapping me, you

537 don't let me go out and then when I do go out it is an issue when I get back I get abused for it, it's not fair.
538 So obviously I've gone to pack a bag and she said right then if you wanna leave, leave, you're not my kid
539 anyway it doesn't matter. That's how deep it was. Right if I'm not your kid I'll go then. So I packed my bag
540 and as I've gone to walk down the stairs she's pulled me back into my room chucked me on my bed and
541 smacked me my head off the radiation and that is when we had the fight and then that is when the police
542 came and took me. And it turns out that the only reason in the first place that she wanted me to come home
543 was so she could get her child benefit back.
544 So that literally broke my heart. Like I thought my mum wants me home and then no she wants the money
545 for me so she can have me home, she wasn't bothered about me.
546
547 So what about friendships throughout all this life? Trust
548
549 I have never really had any friends, I don't really, because the only group of friends that I put my trust in were
550 the girls that put me in hospital.
551 I've been friends with them since I was about seven years old from primary school and then obviously I have
552 moved into a different area had gone to secondary school there that didn't work and then the secondary
553 school that I moved to. Oh there I'm friends with them that just didn't work at all they were horrible to me.
554 This death threats. All these fake accounts threatening me. All these horrible messages in my book. It was
555 just, the only set of friends I've ever really had any time for her fucks me over as well. The woman who
556 raised me has done the same thing. My trust issues are so bad I'd rather stick with one friend that I know I
557 can actually trust. Than stick with a massive group of people
558
559 So you have a friend that you can trust?
560
561 I do have friends that I trust, but like, I keep having to tell myself I can trust them it's fine and tell them this
562 but there's always going to be a part of me that's like, I don't know if I can trust them. I don't know if you're
563 going to say to someone, 'Crystal' told me this. Oh I bet you never knew that'. I just feel like people use it
564 against me, the stuff that I tell them because that is what my mom did. Everything I told her that happened at
565 home or school she'd be like, 'I'm not surprised that is happening at school look at the massive mess you
566 are'. So I am scared that a friend is gonna do that to me. I have just got really bad trust issues.
567 Well so what about your future how do you see it, how did you get to be here?
568
569 I've got kicked out of college. I went to [Derby Roundhouse](#).
570
571 Well what's that?
572
573 That is the main, like, college for [Derby](#). You've got the [Joseph Wright](#) Centre, you've got [Broomfield](#) and
574 then you've got the [Roundhouse](#) that's, which is where the train station is.
575 That's like mainstream college which is like everyone in [Derby](#) goes there. Everyone goes to college goes
576 there. Where's this is like, this is not really our mainstream college. Like the mainstream college is basically
577 built like a school and I go there nine till three, sort of situation. Obviously I was having all these problems
578 like people I have had problems with in primary school and secondary school were at this college. In my
579 class causing problems. I reported it and the teacher would basically turn round to the student and see
580 [Crystal](#) told me you've done this what are you doing? And then because they're not able no longer able to
581 say something to me they'd get a friend that I didn't know to say something to me
582
583 Why are they no longer able to say something to you?
584
585 Because college has said to them if you're carrying on doing this you lose your place here so they thought
586 the only way I'm going to get [Crystal](#), is to use a friend that she doesn't know, to say something to her. So
587 I'd be sat in an English class and my phone was ringing on an unknown number I'd answer it.
588 This one time my teacher told me to put it on loudspeaker so I did and she was screaming down the phone
589 me 'no wonder your mum tried to kill you' and I was thinking, right, so there's only certain people that know
590 what happened at home so it's got to be somebody that really doesn't like me but knows this has happened
591 and they've got someone to ring me or they're ringing me. So they investigated it at college and then my
592 behaviour just started going mad because college weren't dealing with it. Like I'd come in one of the kids
593 would be staring at me whispering to another student. I told the teacher - I'd be the problem. 'Why causing
594 problems for it? Just ignore it'. And then eventually my foster mum came and said I don't feel comfortable
595 with [Crystal](#) coming home every night in tears because she's having problems at college she wants to come
596 in to learn and she can't she is having problems with people she doesn't even know. It is not fair.
597 And they said we can't deal with her behaviour.
598
599 What was your behaviour? What kind of things did you do?
600
601 I just get angry really easily people aren't dealing with the situation how I would deal with it I am dealing with
602 it myself. Like if I am sat in the class and someone is looking at me and they're saying stuff to me if I say to
603 the teacher they're doing this and the teacher just ignores saying just ignore it I will go over to the students

604 and confront them about it, and then if they try an miles off to me I will mouth off just as much and then they
605 will regret it.
606
607 I will get very horrible. Just because
608
609 Will you get violent?
610
611 Well, I don't get violent that much anymore. I used to get really violent, like if you started shouting at me then
612 I'm just punching you in the face because that's the only way I am going to shut you up.
613
614 So you did get violent, like you've said
615
616 I have before, like, that is how we get fights at school because I have had people screaming and screaming
617 at my face and I 'm trying to say what is your actual problem. And they still be talking over me. So I'd have
618 no choice but to do something to shut them up. Which would be a punch in the face a smack in the face,
619 anything to shut you are up so you can actually listen to me. And as I've got older because I am small,
620 people just sort of assume 'she's small I can do this, I will get away with it' but it's not like that. If you come
621 up to me and start a fight with me, Fair enough you started it. But don't expect me not to fight back just
622 because I am smaller than most people. And I will fight back twice as hard, I have to do, till I make sure you
623 realise you are the problem, not me. I have done nothing wrong. You've come on to me, like, I have had
624 people I don't even know, come up to me in town, and then they're fine to me and they're getting your friends
625 to get involved because they can't deal with me. If I'm only small how can you not deal with it. It makes me
626 even more mad that they can't do one on one situation. If I am going to have a fight. With someone it's one
627 and one that for most people is not a one on one and then they've got to have their friends jump in. But if I'm
628 fighting with you is me and you.
629 It is me and you I don't want your friends I want you to have this fight. I'm asking for you.
630
631 So how's your anger now how is the violence now. And your physical anger?
632
633 I don't get as angry as I do, but I do get mad, like in the day I have so many different moods like I'd be one
634 emotion in the morning then I'll be moody then I'd be happy-chappy, then I'll be all sad, crying then I'd be
635 screaming and punching. It every single day I will have at least eight different moods.
636
637 I see, and how did you get to come here?
638
639 The college, the roundhouse said to me there is another college that you could try. And I said well what's it
640 called? And they said **2020** so me and my mum came here for an interview on Monday.
641
642 Your foster mum?
643
644 Yeah my foster mum and she said this college does sound good. And **Ken** said to us, like, we want to help
645 you with this, it is not fair that you've been through all of this and college have just gave up on you because
646 you have problems going on. We're gonna help you sort it out.
647
648 So the people that were involved with you at that college not hear?
649
650 There is one of them is here, there is one of them here but she's different here because she doesn't know
651 anyone here. She's not really got friends herself whereas outside college she had about six friends
652 screaming at me. Here she won't dare look at me she won't dare speak to me. And I am just sitting here with
653 groups of people and she's just sitting on her own.
654
655 Has she also been excluded from school?
656
657 She was removed from mainstream school and then she was sent to **Kingsmead** like for behavioural
658 problems and then, this girl, she's always just always got problems.
659 So she's called **Keesly** and she doesn't come in every day which is good because sometimes I'll sit there
660 and I will feel uncomfortable. The other day I was sat there and she was out there on Facetime to one of her
661 friends. At first, I didn't have a clue she was on face time with this girl, this girl, I don't even know who she is,
662 but she was always telling people, when I get my hands on this **Crystal**, watch what happens all of this. And
663 I'm sat there , and I was taking a picture on my phone, and I seen **Keesly** in the background. **Kelly's** got her
664 phone, like, peeping over her shoulder, to get me in the camera, and I'm just thinking I don't care , who are
665 you on facetime to , I don't care. But then she's put the phone down, then **Callum** who was sat here has then
666 said to her, like, who are you on the phone to? And he's then named the girl and I was like, 'oh my god!
667 That's the girl that wants me', she was showing me on the camera. It wasn't me just being paranoid. She
668 was physically showing her I'm sat in the class with her. So then I've gone to walk out when college is
669 finished four girls stood outside college at the top of the street
670

671 Val the old college
672
673 Crystal this college . I've gone to walk out the front door and just up the road where the car park is there's 4
674 girls staring at me . So I've come back in, I've got **Rosal** and I've gone downstairs for a fag and just standing
675 there . And then **Rosal** like, what's that girl doing? And I've looked and she's got her phone and it's like she's
676 videoing me stood here.
677
678 Do you talk to college about it ?
679
680 I've told **Kay** and **Kay** did sort it and since then I've not seen any of these friends turn up outside college,
681 **Kellys** is not acknowledging me, she's just acting like I really don't exist. Which is better, I'd rather her do
682 than carry on dragging these problems on because she's gonna lose her place at college.
683
684 Here, you mean ?
685
686 Yeh coz they've said that it's not tolerated and if she was to carry on the way she was then I would lose my
687 place coz I would flip, so it's not fair, all because she doesn't like me, for whatever reason she doesn't like
688 me and she doesn't want anyone else to like me .
689
690 So what do you feel are your plans for the future?
691
692 I don't really know. I don't really think about my future because I have days where if I have a really bad day
693 then I have given up, I can be bothered with anything else. Like, I have really high, high, bad behaviour and
694 then I have really, really, low behaviour. I will be all happy and when I am happy I am incredibly happy, but
695 then when I'm sad I am like, way below the mark sad, to the point where if the hospital would put me in
696 hospital they wouldn't let me out. It's that bad.
697
698 So what kind of things are going through your mind then?
699
700 When I'm sad I am literally sat on my bed screaming, crying, and pulling my hair out, my body is boiling, but
701 I'll be freezing cold. I can sit when I'm in this state that I get myself and, I can sit in the freezing cold and
702 sweat and sweat because I'm so hot. I am so frustrated, that, it's because I don't really speak about my
703 problems I keep it all in. Who can I seriously talk to? So I just keep it all in.
704
705 What about your foster mum?
706
707 It is hard for her to understand my problems because she's just had like, **Casplan** has had, like, arguments
708 school and the school have rung to say that I have **Casplan** is having these problems.
709 She's not had to have a phone call of someone saying oh can you foster this child that everyone is tried to
710 kill.
711
712 You're living with your foster mum?
713
714 Yes. She is supportive but there are some problems that she really doesn't understand like. The way my
715 mind works I am better off being on my own when I'm really, really, sad than being with someone. Because
716 normally if someone sees me crying I am going no, no, no, no, no, they can't see me crying.
717
718 And what about physical contact hugs cuddles.?
719
720 I can't do them. I can't do it at all. I don't have my friends. I don't hug my mum. I don't think I've ever said to
721 anyone I love you. Never, ever.
722
723 Who do you love?
724
725 (laugh) Nobody, I literally, my emotions are so, like, you can see my emotions on my face but if you're to look
726 inside my body it would just be black there is no emotion to it like, let's just say, the only thing, the only time
727 I've ever felt like someone matter to me was when I was a kid, before **Rosie** was born, which is my adoptive
728 sister.
729
730 Way before she was born, that was the last time I remember being happy with my family. Of course this was
731 when all 'this is our perfect little daughter'. Then she's come along and it's not even like a jealous situation. It
732 is not me saying oh **Rosie** I have been shoved to the side. Every single person in that family would always
733 say to me 'are you not jealous of **Rosie** she gets all the attention and you don't get anything?' and I would
734 say 'No, I'm used to it'
735 It doesn't affect me.
736
737 Is this your first adoptive family

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Yes. And like even when friends let me down I don't even like normally when I make a massive plan from someone away we going to do this this weekend, and then they text me on the day and say 'we're not doing it', It doesn't even affect me I am like, cool, whatever. I am so used to being cancelled on, I am so used to being let down, it just doesn't affect me anymore. Whereas if someone else was to have that, they'd fall out with their friend, they probably not want to speak to anyone. Me, I am, so, ok cool. I don't care, like do what you wanna do, I don't care I am doing me, you do whatever you wanna do. I have just gone really cold hearted..

So, I see. How do you see yourself now compared to be aware when you were kicked out of school?

Now I'm different, like when I was at school from getting kicked out of school I'd have my mum saying to me you're going to get nowhere in life you're gonna get nowhere with yourself. Then I'd get to the point where I'd say alright then I am not going to get anywhere so I give up believing in my future. We'd have career days at school and did ask me what I want to do. And I'd say I don't know because my Mum's telling me I am not gonna get anywhere in life so I don't even think that far ahead. And then, I sort of think , yeh, now, I have had that sort of a past, but what's to say... The futures going to be different.

Now , fair enough I've had 17 years that's such a bad life, but what, I've got another 83 years possibly? So what's to say they're gonna be another 83 years of what I've just had? No. Just got to believe in something I guess. But I'm very different to how I was. I used to, like get proper hurt easily...get like pushed around , but now , no one can get, no one can really hurt my feelings . I don't really have the feelings to hurt. I just, I don't know how to explain it like, I'm, you wanna put a lot of time and effort into me for me to trust you or for me to want anything to do with you.

If I meet anyone for the first time first day and then the next day for the exact same person I want to know whether to believe it, like, I will think this person could flip on me at any point. But effectively to me I am like you know what I will move. There's no point in arguing with me because I'm gonna argue back with you. I just, my personality is very different. I am very cold to what i used to be.

How does that make you feel?

Sometimes it makes me feel a bit like, shit, because I am so used to pushing people away now and I don't want you in my life, what are you actually gonna help me with, you just actually making problems. If I'm arguing with someone the first argument we have that's a good goodbye from me I won't speak to you again because I have had so many arguments with people that have then messed up badly that it's made me think one eyed man is one too many. I shouldn't be arguing with you I don't need you in my life. So I have pushed that many people away I'd lost that many people because I can't trust anyone, I can't rely on anyone, that sometimes I would generally go like two weeks and I'll be in my bedroom without leaving. I won't come to college, nothing. And I just think to myself who have I actually got?

Seriously I've got no friends, college is different because the people I speak to here I don't really speak to them outside of college it's more like a social gathering to be honest the College of social gathering I'd speak to them here.

Well, it's amazing and I appreciate that you would talk so openly, in front of other people

Yes I know

You're telling me such a big, big, story

Yes I know, I think that when I walk into a room people know the bad stuff that I've done. They don't know the reason behind it. So they're to sit here and listen to what I have actually been though, they're going to understand why I am the way I am. They're not gonna think 'Oh, like she's bad behaved for that. They'll think Oh my god, like she's really, it's not her fault she is like this'.

Yes, the stories that they've been through?

I am very like, I understand people's perspectives on things, sometimes, I am more, I am not really the emotional type. I am better with, like advice and support. I have got so many friends that have been through so much stuff that I want to be friends with the people that don't fit in, but do stand out. Rather than the people that everyone wants to be friends with. Because I'd rather have a quality friend who understands what I am going through myself because they've been through it too then someone who has had their life given to them on a golden platter.

I don't like people like that because they just think like, peak for you, you've had a bad life but I haven't. Everyone's going to have bad times you just need to accept it and support them for it because one day you are going to say something to someone and that'll be it. That person could kill themselves over it, that person could self -harm and escalates all because you said one thing wrong, they need to think about what they're

805 saying. And that is what gets me so frustrated.
806
807 Yes, are you religious?
808
809 Uh uh
810
811 do you think about religion? Or what it means to you? Do you ever think about God?
812
813 I don't really believe in God. I don't think there is a God because when I was younger my uncle used to say
814 to me all, there is a God, there is a God, you need to come to church. But as I've grown older, I thought to
815 myself if there is a god why have I been through all of this bad stuff? Like, God is supposed to be the
816 saviour, this person that helped you, where is the help that I have needed for the past how many years?
817 Even school didn't help me, so like hoping there is a God out there... There is no God. So I just think life is
818 what you make of it if you give up, you give up, that's your fault. People are always going to try and knock
819 you down.
820
821 You see what you've just said, life is what you make of it that's quite a big statement, so are you saying to
822 me there are possibilities for you for stop?
823
824 There are possibilities for everyone. But sometimes you just can't see them because you're that damaged
825 yourself. Like my head is that fucked up, that I,
826 I can't... My mindset is ... No there's no out of this but in reality I know there is an out of this, I know that
827 there will be like 10 years from now I could be living in a nice house have a family be working(. 55.46) and a
828 good job.
829
830 Is that something that you think about?
831
832 Well when I'm at home I think to myself my life is so bad right now. But people always say that you see these
833 things on Facebook that say like life is what you make of it and stuff, and sometimes they do actually help,
834 like it might be just three words for words but they are powerful. Like, life is what you make of it if you give up
835 then that that everyone else's, they couldn't fight it. But if you keep fighting then they've lost the fight and
836 you are stronger than them, you are in control of what happens to your alive. If I let every single person get
837 to me like, I've been there myself. I have been in hospital, I have wanted to give up, but no that wasn't my
838 chance of dying, I am still here because, something, I am on this planet for a reason, I have got a reason to
839 be living, there's something, I have a purpose I have just got to find out what it is.
840
841 You sound like you have a good plan
842
843 Yeah it is just going to take me a few years to believe it properly.
844
845 It seems it's in your mind, so you're aware of it?
846
847 Yes but it's like a very small bit of me, there is so much negativity in my head is so much little positivity there,
848 the negativity overtakes the positivity.
849
850 Sure because of the hurt
851
852 Yes
853
854 And the distrust.
855
856 Yes.
857
858 Well it sounds like there's a little chink in the dam.
859
860 Yeah, which is the same for the positivity. There is always something in the day. They always something,
861 there is always going to be a good thing in the day but because there's so much bad stuff that's happened I
862 can't really put them all into one and think this is been a positive week. The negativity will always take over it.
863 But like when you think about it throughout life you can have good days and bad days. My mechanism is
864 punching someone in the face, which I do need to deal with.
865
866 It sounds like you're changing
867
868 Yeah,
869
870 Do you think that your life would be different if you hadn't been excluded from school?
871

872 Yes, it could be, possibly, if school weren't one of the one's that wanted to get rid of all the bad behaviour
873 students and actually want to support the child then I think if they done that rather than permanent exclusion
874 and excluded me, then I wouldn't be where I am today. I wouldn't have this bad mindset I'd be still, the
875 person I used to be, like
876
877 What person was that?
878
879 Well, when I was at school I was the one they expected with a's, A stars. My family always told me you are
880 so bright but because I'd failed so much in school because of my behaviour and everything that is going on
881 at home I came out with d's. It is not that bad, first thing, I was in hospital before my exams but for me that
882 was a let-down because I've always been told all my life you expect today's, is a star and not D's which is
883 why I wanna resit them. But it just escalates.
884
885 Everybody's worrying about you, caring for you
886
887 I know, they shouldn't be, but, yeah, I don't know
888
889 So it would've been different if you had not been kicked out of school
890
891 I think if they had a proper package of support for children with problems like this then I wouldn't have gone
892 down this bad route and I would've been able to have the help that I needed
893 Someone else, that was my issue because I'd not been there from year seven if I misbehaved like one
894 student told them one story that is the story they're gonna believe. My story doesn't mean anything.
895
896 Well, where would you identify the biggest cause of everything that happened?
897
898 My mum. My adopted mum, because if she gave me a proper childhood like a pro, like a child should have,
899 rather than cleaning pots at the age of six then I would've been a happy child rather than an independent
900 child and then I wouldn't have all this anger because, like, if she'd gave me the right attention that the child is
901 supposed to have, I wouldn't have gone to school getting mad because I had such a bad night at home with
902 my mum. I have got to take it out on someone and then someone's push my buttons. Because that is what it
903 is a bad day go home have another bad day go home coming to school next morning and I have not
904 forgotten what happened last night, it still in my mind and I want to take it out on someone else.
905
906 What, in your experience, has been the biggest impact of being excluded?
907
908 Do you mean how I've come out with no grades basically?
909
910 Just whatever you think
911
912 I say that because if I hadn't been excluded, I'd not have gone all those months without an education. I
913 would have had the education and support in place so I could get the education I needed so I have got the
914 grades I wanted - but no, I got chucked to the bottom and 'I'm a bad behaved kid , get rid of her ' we don't
915 want her, no you should have, right fine enough sometimes I did push the teachers to the extent that they'd
916 have no choice but to get me in trouble but.
917
918 How did you push them ?
919
920 It's like emotionally, mentally, verbally, I'd say things to get them wound up.
921
922 Like?
923
924 I did swear a lot, but when I'm mad I don't pay attention to what I'm saying . It's like I'm another person, I'm
925 two people in one. If I'm mad I don't remember a thing I said to you, I don't remember a thing I've done to
926 you , or I won't remember a thing of it until you tell me or you show me on a video that I've done this ...I won't
927 believe it, I get possessed or something, it's really weird.
928
929 So you feel not getting an education had been a major thing in your life .
930
931 The fact that I've not got an education, because when I've been growing up I've always had my uncle telling
932 me 'look at the work you're producing, this is like A star work'. And then I've left school at year 11 with D's
933 and E's and U's which is like a let-down to me because I've always been the kid that, even though I've
934 behave badly at school, I'll sit there and revise and revise and revise but because I didn't know what to
935 revise because I was never at school , and school didn't bother to chase me up like, get me, don't ring me to
936 see stuff, they just ' she's not coming in today it doesn't matter '. Whereas if a kids not turning up at school it
937 should be your priority to help them. Especially if it's a 16 year old girl living on her own.
938

939 Uhh
940
941 At 16 I shouldn't be living on my own. I should have been in foster care, but I wasn't. I was put in that shared
942 accommodation, in **Winton** yeh, near the cinemas, but it was meant to be shared accommodation and it
943 had 3 bedrooms in but I went 7 months of that living on my own, at 16. No, like, I had no family, no friends,
944 nothing. I was literally in a house on my own for 7 months. I think that's where school went wrong because
945 they had my number, they could have rang me to say 'I want you to come in, I'm coming to get you' but
946 because I didn't have the money to get to school every day and I didn't have the washing to like, wash my
947 clothes and stuff. I didn't have any help with that I did that all myself, like, they were shocked I even
948 managed to force myself to go to the exams because I missed a week of my exams because I was in
949 hospital and then the day I came out I went straight to school.
950
951 How old was that
952
953 That was this year, must have been July time when I was doing the GCSE's. The first week I was in hospital
954 and then I got discharged on Friday morning and had an exam on Friday afternoon and went straight to
955 school for that exam. They were like where have you been all week? "Oh I've just been discharged from
956 hospital!" I still had my band on and everything and they were literally shocked to see me at school. Like this
957 girl's not turned up for any of her lessons but she's turned up for her exams.
958
959 Everything you're saying is so important and you've given me so much information and understanding it's
960 really been amazing talking to you. How was your self- esteem and belief, now, and how it was when you got
961 excluded from school.
962
963 When I was younger if you told me that I'm an ugly anorexic brat I would believe it. Now, if you tell me to my
964 face, I don't care, say what you want, I can say it twice as bad and I can hurt your feelings even more, but I
965 won't. I'll be like, alright, whatever.
966
967 Val but how do you feel now?
968
969 I know I'm not the real perfect person in the world, but like, sometimes I just think to myself 'do you know
970 what, I'm gonna do my makeup I'm gonna make my makeup nice and I feel comfortable with myself. So I'm
971 gonna walk out of the house this morning with this massive attitude that, No one is going to knock me down.
972 And everyone looks at me and they genuinely think, this girl can't have any problems going on, look at the
973 smile on her face look how strong she is being to everyone. So if someone was to say that to me I would've
974 cried but it is not actually like that. You can sell these horrible things to my face, to your face I will show you I
975 don't care. Soon as I get home if it's been really bad I will sit and cry four hours, but no one ever sees that
976 side, even my mum doesn't see that side. I have had my mum say to me for so long, for my whole life, 'oh
977 you're a shameful child', like all these horrible things first so long it's in my head. It is always going to be
978 there.
979
980 You also talked about anger. I was wondering about the anger that comes out at times and seems to take
981 over, or overwhelms you?
982
983 Yeh
984 So I wondered if we can think about the feeling behind the anger
985
986 How do you mean?
987
988 So you were telling me about situations.
989
990 The one, like, with the girl cause I smacked her in the face with a pole because she talked about my mum
991
992 So if anger comes after the feelings and thoughts, what were you feeling at the time when you were angry?
993
994 I wanted to kill her, I actually just wanted to strangle her.
995
996 But what was it about what she was saying, that got you?
997
998 It's the fact that ... this girl, this specific girl, she has everything in her whole life she wants. Her mum and
999 dad love her to pieces; she has everything she could ever want and she was basically one of them snotty
1000 little bitches. Like... if I didn't have that then I'm an issue. She was rubbing in my face, the fact that she's got
1001 everything I haven't .
1002
1003 Right, and what else?
1004
1005 It was like, the way she said it, it was almost like "you should have been that dead child" as almost if to say

1006 like, because I've got everything, my life's so perfect, you've got a dead sister, you should have been that,
1007 and I'm just thinking to myself 'I can put you in the grave with her'.
1008
1009 So what does it mean 'you've got a dead sister, you're small'? What is it about that that makes you feel so
1010 badly?
1011
1012 Mmmm
1013
1014 Is there something else behind it ?
1015
1016 I feel broken, damaged because they're giving you the damage to make you more broken than you are.
1017 They're breaking me even more because no one understands it, the only way I can make people realise how
1018 it's hurting me is by showing them how mad I am.
1019
1020 So you feel broken and damaged,
1021
1022 I think it's the fact that, I could sit and explain to anyone what I've been through, they won't understand how
1023 it makes me feel
1024
1025 And how does it make you feel
1026
1027 Like complete shit, I just literally want someone to look at me and say "I understand how you feel " but it's
1028 not like that. `None of my friends have a clue.
1029
1030 So you feel like complete shit, broken
1031
1032 Yeh
1033
1034 Damaged
1035
1036 Yeh, like the whole world, like, I'm in a hole in the ground and it's got the walls crumbling down on me and I
1037 can't do anything to stop them falling on me , that's how it feels
1038
1039 How else does it feel to have the whole world crumbling down and falling on you
1040
1041 Like everything's against me , I can't do anything to get out of it. No matter how many people I tell, no matter
1042 how much help I get, I'm stuck and I can't get out of it.
1043
1044 Can you imagine any situation in the world where that could happen?
1045 It's like an earthquake
1046
1047 Like an earthquake?
1048
1049 Well there's a crack in the floor, to the point where you can't see the bottom of it and I'm at the very, very,
1050 bottom of it. If I go to get up , anything I grab falls back on me there's no escape out of it.
1051
1052 So there's no escape
1053
1054 When I try to reach out it comes all crashing down, me reaching out, is like me trying to get someone to
1055 understand and because they don't that's the rocks falling on me, and they don't get it and they throw it back
1056 at me, each rock falling on me is something bad happening in my life and the more comes down, the more
1057 it's shit
1058
1059 And you reaching out, is that also in anger behaviour, or trying to explain?
1060
1061 I'd say both
1062
1063 Kids in this generation will never understand. If they hear you've been through such bad stuff – 'it's your
1064 fault' You can't do anything about it but in that kids eyes you're the issue. It's your fault this has happened to
1065 you and they're going to use it against you, to hurt you even more.
1066 Yeh, the teachers didn't understand, when I told them about my mum, they rang my mum and told her. How
1067 stupid can you be ?
1068
1069 What did you want them to do? What should they have done ?
1070
1071 I wanted them to help me like get social services involved, get me out of that house. But they didn't. They
1072 made me even more trouble at home, they made it worse for me, like, they're actually lucky I didn't take it to

1073 the next level in that situation. I could have killed myself in that situation rather than my mum trying to do it.
1074 And then, they, the teachers, would have been responsible for that.
1075 That would have been their fault because they made that situation a hundred times worse.
1076
1077 And what about your physical self?
1078
1079 I've never self-harmed. I overdosed, a hell of a lot.
1080
1081 In what way did it make you feel better.
1082
1083 You thought 'it's finally coming to an end, you've got what you wanted out of life. You can't do any more'.
1084 When I take the tablets and I think 'this is it' 'this is me doing it' I think to myself, finally, I can go and do what
1085 I need to do. I don't need to be on this world any more. I don't need to put up with this shit any more. And
1086 then, when I wake up in a hospital bed and I'm still awake, it hurts. Because I don't want to be awake. I want
1087 to be gone. I don't want to be on this earth because I'm just trapped in a cycle that I can't get out of.
1088
1089 Uhu
1090
1091 Like you get happy , and then it fucks up and then it's shit again and then you can't deal with it. It's been like
1092 this my whole life.
1093
1094 So coming here, you're changing your lives.
1095
1096 Yeh.
1097

9.9. Appendix 9. An Isolation Booth

Consequence Rooms

"A lack of moral accountability" (DfE,2018, cm9709)



Isolated and excluded - but still at school

9.10.Appendix 10. Participant debrief sheet

NSPC Ltd,
Existential Academy
61-63 Fortune Green
Road
London NW6 1DR



Psychology Department
Middlesex University
The Burroughs
London NW4 4BT

Debriefing Information Sheet For Participants

Title of Study : *A phenomenological exploration of the lived experience of being excluded from school due to persistent disruptive behaviour.*

Academic Year :2016

Researcher: Valerie Landenberg

Research Supervisor: Dr Charlotte Macgregor (admin@nspc.org.uk)

I would like to thank you for participating in this research and check that you are still willing for your contribution to be used. Your involvement has been invaluable.

The nature of this study was to understand the many experiences of young adults between 17 and 27 years old who were excluded from secondary school. Pupils might be excluded from school for various reasons but this study focused on those pupils who were excluded due to persistent disruptive behaviour. Government statistics focus on describing the whole excluded population and do not investigate what it feels like to be excluded. The findings, which come from your participation, may help professionals to better understand young people with persistent disruptive behaviour in the future.

If you have any further questions you wish to discuss please get in touch with me at VL147@live.mdx.ac.uk , or telephone me on (a dedicated number purchased). This number will be live for 6 months after the interview.

If you have found any of the material that was discussed upsetting in any way, or if it has brought up experiences that you would like to follow up on, this list of resources below may be helpful.

The United Kingdom Counselling Psychology (UKCP) website has a list of therapists who offer psychotherapy. You can find this at: <http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/findatherapist.html>
Telephone 0207 014 9955

Respect Yourself offers a free daily text to help young people make better decisions and invites you to get involved.
<http://respectyourself.org.uk/about-us>
Text 07537 404 715

The Joseph Rowntree Association is dedicated to inspire change and supports all people in all walks of life. You are welcome to get involved.
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/about-us>
Telephone 01904 629 241

Mind Mental health Charity offers free therapy and counselling.
<http://mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/talking-treatments>
Telephone 0300 123 3393
Text 86463

The Brandon Centre offers sexual and contraceptive help, counselling and therapy and supports young parents.
<http://brandon-centre.org.uk/>
Telephone 02072624792

Off Centre offers counselling, therapy, advocacy, advice and information for young people
<http://www.offcentre.org.uk/>
Telephone 0208 986 4016

Axis at The Hive supports young people with education, employment, housing, sexual health, substance misuse, health and wellbeing.
Axis@catch-22.org.uk
Telephone: 0203 198 0520