“Education is the way out, isn’t it? Education helped me”: Determinants of Accessing Higher Education for Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse. A Grounded Theory Study.

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Submitted in part requirement for the Doctorate in Educational Psychology (EdPsyD)

University of East Anglia

May 2024

Word Count (excluding contents pages, acknowledgements, references and appendices): 48,643.

Summary

This thesis for the Doctorate in Educational Psychology is divided into three chapters, a literature review, an empirical chapter and a reflective account. The literature review provides an overview of domestic abuse, including terminology, legislation and prevalence with a focus on England. This is followed by a review of the literature regarding the effects of exposure to domestic abuse on children and young people with a particular lens on educational attainment.

The empirical chapter presents a grounded theory study which aimed to develop a theory into what enables children and young people who have been exposed to domestic abuse to access higher education. The purpose of this was to provide understanding of protective factors for academic attainment in children and young people exposed to domestic abuse, so that Educational Psychologists could have better understanding of ways to support their academic engagement. Following analysis of the data, the chapter presents the findings and then discusses them in relation to current literature. Implications for practice and ideas for future research are then shared.

The reflective chapter provides a reflective and experiential account of the research journey. Reflections are offered on the process of designing, conducting, analysing and writing the study. The chapter finishes with hopes for dissemination and for the future of the research.

Acknowledgements

To begin, I would like to thank the participants, without them this research would not have been possible. I am so grateful for your time, openness and for trusting me with your experiences. Your contributions were invaluable and I cannot thank you enough.

I would also like to recognise my TEP training course. Thank you to my tutors for encouraging my passion for this study. Firstly, my research supervisor, Imogen Gorman, thank you for your patience, wisdom, support and candour. I am not sure I would have finished this without you. Thank you to Sophia Wareham, my tutor, for your advice and patience in listening to my wittering's! Thank you to Andrea Honess, for your kindness and always making me feel supported. I'd also like to thank my fellow TEPs, for sharing the highs and the lows. Finally, thank you to the DfE for supplying the funding and resources which have allowed me to train as an EP.

A huge thank you goes to my placement supervisors, Lucy, Ian, Reut and Kathe. Thank you for your support, advice and friendships. Time spent with you has been the highlight of this course and I have learnt so much from you all. Thanks also to my wonderful EP team for always making me feel welcome and for all the opportunities and support.

A massive thank you goes to my family and friends for their patience, support and help. Thank you to my wonderful husband, Scotty, for always making me feel I can do anything and providing me with the love and support to do so. All of this is because of you. Thank you to my sister, Annie, for always listening to me, making me laugh and for always having my back! A massive thank you to my in-laws Dee and David. Your unwavering support has made sure I could do this and I am so grateful. I would also like to acknowledge my hero, my Dad, Nick Carter who provided me with unconditional love and fought for me for as long as he could. Also, my Barbie Nan for always loving and caring for me. Most importantly, I am incredibly grateful to my gorgeous children; Cam and Ray for keeping me going and having complete faith in me. You make everything worthwhile. All of this is for you.

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List of Acronyms:

AR – Academic resilience

ACE – Adverse Childhood Experiences

AAD – Adversity Activated Development

BPS – British Psychological Society

CRC - Committee on the Rights of the Child

CYP – Children and Young People

CYPEDA - Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse

DA – Domestic Abuse

DAA – Domestic Abuse Act

DfE – Department for Education

DV – Domestic Violence

EP – Educational Psychologist

EST – Ecological Systems Theory

FE – Further Education

HCPC – Health Care Professionals Committee

HE – Higher Education

IPV – Intimate Partner Violence

LGBTQ+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Other Non-Heterosexual People

MARAC - Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences

ONS – Office for National Statistics

PF – Protective Factors

PTG – Post-traumatic Growth

SEN – Special Educational Needs

SES – Socio-Economic Status

TEP – Trainee Educational Psychologist

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

UNCRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

VAWG – Violence Against Women and Girls

WHO – World Health Organization

YC – Young Carer

Chapter 1

Literature Review

> "Children become the victims or the beneficiaries of adult actions. But children can also be agents in the making of their lives and their worlds" (Cunningham, 2006, p.16).

Introduction

The aim of this narrative literature review is to appraise the existing literature on what enables children and young people exposed to domestic abuse (CYPEDA) to achieve academically. This review is in two parts. This initial section provides an understanding of DA including terminology, legislation and prevalence with a specific lens on England. The second section is a literature review concentrated on the implications of CYP's exposure to DA with a focus on academic attainment.

Domestic Abuse

Statutory Definitions of Domestic Abuse

The UK's statutory definition of DA is "Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if— (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are "personally connected" to each other, and (b) the behaviour is abusive." (DAA, 2021). 'Personally connected' refers to individuals who are or have been connected to each other through marriages, civil partnerships, intimate personal relationships, and parental relationships (DAA 2021). The Domestic Abuse Act (DAA) (2021) defines children (individuals under 18 years old) as DA victims if they see, hear or experience the impact of DA and are related to person A and/or B.

The definition of DA covers a range of abuse types as listed in the DAA (2021) (see Appendix A). These include abuse types that come under the term coercive control. Coercive control itself is an offence and is defined by the Home Office (2015) as being a

sustained and purposeful pattern of behaviour to exert power over one person by another to serious effect.

Terminology

Domestic Abuse.

The DAA (2021) provides professionals with a definition of DA. However, this abusive behaviour has been referred to by other terms prevalent in the public domain and in research. The most common are domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV). DV is defined as various abusive, threatening and/or violent behaviours between adult family members or adults who have been intimate partners (Mullender, 2004). IPV is “behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours” (WHO, 2021).

Whilst widely used these terms are considered reductionist (Stark, 2007; Wolak & Finkelhor, 1998). Use of the phrase intimate partner suggests DA only occurs between those in an intimate relationship. Moving away from intimate partner allows for consideration of other ‘personally connected’ relationships. Furthermore, terms like DV that include violence imply DA is only physical. However, DA includes a range of harmful non-physical abuses (see Appendix A). The term abuse encompasses this range of harmful behaviours and physical abuses. Consequently, this research will be using the DAA (2021) definition and terminology.

Controlling and Coercive Behaviour.

“Coercive control creates invisible chains and a sense of fear that pervades all elements of a victim’s life. It works to limit their human rights by depriving them of their liberty and reducing their ability for action.” Women’s Aid, (2023).

Coercive control is an umbrella term or framework for understanding controlling behaviours including emotional abuse, isolation, continual monitoring and stalking, reproductive control and the denial of resources amongst other abuses (Stark, 2007). Coercive control is considered non-physical but insidious, terrifying and highly dangerous (Lehmann et al., 2012; Stark, 2007; Stark & Hester, 2019). Indeed, chronic coercive control has been shown to be more frightening and psychologically damaging than short-term physical DA (Piispa, 2002). Furthermore, coercive and controlling behaviour is central to most DA (DAA, 2021; Stark & Hester, 2019).

Exposure or Witnessing?

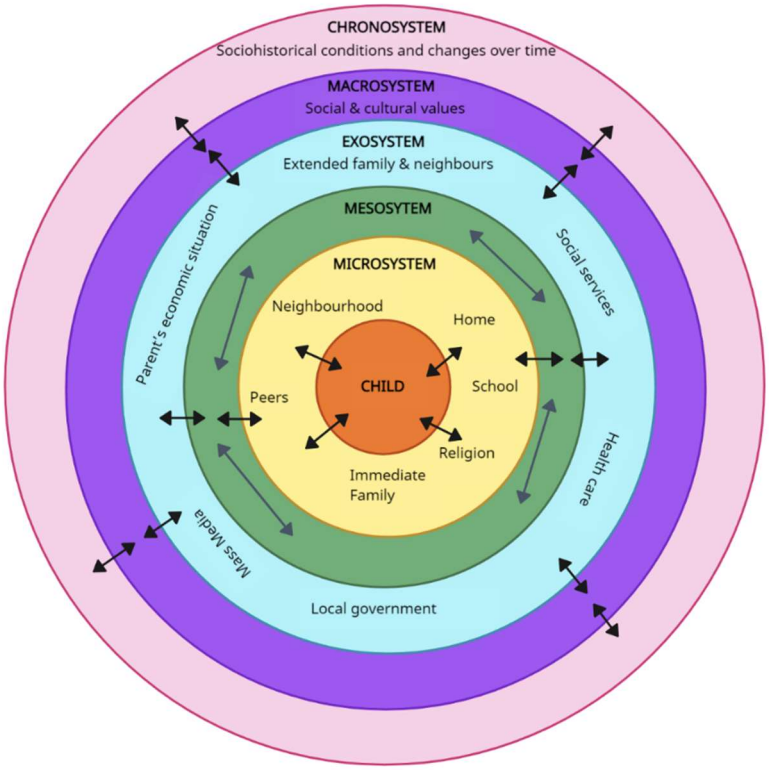
Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) purports that child development is shaped by the system around the child (Longe, 2016). EST proposes there are five levels of influential environment within the system around a child and it is the complex interplay between the child and these systems and relationships and interactions within the systems that influence the child's development (see Figure 1) (Bronfenbrenner, 1997; Longe, 2016). The microsystem is directly influential on the child and includes the child's home life, school life and friends (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). The mesosystem comprises of the interactions between the different systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). Thus, an interaction in one system can influence interactions in another system. The exosystem incorporates wider systems which indirectly impact the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1997), for example a parent's stressful workplace could affect their behaviour at home. The macrosystem is the cultural system in which the child exists, including societal norms (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). The chronosystem is the changes over a child's lifetime and incorporates historical events that can impact the child such as the introduction of the DAA (2021). Accordingly, when DA occurs in a child's microsystem it influences their development and the systems around the child.

'Witnessing' DA is thus considered a reductive term as it implies only direct observation of DA affects CYP (Howarth et al., 2016) and does not reflect CYP's true multi-sensory and multi-systemic experience of living with DA (Ho, 2022; Överlien & Hydén, 2009). Indeed,

Stark & Hester (2019) state ‘witnessing’ only accounts for 65-86% of CYP’s exposure to DA. ‘Exposure’ is a broader term which includes witnessing, hearing and living in a house where DA occurs (Edleson, Ellerton, et al., 2007; Edleson, Johnson, et al., 2007; Evans et al., 2008; Holden, 2003; Howarth et al., 2016). ‘Exposure’ also includes the more insidious experiences that CYP living with DA can have, such as observing the impact on caregiver’s emotional and physical wellbeing, experiencing high emotions in the home and changes to family life (Holden, 2003). Thus, using the term ‘exposure’ covers the myriad of ways CYP can experience DA in their lives.

Figure 1

Model of Bronfenbrenner's (1997) Ecological System’s Theory



A Gendered Issue.

DA is considered a gendered issue with women more likely to be victims, and men perpetrators (Cleaver et al., 2019; DAA, 2021; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Holt et al., 2008; Howarth et al., 2016; Orr et al., 2022). In an analysis of 877 cases of DA it was shown that

where both child abuse and DA occurred the perpetrator was male (SafeLives, 2014). However, there are suggestions that DA is not gendered due to more awareness about male victims and DA occurrence within LGBTQ+ relationships (Chestnutt, 2018; Evans et al., 2008). Certainly, DA does occur within LGBTQ+ relationships (Baker et al., 2013; Home Office, 2015; Stark & Hester, 2019) and men can be victims (Cleaver et al., 2019; DAA, 2021; Gallagher, 2014; Howarth et al., 2016). However, women and girls are disproportionately impacted by DA (Crown Prosecution Service, 2022; Gallagher, 2014; Stark & Hester, 2019; WHO, 2012) and commonly coercive control succeeds by upholding cultural conventions of male and female roles within relationships (Stark & Hester, 2019).

Such is the issue; the gendered problem of DA is recognised internationally. The WHO (2021) has initiated a preventative framework as it recognises violence against women and girls (VAWG) as a major public health issue and a violation of human rights; DA comprises the majority of VAWG. The UN has launched the UN Women Strategic Plan 2022-2025 which aims to eradicate VAWG and specifically stresses the impact of DA (UN, 2021). Additionally, the Council of Europe introduced the international treaty *The Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* (The Istanbul Convention, 2014) which calls countries to condemn all forms of VAWG including DA.

Prevalence

General Public.

In the year ending March 2023, over 2.1 million DA related incidents involving over sixteens was recorded by England and Wales police (ONS, 2023). However, it should be noted that statistics likely do not reflect the true prevalence of DA (Anderton, 2019; DAA, 2021; Fair, 2019; Steven, 2015). These statistics are based on reporting (Anderton, 2019; Gonzalez et al., 2014; Kassis et al., 2013; Steven, 2015). However, DA goes underreported due to feelings of fear, shame and blame, a lack of professional understanding or training, economic dependence, communication skills, isolation, other adversities such as mental

health issues and cultural expectations of privacy (Alexander et al., 2005; DAA, 2021; Ellis, 2018; Gallagher, 2014; Gremillion & Kanof, 1996; Munro, 2011; Osofsky, 2018; Radford et al., 2011; Stanley, 2011). DA is particularly hidden in minority communities including those with disabilities and in LGBTQ+ relationships (Home Office, 2015; SafeLives, 2017, 2018, 2021; Stark & Hester, 2019). Furthermore, an aspect of coercive control is usually to make it incredibly difficult for the victim to disclose and it is usually hard to recognise or articulate, even by the victim (DAA, 2021; Home Office, 2015). DA is often thus termed a hidden or invisible issue (Fair, 2019; Gallagher, 2014; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004).

Women and Girls.

Internationally, in 2022 approximately 133 females a day were killed by someone personally connected to them (UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2023) and at least 30% of women have experienced DA (WHO, 2021). This parallels figures in England and Wales where 1 in 3 women experience DA across their lifetime compared to 8% of men (ONS, 2024). In 2023, reported figures show 1.4 million women in England and Wales experienced DA compared to 751,000 men (ONS, 2023). Furthermore, 98.6% of women killed in domestic homicides were murdered by a man (ONS, 2024). Additionally, DA is positively associated with depression and suicidality in women who have experienced DA (Devries et al., 2013).

Children.

Currently, in the UK, 105,000 CYP are at risk of death or serious harm due to DA (SafeLives, 2023) and 830,000 UK CYP were exposed to DA in their homes in 2019 (Children's Commissioner, 2020). In 32.4% of reported DA cases in England and Wales in 2022, children were living in the household (ONS, 2023). This aligns with a survey of 1143, 13-14 year olds in England which showed that 34% had witnessed DA within their family (Fox et al., 2014). Thus, the Home Office's suggestion that between a quarter and a third of UK children are exposed to DA during their childhood (Oliver et al., 2019) appears

conservative. As Kassis et al. (2013, p.191) wrote, these statistics “are remarkable and alarming for so called civilized societies and high-income countries”.

DA Legislation Relating to Children

DA and its impact on CYP is a significant global concern (WHO, 2021). Consequently, various international conventions and reports exist to try to eliminate DA and VAWG. The UNCRC (1989) formally recognises the negative impact of DA on CYP and directs governments to take appropriate action to safeguard children. To implement this the Committee of the Rights of the Child (CRC) was formed, of which the UK is a member (UN Office of the High Commissioner, 1993). However, the CRC has had to repeatedly ask the UK to prioritise protection of CYP from DA (CRC, 2002, 2016; James & James, 2004). The CRC (2016) recommended the UK government ratify The Istanbul Convention (2014) and increase its capacity to tackle violence against children. Consequently, the DAA (2021) was promised in 2017 (Home Office, 2021).

The DAA (2021) was bought into law in April 2021 (Home Office, 2021). The intention of the DAA (2021) is to inform professionals’ (including EPs’) responses to DA whilst raising awareness of DA and its impacts. The DAA (2021) outlines specific legal duties and guidance to safeguard those exposed to DA. It provides a statutory definition of DA (see above) and makes CYP’s exposure to DA unlawful (DAA, 2021).

Literature Review

Overview

This literature review aims to consider the research into the effects of DA on CYP, with a focus on educational attainment. The review begins by discussing CYP and DA. It then discusses how DA is harmful to CYP and in what ways. In doing so the review considers the impact of DA on CYP’s education. Following this, the review discusses resiliency and protective factors (PFs) with a focus on academic resiliency (AR) and its PFs. The review

then attempts to consider AR in CYPEDA, however due to a lack of research, instead considers AR and PFs for CYP exposed to abuse. Following this, the review appraises EP research into CYPEDA. Finally, future directions for research are considered.

Search Strategy

Literature search terms and combinations of these terms are shown in Table 1. Searches took place from 2022-2024 using Google Scholar and library searches employing electronic databases such as EBSCO, ERIC, PsychArticles, ScienceDirect as well as relevant journals, for example *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *Violence Against Women* and *Journal of Family Violence*. Initial searches focussed on studies in England over the last 20 years. However, the date range and geographical location was expanded, as needed, due to limited studies and use of snowballing.

Table 1

Literature Review Search Terms

Search Terms	+/-	DA Search Terms	+/-	Other Search Terms
• Trauma • Adverse Childhood Experiences • ACEs • Educational Psychologist • Educational Psychology • Generational Trauma • Intergenerational Trauma • Transgenerational Trauma • Resilience • Resiliency • Resistance • Academic resilience • Academic resiliency • Protective factors • Child abuse • Post-traumatic growth • Adversity Activated Development • Poly-victimisation • Adversity package		• Domestic abuse • Domestic violence • Intimate partner violence • Abuse • Violence • Coercive Control		• Children • Meta-analysis • Review • England • UK • Education • School • Learning • Exclusion • Outcomes • Positive outcomes • College • University

How Domestic Abuse Effects Children and Young People

Women and their children experience a higher proportion of the most violent and enduring DA situations (Gallagher, 2014) with DA often starting and increasing during pregnancy (DAA, 2021; Mezey & Bewley, 2019; Refuge, 2021; Shadigian & Bauer, 2004). According to Överlien & Hydén (2009) CYP's exposure to DA is unavoidable when it occurs in their mother's lives, which is aligned with an EST view of child development. In their research, Överlien & Hydén (2009) analysed CYP's discourses of their experiences of DA, they found CYP responded actively to DA exposure, often through emotional distancing, but also by imagining actions that could end the DA.

Adverse Childhood Experiences.

In the literature DA is considered an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) (DAA, 2021; Felitti et al., 1998). ACE is a term which describes the different traumas and hardships an individual may experience during childhood (Felitti et al., 1998; Osofsky, 2018). Felitti et al.'s, (1998) seminal research showed ACEs are linked to poor outcomes in adulthood, with more negative outcomes linked to more exposure to ACEs (Felitti et al., 1998). Negative outcomes include long-term mental and physical health issues, higher prevalence of anti-social behaviour and underperforming academically and economically (Allen, 2011; Felitti et al., 1998). Felitti et al., (1998) also found ACEs typically cooccur.

Whilst Felitti et al.'s, (1998) findings are based on a large sample, it is not a representative sample. Participants were from one city in America and the vast majority were white and college educated (Felitti et al., 1998). Furthermore, the research offers a narrow categorisation of ACE's with the original categorisation being based on a non-representative sample (McEwen & Gregerson, 2019). The categories do not include community-based adversities such as housing, prejudice and poverty. Thus, this research whilst important in outlining the impact of adversities on children is not representative of all children and is not reflective of the systemic complexity of adversities a child may face. In accordance with an

EST view of child development it is important to consider the presence and impact of social adversities on children, especially as more recent research in England and America showed that where deprivation exists exposure to ACEs is increased (Lewer et al., 2020; Mersky et al., 2021). Furthermore, this deficit-based research does not consider resiliency or the protective factors in a child's life and the interplay of these with the adversities.

Polyvictimisation.

Polyvictimisation is used to describe where CYP experience multiple and cumulative adversities including DA (Finkelhor et al., 2007). Cumulative risk (Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004) and adversity package are alternative terms (Rossman, 2001). These theories are based on research demonstrating one adversity in a child's life begets another and so on. Dube et al. (2002) in their study into DA's cooccurrence with other ACEs found DA is linked to almost every ACE. This includes neglect, teenage relationship abuse, adult substance misuse, mental health issues, child abuse and poverty (Boatman, 2014; Children's Commissioner, 2018; Dube et al., 2002; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Gilbert et al., 2009; Hamby et al., 2010; Holt et al., 2008; Jouriles et al., 2008; Kassis et al., 2013; Martinez-Torteya et al., 2009; Radford et al., 2011; SafeLives, 2014b; Stanley, 2011). There is a particularly high cooccurrence, (30-62%), of DA with child abuse (Gilbert et al., 2009; SafeLives, 2014b). This is supported by Holt et al.'s (2008) comprehensive literature review of exposure to DA on CYP's health and developmental wellbeing where they state "the literature reviewed has unequivocally established the interconnectedness between men's abuse of women and child abuse" (p.799).

Polyvictimisation results in more negative outcomes for CYP (Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Gonzalez et al., 2014; SafeLives, 2014a). For example, the cooccurrence of exposure to DA and child abuse appears to result in CYP exhibiting more negative behaviours than being exposed to one of these adversities (Gilbert et al., 2009; Sternberg et al., 2006; Turner et al., 2010; Wolfe et al., 2003). Furthermore, Gonzalez et al.'s, (2014) study into the impact of co-occurring DA subtypes on CYP's functioning found poor caregiver mental health and a lack

of social support is significantly linked to behavioural difficulties in CYP. Though this was based on a sample of Canadian CYP, wider research supports this conclusion with the ‘toxic trio’ of DA, poor parental mental health and parental substance misuse being highlighted as a considerable risk factor for death or serious injury of English CYP in a review of MARACs (SafeLives, 2014b) and in Klostermann & Kelley's (2009) review into the impact of DA and parental alcoholism on CYP. Furthermore, Klostermann & Kelley's (2009) review and Templeton et al.'s (2009) study into English CYP’s experiences of living with parental alcoholism and DA found the ‘toxic trio’ can cause considerable long-term impacts for CYP including low-academic achievement, unstable living conditions, being a young carer and difficulties with emotional wellbeing and emotional regulation. However, whilst these studies highlight the considerable risks of polyvictimisation for CYP they are deficit-focussed studies. Templeton et al.'s (2009) study does touch upon the CYP’s coping strategies and support but acknowledges that further research is needed to understand CYP’s protective factors (PFs) for development of resilience to these adversities.

Psychological Trauma.

The Cambridge Dictionary, (2024) defines trauma as “severe and lasting emotional shock and pain caused by an extremely upsetting experience”. This definition highlights that trauma is a reaction to extreme forms of stress. According to Perry (2007), stress is caused by a challenge to an individual’s system which causes it to move from homeostasis into stress-response; this reaction prepares the person for fight or flight. It is important to consider that stressful and traumatic experiences do not always cause trauma. If stress is moderate, controlled and buffered by an adult it is not usually a negative for CYP (Oshri, 2023; Perry, 2007; Rutter, 2012). Indeed, this type of stress builds resilience and development of adaptive responses that enable management of normal day-to-day stresses (Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2020; Perry, 2007). However, extreme forms of stress such as traumatic experiences can overwhelm the body to where it is difficult to return to

homeostasis (Levendosky et al., 2002; Perry, 2007). The body develops a new equilibrium that compromises the functioning of the individual; this is considered trauma (Perry, 2007).

Trauma responses are not just limited to fight or flight, indeed Perry (2003) himself acknowledges that when the body perceives threat it enters two possible states; dissociation or hyperarousal and there are a range of responses under these states (see Table 2). These responses are adaptive to threat however, when equilibrium is changed they can be easily triggered and maladaptive (Levendosky et al., 2002; Perry, 2003, 2007).

Table 2

Differential Response to Threat

Dissociation	Hyperarousal
Detached	Hypervigilance
Numb	Anxious
Compliant	Reactive
Decrease heart rate	Alarm response
Suspension of time	Increase heart rate
De-realisation	Freeze: Fear
'Mini-psychoses'	Flight: Panic
Fainting	Flight: Terror

Note: Adapted from (Perry, 2003)

Similarly, to stress-responses individuals will adapt their behaviour to manage stressful situations (Bomber, 2022). These behaviours are protective against the original cause of stress but, like stress-responses, if an individual faces extreme stress, these adaptive behaviours can become easily triggered and maladaptive (Bomber, 2022). As behaviour is considered communication, disconcerting and unusual behaviours can be a recognisable sign of trauma/stress (Bomber, 2022).

Transgenerational Trauma.

'Hurt people hurt people' is a common phrase that summarises the general assumption that trauma is passed through generations. Commonly known as generational,

intergenerational or transgenerational trauma, this theory is based on the idea that a parent's experience of trauma can affect their children's emotional wellbeing and cognitive development (Grand & Salberg, 2021; Prager, 2003). Indeed, the literature shows that these children are at a higher risk of developing a range of emotional wellbeing and behavioural issues including post-traumatic symptoms, anxiety and hyperactivity (Grand & Salberg, 2021). This assertion is well supported in the literature in particular with a multitude of studies focussed on the impact of the Holocaust (Grand & Salberg, 2021; Prager, 2003).

More recent literature has focussed on the generational transmission of abuse as demonstrated by Assink et al.'s (2018) meta-analysis of the intergenerational transmission of childhood maltreatment and Greene et al.'s (2020) systematic review of impacts of transgenerational trauma. Assink et al.'s, (2018) meta-analysis reviewed 84 studies which explored the transmission of childhood maltreatment from at least one generation to another. The study found that there was a significant correlation between experiencing childhood maltreatment and then as a parent perpetrating child maltreatment (Assink et al., 2018). However, Assink et al., (2018) acknowledge that cycles of generational trauma can be broken and that parental abuse of children can occur without the presence of generational trauma.

There were limitations to Assink et al.'s (2018) study; childhood maltreatment was limited to physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect, so does not include forms of child maltreatment such as exposure to DA. The study also does not appear to acknowledge the likelihood and effects of polyvictimisation. Additionally, Assink et al. (2018) only focusses on Western countries as they argue there is considerable variation in definitions of childhood maltreatment, risk factors for childhood maltreatment and transgenerational transmission of child abuse between western and non-western countries. Consequently, the vast majority of studies were American/Canadian with only 12 studies from Europe, the study also appears to reflect a mostly white population. Furthermore, the study is again deficit-focussed and does not explore PFs or resiliency. It is also important to note that the study does not refer to

the transgenerational transmission of child abuse as a form of transgenerational trauma. However, it is inferred in their discussion of parent's history of childhood abuse as "unresolved trauma" or a "history of trauma" and that these parents may benefit from trauma-focussed therapies (Assink et al., 2018, p. 142).

Unlike Assink et al., (2018), Greene et al.'s, (2020) systemic review into the intergenerational effects of childhood maltreatment on parenting practice does acknowledge the generational transmission of child abuse as transgenerational trauma. Greene et al.'s, (2020) study also includes non-western populations and focusses on positive as well as negative outcomes. Interestingly Greene et al.'s, (2020) study includes exposure to DA as a form of child maltreatment reflecting the significant impact that DA is acknowledged to have on CYP (Domestic Abuse Act, 2021; Fair, 2019; Holden, 2003; Wolfe et al., 2003) and the stance of charities such as the NSPCC (2024).

Greene et al., (2020) like Assink et al., (2014) found that experiencing childhood maltreatment does increase the risk of perpetrating abusive parenting. Greene et al., (2020) also found that exposure to DA in childhood was a consistent predictor of perpetrating child abuse and in their discussion on this finding they acknowledge the likelihood of polyvictimisation and difficulties in separating the types of child abuse that the child may experience. Greene et al.'s, (2020) study considers the childhood impact of exposure to DA on parenting, but it does not specifically consider the transmission of DA. However, other studies show that victims of DA and/or child abuse are more commonly involved in DA as adults (Abramsky et al., 2011; Assink et al., 2018; Fredland et al., 2015; Holt et al., 2008; Office for National Statistics, 2017; Smith-Marek et al., 2015).

Greene et al.'s, (2020) study includes some indirect exploration of PFs however it acknowledges the need to understand more about the PFs that can break cycles of transgenerational abuse. Whilst Greene et al.'s, (2020) study appears to be comprehensive it does not include qualitative studies, which was the same for Assink et al., (2018), this could limit understanding about the complexities of why parents who have experienced child

abuse may go on to abuse themselves or importantly what enables them to break the cycles of transgenerational abuse.

There are several theories offered behind why transgenerational trauma occurs. Parenting practices and behaviours are seen as passed from generation to generation whether positive or negative (Assink et al., 2018). Social learning theory offers a reason as to why this occurs as it proposes children learn from behaviours modelled by their parents (Bandura, 1973, 1977; Kalmuss, 1984). Thus, if CYP witness DA as part of their day-to-day life these behaviours are their normal and they later use them (Bandura, 1973, 1977; Kalmuss, 1984). This was termed intergenerational transmission of violence or marital aggression (Bandura, 1977; Kalmuss, 1984).

Bowlby's (1988) attachment theory proposes in their first year of life children need to develop a special bond with their mother (attunement), this attachment enables healthy development of the child (Holmes, 2014). Ainsworth et al., (2015) built on this research by purporting that different parenting styles result in different attachment types which steer the child's development. Abusive parenting has been shown to result in disorganised or insecure attachment (Baer & Martinez, 2006; Cyr et al., 2010), and insecure attachment can be a predictor of perpetrating child abuse as Lo et al.'s (2019) meta-analysis of insecure attachment and child maltreatment found. Finally, difficulties with emotional regulation is thought to cause transgenerational trauma. Smith et al., (2014) in their research into maternal experiences of childhood abuse and potential to perpetrate child abuse found childhood abuse can impact a person's emotional regulation which can then result in them being abusive to their children when overwhelmed.

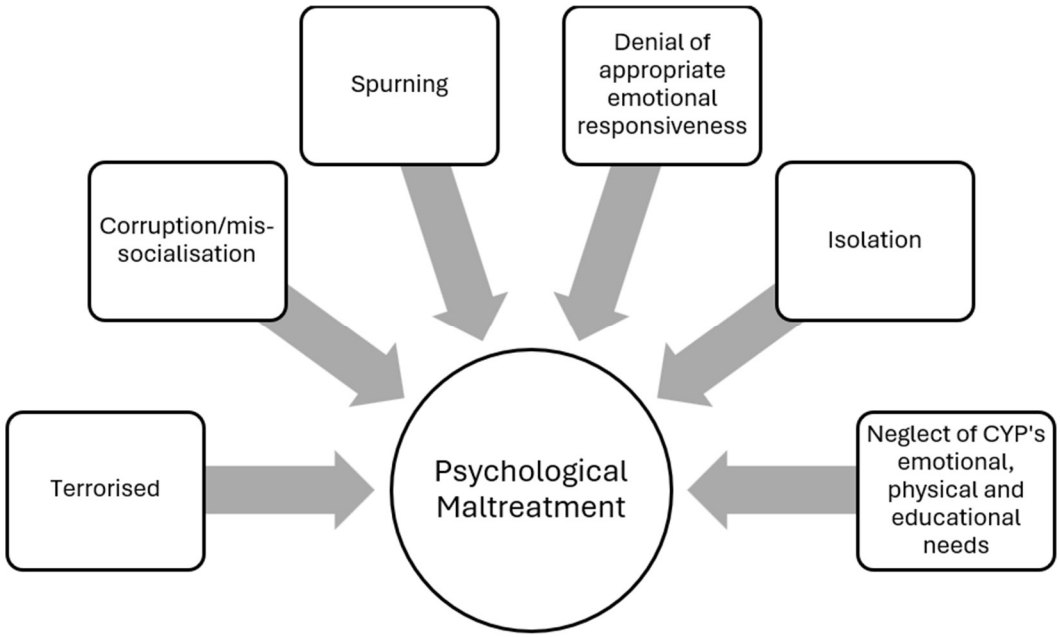
Trauma and Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse.

Perry (2003) states the more prolonged a trauma is, the more likely there will be long-term and potentially permanent effects on a child's emotional, behavioural, cognitive and physiological functioning. The literature on the effects of DA exposure on CYP seems to

support this. DA exposure for CYP usually occurs via their parents (Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Stark & Hester, 2019). Due to CYP's dependence on their parents, exposure is more likely to be prolonged owing to how difficult it can be to leave abusive relationships (Heron et al., 2022). Furthermore, because of this dependence CYP are considered more vulnerable to the threat of DA (Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004) hence the DAA (2021) acknowledging CYP's exposure to DA as unlawful.

Figure 2

How Children's Exposure to Domestic Abuse is Psychological Abuse.



Note: Adapted from Holden's (2003) *Children exposed to domestic violence and child abuse: Terminology and taxonomy*.

Holden (2003) explored why childhood exposure to DA is considered child abuse and found six processes of psychological abuse through which DA causes CYP harm (see Figure 2). Holden (2003) found these processes are either caused by the parent directly mistreating the CYP or through the impacts of DA on the CYP's parent and/or household. Holden's (2003) work is supported in the literature. For example, harm to CYP from DA can occur via impact on parenting capacity. Firstly, the perpetrator is thought to disassociate from the feelings of those around them (Holt et al., 2008) or offer hostility instead of safety

(Radford et al., 2011). Secondly, DA can negatively impact on the non-abusive parent's emotional capacity for their children as shown by various studies (Holt et al., 2008; Jernberg & Booth, 1998; Rossman & Rea, 2005; Sterne & Poole, 2009; Stiles, 2002). Impact on parenting capacity can result in less securely attached CYP (Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Levendosky et al., 2002). Finally, Maslow's self-actualisation theory states that the meeting of basic needs is vital to healthy development (Hooper, 2012) and DA can deplete practical resources which are needed to provide a CYP's basic needs (Gregory et al., 2020). However, it is important to consider that studies show non-abusive parents can quickly regain parenting capacity when safe (Cort & Cline, 2017; Letourneau et al., 2007).

Outcomes of Exposure to Domestic Abuse on Children and Young People

Research into effects of DA exposure on CYP is a relatively new area for study, with research starting in the 1970s and increasing exponentially from the 1990's (Holden, 2003). The research appears to focus mostly on the negative impacts of DA exposure rather than CYPEDA's strengths (Arai et al., 2021).

Negative Impacts.

DA can impact CYP socially, emotionally, behaviourally, physiologically and educationally. As previously discussed, These impacts are typically adaptive responses to trauma, however responses vary as per EST they "depend upon the nature, duration and the pattern of trauma, and characteristics of the child and his or her family and social situation." (Perry, 2007, p.44). This literature review is focussed on educational impacts; however, a summary of social, emotional, behavioural and physiological impacts is provided as these categories of harm are interconnected and causal.

Social.

Socially, CYPEDA are impacted in multifarious ways at different systemic levels (Fair, 2019; Kitzmann et al., 2003). SafeLives (2014a) a UK charity committed to the eradication of DA, uses specialist DA casework data to study the impacts of DA on UK CYP; their research

showed 52% of UK CYPEDA had social development difficulties. This is supported by literature reviews (Bender et al., 2022; Holt et al., 2008; Howell et al., 2016; Stiles, 2002) and meta-analyses (Kitzmann et al., 2003; Wolfe et al., 2003) into the impacts of exposure to DA on CYP which demonstrate that CYPEDA can struggle to develop appropriate social skills, social competence and language and communication skills.

The research reviews (Holt et al., 2008; Howell et al., 2016; Stiles, 2002) as well as Fair's (2019) Home Office report on the impact of DA on CYP state CYPEDA are more likely to experience bullying, perpetrate bullying and cheat compared to their non-exposed peers. Holt et al. (2008), Howell et al. (2016) and Fair (2019) also highlight developing healthy and trusting relationships can be difficult for CYPEDA. Furthermore, in their study into how High School students feel when experiencing DA, Alexander et al. (2005), found 10% of pupils felt lonely and/or isolated.

Socially prescribed perfectionism can be an outcome of exposure to childhood abuse. This subtype of perfectionism is described as “perceiving others as demanding perfection of oneself” (Chen et al., 2019, p.53). This results in needing to present to others as perfect (Chen et al., 2019). Chen et al. (2019) studied links between ACE’s and types of perfectionism, their research showed socially prescribed perfectionism can be attributed to exposure to abuse in childhood.

Emotional Wellbeing.

Kitzmann et al.'s (2003) and Evans et al.'s (2008) meta-analyses into CYP’s exposure to DA highlights 63% of CYPEDA show considerably more emotional wellbeing issues than their non-exposed peers. McDonald, Graham-Bermann, et al.'s (2016) research aimed to examine profiles of adjustment in school-aged CYPEDA, their research identified three profiles of socioemotional functioning: resilient, struggling and severe maladjustment. 34% of CYPEDA were classed as struggling and severe maladjustment (McDonald, Graham-Bermann, et al., 2016). The percentage difference may reflect that McDonald, Graham-

Bermann, et al. (2016)'s sample was limited to American school-aged CYP who were known to DA services, and impact was based on maternal report. Whereas Kitzmann et al. (2003)'s review consisted of 118 studies from around the world and included community sampling, shelter sampling as well as specialist DA service sampling and is thus more comprehensive.

Specific emotional wellbeing impacts detailed in the research includes anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, low self-esteem, perfectionism and low self-worth (Alexander et al., 2005; Anderson & Bang, 2012; Carlson, 2000; Chen et al., 2019; DAA, 2021; Dube et al., 2002; Fair, 2019; Howarth et al., 2016; Howell, 2011; Kimball, 2016, 2016; Levendosky et al., 2002; Rasmussen & Troilo, 2016; Stiles, 2002). Research also shows that CYPEDA are at risk of suicidal ideation both as CYP and adults (Alexander et al., 2005; Dube et al., 2001). Finally, CYPEDA can struggle more with emotional regulation than non-exposed peers (Bender et al., 2022; DAA, 2021; Howell, 2011).

Behaviour.

The reviews and meta-analyses on DA's impact on CYP show that CYPEDA can display more undesirable and high-risk behaviours than non-exposed CYP (Evans et al., 2008; Fair, 2019; Kitzmann et al., 2003; Radford et al., 2011; Yates et al., 2003). This includes disobedience at home and/or school, violence and aggression, alcohol/substance misuse, criminality and vulnerability to criminal and sexual exploitation (Dube et al., 2002; Fair, 2019; Gray et al., 2021; Holt et al., 2008; Kitzmann et al., 2003; Radford et al., 2011; Stiles, 2002). Gray et al. (2021) explored the relationship between ACEs and serious youth violence and found 65% of youth offenders had witnessed DA. This supports Yates et al.'s (2003) study into exposure to DA and difficulties with behaviour.

Physiological Impact.

Exposure to DA can be physically harmful and even fatal (NSPCC, 2020). From 2017-2019, DA was involved in 55% of Serious Case Reviews and was highly prevalent in cases between 1998-2019 (DfE, 2022a, 2022b). Aside from the direct impact of physical abuse,

childhood exposure to DA is positively correlated with leading causes of death in adults including heart disease, cancer, lung disease, liver disease and skeletal breakage (Felitti et al., 1998) as well as harm and changes to nervous and immune systems (Berg et al., 2022; Howell et al., 2016). This is thought to be caused by chronic stress (McAlister Groves, 2018). Furthermore, Howell et al. (2016) completed a comprehensive, international review of how DA impacts CYP at each developmental stage. Howell et al. (2016) concluded exposure to DA has a significant physiological impact on CYP at each stage of development including miscarriage and risks associated with preterm birth, low birth weight, early onset obesity and continuing weight issues. Furthermore, Howell et al., (2016) highlight witnessing violence is linked to asthma and gastrointestinal problems in preschoolers and frequent illness and eating and sleeping difficulties in school-aged children. However, like other reviews, Howell et al., (2016)'s review was also constrained by a lack of diversity of country and culture in the base samples as well as a lack of longitudinal studies. Howell et al., (2016) also argue for more studies focussed on resilience and PFs for CYPEDA.

Educational Impact.

The reviews into CYPEDA show that DA can negatively impact on a CYP's academic achievement and educational outcomes (Holt et al., 2008; Howarth et al., 2016; Stiles, 2002; Supol et al., 2021). Combined, the existing research shows seven interlinked ways CYPEDA's education is impacted; speech and language development, executive functioning (EF), attendance, cognitive performance, literacy and numeracy skills, special educational needs (SEN) and positive educational outcomes. However, compared to the other impacts, educational impacts appear to be a less researched area.

Speech and Language.

Speech and language abilities are positively correlated with academic outcomes and are considered crucial for literacy skills development (Langbecker et al., 2020; Snow, 2016). Radford et al.'s (2011) comprehensive report on UK child abuse and neglect on behalf of the

NSPCC emphasised trauma can cause speech and language needs in CYPEDA. Furthermore, the mothers in Dodd's (2009) research into therapeutic groupwork for mothers and their young children exposed to DA, reported delays in their children's language skill development. Dodd's (2009) research is supported by Howell et al.'s (2016) review which found school-aged children had lower scores on language compared to non-exposed peers. Finally, Holt et al.'s (2008) literature review, highlighted childhood exposure to DA can impact verbal skills development.

Executive Functioning.

EF is considered crucial for school readiness and school success (Diamond, 2013). EF comprises of inhibition, working memory and cognitive flexibility, combined these result in the reasoning, problem-solving and planning skills needed to manage school and life (Diamond, 2013). Howell et al.'s (2016) review and Yule et al.'s (2019) meta-analysis into resilience in CYP exposed to violence states exposure to DA can impact a CYP's EF development. Attentional capacity which is associated with inhibition can be particularly impacted (Anderson & Bang, 2012; Radford et al., 2011).

Attendance.

When CYP miss school, they miss learning opportunities which can directly impact on educational outcomes (Ginsburg et al., 2014). Furthermore, school exclusion is linked to poor academic outcomes and learning disengagement (Pyne, 2019). In their research into school absenteeism and exclusion Orr et al. (2022) found these issues are positively correlated with exposure to DA. There appears to be several possible reasons for this. Research suggests bullying and/or concern for parents can result in truancy in CYPEDA (DAA, 2021; Fair, 2019; Kiesel et al., 2016; Orr et al., 2022). Indeed, in Morris et al.'s (2015) research into CYPEDAs' views of safety and adversity, mothers' shared how DA can mean CYPEDA miss school to be young carers. Furthermore, according to Orr et al. (2022) CYPEDA are at higher risk of fixed-term exclusions due to emotional and behavioural needs.

However, Orr et al.'s (2022) study appears to be the only research to specifically connect DA with exclusion and the sample is Australian. Though a Centre for Social Justice, (2018) report on school exclusion in England notes that pupils at risk of exclusion are more likely to be exposed to challenging circumstances such as DA. Additionally, an Ofsted (2009) report on the exclusion of under sevens showed their schools reported high levels of multi-agency involvement due to issues such as DA.

Escaping DA can also impact CYPEDA's education though moving schools (Orr et al., 2022; Radford et al., 2011; Stanton, 2017). CYPEDA may experience several school changes to escape DA (Orr et al., 2022) and frequent school moves are linked to poor educational outcomes (Tucker et al., 1998; Wood, 1993) and exclusions (Hemphill et al., 2014). Moreover, even when physically present, CYPEDA can mentally disengage with their learning (Howell et al., 2016; Morris et al., 2015).

Cognitive Performance.

Research into CYPEDA's performance on cognitive assessments shows low results are more likely (Fair, 2019; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Howell et al., 2016; Kiesel et al., 2016). An assumption could be made that CYPEDA are cognitively less able than non-exposed CYP. However, trauma can impact a CYP's developmental progress and even cause regression (Perry, 2003). This is supported by Koenen et al.'s, (2003) study into IQ suppression in CYPEDA. Additionally, Howell et al. (2016) note exposure to DA appears linked to memory difficulties in preschoolers and adolescents.

Literacy and Numeracy Skills.

Kiesel et al. (2016) completed research into CYPEDA's academic performance, using longitudinal data they found exposure to DA negatively impacted on CYP's reading and maths scores. This research is supported by Howell et al.'s (2016) review which showed poorer reading and maths scores in school-aged CYPEDA and Thompson & Whimper's (2010) research into the reading levels of 12-year-olds who witnessed DA.

Special Educational Needs.

CYPEDA are more likely to be identified as having SEN than their non-exposed peers (Fair, 2019; Howell et al., 2016). There does not appear to be specific research into why. EPs generally work with CYP who are perceived to have SEN and/or emotional, social and behavioural needs that are affecting their education (Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP), 2023). Moreover, schools are advised to seek EP advice if a CYP experiences difficulties despite appropriate provision (DfE & Department of Health, 2015). In addition, EPs should be involved in the needs assessment process for an Education Health Care Plan for CYP who require more support than typically available (DfE & Department of Health, 2015). Considering the above research that shows approximately one in three CYP are exposed to DA, and that CYPEDA are more likely to be identified with SEN and have behavioural and emotional difficulties then EPs will be working with CYPEDA.

Positive Educational Outcomes.

The research into the impact of exposure to DA in childhood is largely deficit-focussed. However, there exists a cohort of CYPEDA who appear unaffected or even thrive academically (Chestnutt, 2018; Kitzmann et al., 2003; McDonald, Graham-Bermann, et al., 2016; Radford et al., 2011; Suzuki et al., 2008). There is no specific research into why, though Radford et al. (2011) suggest academic success may be due to parental pressure, a desire to escape DA or that educational success may increase CYPEDA's self-worth. Suzuki et al.'s (2008) research into adult's experiences of childhood exposure to DA does not specifically focus on academic outcomes but found participants' valued education as a means to improve their lives. Additionally, Suzuki et al. (2008) observed educational success made the participants feel smart and powerful, with resilience to DA being attributed partly to academic success.

Linked to these suggestions is the concept of perfectionism which is considered both a positive and negative trait (Rasmussen & Troilo, 2016). In their review and study of

perfectionism development within the family system Rasmussen & Troilo, (2016) describe how perfectionism can develop due to exposure to abusive situations, which supports Chen et al.'s (2019) research. Rasmussen & Troilo, (2016) also suggest individuals may seek high academic performance because they believe or have been told that without excellent academic performance they will not be loved or accepted. This is a form of socially prescribed perfectionism as described above (Chen et al., 2019; Rasmussen & Troilo, 2016).

Research Limitations.

Whilst there is overwhelming evidence that DA is harmful to CYP there are research limitations to consider. Firstly, polyvictimisation makes it difficult to isolate DA as being the sole contributor to the impacts on CYP (Fair, 2019; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Holt et al., 2008; Wolfe et al., 2003). Additionally, breadth of research is an issue with research mostly focussing on harm rather than strengths, such as resilience in CYPEDA (Arai et al., 2021; Howell et al., 2016; Kitzmann et al., 2003; McDonald, Corona, et al., 2016; McDonald, Graham-Bermann, et al., 2016). There is also a dearth of longitudinal studies (Fair, 2019; Fogarty et al., 2019; Gonzalez et al., 2014; Howell et al., 2016; McDonald, Corona, et al., 2016; McDonald, Graham-Bermann, et al., 2016; Yule et al., 2019) a lack of CYPEDA's voices (Kimball, 2016; Radford et al., 2011). It should also be noted that as coercive control is a new area of understanding within DA research, the reviews do not include coercive control. Thus, there is a gap in the research reviews regarding the impact of exposure to coercive control on CYP.

The research into impacts of childhood exposure is also limited by convenience often dictating the samples, i.e. CYP in shelters or those using DA services (Evans et al., 2008; Fair, 2019; Holt et al., 2008; Radford et al., 2011; Stiles, 2002). A more recent effort has focused on widening sampling to enable generalisation (Holt et al., 2008; Radford et al., 2011). However, meta-analyses showed no differences in outcomes for CYPEDA whether sampled from shelters, clinical settings or the community (Evans et al., 2008; Kitzmann et al., 2003). Whilst this effort has been made to expand sampling, diversity of sampling

remains an issue. Due to the myriads of difficulties that different minority communities face in reporting DA and being involved in research (including fear, racism and discrimination), the literature is not comprehensive regarding the difference in experiences and impacts for CYPEDA from minority and/or marginalised communities. For example, CYP who have refugee status, CYP of colour, those in tight-knit religious communities and those in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community.

A further issue is that an ethical concern exists about research focussing on labelling CYPEDA with psychiatric classifications (Radford et al., 2011), rather than considering their reactions to DA as adaptive. Additionally, some research discusses outcomes in terms of internalised or externalised (Sternberg et al., 2006; Stiles, 2002). However, the research shows that binary categories do not reflect the enduring and holistic impact of DA on CYP and their lives (Kitzmann et al., 2003). Whilst there are research limitations, it is considered unequivocal that CYPEDA can suffer deleterious short-term and long-term effects (Holt et al., 2008; Kitzmann et al., 2003; Wolfe et al., 2003).

Resiliency

Resiliency Overview.

> The resilience of a child at a given point in time will depend on the resources and supports available to the child through many processes, both within the child and between the child and the many systems the child interacts with (Masten, 2018, p. 16).

Dr Ann Masten, a renowned researcher in the development of resilience, states resiliency is generally accepted as the successful adaptation of a complex and dynamic system to threats against it (Masten et al., 1999). Masten (2014) argues that resilience is considered closer to immunity than recovery, but it is not invulnerability (Masten, 2014). Resilience is not a personality trait and a person can be resilient in one area and not in another (Rutter, 2007; Ungar et al., 2023). Resilience is common, developmental and context dependent (Anderson & Bang, 2012; Fogarty et al., 2019; Masten, 2001). As an ecological-transactional model,

(Betancourt & Khan, 2008) resiliency dynamically draws from biological, psychosocial, structural and cultural resources to maintain the wellbeing of the system (Anderson & Bang, 2012; Fogarty et al., 2019; Masten, 2001; Masten et al., 1999; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Ungar, 2013; Ungar et al., 2023). Thus, resiliency is developable and adversity can improve resilience (Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2020; Oshri, 2023; Perry, 2007). This ecological view of resilience is widely accepted and is aligned with the EST view of child development.

There are concerns regarding the ecological view of resilience and resiliency research in general. Firstly, the concept of resiliency and its risk and PFs factors is overwhelmingly focussed and based on Western civilisations and therefore what is considered as resilient is based on white middle-class norms (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2013; Ungar, 2004; Young et al., 2008). There are therefore concerns that the ideal of a resilient individual is a white, middle-class person which leads to marginalising of minority groups (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2013). Accordingly, there is an argument that resiliency should be more context focussed especially in terms of cultural norms (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2013; Ungar, 2013). For example, in indigenous cultures there should be more of a consideration of the importance of land in considering the development of resiliency (McGuire-Kishebakabaykwe, 2010).

The concept of resiliency has also been called ableist in its focus on the achievement of certain skills and abilities, such as independence (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2013; Ungar, 2004). This is considered problematic within the disabled community as a focus on independence and self-sufficiency invokes the idea that those with disabilities who require care lead tragic lives and that they should overcome their disability (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2013). Moreover, Hutcheon & Wolbring (2013) argue that idea of resiliency is evocative of eugenics discourses regarding survival of the fittest. Hutcheon & Wolbring (2013) therefore propose that resiliency should focus on ‘becoming’ rather than ‘achieving’. However, in England it is difficult to move away from the achievement aspect of resiliency given that in England academic achievement is an important vehicle for the acquisition of resources that

can enable social justice (see Academic Resiliency and Social Justice). Therefore, the concept of resiliency does appear to be defined by the culture and community around the individual.

There is also an argument that resilience studies should better consider availability and types of resources (Ungar, 2013; Ungar et al., 2023). For example, self-motivation may be considered an indicator of resiliency but a person fulfilment of goals is limited by the resources available and opportunities available. Ungar et al., (2023) also argues that despite a huge body of research into the factors that enable resiliency, it is still difficult to predict which CYP will demonstrate resiliency due to the many systems in their lives and the complex interplay between them. Ungar et al., (2023) does acknowledge that a multisystemic view which considers of resources and environments is more commonly being considered in resiliency research, however they argue there is still some way to go to ensure that resilience research truly reflects how complex the development of resiliency is.

Resistance is an alternative conceptualisation of resilience that has arisen from literature into violence (Wade, 1997). Resistance suggests the individual is active in using their relational and social context to develop resistance and opposition against adversity (Anderson & Danis, 2006; Fellin et al., 2019; Katz, 2016; Wade, 1997). The resistance concept acknowledges that CYP and other victims of DA are not passive, but are agentic and will try to resist DA in various ways which leads to resilience (Anderson & Danis, 2006; Fellin et al., 2019; Stark & Hester, 2019; Wade, 1997).

Beyond Resiliency.

There are endless accounts of individuals and groups who found meaning in their suffering and were able to transmute their negative experiences in a positive way, finding new strength and experiencing transformative renewal. Such accounts are not just moving testimonies of the strength of the human spirit but they also challenge the predominant societal discourse of trauma (that implies that trauma is pathological and

requires specialist attention) and the tendency to medicalize and pathologize human suffering (Papadopoulos, 2007, p.306).

Related, but distinct from resiliency, is the concept of Adversity-Activated Development (AAD). AAD is seen as a positive effect of adversity; where the individual is strengthened in response to adversity (Papadopoulos, 2007). These strengths may be new positive characteristics or positive developments (Papadopoulos, 2007). AAD occurs when an adversity drives the person to their limits and therefore changes their life, their sense of meaning, sense of self and understanding of the world (Papadopoulos, 2007). AAD is an individual's new worldview (Papadopoulos, 2007). This concept appears related to Victor Frankl's, (2004) experience and discussion of hope in Auschwitz and beyond. Following his imprisonment in Auschwitz, Frankl (2004) posits where there is hope, there is strength and the possibility of recovery.

Post-traumatic growth (PTG) is a more common term used to describe a positive reaction to adversity. PTG is defined as the "positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances" (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004, p. 1). Similarly to AAD, PTG occurs when the individual is faced with significant adversity that challenges their understanding and worldview (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Though PTG differs from AAD; PTG supposes to positively develop from adversity the individual will be traumatised (Papadopoulos, 2007). However, not all exposed to adversity are traumatised, hence the use of the term 'adversity' rather than 'trauma' in AAD (Papadopoulos, 2007).

Additionally, PTG assumes growth can only occur after exposure to adversity, thus 'post'. However, Papadopoulos (2007) describes how adversities can be ongoing and the positive effects of adversity can happen during the adversity. Papadopoulos (2007, p. 307), also argues 'growth' implies "a degree of inevitability, whereas 'development' is a more neutral term that allows for a wider variation of positive responses". Considering these differences as well as the typically prolonged nature of DA exposure for CYP, AAD appears a more fitting description of positive gains from exposure to DA.

Protective Factors Overview.

It is understood there are factors within a CYP's system that enable resiliency. These are termed promotive and protective factors (PFs). Masten (2018) defines promotive factors as assets or resources that are usually related to outcomes at all risk levels and protective are those that buffer high risk. The terms protective and promotive are used interchangeably because the research shows the same factors often offer both promotive and protective benefits (Masten, 2018). The more PFs a CYP has, the more resilient they can be (Martinez-Torteya et al., 2009). Within the literature on CYPEDA, PFs are seen as resources and attributes that protect, ameliorate, or lessen the risks related to DA; they enable CYP to cope and even thrive (Afifi & MacMillan, 2011; Anderson & Bang, 2012; Barnová et al., 2019; Martinez-Torteya et al., 2009; Suzuki et al., 2008; Yule et al., 2019).

Resiliency in Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse.

> While there is undoubtedly a certain level of commonality in children's experience of domestic violence, it would be erroneous to assume that either impact or outcomes are predictably similar for all children (Holt et al., 2008, p. 799).

Research into CYPEDA, as demonstrated, has overwhelmingly focussed on negative outcomes. This focus has been important in raising public awareness of the harms of DA on CYP to help eradicate DA, especially as the impact of DA on CYP was historically side-lined by a focus on adults (Gallagher, 2014; Radford et al., 2011). Eradication of DA is the aim of SafeLives, (2024) and other institutions such as the Spotlight Initiative (2022). However, as shown, DA is highly prevalent, many CYP will be exposed before DA ends. Accordingly, understanding why some CYPEDA appear unaffected or even thrive could provide professionals with means to engender resiliency development in more CYPEDA.

The research into CYP and exposure to violence has tended to class resilience as an absence of psychopathology and/or poor functioning (Afifi & MacMillan, 2011; Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998), as is having success despite adversity or meeting

developmental goals including academic attainment, social competence, appropriate behaviour and healthy relationships (Hughes et al., 2001; Jackson et al., 2010; Masten, 2001; Yule et al., 2019). Research suggests about half of CYP who were abused or exposed to DA during childhood are not negatively impacted (Martinez-Torteya et al., 2009; Rutter, 2007). Kitzmann et al.'s (2003) meta-analysis put this figure at a third and Fogarty et al.'s (2019) more recent systematic review of PFs for emotional-behavioural resilience in CYPEDA suggests between 20-90%. McDonald, Graham-Bermann, et al.'s (2016) research into impact of exposure to DA on social, school and activity competence suggested 31% of CYP retained global competence and 13% of CYPEDA have high global competence. This has been attributed to resilience (Jackson et al., 2010; Kitzmann et al., 2003; Martinez-Torteya et al., 2009; Rutter, 2007). However currently, resiliency research into CYPEDA, is very limited with recent reviews into CYPEDA calling for more research into specific PFs for CYPEDA and a focus on resiliency in CYPEDA unknown to DA services (Bender et al., 2022; Fogarty et al., 2019; Howell et al., 2016; Spearman et al., 2023; Yule et al., 2019).

Protective Factors for Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse.

There is limited research into CYPEDA's PFs. PFs with robust evidence include healthy attachment, attuned parenting, and good maternal mental health (Holt et al., 2008; Howell et al., 2010; Johnson & Lieberman, 2007; Martinez-Torteya et al., 2009). Other PFs have been purported but are based on initial research or research into similar adversities i.e. CYP's exposure to community violence. Due to the limited research, there have been calls to expand understanding of PFs for CYPEDA, as noted above.

Academic Resiliency.

AR is a relatively new but growing area of research with studies occurring since 1991 (Hunsu et al., 2023; Waxman et al., 2003). As such there is some debate over an operational definition of AR (Tudor & Spray, 2017). However, the most accepted and widely-used definition of AR, sometimes known as school or educational resiliency is, "the

heightened likelihood of success in school and other life accomplishments despite environmental adversities brought about by early traits, conditions, and experiences" (Wang et al. 1994, p.46). Thus, highlighting academic success as a key outcome of AR which has been demonstrated by Beri & Kumar's, (2018) and Radhamani & Kalaivani's, (2021) literature reviews on AR. Additionally, Rudd et al.'s, (2021) and Tudor & Spray's, (2017) systematic reviews into measuring AR show that the majority of studies used academic achievement as a measure of AR (Rudd et al., 2021; Tudor & Spray, 2017). This includes literacy and numeracy scores, achievement scores, grade point averages and admission into post-18 education (Rudd et al., 2021; Tudor & Spray, 2017).

The importance of AR goes beyond academic achievement though. For example, Martin & Marsh (2006) in their study into educational and psychological connections to AR demonstrated that AR predicts self-esteem, school enjoyment and participation in class. Thus, Tudor & Spray, (2017) argue that AR can also be measured through considering the individual's aspirations, motivations and academic engagement. Indeed, Rudd et al.'s, (2021) larger and more recent review found that in quantitative research, studies which measured AR could be categorised into three different approaches: definition-driven, process-driven and latent construct. The latent-construct approach measures outcomes through characteristics and behaviours that are assumed to reflect AR such as academic self-efficacy, disposition and student behaviours, whereas process-driven and definition-driven studies measure AR through academic achievement (Rudd et al., 2021). Process-driven takes a systemic view of AR and focusses on potential PFs for AR (Rudd et al., 2021). Definition-driven studies take a literal approach to the definition of AR and measure academic achievement despite risk/adversity exposure (Rudd et al., 2021). This is considered the positive adaptation view of AR.

In specifying three different approaches to measuring AR, Rudd et al.'s (2021) review implies that utilisation of these approaches to AR are mutually exclusive. But as Tudor & Spray's (2017) review concludes, to obtain a full understanding of AR, researchers should

consider positive adaptation, together with risk and PFs. This infers both the systemic and positive-adaptation approaches should be combined to truly measure AR. A systemic view of resiliency resulting in positive adaptation is in line with general resiliency research and understanding (Masten, 2001, 2014; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2020; Ungar et al., 2023; Werner, 1993). Both Rudd et al.'s, (2021) and Tudor and Spray's (2017) reviews only consider quantitative studies, so it may be that inability to combine these approaches is a limitation of quantitative studies of AR. Currently, there does not appear to be a comparative review of qualitative studies into measuring AR. However, qualitative studies could provide a more holistic understanding of AR as qualitative research focuses on how people make sense of their world and is not restricted by variables (Willig, 2013). Thus, a qualitative study could consider risk and PFs, positive adaptation and outcomes such as academic achievement and success alongside other outcomes.

Academic Resiliency and Social Justice.

An EP's role is to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of CYP (0-25 years) through the application of psychology to improve the systems around them to meet their needs (AEP, 2022; BPS, 2023). As a Director of EP training states:

> EPs are at the core of the interacting systems of school, local authorities, children's departments and families... they have a privileged responsibility across these systems and are able to contribute to the lives of individual, children, and groups and at policy level (Farrell, 2006, p. 75).

Social justice is considered significantly and closely intertwined with the EP role (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2022; Schulze et al., 2017) with social justice being a golden thread in EP competencies (BPS, 2017). Social justice is defined as "an attempt to answer the following question: How can we contribute to the creation of a more equitable, respectful, and just society for everyone?" (Zajda et al., 2006, p. 19). Academic success can result in better lifetime outcomes (Smolentseva, 2022) therefore education systems can facilitate the

achievement of social justice through the promotion of academic achievement, which can enable CYP to become productive and fulfilled members of society (Chestnutt, 2018; Dodd, 2009; Holt et al., 2008; Howarth et al., 2016; Orr et al., 2022; Radford et al., 2011; Stiles, 2002; Yule et al., 2019). Consequently, international and national governments have focussed on educational attainment for all as a means to achieve social justice (HM Government, 2012; Zajda et al., 2006). Understanding AR is thus important to the achievement of social justice and therefore should be a focus for EPs.

HE particularly has the potential to engender social justice as it is considered a pinnacle of academic achievement (Patterson Sr., 2012) with those holding HE credentials being four times more employable than those without. Employment is a key to social justice (HM Government, 2012; Ashwin as cited in Smolentseva, 2022). Social justice via HE is also engendered by HE's transformative effect on individuals and society through the development of knowledge, skills, social norms, selfhood, values, new social statuses and social groups, institutions and domains (Smolentseva, 2022).

Studies into AR have utilised HE admission as a measure of academic resiliency (Patterson Sr., 2012; Peck et al., 2008; Strolin-Goltzman et al., 2016; Testa-Ryan, 2016), but it can also provide insight into how to enable vulnerable CYP to access HE and therefore a crucial pathway to social justice. As has been demonstrated there are many complex and significant barriers to CYPEDA's education and its potentially transformative impact. Therefore, a systemic understanding of AR and its contribution to CYPEDA being able to access HE could help EPs in understanding how best to support social justice for CYPEDA.

Protective Factors for Academic Resilience.

As with general resiliency, research has shown there are risk factors and PFs for AR. PFs for AR have been classified into categories, though the categorisation differs slightly in the research. A recent meta-analysis of risk and PFs for AR by Hunsu et al. (2023) uses the categories individual (including family), social and institutional. Gafoor & Kottalil's (2015)

literature review specifically focuses on categorising the PFs for AR, this resulted in the categories of child, family, school and community which together they propose creates a protective network. This research will be using Gafoor & Kottalil's, (2015) categories due to the inclusion of family as a separate category, as family is intrinsic to DA. Furthermore, Hunsu et al.'s, (2023) meta-analysis appears to neglect analysis of family factors as potential PFs. Table 3 shows Gafoor & Kottalil's, (2015) categorisation of PF's for AR.

Table 3

Categorisation of Protective Factors for Academic Resiliency

Category of PFs	Identified PFs
Within child PFs	Motivational factors, self-beliefs, Cognitive factors, Meta-cognitive factors, Emotional relationships, Social skills.
Within family PFs	Parental Expectations, Parental involvement, Total family environment.
Within school PFs	School organisational factors, School atmosphere, Teacher behaviour, Instructional factors, Peer behaviour.
Within community PFs	Personnel support, Community resources, Cultural support.

Note: This table is adapted from Gafoor & Kottalil's (2015) *Factors fostering academic resilience: A review of literature.*

Within Child Protective Factors.

Hunsu et al. (2023) highlighted cognitive abilities, effort and persistence as PFs for AR that were equitable in their influence on AR. Furthermore, self-belief, hope and optimism were perceived as important PFs for AR (Hunsu et al., 2023). Similarly, Radhamani & Kalaivani's, (2021) literature review into AR declares metacognitive beliefs and motivation for progress are strong PFs for AR, they also outline the importance of self-regulation, problem-solving skills, academic self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Bandura (1994, p. 1) defines self-efficacy as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect

their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave." Self-efficacy and self-regulation were also identified as significant predictors of AR by Martin & Marsh (2006). Related to the PFs of problem-solving and self-belief, highlighted by Radhamani & Kalaivani (2021), were two other concepts that Martin & Marsh (2006) state as crucial to AR; goal-setting and persistence. Whilst Martin & Marsh (2006) categorise these PF's separately they note how linked they are, surmising that having a goal and working persistently towards it enhances AR.

Within individual's PFs are their relationships. Beri & Kumar's (2018) meta-analysis of predictors of AR showed positive relationships including friends, family and teacher relationships are crucial to AR. This was supported by Radhamani & Kalaivani (2021) who saw positive peers and strong supportive relationships with family and school as positively influential on AR.

Within Family Protective Factors.

A supportive and caring family is related to AR (Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021). This relates to the findings of Werner's (1993) seminal, longitudinal Kauai study which showed supportive homes were a PF against significant adversity. Radhamani & Kalaivani (2021) also showed parenting competency is a PF which supports the theories of attachment (discussed above) and 'good enough' parenting. Following years of parenting observations, Dr Donald Winnicott, (1992) developed the influential 'good enough mother' concept. Winnicott states the 'good enough mother' is not a perfect parent, but one who attends to their child's needs with timely sensitive care, which safeguards and develops the child's emotional wellbeing (Child Protection Resource, 2016). Winnicott's theory suggests a mother's parenting capacity is vital to the child's healthy development (Degrieck, 2021). Due to criticisms about the focus on the mother, the 'good enough mother' was subsumed by the 'good enough parent' (Winnicott, 1992).

Within School Protective Factors.

Both Hunsu et al. (2023) and Radhamani & Kalaivani's (2021) reviews found a positive school atmosphere and a supportive school were significant PFs for AR. As mentioned above, teacher relationships were considered crucial to AR (Beri & Kumar, 2018; Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021). Radhamani & Kalaivani, (2021) also found school friendships important in developing school belonging and maintaining pupil's emotional wellbeing. This supports Waxman et al.'s (2003) earlier review which suggested schools built AR "through creating an environment of caring and personal relationships" (p.12).

Waxman et al. (2003) built on Benard's (1997) idea of 'turnaround teachers' to facilitate resiliency in pupils. Waxman et al. (2003) suggest 'turnaround teachers' could model and deliver three PFs their research highlighted as vital for AR; caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities to participate and contribute. To facilitate AR, Benard (1997) posited teachers should be non-judgmental, strengths-based, not take behaviour personally, enable CYP to contribute to the school community and help families and students through support and service referrals. In particular:

> [Turnaround teachers] especially assist overwhelmed youth, who have been labelled or oppressed by their families, schools, and/or communities, in using their personal power to grow from damaged victim to resilient survivor by helping them to: (1) not take personally the adversity in their lives; (2) not see adversity as permanent; and (3) not see setbacks as pervasive (adapted from Seligman, 1995). (Benard, 1997, p.3).

Within Community Protective Factors.

Community support (Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021) and community relationships (Beri & Kumar, 2018) are important to AR . However, there appears little research into the details of this, other than extracurricular activities were not found to be PFs for AR (Hunsu et al., 2023).

Academic Resiliency in Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse.

This literature found no specific research into AR and CYPEDA. The only research that possibly pertains to DA was Hunsu et al.'s (2023) meta-analysis. Hunsu et al. (2023) highlighted socioeconomic status and family-related stress as considerable risk factors for AR, however, the most significant risk factor was family conflict. This indicates exposure to DA as a substantial barrier to AR and therefore academic engagement, school enjoyment, class participation and self-esteem. No specific research appears to exist on PFs for AR in CYPEDA, this appears to be a significant gap in the research considering how transformative AR could be for CYPEDA.

Protective Factors for Academic Resiliency in Children and Young People Exposed to Abuse.

As there appears to be no specific published research into PFs for AR in CYPEDA this literature review instead considered the PFs for AR in CYP exposed to abuse. Due to polyvictimisation, some of this research will have included CYPEDA, thus, PFs for CYP exposed to abuse could be relevant to CYPEDA. However, again there is limited research.

Within Child Protective Factors.

The within child PFs for AR in CYP exposed to abuse echoed the PFs found for AR in general. Coohey et al.'s (2011) research indicated self-regulation may be an important PF for AR. Closely linked to this is emotional regulation which is seen as protective for AR generally and is a PF for CYP in care (Schelble et al., 2010). Problem-solving skills were another PF seen in both AR generally and in CYP exposed to abuse. A study of PFs for AR in Latinx adolescents exposed to community violence found their active coping skills predicted AR (Ramos-Salamanca et al., 2022). Ramos-Salamanca et al., (2022, p. 600) define active coping as “the act of acknowledging and confronting stressful emotions or thoughts (e.g., problem-solving or seeing support).”

Academic abilities are another PF that seemed protective for AR generally and for CYP exposed to abuse. Coohey et al. (2011) conducted a longitudinal study into the reading and maths scores of CYP exposed to ‘maltreatment’. Their study found intelligence in CYP exposed to abuse was positively correlated with reading and maths scores. Coohey et al. (2011) also found CYPs’ independence skills, such as crossing the road and self-care positively correlated with CYPs’ reading scores. Coohey et al. (2011) termed this ‘competency in completing daily tasks’ and speculated both this and success in school required attention to detail, self-regulation and self-motivation. Coohey et al. (2011) suggest this is an important finding as competence in daily living skills can be taught and improved as opposed to intelligence.

Coohey et al.'s (2011) supposition that self-motivation may be a PF for AR for CYP exposed to abuse was supported by a number of studies. Sonsteng-Person et al. (2023) found motivation to succeed appeared to mediate between exposure to community violence and academic achievement in CYP. Research conducted by Diab et al. (2018) into the AR of Palestinian children found motivation for learning was a PF against the impacts of stressful life experiences. Furthermore, the PF of motivation as well as responsibility, aspiration and perseverance were seen to enable Latinx high school students pursue a college education despite exposure to violence (Testa-Ryan, 2016). Testa-Ryan's (2016) study also suggests a sense of purpose, high level cognition skills, bilingualism and intellectual consciousness were important aspects in the participants’ AR.

Within Family Protective Factors.

> Exposure to trauma and violence can change the life course for children, and how these experiences are dealt with by the adults in the children’s lives is crucial. (Osofsky, 2018, p. 3).

Osofsky & Groves (2018) in their book on impacts of violence and trauma on CYP state the child-caregiver relationship is vital in moderating impacts of trauma and violence. This is

supported in AR research by Diab et al.'s (2018) research into Palestinian children, which showed parental involvement in school mediated between impact of war and academic achievement and parental scholastic encouragement was a marginal PF. This paralleled research into South African adolescents who were exposed to child abuse and community violence (Romero, 2018). Romero (2018) showed positive-parenting helped to maintain academic progress in CYP exposed to more frequent 'poly-violence' i.e. violence at home and in the community. Diab et al. (2018) also found siblingship mediated the effects of stressful life events on academic success. Possibly linked to this through the concept of caring for family, Testa-Ryan (2016) found family commitments motivated pursuance of college education.

According to Ratner et al.'s (2006) study, feeling safe was a unique PF for children exposed to community violence. Those who felt safe performed better in cognitive assessments, felt more academically and physically competent and had higher levels of self-esteem (Ratner et al., 2006). Ratner et al. (2006) suggested there were hints that caregiving adults engendered these feelings of safety. These adults were both at home and at school.

Within School Protective Factors.

School attachment has been found to be a PF for AR for CYP exposed to violence (Sonsteng-Person et al., 2023). School attachment comprises of school belonging, liking school, teacher support, peer support, participation in extra-curricular activities, investment in academic achievement and fair consequences (Libbey, 2004). In keeping with this, supportive school staff have been highlighted as a PF for AR and within this caregiving and encouragement by support staff were seen as particular PFs (Diab et al., 2018; Ratner et al., 2006). Interestingly, Coohey et al. (2011) noted CYP with behaviour needs were better performing on maths tests over time than peers without behaviour needs. Coohey et al. (2011) suggest this may be due to extra support CYP with overt behaviour needs may receive.

Diab et al. (2018) found children's learning strategies were a PF for AR when faced with stressful life events. As the development of learning strategies is often the teacher's domain, this indicates teaching of learning strategies could be an important PF, again highlighting teacher's importance. Peer relationships are an aspect of school attachment and Diab et al. (2018) noted peer relationships were a PF for AR against the effects of war exposure.

Within Community Protective Factors.

Testa-Ryan's (2016) study was the only one to highlight community PFs. Testa-Ryan (2016) highlights participants' resilience was motivated by the idea of being a role model for others and giving back to their communities. Though this could highlight motivation, as noted above, as the overarching PF.

Summary of Protective Factors for Children and Young People Exposed to Violence.

Though the research is limited into PFs for AR in CYP exposed to abuse, there are some central themes. These include motivation, the influence of caring and supportive relationships, feeling safe, school attachment, positive self-perception, hope, academic abilities, independence skills and looking after others. Whilst this review places the PFs for CYP exposed to violence into Gafoor & Kottalil's, (2015) recognised categories of PFs for AR, there is a great deal of interplay and interdependence between the categories. Connections between home and school were demonstrated by Diab et al.'s, (2018) research showing home and school encouragement encouraged high levels of self-efficacy and self-regulation which were in themselves PFs for AR. Furthermore, links between within child PFs and school PFs were highlighted by Sonsteng-Person et al. (2023) who found a significant relationship between school attachment and motivation to succeed, and both mediated the relationship between academic achievement and the effects of exposure to violence on CYP. Similarly, Ludwig & Warren's, (2009) research into school-related PFs for urban youth's exposure to community violence found higher identification with school and

higher teacher support was correlated with higher hope. As seen above, hope is a PF for AR. The interplay and interdependence between the within child PFs and PFs external to the child, supports the EST approach to child development.

EP Research into Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse

Considering the high likelihood, discussed above, that EPs will work with CYPEDA, a search of the literature found limited research involving CYPEDA and EPs in England. The existing research appears to consider the psychology behind the impact of DA on CYP and/or the EP's role in supporting CYPEDA. For example, Curtis (2010) looked at how exposure to DA impacts adolescents' relationship attitudes and behaviours, highlighting how abusive behaviours can be normalised. Curtis (2010) also considered the impact of an early intervention programme for DA highlighting the importance of healthy relationship education for CYPEDA.

Three studies researched CYPEDA's educational experiences (Chestnutt, 2018; Ellis, 2018; Stanton, 2017). Chestnutt (2018) met with CYPEDA and their teachers' regarding their school experiences. This resulted in insight into what is important about school for CYPEDA which was feeling safe, positive relationships with peers and staff, school belonging, play and learning (Chestnutt, 2018). Furthermore, Chestnutt (2018) highlighted teachers had some understanding of the effects of DA but often felt helpless in supporting CYPEDA. Similarly, Ellis' (2018) research explored the understanding and experiences of primary teachers of CYPEDA. This again showed teachers can feel helpless and nervous regarding DA, so Ellis (2018) suggested EPs should support CYPEDA by facilitating individual and group supervision for teachers. Finally, Stanton (2017) considered how schools support CYPEDA who relocate due to DA. Stanton's (2017) research demonstrated schools can offer CYPEDA a safe space to recover and build resiliency through supportive staff, however, there can be staff that CYP perceive as unsafe due to an authoritarian manner. Stanton (2017) also posited relocating is frightening and involves loss and grief for CYPEDA.

Two of the studies focussed on EP's conceptualisation and response to DA (Cole, 2017; Gallagher, 2014). Gallagher's (2014) aim was to explore EPs' understanding of DA and the role EPs could have in supporting CYPEDA. Gallagher (2014) concluded EPs sensitivities about DA, its hidden nature and a lack of clarity about EPs' role with CYPEDA prevented EPs from fulfilling their potential work with CYPEDA. Cole (2017) looked at EPs' responses to DA through a psychoanalytic lens. Cole (2017) found DA was a very emotive, threatening and distressing topic to discuss, with EPs feeling out of their depth and helpless when working with CYPEDA. Cole (2017) recommended support and training for EPs to enable to safely discuss and manage DA when it occurs in their work.

Kaye (2018) researched how professionals frame CYPEDA's personal agency. Kaye (2018) found professionals do not fully appreciate CYPs agentic capacity when faced with DA. Kaye (2018) advocated for more understanding of CYPEDA's agentic capacity as a way of appreciating CYPEDA's strengths.

Finally, two studies looked at how EPs could support CYPEDA through their mother's. Dodd (2009) explored a therapeutic play-based intervention designed for mothers and their young children who had experienced DA. Dodd (2009) explored the mothers' experiences of the sessions, who generally found them positive. Cort & Cline's (2017) article explored how EPs can contribute to supporting mothers exposed to DA, as they argued this was key in supporting CYPEDA. Cort & Cline (2017) surmised EPs could support mothers by helping them to process their experiences whilst validating their emotions and reactions. It should be noted that whilst DA is a gendered issue neither research addresses the role of the father or other family members as possible caregivers.

All the above EP studies argued EPs are well-placed to support CYPEDA due to their unique skill set, knowledge of schools and child development and application of psychology. They also argued EPs could support CYPEDA through therapeutic interventions, school staff supervision, family-work, policymaking, awareness raising and reframing, multi-agency working, consultations and training for school staff and LA workers (Chestnutt, 2018; Cole,

2017; Cort & Cline, 2017; Curtis, 2010; Dodd, 2009; Ellis, 2018; Gallagher, 2014; Kaye, 2018; Stanton, 2017). However, the research also shows EPs have similar feelings of helplessness and fear to teachers when working with CYPEDA and that they also require guidance and support (Cole, 2017; Gallagher, 2014). There are also some limitations in the research base for EPs and CYPEDA. The research is very limited especially considering how often EPs are likely to be working with CYPEDA. The research does not consider how EPs can support CYPEDAs' educational engagement and outcomes, which is a primary role for EPs and as seen from above can support social justice for CYPEDA. It is also does not specify how EPs are to train schools and what training for EPs should consist of.

Summary and Future Research Directions

This literature review focussed on what enables CYP to achieve academically despite exposure to DA. The review highlighted a comprehensive body of research into the harmful effects of exposure to DA on CYP including on their education. However, there were limitations with this research including a lack of CYPEDA's voices, especially those unknown to specialist services or outside agencies. Furthermore, the research, in its overwhelming focus on harm, provides a deficit view of CYPEDA and there is limited research that reflects their strengths.

The literature review did highlight however, a cohort of CYPEDA who do well academically, though there is very limited research on this cohort. These CYPEDA would be considered academically resilient. It is important to understand why they are academically resilient to potentially support those CYPEDA who are struggling with their education . As Masten et al. (1999) states, to enable the operationalisation of resiliency we need to identify the criteria by which we know resiliency has been employed. Especially as academic attainment is a key to social justice. Furthermore, research into PFs for AR in CYPEDA could further research into PFs for AR and resiliency in general.

The DAA (2021) was a call to action for all those working with CYPEDA and this review highlights that EPs likely work with CYPEDA and are ideally placed to support them. Despite this, research into EPs and CYPEDA is again limited. What does exist though shows teachers feel helpless when working with CYPEDA and schools would benefit from supervision and training to work with CYPEDA. However, there is no research into how EPs can support CYPEDA's academic attainment and engagement which is a fundamental aspect of EP work. It also showed EPs often felt uncertain when knowingly working with CYPEDA and they themselves require support and training.

Considering the above, studying what enables CYPEDA to access HE could start to address the gaps in the literature in terms of a lack of strengths-based research into CYPEDA. Furthermore, it could provide insight into PFs for AR in CYPEDA. Understanding the PFs for AR in CYPEDA could help professionals to support CYPEDA to develop AR and therefore could help with the achievement of social justice for more CYPEDA. In particular, it could provide EPs with specific ways to support the educational outcomes and engagement of CYPEDA. If EPs have specific understanding of what supports CYPEDA to attain academically then they may also feel more confident in working with CYPEDA. In turn their confidence in supporting CYPEDA could be passed onto teachers through supervision and training, thus lessening teacher's feeling of helplessness when working with CYPEDA.

As there is no known research into AR in CYPEDA and highly limited research into what enables academic attainment in CYPEDA, a grounded theory study is recommended. Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology that is used to develop a theory when there is no known research into a particular area (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 2008; Strauss, 1987; Urquhart, 2022).

To start to address the gap in literature regarding CYPEDA's voices a retrospective study could be used. A retrospective study would involve talking to adults who were exposed to DA in childhood. With the benefit of hindsight, they may recognise DA experiences they did not recognise as CYP, and they may also know how to articulate their experiences.

Furthermore, hindsight and the passing of time could facilitate adults to see what factors were involved in enabling them to access HE. Moreover, adults as participants removes ethical barriers around talking to CYP. It could also enable research into CYPEDA unknown to specialist services. Most importantly, continued research into DA helps make DA visible. Exposing DA helps to rid the fear and shame that enables DA to thrive.

Chapter 2: Empirical Paper

Abstract

Approximately one in three CYP in England will be exposed to domestic abuse (DA). The impact is often harmful, including educationally. Given this, Educational Psychologists (EPs) will likely work with CYP exposed to DA (CYPEDA). Yet, there is little research into this and the existing research shows EPs feel anxious working with CYPEDA. There is also little research into CYPEDA's strengths and there is no specific research into academically resilient CYPEDA.

Grounded theory was used to develop a theory on why some CYPEDA access higher education (HE). Semi-structured interviews were used to retrospectively explore what nine adult participants felt was conducive to them accessing HE. Grounded theory analysis of the interviews resulted in the theory; 'Determinants of Accessing Higher Education for Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse', (DAHE). DAHE comprises three superordinate, but interconnected categories: 'Influences and Motivations', 'Desires' and 'Adaptive Behaviours' and the categories and subcategories within them.

DA was found to have had a multi-systemic impact on CYP's development and this together with certain 'Influences and Motivations' in the CYP's life created particular 'Desires' in the participants. HE was perceived as the way to fulfil these 'Desires' with certain 'Adaptive Behaviours' helping to facilitate HE. The 'Adaptive Behaviours' derived from participants' management of the impacts of DA. Within this, various protective factors for CYPEDA's academic resiliency were identified and discussed. The findings expand the literature on CYPEDA, academic resiliency and resiliency in general. Implications for EP practice are considered, as are future directions.

Introduction

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse (DA) is known to be largely hidden (Fair, 2019; Gallagher, 2014; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004) but highly prevalent with 2.1 million reported DA incidents in England and Wales between March 2022 and March 2023 (ONS, 2023). DA is considered a gendered issue as it disproportionately affects females (Cleaver et al., 2019; Crown Prosecution Service, 2022; DAA, 2021; Gallagher, 2014; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Holt et al., 2008; Home Office, 2015; Howarth et al., 2016; ONS, 2023; Orr et al., 2022; SafeLives, 2014; Stark & Hester, 2019; WHO, 2012). 1.4 million women compared to 751,000 men experienced DA in England and Wales in 2023 (ONS, 2023) and in 98.6% of domestic homicides a woman was killed by a man (ONS, 2024). Additionally, coercive control often flourishes through the upholding of traditional male/female relationship roles (Stark & Hester, 2019). Though many men (Cleaver et al., 2019; DAA, 2021; Gallagher, 2014; Howarth et al., 2016; SafeLives, 2014a) and members of the LGBTQ+ community are victims of DA (Baker et al., 2013; Home Office, 2015; Stark & Hester, 2019).

CYP were living in the home in approximately one third of reported DA cases in England and Wales (ONS, 2023) and 105,000 CYP are currently at risk of serious harm or death due to DA (SafeLives, 2023). Furthermore, it is thought approximately one third of UK CYP will be exposed to DA (Fox et al., 2014; Oliver et al., 2019). Prevalence statistics however are considered conservative due to underreporting especially in minority communities (Home Office, 2015; SafeLives, 2017, 2018, 2021; Stark & Hester, 2019). Underreporting occurs due to feelings of shame, fear, lack of professional understanding, economic dependence, communication skills, isolation, mental health needs and cultural expectations of privacy (Alexander & Sked, 2010; DAA, 2021; Ellis, 2018; Gallagher, 2014; Gremillion & Kanof, 1996; Munro, 2011; Osofsky, 2018; Radford et al., 2011; Stanley, 2011).

Due to international concerns about DA prevalence in the UK and its impacts on CYP (CRC, 2016), England's Domestic Abuse Act (DAA) (2021) came into force (Home Office, 2021). The DAA (2021) defines DA as "Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if— (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are "personally connected" to each other, and (b) the behaviour is abusive." (DAA, 2021). The DAA (2021) classes children (individuals under 18-years-old) as victims if they see, hear or experience the impact of the DA and are related to person A and/or B. 'Personally connected' refers to those who are or have been connected to each other through personal relationships including intimate partnerships and parental relationships (DAA 2021).

The DAA (2021) outlines various physical and non-physical behaviours that are defined as DA, (see Appendix A), including those considered coercive and controlling behaviours. Coercive control is an umbrella term for the sustained perpetration of various non-physical, but dangerous behaviours perpetrated by one person over another which ultimately controls the victims resources, liberty and agency (Lehmann et al., 2012; Stark, 2007; Stark & Hester, 2019; Women's Aid, 2023). DA is commonly referred to in public and in research as domestic violence or intimate partner violence. However, these terms are considered reductionist (Stark, 2007; Wolak & Finkelhor, 1998) due to the words 'violence' and 'intimate partner' which suggest DA only occurs in intimate relationships and is only physical. Thus, this study uses the DAA (2021) terminology of 'domestic abuse' as 'abuse' covers the wide range of behaviours and relationships that can comprise DA.

Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children and Young People

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) proposes a child's development is shaped by the system and the subsystems around them (Longe, 2016). Bronfenbrenner asserts that a complex interplay of interactions and relationships occurs between the CYP and the system and its subsystems surrounding the child; it is this interplay that influences the child's development (see Figure 1) (Longe, 2016). When DA occurs in a CYP's life it is

considered a multi-systemic experience due to the pervasive impact it has on the systems around the child and the child itself (Ho, 2022; Överlien & Hydén, 2009). DA therefore affects the CYP physically, emotionally and relationally (Osofsky, 2018). However, due to DA's insidious nature, particularly coercive control, CYP may not be consciously aware of it. As DA is thought to affect CYP whether or not they directly observe it (Holden, 2003; Howarth et al., 2016), the term 'exposure' rather than witness is used in this review.

Exposure to DA can be considered potentially traumatic. Trauma is defined as "severe and lasting emotional shock and pain caused by an extremely upsetting experience" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). Trauma, particularly long-term exposure to trauma can change the equilibrium of a person's body to the point where their body is sensitive to danger and their stress-response is excessively triggered (Levendosky et al., 2002; Perry, 2007). Exposure to trauma and hardships in childhood has been termed adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Felitti et al., 1998). DA is considered to be an ACE (Felitti et al., 1998). ACE exposure is correlated with poor long-term outcomes including social, emotional and health difficulties and academic and economic underachievement (Allen, 2011). Though it should be noted the Felitti et al.'s, (1998) groundbreaking study was limited to white college-educated individuals from one city in the US. Negative outcomes from ACEs are increased by the amount of ACEs a CYP is exposed to and ACEs typically cooccur (Felitti et al., 1998). This has been termed polyvictimisation (Finkelhor et al., 2013).

DA has been found to cooccur with almost every ACE (Dube et al., 2002) especially child abuse (Gilbert et al., 2009; SafeLives, 2014b). The risk of significant long-term harm to CYP is acute when DA occurs as part of the 'toxic trio' with parental mental health issues and parental substance misuse (Klostermann & Kelley, 2009; SafeLives, 2014a). Studies found this includes death, serious injury, unstable living conditions, being a young carer, academic underachievement and poor emotional wellbeing and emotional regulation (Klostermann & Kelley, 2009). Meta-analyses and reviews show ACEs including DA are often transmitted through generations known as transgenerational trauma (Abramsky et al., 2011; Assink et

al., 2018; Greene et al., 2020; Office for National Statistics, 2017; Smith-Marek et al., 2015), though again these studies are heavily based a white western population. Several theories explain transgenerational trauma including social learning theory (Bandura, 1973, 1977; Kalmuss, 1984), attachment theory (Ainsworth et al., 2015; Bowlby, 1988; Lo et al., 2019) and abuse effects on emotional regulation (Smith et al., 2014).

Table 4

Negative effects of exposure to Domestic Abuse on Children and Young People's education

Categories of impacts of exposure to DA on CYP's education:	What is affected:		Research Reviews:
Speech and language development	General speech and language skills		Radford et al., (2011)
	Language skills		Dodd, (2009)
	Verbal skills		Holt et al., (2008)
Executive functioning	General executive functioning		Howell et al., (2016); Yule et al., (2019)
	Attentional capacity		Anderson & Bang, (2012)
Attendance	Absenteeism	Bullying	DAA, (2021); Fair, (2019); Kiesel et al., (2016); Orr et al., (2022)
		Young carer	DAA, (2021); Fair, (2019); Kiesel et al., (2016); Morris et al., (2015); Orr et al., (2022)
	Exclusion		Orr et al., (2022)
	School moves		Orr et al., (2022); Radford et al., (2011); Stanton, (2017)
	Disengagement		Howell et al., (2016); Morris et al., (2015)
Cognitive performance	General cognitive performance		Fair, (2019); Gewirtz & Edleson, (2004); Howell et al., (2016); Kiesel et al., (2016); Koenen et al., (2003)
	Memory difficulties		Howell et al., (2016)
Literacy and numeracy skills	Reading		Howell et al., (2016); Kiesel et al., (2016); Thompson & Whimper, (2010)
	Maths		Howell et al., (2016); Kiesel et al., (2016)
Special educational needs	General special educational needs		Fair, (2019); Howell et al., (2016)

Considering the impacts of long-term trauma and polyvictimisation, DA exposure is considered harmful to CYP (Holden, 2003). Meta-analyses and reviews on the effects of exposure to DA on CYP support this assertion and detail the social, emotional, physiological and educational harms CYPEDA can experience (Bender et al., 2022; Fair, 2019; Holt et al., 2008; Howell et al., 2016; Kitzmann et al., 2003; SafeLives, 2014b; Stiles, 2002; Wolfe et al., 2003). There is relatively less research on the educational impacts, but the current research shows six interconnected ways CYPEDA's education is negatively affected, this includes

speech and language development, executive functioning, attendance, cognitive performance, literacy and numeracy skills and special educational needs. Table 4 provides a summary of this research.

There are CYPEDA who appear unaffected or thrive academically. The research into why appears limited to Suzuki et al.'s, (2008) study into resiliency in adults exposed to DA. Suzuki et al.'s, (2008) study was not focussed on PFs for AR but found participant's educational attainment was due to a desire to improve their lives and/or the positive affect of educational attainment on their self-perception. It has also been suggested CYPEDA's academic success may be due to parental pressure and/or a desire to escape DA (Radford et al., 2011). Furthermore, the development of perfectionism has been linked to CYP exposed to abusive family situations (Chen et al., 2019; Rasmussen & Troilo, 2016). In particular, socially prescribed perfectionism is a type of perfectionism where to feel love and acceptance the individual seeks high academic performance (Rasmussen & Troilo, 2016).

There is a vast body of research into the effects of exposure to DA on CYP, however this research has limitations. Due to polyvictimisation, DA is difficult to isolate as the sole contributor to CYP's outcomes (Fair, 2019; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Wolfe et al., 2003). The research samples tend to be dictated by convenience, thus participants are often those in shelters or who are known to DA services (Evans et al., 2008; Fair, 2019; Holt et al., 2008; Radford et al., 2011; Stiles, 2002) and there is limited child voice representation (Kimball, 2016; Radford et al., 2011). There is also a lack of longitudinal studies (Fair, 2019; Fogarty et al., 2019; Gonzalez et al., 2014; Howell et al., 2016; McDonald, Corona, et al., 2016; McDonald, Graham-Bermann, et al., 2016; Yule et al., 2019). Additionally, the research can tend to label CYPEDA with psychiatric classifications (Radford et al., 2011) rather than considering their reactions as adaptive. It also classes reactions as internalised or externalised which is seen as reductionist and unreflective of the enduring impact DA can have on CYP (Kitzmann et al., 2003). Furthermore, the research mostly provides a deficit view of CYPEDA rather than their strengths, particularly educationally (Arai et al., 2021;

Howell et al., 2016; Kitzmann et al., 2003; McDonald, Corona, et al., 2016; McDonald, Graham-Bermann, et al., 2016) and the research suggests at least 20% of CYPEDA are not negatively impacted (Fogarty et al., 2019; Kitzmann et al., 2003; Martinez-Torteya et al., 2009; McDonald, Graham-Bermann, et al., 2016; Rutter, 2007) and some thrive (McDonald, Graham-Bermann, et al., 2016; Radford et al., 2011; Suzuki et al., 2008).

Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse and Resiliency

Those that appear unharmed by exposure to abuses such as DA are considered resilient (Afifi & MacMillan, 2011; Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). Resiliency research defines resiliency as the successful adaptation of a complex and dynamic system to threats (Masten, 2018). Resiliency is not a trait (Rutter, 2007), it is context and threat dependent and it is developable (Anderson & Bang, 2012; Fogarty et al., 2019; Masten et al., 1999; Rutter, 2007). Resiliency is considered an ecological-transactional model and so draws from the systems around the child (Betancourt & Khan, 2008). There are concerns about resiliency research and the concept of resiliency. It is felt it that resiliency research does not draw enough from social factors such as the individual's culture and does not focus enough on the availability of resources and opportunities (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2013; Ungar, 2013; Ungar et al., 2023). The concept of resiliency has been criticised for being grounded in white middle-class norms and that in its focus on achievement is ableist and is not culturally responsive (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2013; McGuire-Kishebakabaykwe, 2010; Ungar, 2004). However, in England it can be argued that academic achievement is a vehicle for social justice.

Resistance is an alternative conceptualisation of resiliency derived from violence research (Wade, 1997); it is active opposition against adversity (Anderson & Danis, 2006; Fellin et al., 2019; Katz, 2016; Wade, 1997). Post-traumatic growth (PTG) and Adversity-Activated Development (AAD) are terms that are used to describe when individuals thrive in reaction to adversity (Papadopoulos, 2007; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The difference

between PTG and AAD is AAD acknowledges individuals do not have to be traumatised to develop from adversity, that positive gains do not have to be growth and that development can occur during an adversity not just afterwards (Papadopoulos, 2007).

Resiliency is thought to be dependent on protective factors (PFs) within a person's system (Masten, 2018). PFs for resiliency in CYPEDA are perceived as qualities and resources that protect, buffer and lessen the risks of DA (Masten, 2018). Research into PFs for CYPEDA is limited, what exists shows that healthy attachment, attuned parenting and sound maternal emotional wellbeing are PFs for CYPEDA health (Johnson & Lieberman, 2007 as cited in Fogarty et al., 2019; Holt et al., 2008; Howell et al., 2010; Levendosky et al., 2000; Martinez-Torteya et al., 2009). Research into PFs for resiliency is important as it can enable understanding as to how to engender resiliency in others (Masten et al., 1999).

Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse and Academic Resiliency

Academic resilience (AR) is defined as "the heightened likelihood of success in school and other life accomplishments despite environmental adversities brought about by early traits, conditions, and experiences" (Wang et al., 1994, p. 46). AR has also been shown to predict self-esteem, school enjoyment and participation in class (Martin & Marsh, 2006). There is no known research into AR in CYPEDA. The only possible research is a meta-analysis by Hunsu et al. (2023) into risk and PFs for academic outcomes which highlighted family conflict as a significant risk factor for AR.

Research into PFs for AR, as a subcategory of resiliency research, is very limited. What exists has determined that PFs for AR can be classed into four interlinked categories: within child PFs, within family PFs, within school PFs and within community PFs (Gafoor & Kottalil, 2015). Table 3 details the identified PFs for AR within these categories.

Understanding the PFs that enable AR in CYPEDA could be important as it could help CYPEDA overcome the various barriers to their academic attainment, and as will be shown

academic success can enable social justice. However, there is no known specific research into PFs for AR in CYPEDA. There is some research into PFs for AR in CYP exposed to abuse. This research could be relevant for CYPEDA as due to polyvictimisation this cohort is likely to include CYPEDA. These PFs are surmised in Table 5 using the PFs for AR categorisation determined by Gafoor & Kottalil (2015).

Table 5

Protective Factors for Academic Resiliency in Children and Young People Exposed to Abuse

Categories of PFs	Identified PFs	Research:
Within child PFs	Self-regulation	Coohey et al., (2011)
	Emotional regulation	Schelble et al., (2010)
	Active coping skills	Ramos-Salamanca et al., (2022)
	Reading and maths skills	Coohey et al., (2011)
	Independence skills	Coohey et al., (2011)
	Motivation	Coohey et al., (2011); Diab et al., (2018); Sonsteng-Person et al., (2023); Testa-Ryan, (2016)
	Sense of purpose	Testa-Ryan, (2016)
	Aspiration	Testa-Ryan, (2016)
	Perseverance	Testa-Ryan, (2016)
	High level cognition	Testa-Ryan, (2016)
	Bilingualism	Testa-Ryan, (2016)
	Intellectual consciousness	Testa-Ryan, (2016)
Within family PFs	Child-caregiver relationship	Osofsky & Groves, (2018); Romero, (2018)
	Parental involvement in school	Diab et al., (2018)
	Siblingship	Diab et al., (2018)
	Commitment to family	Testa-Ryan, (2016)
	Feeling safe	Ratner et al., (2006)
Within school PFs	School attachment	Sonsteng-Person et al., (2023)
	Caring school staff	Diab et al., (2018); Ratner et al., (2006)
	Learning strategies	Diab et al., (2018)
	Peer relationships	Diab et al., (2018)
Within community PFs	Being a role-model	Testa-Ryan, (2016)
	Giving back to the community	Testa-Ryan, (2016)

Educational Psychologists and Domestic Abuse

The AEP defines EPs as promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of CYP (0-25 years) through applying psychology to support them and their schools and families (AEP, 2022). The BPS (2023) explains how EPs work systemically to improve systems such as school and home to meet the needs of CYP. Thus, social justice is considered significant and closely linked to the EP role (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2022; Schulze et al., 2017). Social justice is “an attempt to answer the following question: How can we contribute to the creation

of a more equitable, respectful, and just society for everyone?" (Zajda et al., 2006, p.19). Academic attainment is seen as a key to achieving social justice as it can enable CYP to become contributing and fulfilled community members (Chestnutt, 2018; Dodd, 2009; Holt et al., 2008; Howarth et al., 2016; Orr et al., 2022; Radford et al., 2011; Stiles, 2002; Yule et al., 2019). HE, in particular, offers opportunities and access to employment, together with a transformative effect that can enable social justice (HM Government, 2012; Smolentseva, 2022). As shown exposure to DA can prevent academic attainment for CYPEDA so it can also prevent social justice for them.

Given the EP role, the prevalence of CYPEDA and the higher likelihood of CYPEDA being identified with SEN and/or struggling socially and/or behaviourally, EPs will be working with CYPEDA. However, there appears to be only nine studies that involve EPs and DA. Three studies focus on CYPEDA's educational experiences from children and teacher's perspectives (Chestnutt, 2018; Ellis, 2018; Stanton, 2017). Two studies consider EP's conceptualisation and responses to DA (Cole, 2017; Gallagher, 2014). Two more research how EPs could support CYPEDA through their mothers' (Cort & Cline, 2017; Dodd, 2009). Kaye (2018) explored professionals' framing of CYPEDAs' personal agency and finally Curtis (2010) studied exposure to DA on adolescents' relationship attitudes and behaviours.

All the studies argued that EPs are ideally placed to provide support for CYPEDA due to their skillset and systems work with caregivers, schools and other professionals (Chestnutt, 2018; Cole, 2017; Cort & Cline, 2017; Curtis, 2010; Dodd, 2009; Ellis, 2018; Gallagher, 2014; Kaye, 2018; Stanton, 2017). However, Cole (2017) and Gallagher's, (2014) research highlighted EPs can feel overwhelmed and helpless when working with CYPEDA which indicates that whilst EPs may be best placed they may not feel equipped. Furthermore, the research does not consider how EPs can support CYPEDA's academic engagement and attainment. Knowing how EPs could support CYPEDA could be beneficial to CYPEDA and may help EPs and schools to feel confident in supporting CYPEDA.

Aims and Rationale

Considering the above, the research question is: 'What enables those who have been exposed to domestic abuse in childhood access HE qualifications?'

The researcher hopes that exploring this question could shed light on PFs for CYPEDA's AR whilst highlighting the strengths of CYPEDA. Researching this could also add to resiliency research in general. Furthermore, this research could expand the breadth of research into CYPEDA by speaking to those who may have been unknown to DA services. It could also increase the research into EPs and CYPEDA whilst providing EPs with ways to support CYPEDA to academically attain and therefore potentially enable social justice for CYPEDA. Most importantly, all research into DA makes DA a more visible problem and thus is a preventative step forward.

Methodology

Epistemological Stance (Researcher's Worldview)

The researcher considers themselves to have a pragmatist worldview. John Dewey, a key psychologist and philosopher behind the pragmatism epistemology (Bryant, 2009) and its use for social improvement (Legg & Hookway, 2021) purports that pragmatism is about discovering knowledge to bring clarity to unclear situations (Noddings, 2010). Therefore, the emphasis is on the discovery of useful knowledge (Bryant, 2009; Noddings, 2010). Consequently, the focus of this research is to find useful knowledge that EPs can use to benefit CYPEDA and the systems around them. The design of this research reflects this aim.

In pursuit of useful knowledge, pragmatism focuses on and starts at the problem and each problem is individually considered and approached (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). So, in considering what is most likely to help with understanding a problem, pragmatists are comfortable with using whatever methodology is most appropriate in elucidating truth (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Morgan, 2020). Dewey describes this as application of common

sense (Legg & Hookway, 2021). The intention of offering this flexibility in methodology is to ensure thorough and deep understanding (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This also means the researcher is justified in adjusting and rethinking when a method is not working. Thus, the researcher's epistemological stance enabled them to choose the methodology which could lead to deep understanding and useful knowledge.

Chosen Methodology

Grounded theory was the chosen methodology as it enables theory development in areas where there is no existing literature (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 2008; Strauss, 1987; Urquhart, 2022). Grounded theory is a qualitative research method proposed in 1967 by Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser (Charmaz, 2014). The aim of grounded theory was to systematically derive theories that help to understand human behaviour (Urquhart, 2022). This was revolutionary at a time dominated by positivism with research into human behaviour focussed on quantitatively testing theories (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2022). Strauss and Glaser posited that through grounded theory's systematic approach, qualitative research could offer more than description and could generate theory (Charmaz, 2014). Grounded theory achieves this through the research being 'grounded' in the data, instead of being dependent on previous theories (Charmaz, 2014).

Over time many variations of grounded theory have emerged (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2022; Willig, 2013). According to Willig (2013) there are three dominant versions; the original 'classical' version, a more structured approach from Strauss and Corbin and Kathy Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory. The classical version of grounded theory aimed to minimise the influence of the researcher on the data (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2022; Willig, 2013). In contrast, Strauss and Corbin's version introduces the use of axial coding to ensure the researcher considers particular patterns of data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss, 1987). This has been seen as deductive rather than the inductive approach originally key in grounded theory (Willig, 2013). Furthermore, whilst axial coding is seen by some as helpful

in ensuring thorough analysis, others feel it is overly prescriptive and reduces the flexibility appreciated in the classical version (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2022; Willig, 2013).

Constructivist grounded theory “adopts the inductive, comparative, emergent, and open-ended approach of Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) original statement” (Charmaz, 2014, p.13). It also focuses on the flexibility of the classical versions though constructivist grounded theory differs in terms of epistemological assumptions. The Strauss and Glaser versions of grounded theory reflect positivism and see theories as waiting to be discovered, whereas constructivist grounded theory is based on social constructivism (Charmaz, 2014). Thus constructivist grounded theory believes theories are constructed by the researcher from their data (Charmaz, 2014; Willig, 2013). However, Charmaz (2014) also argues the strategies used in grounded theory are not limited by epistemology or ontology. Consequently, grounded theory can be used in pragmatist research and is thought to be well-suited to it (Bryant, 2009, 2017; Hallberg, 2006; Morgan, 2020).

Strauss was a pragmatist and a follower of Dewey’s work (Bryant, 2009) moreover, he eventually stated pragmatism philosophy underlines grounded theory (Birks & Mills, 2015). Likewise, Nathaniel (2011) draws links between Glaser’s work and pragmatism and in doing so argues Glaser’s grounded theory aligns with pragmatism. Furthermore, Charmaz (2014) states grounded theory has pragmatist foundations and asserts her constructivist grounded theory includes the pragmatist “dual emphasis on action and meaning” (p.13). Additionally, she argues grounded theory combined with pragmatism can enhance social justice research through rigor and focus on novel aspects of people’s experiences (Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz, 2009). Indeed, Nathaniel (2022) states grounded theory enables researchers to see unseen processes in daily life which can bring clarity to people’s experiences and change systems to improve their lives.

Considering the above and lack of research into CYPEDA and education and AR, grounded theory was felt the most appropriate methodology. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) was considered as it can enable an exploration of participants’ experiences.

However, grounded theory enables this whilst facilitating theory generation which is important when there is no prior research. Quantitative methods were also contemplated however the lack of prior research meant it is difficult to ascertain what factors should be tested. Therefore, a mixed methods approach was considered. This would have used grounded theory to elucidate a theory, followed by the development of a quantitative questionnaire to test the theory on others. However, time constraints made this unmanageable, so the intention is to conduct the quantitative aspect as a future study.

It should be noted that whilst this is a grounded theory research project and the researcher follows the structure and tenets of grounded theory, they have not prescribed to a particular version. The researcher instead uses grounded theory as it was intended; flexibly (Hallberg, 2006) and with the pragmatic stance of common sense. This flexibility and common-sense approach enabled the researcher to best engage with the data in order to get the best out of it in the pursuit of useful knowledge and theory development. This reflects the researcher's pragmatist epistemology as well as the purpose of using grounded theory. Thus, the researcher will refer to their use of grounded theory as using grounded theory methodology (GTM).

Study Design

This is a retrospective study, where semi-structured interviews were used to explore what adult participants feel enabled them to access HE. The study utilised key strategies of GTM including theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation, line-by-line coding, focussed coding, memo-writing, constant comparison and theoretical coding and diagramming. These are discussed in further detail below.

Participants

Inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6

Participant criteria

Participant Criteria	Reason for criteria
Achieved HE qualification	This was to ensure that participants had experience of accessing HE qualifications as this is pertinent to the research.
School education in England	Educational settings and curricula do vary per country and considering EST, there was a real possibility that the educational norms of the country would determine in part accessibility to HE. If this was the case ensuring that the participants were educated in the same country could enable this to be explored.
Adults aged 18-47 years	Participants needed to be adults as this was a retrospective study, but also ethically it was not felt appropriate to talk to children about DA, especially if they may still be being exposed to DA. 47 years was chosen as this ensured that the adults had been mostly educated under the national curriculum. Again, it was important to keep this consistent in case the curriculum was relevant to CYPEDA accessing HE.
Exposed to DA in childhood 0-17 years	Being exposed to DA in childhood was a key to this research. The term 'exposure' rather than 'experienced' or 'witnessed' ensured that participants could participate even if they were unaware or could not name the DA dynamics in their household as children. DA is as defined by the DAA (2021) and 'abuse' is used rather 'violence' as it covers all forms of DA including violent and non-violent. Utilising the both the terms 'exposure' and 'abuse' ensures a greater range of participants and acknowledges that non-violent forms of DA can impact on CYP. For example, coercive control is difficult to recognise and children may not experience it directly but may still be affected by it.
Not exposed to DA in adulthood (18+)	This was to ensure participant's wellbeing. As if the participants were currently in relationships where DA was involved or had been exposed to domestic abuse as adults and/or parents this research could be emotionally provoking for them. It was also to ensure clarity of recall regarding childhood as exposure to DA in adulthood could possibly confuse recollection of childhood experiences.

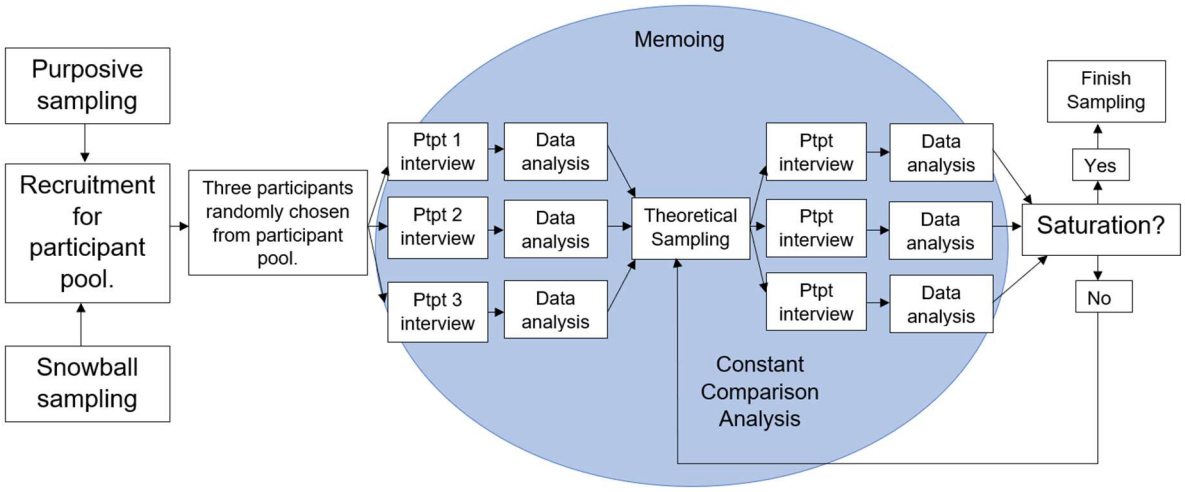
Recruitment

Participant recruitment involved theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation. In theoretical sampling the researcher recruits a participant using purposive sampling, they then analyse their data and recruit another participant who can potentially expand on the findings of the first participant. This process is repeated until categories of data are refined and filled, thus achieving theoretical saturation (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2022). Theoretical sampling enables the researcher to expand on observations from the data which make the most sense (Morgan, 2020). This facilitates a pragmatist approach by enabling reflective and reflexive inquiry and consideration of prospective outcomes for potential solutions (Morgan, 2020).

Theoretical sampling is time consuming (Urquhart, 2022). To manage this with limited time the researcher intended to recruit a pool of participants from which to theoretically sample from. To further save time the intention was to analyse data from three participants before theoretically sampling, Figure 3 outlines the proposed process. Based on other grounded theory projects the researcher estimated they would need 6-12 participants.

Figure 3

Proposed Theoretical Sampling Process



Time was allocated for this process, but due to circumstances beyond the researcher's control, this design had to be adapted to account for a shorter timeframe. Charmaz (2014)

recommends reinterviewing participants to enable theoretical sampling when time is limited. Thus, the researcher successfully applied to ethics for the option of reinterviewing (see Appendix B).

Recruitment took place via advertising on the social media platform X (www.twitter.com), and Facebook groups focussed on adult survivors of DA where gatekeepers gave permission (see Appendix C for Request for Gatekeeper Approval). The recruitment advertisement (see Appendix D) was also disseminated by the Domestic Abuse Research Network (https://www.uos.ac.uk/our-research/research-institutes/institute-for-social-justice-and-crime/domestic-abuse-research-network-darnet/), the Violence Against Women and Girls Network (https://vawgnetwork.mdx.ac.uk/) and the AEP (www.aep.org.uk). To ensure participant diversity the researcher approached charities which support marginalised groups within the DA field, including the LGBTQIA+ community, males and different ethnic minorities. Consequently, ManKind (www.mankind.org.uk) disseminated the recruitment advert. The researcher was also given permission to email the Heads of Postgraduate courses at their university. They as gatekeepers chose whether to invite their course attendees to participate (see Appendix C).

Participant Demographics

Ten participants were initially recruited, nine attended interviews. Participant demographics are shown in Table 7. Demographic information was collected in the interviews and via participant demographic forms completed by the participants (see Appendix E).

Table 7

Participant Demographics

Pseudonymised name	Participant identified gender	Preferred pronouns	HE Qualification	Ethnicity	Type of DA exposed to	Participant identified polyvictimisation
Edie	Female	she/her/hers	Undergraduate degree	White British / Jewish	Physical abuse Coercive control Emotional abuse Verbal abuse	Child abuse Parental mental health needs
Natalia	Female	she/her/hers	Doctorate	Pakistani	Physical abuse Emotional abuse Verbal abuse	Child abuse
Anya	Female	she/her/hers	Undergraduate degree	White British	Physical abuse Coercive control Emotional abuse Economic abuse Verbal abuse	Parental mental health needs Poverty
Marsha	Female	she/her/hers	Doctorate	Gypsy and Irish Traveller	Physical abuse Coercive control Emotional abuse Economic abuse Verbal abuse	Poverty Discrimination
Naomi	Female	she/her/hers	Postgraduate Diploma	White British	Physical abuse Coercive control Emotional abuse Economic abuse Verbal abuse	Child abuse Poverty Parental addiction
Brooke	Female	she/her/hers	Masters degree	White British	Physical abuse Coercive control Emotional abuse Economic abuse Verbal abuse	Parental mental health needs Poverty Homelessness Parental addiction
Chloe	Female	she/her/hers	Undergraduate degree	White British	Coercive control Emotional abuse Economic abuse	Parental mental health needs Poverty
Alex	Female	she/her/hers	PhD	White British	Physical abuse Coercive control Emotional abuse Economic abuse Verbal abuse	Verbal abuse Parental mental health needs Poverty Parental addiction
Robin	Male	he/his/him	Masters degree	White British	Sexual abuse Emotional abuse Verbal abuse	Verbal abuse Parental mental health needs Poverty Parental addiction

Data Collection

Participants were interviewed individually but in phases. Each interview phase was followed by line-by-line coding and focused coding before the next phase of interviews took place (see Table 8). This was so that concepts and categories emerging from the data could be incorporated into the next phase of interviews as per theoretical sampling.

Table 8

Interview Details.

Pseudonymised name	In person or online interview	Interview phase	Interview length (mins)	Lifeline completed?	Lifeline received by researcher
Edie	In person	1	69	Yes	Yes
Natalia	Online	1	59	Yes	No
Anya	In person	1	61	Yes	Yes
Marsha	Online	2	83	Yes	Yes
Naomi	Online	2	84	Yes	Yes
Brooke	Online	3	81	Yes	Yes
Chloe	Online	4	69	Yes	Yes
Alex	Online	4	79	Yes	No
Robin	Online	4	83	Yes	Yes

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviewing was utilised as it supports GTM analysis (Willig, 2013). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews enable rich data as whilst it facilitates the researcher to explore a particular topic, the power can shift to the participant as they can explore the topic from their viewpoint (Charmaz, 2014; Willig, 2013). Additionally, the

flexibility in the interview can assist the interviewer to pursue lines of interest pertinent to the research topic (Willig, 2013). This is in keeping with pragmatist epistemology.

Willig's (2013) guidance on qualitative research using semi-structured interviews emphasises the importance of rapport building and encourages the interviewer to consider the impact of themselves on the participants. Considering DA can be difficult to discuss, for affinity and reassurance, the researcher disclosed their CYPEDA status to the participants. This appeared to relax participants, it enabled dialogue and some confirmed it was helpful.

The participants had the option of online or in person interviews, dependent on distance to the researcher. Online interviews took place via Microsoft Teams. In person interviews occurred at the researcher's university within public spaces, but where participants could not be overheard. Interviews were recorded using Microsoft Teams and Voice Memos for back up. Transcription was also enabled on Teams for further back up. Recordings and transcriptions were stored on the researcher's university One Drive.

Participatory Approaches

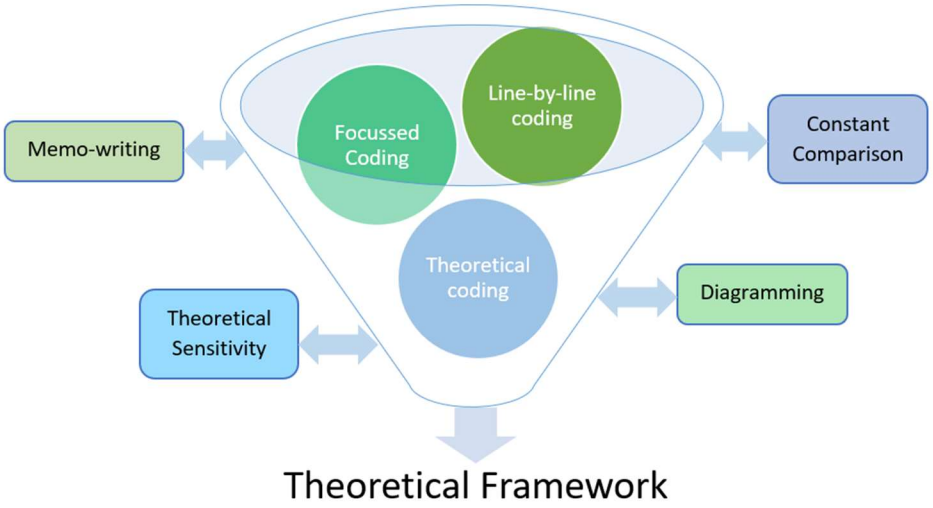
Participatory approaches are used in research to enable participants' autonomy in the research process. Thus, participants were given the option of member checking. Participants were also asked to complete a Lifelines activity at the beginning of the interviews. Lifelines is a participatory timelining activity that can be used in retrospective studies to tactfully encourage recollection, whilst facilitating participant autonomy and expertise (Gramling & Carr, 2004). Using paper and pen, participants are asked to create a timeline where they illustrate or write their life events in chronological order (Gramling & Carr, 2004). The participants were provided with instructions and an example Lifeline (see Appendix F) and were asked to focus their timelines on DA and their education. All participants completed a Lifeline and seven were shared with the researcher.

Data Analysis

For analysis, the GTM methods of line-by-line coding, focused coding, constant comparison, theoretical coding, memo-writing and diagramming were used (see Figure 4). Axial coding was not used due to it being deductive (Charmaz, 2014). Furthermore, Charmaz (2014) argues the constant comparison method likely yields the same results and Glaser (1978) states using theoretical coding makes axial coding irrelevant.

Figure 4

Data Analysis Process



Line-by-Line Coding

"Line-by-line coding encourages you to see otherwise undetected patterns in everyday life. Line-by-line coding enables you to take compelling events apart and analyse what constitutes them and how they occurred" (Charmaz, 2014, p.125). Line-by-line coding was the initial stage of analysis following each interview. Line-by-line coding is unique to GTM and requires the researcher to name each line of the data (Glaser, 1978). This facilitates attention to detail, immersion in the data, thorough analysis and constant comparison (Charmaz, 2014). Furthermore, Urquhart (2022) argues line-by-line coding enables deep familiarity, the researcher to leave preconceptions behind and originality in theory building. Line-by-line coding is thus thought to provide more directions to pursue whilst highlighting emerging links which supports theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2014).

Glaser (1978) recommends coding using gerunds to stay close to the data whilst perceiving processes. Charmaz (2014) argues this heuristic device enables control over the data analysis and helps the researcher to reflect an insider rather than outsider view of the data. Whilst Charmaz (2014) advocates for coding with gerunds, she recognises it is not often used. Coding with gerunds was attempted by the researcher. However, they found this process too restrictive, awkward to use and at times it led to a surface description rather than analysis. Therefore, the researcher took the pragmatic stance to continue line-by-line coding without gerunds (see Appendix G). The researcher used tables in Microsoft Word for this initial stage of coding.

Focused Coding

"Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 138). Focused coding (Charmaz, 2014) also known as selective coding (Urquhart, 2022) was the second stage of coding applied to the data. Focussed coding involves focussing on more frequent initial codes and/or those that have more significance than other codes in terms of analysis (Charmaz, 2014). By doing so it "condenses and sharpens" what the researcher has completed through initial coding whilst advancing analysis (Charmaz, 2014, p.139). The focused codes contribute to the core categories involved in the researcher's theory and enables the researcher to have these categories in mind as they focus on collecting the next lot of data as per theoretical sampling (Urquhart, 2022). Thus, the researcher completed focussed coding before moving onto the next phase of interviews (see Appendix H). Focused coding was also completed on Microsoft word using the Tables function.

Theoretical Sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity was utilised throughout the analysis process. Applying theoretical sensitivity when coding enables theory development, thus theoretical sensitivity is an integral

aspect of coding. Theoretical sensitivity is the researcher's "ability to understand and define phenomena in abstract terms and demonstrate abstract relationships between study phenomena" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 161). Theoretical sensitivity supports the researcher to recognise links and patterns in their data and enables them to define their categories. The use of theoretical sensitivity and coding are considered to be symbiotic with one increasing the power of the other (Charmaz, 2014). Glaser (1978) argues theoretical sensitivity requires the researcher to be widely read so they are aware of possible connections between the data and what they may signify. Charmaz (2014) therefore argues findings are likely to represent the researcher's discipline, so this needs to be held in mind during analysis.

Constant Comparison

A core aspect of GTM is constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss as cited in Charmaz, 2014). Constant comparison is where similarities and differences in data are found through comparing every aspect of the data, including codes and categories from an interview as well as comparing interviews (Charmaz, 2014; Hallberg, 2006). Constant comparison is thus used throughout data analysis and Hallberg (2006) sees it as essential for pulling the methodology together. This was the case for this research as using this method enabled decisions about coding, facilitated development of categories and supported the process of theory building, as seen in the researcher's memos (see Appendix I).

Memo-Writing

Memo-writing and regular reviewing, or sorting (Glaser, 1978), enables a strong foundation for research and theory building, consequently it is considered central to GTM (Glaser, 1978; Urquhart, 2022). In short, memos are "informal analytic notes" that serve many functions (Charmaz, 2014, p.161). Charmaz (2014) states memo-writing provides the researcher space to order their thoughts and converse with themselves, this stimulates and enhances ideas and concepts and enables constant comparisons. Charmaz (2014) sees

memo-writing as a crucial step between focused coding and theoretical coding but argues it should be used throughout the research process for deeper analysis. Accordingly, and because being reflective and reflexive is fundamental to the EP role, memo-writing occurred throughout the research. Memos were handwritten and kept in a dedicated notebook (see Appendix I). The memos represent thoughts about codes, categories, theories and the research journey.

Theoretical Saturation

Theoretical saturation, as discussed above, is when the researcher feels they have enough information about a category. The researcher believes theoretical saturation was reached for the categories.

Theoretical Coding

"Theoretical codes are meant to be integrative; they lend form to the focused codes you have collected. These codes may help you tell an analytic story that has coherence" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 151). Theoretical coding is the final level of coding and enables the researcher to explore how the codes may relate to each other as part of a theory (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2022). Indeed, Urquhart (2022) argues theory development cannot occur without theoretical coding. To structure and aid theory building the use of coding families can be applied at this point (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser, 1978; Urquhart, 2022). However, criticism exists about the families not being comprehensive, also there is a danger of pigeonholing and precluding data in an effort to fit it in certain coding families (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) instead suggests theoretical codes should emerge from the data, which was the researcher's approach.

Theoretical coding occurred by taking the focused codes from Microsoft Word and sorting them into three Microsoft Excel sheets (see Appendix J). These excel sheets represented

different stages of the theory in development. Within the sheets were different categories that had emerged from the analysis thus far. During the process of theoretical coding, diagramming and memo-writing continued. These three strategies resulted in emergence of new categories, subsummation of categories by other categories and so on until core categories emerged. From this process a model was created which represents the theory of why some CYPEDA access HE (see Figure 5).

Diagramming

Diagramming was integral to this research. The researcher found diagramming their concepts and ideas invaluable. Diagramming helped them to develop codes, visually organise their data into categories and categories into theories and eventually into a coherent theory (see Appendix K) which is the aim of diagramming (Charmaz, 2014). Furthermore, diagramming was used throughout the research process to develop and make sense of thoughts and to sort and recognise connections in the data. This is illustrated in the researcher's memos which are littered with diagrams (see Appendix I).

Ethical Considerations

Considering the research subject, working ethically was paramount. Ethics approval was obtained from the UEA Ethics Committee (see Appendix B). This research was also conducted in line with the BPS' Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2021), the Research Integrity Framework on Domestic Violence and Abuse (Women's Aid, 2020) and the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) (HCPC, 2015). The researcher also attended DA conferences where they received talks from DA services who support minority groups. This helped to ensure the interviews were as inclusive and culturally responsive as possible.

Ensuring participants felt in control and had informed consent was a priority throughout the research. Informed consent was sought via the Participant Information and Consent form

(see Appendix L). If participants gave consent, they were sent an email reiterating the participant parameters and the interview process to ensure they remained willing to participate. If participants met the parameters and consented, they were provided with the semi-structured interview outline with options to remove or edit questions and share any thoughts with the researcher (see Appendix M). At the beginning of the interview the researcher checked if participants were content to proceed. Consent was again sought for recording, transcription and for the Lifelines activity. Participants were regularly reminded that they did not have to answer questions and everything would be pseudonymised. Participants were also asked if consent remained for reinterviewing.

Following the interview a participant debrief sheet offering avenues for support was provided (see Appendix N). Those who requested to review their transcripts were sent them prior to data analysis and were given the option to edit or change answers before analysis.

Quality of the Research

Grounded theory is considered a research methodology that enables quality research through its unique sampling and analysis process and through theory building (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021; Glaser & Strauss, 2017; Urquhart, 2022). However, Glaser & Strauss, (2017) argue the quality of qualitative research should be evaluated against its own qualitative standards, so this research will be discussed using Yardley's, (2000) principles of quality for qualitative research. The principles consist of Sensitivity to Context, Commitment and Rigour, Transparency and Coherence and Impact and Importance (Yardley, 2000). Additionally, to further demonstrate how the use of grounded theory ensures high quality, rigorous research this section will refer to Charmaz & Thornberg's, (2021) guidelines for conducting quality grounded theory research.

Sensitivity to Context

To ensure quality in research Yardley, (2000) argues the researcher should be attuned to the context of the study. According to Yardley, (2000) this includes the theoretical context, relevant literature and findings, methodological context, the participant and researcher's contexts and ethical issues. This is also seen as important in achieving quality grounded theory research (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). To enable this, Yardley, (2000) advocates for the researcher to have a sound understanding of their chosen methodology and research area to ensure a deep and extensive analysis. This is a strength of grounded theory (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021) as theoretical sensitivity it is a core tenet of grounded theory (Glaser, 1978). Consequently, as shown, the researcher prepared for this study by learning all they could about grounded theory. Furthermore, an extensive literature review was conducted of both qualitative and quantitative research in relevant areas (see Literature Review). Yardley, (2000) also argues that being sensitive to the context also involves being sensitive to the data itself. Grounded theory enables this through its methods of coding and the use of theoretical sampling (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021) which were employed in this study (see above).

Sensitivity to the participants' contexts were paramount in this study. The researcher has extensive experience working with CYP who have experienced trauma and the researcher was also an insider researcher. This empowered the researcher to be sensitive to what the participants may have experienced and may still be experiencing and therefore potential safeguarding and ethical issues. Thus, the researcher designed a project they hoped would protect the participants but also perhaps help in their healing through providing a forum for them to speak about and makes sense of their experiences, in a way that could potentially help others. To enable this, the study was deliberately designed as a retrospective study so that adults rather than CYP would be the potential participants, furthermore participants were not selected if they had experienced DA as an adult. Further protective steps were taken such as pseudonymising, focussing on strengths, avoiding in depth discussion of abuse,

member checking, providing participants with the interview schedule and a debrief sheet with relevant avenues for support (see Appendix N).

Being an insider researcher allowed sensitivity to context regarding the researcher/participant relationship. Consideration of the power dynamic between researcher and participant is seen as crucial to qualitative research (Yardley, 2000). Being an insider enabled a more equal power distribution as participants shared they felt the researcher was one of them and therefore would be able to understand, empathise and carefully manage the information they shared.

Having an insider perspective also offered a shared understanding. Shared or unspoken understanding is an important part of communication between the listener and the speaker (Yardley, 2000) and felt particularly important in this area of research as DA experiences can be difficult to articulate due to their peculiarities and the emotional weight they carry. The participants not having to go into detail protected them which was shared with the researcher. However, it can also mean that assumptions are made based on the researcher's own experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Charmaz, 2014), so the researcher worked to clarify meaning where possible and remained open to different perspectives. Member checking also helped to ensure that the participant's meaning was conveyed (Yardley, 2000) as did direct quotes from the participants. Furthermore, the researcher endeavoured to remain as aware of their own assumptions throughout the interviews and through reflection and memo-writing during analysis.

Commitment and Rigour

The principle of commitment refers to the researcher ensuring prolonged engagement with the subject, immersion in the data and development of competency in the methods used (Yardley, 2000). Rigour is defined as the comprehensiveness of the data collection, analysis and interpretation (Yardley, 2000). The researcher has prolonged engagement with the

subject through their personal and work experiences and so was already highly immersed in the research area. Furthermore, the participant as noted above immersed themselves in learning to use the methodology, which was extended by their previous research experiences as well as their experience in interviewing and working with those that have experienced childhood traumas. In addition, the researcher has further committed to this area by attending and participating in DA conferences. The researcher also offers training in the area of DA through their employment.

Immersion in the data as well as a rigorous analysis and interpretation was enabled due to this commitment to the research but also through the use of grounded theory methodology. The process of analysing data to expedite further collection of rich and relevant data through theoretical sampling enables commitment and rigour (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). Additionally, the staged process of grounded theory coding from line-by-line coding to theoretical coding together with constant comparison, diagramming and memoing facilitated the researcher to become fully immersed in the data (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021; Urquhart, 2022). This analytical process is seen as a particular strength of the grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021; Urquhart, 2022).

Transparency and Coherence

The principle of transparency and coherence refers to the transparency and rhetorical power applied in the presentation of the analysis (Yardley, 2000). This is also advocated for by Charmaz & Thornberg, (2021) to enable quality in qualitative research. Moreover, Charmaz & Thornberg, (2021) suggest that grounded theory methods enables this transparency and coherence as using theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation improves analysis and provides the researcher with data from which they can make robust claims. This research applied both theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation.

Yardley (2000) also suggests transparency and coherence can be achieved by detailing all aspects of data collection process, analysis and by providing excerpts of the data**.** This can be seen throughout this thesis. Reflexivity is also considered a vital aspect of achieving transparency and coherence (Yardley, 2000) and to ensure this the researcher completed a research diary and used the grounded theory methods of memo-writing (see Appendix I) and constant comparison, which as shown build in reflection and reflexivity. Furthermore, Chapter Three provides the researcher's reflections of this research journey.

Impact and Importance

Fundamental to research is its usefulness, hence the principle of impact and importance (Yardley, 2000). Usefulness is also a core tenet of the researcher's pragmatist epistemology (Bryant, 2017; Noddings, 2010) and of their profession. Consequently, the aim of this research is to develop a theory of some CYPEDA are able to access HE. In developing this theory, the researcher hopes to provide insight into how EPs and educational professionals could promote the academic achievement and therefore social justice of CYPEDA. This is important as, as the research shows exposure to DA is often harmful to CYP's education. This research is also potentially useful in building on research into resiliency and AR in CYP. Consequently, grounded theory enabled the research to be prioritise usefulness through its focus on theory development (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021).

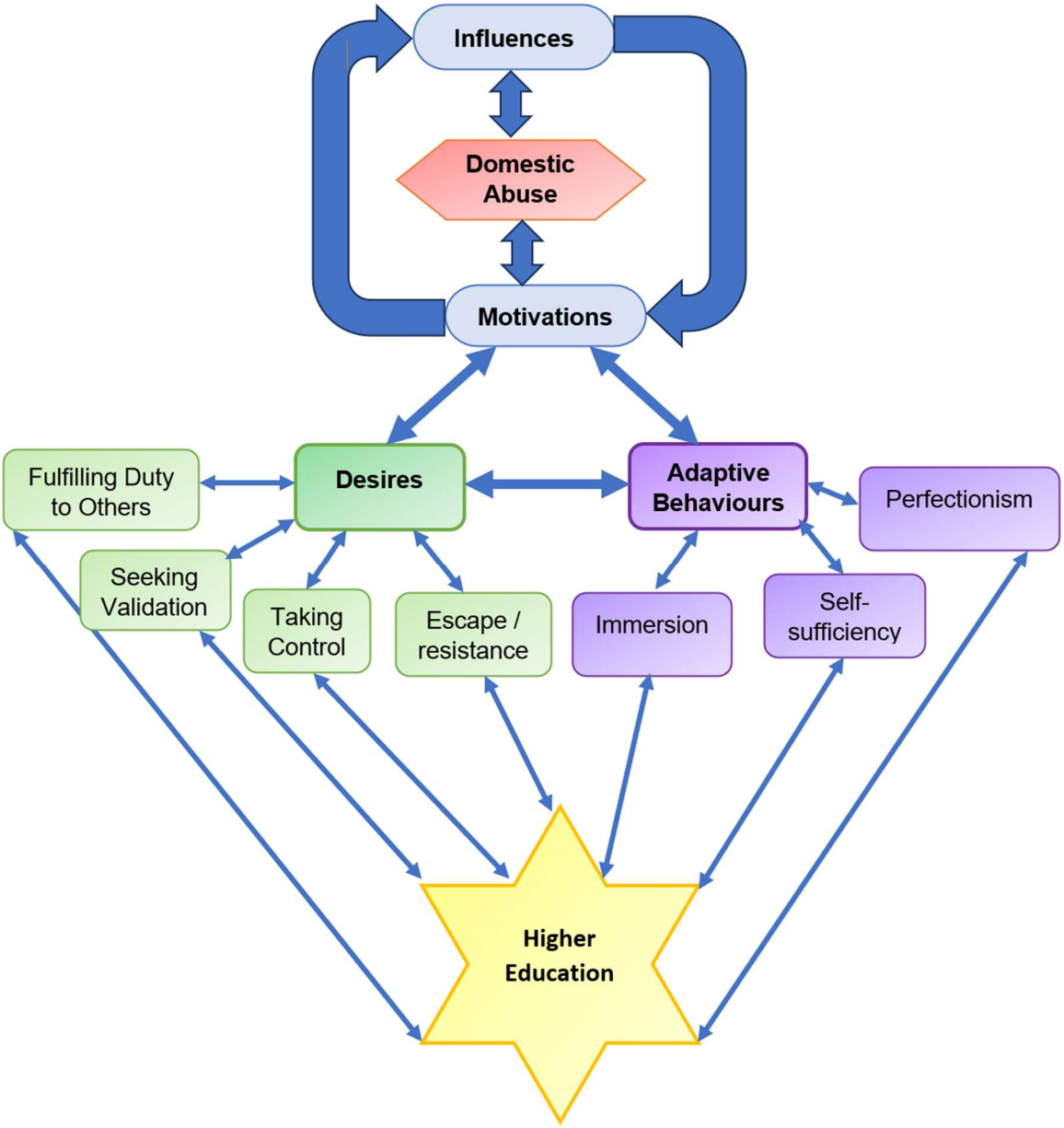
Findings

This section will first describe the substantive grounded theory model derived from the analysis (see Figure 5). A comprehensive description of the categories and subcategories that contribute to the substantive theory will follow.

Substantive Grounded Theory Model

Figure 5

Visual Representation of the Theoretical Model 'Determinants of Accessing HE for Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse'.



Marsha: Education is the way out, isn't it? Education helped me.

'Determinants of Accessing Higher Education for Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse' (DAHE) is the theoretical model constructed from the participants' data. The model subsumes three superordinate categories; 'Influences and Motivations', 'Desires'

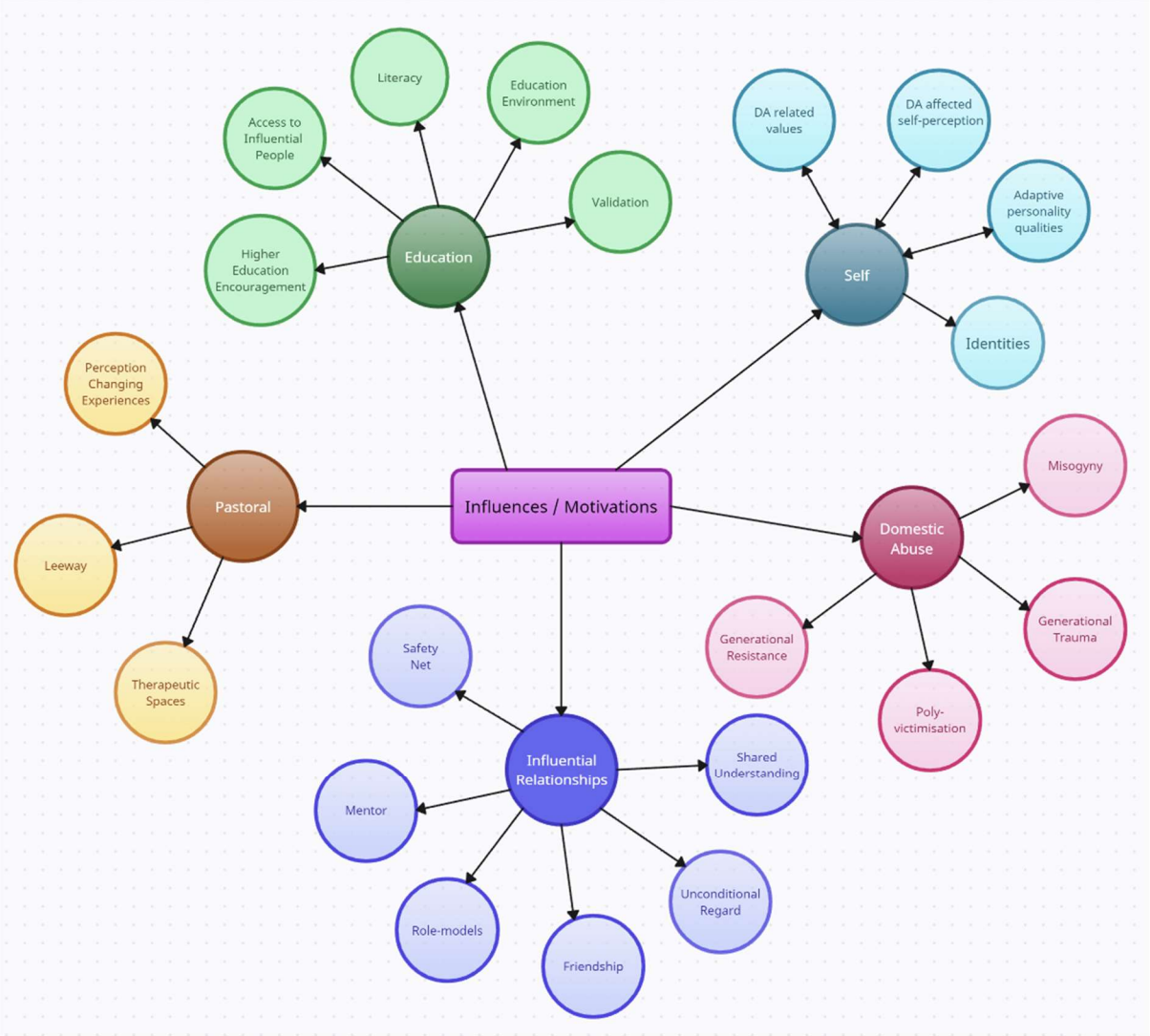
and ‘Adaptive Behaviours’ as well as the categories and sub-categories that comprise the superordinate categories. Figure 5 is the visual representation of this model. As can be seen the model is funnel-shaped and largely sequential in structure with ‘Desires’ and ‘Adaptive Behaviours’ deriving from the larger ‘Influences and Motivations’ superordinate category and HE being the eventual outcome. However, it is important to note that whilst sequential, the three superordinate categories were interrelated and influenced each other through feedback cycles.

The initial superordinate category of ‘Influences and Motivations’ represents the influences and motivations in the CYP’s life. Influences and motivations were grouped because their symbiotic relationship meant an influence could be a motivation and vice versa. For example, a role model’s influence could motivate the CYP to work hard. As per, EST the influences and motivations in a child’s life are numerous, as such this is the largest superordinate category and comprises of five categories; ‘DA’, ‘Self’, ‘Influential Relationships’, ‘Education’ and ‘Pastoral’ and their sub-categories (see Figure 6). ‘DA’ is represented in the substantive model as a separate influence as the analysis showed it influenced every aspect of participants’ childhoods.

These ‘Influences and Motivations’ in a child’s life when combined with the unique influence of DA created particular ‘Desires’ and ‘Adaptive Behaviours’ in the participants. In this research ‘Desires’ represent needs that participants’ felt an overwhelming want to fulfil in reaction to childhood exposure to DA. Desires consisted of ‘Seeking Validation’, ‘Taking Control’, ‘Fulfilling Duty to Others’ and ‘Escape / Resistance’ (see Figure 7). ‘Adaptive Behaviours’ were behaviours the participants’ developed to cope with DA but also helped with fulfilling the ‘Desires’ and were conducive to accessing HE. The ‘Adaptive Behaviours’ are ‘Perfectionism’, ‘Self-Sufficiency’ and ‘Immersion’ (see Figure 8).

Figure 6

'Influences and Motivations' Superordinate Category and its Categories and Subcategories



'Adaptive Behaviours', 'Desires' and 'Influences and Motivations' are in a feedback loop with each other and often their categories were interlinked. For example, a child exposed to DA consequently has a strong desire to escape, so they use books to mentally escape, by doing so they develop the adaptive behaviour of immersion which allows them to completely take their minds away from DA. By escaping through immersion, the CYP takes back control which is another desire. Reading also opens their minds to new worlds and this feeds into the desire to escape and so on.

Figure 7

'Desires' Superordinate Category and its Categories

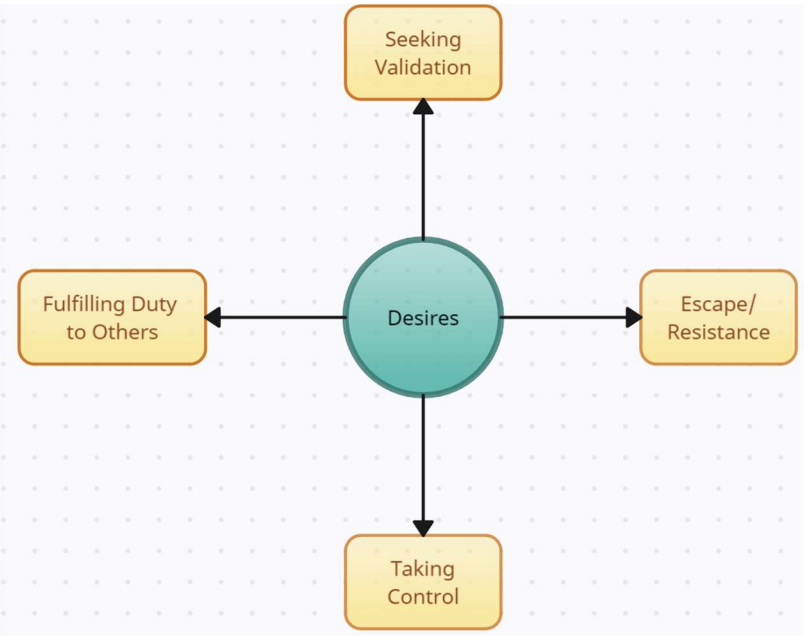
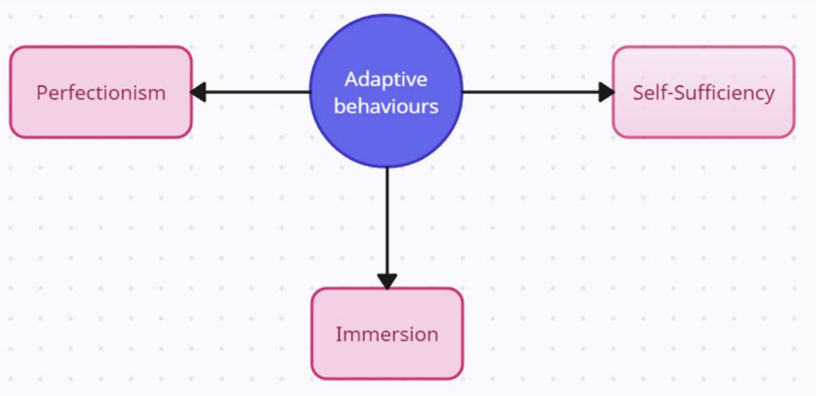


Figure 8

'Adaptive Behaviours' Superordinate Category and its Categories



HE appeared to result from the 'Desires' and 'Adaptive Behaviours'. HE provided an answer to fulfilling the 'Desires' and 'Adaptive Behaviours' enabled access to HE. To take the example further, through immersion in reading the participant learns about university and finds out university can provide a physical escape and possibly financial escape through job opportunities. University therefore becomes a realistic solution to escaping DA. In sum, a synergistic relationship between the superordinate categories of 'Influences and Motivations', 'Desires' and 'Adaptive Behaviours' exists. The 'Influences and Motivations' in

a child's life when combined with DA could lead them to develop 'Desires' which the participants had an overwhelming urge to fulfil. In response to DA exposure the participants developed 'Adaptive Behaviours' to help them cope with DA and fulfil their 'Desires'. Furthermore, the 'Adaptive Behaviours' were efficacious for accessing HE. This combination led to a focus on HE as a solution to fulfilling their 'Desires', with the 'Adaptive Behaviours' making HE possible. Hence why some CYPEDA access HE.

Superordinate Categories, Categories and Sub-Categories

A detailed description of the superordinate categories, categories and sub-categories is offered below. Participant quotes are used to illustrate and reinforce the findings.

Influences and Motivations

This superordinate category consists of the influences and motivations that analysis highlighted as affecting the possibility of HE for the participants. It should be noted there is an interplay between the influences and motivations as this quote typifies:

> **Alex:** I just escaped at school. I just loved just, just to stay there as long as I could and I was making art, making book- but know reading books, be in the library, volunteering, and it was just as an escape because home was so difficult um that it was what I nee- you know it was a refuge for me um so I think that's why and it was just ironic because as far as school was concerned, I'm thriving you know, and actually everything's falling apart.

This account highlights by using school as an escape Alex was provided with opportunities that shaped her development and her sense of self, this in turn motivated her desire to be in school and being in school provided various influential opportunities. This cycle repeated until HE became a desired solution. Accordingly, all the influences and motivations are symbiotic and synergistic and should not be considered in isolation.

Domestic Abuse.

Exposure to DA in childhood had a pervasive impact on all aspects of the participant's lives. This included their education, as shown by Alex above, and it continues to influence their lives as adults. Thus, though discussion of DA incidents was avoided its impact could not be and so DA became a core category. It is also an influence that is not in every child's life but is the unifying influence for all the participants in this study. DA's unique influence was categorised into four sub-categories: 'Polyvictimisation', 'Misogyny', 'Transgenerational Trauma' and 'Transgenerational Resistance'.

Polyvictimisation.

As can be seen in Table 7, DA was not the only ACE the participants faced, all experienced at least one other. Child abuse, poverty, parental addiction and parental mental health needs alongside DA appeared influential in the participant's lives. Some participants described parental mental health needs as the cause of abuse but more often the abuse impacted the non-abusive parent's mental health or their mental health made them vulnerable to DA. Parental mental health needs affected the parent-child relationship with some participants taking on the adult role (see 'Identities') and occasionally it caused deterioration of the parent-child relationship.

Edie: everything that she did has just destroyed anything that might have been love.

Parental addiction had a significant impact on the participants. Parental addiction appeared part of a complex interplay between DA, parental mental health needs and poverty. Domestic chaos was an element of participants' experiences of polyvictimisation but the combination of poverty and parental addiction appeared to lead to substantial chaos.

Brooke: Mum and Dad had bought actually, they had three houses that they'd brought, but lost it all, obviously, when all of this was happening, then become drug users

themselves before I went to uni, but I guess that fuelled a lot of it but, in terms of before I went to uni, yeah so I guess we've become homeless just before I went to uni.

The chaos element of polyvictimisation made it difficult for some participants to engage with their education.

Anya: my Mum and Dad's relationship was really breaking down so um I just really, I didn't go [to school] I didn't really engage.

Polyvictimisation also, for some, lowered school's expectations of them.

Marsha: I think there's a couple of things I think one thing is my attendance, one thing is like my social class and one thing I think is also like knowing I don't know how much teachers knew about what was going on at home, but we were on like a register and you're aware of that and you sort of think, I remember like one time my sister's tutor taking me to one side, taking her to one side "is everything OK at home?" and you sort of think, I don't know I think a lot of that builds up to low expectations.

However, as seen above for Alex, polyvictimisation became a motivation to engage in education as a refuge from the chaos. Indeed, for some the chaos and the resulting low expectations made them fight harder for their education.

Marsha: I graduated top of my class and I remember it being a big thing about "[Marsha]? How's [Marsha] the one who graduated top of the class" and it became like a driver for me. "I'm gonna get a first, I'm gonna graduate top of this class because everybody thinks I'm, like, not good enough".

Misogyny.

Brooke: my experience of my Dad and how he was towards my Mum shaped what I think about women and what are wom-, what it is, what it means to be a woman in terms of how I want it to be like moving forward.

Misogyny and its impacts on the participants was a recurring theme in the participants' experiences of DA. This aspect of DA was deeply influential on the development of participants' sense of self and their values, which in turn influenced their education. For example, Robin was expected to assert his masculinity through aggression.

Robin: I was always teased by my uncles for being a softy and a poof and a pushover and all those other things.

Whereas some female participants were positioned into submissive roles from a young age.

Alex: I had a lot more pressure to.. be domestic, to be good, to be quiet, to be, you know, cert- certainly that, whereas he was, more like "you're such a shit, just go out", you know? So, he [brother] spent a lot of time out the house um getting up to who knows what.

Expectations to be a 'good girl' lent itself to educational success as some participants used education to fulfil that role.

Naomi: I basically just do whatever (laughs) people do really wanted me to do, like good girl-itis I used to call it, you know just wanted to like please everybody.

Similarly, the 'domestic' expectation created a focus on education through resistance.

Brooke: Yeah so the whole idea of them being a male and doing better than me and being more powerful than me is, obviously with my Dad's stuff going on has made my motivation.

In resisting gender expectations and associated DA several participants developed the value of feminism. Feminism as the antithesis to misogyny proved to be a powerful influence as it led to several participants focussing their education, lives and careers on ending DA through empowerment of women and tackling of toxic masculinity.

Alex: I've thought about a lot and sometimes I think I've just been trying to stop domestic violence through my (laughs) through my studies**.**

Marsha: I think that boys should have a way of being, feeling safe to express emotions in a way that doesn't involve violence and harm and like them entering relationships as well. So, I think that's kind of, I dunno, weirdly, that sort of feels like something that I feel quite strongly about it is how we can help, especially boys who've been through domestic violence themselves, I think of l-, helping them to develop like strong, like just seeing how what's happened with my brother of like a way of being not.. not repeating those patterns I guess.

Transgenerational Trauma.

Abuse and trauma were ingrained in the history of almost all participants' families to the point where toxic relationships and abuse were normalised and accepted.

Natalia: so, when my mum was hit, she was saying about her mum being hit, she was like "well that's just how things are", that she just accepted it.

In Robin's family abuse was so common, there was an expectation that he would accept his exposure as it could have been worse, e.g. akin to the experiences of other CYP in his family. The widespread trauma in Robin's family also resulted in the family's infamy for criminality and violence in his community and school. This led to expectations that Robin would repeat the patterns of violence endemic in his family.

Robin: My teachers taught my, my cousins and had really bad experiences with them so I was, I had quite a few of experiences of being prejudged by teachers, even like little kind of, not necessarily kind of big explosive things, but like little, like tacit kind of, kind of reactions and facial expressions and things and um you know like "oh yeah you're his brother or you're his cousin" or so "you know obviously you're gonna be bad" and hopefully I prove them wrong.

This excerpt highlights the community's expectations of Robin and his family, but whilst transgenerational trauma influenced outcomes for his cousins, these expectations motivated Robin to take a different path.

> **Robin:** I very much live my life in opposition to things, especially at a young age. It was mo-, far more of um me thinking about things in terms of "I don't want to be that" and "I don't want to be like that" and "I don't want to be like you."

Robin also shared his awareness of how transgenerational trauma enabled him to understand his mother's choices and behaviours which helped their relationship. This was reflected in other participants' processing their parent's abusive behaviours.

> **Marsha:** I'd never want a relationship with my Dad, but knowing, like, some of the stuff like his, his mum used to beat him, and I feel like he, it's the way a lot of the things that he did came from a place of anxiety and hurt.

It appeared this awareness and understanding of transgenerational trauma was important in the participants' healing processes and helped prevent them from continuing the cycles of DA through focus on their education. Especially when encouraged by family members.

Transgenerational Resistance.

> **Marsha:** my mum was a cleaner, my mum would have her head down a toilet scrubbing the toilet and she'd say, "do you want to do this when you're an adult? If not go to school, get an education." Um yeah education sort of always felt like quite important.

Insight into how to break generational patterns of trauma and abuse was often gifted to participants by family members. These family members had lived through and learnt from their own childhood experiences and were determined to break the cycle either for themselves or for their loved ones.

Robin: I had a very supportive brother um who used to say um and this is a running joke between us, that he's made all the bad decisions, so I didn't have to, um and that joke aside, I did genuinely have to, get to learn from his experiences.

This determination to break patterns of trauma was a form of resistance that repeated over the generations in response to transgenerational trauma, a sort of transgenerational resistance. It was observed this transgenerational resistance incrementally improved outcomes per generation.

Alex: you know, my granddad coming from a Barnardo's home to Squadron Leader is a massive hustle, hustle you know, my Nan ended up as a social worker, that's you know..

Researcher: Impressive as well.

Alex: Impressive and especially for that time it was impressive and then my mum's degree and I have got the gri- yeah I have inherited like a grit and a graft of like we're gonna better ourselves.

For Natalia who grew up in a religious community, transgenerational resistance was a cultural expectation.

Natalia: we've moved from Pakistan to the UK, priority being to get like our children a good education so that's why they put all their savings into our private education so it kind of felt like it was my duty to them, also to do well because they just drilled into us I say us, my siblings, so much of doing well and being the oldest it was like "you're the first one, you're our guinea pig", so maybe it was kind of entrenched that I would go to a university.

Natalia shared her peers within the community experienced this too. Their families and community expected them to succeed to improve things for the next generation like they had done for them.

Natalia: when I graduated, she was like “congratulations you are now ready to give to the community” like that's where it was, it wasn't like “now go do you, be amazing” it was like “right, now you can give back. You are now skilled enough to give back.”

Taking on the mantle of transgenerational resistance was present in non-religious families too as they were also determined to protect younger family members from transgenerational trauma.

Anya: he [grandad] was I would say the support throughout all of us and now.. that.. so, my younger, the two in the middle, er younger brother and sister they don't have.. pfff they've got, my mum is very chaotic and then they have her ex-husband who they don't see at all. He was like I would say on level of abuse he was the worst one, absolutely, but I have sort of, so my sister who's 17 she often comes to stay with me and make sure that they have that place to go and that support.

Often, education was perceived as the vehicle for transgenerational resistance with participants having this message ‘drilled into’ them.

Chloe: like she [Mum] left school at 15 and things, but like sh- for my whole childhood, she was always doing like a GCSE evening course and, you know, GCSE Saturday course and things like that and she always was saying to us like, you know, “go to school, get your qualifications, like do what you can” and she also at the same time was always saying, like, “don't get in a relationship, don't have babies” like it was drilled into us.

Sometimes it was less direct. Brooke was influenced by her Aunt drilling the importance of education into her sons.

Brooke: their Mum didn't even finish school, but she valued education, so she would make them do work, they weren't allowed a sick day, they weren't allowed to have any time off.

This resistance influenced Brooke and she like other participants realised education was a way she could resist the gender roles in her family and escape transgenerational trauma.

Brooke: I was always being compared to those two cousins. Umm yeah and I think I'm not sure I valued education, I feel, I feel like I valued the endpoint like I, I had a goal in terms of not wanting to rely on anyone or a man. So that was my end goal and I did how do, I just did whatever I had to do to get to that, if that makes sense and education was my route.

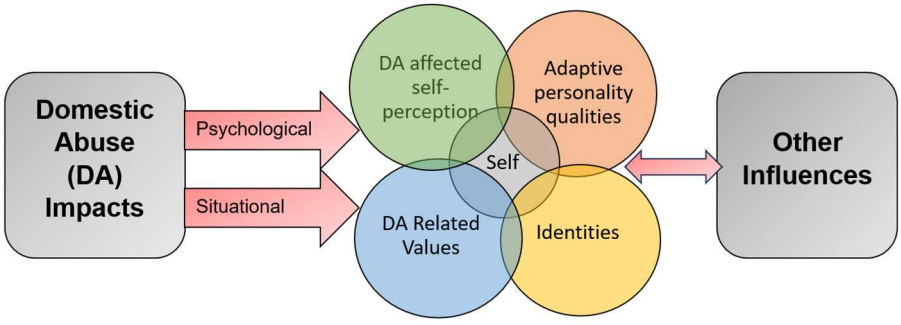
Self.

Naomi: I am a sum of my parts and like my experiences and it's taken me a long time to.. be OK with that.

The psychological and situational impacts of DA appeared to influence the participants' sense of self as illustrated by Figure 9. These psychological and situational affects interacted with other influences on the participant's life including their family and communities, their values and belief systems and their own personality qualities. This interaction appeared to effect participants' self-perception, identities and values and some developed adaptive personality qualities. These areas of self were interlinked and affected each other.

Figure 9

Effects of Childhood Exposure to Domestic Abuse on the Self



Domestic Abuse Affected Self-Perception.

DA had a powerful impact on participants' self-perception. Many participants described DA damaging their self-esteem, and self-worth as they struggled to understand why their parent(s) did not prioritise them.

Anya: I thought urgh I'm a b- I used to think really quite badly of myself and I thought I was a really rubbish person.

For some, this has had a lifelong impact despite their successes.

Edie: for every positive that I think I've achieved it is counterbalanced by… I don't know just the negatives and I've got a very um… unfortunately a very um.. negative mindset about myself.

This low sense of self-worth and self-esteem often resulted in participants looking to their education for self-worth, especially if they enjoyed learning and were having some success.

Natalia: I loved it when they [teachers] said "well done [Natalia] you're trying really hard" I thought "thanks" like I I loved it, I loved it.

If participants were able to gain some self-worth from their academic achievements this often led to a personal investment in their education as part of seeking validation (see Desires). It also led to developing an identity of being clever or academic.

Identities.

Many participants described themselves as being academic or clever, likely due to the positive validation and successes they had in education. This academic identity was important to participants as it somewhat compensated for their poor self-worth.

Chloe: Yeah on reflection probably was quite academic and that kind of way of wearning, learning works for me, um yeah so I've always kind of had, I guess, quite a bit of positivity

around school and learning, it was always just more like, you know, confidence is poor, but learning is good (laughs).

This identity sustained participants' focus on education despite considerable adversity.

Alex: if you think about, you know such a young age and, and had that acad- academic identity, even though the reality was, I was really struggling you know, I wasn't eating, I was, I had all the hair cut off, I was obviously struggling, from the outside, but because I felt like I was academic and also I was, became very lonely, very insular, that probably was why I've ended up being OK academically, which is a funny thing.

This identity for accessing HE was vital as it meant HE felt possible. Furthermore, accessing HE was perceived as affirming this identity and so accessing HE became a goal.

Robin: as far as I know, university has always been on the um on the cards. I think if I'm going to analyse it, I think it's because I wanted to be a judge, I knew that judges had to clever and clever people had degrees um and to get a degree, needed to go to uni.

The identity of being 'good', as discussed above, was forced upon several participants and it became their only way to be seen as worthy. Thus, striving to fulfil this identity was a goal for some as they sought this validation. School was a place where being 'good' could result in validation and this somewhat substituted for what some parents could not offer.

Chloe: my Dad was like really a bit of a pusher and you could never kind of please him I guess with whatever you did, so it was nice to feel like, OK, I'm pleasing I guess my teachers with the work um and um and good feedback.

The 'good' identity was also an aspect of being a young carer, which was an identity all participants were forced into due to DA and associated adversities, such as parental mental health and addiction.

Alex: my Dad left when I was 14, but he continued to abuse my Mum through the family court um and obviously my Mum had a baby, so I was getting up in the night to feed my

sister, help my Mum, my Mum was depressed, she was on benefits um it was actually a terrible time.

Most participants took on a parenting and protective identity for the sake of their siblings.

Naomi: I used to like, take me and my siblings like in, I was older I was more aware of it, like my brother and sister don't remember as much as I do. Um but we used to spend a lot of time in our bedroom, like when my, my Dad.. like because he, he took his own life at, at the home, like we were in our bedroom, like my bedroom.

For others, it was their parent or carer they were young carers for, and some physically and emotionally cared for every household member. This had a considerable impact on participants' sense of self as the 'young carer' identity mostly subsumed their ability to be a child.

Brooke: my whole childhood I remember my Dad would be like um, I'd have to go do like the cooking and clean from a very young age and my brothers wouldn't have to do it. So I'd have to get like, after the whole family had eaten their dinner, I'd have to then go and clean up when I was proba- really young actually, and my other brothers wouldn't have, wouldn't have had to done it even if one of em's only two years younger than me, which is weird um, I'd always be like the family babysitter and things like that and my Mum and Dad would sign me up to that role.

In being a young carer participants took on an adult identity and the worries and responsibilities of being an adult. This had a profound effect on participant's sense of self and their wellbeing.

Chloe: my Mum really struggled with her mental health and so I think we all picked up more than maybe what we should have done or needed to. Um yeah, I think there's always, I think there was, I don't know how to, almost like a self-fulfilling prophecy. If my Mum would always say things like, "oh [Chloe's] like the calm one she, she like won't hurt

people's feelings and she'll do this." So, then I kind of almost like, "oh, so I need to keep doing that cause it" I guess it would been reinforced that it was helpful.

This impacted participants' engagement with schooling, particularly high school. They either fully engaged to escape or their attendance became infrequent as they felt a need to be physically close to their non-abusive parent.

Researcher: Was there kind of a protective element to wanting to be at home with your Mum?

Brooke: Yeah probably because I knew she was like upset a lot.

Being a young carer influenced accessing HE in several ways. Participants saw HE qualifications as a means of providing for their family (see Fulfilling Duty to Others). Participants also perceived it as a place where they could prioritise themselves (see Escape/Resistance). Furthermore, being a young carer gave the participants tools useful for accessing HE (see Self-Sufficiency).

Being a 'young carer' and 'being good' were identities participants felt powerless to resist, however there were other identities and expectations of self which were actively rejected. Particularly around low-expectations based on social-class, gender and family reputation.

Robin: I used to resent being told that me and my cousins were the same because I wa- I was trying to get to uni, trying to do these things.

Active rejection of low expectations gave participants a sense of purpose and success as they prioritised accessing HE to defy expectations.

Brooke: I was the first girl to go to university so, that was quite an, an achievement out of my family. I got a really big family um, but I think people just didn't expect it from me, they was a bit like "ohh you're just gonna be sixteen and pregnant".

Growing up at the whim of DA led many participants to actively reject and fight against the low expectations they felt were projected onto them, thus some participants saw

themselves as ‘fighters’. This was also driven by the ‘young carer’ identity as they fought for family members and had an inherent sense of protecting others from DA (see Fulfilling Duty to Others). It was also part of a need to fight back and escape DA (see Escape/Resistance). Becoming a fighter shaped participants’ sense of self and sense of being.

Marsha: I guess it is an important part of who I am, of being somebody that will stand up.

Adaptive Personality Qualities.

The identities of ‘being good’, ‘young carer’ and ‘fighter’ led to participants’ developing personality qualities that protected themselves or others from DA. For some these qualities enabled HE access. ‘Being good’ mixed with a fear of conflict, (due to DA exposure), appeared to facilitate the development of trouble avoidance personality qualities like being quiet. Participants maintained this quality in school as their fear of conflict was all-encompassing. Being good and quiet led to participants doing well at school which emphasised maintenance of this personality quality.

Chloe: I was quiet and shy, yeah, cause it just helped me to fit in and just like not stand out any more than I needed to.

Chloe’s account shows being quiet kept her hidden and this was especially important to Chloe as she experienced living in a refuge and was told to keep this a secret by the adults around her. Chloe also developed other adaptive personality qualities to keep herself and others safe. For example, Chloe became hyper-empathetic so she could pacify others and hide as needed.

Chloe: from a very young age I- I've, I've always just been like very aware of other people's emotions and like atmospheres, so I would always just like behave in a way that would kind of mediate that or, like, bring tensions down. So, like, I would never misbehave at home because I didn't wanna get shouted at or cause you know an

argument, so I, it probably yeah, was just like this was an easy way of being and then I'd be the same in school.

Additionally, Chloe hid her love of learning to keep herself socially safe at school. Chloe spent much of her childhood adapting herself to the point where HE became a priority as she wanted to become her true self.

Chloe: I basically was like I'm going to uni in [City] and I'm just starting my own life and I feel like it was almost like I could literally construct my own life of how, how I wanted it to be like.

Similarly, Brooke adopted a quiet persona in school to keep others from noticing her due to her fear of conflict.

Brooke: I never made a fuss or anything, I was always quite quiet**.**

She later adapted again, by finding her voice to advocate for her mother's wellbeing (see Self-Sufficiency). Finding her voice was also part of being a young carer and being a young carer seems to have led Brooke and others to build on and enhance the caring qualities of their personhood. This enhancement fed into several participants' careers as they focused on protecting and looking after others. HE was needed to access these careers.

Anya: I decided to go and work at the hospital at the [local hospital] as a Healthcare Assistant and see how I found it in a clinical environment, acute environment and yeah that's where I fell upon the TNA [Trainee Nursing Associate] course and that's how I got to where I am now.

Values.

A strong sense of values pertaining to education and HE was noticed in the participants. Core values leading to a focus on education were prizing hard work, education, reading and social justice. At least one of these values was present in all participants. The valuing of

education, reading and hard work appeared to be instilled in participants by influential figures in their lives. Several participants attributed gaining their valuing of education to modelling and/or encouragement by non-abusive parents or wider family members.

> **Marsha:** she [Mum] was the one with holes in her shoes and that they knew, you know "oh this is the woman that's getting beaten and all of this" and showing up with bruises and she come, but she'd come to all of those meetings, she really cared about education.

Valuing education was particularly important in families where education had been inaccessible to previous generations due to the intersectionality of gender, discrimination and abuse. Thus, as part of transgenerational resistance there was active encouragement of participants to take available educational opportunities.

> **Natalia:** whenever she [Grandmother] would call and check in she'd always say, "how's your work, learning going? How's your education going? You're working hard right? Yeah it's so important to do that".

As part of this generational resistance, working hard was also encouraged and role modelled through the generations. Alex explained how the values of hard work and education despite adversity were instilled into her.

> **Alex:** so at one point she [Mum] went to night, you know, evening classes to do this college course and I remember her sitting with the typewriter on an ironing board in the lounge doing her degree and so I knew it was graft you know, she worked really hard in difficult circumstances and she graduated, we're really proud.

Despite not being actively encouraged to focus on her education, Alex found having it modelled was enough to deeply instil this value in her. Alex also had a strong sense of social justice. Indeed, many participants had this value. It appeared to derive from an awareness of their unfair treatment mixed with a need to protect others from DA. Social justice became a fuel for several participants as they saw education as the way to help others.

Alex: I remember, so I became really interested in feminism, women's rights, when I was in school obviously I think probably cause what was happening at home and um I remember when I started my first degree was Women's Studies Anthropology and it was very much that question, like what do you want, what would I want to do with that? And I thought to myself.. "think I want to change the world and become expert in this area".

Influential Relationships.

Robin: I wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't for her right, there's like three people in my life and she's one of them, in terms of my educational life.

Influential people in their relationships with the participants were at the core of participants accessing and pursuing HE. Influential people were those that impacted the participants by being role models, mentors, friends, and/or offering the participant a shared understanding, a safety net and unconditional regard.

Unconditional Regard.

Unconditional regard was vital to the participants in providing them with unconditional support. It was the antithesis to the conditional attention participants received or saw others receiving due to DA. For some participants this involved unconditional championing. Educationally this was transformative as championing made the participant feel worthy, prioritised and capable. This was especially crucial when there were low expectations.

Marsha: she advocates for all of us like for my sister, my brother um she is, yeah she will, like you almost would have to stop her like, "I'm gonna go up the school and say this" like she used to do it more for my sister and I'd be like, "Mum don't go up the school embarrass me", she's like, "no, they should be entering you for this and they should be doing that".

Marsha's mother's relentless championing changed Marsha's educational outcomes as she fought for Marsha to sit higher GCSE papers. Unconditional regard and championing also came from those who acted as a surrogate parent in terms of love, support and care.

Anya: He [grandad] was an amazing man, he was our safe space as well for years and years and years.

It could also come from being in a sibling group as some participants shared.

Naomi: even during those times that we haven't got on... we would still like defend each other like to the death, like very close and especially after my Dad died, us four, so my Mum and my siblings like so close, um like you know us versus the world kind of thing.

Receiving unconditional regard lessened feelings of worthlessness and gave participants a sense of safety during unsafe periods. This enabled and encouraged participants to keep going and prioritise their learning even when faced with considerable adversity.

Brooke: my Mum, like, even though everything was happening she always told me n- not to come back home, she always told me to continue, she was, she was, um she was definitely my biggest supporter and definitely the person that... I don't know, just told me to believe in myself a bit, and um yeah, even now she's, she's so amazing but I guess we've got put second in that time, but it doesn't matter cause she was still in the background telling us how much she loved us.

Role Models.

Role models were those whom participants looked up to and were inspired by. Role models were generally situated within the participants' family, their educational setting or workplace. In this study, role models seemed to offer at least one of the following elements: relatability, different life possibilities or reasons to actively avoid their current situation.

Relatable role models were important in accessing HE as they showed participants that people like them could access HE. This helped participants to tackle any self-doubt that may have been a barrier to HE.

> **Anya:** I don't think I ever thought myself as someone clever enough to do a degree mm hmm, but when I saw some nurses come in and I was like, do you know what they seem really relatable, and I thought ahh I can like, I can see a bit of me in them, if you know what I mean um, and it was almost like if they can do it, what's stopping you?

As discussed, family members who valued education were influential on the participants' perceptions of education. This valuing had a more powerful impact if prioritising education was role modelled. Thus, participants seeing a parent focussing on education or work or being successful in any form was inspiring and relatable. As seen above, Alex observed her mother earn her degree during chaos and Chloe saw hers attend night school. Anya recalled periods where she admired her mother for her work successes. Older siblings provided particularly relatable educational role models for HE as they faced similar adversities. They also provided participants with a clear path to follow.

> **Marsha:** we had no clue in my family like what unis are, how you apply, what you do, blah blah blah. So, it was like, that's easy she [sister] went there, I'm going there.

Whilst participants admired their mothers for their successes despite adversity, many participants experienced a complex role modelling relationship with their mothers. Most participants, although inspired by their mothers, wanted to avoid emulating them to avoid DA and revictimisation.

> **Naomi:** this sounds horrible, but I didn't, and I feel really bad saying it, but I think a driver for me is not necessarily the safety part, but not wanting to be in the same situation as my Mum was, which sounds horrible.

This aspect of parental role modelling had a powerful impact on participants' prioritising education to avoid DA.

Brooke: I didn't wanna be like my mum, which sounds really horrible cause now I would, my Mum's personality is lovely and she's amazing, but I guess growing up I never wanted to be like her, so that kind of like when the fl-, a flip, like kind of switched and then I was like right I need to go, need to get my education, I need to have a good job sort of thing.

Brooke and Naomi's accounts show there is guilt about not wanting to emulate their mothers. But it was perhaps the power of their feelings towards their mothers which enabled them to be profoundly influential role models for the participants.

Exposure to DA was normal for participants until they were shown otherwise. Thus, role models could be those who showed participants' a different and positive way of living. This could be a healthy family life, a more affluent lifestyle or physical distance. Participants then aspired to attain these ways of living. HE was a path to achievement of this goal.

Chloe: he [older half-brother] lived in [City 2], which in my head I was like "oh, that city's better than my town." He had a car, he used to be in the Army, but he'd come out and he just had a job and I remember thinking like he just, he can buy nice things, he can do nice things, like he'd take us to the cinema and um he'd just do fun stuff with us, like we'd go camping and um I remember thinking like, "I wanna be like him, like I wanna have a car, I wanna do nice things, buy nice things", which sounds quite superficial, but I was like, I want to do well for myself because I could see how nice it is.

For Robin and Marsha, who had grown up in a world saturated by violent men, having role models that provided examples of healthy masculinity was perception-altering. Robin shared the powerful impact of receiving an adult male's heartfelt apology.

Robin: the reason I mentioned that is because I kept that card in my room um on display for my whole childhood.

With hindsight Robin reflected this apology was powerful as it validated his feelings and made him feel worthy in a time when he was emotionally neglected. It also challenged his

dominant examples of male role modelling. Similarly, Marsha acknowledged the importance of having a male role model who was the antithesis of her father.

> **Marsha:** it's probably one of the o- like was a very important male role model in my life as well cause he was very, like he was very quiet which I wasn't used to from men in my family, he's very quiet and very like calm most of the time, he rarely lost his rag.

Having positive male role models gave both Marsha and Robin a tangible example that masculinity can take different and healthy forms. Marsha's male role model was her primary teacher. Not only did he provide this positive male role modelling for her, but he was also a mentor who had a significant impact on Marsha's wellbeing and her educational outcomes.

Mentors.

Mentors played a powerful and pivotal part in participants' accessing HE. All participants experienced some level of mentoring and where there was an acknowledged mentor, participants talked with passion and gratitude about the mentor's impact on their lives.

> **Marsha:** he [teacher] just always made an effort to have a relationship with me and, like, have a really high expectation of me, like, if I, if I did something bad in school, he was always like, "no, [Marsha], this isn't you, you're a good girl." And he always, I don't know, like, so I think that made primary school. Oh, it's making me really emotional actually thinking about him. I think that was very important.

Mentors appeared to be adults who took a special interest in the participant's educational or employment journey and in so doing made participants feel special. Mentors came alongside participants and provided them with some of the tools they needed and helped them access the pathways needed to benefit from education or employment. This included giving them opportunities or leeway when they could see the participant struggling (see Pastoral).

Mentors were also consistent, encouraging, generous with their time and attention and truly saw the participant. This made participants feel worthy and confident enough to make their aspirations possible.

Brooke: she [mentor], like, seen under the surface, she didn't just take me for who I was. She kind of looked a little bit deeper and supported me and she was kind of my key person.

The participant-mentor relationship was also non-judgmental, so the participant felt safe and respected. This sense of safety together with high expectations enabled mentors to challenge participants to work harder, change negative behaviours and to make the best of their education and their lives.

Robin: she was just this really ultra-ly kind of inspiring teacher that used to challenge me, challenge me to work harder and challenge me on any kind of shit ideas that I had and really kind of, really kind of pushed me.

The safety, encouragement and challenge aspects of the mentor-participant relationship also empowered participants to make momentous decisions they would not have done so without their support. Thus, mentors were invaluable and instrumental in participants accessing HE.

Edie: I kind of put it down to those two mentors, I'll call them, that I've had at the university, uh tut sorry err at the [job], um yeah, them kind of seeing beyond the slightly awkward shy um woman and giving me an opportunity and then encouraging me to to go for that job I think yeah. I think if if those relationships hadn’t have happened I wouldn't have gone to university.

Considering that consistency, safety, encouragement and attention was not always present in the participants’ homelives, the mentoring role had an even more influential effect on the participants. Consequently, for many participants, the mentor became their friend.

Friendship.

The social aspect of school and life for participants was mixed. Some participants, due to the isolation that often accompanies DA, struggled to make meaningful friendships or rely on their friends. Friendships were also undermined by a lack of shared understanding as participants were forced to mature, diminishing typical childhood concerns.

Anya: my friends would be like, like you know, or on MSN or whatever, they'd be like, “where are you? Like you haven't been at school for like a week” and I'd be like, I just, “yeah” and they'd be like “things can't be that bad” and I'm like “mmm yea”.

For a few though, friendships were important in accessing HE and for a couple their friendships were a lifeline. Friendships that facilitated HE were those where there existed common values around prioritising education and this was motivating for participants.

Natalia: I had good friends at school who were very conscientious, I was in a good group of people who were also very hard working, very similar upbringings, um second immigrant children too um, all had a similar value system so I think I would have always gone to university.

Naomi: like they all worked really hard. We were all kind of, we were all academic, I suppose um had similar values with stuff like that, had similar interests, and I suppose that was quite motivating as well.

Furthermore, the thought of accessing HE was less frightening when participants had friends who were going too.

Edie: I guess what helped as well is, I had a friend from school, we both went to art college together.

Friendships were crucial for a few participants. These relationships provided love, support and unconditional regard, which as discussed, was needed for many participants. Moreover,

they provided participants with an emotional outlet and a safe space to help cope with the demands of school and their homelives.

> **Brooke** there's one friend who.. I speak to everything about and she's so nonjudgmental and she just.. she sometimes plays devil's advocate, but she doesn't kind of make a comment on what I should or shouldn't do? She's, kinda lets me chat and we just chat for hours. Umm, she's yeah, I've known her since nursery, so she's a good person that's always been there.

Shared Understanding.

Participants, especially as CYP, found DA difficult to comprehend and articulate, particularly coercive control. Thus, it was hard to disclose and share with others. Disclosing was also difficult due to shame and fear. So, having someone to talk to who had lived experience of DA was valuable to the participants. Shared understanding meant having someone participants could talk to openly without fear and shame. This mostly occurred amongst sibling groups.

> **Marsha:** So I think ha- having somebody that you can talk to about anything is really important, like having like my brother and sister being able to talk to about stuff was really important for me growing up.

Equally an unspoken understanding meant participants did not have to explain their behaviours. Moreover, a shared understanding especially amongst siblings provided participants with camaraderie in the face of adversity. This camaraderie or kinship created a network of support which enabled participants to better cope with DA and its ongoing effects.

> **Naomi:** I think having that shared experience and even like now like in adult, like teenage years with my Mum and stuff like we've always had to rally, like we'll always rally together if we need to.

Safety Net.

Siblings and friendships provided participants with a safety net of support. This safety net strengthened participants' resilience against DA impacts. It also made participants feel secure enough to take steps and make decisions they felt unable to on their own. This was important in accessing HE as Edie's example about going to Art College with a friend demonstrated. Sibling groups were particularly effective safety nets as their shared understanding, shared experiences, close proximity and common enemy united them.

Anya: my Mum is, she is a good Mum and there's always been these men that come in and out but when we all stand together.. we're actually a force of our own you know?

These sibling groups not only provided strength in numbers, but they actively encouraged and supported each other to pursue their aspirations and make the best of their lives.

Naomi: like we have a sibling chat and we are all proud of each other, my brother's especially proud to be fair, he always likes, he, he messages me and he's like, "what is it that you're doing again?" cause he likes telling his friends and stuff.

Furthermore, those with older siblings at home found these siblings protected and shielded them from DA and related adversities.

Chloe: my oldest sister is, like almost four years old than me so she always, she was quite like a protector.

Education.

Outside the home, educational settings were the most influential space in the participants' lives. Not all participants had positive school experiences, but the settings did provide important influences that helped nearly all the participants access HE. These influences fell into five sub-categories; Literacy, Validation, Access to Influential People, Educational Environment and HE Encouragement.

Literacy.

Literacy skills, particularly reading, were perceived by all participants as important. Most participants believed they learnt to read prior to school, but for some, due to their homelives, school was the place that enabled them to read and gave them access to books.

> **Naomi:** I'd get books from the library at school, and we had a library at school and I remember that in primary school I used to take books out from the library, at secondary school as well.

Reading provided pleasure, it was a form of escape (see Immersion) and being a reader and a writer supported academic engagement and learning.

> **Marsha:** I was fortunate that I, I mean, I could write and stuff so that, I guess, was a strength of mine, I mean, like other kids, it might have been sports or whatever, but I think because in school it was focused on that, you didn't have to think about anything else.

Participants also received validation from teachers for their reading skills, which as discussed was something participants needed.

> **Naomi:** she [teacher] gave me a copy of um (tut) *Vanity Fair*, like not the magazine, but the book, like the William Thackery one and it was hers from the 80s or something and she gave it to me cause she knew I really liked reading and I remember that making me feel really special.

As Naomi's account shows, teachers were prepared to go beyond their day-to-day role to engender and encourage participant's love of reading, develop their literacy skills and widen participants' worlds through books. This widening of the world was crucial as it provided a way participants could see other ways of living and that there were ways to escape DA. Robin, for example, found out about university and his potential career through reading, he then used his reading skills to research the practicalities of university. Thus, schools played

a critical role in developing and enhancing participants' literacy skills that in turn enabled access to HE.

Validation.

As discussed, exposure to DA and its accompanying adversities left many participants feeling worthless and unseen and many of those participants had been conditioned to be 'good'. Participants found validation from others helped to lessen feelings of worthlessness and confirmed they were being 'good'. Participants found educational settings were a potentially rich and consistent source of validation, in contrast to their homes.

> **Naomi:** I think I probably sought validation more from.. adults outside of the home at school than at home.

The first-time receiving validation in school after having minimal validation in their homelives had a profound impact on participants. This was evident from how well-defined and emotive these memories were for the participants.

> **Edie:** I distinctly remember the reactions of everyone towards this picture I've drawn, so I remember thinking, "OK everyone likes this drawing" and from that point onwards I think that um, that the teacher perhaps started to notice me and.. from that point um until I left Junior School I think I was getting a lot of praise which I hadn't had before. So in those last two years of Junior School you know?... feels a bit funny to say you know, I think I feel like I was doing the best in my class or certainly one of the best in my class.

Receiving this validation, enabled Edie to feel truly seen and resulted in her developing into a successful learner. This was a similar story for many participants as they realised there was a simple way to receive validation, which was to focus on their schoolwork.

> **Chloe:** I knew that I could work hard, do well, get that feedback, feel good about myself.

This became a feedback cycle as the focus on the schoolwork meant they became more successful learners, and the more successful a learner they became the more validation they received.

> **Naomi:** I was ve-, very into school from a young age. I think it was when I was probably like in Year 1, I started to think a-, “oh, you know, if I work really hard and you know I get good feedback I get, like you know, positive feedback which I like.” Um, so I started working really hard, like all the way through.

Validation enabled participants to start to develop a positive sense of self. In particular, it helped participants define themselves as ‘clever’. Which, as seen above, helped participants to access HE. Furthermore, feeling successful, confident and happy in lessons resulted in participants developing an enjoyment of learning that sometimes went to love of learning or love of a subject.

> **Robin:** she [history teacher] read it [report] to the whole class and then read it again in front of a whole, in front of the whole school assembly um, and she didn’t name me in the assembly, but she said “one of my Year 8 students has written this and I want to read it to you” and she read it, and it was just absolutely inspiring and that was the kind of moment that I almost, I kind of fell in love with the subject and I’ve also, I’ve also always enjoyed things that I’m good at, um I like that sort of praise cause I don’t, I didn’t used to get a lot of, get a lot of that as a kid, so it was nice to get it from her.

This love of learning or of a subject was a substantial influence on participants accessing HE as it kept them engaged with their education despite adversities. Furthermore, for the participants that had a love of learning or a love of a subject, HE was a natural next step so they could stay doing something they loved.

Access to Influential People.

Validation was more powerful when it came from adults who participants respected and were inspired by, such as role models and mentors. Educational settings provided participants with access to these inspiring and influential people as they were often educators. These were people who made HE a realistic possibility, especially when participants were in FE.

Chloe: I just remember being really inspired by like the tutors that I met and like what jobs they got, they'd done in their kind of careers.

These inspirational tutors led to Chloe choosing her HE qualification and this was a similar story for other participants who were influenced by teachers and tutors to access HE.

Robin: she kind of wasn't pushing me into doing a History degree, but was more like saying she was really happy when she found out I was going to do a History degree, um so she taught me from Year 8 to Year 12, er sorry Year 8 to Year 13, all the way through and inspired the love of the subject to the point where um, I'm starting to make efforts to track her down so I can invite her to my PhD graduation.

Educational settings also provided participants with other influential adults within the school community who were instrumental to participants accessing HE in various ways. For Robin one of these people was the school cook with whom he had daily interactions with due to free school meals.

Robin: I ended up mentioning it to her one day that my mum had kicked me out and I was homeless and she kind of disappeared for a little bit and then came back and then said, "Oh you, I have a spare room, come and stay with me".

Without this support, Robin would have been homeless and potentially needing to enter care during his A-Levels. Instead, the cook's intervention meant Robin could focus on his A-Levels so he could access HE. Robin's experience shows all adults in a child's educational setting have the power and potential to be influential in a CYP's life.

Educational Environment.

Participants' educational engagement was dependent on their school environment. Expectations of pupils were an aspect of the educational environment that participants found impacted their engagement. For example, Marsha attended primary and secondary school in an area of deprivation. At her primary school, high expectations of learning were in place no matter the pupil's background. Whereas, at secondary school Marsha found teachers had low expectations of pupils due to their socio-economic status. Going from a school where her learning was valued to one where she felt she did not matter was demotivating and resulted in her disengagement.

> **Marsha:** the reason I didn't come to school much in secondary school was that I didn't feel like the teachers there like, a lot of them, like respected or cared about me like they did in primary school. I think or like I think there was low expectations in general in the school I went to as well, the school I went to was pretty um low standards all round.

Conversely, participants found it difficult to cope in schools with very high expectations. Participants perceived their results were prioritised to the detriment of their wellbeing. Furthermore, being compared to high achieving others was damaging for their already fragile senses of self, especially if their sense of worth was based on educational validation. This also resulted in disengagement.

> **Edie:** it felt like pretty much everyone else was better at everything than I was. So, I'd gone from being um tut I don't know, recognised as let's say gifted at primary school, junior school um, but being pretty overlooked at senior school so by the time I was 15-16, GCSE years, no interest whatsoever.

As can be seen in Marsha and Edie's accounts, school environments where participants were recognised and encouraged seemed to be more successful in keeping participants engaged. As also shown, primary school environments often felt safer than secondary

settings. This seemed to be due to staff attention and consistency which primary settings can offer. School environments were also considered safer and therefore more engaging if they offered the participant structure and control that was lacking in their homelives.

> **Chloe:** consistently it was always there, it didn't, and like obviously, although my mum like tried really hard, I guess with her mental health, she was probably a bit more up and down, but school was like very consistent.

Additionally, schools also felt safe if they offered safe spaces where participants could immerse themselves in something they enjoyed, be alone with their thoughts and escape from the tumult of the main school. Having these spaces especially when home was unsafe, enabled participants to engage with their school and have a sense of belonging.

> **Alex:** You know I really thrived in that environment. I had a good art teacher and I used to spend all the time in the art room and the library and they gave me the space to, to do that and you know, it made a big difference to me.

School environments that offered encouragement and support, expectations of learning and provided participants with a safe space appeared to be the ingredients needed to engender school engagement.

Higher Education Encouragement.

Participants who were encouraged by their settings to consider HE found this helpful. Typically, this occurred during FE. For some, this was general encouragement by tutors or teachers. Others had more specific encouragement, like a university trip or mentoring for Oxbridge. Through this active encouragement, HE became a tangible and achievable option.

> **Naomi:** I didn't have aspirations to go to uni really um until I spoke to.. until I had tutors at college speak to me about it.

Pastoral.

Pastoral support was nurturing support which helped participants' wellbeing and enabled them to dream of a different future. Whilst this pastoral support came from mentors and through unconditional regard, there were other areas unique to participants' experiences that helped them to access HE. These were accessible therapeutic spaces, being given leeway and being provided with perception-changing experiences.

Therapeutic Spaces.

In this study, therapeutic spaces are physical spaces which enhanced participants' wellbeing. This could be a safe space where the participant could just be, or where they could engage in an enjoyable and mindful activity, or where there was a trusted adult who would listen to them or a combination of these aspects. These spaces were a lifeline for participants who had access to them. These spaces tended to be art rooms and libraries.

> **Natalia:** the library has like places to hide like where just like the enclosing's of the bookcases or different tables or sofas, like I could just, you can't see me, like you could see me in a dining room which was very open. So, I like that actually, you're just hide in there or no one would see you behind a corner.

These spaces were continually accessible so participants could access whenever needed. They were calm, inviting and friendly spaces. Both art rooms and libraries also provided activities where participants could be mindful and escape their stress.

> **Alex:** I remember going to the li- to the town library on my own from in primary school and I remember going there all the time.. and loved it, and then it became you know the school library as we went on, but yeah I always remember loving that because it, course that was the time, you know back in the day, you'd p-, parents would just let their kids go out so you, where'd you go? Well, there's not that many places.

Having a trusted adult who offered a listening ear, enhanced these spaces and positively contributed to participants' wellbeing.

Alex: she [art teacher] used to let me, you know I used to go there in the lunch breaks, not because I disclosed to her, but she, just we just got on, so I was always there making things, which is what I needed, um yeah, she just meant a lot to me.

For a couple of participants this person was a school counsellor who offered a therapeutic space.

Natalia: I never said anything but I think I'm pretty sure [school counsellor] could read in between the lines that things weren't ok at home and I was talking about it and I had support and I had a place to go and cry at school if I needed to get away from the classroom or whatever, it was so, I feel like I was being looked after in that sense.

As can be seen from Alex and Natalia's accounts the adults did not need to know about their DA exposure to effectively support participants' wellbeing. This support for wellbeing was vital in participants accessing HE as it helped them to process and manage the emotional effects of DA which could have derailed them.

Robin: it was that positive experience with the school counsellor, first of all, kind of validating er my feelings and actually telling me that actually it was OK to be the way that I was, um in many ways that that kind of prompted me on.

Thus, therapeutic spaces were a vital aspect of accessing HE for some participants and would have been beneficial to others.

Chloe: I just wish I didn't have to like carry all of that un-until I got to uni

Leeway.

Participants found being given leeway valuable in both accessing and progressing with their education. Leeway was being given the benefit of the doubt or latitude when things

were going wrong. Leeway was usually given by an educator who valued the participant's potential but recognised something was impacting them. Leeway was an exercise in pragmatism by the educator who in order to benefit the participant, either enabled them to bypass a learning hurdle or allowed them to get away with something.

Alex: I told my art teacher that the maths teacher had said it was fine for me to attend life drawing classes in the Community College building on cam- on the school grounds, (laughs) which they hadn't, but no one seemed to mind, like in the end no one resisted, so I used to go in school time once a week to a life drawing class with like adult learners who are like retired and I remember after she said, in fact, maybe she said to me at my wedding like "you didn't ever get the, the maths teacher never even knew about it".

Leeway was a gift the adult gave the participant, but it was given in trust that the participant would use the gift to try to fulfil their potential. The benefits of leeway though went beyond fulfilling potential. The act of being given this trust was profoundly meaningful as it made the recipient feel worthy and believed in.

Anya: It made me feel really good yeah, and to have someone that was encouraging and ac- I'd say he [College Tutor] was the reason why I passed that course so it was, it was a, it was like a diploma, so I came out with a merit but I was in the later part of the course I was managing to get distinctions in there, but he also made massive er.. what's the right word? He he definitely.. I can't find the words like he made it so that I could pass.

Researcher: Allowances?

Anya: Yes definitely made allowances cause even if I maybe was having a tough time in the first-year um or maybe I didn't want to present something or something like that I would or like when I remember having to do a er a quiz on birds and somehow I ended up with the entire sheet of what I needed to learn.

This gift of leeway boosted Anya's self-confidence and enabled her to pass her FE course, which was the gateway to her later accessing HE. This dual benefit of leeway was recalled by participants with gratitude due to the positive impact it had on their lives.

Perception-Changing Experiences.

Perception-changing experiences were opportunities participants were given which enabled them to perceive a future without DA. These were opportunities that physically took participants out of their day-to-day lives and showed them another way of life. Perception-changing experiences varied from trips to another town or city to trips abroad.

> **Chloe:** he'd takes us to like [City 3] and [City 4] and like he'd take his different cities, so it kind of gave me that taste of like what is actually out there.

These trips no matter how mundane they appeared were unforgettable to participants as they made participants reevaluate what was normal and what was acceptable.

> **Brooke:** I started to go around my friend's houses more and noticed kind of how their Dads were and the differences between the different families.

These experiences were especially memorable if someone had gone out of their way to gift the participant these experiences. As like with being given leeway, the act of offering these opportunities made participants feel worthy. These perception-changing experiences were transformative for participants in terms of accessing HE, as HE was seen as the pathway to accessing these different ways of living.

> **Alex:** I said "well we can't afford it" [school trip] and they [school] and they made it happen, there was a lot of, probably subtle things like that where they made opportunities happen for me that I didn't wouldn't have seen for myself at that time because it wasn't gonna happen other, you know my Mum wasn't gonna pay, but the, the school trips I did really also changed my life. It was um you know, to travel, like I've travelled a lot since,

but to see the world like we weren't going away, my family didn't, we went to a caravan with my Nan mostly that was it um so, yeah, the school trips definitely changed my life.

Desires

Participants developed particular desires in reaction to various combinations of the above influences and motivations. Desires were a powerful drive to take action, to satisfy a need, caused by exposure to DA. For participants these were ‘Seeking Validation’, ‘Escape/Resistance’, ‘Fulfilling Duty to Others’ and ‘Taking Control’.

Seeking Validation.

Exposure to DA led to many participants feeling worthless, isolated and invisible. Educational settings were a reliable source of validation which was achievable if participants focussed on their academic work. It was often the first-time participants experienced validation from adults. These first and consistent experiences of validation were intensely meaningful for the participants (see Validation), as it fulfilled their essential needs of connection, feeling worthy and being perceived as ‘good’. It was also often perceived by participants as the only way to feel confident and seen. Thus, for most participants, seeking and receiving external validation became an overwhelming desire.

Alex: I think sometimes, I think I'm constantly looking for external regard through, er whether it's writing books and articles, whether it's getting the grades, whether it's trying to search for that somebody to say, “well done” and you know, “you matter, I notice you”. I think I even do that now because I think actually my self-esteem's quite low and that's because of the abuse.

Consequently, participants saw pursuing HE as the means to gain external validation. The fact that external validation came from doing well at school also made HE accessible as participants were receiving the grades they needed to access HE. Furthermore, achieving

grades and HE qualifications despite adversity and the status and titles qualifications could bring was also seen as validating.

> **Edie:** to actually do it [degree] and to get through it despite all the other stuff that was going on in my life at the time, to actually achieve that and to actually be able to say in my you know in my CV or on my er E-mail signature [job role] felt like a very validating um thing to be able to do.

Thus, the status of the qualification, combined with feelings of success and validation led to many of the participants seeking harder and harder academic challenges to gain more external validation.

> **Robin:** the reason I like having, I mean, I've put being published on my timeline cause that's a huge moment because there was all sorts of external kind of gratification from that, right I was getting accepted by my new peers as in like the doctors and the professors and um, and, and things that when you tell someone outside of academia, at least that you're published, they are often interested in it and they give you that kind of, that kind of praise that I obviously crave so much.

Robin's account shows how seeking validation was a significant reason for him accessing HE. This was the case for most participants.

> **Naomi:** for all of my life I've been in some form of education like working towards something like to get a certificate or something or a score to be like "well done".

However, some participants reflected this desire can be insatiable, as external validation is a superficial fix for poor self-worth.

> **Alex:** what I'm realising, it's a really hard, it's a hard journey when you've gone through this coping mechanism to realise, I think in the end that, that's not gonna come, you, it's not gonna fill the gap of abuse.

Escape/Resistance.

HE was seen as the way to achieve escape and resistance. Living with DA and its associated adversities endowed all participants with a strong desire to escape DA and/or fight against revictimisation. To escape, participants sought safe spaces. Educational settings (see Therapeutic Spaces) employment and/or learning provided participants with a safe space. Once participants found a safe space there was an intense desire to stay in this space. Thus, this meant accessing HE to stay in education or to achieve qualifications that enabled them to access or stay in a safe workspace.

> **Anya:** I've always wanted since I was a little girl is to have a safe space and a place to call my own and I think like.. you can't do that necessarily nowadays on a minimum wage job like by yourself, like to be able to really push through that and I think maybe part of that was maybe what drove me, like you know and.. knowing that I can progress and progress my career.

As Anya's account shows, HE allowed her to access her career as a safe space, but also the qualifications HE offered also meant financial security. Financial security was seen as a means to escape especially for participants who had been exposed to financial control and poverty. Financial security meant independence, never having to rely on a partner and therefore was a form of resistance against DA.

> **Naomi:** like I don't ever want to be in the same position that she was where, you know she was also like, because she was financially controlled she couldn't get out of that relationship. So, I do think that that was a driver for me as well like I wanted to.. have my own money, do, have my own job so that I could be independent.

The act of going to university also enabled escape. Participants saw going to university as a physical escape from their homelives and communities through distance.

> **Alex:** I couldn't wait to leave to go to university you know I just wanted to get as far away as I could.

This distance and going to university also offered participants the chance to escape through anonymity and start a new life.

> **Robin:** as much as it was an educational journey and all the just trying transformative stuff and those other kind of romantic, kind of educational things, it was my way of getting out and I knew that if I did well at GCSEs that means I could do A-Levels and if I could do A-Levels then I could get into university and I could leave and I could just leave all of this town and all of these people and all of their bullshit behind.

Having university as an escape plan gave Robin hope, which enabled him to keep going despite the adversities he faced.

> **Robin**: I used to say to myself, “it's only a few months now, it's only a year now, it's only”, you know, I'm one day closer than I was yesterday.

In summary, all participants had an overwhelming desire to escape and/or resist revictimisation. HE, in multiple ways, was seen as the solution as Brooke surmises.

> **Brooke:** It [university] probably was to escape as well cause at the time that's when everything was kind of falling apart in, Mum and Dad started to use drugs, so I guess it was a bit of a mixture of wanting to go away and be independent, but also wanting to escape from the family and then thirdly, because that's something I knew, 'cause I was so passionate about having a good job and supporting my, you know, being this independent woman that didn't need no boyfriend, ever.

Fulfilling Duty to Others.

Childhood exposure to DA left many participants with a sense of duty to others they had a strong desire to fulfil. This was perhaps a consequence of having to take on caring roles at an impressionable age and/or the values they developed. This sense of duty manifested in different ways, such as giving back through emulating mentors.

Robin: people like [mentor], for example, he didn't care where you came from or what you've done before, what mattered, and this is the kind of thing that I try to take on as a teacher, what matters is what you're doing now and how much effort you put in.

This sense of duty to others may have also manifested through the social justice values many participants held.

Marsha: I'm somebody that will stand up for like, I mean like anti-racist working parties and all of the kind of social justice things is very important to me and I am always, I'll stick up for myself, I'll stick up for other people.

Others developed a sense of duty in reaction to what they lacked in their childhoods and wanted to prevent others experiencing the same.

Naomi: I remember being in secondary school and thinking I don't want anyone else to ever feel this way like I felt, I I remem- I felt frustrated with the lack of support that I had, but I didn't feel like I could ask for it and I knew I wanted to work with young people, I think at one point when I was a teenager I said I wanted to like be a child counsellor and people were like, “are you sure, cause you've had all this stuff happen?”

As Naomi’s statement infers, this desire to help others is so strong in many participants that they have no choice but to fulfil it even if detrimental to themselves.

Alex: I've worked in all different aspects of the gender-based violence sector, I’ve worked in projects with sex working women and a refuge. I've worked in policy, training, um so that's all I've ever done. Obviously that's because of my past, cause I just can't let it go and sometimes I think God, I wish I could just.. go do something else.

Participants held a hope their careers could provide them with opportunities to fulfil this desire, and many of their chosen careers required a HE qualification. Indeed, it is interesting that all participants are in careers where they care for others or support children and/or young people.

Taking Control.

Participants became actively focussed on seeking control in various aspects of their lives. This desire for control appeared to be a reaction to DA bringing inconsistency and unpredictability into their childhoods, their homes and through the parenting they received. Accordingly, participants sought to exert control over whatever they could to feel safe.

> **Chloe:** I have had issues with control in the past around like eating and restrictive eating and things, like I've never had anything diagnosed, but I've definitely struggled with that, although I think I'm through that now, but I think the more stressed I am, the more control I need, I feel I need to exert.

As seen above, several participants found their education or employment settings offered them a sense of control. These settings were often ordered, structured and predictable. Also, participants had control over receiving validation which, as discussed, was a need.

> **Naomi:** I guess like I used li- like school as a bit of a control thing, like I could control that. It was easy for me to.. kind of get buried in that, I could, I could influence if I did well, didn't do well.

Participants also sought control in reaction to being controlled. Many participants were exposed to coercive control and experienced their lives being controlled by an abusive adult. Furthermore, several participants witnessed the ramifications of coercive control on their non-abusive parent and in reaction sought to avoid this situation. HE was seen as the way to do this (see Escape/Resistance). By actively resisting revictimisation the participants were trying to take control over their own lives so no one else could.

> **Brooke:** cause of what I was, obviously was brought up, was that my Dad was in control and told my Mum what she can and can't do and she didn't really have much co- and in terms of her choices that she made, so I didn't want to be like, I guess I didn't wanna be like my Mum.

Some participants sought to take control over DA by educating themselves about DA. Learning about DA enabled participants to understand why people abuse and why their non-abusive parents stayed. It also helped participants to make sense of their duality of feelings towards their parents.

> **Brooke:** I thought that was going to help me understand why my Dad did what he did and I recognised that actually, good people do bad stuff sometimes.

This understanding enabled acceptance and sense of healing which gave some participants control over what they had experienced.

> **Marsha:** I'd, I'd never really thought about in any way other than, like, “Dad's really evil, and thank God like I'm never going to happen to see him again”, to start to think about why these things happen, how they happen, the sort of psychology behind it and that was like, “Oh my God like, this is like the magic key to understanding why I'm like”, suddenly I felt like all the things that I think about myself, that's a bit weird, or my siblings, is a bit weird, isn't weird.

Some participants chose to learn about DA so they could help others and even focus on the DA eradication. Pursuing a career focussed on preventing DA and supporting others was also about participants taking control and fulfilling their sense of duty to others.

> **Alex:** I think that it's [studying DA] probably come from that desire to exert some control over the situation. Stop it happening again to someone else.

Consequently, HE in various ways offered a solution to participants’ desire to take control.

Adaptive Behaviours

Adaptive behaviours were behaviours participants developed to cope with and manage impacts of DA exposure and related adversities. Analysis of participant’s data showed there were particular adaptive behaviours that occurred because of DA, but also fuelled and

enabled participants to access HE. These adaptive behaviours were Perfectionism, Immersion and Self-Sufficiency.

Perfectionism.

Perfectionism evolved out of participants' desires for control and external validation. As discussed above, many participants exhibited a strong need for external validation and for some it was like an addiction. Furthermore, as validation was achievable through school and offered a sense of control, participants found themselves entering a cycle of working ever harder to receive more validation, and the more validation they received, the harder they worked. Thus, participants sought harder and harder academic challenges such as HE qualifications. Participants also realised the standard of work dictated the level of validation and thus some became obsessive about their standard of work.

> **Naomi:** I would spend hours like I'd record myself and I'd play it back to myself so I could remember it and by the, it would be, I'd spent unhealthy amount of time revising and stuff like that because I was like, I have to do it, I just like, I had to do well.

Failure was not an option as it would mean a loss of control and external validation. Losing this validation would damage their fragile self-confidence, which had become reliant on external validation and feelings of worthlessness would raise their head again.

> **Naomi:** I actually remember I got a B in an A-S Psychology unit or exam or something and I was devastated which is ridiculous when I think back on it, so I redid it, I resat it.

Being perfect became the only option. Being perfect meant being in control and gaining validation. Perfectionism was the resulting behaviour as it was the only way to be enough. Developing the adaptive behaviour of perfectionism has been both a positive and a negative for the participants. It was positive in that it was functional in temporarily fulfilling participants' needs by providing them with control and external validation. It was also protective in that being a good student avoided conflict and further potential insults on their self-worth by

being perceived as a ‘bad’ student. Furthermore, being a perfectionist meant participants were perhaps given more trust and notice by their educators.

Natalia: I was academically trying, I was like the one that would try hard, so I had good relationships with my teachers because I was a hard worker.

This credit may have facilitated more positive relationships, leeway and possibly mentoring.

Alex: it was easy to do cause I was a good girl, like you know, this is the thing, it's, my brother wouldn't have got leeway.

Perfectionism gave the participants a drive to seek HE as a way of proving themselves.

Chloe: perfectionism definitely comes from my Dad. Like we could never do anything good enough to please him, it was always like “do better, do better”. You know, “change the artwork, get a higher grade”. So, I do think probably in a way like his, his way of being, his way of parenting or whatever has, it had like deeply, deeply instilled something in me. So yeah, it's a weird one, isn't it? So maybe if I hadn't had him as a Dad or had that kind of, grown up in domestic abuse, like maybe I wouldn't have that drive in me.

Perfectionism also supported participants in their bids to access HE. Perfectionism resulted in the grades and successful application needed to access HE. However, perfectionism could also be damaging as participants put enormous pressure on themselves to be perfect.

Chloe: like I won't be able to sleep, so I just wake up in the night thinking of my To Do List, so I, it’s probably almost quite obsessive.

As Chloe’s account reflects perfectionism overrode participants’ basic care needs which resulted in huge levels of stress and for some, illness.

Naomi: I was working so hard and I wanted to be perfect and amazing at everything and I was really struggling with it, so I was getting migraines.

Thus, perfectionism enabled participants to take control, avoid conflict, build positive teacher/student relationships, receive validation and access HE, but it could be unhealthy.

Immersion.

Immersion was an adaptive behaviour which developed from the need to escape and hide. As discussed, all participants had a desire to escape DA, and some developed the adaptive behaviour of immersion. Immersion was a form of hyper-focus that enabled participants to exclude thoughts related to DA and its associated adversities. Immersion thus offered escape and respite.

Perfectionism and immersion were not mutually exclusive behaviours and indeed they often enabled each other. To achieve perfectionism the participants would immerse themselves in an activity, and perfectionism was a means of achieving total immersion. Immersion could be physical or mental; activities included sport, art, music, study and reading. The type of activity appeared to depend on what was accessible and was something they were successful at.

Robin: most of my childhood was spent in a pub, um either with my mum or looking after my mum which gives you some indication of the kind of um kind of situation I was in and I ended up learning how to, [brother] ended up teaching me how to play pool so I didn't have to just sit in the corner and drinking a coke and being bored and then I ended up taking that quite far and I ended up playing for England.

Immersion in reading and learning was particularly prevalent. Reading facilitated total escapism for many participants through enabling the participant to tune out the DA and have moments of contentment through enjoying captivating stories and furthering knowledge.

Chloe: big reader, to be honest, I think we all read like in ou-, in our family as like escapism, um just to be really into a book, into a story.

This escapism fuelled participants' love of reading and some participants found they took any opportunity to read rather than be present in their day-to-day lives.

Naomi: I remember being on, being on family holidays and I wouldn't really wanna talk to anyone and I'd just read.

As seen above, reading facilitated learning and learning again became something participants could escape into and become totally immersed.

Brooke: learning felt a bit safe for me I guess and it's always been something that's took my mind away from some, everything else that's been going on, so I've always used it as a kind of a focus or a driver in terms of ignoring everything else and focusing only on that.

Immersing themselves in reading and learning was mostly a positive adaptive behaviour as it protected participants from DA and its impacts. It also provided the tools and knowledge needed to access HE. The stamina and focus required to immerse oneself in an activity was also conducive to accessing HE as it meant participants were able to apply themselves to the level of study needed. However, immersion could be maladaptive. Immersion is an avoidance strategy and for some this transferred to other aspects of their lives.

Edie: I do worry that I did my avoidance and I avoided the things I could've done.

Self-sufficiency.

Participants appeared to develop a high level of self-sufficiency at a young age. This seemed to be due to participants' caring responsibilities and/or having to survive when parenting was inconsistent or unavailable. Being self-sufficient involved being proactive, advocating for themselves and others and developing independence skills.

Alex: certainly, all those experiences would have given me a strength. Boarding school, school trips, anything like that gives you a sense of self-reliance, which probably is helpful

when you're experiencing abuse because you can't rely on anyone else. You learn that pretty early.

As Alex's account indicates, being self-sufficient made participants feel stronger and when used successfully it improved their self-confidence.

Brooke: It was when my mum was um, got sectioned and nobody was listening to us and n- she was getting no support and they kept, like, putting her away from the hospital and I went into the hospital and like, had to be her spokesperson and had to like, advocate for her. I think probably was, that my turning point in terms of me coming out of my shell a bit cause I had to, cause I had, cause who else was gonna help my mum sort of thing.

Participants therefore justifiably feel proud of their self-sufficiency and it generally appears to be a positive adaptive behaviour.

Edie: I am proud of my.. um self-sufficiency.

Through application of self-sufficiency participants were able to escape and in attempting to escape participants further enhanced their self-sufficiency skills. For example, participants realised they needed to be independent to escape, thus they used their proactiveness to develop practical skills such as driving.

Researcher: So, you had the job to pay for the driving lessons and the driving lessons meant

Anya: I had freedom.

Self-sufficiency was important in accessing HE as it made HE possible. Participants knew they could already stand on their own two feet. Furthermore, the skills of proactiveness, independence and advocation enabled participants to prepare for university.

Robin: I was the first year of the nine thousand fees um so it was all in the news. So, I went and entered the research and actually I found that oh, it's actually, it's education free at the point of use um and there's all sorts of um kinda criteria that you need to pay it back and I

thought, actually my Mum being on benefits, and me coming from such a poor situation is really gonna benefit me.

Summary of Findings

In summary, a detailed and thorough analysis of the participant's data using grounded theory resulted in the theory of DAHE (see Figure 5). DAHE proposes that the participants accessed HE due to the development of certain 'Desires' and Adaptive Behaviours'. The 'Desires' are powerful needs the participants felt compelled to fulfil as a result of DA exposure, these are 'Seeking Validation', 'Escape/Resistance', 'Fulfilling Duty to Others' and 'Taking Control' (see Desires). The 'Adaptive Behaviours' are behaviours participants developed to help them manage the impact of DA on their lives. The 'Adaptive Behaviours' also helped the participants pursue their 'Desires' and were facilitative of HE access. The 'Adaptive Behaviours' are 'Perfectionism', 'Immersion' and 'Self-Sufficiency'. The 'Desires' and 'Adaptive Behaviours' highlight that participants were not passive in their reaction to DA exposure but were resistant and adaptive to its impact on their lives.

The 'Desires' and 'Adaptive Behaviours' developed from particular powerful 'Influences and Motivations' in the participants childhoods which included 'DA', 'Self', 'Influential Relationships' 'Education' and access to 'Pastoral' experiences. This category demonstrated how pervasive DA exposure was on the participants and how experiences and relationships in childhood shaped the participants values, goals and behaviours. Though the relationship between the 'Influences and Motivations' and 'Desires' and 'Adaptive Behaviours' was hierarchical the categories were also symbiotic, with each category influencing the other until HE became an accessible aspiration.

Discussion

The research aim was to develop a theory into why some CYPEDA are able to access HE and in so doing identify PFs for AR which EPs could use to support CYPEDA to engage with their education. This engagement with education may enable social justice for CYPEDA as education is linked with better life outcomes (HM Government, 2012; Smolentseva, 2022). This section will explore the study's findings regarding current literature and offer expansion of the literature. Firstly, the developed theory will be discussed, this will then lead into examination of the PFs for AR in CYPEDA identified. Implications for EP practice are then shared. Finally, limitations of the study and future research directions are considered.

The Theory: Determinants of Accessing HE for Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse (DAHE)

> We will expect most child outcomes in abuse cases to take shape gradually, over time, following the unfolding dynamics of coercive control, amid numerous social transactions in which children negotiate, withdraw, collude, resist, escape, and detach, all the while having to choose, as do their mothers, between their own safety and well-being and the safety and well-being of those on whom they depend for security, nurturance, and love (Stark & Hester, 2019, p. 98).

Stark & Hester (2019) highlight the complex social systems CYP grow up within and the various ways they manage DA exposure, they also emphasise time is needed to understand the effects of childhood exposure to DA. The current study, as a retrospective study, has enabled time to pass so child outcomes can be fulfilled and insight can be gleaned into what enabled access to HE. The theory resulting from this study; DAHE, emphasises and acknowledges the importance of a system's view of child development and therefore systemic thinking when considering the effects of DA on CYP, the PFs they have and develop and CYP's resistance of DA.

DAHE encompasses three superordinate categories: ‘Influences and Motivations’, ‘Desires’ and ‘Adaptive Behaviours’. Figure 5 illustrates that CYPEDA’s ‘Desires’ and ‘Adaptive Behaviours’ result from ‘Influences and Motivations’ in CYPEDA’s lives. Furthermore, the categories are symbiotic as ‘Desires’ and ‘Adaptive Behaviours’ fuel each other and are in a feedback loop with ‘Influences and Motivations’. Consequently, DAHE supports an EST view of child development (see Figure 1). Additionally, DAHE emphasises ways in which DA exposure affects CYP and how CYPEDA manage, resist, develop and adapt from DA. This brings weight to the theory of CYPEDA having agentic capacity (Anderson & Danis, 2006; Överlien & Hydén, 2009; Stark & Hester, 2019) whilst highlighting relevancy of the theories of adaptive responses (Bomber, 2022; Levendosky et al., 2002; Perry, 2003, 2007) and development from trauma (Papadopoulos, 2007; Tedeschi, 1999; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The core categories of DAHE will now be discussed regarding these theories.

Superordinate Categories

Influences and Motivations.

Naomi: I am a sum of my parts and like my experiences.

The core category of ‘Influences and Motivations’ particularly aligns with EST. In EST (see Figure 1) the child is at the centre and the microsystem, the system closest to the CYP, is the most influential on their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). The microsystem contains the CYP’s school, home, peers and immediate family (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). Similarly, this study found education, influential relationships, pastoral support and DA the most significant influences on CYPEDA’s lives relating to accessing HE. Education comprised the participants’ school, college or workplace. Influential relationships were relationships which offered CYPEDA unconditional regard, friendship, mentoring, role modelling, shared understanding and a safety net. These relationships were generally with caring others in the CYP’s family, school or workplace. Pastoral support was also linked to

caring adults, but it additionally emphasised the importance of safe spaces in the CYPEDA's school or community especially as DA often made home unsafe.

EST proposes that CYP's development occurs through their interaction with the systems around them, including the home, and these systems influence each other (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). Accordingly, as DA generally occurs in the home it is likely to influence CYP's development and outcomes. Indeed, studies argue DA has a multi-systemic impact on a CYP's life (Ho, 2022; Holden, 2003; Överlien & Hydén, 2009; Stark & Hester, 2019). This study supports this view as it highlights the significant impact DA had on participants' lives, their development and outcomes. This shows why CYP's exposure to DA is a substantial issue and thus why research into the effects of DA on CYP is vital. It also emphasises why systemic thinking is crucial when considering the effects of DA on CYP's lives.

The DA category highlighted aspects of DA which were influential regarding participants' access of HE. These were misogyny, transgenerational trauma, transgenerational resistance and polyvictimisation. The 'polyvictimisation' subcategory provides evidence for the various concepts and theories which emphasise that DA often co-occurs with other ACEs (Dube et al., 2002; Felitti et al., 1998; Finkelhor et al., 2013; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Gilbert et al., 2009; Holt et al., 2008; Jouriles et al., 2008; Rossman, 2001; SafeLives, 2014a, 2014b). Indeed, all the participants experienced co-occurring ACEs. Thus, DA should not be considered in isolation when working with CYPEDA.

The DA category also provides support for the concept of transgenerational trauma (Assink et al., 2018; Greene et al., 2020). Many participants discussed how abuse affected their previous generations and several shared how normalised it was in their families, accordingly this reinforces the social learning theory view of both transgenerational trauma and child development (Bandura, 1973, 1977; Kalmuss, 1984). This study's findings also offer an extension to the theory of transgenerational trauma whilst supporting theories of resistance and agentic capacity in those exposed to DA. The study proposes that whilst

trauma appears to be passed through generations, resistance to DA and its relating adversities was also passed down.

This transgenerational resistance appeared to grow from generation to generation as one generation learnt from another. Resistance was often modelled by adult caregivers, suggesting that similarly to transgenerational trauma, social learning theory (Bandura, 1973, 1977; Kalmuss, 1984) could be a reason why resistance is passed through generations. Additionally, for some participants, resistance was actively encouraged by adult caregivers who in their own acts of resistance worked to avoid their children repeating their patterns. This offers further support to the idea that those exposed to DA are agentic in their responses to it (Anderson & Danis, 2006; Överlien & Hydén, 2009; Stark & Hester, 2019). Furthermore, as participants were actively developing resistance in response to DA this provides evidence for AAD and the theory that positive development can occur during adversity (Papadopoulos, 2007).

Prevalence statistics and DA research shows DA is a gendered issue with significantly higher incidences of men exerting power over women and their children through fear than the converse, (Cleaver et al., 2019; Domestic Abuse Act, 2021; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Holt et al., 2008; Howarth et al., 2016; Orr et al., 2022). This can be partly explained through aspects of social conditioning such as misogyny; misogyny was a strong theme in several participants' homelives and upbringings. Some participants also attributed DA to misogyny which supports the literature (Stark & Hester, 2019). Indeed, some participants were forced to take on roles which made them subordinate to the males in their lives. Additionally, the male participant was derided by his family for not personifying aggressive masculinity. In reaction, feminism became a strong theme in several participants' lives. This again demonstrates the participants' agentic capacity and shows how DA affected participants' identities.

In this research 'Identities' is a subcategory of 'Self'. The 'Self' category shows the impact of DA exposure on participants' personhoods. In addition to 'identities' DA appeared to affect

‘Self-Perception’ and ‘Values’. The ‘Identities’ section focussed on identities participants were forced to take on and/or were identities that enabled them to focus on their education despite DA, for example being a ‘young carer’, ‘good girl’ or ‘academic’. These identities ultimately shaped who the participants were and their outcomes either through acceptance of this identity or through resisting it. For example, many participants were forced into a caring role and subsequently their professional life involves offering care or support for others. Or participants sought HE to prove misogynistic or low expectations of them as wrong, once again highlighting the importance of agentic capacity in CYPEDA .

DA exposure affected participants’ self-perceptions and for most this lead to low self-worth and low self-esteem. This appeared to result from not being their parent’s priority because of DA or being treated abusively as part of DA. This supports Holden's, (2003) theory into the ways CYP are harmed by DA exposure. It also reinforces the importance of attachment and of timely ‘good enough’ parenting in enabling healthy child development (Ainsworth et al., 2015; Bowlby, 1988; Degrieck, 2021; Fogarty et al., 2019; Holmes, 2014; Holt et al., 2008; Howell et al., 2010; Martinez-Torteya et al., 2009; Winnicott, 1992).

Participants developed particular values because of DA exposure which supported them in accessing HE. These were hard work, education, reading and social justice. Hard work, reading and education appeared to develop as part of transgenerational resistance with parents or other family members modelling and/or actively encouraging hard work and the pursuit of education. This, as shown, demonstrates social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Kalmuss, 1984) and the powerful impact adults can have on CYP’s development as per EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). Social justice appeared to develop from participants’ resistance of the effects of DA through their desire to prevent others from similar experiences. It was also often linked to feminism and the reaction to misogynism. Again, CYPEDA’s agentic capacity is highlighted (Anderson & Danis, 2006; Överlien & Hydén, 2009; Stark & Hester, 2019).

The ‘Self’ category also showed how participants developed personality qualities to protect themselves and others from DA. These personality qualities included being good,

being quiet, being a fighter and hyper-empathy. The development of these personality qualities could be considered adaptive as they occurred in response to the enduring and extreme stress of DA exposure (Perry, 2007). Indeed, the qualities of being good and quiet match the dissociative response of compliance outlined in Perry (2003)'s Differential Response to Threat (see Table 2). Additionally, under hyperarousal, becoming a fighter can be classed as a fight response and hyper-empathy could be related to hypervigilance. This thus reflects theories that suggest CYP adapt their responses and behaviours to manage trauma (Bomber, 2022; Perry, 2003, 2007). Consequently, as adaptive responses, these personality qualities could be considered PFs and will be discussed below.

This research, as shown, provides weight to the supposition that childhood exposure to DA has a multi-systemic impact on CYP's development and outcomes. Thus, in supporting CYPEDA it is vital to use systemic thinking to think beyond the immediate and visible effects of DA to the effects DA could be having on the CYP's sense of self, values and ways of being. The ways these areas supported CYPEDA to access HE are discussed below.

Desires.

Chloe: If I hadn't had him as a dad or had that kind of, grown up in domestic abuse, like maybe I wouldn't have that drive in me.

This study identified four desires which developed from the 'Influences and Motivations' in the participants' lives and enabled access to HE. Desires in this study are defined as needs the participants felt they overwhelmingly needed to fulfil. The desires were 'Seeking Validation', 'Escape/Resistance', 'Fulfilling Duty to Others' and 'Taking Control'. The 'Desires' highlight how and why motivation and perseverance develop and are significant for AR in CYPEDA. The 'Desires' also fuel and emphasise the presence and importance of agentic capacity in CYPEDA.

As demonstrated, DA has a multi-systemic effect on CYP and is usually harmful (Holden, 2003) as the participants found. Hence, participants all had an irresistible desire to escape, either for themselves and/or for their loved ones, present and future. Conceptualisations of escape varied and included a need to physically escape through distance or to escape to a safe space. Some participants desired a new life, the chance to be themselves and to rid themselves of DA related identities. Nearly all participants sought escape to avoid re-victimisation and the lives of their parents. Consequently, participants often pursued financial independence. Escape was fundamentally valuable to participants and planning their escape gave them hope in the face of adversity. This reinforces the importance of hope for resiliency and recovery from adversity (Frankl, (2004).

Participants perceived HE as a way of achieving these different escapes, thus many participants focussed on HE. This focus on escape through HE and plans to act on it demonstrates CYPEDA actively resist DA, reinforcing Överlien & Hydén's (2009) finding that CYPEDA have agentic capacity. It also extends Överlien & Hydén's (2009) research by demonstrating CYPEDA, given time and support, do more than just imagine how to prevent DA. CYPEDA followed these plans through.

‘Fulfilling Duty to Others’ was a fuel for escape/resistance in some participants. This appeared to be due to their young caring roles. Moreover, most participants felt an overwhelming sense of duty to protect others from DA or similar adversities. HE was perceived as a means of achieving this as it could provide qualifications that can enable financial stability and/or would facilitate a professional career supporting vulnerable others. This desire to give back was observed in Testa-Ryan's (2016) research into the AR of Latina high school students and thus this study lends weight to their findings.

Exposure to DA negatively impacted participants’ self-worth and self-esteem which is a known effect of childhood exposure to DA (Holt et al., 2008; Radford et al., 2011). Likely, due to the impact of DA on parenting capacity (Holden, 2003; Holt et al., 2008; Jernberg & Booth, 1998; Radford et al., 2011; Rossman & Rea, 2005; Sterne & Poole, 2009; Stiles,

2002). Consequently, participants sought external validation as it made them feel confident and seen. However, the need for external validation became insatiable for many participants and thus became an intense desire. As emphasised by EST, school is the other significant presence in CYP's lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1997) and participants realised school could be a reliable and consistent avenue for external support if they worked hard. HE as a potential extension of school, meant a potential extension of external validation, so participants accessed university. This finding emphasises how vital receiving praise and acknowledgement is for CYPEDA. However, it also highlights that CYPEDA would benefit from support to develop self-confidence so they are not reliant on others for their sense of self-worth.

Receiving external validation from school also gave participants a sense of control. As shown in the literature, an unstable homelife is an outcome of exposure to DA and associated adversities (Holden, 2003; Templeton et al., 2009). Furthermore, the literature shows, DA involves taking away victims' control (DAA, 2021; Stark, 2007; Women's Aid, 2023). For these reasons, seeking and taking control was found to be vital to CYPEDA. Participants therefore sought environments which could enable them to feel in control. The educational environment offered many participants the structured and consistent environment their homelives lacked. Thus, continuing into HE was a way of maintaining this structure and control. Educational settings could therefore be considered protective for CYP against the effects of DA exposure. HE also offered participants a way to gain control over their lives as part of resisting DA and avoiding revictimisation. This was because HE offered physical escape and qualifications that could enable financial independence.

Participants also sought to take control over the impacts of DA on their wellbeing through educating themselves about DA. Participants particularly showed a want to understand the behaviours of their parents, they therefore sought educational opportunities that could offer these answers. Participants who received these answers found it helped them to reconcile their conflicting feelings towards their parents and thus this education aided their healing.

Adaptive Behaviours.

Alex: anything like that gives you a sense of self-reliance, which probably is helpful when you're experiencing abuse because you can't rely on anyone else. You learn that pretty early.

As previously discussed, participants developed personality qualities that both protected and enabled them to manage the DA in their lives. For the same reasons, they developed adaptive behaviours. This section focusses on the adaptive behaviours which helped participants manage DA whilst facilitating HE. These were perfectionism, self-sufficiency and immersion. All participants displayed at least one of these behaviours. This reinforces the literature which states CYP's behaviour can reflect their trauma (Bomber, 2022).

The present study evidences the link between CYPEDA and perfectionism. The literature on perfectionism shows it can develop due to child abuse and/or an individual's need for validation and acceptance, particularly socially prescribed perfectionism (Chen et al., 2019; Rasmussen & Troilo, 2016). As shown, the participants had a need for validation due to the effects of DA on their homelives. So, participants sought external validation from their schools through hard work. Many of the participants became almost dependent on this validation as they equated their sense of self-worth with academic achievement. Accordingly, they studied to extreme levels and often had a fear of failure. This reflects the literature on how perfectionism develops (Rasmussen & Troilo, 2016).

Perfectionism in academic achievement lends itself to HE due to the achievement of results and the seeking of harder academic challenges for perceived higher reward. This supports Radford et al.'s (2011) suggestion that perfectionism may be a reason behind why some CYPEDA thrive academically. Therefore, perfectionism could be considered a PF for AR and will be discussed below. Additionally, perfectionism is not noted by Perry (2003) as a differential response to threat. Thus, this study could provide evidence that perfectionism can be a threat response. Perfectionism could also be a driver behind AAD (Papadopoulos,

2007) and therefore may provide insight into how AAD can occur in CYPEDA and for those facing other adversities. However, as Bomber (2022) states, adaptive behaviours to trauma can become maladaptive. This was reflected in participants' extreme levels of study which affected their wellbeing, this is in keeping with the literature on perfectionism (Rasmussen & Troilo, 2016) and ultimately achieving high academic success did not fulfil their need for love and acceptance.

Self-sufficiency was an adaptive behaviour resulting from being a young carer, with participants learning, and being taught, to take care of themselves and others from a young age. Skills involved in self-sufficiency included being independent, proactive and having the ability to advocate for themselves and others. Competency in daily living skills were shown to be a PF for AR in CYP exposed to maltreatment (Coohey et al., 2011). Certainly, participants found self-sufficiency facilitated both escape of DA and access to HE, through giving them the confidence, knowledge and skills to do so. This study therefore reinforces Coohey et al.'s, (2011) supposition that competence in daily living skills are protective for CYP's education. This is significant as, as Coohey et al. (2011) asserts, these skills can be taught.

To help escape and resist DA effects, some participants developed an ability to totally immerse themselves in activities. Activities that enabled immersion were those participants found easy and that offered them mindfulness such as learning, reading or physical activities. As such, these activities could be considered protective as they were therapeutic, enabled a mental escape and allowed the participants to take control of their situation. Thus, this appears a mostly positive adaptive response to DA. However, immersion could also be considered dissociation, which Perry (2003) argues is a response to trauma. Dissociation can be maladaptive if it becomes an easily triggered response, resulting in individuals finding it difficult to be present in their lives, it is also linked to various emotional wellbeing needs (Granieri et al., 2018). Immersion is not noted in the literature as a PF for AR or resiliency in general. However, immersion requires high levels of focus and stamina, which could be

considered related to the PFs for AR of self-regulation and perseverance (Coohey et al., 2011; Testa-Ryan, 2016). Indeed, these skills are helpful for study. Immersion activities as PFs will be discussed in detail below.

Protective Factors for Academic Resiliency in Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse

Research into resiliency and PFs is crucial as understanding of PFs can give insight into how to develop resiliency in others (Masten et al., 1999). This is the first known study into PFs for AR in CYPEDA, thus this will provide a new dimension to resiliency research and research into resiliency in CYPEDA. This research also expands the research into PFs for AR and specifically into CYP exposed to abuse. This is important as PFs for AR is a limited area of research. This section will discuss the current study's findings regarding PFs for AR in CYPEDA in terms of the existing literature on PFs for AR. The section will also discuss how this study expands the existing literature and will offer new PFs for AR. Gafoor & Kottalil's (2015) categorisation of PFs for AR will be used as it provides a comprehensive overview of PFs for AR (see Table 3) and maps well onto EST (see Figure 1).

Within Child Protective Factors.

Cognitive factors have been identified as PFs for AR in general (Hunsu et al., 2023) and for CYP exposed to abuse (Coohey et al., 2011; Testa-Ryan, 2016). Coohey et al. (2011) in their study into academic achievement despite maltreatment found reading and maths scores were indicative of academic success. This study supports this as it found CYPEDA who identified as voracious or proficient readers found reading helped them to study and access the curriculum. In addition, this study expands the existing research through insight into why reading is a PF for AR in CYPEDA. Reading enabled escape from DA and provided participants with insight into worlds without DA. It also bought them to the attention of

teachers, with participants being celebrated and encouraged for their reading skills. This made participants feel special and worthy, which met a need in the participants due to difficulties with self-worth related to DA exposure. Reading also helped participants prepare practically for HE. A participant also found writing to be helpful in her schooling and bought her special attention. Accordingly, writing skills could also be a PF for AR or it could be that any academic skills that earn teacher praise can be PFs for AR.

Hunsu et al. (2023) and Radhamani & Kalaivani (2021) found academic self-belief to be a PF for AR. The current study corroborates their findings as the participants attributed feeling academic or perceiving themselves to be academic as helping them to engage with their learning. This identifies the importance of engendering academic self-belief in CYPEDA to support their AR.

Participants, as shown, took on adaptive personality qualities to protect themselves from DA. Some of these qualities were conducive for accessing learning and therefore could be considered PFs for AR. These included ‘being good’ and ‘being quiet’. To maintain these personality qualities participants had to be able to regulate their emotions and behaviours. Consequently, this study corroborates earlier research which found emotional and/or behavioural self-regulation to be PFs for AR in CYP exposed to abuse (Coohey et al., 2011; Schelble et al., 2010) and for AR in general (Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021). Self-regulation is an aspect of executive functioning, which is vital for learning (Diamond, 2013) it therefore seems logical that aspects of executive functioning would be PFs for AR.

Linked to being good were participants’ values. Participants had at least one of the following values: hard work, education, reading and social justice. Aside from reading, holding these values could be considered new PFs for AR. However, they could also be considered motivations for progress which is an identified PF for AR (Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021). Being motivated is also a PF for AR in CYP exposed to abuse (Coohey et al., 2011; Diab et al., 2018; Sonsteng-Person et al., 2023; Testa-Ryan, 2016). Furthermore, valuing hard work could be linked to perseverance which is noted by Testa-Ryan (2016) as

enabling CYP exposed to abuse to access FE, as is giving back to the community, which could correspond with the value of social justice. The valuing of hard work, education, reading or social justice as PFs for AR could be a significant finding as these values can be instilled in CYPEDA by others. Indeed, participants appeared to develop these values in response to modelling and/or encouragement by family members. However, they also developed from participants' resistance to DA and social expectations. Highlighting again how CYPEDA's resistance is significant.

Resistance has been shown to facilitate resiliency (Anderson & Danis, 2006; Wade, 1997) and it is a strong theme in this research. DAHE highlights the various ways participants fought to resist the effects of exposure to DA and low-expectations due to polyvictimisation. Resistance included feminism and valuing social justice, hard work and education. It also included fighting and advocating for themselves and others, escaping, taking control and developing adaptive personality qualities and behaviours like self-sufficiency. Thus, as shown DAHE provides support for the concept of agentic capacity in CYPEDA and it provides evidence for the connection between resistance and resiliency (Anderson & Danis, 2006; Wade, 1997).

The current study extends the link between resistance and resiliency as it suggests that resistance could be a PF for AR in CYPEDA, as to resist the effects of DA, participants focussed on their education. Resistance as a PF for AR could also be linked to the PFs of aspirations, perseverance and motivation which have been suggested as PFs for AR in CYP exposed to abuse (Coohey et al., 2011; Diab et al., 2018; Sonsteng-Person et al., 2023; Testa-Ryan, 2016). Resistance to DA was often modelled or actively encouraged by family members as part of the proposed concept of transgenerational resistance. Thus, resistance could also be a Within Family PF.

Participants developed the adaptive behaviours of immersion, self-sufficiency and/or perfectionism to help them cope with DA exposure. These particular behaviours were also facilitative of their education so were PFs for their AR. Immersion is possibly connected to

dissociation which is considered a threat-response (Perry, 2003) and dissociation is associated with mental health difficulties (Granieri et al., 2018). However, participants demonstrated how immersion was protective as it enabled mental escape and was often therapeutic for the participants in offering mindfulness. Furthermore, immersion if channelled positively appeared to lead to development of high-level skills, which were useful for attainment. Indeed, immersion in reading and learning lent itself to academic attainment.

The ability to immerse oneself is not specifically identified in the literature as a PF for AR and therefore may be a new PF for AR. However, it could also be linked to executive functioning as immersion requires a high level of focus and attentional capacity is an aspect of EF (Diamond, 2013). Immersion could also be considered a coping skill and perhaps is linked to Ramos-Salamanca et al.'s (2022) finding of active coping as a PF for Latinx adolescents exposed to community violence. As immersion could be a new finding, and can be both facilitative and maladaptive, it would be useful to understand more about this behaviour and how CYPEDA could channel it for benefit.

Perfectionism appears to be a PF for AR in CYPEDA as it was a strong driver for many participants' academic achievements. There is no known literature that identifies perfectionism as a PF for AR, thus this could be a new PF for AR and therefore provides a link between studies into perfectionism and studies into AR. Perfectionism could also be considered a form of motivation and perseverance, which are suggested PFs for AR in CYP exposed to abuse (Coohey et al., 2011; Diab et al., 2018; Sonsteng-Person et al., 2023; Testa-Ryan, 2016). Perfectionism, however, can negatively affect CYPEDA's wellbeing due to high levels of pressure. Perfectionism can also impact on CYPEDA's wellbeing by masking their emotional needs in school. Participants found that as they were well-behaved and academically achieving, they were not perceived as needing emotional support. Consequently, more understanding of perfectionism as masking needs as well as being a manifestation of poor emotional wellbeing could be beneficial to CYPEDA. Perfectionism

being both facilitative and negative for CYPEDA adds to the existing debate on whether perfectionism is a positive or negative attribute (Rasmussen & Troilo, 2016).

Self-sufficiency was another adaptive response to DA that appeared to facilitate access to HE for the participants. This supports Coohey et al.'s (2011) finding of competency in completing daily tasks as being related to academic attainment. Coohey et al. (2011) suggest this competency and academic attainment are related through the individual's attention to detail, self-regulation and self-motivation. Self-sufficiency certainly appeared to motivate the participants in the current study. However, the participants' self-sufficiency and academic attainment also seemed to be linked by an ability to organise and advocate for themselves and others. This therefore expands understanding on why independence skills are PFs for AR in CYP exposed to abuse. Self-sufficiency for the participants is also linked to a sense of duty which has been proposed as a PF for AR in CYP exposed to abuse (Testa-Ryan, 2016). This link between independence skills and sense of duty may be a unique link for CYPEDA due to DA causing participants to become young carers and/or their valuing of social justice in resistance to DA.

Within Family Protective Factors.

Positive parenting is an established PF for CYPEDA (Holt et al., 2008; Howell et al., 2010; Johnson & Lieberman, 2007; Martinez-Torteya et al., 2009), it was also acknowledged as helping CYP to maintain academic progress despite exposure to poly-violence (Romero, 2018). This study supports this and proposes positive parenting is also a PF for AR in CYPEDA as unconditional regard was vital to participants' educational engagement. Unconditional regard often came from the non-abusive parent or other family members. Unconditional regard included championing of the participant. This helped participants feel worthy, which as seen, was a need of many participants. It also appeared to result in participants attaining at levels which defied others' low expectations of them. Furthermore, the championing instilled valuing of education in several participants. This concept of

educational championing also lends support to the PFs of parental involvement in education and parental scholastic encouragement as identified by Diab et al. (2018) in their research into PFs for academic attainment in CYP exposed to war.

Family members who offered unconditional regard were seen as safe spaces for participants. Feeling safe was particularly important to the participants due to DA exposure. This aligns with Ratner et al.'s (2006) finding that feeling safe was a unique PF for children exposed to community violence. It also provides evidence for Ratner et al.'s (2006) suggestion that this sense of safety came from caregiving adults. The significance of unconditional regard and positive parenting as PFs for AR in CYPEDA is perhaps logical given the child-caregiver relationship is seen as mediating the effects of exposure to violence and trauma on CYP (Osofsky & Groves, 2018). Moreover, several enduring and prominent theories assert parenting and supportive homes as being intrinsic to child development (Ainsworth et al., 2015; Bandura, 1977; Holmes, 2014; Werner, 1995; Winnicott, 1992). It is important to note though that unconditional regard was not unique to caregivers as school staff also provided some participants with unconditional regard. Thus, unconditional regard can also be a Within School PF (see below).

Safe family members also provided participants with role models, though role models also occurred outside the family (see below). Role models were those who inspired participants to follow a different life path. Family members as role models were important in participants' engagement with learning as they were relatable. These were family members who modelled the benefits of education or who enabled participants to fight for a different life to theirs. For many participants this was their mother and participants found themselves actively avoiding the same situations as their mothers. This was an act of resistance inspired by their mothers, highlighting again participants' agentic capacity as a PF for AR. This also shows how agentic capacity can be stimulated through role modelling.

Role models were also older siblings or family members who modelled how to achieve academically or showed the participants aspirational lifestyles. The combination of having a

situation the participants had a strong desire to avoid coupled with a view into a different life was an important PF for AR. This combination made participants focus on their education as a means to escape and achieve their coveted lifestyle. This finding could provide evidence for how AAD can be operationalised as AAD is thought to stem from changes to the person's perception of the world due to adversity (Papadopoulos, 2007). This combination could also be linked to the concept of hope engendering resilience as the aspirational life-styles gave participants hope (Frankl, 2004; Hunsu et al., 2023). Furthermore, it could be connected to the PFs for AR in CYP exposed to abuse of motivation, perseverance and aspiration (Coohey et al., 2011; Diab et al., 2018; Sonsteng-Person et al., 2023; Testa-Ryan, 2016).

Diab et al.'s (2018) study identifies siblingship as a PF for AR in CYP in stressful life situations. The current study provides reasons as to why siblings can offer multiple PFs for AR. Siblings provided role modelling, they also actively encouraged each other with their education and were protective of each other. The current study also found that larger sibling groups (three or more) provided participants with a safety net against the effects of DA and thus helped participants feel safer. This adds further weight to the proposal that feeling safe is a PF for AR in CYPEDA. Thus, for CYPEDA their sense of safety may come from siblings rather than parents due to the impact DA can have on parenting (Holt et al., 2008; Jernberg & Booth, 1998; Radford et al., 2011; Rossman & Rea, 2005; Sterne & Poole, 2009; Stiles, 2002). Protection of each other may also be linked to Testa-Ryan's (2016) proposed PF for AR of commitment to family as a PF, especially as some participants pursued academic attainment to support their siblings.

Perhaps uniquely to CYPEDA, siblings also provided shared understanding. Shared understanding for CYPEDA is important due to DA often being hidden and difficult to articulate and disclose. This shared understanding could be unspoken and it provided participants with a person who had shared insight into their experiences of DA. This meant participants were less isolated which is protective as isolation is one of the harmful effects of DA exposure on CYP (DAA, 2021; Holden, 2003).

All participants were young carers to siblings and/or their parents. This included direct care, protection or playing a mediating role in the home. Being a young carer engendered a sense of duty in the participants. This sense of duty, as shown, became a desire for many participants and this need as demonstrated above was a PF for AR.

Within School Protective Factors.

EST demonstrates the important influence school has on CYP (Bronfenbrenner, 1997) and school, due to its focus on educational attainment, provides various PFs for AR (see Table 3) and for AR in CYP exposed to abuse (see Table 5). These PFs occur through the school environment, educational opportunities, access to influential staff and friendships which aligns with the findings of the current study. A positive and supportive school environment has been stated as a PF for AR (Hunsu et al., 2023; Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021). The current study extends this finding, whilst providing insight into why the school environment is a PF for AR. Firstly, participants found a school's expectations of them was crucial. Both low expectations and overly high expectations led to disengagement with learning. Whereas personalised high expectations were encouraging for participants and led to them feeling seen and worthy, which as shown, was a need. High expectations also meant participants did not feel judged and non-judgemental teachers have been proposed as facilitative of AR (Benard, 1997; Waxman et al., 2003).

Predictable school structure enabled participants to feel in control which this study demonstrates is a desire for CYPEDA. This consistent structure led to some participants wanting to be in school as it provided an antidote to their chaotic homelives. Thus, school structure was a PF for AR for some participants. Additionally, the school environment offered participants safe spaces like art rooms and libraries. These provided a physical and mental refuge from their homelives, especially when they offered participants immersive activities such as studying, art and reading. The presence of safe and accessible spaces in school

could be considered a PF for AR in CYPEDA and an extension of Ratner et al.'s (2006) finding of feeling safe being a PF for AR for CYP exposed to community violence.

The school environment also provided participants with access to influential figures. These could be school staff and/or peers. These influential figures provided unconditional regard outside of the home, including championing, non-judgement, care and support. They could also be role models and were often mentors for participants. Mentors took a focussed interest in furthering participants' education and provided them with ways to do so. Mentors empowered the participants and made them feel worthy and validated as they saw beyond the CYP's circumstances or the behaviours they were displaying. This fulfilled many participants' DA-related needs. School mentors also engendered participants with a love of learning or a love of a subject. This was motivating for participants, and motivation is a PF for AR (Coohey et al., 2011; Diab et al., 2018; Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021; Sonsteng-Person et al., 2023; Testa-Ryan, 2016).

These mentors were incredibly powerful figures in participants' lives, with participants displaying profound gratefulness to their mentors. Accordingly, this study provides evidence that caring and supportive teachers are PFs for AR for CYP exposed to abuse (Diab et al., 2018; Ratner et al., 2006). It also support Waxman et al.'s (2003) proposal that 'turnaround teachers' can model and deliver the PFs for AR whilst extending the ways in which they can do this. This includes the giving of leeway. In this study being given leeway helped participants engage with their education whilst making them feel special, trusted and respected all of which was important in meeting the participants needs as CYPEDA.

The current study showed support and care could from other school staff, not just teachers. Indeed, school staff could be pivotal in supporting AR in participants. Thus, demonstrating that all school staff have the potential to change a CYPEDA's life. Connected to this was the positive effect that access to a school counsellor had on participants in maintaining their wellbeing whilst studying. Though this therapeutic support did not have to come from a school counsellor as some participants found they were therapeutically

supported by just having an adult listen to them. A further finding from this study is that the therapeutically supportive adult did not always know about the CYP's exposure to DA, yet the support was still beneficial. Therapeutic support does not appear to be an identified PF for AR, thus further research is suggested.

School also offered other potential PFs for AR that do not seem to have been identified. As discussed, participants found being shown a different and positive life from their own provided them with the understanding that their lives could be different. This led to the development of aspirations. Schools offered participants perception-changing experiences, which included school trips. Trips became particularly pivotal for participants when schools went out of their way to ensure the participant could access them. This suggests perception-changing experiences including school trips are PFs for AR. Perception-changing experiences also provides a challenge to social learning theory as it shows challenges to the normal can undo what has been normalised. This is a significant finding as it indicates the effects of abusive parenting can potentially be somewhat reversed.

School trips also included trips to universities to experience HE life. Being included on these trips or being spoken to about HE by school staff, made HE a possibility for some participants. Indeed, some participants, despite high academic attainment had not thought of HE as a possibility as it was not normal for their family. Thus, this shows HE encouragement is important in enabling CYPEDA to access HE.

Schools also offered participants peer support. Peer support and friendships have been shown to be PFs for AR in CYP exposed to abuse (Diab et al., 2018) and for AR in general (Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021). This study shows how peer support can be significant. Friends offered non-judgement and a safety net for participants. Friendships also offered participants encouragement in accessing HE especially if they had shared values of learning and intentions to go to FE or HE. However, it is important to note that some participants found maintaining and developing friendships difficult, seemingly due to a lack of commonality. DA made participants grow up quickly and have different priorities, so their

friends' typical concerns and behaviours seemed trivial. Furthermore, DA was often a secret and prevented friendships based on an authentic understanding of each other.

All these aspects: the school environment, supportive staff, perception-changing experiences and friendships help to develop school attachment/belonging in some participants. School belonging is shown as a PF for AR in CYP exposed to abuse (Sonsteng-Person et al., 2023). However, many participants did not feel attached to their schools, particularly high schools with several participants becoming disengaged or seeing it as a means to an end. Disengagement almost derailed participants from accessing FE or HE, were it not for their desires or mentors coming into their lives. This is noteworthy as it shows high schools can improve their support of CYPEDA. However, as this study is retrospective, a current study of CYPEDA's attachment to high school may be useful.

Within Community Protective Factors.

The literature review highlighted a lack of research into community PFs for AR. Testa-Ryan's (2016) study was the only one to suggest a possible community PF; aspiring to give back to the community. As seen in the present study, many participants developed a sense of social justice which made them want to give back to others which supports Testa-Ryan's (2016) research. This study also highlighted the CYPEDA's community can encourage education to give back to the community. One participant grew up in such a community. In her tight-knit religious and cultural community all CYP were expected to academically achieve to give back. This engendered a high academic drive in the participant and her peers, it also led to the participant and her peers having a shared understanding and values. These shared values, as already discussed, were motivating for participants and peer-relationships are considered a PF for AR (Diab et al., 2018; Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021). The participant's community also indirectly supported the participant during their exposure to DA as she found her beliefs and membership of community gave her strength and thus

resilience. This indicates that some communities could be PFs for AR in themselves. Further research could define the properties of communities that are able to engender AR.

As seen, safe spaces were important to CYPEDA. Some participants found these spaces in their community. Libraries were mentioned as they were easily accessible, calming spaces which offered security and the chance to escape in books. Community sports were also briefly mentioned. Consequently, safe spaces in accessible places for CYPEDA, such as the school and the local community can be important PFs for CYPEDA in general, but libraries may be a particular PF for AR in CYPEDA due to its link to reading and learning.

It is important to acknowledge that some participants accessed HE through their employers. These workplaces offered participants the ability to fulfil their desires of seeking validation, escape and taking control. They also provided relatable role models, mentoring, non-judgment, encouragement, validation and a safe space. This enabled participants to see it was possible to progress in their career through HE, with career progression offering financial independence and escape. This parallels the support participants found useful in schools and thus shows how important caring adults and mentoring can be for CYPEDA. It also shows these individuals can be found in the community and academic attainment does not have to happen at school. This is a significant finding as CYPEDA, are often most vulnerable during their school years when they are dependent on their homes. Thus, support for CYPEDA to engage with education should occur when the CYPEDA is ready to pursue their education, not just during the traditional school years.

Implications for practice

Implications for practice deriving from this study are focussed on EPs supporting CYPEDA, either directly or through systemic working. Based on this and the findings in this study, this section consists of the following areas for support: EPs, areas to be aware of when working with CYPEDA, learning opportunities to support CYPEDA, educational

environment, educational setting staff and supporting families. The implications for practice will refer to CYPEDA, however as DA is often hidden keeping these ideas in mind for all CYP or at least those suspected to be exposed to DA would be helpful.

Educational Psychologists.

This study demonstrates how important systemic thinking is when considering the effects of exposure to DA and in thinking about ways CYPEDA can be supported. Thus, it supports the EP literature on CYPEDA which states that EPs are ideally placed to support CYPEDA due to their systemic work and skillset (Chestnutt, 2018; Cole, 2017; Cort & Cline, 2017; Curtis, 2010; Dodd, 2009; Ellis, 2018; Gallagher, 2014; Kaye, 2018; Stanton, 2017). EPs understand child development and education and they can offer training, therapeutic support and supervision. Furthermore, EPs are skilled in working directly with CYP, their educational setting and their families to engender positive change. However, due to the multi-systemic impact on CYPEDA, EPs should be aware that they could and can support CYPEDA through other professionals. For example, college tutors, social workers, foster carers, specialist DA service providers, health professionals, exploitation teams and youth offending services.

This study shows how EPs can work with CYPEDA. The study demonstrated therapeutic support can be critical for the recovery and maintenance of CYPEDA's emotional wellbeing. Supporting CYPEDA can be intimidating for EPs and teachers (Chestnutt, 2018; Cole, 2017; Ellis, 2018; Gallagher, 2014), however this study highlighted how participants found therapeutic support effective whether or not the practitioner was aware of the DA. Consequently, CYPEDA do not appear to require DA specific therapeutic skills and thus DA should not be a barrier to receiving therapeutic support. EPs can offer this support or train school staff to offer trauma-informed therapeutic spaces.

Another potential area of training and intervention for EPs would be to design a teaching module that educates CYP about DA from a psychological perspective. The findings show some participants sought control and healing through understanding DA and the behaviours

of perpetrators and victims. Participants who received this learning found it helpful in understanding theirs and their parents' behaviours and their complex emotions towards their parents. Healthy relationships education is now compulsory for primary and secondary pupils (DfE, 2019). However, this could be supplemented with this EP designed module, which could help with healing and prevention. EPs can also offer training and consultation which offers support based on the following sections.

Areas to Be Aware of When Working With Children and Young People Exposed to Domestic Abuse.

This section focuses on study findings regarding CYPEDA that those working with CYPEDA may be unaware of. This study showed how pervasive, multi-systemic and enduring the effects of DA are. It is important those working with CYPEDA see beyond the immediate and visible impacts of DA and understand the various ways DA can impact a CYP in the short-term and in the long-term. Those supporting CYPEDA also need to be aware that DA is usually part of an adversity package. This should include awareness of the high co-occurrence of DA and child abuse and the particularly significant impacts of the 'toxic trio'. This should inform safeguarding and awareness of the impacts on CYP.

CYPEDA's resistance and agentic capacity was clear in this study. DAHE emphasised the multifarious ways CYPEDA resist and manage their exposure to DA and related adversities. Kaye (2018) argued it is important that professionals are aware of CYPEDA's agentic capacity to avoid a deficit view of CYPEDA. A deficit view can lead to low expectations and low expectations were an issue for some participants in this research. Conversely, understanding that CYP have agentic capacity could help those supporting CYPEDA to see that they aspire and can achieve their goals. Furthermore, the current study highlights all adults including all school staff have the power to help CYPEDA achieve their goals. Moreover, seeing and celebrating CYPEDA as powerful and strong could provide a way of enabling their self-worth. This is crucial as, as shown, CYP's self-worth was often

damaged by exposure to DA. Giving of positive attention may also help mitigate CYPEDA needing to seek any type of attention including negative attention.

A deficit view and expectation of CYPEDA could also derive from the substantial research which highlights the negative behaviours CYPEDA can display (Dube et al., 2002; Evans et al., 2008; Fair, 2019; Gray et al., 2021; Holt et al., 2008; Kitzmann et al., 2003; Radford et al., 2011; Stiles, 2002; Yates et al., 2003). However, this study showed CYPEDA can be perceived as well-behaved due to conflict avoidance, a need to be seen as good, seeking validation for their work and perfectionism. Considering this, and the high prevalence of DA, it is likely there is a cohort of CYPEDA who display these 'good' learning behaviours. However, this puts these CYP in danger of being overlooked or having their academic attainment prioritised over their emotional wellbeing. Certainly, some participants found this and consequently did not receive timely support for their emotional wellbeing. Consequently, educational professionals should be made aware that one in three CYP will likely be exposed to DA (Fox et al., 2014; ONS, 2023; Oliver et al., 2019), but they are unlikely to know who. They should also be mindful that behaviours like being overly compliant, quiet and having a high desire for academic achievement and praise could be signs of exposure to DA. Furthermore, they should be cognizant of CYP displaying perfectionism, as though it may result in high levels of academic achievement, it can also indicate and cause high levels of stress and poor wellbeing. Moreover, as schools are unlikely to know which CYP have been exposed to DA, a trauma-informed approach should be a whole setting approach.

Learning Opportunities.

This section provides recommendations, derived from this study's findings, for learning opportunities for CYPEDA. Literacy skills, especially reading skills, were shown as a PF for AR in CYPEDA. This went beyond the cognitive and curriculum implications of being able to read and write. Passion for reading bought participants to the notice of teachers, resulting in special attention and praise. Reading also enabled participants to comprehend the possibility

of life without abuse, it prepared them practically for HE and supported emotional wellbeing by providing a mental escape. Thus, schools should continue to prioritise the development of literacy skills in CYP. If CYPEDA do struggle with their literacy skills, then encouragement of a love of stories and alternative avenues to accessing books should be prioritised, so they can still benefit from the escapism and knowledge books provide. This may also motivate them to overcome barriers to reading.

The significance of EF as a PF for AR in CYPEDA was emphasised by this research. Consequently, helping CYP to develop their regulation abilities through relevant interventions should be a priority. Independence skills should also be encouraged as independence skills are a PF for AR and they help CYPEDA act on their resistance against adversity. Furthermore, CYPEDA may need these skills to support themselves and others.

Active encouragement of HE by educational settings was shown to inspire participants to access HE. Consequently, schools should promote HE and make the process as transparent as possible for students from a young age. This may motivate CYP, but it can also show them if it is right for them, so alternatives to HE should also be promoted. Educational settings should also make CYP aware that education can be available at a later age, so CYPEDA do not see themselves as failing if they are not ready to engage with their learning. Linked to this, schools should continue to offer school trips and keep them accessible for all CYP as these can provide them with inspiring and perception-changing experiences.

Educational Environment.

This study showed that the educational environment is key in supporting CYPEDA's AR. Based on the findings, this section highlights ways educational settings can facilitate CYPEDA's educational engagement. Educational settings should encourage high expectations of CYPEDA. This can cause CYPEDA to feel others value them and their education no matter their background, experiences or behaviours. However, the expectations should be personalised and CYPEDA should not feel that they are wholly

judged on their attainment. Settings should therefore endeavour to value the whole child not just their academic results.

The educational environment can provide CYPEDA with structure and consistency, which can be an antidote to chaotic homelives. Thus, ensuring the predictability of the school day and staff for CYPEDA is important. This should also extend to boundaries and rewards as some participants liked knowing exactly what they needed to do to earn praise and attention. However, schools should be wary of consequences for behaviours that are beyond CYP's control, for example punishing a CYP for being late when they may be caring for other family members, or for not having the right equipment when their homelife is chaotic and unsafe. Again, it is unlikely that school staff will be aware of which CYP are exposed to DA, thus a whole school trauma informed approach to behaviour and consequences should be considered. Furthermore, participants showed a high need for control and so letting CYPEDA feel in control over aspects of their day will also be important.

Access to safe, calm spaces was something many participants in this study sought and some found in their schools. The educational environment should thus offer pupils continued access to safe spaces such as libraries, art rooms and sports areas during breaks and transition times. CYPEDA can then seek refuge when feeling unsafe and it makes the school environment feel safe. Furthermore, the space can be therapeutic for a CYPEDA if it contains mindful activities and/or an adult who can build a relationship with the student and listen to them.

Friendships are considered a PF for AR and those that had positive friendships found them helpful. However, several participants found it hard to make and maintain friendships. Schools could support CYPEDA to make friends by providing opportunities for them to spend time with like-minded peers through extra-curricular activities, class seating and study sessions for example. As CYPEDA are highly likely to be a Young Carer, access to Young Carer support could also be helpful.

Educational Setting Staff.

This study found school staff who offered CYPEDA mentoring, time, non-judgement, high expectations, praise, leeway and unconditional regard including championing and care, were instrumental in CYPEDA's educational engagement. These staff also offered CYPEDA positive role models who provided challenge to the role modelling offered in the home. Teachers are currently under a great deal of pressure and so time is not always possible. However, as this study illustrated, this support can come from other staff. Accordingly, all staff should be encouraged to engender as many of these qualities as possible even when CYPEDA are displaying challenging behaviours or are unrelenting in their need for attention. Indeed, challenging behaviours are a sign CYP need this attention and mentoring (Bomber, 2022). School staff should also have high expectations of CYPEDA and find ways to make them feel clever, as feeling clever enables AR.

Family Support.

As shown, family plays a substantial role in child development and positive parenting can mediate the impact of exposure to abuse on education. DA can reduce parenting capacity, but studies show the non-abusive parent will often fight to regain parenting capacity when possible (Cort & Cline, 2017; Letourneau et al., 2007), thus supporting non-abusive caregiver's emotional wellbeing is vital. The EP could do this by providing therapeutic interventions with the parent and child as per Dodd (2009) if appropriately trained. They can also offer parent surgeries and consultations and can signpost parents to local offers for parenting support. Schools could also offer parenting support, such as access to Parent Support Advisors. To engage parents, it could be useful to acknowledge and celebrate their acts of resistance. This could also encourage transgenerational resistance. Additionally, the non-abusive parent or other family members should be encouraged to be involved in their child's education as this was shown to help CYPEDA engage with and value their education. The EP could do this through school training or through parent surgeries and consultations.

Siblings were highlighted in this study as offering multiple PFs for AR in CYPEDA and were PFs in general. This is a significant implication for practice as it shows that whilst siblings may have to take on the burden of care for their siblings, the network they create can fortify their resilience. This indicates that where possible and appropriate siblings should be encouraged to maintain their bond. EPs could encourage this through their work with schools and families, but also through their work within multidisciplinary teams. For example, when working with social workers who may be considering care and contact arrangements for CYPEDA.

Community Support.

It is important for CYPEDA to have safe places in the community which are easily accessible, such as libraries or community sport spaces. These can keep CYPEDA safe whilst encouraging the development of skills that can enable educational attainment. The community should also encourage and help CYPEDA to access FE, HE or other educational opportunities past traditional school ages. As some participants in this study demonstrated, once a person feels safe, worthy and inspired they can then access HE to their benefit.

Limitations

The study being retrospective could be a limitation. It may mean that findings around what schools offered or did not offer the participants, might now be irrelevant. Surveying a current school population using the current study's findings around education may help to understand how schools can currently best support CYPEDA. Furthermore, the retrospective nature of the study could be argued to provide unreliable findings due to the fallibility of memory. However, studies show when people recall past trauma/abuse their memories tend to be robust (Patten et al., 2015). The use of Lifelines also helped participants to recall and to make sense of their memories. Moreover, interviewing adults was ethically more sound

and carries less risk than interviewing CYP who are considered a vulnerable research population (Oates et al., 2021). Adults also had the benefit of hindsight to process their past, make sense of their experiences and see the big picture behind these experiences. Additionally, as children, participants did not necessarily recognise DA or the extent of the abuse, especially when it involved coercive control. Therefore, time and experience enabled participants to understand, label and articulate their DA experiences.

The current study's sample was somewhat representative of different cultures, religions and backgrounds. However, the sample size means it could not possibly represent the full diversity of the English population. This could be considered a limitation as there were indications in the study that religion and culture did impact CYPEDA's AR. Furthermore, there was only one male participant. Whilst DA is gendered, the exposure of CYP to DA in the home is unlikely to be, as all CYP in the home are vulnerable to DA's effects. However, there are differences in the way boys and girls experience DA (Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Holt et al., 2008; Howarth et al., 2016; Kassis et al., 2013). Indeed, several participants shared their brothers had different outcomes to them and/or their sisters. Boys also experience school differently to girls. For example, their attainment is lower in English (Machin et al., 2013) and boys are more likely to be excluded than girls (gov.uk, 2024). As boys and girls experience DA and schooling differently, it follows that PFs for AR could be gender dependent. Further research would ascertain if PFs for AR are gender, race, religion, and culture dependent.

The research could be limited by the types of people who are more likely to volunteer for research. Participants had to be willing to give their time and to share their experiences. Thus, they may naturally be people who want to give their time to help others. This could be why it was found that participants had a strong desire to help others and were in caring or supportive occupations. Again, it would be interesting to widen the sample to see if a desire to help others is an outcome of childhood exposure to DA.

Future Research

There are various options for future research as this research presents a new theory and provides possibilities of previously unidentified PFs for AR. Firstly, it would be interesting to see if these findings are representative of other CYPEDA, perhaps through a survey sent to the general public or to schools and university populations. This also may enable a more inclusive sample. It would also be helpful to do further research into the newly identified PFs for AR to understand more about situations in which they occur and to see if they are unique to DA. These include immersion, perfectionism, CYP's values, writing skills, safe spaces in schools and in the community, predictable school structure, shared understanding, role models, therapeutic support and perception-changing experiences. Furthermore, it would be interesting and useful to do comparative studies with male CYPEDA and participants from close-knit religious and/or cultural communities to see if there are differences in PFs for AR and in how they access HE. Additionally, to understand more about determinants of accessing HE it could be useful to conduct comparative studies with other groups who can struggle to access HE in England, for example CYP under social care (Jay & Mc Grath-Lone, 2019), Gypsy, Roma and Traveller CYP (Kirkby et al., 2023; J. Morgan et al., 2023) or CYP with refugee status (Lambrechts, 2020).

It may also be helpful to know more about the links between CYPEDA and perfectionism and AR and perfectionism as perfectionism appears to be masking a cohort of CYPEDA who need support. Further research into AR in CYPEDA is also needed as this is the first known study. This would also provide research into AR in general. Furthermore, it may be interesting to pursue research into the potential concept of transgenerational resistance. If transgenerational resistance is a potential new aspect of resiliency, it would be worth understanding more about this to consider how to engender it in other families.

Research into mentoring for CYPEDA may well be helpful for educational professionals. It could provide further insight into how mentoring works for CYPEDA and the types of mentoring acts that work for CYPEDA. This might help with school attachment, particularly in

high school, as high school engagement was an issue for several participants. Related to mentoring, further research into how usual it is for CYPEDA to access education through their workplace may be beneficial. This understanding could provide more avenues for CYPEDA to access educational opportunities when they are ready to do so.

Conclusion

This is the first known study into how CYPEDA access HE and the aim was to generate a theory on this using GTM. It was also hoped that PFs for AR in CYPEDA could be identified so EPs could potentially use them in their work. It was hoped that having ways to support CYPEDA may help EPs to believe they are appropriately skilled to work with CYPEDA. Another aim was to expand research into CYPEDA through providing a strengths-based view of them as well as offering representation of their voices including those unknown to specialist services. The overarching aim of this research though, was to shine a light on DA as DA thrives in secrecy.

DAHE was the resulting theory of this study (see Figure 5). DAHE provides EPs and other professionals with insight into how CYPEDA access HE. In doing so, it highlights the agentic capacity of CYPEDA and how CYP adapt and grow in response to DA. In particular, the study highlighted how crucial and influential the systems around the CYPEDA are, particularly school, home and relationships. It also emphasises the sense of duty to others that CYPEDA often feel and how vital it is for them to feel worthy, seen, in control and safe. The study presents various PFs for AR in CYPEDA and so provides numerous ways EPs can support CYPEDA. EPs can use their skillset and systemic thinking to enable these PFs either through direct work with the CYP or through their systemic work. Most importantly this study highlights that whilst CYPEDA are vulnerable, they are also strong, astute and determined and they should never be underestimated.

Chapter 3

A Reflective and Reflexive Account of the Research Journey

Introduction

Educational Psychologists (EPs) are expected to be reflective and reflexive practitioners (BPS, 2017; HCPC, 2015). Moreover when conducting human research the BPS (2021) Code of Human Research Ethics states psychologists must be self-reflective in their research. Accordingly, this chapter provides a reflective and experiential account of this research journey. It will first focus on the reasoning behind the research topic including my positionality. It will then discuss my experiences of grounded theory and what I learnt from the process of using it. In doing so reflections on my epistemology and ontology will be discussed. The chapter will conclude with my hopes for dissemination and for the future of this research.

The Research Process

Choosing a Research Topic

Qualitative research acknowledges research is not influence free as the researcher will always bring their own perspectives, prior experiences and knowledge into the research process (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Charmaz, 2014). Furthermore, Braun & Clarke (2022) argue the importance of acknowledging the researcher's positionality as it will shape and influence the research. Certainly, my positionality and prior personal and professional experiences was intrinsic in the choice of research and in the research process.

Initially, my role as an EP in training influenced my choice of topic. The research needed to be relevant to the profession and ideally facilitate EP practice, as EP practice should be evidence-based (BPS, 2017; HCPC, 2015). Accordingly, research is a core function of the EP role (BPS, 2017; Currie, 2002; Fallon et al., 2010; HCPC, 2015; Kelly & Marks, 2016)

and it is one I embrace. Indeed, the ability to research was partly why I pursued becoming an EP. Furthermore, research provides EPs with understanding of what is needed to ensure the healthy development of children and young people (CYP) (Currie, 2002) and the BPS (2021) Code of Human Research Ethics states psychological research should aim to provide research that is for the 'common good'. Consequently, social justice is intrinsic to EP research and enabling social justice is another reason I wished to be an EP. Thus, it was important that my research was useful for EPs and had the potential to work towards a socially just society.

Over my educational career I have been fortunate to have had opportunities to conduct both qualitative and quantitative research projects, although not at this level. Based on this I knew I wanted to choose a research project I was passionate about. This was to ensure motivation and attention to detail. As I was excited about the research project, I started thinking about ideas from when I decided to become an EP. However, it was when completing an essay on the impact of policy and legislation on CYP exposed to domestic abuse (CYPEDA) and the role of the EP in supporting CYPEDA that I felt I had found my area of research.

When researching CYPEDA I was struck by how much there was on DA harms (Arai et al., 2021). Moreover, I noted how DA negatively impacted CYPEDA's educational outcomes (see Table 4). Based on this, my professional experiences and the prevalence of one in three CYP being exposed to DA (Fox et al., 2014; ONS, 2023; Oliver et al., 2019) I knew EPs would be working with CYPEDA. However, due to the secrecy around DA (Fair, 2019; Gallagher, 2014; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004) they may not be realising how often they are supporting CYPEDA. From my own experiences as a TEP and working within EP services previously, I felt EPs, due to their skills and toolset, could play a pivotal role in supporting CYPEDA, which is reflected in the existing research (Chestnutt, 2018; Cole, 2017; Cort & Cline, 2017; Curtis, 2010; Dodd, 2009; Ellis, 2018; Gallagher, 2014; Kaye, 2018; Stanton, 2017). I also hypothesised that support to access their education could potentially be

lifechanging for CYPEDA due to education's potentially transformative effects (Chestnutt, 2018; Dodd, 2009; Holt et al., 2008; Howarth et al., 2016; Orr et al., 2022; Radford et al., 2011; Stiles, 2002; Yule et al., 2019). Yet there appeared to be only several studies involving EPs and CYPEDA and within this research there was evidence that EPs and teachers felt helpless and overwhelmed when working with CYPEDA (Chestnutt, 2018; Cole, 2017; Ellis, 2018; Gallagher, 2014).

I reflected on my passion and interest in this and realised this was partly fuelled by having been a CYPEDA. I have also always attributed my escape from DA to my education and HE qualifications. I feel they enabled me to access a different life and this gave me the time, space and knowledge to unlearn the lessons and values bestowed on me from living with an abusive parent. I believe this enables my children to grow up in a healthy household and therefore will hopefully end the cycles of transgenerational trauma that plagued my family. I also noted in the literature there are CYPEDA who appear unscathed or even thrive, including academically (Chestnutt, 2018; Kitzmann et al., 2003; McDonald, Graham-Bermann, et al., 2016; Radford et al., 2011; Suzuki et al., 2008) but there is no direct research into why. Thus, as a TEP and former CYPEDA who is passionate about social justice, I wondered if there were particular reasons why these CYP coped or thrived academically. I knew from resiliency research that understanding PFs for resiliency can be utilised to engender resiliency in others (Masten et al., 1999). Thus, I thought knowing more about potential facilitators for CYPEDA to access education could help EPs to support CYPEDA who were struggling. I felt this may help CYPEDA directly whilst working towards the ultimate goals of social justice and eradication of DA.

Methodology

I am considered an 'insider' researcher in that I am a member of the group the study is focussed on (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This can be considered a negative and a positive as there is a danger that I bring my own assumptions into the research and unwittingly focus on

or ignore data which does not fit with my own experiences and assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Charmaz, 2014). In addition, being an insider can affect what the participant tells the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Charmaz, 2014). For the topic of DA I felt being an insider would be beneficial due to shared understanding and trust (Braun & Clarke, 2022) as it can be difficult for those exposed to DA to disclose for various reasons (H. Alexander et al., 2005; Domestic Abuse Act, 2021; Ellis, 2018; Gallagher, 2014; Gremillion & Kanof, 1996; Home Office, 2015; Munro, 2011; Osofsky, 2018; Radford et al., 2011; Stanley, 2011). Additionally, I felt being an insider as well as having experience of working with children and adults regarding sensitive topics such as abuse, enabled me to be attuned to the appropriate design and execution of the research. My pragmatist worldview also fed into this.

As a researcher and professional I hold a pragmatist worldview. I believe in the use of flexibility and a common-sense approach to problem-solving; I believe in using research to find knowledge that is practical and useful, and I believe in social justice. Pragmatism is founded on the principles of using common sense to find knowledge that is meaningful and useful for social improvement through providing understanding to an unclear situation (Bryant, 2009; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Legg & Hookway, 2021; Noddings, 2010; Willig, 2013). Pragmatists consider each problem individually and start their investigations at the problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Pragmatists then follow the path that is needed to provide the deepest understanding of the problem, thus common sense, diligence and flexibility is intrinsic to pragmatist research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Consequently, pragmatists use which tools and research methodology will enable the most thorough and effective investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Thus, I chose the methodology I judged to be the most appropriate and useful to this study.

In deciding on the most appropriate research methodology, I utilised my positionality as a pragmatist, TEP and insider to consider quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches. Quantitative was ruled out as a standalone methodology as there was no previous research into CYPEDA's academic resiliency (AR) or their protective factors (PFs)

for AR. Thus, there is little basis for choosing variables to explore. Also, as it is an unknown area of research, I did not want to exclude anything potentially important to CYPEDA accessing HE by using preconceived variables.

In comparison, qualitative research is focussed on meaning and enables a thorough and rich exploration of people's experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Willig, 2013), which I felt would provide a crucial foundation for a new research area. Qualitative research also gives voices to marginalised groups (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Willig, 2013) and I felt capturing the voices of CYPEDA should be central to this research. Especially as a limitation of the research into CYPEDA is a lack of their voices (Kimball, 2016; Radford et al., 2011).

I also feel the voices of those who experience DA should be central to a deep understanding of DA and its effects. This is especially important in DA-related research as the voices of victims are often hidden due to the nature of DA (DAA, 2021; Fair, 2019; Gallagher, 2014; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2004; Home Office, 2015). Additionally, I knew from research and my insider perspective that there are those who want to share their DA experiences, but are unwittingly silenced by others people's sensibilities and fears about DA (Gallagher, 2014; Gremillion & Kanof, 1996). Consequently, I felt this research could provide a space for those willing to share and it may be empowering for them to do so due to the strengths-based focus and the aims of the research. Additionally, as an insider researcher I hypothesised, due to the multifaceted nature of DA experiences and the messiness of human life, that there would be a complex interplay of factors in CYPEDA's lives that enabled HE access. Qualitative research could allow the participants space to discuss this (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

GTM was chosen as the appropriate research methodology as it is used to enable development of a new theory where there is no prior research (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 2008; Strauss, 1987; Urquhart, 2022). GTM also allows participants to share their experiences and enables a thorough and deep analysis of individual's experiences (Charmaz, 2014). Reflexive thematic analysis was considered as it

also enables a thorough analysis of individual's experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2022) and I had enjoyed using it in previous research. However, advocates of GTM argue that its analytical process enables the most thorough analysis of all the qualitative methodologies (Charmaz, 2014; A. Nathaniel, 2022; Urquhart, 2022) and it does this whilst enabling theory generation. I felt the theory generation was crucial as it is a new area of research and theory generation could be useful in providing EPs an evidence-base to work from when supporting CYPEDA. I also considered mixed methods with GTM as the qualitative aspect followed up by a quantitative enquiry into the findings from the GTM. However, time meant this was not feasible. Thus, GTM was the chosen methodology for this study.

Literature Review.

To enable theory generation and thorough analysis I was keen to utilise the core methods involved in GTM. This included generation of the literature review. Glaser and Strauss, the founders of grounded theory believe the researcher should be free from preconceptions when conducting research, so they argue the literature review should be conducted following data analysis (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2022). However, this was not possible. It was a requisite of the EP course that I complete a literature review at the beginning of the research process to establish the rationale for the research. Balancing GTM ideals with research institution's requirements has been an ongoing difficulty for many researchers (Urquhart, 2022). Furthermore, Strauss later acknowledged that it is not possible for the researcher to be free from preconceptions and prior knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

It has thus been suggested by experienced grounded theory researchers that a scoping review is conducted at the beginning of the research to establish the rationale, and then this scoping review is shaped into a literature review at the end analysis (Sutcliffe, 2016; Urquhart, 2022). I followed this approach and found it useful. The scoping review enabled me to have a wide enough knowledge to make connections during analysis, but it was wide enough that I did not feel I had particular expectations of the findings. This aligns with

Glaser's (1978) argument that the researcher should be well read to ensure they can make connections in the data when analysing it.

Recruitment and Sampling.

Theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation are research tools unique to GTM (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2022). Theoretical sampling enables the pursuit of knowledge through choosing participants that enable deeper insight into an area of interest emerging from previous participant's data (Morgan, 2020). To do this the researcher recruits a participant using purposive sampling, they then analyse this participant's data and from this develop criteria on which to recruit another participant (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2022). Then this participant's data is used to recruit another participant and so on until theoretical saturation is achieved (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2022). Theoretical saturation is when the researcher feels enough data has been collected to support a theory or theme (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2022). I was keen to follow the process of theoretical sampling as it enables theory development (Charmaz, 2014), but it is also aligned to my pragmatist worldview in the use of common sense to pursue a line of enquiry to gain useful insight. Theoretical sampling however is time-consuming (Charmaz, 2014).

Due to the time limitations of this study, I conceived what I felt would be a time-efficient way of utilising the ideals of theoretical sampling (see Figure 3). This involved using purposive sampling to recruit a large pool of participants from which I would then theoretically sample from. Additionally, rather than theoretical sampling after analysis of one participant's data I intended to analyse three participants' data before returning to the pool for three more participants until theoretical saturation was achieved. Based on other similar research I estimated I would need 6 to 15 participants. However, due to unexpected circumstances, the time for sampling was reduced and so I decided not to recruit a pool of participants, but instead decided to recruit enough participants for analysis. I also applied

successfully to ethics for the option of reinterviewing (see Appendix B). Charmaz (2014) recommends reinterviewing to enable the tenets of theoretical sampling when time is limited.

Recruitment in research can be a difficulty (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and I have experienced this before. However, as an insider in the DA community, I felt confident there would be those willing to speak about their experiences. This hypothesis appeared to be accurate as recruitment was quick and I was able to recruit 10 participants within a few weeks. This may also have been related to the recruitment strategy and I am grateful to ManKind, the VAWG Research Network, DARNet, UEA Postgraduate Course Directors, X and the Facebook forums that promoted my research so successfully.

During recruitment I was interested in the reaction a Postgraduate Course Director had to promoting the research. I noted that social sciences and health-based Course Directors were supportive perhaps due to their familiarity with the subject of DA. However, a Course Director from a technology-based discipline felt its promotion to their students would be too affronting. I spent some time reflecting on this and became worried I would be upsetting too many people. However, as this was followed by enthusiasm from other Course Directors and as I had the support of other recruitment pathways, I reflected this reaction was more to do with the Course Director's own fears, but it is also why DA research is important. This fear of DA upsetting people, whilst well-meaning is not unusual (Gremillion & Kanof, 1996), but it encourages the secrecy around DA and it takes people's choice away to talk about their experiences (Gallagher, 2014; Gremillion & Kanof, 1996). It is this secrecy and silence that DA thrives on. Knowing this research could enable CYPEDA to talk about their experiences to hopefully help others spurred me on.

Interviewing.

I used semi-structured interviews as they can enable rich data collection (Charmaz, 2014; Willig, 2013). Semi-structured interviews also facilitate the interviewer's focus but gives the participant control over what they share (Charmaz, 2014; Willig, 2013). I also used Lifelines

(Gramling & Carr, 2004), as a participatory approach that could hopefully gently stimulate and structure participants' recollections regarding accessing HE.

The combination of the semi-structured interviews with Lifelines enabled a richness of data that surpassed my expectations. Lifelines was effective in stimulating and making sense of participants' memories, it also enabled them to focus on pivotal moments and people which was unintended but beneficial. Another unintentional benefit was that starting the interviews with Lifelines provided a gentle introduction that set the focus of the interview but gave the participants power over the interview from the start. The participants then used their Lifeline as a basis for sharing their experiences relating to accessing HE. Hearing these stories was a privilege and I was in awe of the participants' strength, determination and candour. These powerful stories were also motivating and empowering as they reinforced why research into CYPEDA is important.

I believe that being an insider researcher and being honest with participants about this was beneficial in facilitating rich data. Participants commented it was important in making them feel comfortable and it helped them to understand my motivations. Furthermore, as DA can involve situations that are too difficult to explain, some participants felt they did not have to explain as we shared unspoken understanding. This kept the interviews safe for the participants. Indeed, some participants shared it was the first time they had shared their stories and found it healing to do so. In reflection, it was also a cathartic experience for me as simply hearing their stories helped me better understand my own experiences and reactions. This was motivating as I felt it highlighted why it is important to talk about DA. It was though sometimes hard for me not to make assumptions based on my own experiences as predicted by (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This occurred when the parallels between my experiences and the participants was very close. I tried to stay aware of this as possible and then worked to ensure the participants remained in control if I noticed this happen.

I was worried that not having a pool of participants to theoretically sample from could limit the research. However, the flexibility in interview structure facilitated elements of theoretical

sampling as I could incorporate questions that would enable me to explore themes that were arising from previous participants. Furthermore, the richness of the data and the strong themes that emerged meant I felt confident that theoretical saturation had occurred. Based on this I did not need to reinterview. However, there were a couple of emerging themes that I would have been interested to explore through true theoretical sampling had I had longer for the research. This exploration could not have happened in reinterviewing due to the limited sample. These themes were around male participants' experiences of accessing HE and also cultural and religious influence on accessing HE. Conducting theoretical sampling to explore these avenues could have also enabled a more diverse sample.

Analysis.

I adhered to GTM for analysis which involved starting with line-by-line coding, followed by focused coding, then theoretical coding and finally theory development. During these coding stages the GTM tools of memo-writing, constant comparison, diagramming and theoretical sensitivity were employed (see Figure 4). Though I chose not to use axial coding, (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss, 1987) as it has been criticised for being too deductive and inflexible and I did not want to force data into predefined categories (Charmaz, 2014; Urquhart, 2022; Willig, 2013). I also tried coding with gerunds for line-by-line coding as advocated for by Charmaz (2014) to perceive processes and encourage intimacy with the data. However, I found it awkward and not always appropriate so I moved away from this method. My pragmatist values of common sense and using the most effective tools helped me feel confident in these decisions.

The GTM methods of analysis are designed to ensure a deep and thorough analysis, thus it is often considered time-consuming (Urquhart, 2022). This was my experience. I found GTM analysis effortful, however it facilitated total immersion and familiarity with the data. This was both exciting and rewarding as it enabled connections to be made, themes to develop and ultimately resulted in the development of DAHE. I also found the GTM process

to be a straightforward and common-sense approach that suited my epistemology and way of working as an EP in training. I felt it mirrored casework in the use of pulling together information from various sources to yield a big picture view of the problem. Thus, I also found the use of constant comparison and theoretical sensitivity natural as EPs use their knowledge and understanding to make connections when hypothesising.

Charmaz (2014) notes the researcher's discipline will influence the study's findings, which I did find. For example, I feel the connections made regarding transgenerational trauma reflects understanding of influences on child development. Understanding influences on child development is in EP competencies (BPS, 2017; HCPC, 2015). I am thus aware different interpretations may have occurred if a researcher from another discipline was to analyse the same data. Thus, I would like to find out if DAHE is applicable to other CYPEDA.

Memo-writing is considered central to GTM as it enables a foundation for theory building through giving the researcher space to order their thoughts, compare and make connections and thus enhance ideas (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser, 1978; Urquhart, 2022). This was the case in my research. Initially, I was worried about memo-writing as I am not a natural diary writer. However, I persevered and soon found I was writing them regularly as they gave me space to explore and make sense of my thoughts (see Appendix I). Diagramming, however, is something I have always used to explore my thoughts and ideas, so its use was intuitive. The aim of diagramming is to organise the data into categories and then into a theory (Charmaz, 2014). Ultimately diagramming, particularly the use of mind maps, enabled the development of DAHE (see Appendix K), I feel I would have struggled to pull all the information together without this visual strategy.

The Writing Process

The writing process was the hardest part of this research for me. I found doing the research generally such a positive process, but when it came to writing it up I could not start and found myself avoiding doing so. I was intimidated by how to take the findings of the

research and shape them into a written document. I also knew the amount of findings and the complexity involved in them would mean writing would be a long process. I also put pressure on myself about ensuring the research did justice to the participants' experiences. This is perhaps part of having been a CYPEDA, and it reflects my findings that CYPEDA can be driven by a sense of duty to others and want their work to be perfect as a means of gaining acceptance.

Following a facilitative meeting with my research supervisor I knew I could no longer avoid the write up. Once I started writing, it was not as difficult as I had imagined, though it was definitely challenging. I also found when writing I continued to sharpen themes and make further connections. Charmaz (2014) writes this should be expected. This highlighted to me the importance of the writing process and next time I conduct research I will see the write up as an extension of the research process as Charmaz (2014) advocates.

Overall Reflections on the Research Process

I found the use of GTM to be demanding but ultimately rewarding and exciting and I would do it again. However, I think having more time would have made the process more enjoyable as I think a lot of the challenge came from time pressure. I also would use grounded theory again. I feel it was the appropriate choice for this research as it enabled the hoped-for outcomes and it suited me as a researcher, both in my approach and in my epistemology. I also found it exciting to be researching an unknown area and this may have been daunting without having grounded theory to use.

Regarding outcomes, the use of this methodology enabled a theory of why some CYPEDA access HE; DAHE. It also facilitated understanding into PFs for AR in CYPEDA and in doing so it reinforced understanding of already known PFs for AR whilst introducing new PFs for AR. Thus, the study expanded the research into AR, resiliency and DA. Furthermore, it is hoped that DAHE and understanding of PFs for AR in CYPEDA will provide and empower EPs with knowledge they can use in supporting CYPEDA. I hope this

will help CYPEDA to engage with and benefit from their education. Furthermore, EP's time for research has been sidelined over the years due to statutory assessments and trading commitments (Fallon et al., 2010). Therefore, it is also my hope that this research, in a small way, contributes to why EPs should be given dedicated time to research.

Dissemination

I am keen to disseminate this research. Firstly, I would like the opportunity to publish this research so it adds a strengths-focussed study to the research on CYPEDA whilst highlighting the importance of their education. Specifically, I would like to publish this research in *Educational Psychology in Practice* as this would enable EPs to access it. I hope the findings will empower EPs to use their abilities to work with CYPEDA. To take this further I am planning to continue this research by seeing if DAHE applies to other CYPEDA. Furthermore, I hope with the support of my EP service to specialise in DA. This is not an area where EPs have traditionally specialised so I hope by doing this it encourages other EP services to prioritise this prevalent and pertinent Adverse Childhood Experience.

Through specialising in DA, I am planning to offer training for EP services based on this research and the wider literature. I would like to offer training on areas such as understanding DA and how EPs and schools can best support CYPEDA. I would also like to offer training on DA to EP training courses. I also feel that an EP perspective on DA would be useful for other professional disciplines who work with CYPEDA so they prioritise CYPEDA's education. Additionally, I am intending to continue to attend DA conferences and hope to share my research and an EP perspective at these conferences. I hope this will ultimately lead to EP involvement in policy development around CYPEDA. I would also like to work on developing a psychology informed module for schools specifically on DA. The aim of this would be to help CYP understand more about DA and the effects on themselves and their family members. In doing so I hope this would help CYP and school staff to talk openly about DA thus alleviating some of the secrecy and shame that is intrinsic in perpetuating DA.

Conclusion

This research process has truly been a journey. It has been challenging and there have been lows, but mostly there have been highs and I will miss conducting this research and having the opportunity to do so. I have learnt a lot from this research, not just how to do grounded theory, but I've learnt a lot from the participants about how they managed the effects of DA on their lives. I have gained a strong sense of direction for my career and I have acquired insight into myself and my behaviours. As such I feel that this research has been a transformative process and I will continue to be grateful for this opportunity. I mostly hope though, this research puts CYPEDA firmly in the centre of EP work and in doing so supports CYPEDA to benefit from their education. This may just help us to reduce the negative impact of DA on CYP, whilst inching towards reduction of DA.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Domestic Abuse Types

Table A1.

Types of domestic abuse and indicative behaviours

Domestic abuse types:	Indicative behaviours:
Physical abuse, violent or threatening behaviour	• being, or threatened to be, kicked, punched, pinched, pushed, dragged, shoved, slapped, scratched, strangled, spat on and bitten. • use, or threats of use, of weapons including knives and irons. • being, or threatened to be, burned, scalded, poisoned, or drowned. • objects being thrown at or in the direction of the victim. • violence, or threats of physical abuse or violence, against family members. • causing harm by damaging or denying access to medical aids or equipment – for example, a deaf person may be prevented from communicating in sign language or may have their hearing aids removed. • harming someone whilst performing 'caring' duties, which are often performed by relatives. This is especially relevant for individuals who are heavily dependent on others, such as disabled and older people and may involve force feeding, over-medication, withdrawal of medicine or denying access to medical care.
Sexual abuse	• rape and sexual assaults. • being pressured into sex, or sexual acts, including with other people. • being forced to take part in sexual acts because of threats to others, including children. • unwanted sexual contact or demands. • 'corrective' rape (the practice of raping someone with the aim of 'curing' them of being LGBT). • intentional exposure to HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) or sexually transmitted infections.

	• being pressurised or being tricked into having unsafe sex, including deception over the use of birth control. • forced involvement in making or watching pornography. • hurting a victim during sex including non-fatal strangulation.
Controlling or coercive behaviour	• controlling or monitoring the victim's daily activities and behaviour, including making them account for their time, dictating what they can wear, what and when they can eat, when and where they may sleep. • controlling a victim's access to finances, including monitoring their accounts or coercing them into sharing their passwords to bank accounts in order to facilitate economic abuse. • isolating the victim from family, friends and professionals who may be trying to support them, intercepting messages or phone calls. • refusing to interpret and / or hindering access to communication. • preventing the victim from taking medication, or accessing medical equipment and assistive aids, over-medicating them, or preventing the victim from accessing health or social care (especially relevant for disabled victims or those with long-term health conditions). • using substances to control a victim through dependency or controlling their access to substances. • using children to control the victim, e.g. threatening to take the children away. • using animals to control or coerce a victim, e.g. harming or threatening to harm, or give away, pets or assistance dogs. • threats to expose sensitive information (e.g. sexual activity or sexual orientation) or make false allegations to family members, religious or local community including via photos or the internet. • intimidation and threats of disclosure of sexual orientation and/or gender identity to family, friends, work colleagues, community and others. • intimidation and threats of disclosure of health status or an impairment to family, friends, work colleagues and wider community – particularly where this may carry a stigma in the community. • preventing the victim from learning a language or making friends outside of their ethnic or cultural background. • threatening precarious immigration status against the victim, withholding documents, giving false information to a victim about their visa or visa

	application, e.g. using immigration law to threaten the victim with potential deportation. • using the victim's health status to induce fear and restrict their freedom of movement. • threats of institutionalisation (particularly for disabled or elderly victims). • physical violence, violent or threatening behaviour, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, economic abuse and verbal abuse (as further detailed in this chapter).
Immigration abuse	• threatening to no longer provide support for their stay in the UK. • falsifying a victim's immigration status and/or purposefully bringing a victim into the UK with an incorrect visa to ensure they remain vulnerable to immigration enforcement, and without options for regularisation. • withholding key immigration documents from a victim, including their passport, so they are unable to ascertain what rights they may have. • withholding accurate information from a dependent, for example, when their visa lapses. • purposefully mismanaging a victim's immigration status and/or application, so they become overstayers and/or without valid status. This might involve purposefully missing a deadline to renew a dependent's visa. • deliberately using the immigration system to control and threaten a victim. For example, actually and/or threatening to report their insecure status to the Home Office. • providing misinformation or mistruths to a victim about their rights or to multi-agency professionals working with the victim. For example, falsely stating that the victim has NRPF when this is not the case. • subjecting a victim to so called 'honour'-based violence or abuse within a transnational context. For example, ensuring that a victim is at high risk of 'honour'-based violence or abuse in their country of origin, and subsequently using the threat of deportation and the likelihood of additional harm as a tool to control them.
'Corrective' abuse	• 'corrective' rape (the practice of raping someone with the aim of 'curing' them of being LGBT). • Conversion therapy.
Emotional / psychological abuse	• manipulating a person's anxieties or beliefs or abusing a position of trust. • hostile behaviours or silent treatment as part of a pattern of behaviour to make the victim feel fearful.

- being insulted, including in front of others. This includes insulting someone about their race, sex or gender identity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, age, faith or belief or undermining an individual's ability to parent or ability to work.
- repeatedly being belittled.
- keeping a victim awake/preventing them from sleeping.
- using violence or threats towards assistance dogs and pets to intimidate the victim and cause distress, including threatening to harm the animal as well as controlling how the owner cares for the animal.
- threatening to harm third parties (for example family, friends or colleagues).
- using social media sites to intimidate the victim.
- persuading a victim to doubt their own sanity or mind (including 'gaslighting').

Economic abuse

- controlling the family income.
- not allowing a victim to earn or spend any money unless 'permitted'.
- denying the victim food or only allowing them to eat a particular type of food.
- running up bills and debts such as credit or store cards in a victim's name, including without them knowing.
- refusing to contribute to household income or costs.
- deliberately forcing a victim to go to the family courts so they incur additional legal fees.
- interfering with or preventing a victim from regularising their immigration status so that they are economically dependent on the perpetrator.
- preventing a victim from claiming welfare benefits or forcing someone to commit benefit fraud or misappropriating such benefits.
- interfering with a victim's education, training, employment and career so that they are economically dependent on the perpetrator.
- not allowing a victim access to mobile phone / car / utilities.
- damaging the victim's property.
- not allowing a victim to buy pet food or access veterinary care for their pet.
- coercing the victim into signing over property or assets.

	• refusing to make agreed or required payments, for example mortgage repayments or child maintenance payments. • deliberately frustrating the sale of shared assets, or the closure of joint accounts or mortgages.
Verbal abuse	• repeated yelling and shouting. • abusive, insulting, threatening or degrading language. • verbal humiliation either in private or in company. • being laughed at and being made fun of. • discriminating against someone or mocking them about their disability, sex or gender identity, gender reassignment, religion or faith belief, sexual orientation, age, physical appearance etc.
Harassment or stalking	• following a person. • contacting, or attempting to contact, a person by any means. • publishing any statement or other material — i. relating or purporting to relate to a person, or ii. purporting to originate from a person. • monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication. • loitering in any place (whether public or private). • interfering with any property in the possession of a person; and watching or spying on a person.
Technology-facilitated abuse	• placing false or malicious information about a victim on their or others' social media. • setting up false social media accounts in the name of the victim. • 'trolling' with abusive, offensive or deliberately provocative messages via social media platforms or online forums. • image-based abuse – for example, the creation of false / digitally altered images and the non-consensual distribution, or threat thereof, of private sexual photographs and films with the intent to cause the person depicted distress ('revenge porn'). • 'upskirting' which involves someone taking a picture under another person's clothing without their knowledge.

- hacking into, monitoring or controlling email accounts, social media profiles and phone calls.
- blocking the victim from using their online accounts, responding in the victim's place or creating false online accounts.
- use of spyware or GPS locators on items such as phones, computers, wearable technology, cars, motorbikes and pets.
- hacking internet enabled devices such as PlayStations or iPads to gain access to accounts or trace information such as a person's location.
- using personal devices such as smart watches or smart home devices (such as Amazon Alexa, Google Home Hubs, etc) to monitor, control or frighten.
- use of hidden cameras.

Abuse relating to faith

- manipulation and exploitation through the influence of religion.
- requirements for secrecy and silence.
- marital rape and the use of religious scripture to justify that.
- coercion to conform or control through the use of sacred or religious texts/teaching e.g. theological justifications for sexual coercion or abuse.
- causing harm, isolation and/or neglect to get rid of an 'evil force' or 'spirit' that is believed to have possessed the victim.
- requirement of obedience to the perpetrator of domestic abuse, owing to religion or faith, or their 'divine' position.
- forcing the victim to act or behave in ways which contradict religious beliefs and or spiritual rituals and practice (e.g. forcing the victim to transgress religious dietary observations).
- preventing the victim from performing acts of worship, prayers and / or attending communal worship.
- forcing sexual acts which contradict religious observance and or religious law (e.g. during and after menstruation or pre-marital sex).
- forcing or limiting access to abortion, birth control or sterilisation when this will contravene religious observance.

Religious-only marriages, being unregistered marriages that are conducted in accordance with the rites of a particular religion but without legal status, can be used by perpetrators to:

- actively discourage or prevent the marriage being registered in English and Welsh law ensuring that victims are denied their legal rights and protection in the event of a breakdown in the marriage. Many women are unaware that their marriage does not have legal status because they are coerced or deceived into thinking their marriage is legal. This along with an insecure immigration status of the victim can act as a powerful tool for coercion and control.

- coerce or trick women into being part of a polygamous marriage where the husband believes he can have more than one wife at the same time.

Forced marriage

- Forced marriage typically occurs in the context of 'honour'-based abuse, and involves the use of violence, threats or any other form of coercion against a person with the intention or belief that the conduct may cause a person to enter into a marriage without consent. This includes non-binding traditional, or unofficial marriages. Forced marriage is recognised as a form of domestic abuse - if carried out by someone with a personal connection to the victim and where both parties are at least 16 years old.

- Usually someone must use violence, threats or another form of coercion to carry out the offence of forced marriage. However, if a person is unable to consent to marry, under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, any conduct aimed at causing them to marry may be forced marriage, even if it is not violence, threats or another form of coercion. In all cases, forcing someone into marriage could include making arrangements; the offence could be considered to have occurred even where the marriage does not end up taking place.

- Victims of forced marriage can be of any age, and many are under 18. Young victims may for example be coerced to marry under the threat of physical violence or the fear of dishonouring their families.

- In addition, once the provisions of the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 are brought into force, it will be deemed a forced marriage, thus illegal, for someone to cause a child under age of 18 to enter into a marriage in any circumstance, even if the person does not use violence, threats or another form of coercion to do so.

'Honour'-based abuse (inc. Female Genital Mutilation)

- 'Honour'-based abuse is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of the family and/or community, or in response to individuals trying to break away from constraining 'norms' of behaviour that their family or community is trying to impose.

- 'Honour'-based abuse can include physical, emotional or psychological abuse and occur in specific contexts, not all of which represent domestic abuse under the 2021 Act, for example in cases where the victim and perpetrator are not "personally connected". However, 'honour'-based abuse is typically carried out by a member or members of the family or

extended family and is likely to involve behaviours specified in the statutory definition of domestic abuse in the 2021 Act. Perpetrators may use a range of tactics against the victim, this can include restrictions to their freedom, isolation, physical abuse, and threats to kill. For more information on abuse carried out by a family member(s), please see the 'Abuse by family members'.

- Forced marriage and FGM are potential forms of 'honour' based abuse.
- FGM is a form of violence against women and girls which is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. It typically occurs within the context of 'honour'-based abuse. As FGM is generally inflicted upon children, the government considers it a type of child abuse. However, it is also carried out on women for a variety of reasons such as giving a woman social acceptance before marriage or ensuring her chastity. Whilst FGM may be an isolated incident of abuse within a family, it can be associated with other behaviours that discriminate against, limit or harm women and girls. These may include other forms of 'honour'-based abuse and domestic abuse. A Female Genital Mutilation Protection Order (FGMPO) is a civil order which may be made for the purposes of protecting a girl or woman against the commission of an FGM offence – that is, protecting against the risk of FGM or providing protection where an FGM offence has been committed.

Note. Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Act, (2021).

Appendix B

Ethics Approval

University of East Anglia

Study title: Seeking the light: Understanding what enables those exposed to domestic abuse in childhood to complete a higher education qualification. A grounded theory approach.

Application ID: ETH2324-1097 (significant amendments)

Dear Victoria,

Your application was considered on 5th December 2023 by the EDU S-REC (School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Subcommittee).

The decision is: **approved**.

You are therefore able to start your project subject to any other necessary approvals being given.

This approval will expire on **31st May 2024**.

Please note that your project is granted ethics approval only for the length of time identified above. Any extension to a project must obtain ethics approval by the EDU S-REC (School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Subcommittee) before continuing.

It is a requirement of this ethics approval that you should report any adverse events which occur during your project to the EDU S-REC (School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Subcommittee) as soon as possible. An adverse event is one which was not anticipated in the research design, and which could potentially cause risk or harm to the participants or the researcher, or which reveals potential risks in the treatment under evaluation. For research involving animals, it may be the unintended death of an animal after trapping or carrying out a procedure.

Any amendments to your submitted project in terms of design, sample, data collection, focus etc. should be notified to the EDU S-REC (School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Subcommittee) in advance to ensure ethical compliance. If the amendments are substantial a new application may be required.

Please can you send your report once your project is completed to SIRG (student.survey.request@uea.ac.uk).

Approval by the EDU S-REC (School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Subcommittee) should not be taken as evidence that your study is compliant with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. If you need guidance on how to make your study UK GDPR compliant, please contact the UEA Data Protection Officer (dataprotection@uea.ac.uk).

I would like to wish you every success with your project.

On behalf of the EDU S-REC (School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Subcommittee)

Yours sincerely,

Victoria Warburton

Ethics ETH2324-1097 (Significant amendments): Mrs Victoria Scott

Appendix C

Request for Gatekeeper Approvals

Appendix C1: Social Media Gatekeeper Approval Request

Gatekeeper Email

My name is Victoria and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist at the University of East Anglia.

I am currently conducting research to develop a theory on what enables children and young people who were exposed to domestic abuse in childhood go on to achieve an undergraduate degree or equivalent higher education qualifications. Much of the research into those exposed to domestic abuse in childhood focusses on the negative outcomes, and the impact on education for those exposed to domestic abuse can be devastating. However, we know that there are some children and young people who do well academically and this research would like to understand why,

The focus on academic achievement is that academic success is often a key to better life opportunities and social justice. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings from this project can be used to create interventions that enable more children and young people exposed to domestic abuse to fulfil their academic potential.

I am looking to recruit adult participants to be interviewed. I was wondering if I could please post/share my recruitment flyer on your page? The adults would need to have been exposed to domestic abuse within their childhood (0-17 inclusive) and have gone onto achieve a higher education qualification. They need to have been born after 1976 and educated in England so have had similar curriculum experiences. To safeguard their wellbeing it is important that they have not experienced domestic abuse as adults (18+ inclusive). Participant will not be asked to discuss their domestic abuse experiences in detail.

If your readership know me personally or professionally please be aware that participation is entirely voluntary and if they choose not to participate it will not affect their relationship with me. If they do choose to volunteer then care will be taken to ensure it does not affect our relationship negatively.

I have attached the recruitment advert/post for your consideration.

If you have found this email emotionally provoking the following is a link to help you access appropriate domestic abuse services. Women's Aid Directory - Women's Aid (womensaid.org.uk)

Thank you so much for your time and help and I look forward to hearing from you.

Victoria Scott (she/her)
Trainee Educational Psychologist
University of East Anglia

Appendix C2: Course Director Gatekeeper Approval Request

Course Director Gatekeeper Email.

Dear xxxx,

My name is Victoria and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist at the University of East Anglia.

I am currently conducting research to develop a theory on what enables children and young people who were exposed to domestic abuse in childhood go on to achieve an undergraduate degree or equivalent higher education qualifications. Much of the research into those exposed to domestic abuse in childhood focusses on the negative outcomes, and the impact on education for those exposed to domestic abuse can be devastating. However, we know that there are some children and young people who do well academically and this research would like to understand why.

The focus on academic achievement is that academic success is often a key to better life opportunities and social justice. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings from this project can be used to create interventions that enable more children and young people exposed to domestic abuse to fulfil their academic potential.

I am looking to recruit adult participants to be interviewed I was wondering if you could share with the students on your course? The participants would need to have been exposed to domestic abuse within their childhood (0-17 inclusive) and have gone onto achieve a higher education qualification. They need to have been born after 1976 and educated in England so have had similar curriculum experiences. To safeguard their wellbeing, it is important that they have not experienced domestic abuse as adults (18+ inclusive). Participant will not be asked to discuss their domestic abuse experiences in detail.

If the students know me personally or professionally, please be aware that participation is entirely voluntary and if they choose not to participate it will not affect their relationship with me. If they do choose to volunteer then care will be taken to ensure it does not affect our relationship negatively.

I have attached the recruitment advert/post for your consideration.

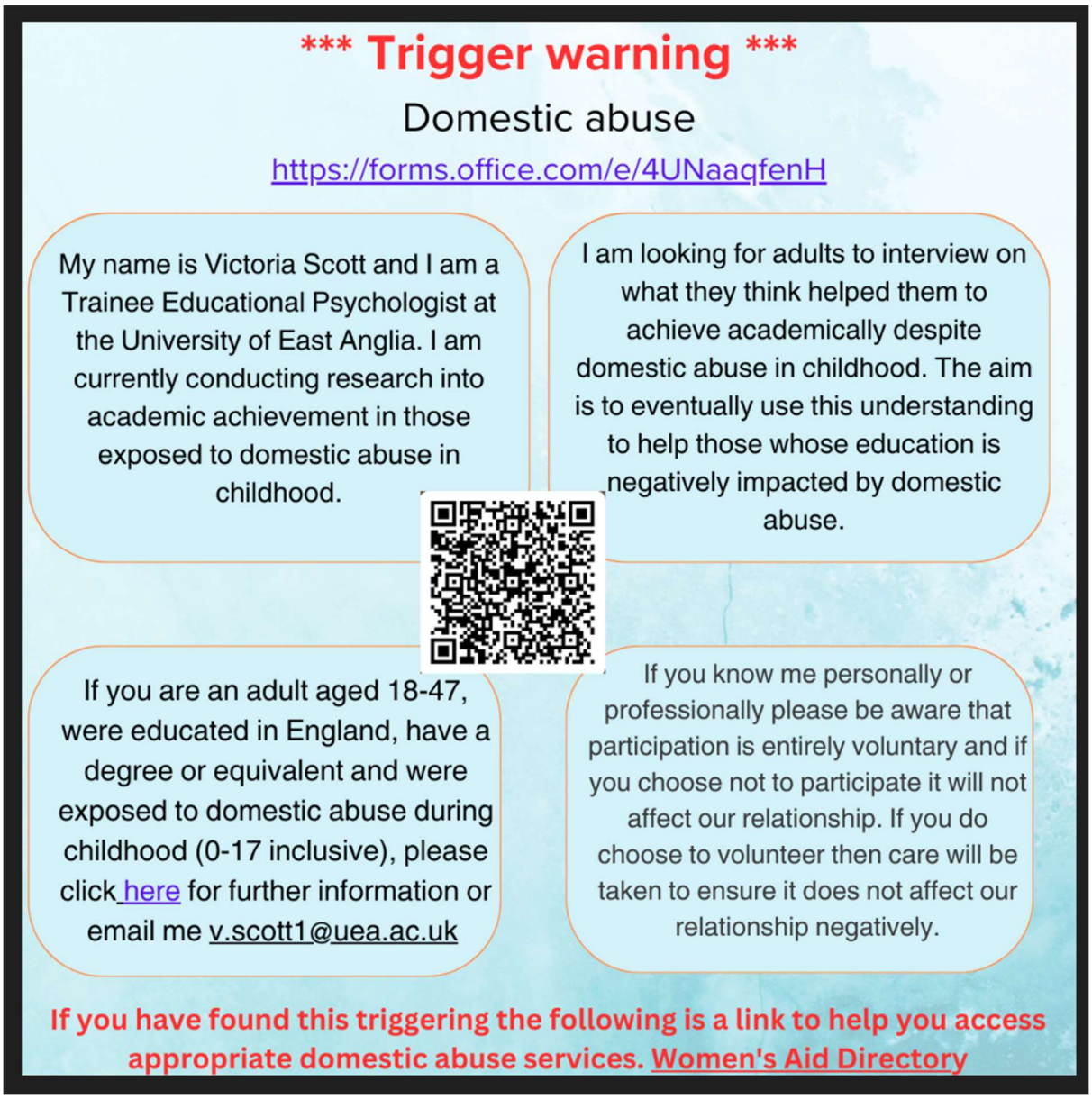
If you have found this email emotionally provoking, please contact the UEA Wellbeing Service https://my.uea.ac.uk/divisions/student-services/wellbeing alternatively the following is a link to help you access appropriate domestic abuse services. Women's Aid Directory - Women's Aid (womensaid.org.uk)

Thank you so much for your time and help and I look forward to hearing from you.

Victoria Scott (she/her)
Trainee Educational Psychologist
University of East Anglia

Appendix D

Recruitment Advertisement



Appendix E

Participant Demographic Information Form

Interviewee Demographic Information Sheet

Please complete the sheet below. Please be aware that personal information will be anonymized in the research, I am only asking for your name now to ensure consistency in record keeping. Please do not feel obliged to answer any of the questions. If you feel uncomfortable at any point, please do let me know so that we can have a break or stop as needed. As discussed you are welcome to withdraw your consent for participation at any points. If you have any questions please do ask.

Pseudonym _____

Age _____

Self-identified gender _____

Gender assigned at birth _____

Preferred Pronouns _____

Ethnicity (please tick which box you feel best describes your ethnicity):

White

- ○ English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- ○ Irish
- ○ Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ○ Any other White background:

_____

Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups

- ○ White and Black Caribbean
- ○ White and Black African
- ○ White and Asian
- ○ Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background:

_____

Asian / Asian British

- ○ Indian
- ○ Pakistani
- ○ Bangladeshi
- ○ Chinese
- ○ Any other Asian background:

_____

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

- ○ African
- ○ Caribbean
- ○ Any other Black / African / Caribbean background

_____

Other ethnic group

- ○ Arab
- ○ Any other ethnic group:

_____

Domestic abuse exposed to in childhood, defined types are as outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act, 2021 a copy of which is available if you would like further information. Please feel free to ask questions. Please tick all that apply:

- o Physical abuse, violent or threatening behaviour
- o Sexual abuse
- o Controlling or coercive behaviour
- o Immigration abuse
- o 'corrective' abuse
- o Emotional/psychological abuse
- o Economic abuse
- o Verbal abuse
- o Harassment
- o Stalking
- o Technology-facilitated abuse
- o Abuse relating to faith
- o Forced marriage
- o 'Honour'- based abuse (inc. Female Genital Mutilation)

Appendix F

Lifelines Instructions

F1: Instructions

Lifelines Instructions.

Information give:

Lifelines is a simple drawing and/or writing activity that encourages life history recollection. Would you like to know the instructions?

If online participants will be asked to come to the interview with several sheets of A4 blank paper, scissors and cellotape and some pens and pencils and they will be asked to share a photo/scan of the completed lifeline via the university OneDrive.

Instructions:

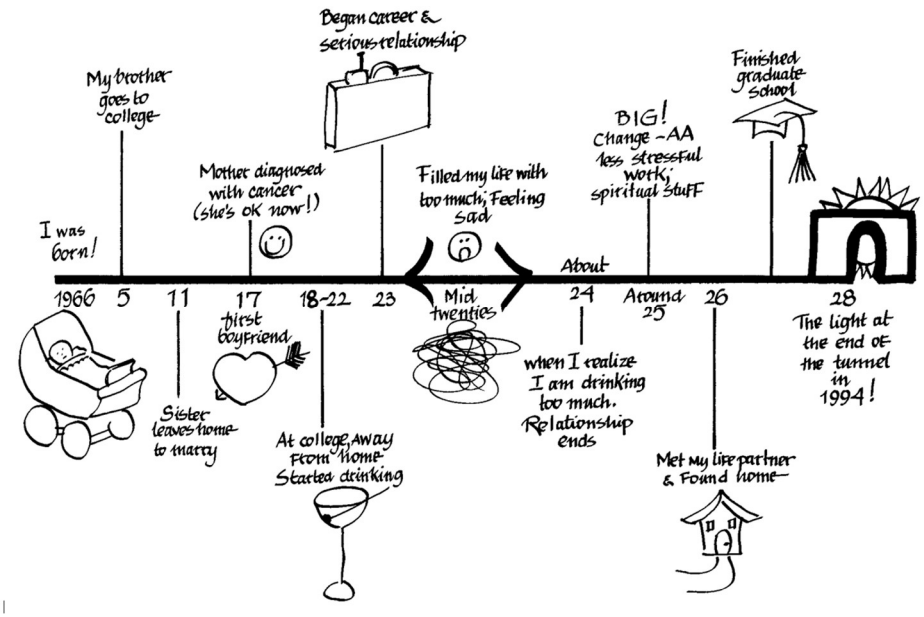
1. I would like you to create a timeline of your life where you will be able illustrate the memorable aspects of your life but I would also like you to consider where you would put your exposure to domestic abuse on the lifeline.

2. Using the paper, scissors and cellotape provided, please could you create a sheet that is long enough for your lifeline.

3. Now could you spend some time creating your lifeline, you can draw, write, colour, however you feel you would like to create your lifeline. Please include when you were exposed to domestic abuse, but you do not need to go into any details.

4. Participants will be shown the example Lifeline (see figure 1).

F2: Example taken from Gramling & Carr's (2004) *Methods. Lifelines: a life history methodology.*



Appendix G

Line-by-line Coding Example

Gender norms integral to sibling outcomes A exp more praise, pressure to keep hse Expected to take mother role of sister Pressured to be good, quiet & domestic Bro told he was trouble, to not be in hse Bro had to adapt to life outside home Being out of home gave opps for trouble Thinking about boarding school Young when first attended boarding Feels too young to be sent away Felt in control of going away Perceived herself as academic Sitting entry exam made A feel clever Recently found school paperwork Poor school reports from boarding Teachers no understanding of childhood Teachers seeing A as attn seeking Teachers reporting awful behaviour Boarding school hostile environment Thought left boarding due to funding Boarding school traumatic Boarding school enabled emotional independence from family Emotional detachment protected A	A: Well mm partly the good you know, the gender norms for sure, I was more praised and pressured to you know, keep house when my sister was a baby I was, you know, feeding her in the night. She was born when I was in secondary school, so I had a lot more pressure to.. be domestic, to be good, to be quiet, to be, you know, cert- certainly that whereas he was more like "you're such a shit, just go out", you know? So he spent a lot of time out the house um getting up to who knows what, but I think beyond that, it's really interesting for me that I've been thinking a lot about this boarding school two years, over time because at the time, so I was only t-, you know, ten and half when I went, which.. I just can't believe now I've got kids that anyone would do that to a kid but anyway um at the time when I was a child, I used to tell myself.. I chose to go because home was so bad, so that was the story I had in my head and that's when I thought I was academic, you know, I had to do an exam to get in and so for, I thought for all these years that you know, that was what had happened, and then I found all this paperwork, a few years ago and.. my school reports were terrible at boarding school and they were very.. from, written from the perspective of people who weren't, didn't understand what I was going through I, we had a lot of troubles but they were very much like she's attention seeking, she's terrible behaviour, you know she did, really, really awful, it was a very hostile environment um but anyway, then I realised that I left boarding school cause my um the military stopped funding it, I had I thought I'd chosen a lot more of that um but anyway although I found it quite traumatic.. to be put in boarding school, um I think probably it engendered an emotional detachment to my family, which is probably why I ended up being alright.

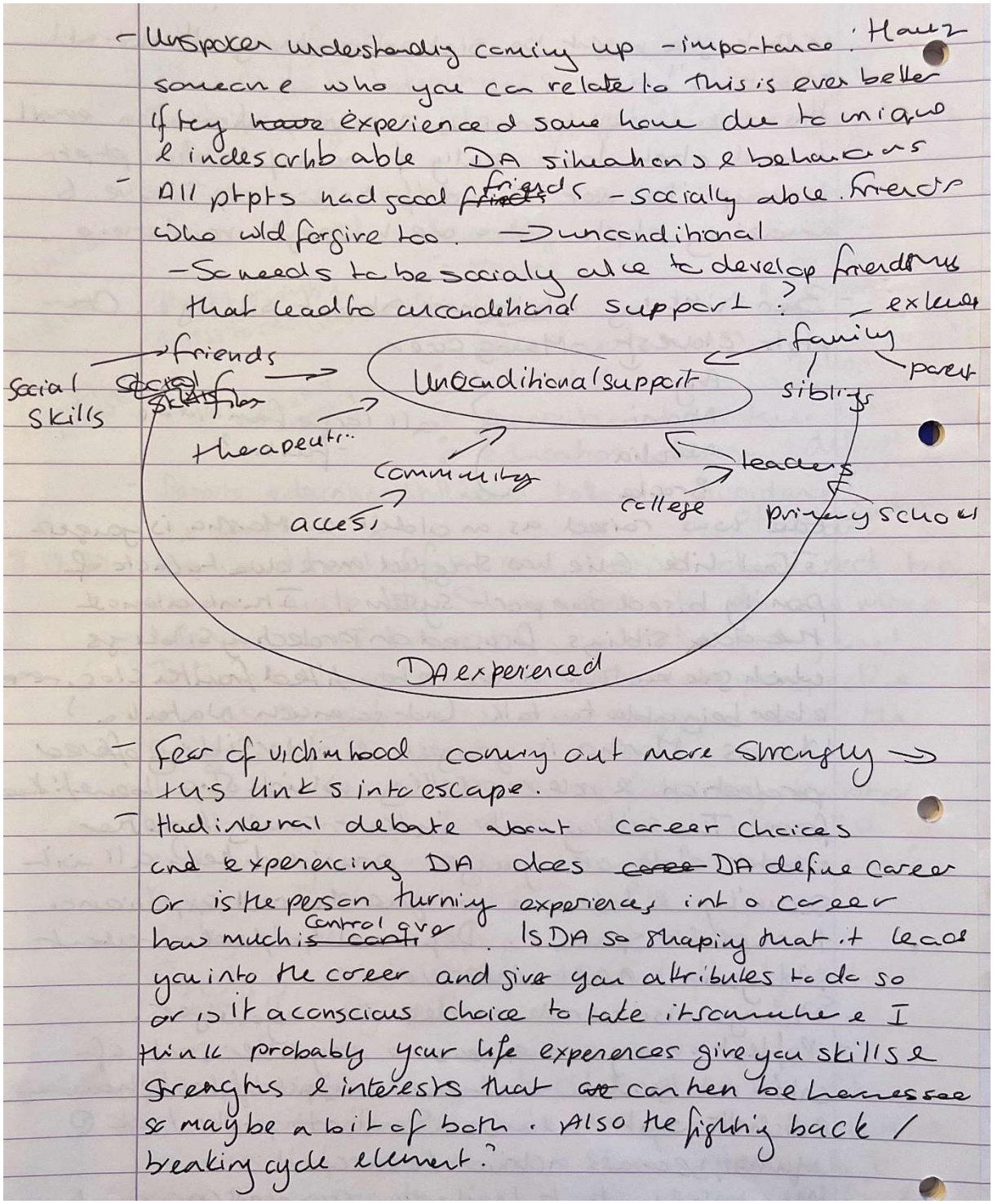
Appendix H

Focused Coding Example

Pivotal moment Felt encouraged Felt noticed Felt encouraged Attributes college success to tutor Importance of being give latitude when life is chaotic Facilitating success Feeling believed in	Saved meaningful piece of work Exploring college work Wondering why saved the work. Tutor comment pivotal encouragement Tutor encouragement made Anya feel good Felt encouraged Attributing college success to tutor. Grading improved due to support. Wording Facilitated her passing Being given latitude Recognition of need for support Recalling examples of support. Facilitating her success Feeling believed in	got I've saved one piece of work that he um like I went through everything like a little while ago and I was like why have I still got all this and it was just this one piece of work and he wrote on it like "this is fantastic why have I not seen this work for me before carry on doing like" V: Aww A: Yeah V: And how did that make you feel? A: It made me feel really good yeah and to have someone that was encouraging and ac- I'd say he was the reason why I passed that course so it was it was a it was like a diploma so I came out with a merit but I was in the later part of the course I was managing to get distinctions in there but he also made massive er.. what's the right word? He he definitely.. I can't find the words like he made it so that I could pass V: Allowances? A: Yes definitely made allowances cause even if I maybe was having a tough time in the first year um or maybe I didn't want to present something or something like that I would or like when I remember having to do a er a quiz on birds and somehow I ended up with the entire sheet of what I needed to learn and V: oh A: (laughs) V: So he he A: Yes V: believed in you? A: Yes he did V: And you felt that? A: Yeah

Appendix I

Researcher Memo Examples



DA

Edie – meek seeking safety/community/quiet → [redacted]

Natalia – DA forcing to into career, sense of belonging (seeking safety) → [redacted]

Anya – Young carer, protector seeks safety → [redacted]

Marsha – fighter, sense of justice wanting to understand (breaking cycle) → [redacted]

Naomi – Young carer, academic, unresolved → [redacted]

Bracie – Young carer, wanting to understand DA, (escape, prevent) → [redacted]

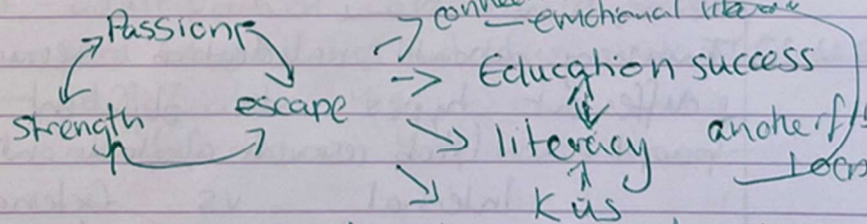
– Seeking control keeps coming up. Is this linked to safety? = thinks so. Will need to do some kind of diagram.

X ——— Y

Memo – 09.12.23

– Thinking about control N feeling like she was in control @ school but actually it was the feeling of being controlled & knowing expectation & clear path to success. As actually when given control over life & education @ uni ~~cont~~ she was ill-equipped to deal be in control & struggled. But then was able to & recognise when she started to take internal control over self.

– Interesting & N raise f/b loop of reading as escapism & being good @ reading.



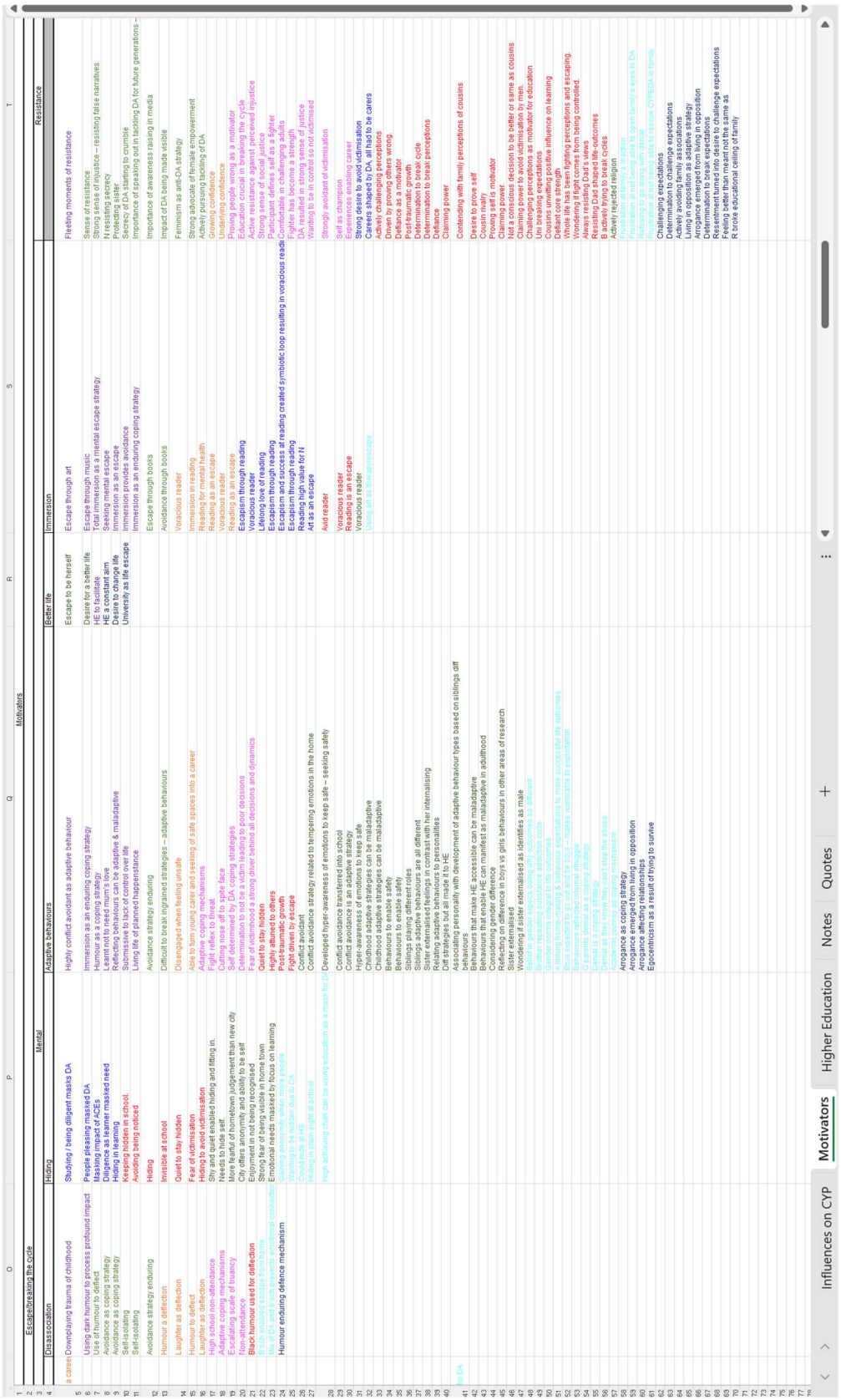
Metaphorical escape leads into means to physically escape & break out

– Sibling again!

– ACEs shaping career again!

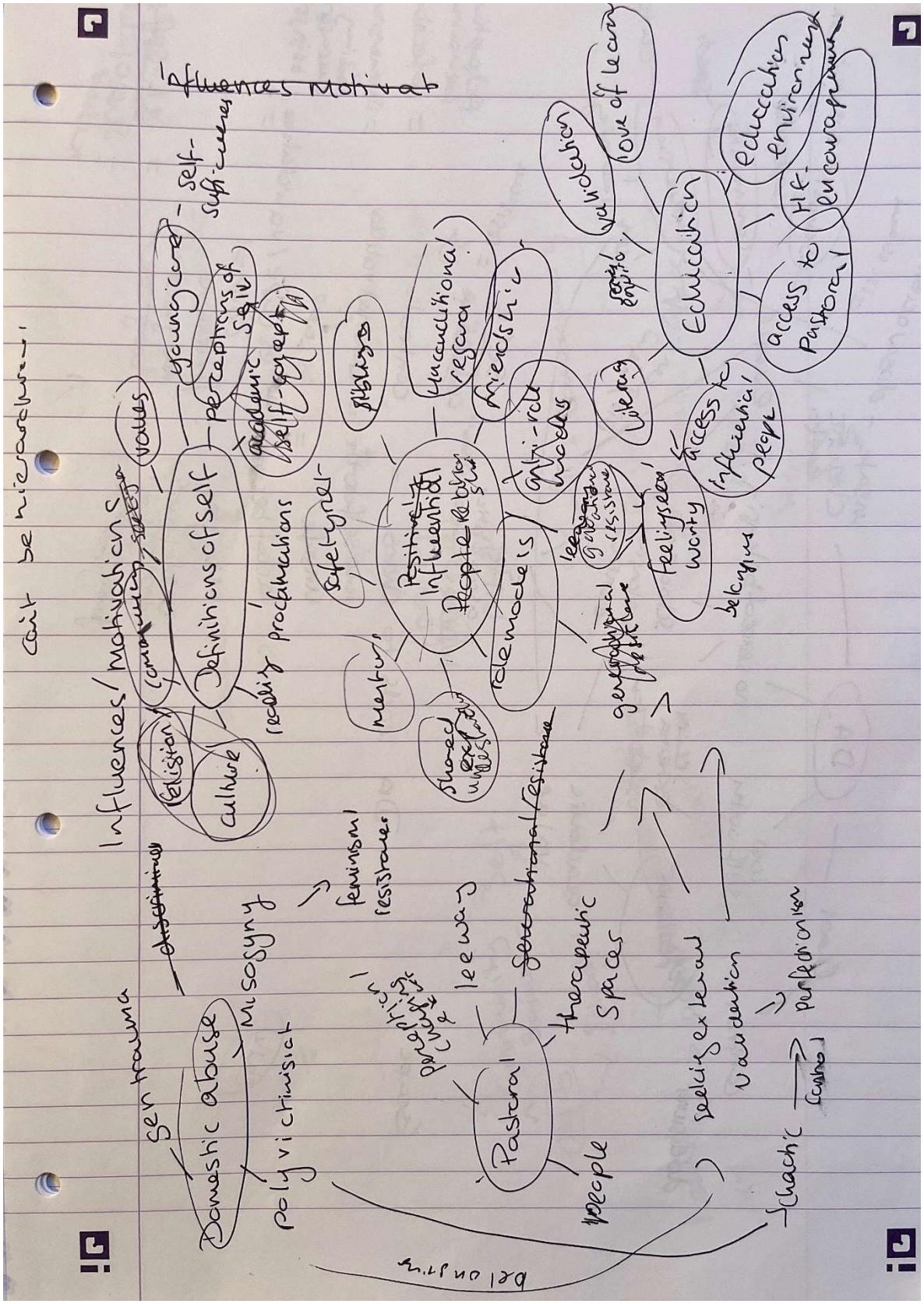
Appendix J

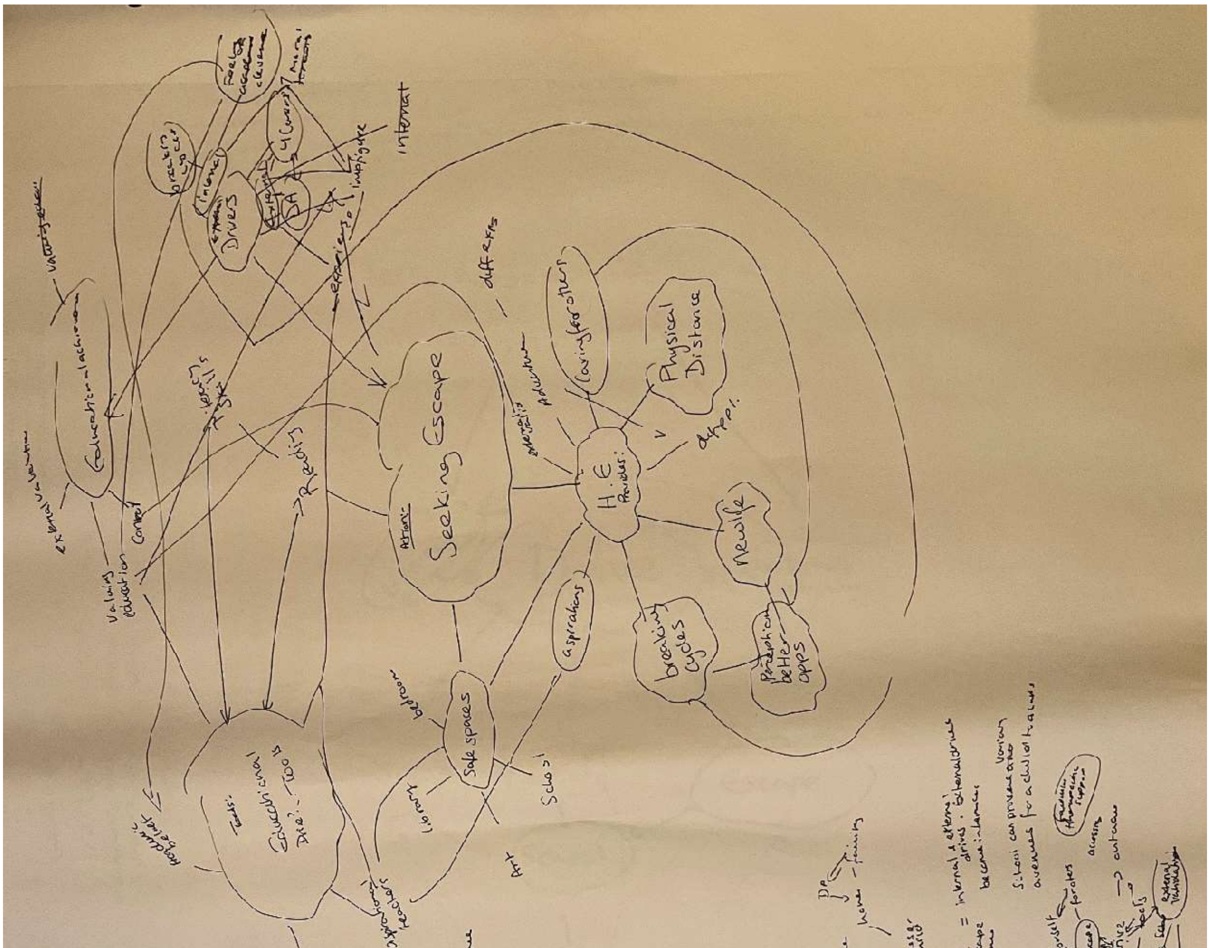
Theoretical Coding Example

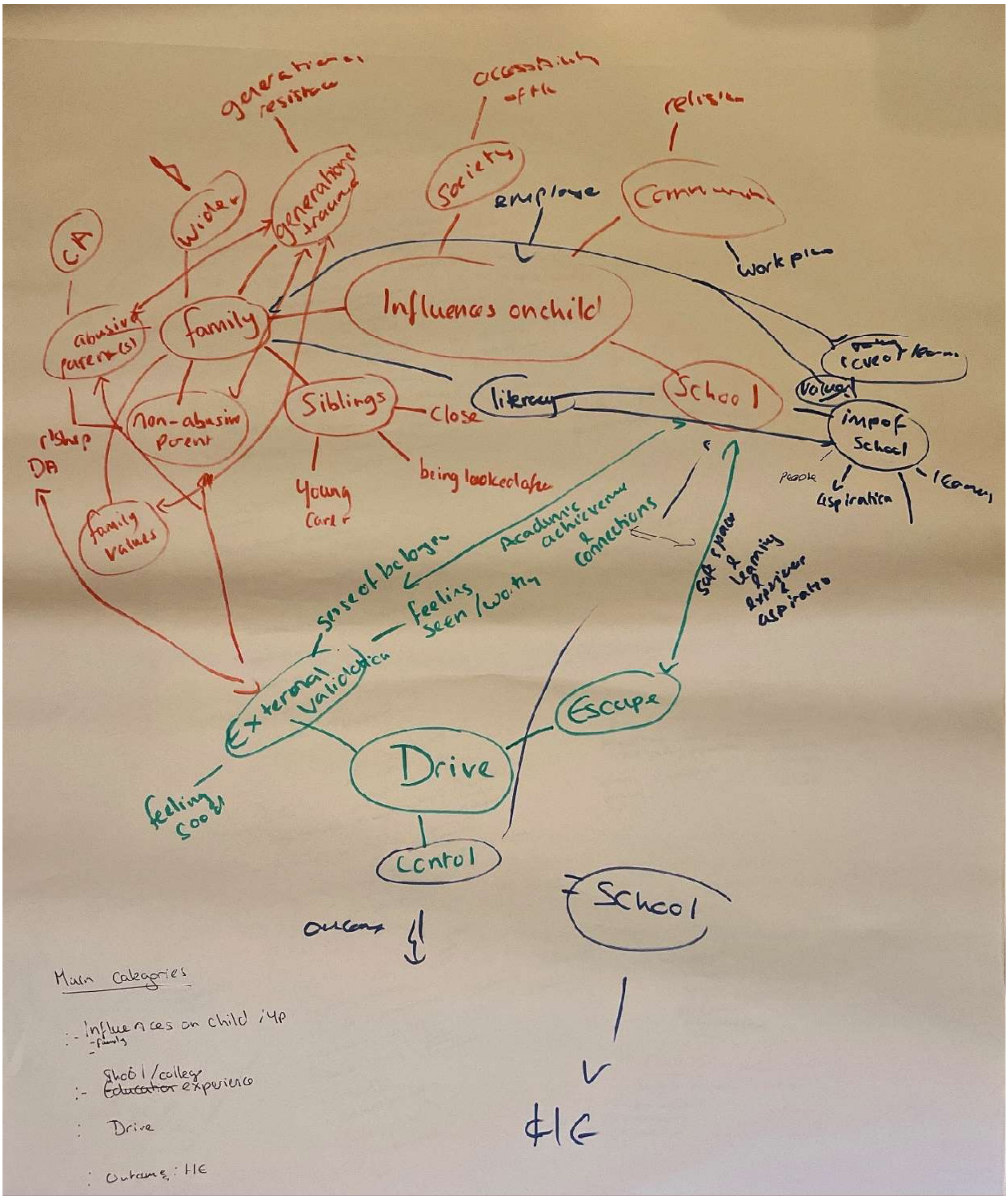


Appendix K

Diagramming Examples




Seeking Escape
Safe spaces
H.E Provides:
Physical Distance
Newlife
breaking cycles
Aspirations
Drivers
Internet
Connections
External
Internal
Education tools


generational resistance
accessibility of HE
religion
Society
employer
workplace
CA
wider
generational trauma
abusive parent(s)
family
Influences on child
School
literacy
Siblings
Close
Non-abusive parent
r'ship
DA
family values
Young carer
being looked after
imp of School
Aspiration
sense of belonging
Academic achievement & connections
feeling seen/worthy
External validation
Escape
Drive
feeling good
Control
outcome
School
HE
Main categories
Influences on child
School/college
Education experience
Drive
Outcomes: HE

Appendix L

Participant Information and Consent Form

Participant Information form and Consent

Seeking the light: Understanding what enables those exposed to domestic abuse in childhood to complete a higher education qualification.

* Required

What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study about what has enabled you to achieve higher education qualifications despite exposure to domestic abuse during your childhood. You have been invited to participate in this study because in childhood (0-17 inclusive), you were exposed to domestic abuse and have since gone on to achieve an undergraduate degree or equivalent higher education qualification. You are also aged between 18-47 and your schooling took place in England. This Participant Information Sheet tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the study. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. By giving consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:
✓ Understand what you have read.
✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.
✓ You have received a copy of this Participant Information Sheet to keep.

Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researcher: Mrs Victoria Scott, Trainee Educational Psychologist, School of Education and Lifelong Learning at the University of East Anglia. This will take place under the supervision of Imogen Nasta Gorman, Educational Psychologist & Course Director in the School of Education and Lifelong Learning at the University of East Anglia (I.gorman@uea.ac.uk).

What will the study involve for me?

This research is to develop a theory on what enables those exposed to domestic abuse in childhood complete higher education qualifications. Unfortunately many children and young people's education is negatively impacted by domestic abuse exposure. Currently, there is no theory about why some children exposed to domestic abuse manage to complete higher educational qualifications in the face of this adversity. To develop this theory I am recruiting participants to be interviewed.

If you consent to participate I will send you the proposed interview questions, so you can check that you're happy to proceed. The interview schedule is loose so that it is more of a discussion about your views on why and how you completed higher education qualifications. I will also ask you to complete a short visual activity which involves drawing a timeline. You do not have to do this and you can choose to not answer certain questions. Dependent on distance from me the interviews can be online or in person. If in person we will meet in a quiet, mutually agreeable public space. If online we will use Teams preferably. If online I will ask you to obscure your background and I will do the same. Interviews can take place between now and the end of February 2024

Dependent on distance from me the interviews can be online or in person. If in person we will meet in a quiet, mutually agreeable public space. If online we will use Teams preferably. If online I will ask you to obscure your background and I will do the same. Interviews can take place between now and the end of February 2024.

Following the interview, I would like to have the option to reinterview you. This would be to gain more detail on some of the aspects that I feel may have supported yourself and others to gain higher education qualifications. This may not be needed but I would like to have the option should I need more information. Reinterviewing is entirely optional and you can withdraw consent for the reinterview up to the point of data analysis.

If you decide to participate I will allocate you a pseudonym which you will use for the questionnaires and interviews, any identifying information that occurs will be anonymised or redacted. An audio recording will be taken of the interviews so that I can create a transcript of the interview.

You will have the opportunity to review information generated about you prior to publication.

How much of my time will the study take?

It is estimated that the interview will take about an hour. Any reinterview will take about 30 minutes. You can take breaks during the interview and if you decide to end early and/or withdraw consent this will be respected. If you choose to review your transcript, this will take a similar amount of time.

Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I have started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia (or Norfolk Children's Services) now or in the future.

If you decide to take part in the study, you can withdraw your consent up to the point that your date is fully analysed. You can do this by sending an email to me at v.scott1@uea.ac.uk

What are the consequences if I withdraw from the study?

You are free to stop the interview at any time. Unless you say that you want us to keep them, any recordings will be erased and the information you have provided will not be included in the study results. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview. If you decide at a later time to withdraw from the study your information will be removed from our records and will not be included in any results, up to the point we have analysed and published the results.

Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Though you will not be asked to share your domestic abuse experiences it is possible that discussing your childhood will bring up issues of concern especially if your experiences were more recent. **Please note if you have experienced domestic abuse as an adult (18+) you cannot participate in this research to protect your welfare.** You do not have to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable with and we can take breaks and stop the interview if you feel you want to. You will also be provided with information on avenues for support. If you are currently receiving support for your experiences such as from a therapist, counsellor, social worker or police please do discuss with the professional whether it would be appropriate to participate in this research. Safeguarding protocols will be followed and we will discuss these at the beginning of the interview too. Your information will also remain anonymised and we will use a pseudonym for your name.

Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

I would hope that talking about your experiences would offer reflection and some degree of healing and that it may reinforce your successes.

It is anticipated that the theory that is developed from this research will be used to support children who are exposed to domestic abuse to be more resistant to the impact of domestic abuse on their education and therefore be able to take advantage of any opportunities that arise from having educational qualifications.

What will happen to information provided by me and data collected during the study?

From the time of your agreement to participate you will be given a pseudonym to keep your identity protected. The data collected will be an audio recording of your interview which will be made into a transcription of your interview. I would also like to have a copy of the timeline activity, this could be a photograph, photocopy or a scan which you can send to me through the university's secure OneDrive. Questions to determine if you will be selected for interview will be collected on the online survey platform Microsoft Forms where you will use your allocated pseudonym to protect your identity. Any identifying information that occurs will be anonymised or redacted and the demographics you provide will be kept on a password protected laptop in an encrypted file.

You will be given the opportunity to review your transcript(s) and you will be able to withdraw your data up until this point. You will be unable to withdraw your data once it has been analysed. My supervisor Imogen Nasta Gorman may see your transcript but it will remain anonymised and it will be shared via OneDrive.

It is intended that the findings of this research are published as a thesis and within relevant academic journal publications. It is hoped that the theory developed from this research will be tested amongst the general population and then used to develop interventions to support children and young people who are or have been exposed to domestic abuse.

Your personal data and information will only be used as outlined in this Participant Information Sheet, unless you consent otherwise. Data management will follow the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the University of East Anglia's Research Data Management Policy.

The information you provide will be stored securely and your identity will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but you will not be identified in these publications if you decide to participate in this study. The data will be kept for at least 10 years beyond the last date the data were accessed.

What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Mrs Victoria Scott (v.scott1@uea.ac.uk) will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have.

Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by by completing and returning this section at the end of this Information Sheet and Consent Form via email to v.scott1@uea.ac.uk This feedback will be in the form of a one-page lay summary that will be emailed to you. This feedback will be available from August 2024

What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

If there is a problem please let me know. You can contact my supervisor via the University of East Anglia at the following address:

Imogen Nasta Gorman
School of Education and Lifelong Learning
University of East Anglia
NORWICH
NR4 7TJ
I.gorman@uea.ac.uk

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the Head of School of Education and Lifelong Learning: Professor Yann Lebeau (Y.Lebeau@uea.ac.uk, 01603 456161 Ext. 2754).

How do I know that this study has been approved to take place?

To protect your safety, rights, wellbeing and dignity, all research in the University of East Anglia is reviewed by a Research Ethics Body. This research was approved by the EDU S-REC (School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Subcommittee).

What is the general data protection information I need to be informed about?

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis for processing your data as listed in Article 6(1) of the UK GDPR is because this allows us to process personal data when it is necessary to perform our public tasks as a University.

In addition to the specific information provided above about why your personal data is required and how it will be used, there is also some general information which needs to be provided for you:

• The data controller is the University of East Anglia.
• For further information, you can contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@uea.ac.uk
• You can also find out more about your data protection rights at the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
• If you are unhappy with how your personal data has been used, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@uea.ac.uk in the first instance.

Further information

This information was last updated on 30 September 2023.
If there are changes to the information provided, you will be notified by email to the address you have provided.

1. I would like to participate *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Participation Consent Form

I am willing to participate in this research study.

In giving my consent I state that:
- I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be asked to do, and any risks/benefits involved.
- I have read the Participant Information Sheet, which I may keep, for my records, and have been able to discuss my involvement in the study with the researchers if I wished to do so.
- The researchers have answered any questions that I had about the study and I am happy with the answers.
- I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and I do not have to take part. My decision whether to be in the study will not affect my relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of East Anglia (or Norfolk Children's Services) now or in the future.
- I understand that I may stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, and that unless I indicate otherwise any recordings will then be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study results. I also understand that I may refuse to answer any questions I don't wish to answer.
- I understand that the results of this study may be published but that any publications will not contain my name or any identifiable information about me.
- I understand that personal information about me that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to. I understand that information about me will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by

2. I consent to: *

	Yes	No
Audio-recording	◯	◯
A potential reinterview	◯	◯
Reviewing transcript(s)	◯	◯

3. Please provide an email address for the researcher to contact you on: *

4. Would you like to receive feedback about the overall results of this study? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

5. If you answered **YES**, please indicate your preferred form of feedback and address:

Appendix M

Semi-Structured Interview Outline

Thesis Semi-Structured Interview Questions/script:

Not all these questions need to be asked more just prompts for relevant discussion:

- What higher education qualifications have you achieved?
- What made you choose those qualifications?
- What was your route to achieving those qualifications?
- What is it do you think that enabled you to achieve those qualifications despite the domestic abuse?
- What were you like as a child?
- Would you describe yourself as academic as child?
- Did you have any kind of support network?
- Did you have any particular strategies that you used to help you cope with the domestic abuse?
- Do you use any of those strategies as an adult?
- Tell me about your household growing up?
- Reminder that specifics are not needed and they do not have to answer any questions they do not want to
- Can you tell me about what sort of age you were when you were first exposed to domestic abuse in your home and how long it went on for?
- Out of 10 how severe would you say the domestic abuse was? Verbal scaling 1-10
- Who were the perpetrators?
- Did anybody know about the domestic abuse outside of the home? Were they helpful?

Appendix N

Participant Debrief Sheet

Mrs Victoria Scott
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Education and Lifelong Learning

University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7TJ
United Kingdom

Email: v.scott1@uea.ac.uk
Web: www.uea.ac.uk

Study: What enables children and young people exposed to domestic abuse to achieve a higher education qualification.

Participant Debrief Sheet:

Thank you for participating in the interview and timeline activity. Your contribution is very valued. I hope that you have found it interesting and have not been upset by any of the topics discussed. However, if you have found any part of this experience to be distressing and you wish to speak to one of the researchers, please contact:
Victoria Scott - v.scott1@uea.ac.uk
Supervisor Imogen Gorman – I.gorman@uea.ac.uk

There are also a number of organisations listed below that you can contact.

Organisations	Contact
Your GP	
NHS Direct	Call: 111
Samaritans	Call: 116123 or https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/
Local domestic abuse service	https://www.womensaid.org.uk/womens-aid-directory/
National domestic abuse helpline	https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/
Women's Aid	https://www.womensaid.org.uk/
Mankind (for males exposed to domestic abuse)	Call: 01823 334244
Men's Advice Line	Call: 0808 801 0327 or info@mensadviceline.org.uk
Broken Rainbow (for domestic abuse with LGBT relationships).	Call: 0300 9995428 or help@brokenrainbow.org.uk
Stand Alone (support for students estranged from family)	estranged@slc.co.uk
Sue Lambert Trust (for sexual abuse survivors)	Call: 01603 622406 or info@suelamberttrust.org

If you are a student of the University of East Anglia the following may also be helpful:

- The UEA(SU) Wellbeing Service: https://my.uea.ac.uk/divisions/student-services/wellbeing
- For support regarding personal or family problems: advicecentre@uea.ac.uk or studentsupport@uea.ac.uk