

Thesis: An investigation of perceptions of individual and group support provided for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse.
By Eleanor Ley

Title Page

Name: Eleanor Ley

Title: An investigation of perceptions of individual and group support provided for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse. A particular focus on a new intervention: LINX, developing guidelines for practice.

Declaration:

Submitted by Eleanor Rose Ley to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Educational Psychology in Education, Child and Community Psychology. The month and year of submission was May 2011.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University

Signature:

Overview

Support provided for adolescents who have witnessed domestic abuse is under developed, with little research exploring its effectiveness. This research has explored different individual experiences of support (for both group and individual interventions). The views were explored within the interpretivist paradigm to create an in depth understanding of the individual experience within this relatively under researched area. Information was collected using semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, observations and a focus group to develop a model that could be used for practice.

Paper 1 focused on young people's view of conflict, their experiences of group and individual support and professionals' views on support, to consider implications for the implementation of any new support interventions within this particular local authority. The common themes included: the role of physical activity during support sessions, the importance of facilitator qualities, possibly challenging young people's views of violence, the role of individual work and how it should be used in conjunction with any group work and the importance of systemic factors.

Paper 2 focused on a new group intervention called 'LINX' looking at the experiences of individuals involved with the project using a case study methodology. This research has identified that there were varied views on group projects such as LINX. Some of the positives were the identification of a greater range of behavioural coping strategies and improved relationships; though it was debated by some participants whether this would be long lasting. Some identified negatives of this form of group work were the lack of systemic support and a desire for ongoing work. Paper 2 built on paper 1, identifying many themes' were reflected in this new intervention and I have begun to develop the first steps of a model to guide practice in this area.

Clear implications for policymakers were also identified including the role of Common Assessment Frameworks (CAFs) to highlight domestic abuse. This could then be followed up with a coordinated system with clearly designated roles to enable support to be better understood, and possibly facilitated.

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Clear implications for professional practice include: involvement of educational psychologists' in awareness raising, by training staff within schools about key issues around domestic abuse, possibly helping to develop a selection programme for support workers based on key characteristics.

Future research could consider new support interventions in light of the guiding principles for practice developed through this research. Ongoing longitudinal work exploring individuals' views and thoughts about whether support is beneficial would also be of value.

Theoretical perspectives such as attachment theory, social learning theory and systems theory have all been useful in helping to explain the themes identified in this research.

To conclude this piece of research has investigated views on support provided both individually and through group work (paper 1) attempting to create principles which could be shared with local authorities for consideration in the design, implementation and evaluation of interventions supporting adolescents who have witnessed domestic abuse (paper 2).

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Paper 1: An investigation of young people and professionals perceptions of support for adolescents who have witnessed domestic abuse.

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Abstract

This paper explored individuals' experiences of support (both group and individual) for adolescents who have witnessed domestic abuse. There is no clear guidance for successful implementation of support for these adolescents. Information was collected using semi-structured interviews with five adolescents (four males and one female, aged 15 to 18) who had experienced support, and five key professionals who were involved in providing support.

This paper identified that young people who experience domestic abuse have some similar views on situations involving conflict and how to cope with those situations, that family could be viewed as a source of conflict and violence can be normalised.

The young people's experiences and the professionals' views on support were similar, providing implications for the implementation of any new support interventions within this particular local authority. These included: consideration of existing coping strategies, possibly challenging young people's views of conflict and the role of individual work and how it should be used in conjunction with any group work.

Clear implications for policymakers and practice were identified such as the role of Common Assessment Frameworks (CAFs) to highlight domestic abuse.

Future research could consider new support interventions in light of these findings, with related longitudinal studies aimed at further investigating the identified characteristics of support.

Introduction

There is a growing realisation that there needs to be more support for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse and may be experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties as a consequence (Save the Children 2002). What support there is has been sparsely evaluated and new research needs to target the effectiveness of new interventions for adolescents (Hughes 1992). The purpose of this paper is to address this discrepancy by looking at what support is available for adolescents and how it is perceived to create a better understanding of what may be barriers and facilitators to this form of support provision.

Domestic abuse can be defined as: 'the misuse of power and the exercise of control by one person over another within the context of any intimate or close relationship, past or present. Such abuse may manifest itself in a variety of ways including physical violence, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual violence and abuse, financial control and abuse and the imposition of social isolation or movement deprivation' (Against Domestic Violence and Abuse, ADVA, 2001). This definition demonstrates how far reaching the issue of domestic abuse is, the terms violence and abuse are often used interchangeably within the literature, but as abuse is a term which encompasses a greater range of behaviours it will be predominantly used in this research. The widespread nature of domestic abuse is illustrated with it being estimated one in four women experience it at some time in their life (British Medical Association 2007). The Department of Health estimated that at least 750,000 children in England and Wales were living with domestic abuse (Department of Health, 2002)

The effect that domestic violence has on children and young people has been somewhat neglected in the literature. Evidence has indicated that 1 in 3 child protection cases also show a history of domestic abuse to the mother (Hester and Pearson 1998). These children have been called the 'forgotten' victims of adult domestic violence (Hughes 1992). However there is growing recognition that domestic abuse can have a short term and long term impact on a child's development behaviourally, emotionally and psychologically (Hester, Pearson & Harwin 2007, Mullender, Hague, Imam, Kelly, Malos, & Regan 2002).

This has resulted in a growing recognition of the needs for policy and support around this issue (The Home Office 2005). However limited research has been conducted looking at young people's perspectives on domestic abuse and in particular the support that is available to them (Mullender et al 2002).

Policy context

In recent years government legislation has attempted to address some of these concerns. The Every Child Matters (2003) outcomes clearly link to the possible effects of domestic violence with child safety, being healthy, enjoying and achieving: all key principles and identified as being affected by domestic abuse (James 1994).

Statutory acts relating to domestic abuse include: The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 and the Children Act 2004. The government has recently recognised that domestic abuse is an indicator of child protection needs. The Home Office produced a figure that nearly 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence (2005). In 2007 The Home Office extended the legal definition of harm to children to include witnessing domestic abuse of others, even if the child had not been directly abused. The responsibility of schools and other agencies has now been changed as a result of The Children Act 2004 as they should be aware of definition of harm can be considered the 'impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.' Therefore it is the responsibility of those safeguarding children to be aware of the role of witnessing domestic abuse.

The HMIC/HMCPSP Inspectorate Report (2004) on domestic violence recommended that the police should note the details of any children as well as the impact of the crime on them when they are investigating domestic cases. The Home Office produced its third annual progress report on its 'National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan' in 2007 reviewing the provision of facilities and support for women and children. In 2009 HM Government introduced a coordinated strategy aimed at ending violence

against women and girls by promoting education and understanding. However there have been criticisms that at a national level there still remains limited attention to prevention work and young people are still having difficulty accessing the support they need, with minimal progress in specific intervention programmes and negligible evaluation of this support (Hester and Westmarland 2005).

Selected Literature

A literature review was carried out investigating how domestic violence can impact young people and what support is available. This review and how it was carried out can be seen in appendix 31. This section is going to examine how domestic violence impacts on young people, particularly during adolescence, the support available and how psychological theory could be used to explain possible outcomes. The aim is to select literature for this review that provides the case for the specific research questions this study addresses.

The impact of domestic abuse on young people

Historically it was not until the 1980's that research started to investigate domestic violence in terms of its prevalence and consequences (Hotaling & Sugarman 1986). There continues to be a gap in adequate provision for children and young people who experience domestic abuse (Hester and Westmarland 2005).

Negative short and long term effects result from children's exposure to domestic abuse and can include damage to family relationships, anger, sleep problems, fear, withdrawal, and feeling responsible for the violence and powerless to intervene (Mullender et al 2002, McGee 2000).

Research has predominantly focused on the direct victim of domestic abuse (UNICEF 2009) but there are findings to show that children exposed to domestic violence may suffer a range of severe and lasting effects which can be similar to children who are themselves physically abused (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano 2002). Some studies have indicated that children who witness domestic violence are more

likely to be affected by violence later in life; as perpetrators or victims (James 1994). Research has indicated that up to 40% of chronically violent teenagers had experienced domestic violence in the home (James 1994). A literature review by Dauvergne & Johnson (2001) supported this finding that children who had witnessed domestic violence were nearly three times as likely to be involved in physical aggression at school.

The focus of this research is adolescents (or young people), as this is a time which has often been overlooked in the literature in terms of psychological effects of domestic violence (Mullender et al 2002). However the research that has been carried out has indicated that witnessing or experiencing domestic abuse can have a significant impact on adolescent relationships. Werkerle and Wolf (1998) conducted a study with adolescents which indicated that witnessing or experiencing domestic violence was the best predictor of violence in later relationships. In 2009 a study looking at adolescent relationships revealed that a quarter of teenage girls had experienced physical violence (Barter, McCarry, Berridge & Evans).

Support available for young people

Work with children and young people can focus on the individual or a group. Direct work can include counselling, play therapy, life story work, crisis work and safety work (Mullender et al 2002). Few group interventions in the UK have targeted just children/adolescents (without their parents present) (Hughes 1992). More research examining the role of support and what is available will be considered in paper 2.

The majority of the research into evaluating the effects of domestic abuse and the limited individual or group support that is available for young people, has taken a positivist epistemological approach evaluating support interventions using standardised tools such as checklists and questionnaires (e.g. Carlson, 1990, Jaffe, Sudermann & Reitzel 1992, Levy 1984 & Fantuzzo and Mohr 1999). Gathering quantitative data such as this, can often lead to a lack of validity as participants are not able to express their opinions freely, there can also be a tendency to answer in a socially desirable way. In this sensitive

area, this approach also does not allow for the freedom of expression and gradual development of a response that a more subjective approach allows for (Mullender et al 2002).

There has only been a handful of studies in the U.K. (and internationally) that have adopted a more interpretivist approach and considered the voice of the child when researching the effects of domestic abuse and the support available (e.g. Mullender et al 2002, McGee 2000 & Fitzpatrick et al 2003). The research which has looked at the young person's perspective has looked at a range of factors including: perceptions of domestic abuse, mother child relationships, views on moving house and changing education (McGee 2000, Stafford, Stead, & Grimes 2007, Fitzpatrick, Lynch, Goodlad & Houghton 2003). These studies have tended to focus on perceptions of support available for children rather than adolescents (Mullender et al 2002). Adolescents tend to be more difficult to target as they may have experienced domestic abuse in their past and may be showing behavioural or emotional symptoms in the present. Evaluating support for children tends to be easier in terms of access as they are often spoken to whilst in a refuge (Fitzpatrick et al 2003). Therefore support and its evaluation is often targeted at children under 14, as older adolescents tend to live elsewhere (Stafford et al 2007). Also the views of the possible wide systemic network of professionals that could be involved, such as counsellors, school staff and educational psychologists has been overlooked, instead focusing predominantly on refuge workers perceptions (Fitzpatrick et al 2003). It would seem important for new support interventions (such as the one examined in paper 2) to be evaluated in the context of perceptions of current support staff in a particular Local Authority, so that identified barriers and facilitators to providing support are contextually relevant.

Theoretical Perspectives

Much of the research which has been carried out looking at the effects of domestic abuse on adolescents has not been linked to a particular theoretical perspective. Therefore this is a new area, in

terms of identifying how domestic abuse research can be explained by psychological theory (Hotaling & Sugarman 1986). Currently there is no one theory that can be used to explain why an adolescent who has witnessed domestic abuse when they were younger will possibly go on to have emotional and behavioural difficulties (the literature review, appendix 31, considers a range of different possible explanations). This section covers the three most relevant theories that appropriately explain the findings of this study.

Social learning theory

Social learning theory would suggest that children who witness abuse may also learn to use it or find it more socially acceptable as it is learnt to be normal behaviour. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory suggests a person learns by modelling their behaviour on significant adult role models. Some support for this hypothesis has been found; Rosenbaum and O'Leary (1981) reported that male perpetrators were more likely to have grown up in homes where domestic abuse was occurring. Carlson (1990) also found that adolescent males who witnessed domestic abuse were significantly more likely to use violent behaviour than non-witnesses.

Social learning theory has been expanded in the area of domestic violence to include what is known as the 'cycle of abuse theory' (e.g. Knapp 1988), boys will model their behaviour on that of the abuser and that girls will internalize their mothers' passivity and potentially end up in similar relationships. So the way that adolescents deal with conflict may be to get aggressive, or learn that this is 'normal' behaviour. Depending upon the findings the role of support may be about challenging these views. However there have been criticisms of this theory as it denies and ignores the experience of many young people who have witnessed domestic abuse and are determined never to replicate it in their own lives (Peled 2000). It ignores the potential of people to learn from their experiences and change their behaviour using cognitive reasoning (McGee 2000). Bandura (1977) did consider cognitive factors in his theory of social learning, which is a critique of the 'cycle of abuse' as interpretation is as important as imitation.

Attachment theory

Leading attachment psychologists, Ainsworth & Bell, pointed out that 'Attachment is an affectional tie that one person forms to another person, binding them together in space, and enduring over time' (1973, p.10). Bowlby (1988) identified that attachment could fall into different categories such as secure or insecure. He identified secure attachment with a primary caregiver as being important for later healthy functioning.

Attachment is therefore the process by which children are made to feel safe and can go on to experience age appropriate opportunities outside the home. In a household with domestic violence this is unlikely to be the case (Sternberg 2005). Sims, Hans & Cox (1996) provided supporting research which indicated that domestic violence in a household meant children are more likely to be insecurely attached. Insecure attachment can be linked to the following behaviours; poor relationships, a difficulty understanding why other people behave the way they do and externalizing behaviour such as aggression. Worley, Walsh and Lewis (2004) also investigated early childhood experiences of domestic abusers and identified that they often had experienced neglect, domestic abuse and rejection. This led Worley et al (2004) to conclude that these experiences had been likely to influence their attachment relationships and internal working models of how relationships should be.

Sternberg (2005) investigated the effects of both childhood and teenage experiences of domestic violence on adolescent-parent attachments in Israeli adolescents. Adolescents who had experienced domestic abuse recently were less likely to be attached than those who had experienced domestic abuse sometime ago or those who had witnessed it. The research also indicated that intervention and time can change attachment relationships. However these conclusions were based on quantitative evidence which may not have reflected the extent of the adolescents' feelings.

Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner (1963) proposed a theory which recognised that people make sense of their world in terms of events and experiences and these all occur within a system where an individual develops within many layers of context. The impact of family, community and society all come into play and can shape an individual's development.

In his Ecological Systems Theory (1963) Bronfenbrenner proposed different levels which can impact on the individual:

- Microsystemic – the direct relationships an individual may have with their family, school and friends.
- Mesosystem – looks at the relationships between the different layers within the system e.g. school and home.
- Exosystem – the larger social system.
- Macrosystemic – society and cultural norms.

Bronfenbrenner's system theory has been used by researchers such as Belsky (1984) to consider the impact of domestic abuse in the context of the system upon which it occurs. Therefore the impact of domestic abuse may be moderated according to the system and the attitudes and behaviours of different people within the system. This investigation will seek to gain the views of people at different layers within the system in order to understand how support can be most usefully targeted. This is not just to give feedback within the microsystem, but looking beyond that to the other layers within the environment, ultimately to promote long term policy and practice change in response to the needs of the individual.

Rationale and Research Aims

The rationale of this research is to address gaps in the existing literature by examining views of adolescents who have witnessed domestic abuse in terms of how they may deal with conflict situations. The adolescents have received support for emotional and behavioural difficulties and therefore are likely to experience conflict themselves as well as having witnessed it. This will be considering alongside and in conjunction with their views of what support is currently available in a Local Authority in the South of England.

This research will also consider the often overlooked views of the wider support network; the professionals providing the support in a particular local authority, aiming to identify a link between how young people deal with difficult situations and whether support utilises these existing strategies. This research has a qualitative focus in order to gain a rich picture of the views of the young people in the context of wider systemic support looking at professionals' responses to these views, triangulating what support systems should look like in this new area. Identifying general themes that can then be used in paper 2 to illuminate a new support programme for young people who have experienced domestic abuse.

Research Question 1: *How do young people who have witnessed domestic abuse view and cope with situations where there is conflict? How can these be best theorised and understood?*

Research question 2: *How do young people (service recipients) who have witnessed domestic abuse experience different support services in a Local Education Authority in the south of England? From the young people's perspective has the support provided taken their views into consideration?*

Research question 3: *What are the views of the relevant professionals (service providers within a LEA in the South of England) about services provided for young people who have experienced domestic abuse? How can these be best theorised and understood?*

Methodology, Design and Methods

The overall approach to this research took an interpretative epistemological stance looking to illuminate and explore what the individual perceptions of conflict and support available for young people/adolescents who have experienced domestic abuse may be. This philosophical underpinning is appropriate as research looking at the effects of witnessing domestic abuse (and the support available) is still developing. The views of young people, in particular adolescents, have only recently come to the forefront and therefore are under researched. An approach which values the subjective nature of individual experience in understanding this phenomenon is important.

The interpretivist paradigm has a relativist ontology, in that there is an assumption that meaning is socially constructed between individuals and the researcher cannot separate themselves from what they know. The researcher's values are acknowledged to be part of the research process (brief description of the researcher's background in appendix 1). With the assumption that truth is a negotiation of a subjective reality and its interpretation, there is an acknowledgement this is bound to a particular context and time. The methodology utilised in this evaluation is illuminative enquiry. Illuminative enquiry is collaborative in nature with the problem being shared by the researcher and the participant in the context which they both exist (Worthen & Sanders 1987a). A methodology such as illuminative enquiry reflects this epistemological position and uses methods that encourage a dialogue between researcher and participant, such as a semi structured interview.

Participants

An opportunistic criterion sample was used, five participants were approached and then self selected to take part in the study voluntarily. Table 1 provides details of the participants who volunteered to take part in this enquiry including the format of the support they had received in the past.

Table 1 – Young people participants’ background information

Participant	Gender	Age	Received group or individual support
Todd	Male	18	Individual
Dave	Male	17	Individual
Sarah	Female	17	Individual
Richard	Male	15	Group
Ben	Male	16	Group

More detail regarding the participants’ background is available in appendix 2. None of the participants received both group and individual support.

The participants were defined as adolescents. With the researcher using the following definition: ‘The term *adolescence* is commonly understood to define the period of life between childhood and adulthood. This time frame, however, not only describes a very diverse reality, but adolescence varies considerably across cultures, over time, and within individuals’ (Kaplan, 2004, p. 1). This research is identifying teenage years as adolescence, and calling the participants ‘young people’.

Next five professionals who had been involved with providing support to adolescents who have experienced domestic abuse were selected to be interviewed. Four were identified by speaking to a lead strategist for the Against Domestic Violence Agency (ADVA,) who co ordinates support county wide in this particular local authority, identifying the most relevant service providers (professionals) in this area. Table 2 provides information on the professions and the type of support they have provided.

Table 2- Professional participants' background information

Participant	Gender	Professional Role
Against Domestic Violence Agency (ADVA) Strategist	Male	Co ordinates support for these young people at a county wide level.
Specialist Educational Psychologist	Female	Provides individual and group support
School Counsellor	Female	Provides individual support
Woman's Aid Worker	Male	Provides individual and group support
Child and adolescent mental health worker (CAMHS)	Female	Provides individual support

(More detail regarding the professionals' background is available in appendix 3).

Semi Structured Interviews

The data was collected through a series of semi-structured interviews with young people and professionals. Semi-structured interviews allow the interviews to be free-flowing unlike structured interviews, but also have a focus with clear prompt questions. Interesting leads which the researcher may not have thought of can easily be followed up, it also allows the interviewer and the interviewee to develop a relationship and rapport to explore issues in considerably more depth than just a questionnaire alone. Disadvantages can be interviewer bias where answers can be encouraged/sought out which suit preconceived notions (Miles & Huberman 1994). Other qualitative data collection techniques which may have been suitable were considered such as focus groups, which are considered an easy way of collecting a lot of views, however in this sensitive area it was thought that participants might like privacy.

The two sets of interview questions (one for the adolescents and one for the professionals) were created using a conceptual framework (Ausubel 1968) the conceptual map can be seen in appendix 4a. The resulting interview schedules are in appendix 5 a & b. For the adolescents the concepts were identified from the research questions and the small amount of previous research into support with a younger age range, helping to identify relevant themes around support.

Pilot Investigation

The questions from the semi-structured interview were piloted with three 16 year olds from a local secondary school to check for understanding of the language used and issues concerning the method of data collection used. This piloting identified the questions as easily accessible. However I felt that in order to ensure the responses were elaborated on prompts should be included in the main study. I therefore added the following prompts to my semi-structured interview schedule in appropriate places.

Can you say a bit more?

How did that make you feel?

What do you think about that?

Is there another time when you have felt like that?

Another issue that was important for consideration in the main study was where the participants were interviewed. During the pilot study I interviewed them in a small room, where there were continual interruptions which disrupted the conversation. This focused my awareness of the importance of a quiet space which would be uninterrupted to carry out the semi structured interviews in the main study.

The questions for the professionals were developed around some of the themes identified by the young people as important when providing support, as well as their more general perceptions of support linked to research question 3.

Procedures

Initially the researcher spoke to one of the strategy consultants for ADVA (Against Domestic Violence and Abuse) to identify what support was currently available for young people in this particular Local Authority, and which professionals were most involved with organising or providing support.

Support was identified as limited, especially group work with only one project for adolescents who had witnessed domestic abuse having recently taken place - and subsequently discontinued ('Changing Places'). The most appropriate way of gaining access was suggested through support providers such as Women's refuges (as they have some outreach support for adolescents) and a secondary school where Changing Places had occurred. I approached the secondary school which had completed the Changing Places programme and one women's refuge to help identify suitable participants who had previously experienced group or individual support in this area. Participants were approached (after consenting to give their details to me via the school or the refuge) by letter (appendix 10) and a follow up telephone call.

Each interview was carried out with just the researcher and the participant, two of the five interviews with the young people had to be held over the phone due to time and travel constraints. The other three interviews were held at the school premises of the participants, as this was identified by all three as being the location in which they felt the most comfortable.

The interviews with the young people were carried out first, as some of their feedback on their perception of support for witnessing domestic abuse was fed into the semi-structured interviews with the professionals. The interviews with the professionals were held face to face at their place of work.

All the interviews were carried out in an empty room and were recorded with a Dictaphone and later transcribed by the researcher. The tapes and transcripts are kept in a secure location. All the interviews lasted from approximately twenty to fifty minutes, with all information that could identify the participants was made anonymous by changing their name, during transcription.

Data Analysis Techniques

The interviews were transcribed into word documents by the researcher, an example of two transcripts can be seen in the appendix; one from a young person (appendix 6) and a professional (appendix 7).

Data was analysed using a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006), more information on this approach is in the analysis section below. An inductive approach was utilised as it is a relatively under explored area in terms of research, therefore there was considered to be no suitable pre defined framework upon which the transcripts should be coded. This allows for the possibility of new ideas to be developed, however it is recognised the researchers' own understandings of the area could also influence the analysis. It was decided to use thematic analysis instead of two other potentially suitable approaches to data analysis, grounded theory or interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

Grounded theory is often used to develop a new theory in an area where there is little known and so would therefore be fitting for my research purposes. However it was rejected because it would require revisiting the data collection process after an initial analysis and this was not possible due to time constraints. IPA looks at individual cases for personal experiences and meaning and as such would be

appropriate for pursuing my research questions. But, as I wanted to look across cases for common themes, the thematic analysis approach was felt to be more appropriate.

Ethics

Please refer to the ethics form (appendix 9) ethical clearance was approved before any data collection began, this was sought from Exeter University's Ethics Committee. The form was completed with full adherence to the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethical Conduct (2005). Initially I approached support providers about individuals who may be interested and suitable for this research, their contact details (with their permission) were obtained and a letter of consent of was sent to their parents and the participants, the letter also contained general information regarding the nature of the research (appendix ten).

At the start of the interviews all participants were fully briefed about the nature of my research (appendix eleven), they were also told they could withdraw at any time. To ensure that participants were not anxious about the recording of the information being identifiable as theirs they were assured that the transcripts would be made anonymous by changing all names and the audio recordings destroyed. After the interview the young people and professionals were debriefed and reminded of their right to withdraw (appendix twelve). The researcher's contact details were also given to each of the participants in case they had any queries or decided they would like to withdraw at a later date. The appropriateness of the ethics considered in this study was considered in line with previous research in this area which has involved adolescents and domestic abuse. Researchers in similar areas have tended to use opt out letters have been used to gain informed consent, as it can be a difficult and ephemeral group to gather information from (Buckley, Holt & Whelan 2007). These methods informed my ethics procedure. The questions asked of them were of their experiences, but they were given a choice not to respond and told they could leave at any time. They had also already received support for their

experiences and were still able to contact that support service, as well as the researcher, if they felt they needed additional advice.

In my research there were ethical issues which arose which were unique to my thesis, despite my initial planning in accordance with the British Psychological Society Code of Conduct (2006).

In paper 1 two ethical issues arose which had implications for the protection from potential ongoing stress and providing informed consent of the young people involved. Two of the participants I spoke to had only experienced a group intervention and one of the key findings from my research was that individual ongoing support was highly valued. This posed an ethical issue for the two participants, who also happened to mention some negatives of group support, as to whether it would be necessary to put them in touch with a counsellor to provide individual support. I had to consider the ethical issue which was linked to their ongoing protection from harm/stress by providing the support they may need, versus potentially breaking their consent around what they had agreed to participate in by contacting them further and suggesting they get in touch with someone else to speak to. I eventually concluded that as none of the participants were currently displaying externalising difficulties and could identify some improvement in their relationships, they may feel that suggesting they needed additional support would not recognise this. It was also important to respect what they had consented to be involved in, in regards to just participating in a semi structured interview.

Analysis and Discussion

The raw data was analysed using a thematic analysis through which a number of initial codes were identified, these were grouped into intermediary codes, analysis continued until saturation occurred.

For the young people the intermediary codes could be grouped into two superordinate themes:

i) experiencing conflict, which reflected an investigation of the first research question: *how do young people who have witnessed domestic abuse view and cope with situations where there is conflict. How can these be best theorised and understood?*

The themes extracted from the analysis of views of conflict were: escape, family relationships, and normative justification.

ii) Support characteristics which reflected an investigation of the second and third research questions, **2:** *How do young people (service recipients) who have witnessed domestic abuse experience different support services in a Local Education Authority in the south of England? From the young people's perspective has the support provided considered their views on how to deal with conflict? 3: what are the views of the relevant professionals (service providers within a LEA in the South of England) about services provided for young people who have experienced domestic abuse? How can these be best theorised and understood?*

The themes linked to characteristics of support could be grouped into 4 subordinate themes: conflict and support, professional qualities, group vs individual support and systemic implications.

The following section will give examples of all these themes in the young people's words. Details of the codes and how they were grouped can be seen in appendix eight. Inter-coder reliability was achieved by a sample of the data being independently coded by another researcher achieving 90% agreement.

Superordinate theme: 'Young people's Experiences of conflict and their views on its causes'

The following subordinate themes extracted from the semi structured interviews aim to better understand what circumstances cause conflict for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse (often family relationships), and how these young people view conflict (violence can be seen as normal) and cope with these situations (often through physical exercise).

For the first subordinate theme (views of conflict) a step-by-step approach to theme generation is given:

An example of the stages of analysis

The following is a detailed step by step example which is an investigation of the first research question: *how do young people who have witnessed domestic abuse view and cope with situations where there is conflict. How can these be best theorised and understood?* It is an illustrated example which will demonstrate how young people can justify and normalise violence in conflict situations and that professionals will often challenge this view.

This analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stage model. The first stage of the thematic analysis process entails the researcher familiarising themselves with the data which can be achieved by personally transcribing the verbal data into a word processing document. I did this for all interviews. Stage two involves coding the data. Stage three involves the searching for themes (sorting different codes into potential themes and collating the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) themes 'capture' something important within the data in relation to the research questions and provide a level of 'patterned' response from within the data set. Stage 4 involved reviewing themes and stage 5 was about clarifying and identification of themes and moving beyond the surface level meaning to a deeper understanding based on interpretation. Stage six is the production of the report.

Each interview was individually coded and similar codes were identified between interviews and sorted into potential themes.

Stage 1 a young persons (Todd's) fully coded semi structured interview

Example of a coded interview (codes in the comments boxes):

E: Tell me about the different sorts of relationships you have with your friends and family.

T: Well before I did the course, I used to argue with my mum all the time and it was pretty crap when you fall out all the time and have a massive row, I used to feel alot a lot of anger towards her and sometimes shout or hit things, because I blamed her for what ever. But after I started to see the womens aid worker, we were at mums house and it helped me to start to get on with her. It definitely helped to see her point of view, by discussing things using different words it helped to understand it abit differently, I mean now ever since the course I have been able to speak to my mum with no anger there. But I do still find that if I ask simple questions, for example I tried to take the dog out last night, she will try to make it difficult in a way, but now I cant be bothered to argue and I'll just leave it because it's more hassle than its worth.

Comment [E1]: 1.Difficult family relationships

Comment [E2]: 2.Anger, aggression

Comment [E3]: 3.Language changing views

Comment [E4]: 4.Apathy to arguing

E: Before how might you have handled an argument?

T: Shouted, fallen out and felt angry, I would have just left gone out on my bike to a mate's house something like that. I would have just took time out.

Comment [E5]: 2.Agression

Comment [E6]: 5. Physical activity

E: What do you currently enjoy doing in your free time?

T: I've got an expensive mountain bike that I use quite a lot, that's what I do. Well I work in a push bike shop and I can fix it up if I need to or play around with it there. Now I've got a driving licence I can go to Wales and that sort of thing at the weekend. Down hill stuff. I've been to Haldon forest and done some jumps and stuff. Its good fun.

Comment [E7]: 5. Physical activity

Comment [E8]: 5. Enjoyment of physical activity

E: What do you when you feel upset?

T: I might go out on my bike. That's the sort of thing go out.

Comment [E9]: 5. Physical activity

E: Do you ever feel that using violence is an appropriate way to deal with a situation?

T: Not really, I never used against my mother, it was getting to the point before my counsellor where she got up in face, pulled my hair and slapped me, when we were having an argument and I got up and pushed her away and she fell into the wall. I mean I pushed and she just lost her footing. I mean that was the last time, I moved out after that. That was it really, I don't feel any anger towards her now. The only time I would feel that it would be appropriate would be if I saw my step dad again, but she knows that, and my counsellor knows how I feel about that.

Comment [E10]: 6. Physical aggression

Comment [E11]: 2. Anger

E: Do you think there are ever reasons why people use violence in a relationship?

T: People do throw their weight about, to get their own way more than anything. I think it's acceptable if someone does something to you that deserves it.

Comment [E12]: 7. Explanation for violence

Lots of people do it. You know I've seen my step dad shout or hit my mum, but it's not just them, you know people at school might do it as well to get their own way.

Comment [E13]: 8. Normalisation of violence

E: Can you tell me a bit more about that?

T: Not sure really.

E: Did you find the work we a counsellor useful?

T: Definitely, it gave me something to look forward to sitting there and talking, I still see him now when I drive around town. He is somebody I rely on, who didn't judge me for what I said. To be fair we have a relationship more as friends than what it was before, I still have his mobile number and we still give each other texts now and then. When he was doing the counselling he was going through a rough patch because his dad passed away so he missed a couple of appointments, and he just texted saying give us a call if you need to chat.

Comment [E14]: 4. Language/talking

Comment [E15]: 9. lack of judgement in counsellor support

E: So did you feel that you could rely on him then?

T: Yeah, yeah definitely.

E: Who put you in touch with him?

T: I don't really know, I think it was something that my mum got through women's aid.

E: Was there any other support you had in addition to the counsellor?

T: Just my counsellor I think. My counsellor was different because it was someone you don't know like that, so you think that they're not going to tell your whole family, it was good to spend time with him.

Comment [E16]: 9. Counsellor support: confidentiality

E: So you do think other people in your situation would benefit from seeing a counsellor?

T: Yes I definitely think it is, definitely a difference.

E: What other benefits did the sessions with the counsellor provide?

T: Cheer you up, have a bit of laugh sort of thing. We did do one thing where we went climbing with some others who were in his group, so you met other people who were in the same situation – not talk about it like that, but there was more of you there.

Comment [E17]: 9. Relationship Building

Comment [E18]: 10. Group factors: similarity

E: Have you kept in touch with any of those people?

T: No, it was only for an hour or so, and they were all younger than me most of them.

Comment [E19]: 10. Group factors: age

E: Is there anything you think that could be improved about those sessions you had with the counsellor?

T: No I can't really think of anything like that.

E: What about the time period?

T: I would have liked to have gone on for longer, I enjoyed the one on one time, the length of time each session was good. Like he said it was sort of a 2 year thing when he started it, I don't know if he's still doing it or if he's doing something a bit different.

Comment [E20]: 11. Length of Support

E: Do you think in the long term it will have had an effect on how you look at things?

T: Yeah in a way, now I think it will stick with me for life. Now if I fall out with anybody – like my girlfriend, I think I can't be bothered to argue, I've done enough of it.

Comment [E21]: 4.Change- apathy to arguing

E: (Brief description of LINX) Do you think group work sounds useful?

T: I think it would be, but if it's a similar age, because it would be useful for kids to open up in a group, or even if they just hang out with each other, because they might find it more useful spending time with somebody of their own age rather than somebody a lot older than them.

Comment [E22]: 10. Group factors; benefits of age similarity

E: Do you think that having single sex groups is a good idea?

T: I think that boys probably find it easier to talk to boys and vice versa for girls.

Comment [E23]: 12. Preference for single sex

E: If you could have had the chance to go along to something like LINX would you have done it?

T: Yes definitely.

E: Any final comments?

T: I think it was really helpful that when we finished the counsellor and I exchanged proper mobile numbers, and we've kept in touch, we'll always say hello and the other day do popped around to my work to say hello and to see how I was doing, and we had a cigarette and coffee. I know that if I ever needed anybody to talk to that would be someone I would consider. Somebody that I would rely on. I did say things to him like how does he deal with hearing things that people like me say and not getting angry – I asked how he deals with it, and he says he goes for a session at the gym so he can go and work it out so it doesn't stay in its head. I think its important that it carries on, I hope it carries on after the 2 years because it helped me and there will always be somebody who it will help. If it hadn't helped me it would be the same – me and mum would fall out and not speak for months, it just puts you in the wrong frame of mind, its your mum and you not speaking and your treating her like crap.

Comment [E24]: 13. Importance of ongoing support

Comment [E25]: 9.Relationship building

Comment [E26]: 5. Physical Activity

Comment [E27]: 13. Importance of support

Comment [E28]: 1. Difficult family relationships

Stage 2: Initial codes from Todd's interview in the order they appeared:

1. Difficult Family relationships.
2. Aggression
3. Language changing views
4. Change/Apathy to arguing
5. Physical activity
6. Physical violence/aggression
7. Explanation of violence
8. Normalisation of violence
9. Counsellor Support/Relationship Building (confidentiality, lack of judgement)
10. Group Work
11. Length of support
12. Preference for single sex
13. Importance of support

Stage 3: Example of collation of extracts into codes/ developing themes. Sub theme: Normative

Justification, Code: Explanation of violence

This stage of the analysis (3) involved cross comparing the young people's semi structured interviews identifying common codes.

Interview with Dave:

You have to defend yourself.....I just deal with a difficult situation head on. (P5, L17)

Interview with Todd:

People do it to throw their weight about, to get their own way more than anything; I think it's acceptable if someone does something to you that deserves it (P6, L26)

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Interview with Richard:

For protection, I reckon to defend yourself, maybe you can't see any other way of dealing with a certain situation and someone is attacking you so you feel like you need to defend yourself, and if that means using violence, well.....(P3, L12-14)

Interview with Ben:

I can understand why someone would do it in a certain situation, if someone offended you enough I would probably hit them, if someone hits you, you can't just walk away. Hitting someone is OK if it means that person knows what you are about so they won't try to intimidate you again. (P4, L17-19)

Stage 4/5 - Data Matrix showing illustrative excerpts from young people interviews for the Sub theme of: Normative Justification, which is comprised of the similar codes: aggression, normalisation of violence and explanation of violence

This next stage involved collating different codes which had been identified across the interviews into over-arching themes

Codes developed into subtheme 'Normative Justification'	Todd	Richard	Ben	Dave
Aggression	<i>I got up and pushed her away and she fell into a wall. I mean I pushed and she lost her footing. I mean that was the last time, I moved out after that (P5, L23-26).</i>		<i>When I get angry I can tend to lash out (P1, L4)</i>	<i>I probably would have used violence to my friends, or to my girlfriend, or violent actions – never ever hit her but punch things around her, or throw my weight around, which helps me to intimidate her. (P ,L)</i>

<p>Explanation of violence</p>	<p><i>People do it to throw their weight about, to get their own way more than anything. I think it's acceptable if someone does something to you that deserves it</i> <i>(P6, L27-29)</i></p>	<p><i>For protection, I reckon to defend yourself, maybe you can't see any other way of dealing with a certain situation and someone is attacking you so you feel like you need to defend yourself and if that means using violence well.....</i> <i>(P3, L12)</i></p>	<p><i>I can understand why someone would do it in a certain situation, if someone offended you enough I would probably hit them, if someone hits you, you can't just walk away</i> <i>(P4, L17)</i></p>	<p><i>you have to defend yourself.....I just deal with a difficult situation head on.</i> <i>(P5, L17)</i></p>
<p>Normalisation of violence</p>	<p><i>Lots of people do it, you know I've seen my step dad shout or hit my mum, but it's not just them, you know people at school might do it as well to get</i></p>	<p><i>I've seen lots of my family and friends use violence at different times so it just becomes quite normal, you know? (P6,</i></p>	<p><i>Everyone gets angry with people sometimes (P1, L6)</i></p>	

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	<i>their own way.</i> <i>(P6, L30-31).</i>	<i>L39)</i>		
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Data Matrix showing illustrative excerpts from Professionals interviews, Sub theme of: Normative Justification, code: challenging views that violence is acceptable

SUB THEME	Woman's Aid Counsellor	School Counsellor	Educational Psychologist	ADVA Organiser	CAMHS Worker
Challenge	<i>But you've also got to try to pull it back to their experience, to allow them to talk about their experiences to a point and challenge the impact of their experiences. What comes out is labelling, assumptions about normality of domestic abuse, all things they didn't like they were doing</i>	<i>Domestic violence is a funny one, it's not like they will come in and say my dad is beating up my mum. They live with it – and I think some of them think it's quite normal.</i>	<i>always been very boundaried not opening cans of worms that someone else has to put a lid on, as often they have learnt to be cope by justifying the behaviour as acceptable, an everyday occurrence which needs to be challenged appropriately.</i>		<i>I think society looks at violence differently to someone who sexually abuses, by doing that they become perpetrators important not to normalise that behaviour.</i>

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	<i>with others, and we were able to work with them around this.</i>				
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Stage 5: Example of all themes, subthemes and initial codes (from all SSI interviews from the Young People & Professionals) and another example of coding/theme generation can be seen in Appendix 8 (pg 166).

Stage 6 writing the report: This stage involved considering the themes in the context of theory and how this research contributes new understandings to how young people explain domestic abuse as normal (often in the context of their own experiences), links were made to social learning theory (Bandura 1977) through the modelling of significant others (who have used violence) and so justifying this behaviour as acceptable. This has implications for new role models (the professionals) to challenge these views and model alternative ways of behaving; this is considered in more depth in the following section.

Theme 1: Normative justification

As a way of coping with domestic abuse and conflict it seemed that these adolescents would often make reference to the acceptability of violence by reference to how many other people are involved in a similar situation, therefore it is often justifiable as others behave in a comparable way. Hence the term 'normative justification' is used to describe this theme as for these young people violence was accepted as 'normal' within their family and peer group.

Todd: *'People do it to throw their weight about, to get their own way more than anything. Lots of people do it, you know I've seen my step dad shout or hit my mum, but it's not just them, you know people at school might do it as well to get their own way.'*

Richard: *'For protection, I reckon to defend yourself, maybe you can't see any other way of dealing with a certain situation and someone is attacking you so you feel like you need to defend yourself.'*

Ben: *'Well it's never really right but I understand why someone would do it in a certain situation, if someone offended you enough I would probably hit them, if someone hits you, you can't just walk away.'*

The findings indicated that most of the young people involved in this research could justify violence as normal within relationships, and could give (often differing) examples of why they justified the abuse occurring.

Totten (2003) identified there is a significant gap in the literature about young people's views on violence in their own relationships with research growing in the last decade, particularly in America. He identified that many young people held views similar to adults and that this was often linked to the acceptability of a man behaving in a certain way as that is part of a heterosexual man's identity, which could include physical aggression.

Recent U.K. studies have indicated that there is a high acceptability of domestic abuse in young relationships, but there were gender differences, for example a study in Southwark (2006) revealed that young men were more likely than young women to accept aggressive behaviour as an acceptable action if, for example, a partner was unfaithful. In this study there was only one view which was less tolerant on the acceptability of domestic abuse which was a female, Sarah: *'It's never acceptable to hit someone, under no circumstances.'*

However McCary (2009) conducted a piece of research looking at attitudes of 77 young people, both male and female, examining their views on domestic abuse. The findings revealed ambivalence towards domestic abuse from both genders with many justifications as to why it may be acceptable. These included: male dominance, cultural acceptability, fear of female equality and women may deserve it. However this research used focus groups to collect data to address the power differential between

interviewer and interviewee. A criticism of this form of data collection is that certain dominant members of the group are more likely to express their opinions.

Neighbours, Walker, Mbilinyi, O'Rourke, Edleson, Zegree & Roffman (2009) conducted research that showed that social norms related to domestic abuse were over estimated by male perpetrators in relation to other male perpetrators. This suggests that there may be discrepancies between what males think is an appropriate social norm amongst others and what they actually feel themselves, so interventions could aim to target what common perceptions actually are.

The explanation that domestic abuse is acceptable because it is 'the norm' can be elaborated in the context of Social Learning Theory (Bandura 1977); when children are young they observe behaviour and learn by modelling it, therefore replicating similar behaviours. Several of the adolescents could also give examples of when they have behaved in a violent way in a situation of conflict and also mention that they have witnessed this type of behaviour in the past, providing additional evidence for the role of modelling behaviour as suggested by Social Learning Theory. Social Learning Theory can also help to explain the difference between the genders as it would predict that females may learn to be more passive or less tolerant (if their mother had left the situation) and males more accepting, as with most domestic abuse the perpetrator is male (ADVA 2001).

In summary young people who have witnessed domestic abuse tend to explain their experiences as relatively normal, and that many people can be violent. This explanation can possibly be explained by social learning theory in that young people normalise their experiences by learning how to behave from others.

2. Family as a source of conflict

Family relationships were rarely talked about as being supportive when trying to avoid conflict, even when it was not regarding the perpetrator of the domestic abuse, and instead they were often considered to be the source of much difficulty.

All of the young people, apart from one, still lived at home with their mothers. There was mixed feelings towards their family, it was often mothers in particular who were mentioned when talking about situations of conflict and how they dealt with difficult situations.

Mixed sometimes contradictory feelings were felt towards family members. Todd: *'I used to argue with my mum all the time and it was pretty crap when you fall out all the time and have a massive row, I used to feel a lot of anger towards her, because I blamed her for the situation she put us in – you know with the violence. I do still find that if I ask simple questions, for example I tried to take the dog out last night, she will try to make it difficult in a way.'* Todd mentions the anger he felt towards his mother, which led to conflict often around simple day-to-day activities. Potential difficulty is highlighted in this excerpt when he mentions the sense of blame towards his maternal figure for the situation he had experienced. This finding around blame towards the non-perpetrating parent has been reflected in previous literature (e.g. Sternberg 2005, Peled 2000).

However family relationships were also made complex by the young person feeling a protective role, Richard: *'Yeah there's my mum and I have some brothers and sisters, we're quite close I suppose, I don't know if I feel that I could talk to them about everything though as I feel that I have to look after them. I sort of love them cos I have too, but don't feel close to them, sometimes I don't even like them.'* However within Richard's narrative it is possible to see how these emotions are complex and occasionally contradictory toward his mother and other members of his family, which again is likely to cause conflict. Research has identified how children living with domestic abuse can experience mixed emotions with

young males often feeling a protective role towards their mother which can cause disagreements within other family relationships (Peled 2000).

In summary family relationships can cause mixed emotions in the context of witnessing domestic abuse, therefore could not be relied upon as a stable form of support, as protective feelings as well as feelings of anger towards a maternal figure have been identified.

3. Escaping from conflict

When the young people were asked about their home background it became apparent that one of the ways that they cope with times of conflict is to try to escape their situation, this was often through physical activity which was common to all the young people who took part. This means of being able to escape a situation was something that the young people used to not only escape conflict but to also feel differently about the situation.

Todd: *'I've got an expensive mountain bike that I use quite a lot, that's what I do when I'm finding things difficult.'*

Dave: *'I like to play rugby, surf and I like to skate When I've been out and done something like that I just feel more positive, I've always been quite sporty.'*

Sarah: *'Go to my room, try to get away from everyone, I might put music on, or even go out shopping. I try to avoid a situation if I find it difficult to deal with, you know sort of escape by taking my mind off things.'*

Richard: *'Generally I play football, it takes my mind off things to have a good kick about and run around. It doesn't even have to be with anyone else, sometimes I quite like going on my own.'*

Ben: *'Lots of sports, I play football a lot, it helps me to relieve any feelings of frustration or anxiety that may be playing on my mind.'*

The Home Office of National Statistics (2009) has indicated that young people aged between 16 and 24 report sports, watching television and spending time with friends as the most common leisure activities. This research corroborates these statistics with most of the young people who were spoken to mentioning they took part in physical activities such as football and biking, as a means of escaping difficult situations and conflict. This is consistent with other findings that identify that when support has been offered by Women's Aid in the form of activities, fun and sport it was highly rated (Fitzpatrick et al, 2003; Mullender et al, 2002; Stafford et al, 2007). Interestingly there was a difference in how the young woman spoken to chose to escape situations through shopping or reading, and therefore gender differences in coping strategies is an important variable to consider.

Therefore learning to escape conflict through physical activity has been identified in the narratives of these young people as a useful means to avoid conflict and could be a potential form of support.

Superordinate theme: Support Characteristics

The following section looks at the views of young people on support, whether their views on conflict were influenced by support, and vice-versa, and how this links with professionals' views. The aim is to create an understanding of what themes are relevant to support and how these could be utilised when considering future provision for those who have witnessed domestic abuse. The following extracts reveal how the themes were triangulated between young people and professionals' views to create a coherent understanding about support provision.

Initially consideration of whether support has considered the young people's view of conflict will be discussed. The themes extracted will then move on to reflect a broader understanding of what valuable support may look like for young people, with the addition of reflections from relevant professionals'.

This creates a better overall understanding of what support provision for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse may involve.

1. Support and conflict views:

a) Escape through physical activity.

Many of the young people commented that the support had helped them to return to how they used to be, like playing a sport, or helping them to find new ways of managing relationships. Dave: *'I don't think there is a single thing which hasn't changed as a result of this work. I didn't used to play rugby – because I didn't want to, but then because of him I started again, I had played rugby all the life so it was very strange that I stopped. It has literally made me, me, back to my old self. I suppose mum said how happy I am now when I come home, I used to go into my room and not do a lot, whereas now I will go straight in and say hello to her.'*

Interestingly this theme was not reflected in the professionals' views on support characteristics with no professional mentioning the role of physical activity as a means of providing support, or recognition of how young people returned to activities they used to enjoy as a result of support and how this used to be used as a coping mechanism. Therefore an implication for support programmes would be for professionals to have heightened awareness that it may be important to identify positive previous behaviours the young person has stopped engaging with, or desirable new ones, when considering the goals of any support programme. The role of physical activity could be promoted and highlighted during support sessions, facilitating access to clubs and sports sessions.

Therefore the role of physical education should not be over looked. The importance of physical exercise has long been noted to have a beneficial effect in terms of boosting mental health as well as physical functioning (Cohen & Williamson 1991).

Nonetheless when implementing any aspect of a new intervention which may be unfamiliar or new, an awareness of self efficacy (capability belief) is important in order to create the right situation for change. Sarah commented that she *'finds new situations daunting.'* This is reflected in existing research for example 'The Lifestyle Education for Activity Program (LEAP) intervention' (Dishman, Motl, Saunders, Felton, Ward, Dowda & Pate 2004), which demonstrated that changes in self-efficacy were partially responsible for increased physical activity among adolescent girls and any resulting behaviour changes. Self efficacy is an important variable to consider when asking adolescents to take part in any new activity as how well they believe they can do will impact on whether they attempt a task (Bandura 1997).

This theme has highlighted a suggestion for intervention programmes to possibly include physical activities but bear in mind self efficacy using positive reinforcement and examples of success when introducing any new activities (Dishman et al 2004). This is a possible limitation of any intervention which asks a young person to attempt a new task and does not consider their self belief in their own capabilities.

b) *Family relationships and support.* Many of the young people identified how having some support, either one-to-one or in a group helped to improve their family relationships, as these relationships themselves were not cited as a source of support, more often a source of conflict.

Todd: 'But after I started to see the women's aid worker, we were at mum's house and it helped me to start to get on with her. It definitely helped to see her point of view, by discussing things using different words it helped to understand it a bit differently, I mean now ever since the course I have been able to speak to my mum with no anger there.'

Sarah: *'I like to spend time with family and friends, more now after speaking to someone, before I think I always argued and felt like things weren't going my way, I guess I had a lot of resentment, you know? Whereas now I can be calmer and think before I act'*

Ben: *'I don't really see my half brothers and sister any more. I used to have lots of fights with my younger brother, I think I can just tolerate a lot more now and walk away from a situation more, I think being in a group and talking helped'*

This complex relationship was recognised by professionals, reflected in an excerpt from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Worker: *'I would be clear about not wanting to work with the parent as often the issues lie there – both with mum and the perpetrator, although I have done parenting strategies separately.'* School Counsellor: *'They might even feel resentment towards mum – you know that's quite common, why did she put us in that situation?'* Both quotes highlight that it may not be appropriate for parents and young people to be involved in domestic abuse support work together but separately instead.

This is, however, in conflict with some previous research on support (especially with children) which has included parents in group work with children (Graham-Bermann 2001). This was reflected in this research with discrepancies in the professionals' narratives over whether family relationships were identified as being crucial to ongoing support or should be kept totally separate.

Woman's Aid Worker: *'I think it will be really good if you get to the point where they are able to express some of these feelings of blame and have the parent there to hear that and begin to process some of that I think it is very powerful.'*

ADVA Strategic Commissioner: *'I've got an intuitive believe that domestic violence does impact young people and their relationships with their family, instead of ignoring it needs to be dealt with.'*

Interestingly this conflicting view on the role of the family amongst the professionals was similar to the contradictory nature of their family relationships that was explored with the young people.

This theme extends previous findings regarding children (McGee 2000) to adolescents who identified that having individual support from outside professionals can be helpful to promote family relationships as they can speak privately about them. This would not negate the possibility of working separately with the family.

c) *Normative justification and support.*

Similar to the young people some of the professionals identified that exposure to domestic abuse had resulted in a justification that violent behaviour in relationships was relatively normal. The importance of challenging the assumptions during support, regarding acceptability of domestic abuse, was identified as important.

Women's Aid Worker: *'you've also got to try to pull it back to their experience, to allow them to talk about their experiences to a point and challenge the impact of their experiences. What comes out is labelling, assumptions about normality of domestic abuse, all things they didn't like they were doing with others.'*

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Worker: *'I think society looks at violence differently to someone who sexually abuses and by doing that it may mean they in turn become perpetrators, therefore it is important not to normalise that behaviour and challenge their assumptions.'*

This has implications for most forms of support (both group and individual) with this analysis reinforcing the need to challenge views, providing a different perspective to the one they may have identified as 'normal justification' of behaviour in situations where conflict may arise. Some of the young people who were spoken to identified that their views had already started to change as a result of support.

Dave: *'Whereas before I probably would have used violence to my friends, or to my girlfriend, or violent actions – not ever hit her but punch things around her, or throw my weight around, which helps me to intimidate her, now I've learnt from speaking to someone to be more calm and talk about things.'*

Sarah: *'I think it is about trying to control someone and make them do what you want them to do. The support I had made me realise you can change what you think, even if you have experienced violence at some point in your life and are copying what you have experienced.'*

Social Learning Theory (Bandura 1977) could be used to provide a theoretical basis for support programmes and provide practical implications such as; examples of positive behaviour upon which to model their responses, in the form of scenarios or role play to promote positive behaviour change.

However children seek to make sense of their world and how they do this will vary. It is important to consider interpretation as important as imitation. Mediating cognitive variables will influence what behaviour is demonstrated (McGee 2000). The implication for support programmes is the need to tailor the support to the individual. This will help them to manage their varying perceptions of the justification of conflict and their feelings towards the individuals involved. In relation to group work any intervention would need to be flexible enough to account for individual needs which could potentially impact on the structure of the programme.

This theme has identified the importance of challenging views about what behaviour may be considered normal in the context of their experiences.

2. Professional qualities

Professional qualities were highlighted by the individuals and related to key characteristics of the professionals involved that had supported them in dealing with their experiences, and later perceptions of their experiences. Similar characteristics were also identified in the professionals' narratives.

Key characteristics of those providing support included:

- a) **Reliability and challenge** Todd: *'Somebody that I would rely on, who didn't judge me for what I said.'* And Dave: *'He listens, and you know he's very easy to trust. Personally I just found there*

was something about him, he'd been there before, he wasn't just a person who didn't want to be there.....No matter what you said, he never, ever judged you or made you feel like crap. He wasn't afraid to confront you, 'why did you say or do this.' He was very confrontational if he thought what you were doing was wrong like being aggressive with my girlfriend. I think that not straight away I understood, I knew in my heart of hearts it was right but I didn't want to listen.' Dave also refers to the complex balance of a lack of judgement combined with possible challenge from the support provider when he talks about the confrontation that occurred which he acknowledges led to a later shifting of beliefs. A lack of judgement was also reflected in the school counsellor's narrative:

School Counsellor: *'I think there is real benefit in just having a chat, listening - you know without judgement, talk and use positive reinforcement and practical solutions. Often a simple cup of tea helps them to feel cared for and looked after.'*

- b) **Experience & confidentiality**, Richard: *'I knew they knew what I was talking about as they had been there, and I wasn't worried about what I said in case they told anyone else, as everything was so messed up at the time.'*

Educational Psychologist: *'identified people who are confident to talk, have experience of working with domestic violence and are not afraid of the child protection aspect.'*

- c) **Flexibility**, Sarah: *'I really felt after a while that I could express myself and talk about things that I don't really discuss with anyone else, they were comfortable familiar you know easy to talk to. They could always be relied on to change the topic if it got too much and think about things from a different angle.'*

ADVA Strategic Commissioner: *'support needs to be flexible, some people like a structure and that's not going to work with these young people,'*

Women's Aid Worker: *'Being Flexible, each session is quite holistic and fitted to the situation, it's really giving them an opportunity to say 'no judgement – you lead this', giving them an*

opportunity to talk about it, what's going on, what's gone on, what effect its having on them, looking at some behaviours that might be happening because of what's gone on.'

- d) Also identified was the professional being able to put **the voice of the child** at the forefront of any work (child and adolescent mental health worker). Child and Adolescent Mental Health Worker: *'I think ideal support would be something that is more child orientated, that gives a child a chance to say what they want, rather than saying this is our system. Having a lot more participatory involvement, peer training and that sort of thing, they do that in social services a lot. They get young people to train foster carers and professionals to listen.'*

These findings regarding key professional qualities highlight the importance of relevant experience and training, as professionals from many different areas (The Woman's Aid Federation 2007) are often involved in providing support for those who witness domestic abuse. All the professionals spoken to had had different training and some used different theoretical frameworks. This research highlights a need for consistency utilising the key characteristics such as those identified in this research when considering what makes a good service provider, especially for new interventions where the facilitators may not be experienced domestic abuse support providers, just professionals with some experience working with young people who can deliver a programme.

There is minimal research identifying key characteristics of a good support provider in this niche area, more an understanding of good practice and relevant experience (Rye 1998). There is some prior research which has emphasised the professional's role, rather than key characteristics, for example suggesting they should focus on highlighting dangers, risks and safety plans for children who live with or have lived with domestic abuse (Loosley 2004). There are beginnings of research which identify general professional qualities by acknowledging the need for support providers to have a fundamental understanding of the impact of domestic abuse to be able to communicate effectively, without undermining the children's own resilience in the situation. This has been identified as requiring skills

sensitivity on the part of the professional (Ellis 2004), this work with children which could be expanded to adults.

As the awareness for the need of this form of support grows, selection on the basis of key competencies (such as the ones identified in this research) could be used as well just experience of working with young people. This would meet current policy recommendations from government publications such as the 2009 HM Government coordinated strategy aimed at ending violence against women and girls promoting education and understanding. Shared recognised professional competencies could also help to negate current criticisms of support around rigorousness of support (e.g. Hester and Westmarland 2005).

This research has helped to develop and conceptualised new understandings linked to key professional qualities (e.g. flexibility and challenge) for those who work with adolescents who have witnessed domestic abuse.

3. Group versus individual support

The young people involved generally had similar perceptions of what useful support consisted of, with all young people identifying that having individual time with a professional outside of the family was important. However there were contradictions in the narratives as most individuals could see the benefits of group work, but overall they thought individual work would be more helpful. Reference was also made to support being ongoing if needed.

Todd: 'I would have liked to have gone on for longer, I enjoyed the one-on-one time.....meeting other people who were in the same situation – not talk about it like that. To be fair we have a relationship more as friends than what it was before, I still have his mobile number and we still give each other texts now and then.'

Sarah: *'I think the sharing of experiences is useful, to know that you're not alone. It's nice to speak to people your own age. But I think individual support is more personable, and I know that I could still contact the person I spoke to if I really needed to.'*

Richard: *'I would have liked a bit longer though as I felt that I just started sharing somethings when it finished. It takes me a while to trust people and be sure that they are really there to support me.'*

Ben: *'I think group support is very awkward, especially at first because no one knows each other, people don't really say what they really feel, it got a little better but was still awkward most of the time. It took time though for me to trust other people enough to discuss my experience.'*

Similar to the young people the professionals identified the important role of individual work and the possible difficulties of group work

Educational Psychologist: *'there is not a huge amount of direct contact support.....I think the barriers to getting a group together would be quite significant like time and management.'*

School Counsellor: *'I think group work works well, but there are always some individuals who are better on an individual basis. The problem with group work is trying to ensure they don't miss too much, there's always one kid who doesn't want to miss a lesson. There is always some kid who mucks around.'*

Women's Aid Worker: *'Support work needs to last as long as the individual needs it – I often stay in contact, by text or phone, just so they feel like they've got someone to go to.....group work is notoriously difficult....'*

ADVA Strategic Commissioner: *'I would like to see young people followed up by 1-to-1 work for a while, it's hard to say how long because that might vary from individual to individual. Some may not need it, and others may need it for years. Or hopefully by their behaviour improving being able to access more universal services like youth work, school opportunities, work programmes,'*

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Worker: *'I only work individually, I think group work can work – but needs to be thought about in terms of logistics, who is in the group, do we say what the group is focusing on? These can be barriers which are too great to overcome. I feel quite strongly that support should be offered infinitely.'*

The professionals seemed to identify individual work as important, but often in the context of the difficulties of group work, so the latter is seen as valuable just possibly more difficult to organise.

The few studies that have looked at individuals' perception of support have generally focused on the child (rather than adolescents), with children's accounts of being involved in group work tending to be positive (Stafford et al, 2007; Mullender et al, 2002).

There is mention of individual work preceding group work (Mullender et al 2002) and that group work can build on the work done with the individual. However this research identifies that individual work is important and should possibly used in conjunction with any group work, with group work working best when it is carried out with familiar adults in a familiar environment allowing ongoing support with a key adult to continue if necessary.

Previous research has highlighted that individual work may be more suited to those children who have been exposed to chronic violence and may be displaying fairly severe emotional and behavioural issues, with group work being suitable for all (Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson 1990). However the findings from this research indicate that most of the young people indicated a preference for individual work – despite coming from a range of backgrounds.

Current guidelines for individual work are predominantly for working with children (Women's Aid Federation 2007) and therefore maybe not be entirely appropriate for adolescents. Also they tend to be linked to children and young people based in refuges, so are focused on individual work that may be linked with the non-perpetrating parent, and general standards about understanding domestic abuse and advocacy (Women's Aid Federation 2007). It seems important, therefore, that similar

ideas/guidelines are identified for adolescents who may have experienced domestic abuse in the past and do not live in refuges but need individual support, the theme *professional qualities* identifies what the adolescents and professionals in this research felt was important in addition to ongoing support.

Attachment theory is relevant when considering the importance of a key adult (which maybe fostered more readily within individual work with an adolescent), if domestic abuse has disrupted attachment to create insecure attachments (Bowlby 1988). Research has identified the impact that a supporting adult can have on development if they provide that secure attachment, even later on in maturity, helping to develop behaviour and support emotional development (Geddes 1999).

In summary both young people and professionals identified that good support would be ongoing and incorporate some form of individual work. Thus this research has contributed a new understanding to the role of individual support versus group support for adolescents.

One theme which was consistently identified in the professionals' narrative which was unique to them in the sense that it did not appear in any of the young peoples' narratives was the impact of systems. The professionals identified the wider issues around providing services, which is likely in part to be from their more over-arching view of support services, in comparison to the young people interviewed. This is elaborated on below.

4.Systemic Implications

Key systemic issues identified were:

- a) The importance of domestic abuse support work being **part of someone's job role**.

ADVA Strategic Commissioner: *'but not many people find the time to deliver the group work, because it wasn't really part of their job role..... I think multi agency work is improving but it's still a long way off.....'* This quote identifies that in this particular local authority there is more

systemic work around multi agency working and domestic abuse to be done: for example ensuring the professionals providing the support feel they are also supported by the wider system by this type of work being included within their job description.

- b) **Awareness raising and the role of schools.** A need for all members of a system to promote planning and prevent difficulties from a lack of understanding about the role of support was identified. As this excerpt from the School Counsellor identifies, misunderstanding can lead to friction: *'There was a bit of friction between them, the people who were running the group programme and a couple of other members of staff, because students were missing lessons. I think some of the members of staff didn't want it to work because they didn't understand what it was about. It's the trouble when groups are run in school time they don't understand the school routine.'*

Other quotes reflect the need for domestic abuse support to be embedded within schools, rather than outside agencies providing the support. Awareness raising should be a means of targeting and challenging some of the possibly more widespread views about the acceptability of violence within relationships, in addition to pointing individuals in the right direction for support. Women's Aid Worker: *'It's got to be that school awareness is raised from joint working with school from schools and children in schools not just outside professionals. Less prescriptive not just identifying individuals but about providing awareness to all. A criticism of ADVA is the lack of joined up thinking, if the pots of money come up they go bang, bang and scatter about without any joined up planning.'*

Educational Psychologist: *'I feel it's still quite a new area for awareness raising so getting some of the ideas around healthy relationships embedded into PSHE is important, but I think it's not something that is going to happen overnight. I think for support programmes to have a chance to become embedded long term there would have to be funding allocated directly to schools.'*

- c) The important role of **Common Assessment Frameworks (CAFs)** were identified as being underused. Educational Psychologist: *'I think the CAF could be very useful for raising awareness*

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in localities and communities about which services might be able to help and come together, it has the potential to bring agencies together.' The role of Common Assessment Frameworks (CAFs) is being identified as an important way to identify the need for domestic abuse support, with possibly a routine question about the issue being included, clearly having an implication for policy and practice of professionals working in this area.

Bronfenbrenner's (1963) ecological systems theory identifies how individuals are placed within multi layer systems and how each layer can impact on the individual. This has clear implications for policy; promoting effective communication about domestic abuse with all members of the system (not just the professionals providing support), with a coordinated system with clearly designated roles.

There is research which has supported multi agency provision being given to young people who have witnessed domestic abuse (Humphreys & Stanley 2006). But often this has focused on health, housing and education needs, rather than a coherent approach to the emotional and behavioural development of adolescents and the needs of the professionals providing the support which this paper has started to explore.

To sum up the theme of support characteristics has identified many relevant themes, which will be summarised in the next section. Both young people and professionals have identified common themes which could be considered when designing and implementing new support interventions for adolescents who have witnessed domestic abuse.

Overall Discussion and Conclusions

Key findings

In answer to the first research question around how young people view and cope with situations where there is conflict, the key finding was a common perception that violence was relatively normal and could be justified in the context of their own experiences. The normalising of the young peoples' view of conflict could be explained within the context of social learning theory, in that what they had witnessed had helped shape their own behaviour and views on violence.

These experiences were often linked to family relationships and the complex feelings they held around their relationships within this unit. Another important finding was linked to how they learnt to cope with conflict which was often by escaping a situation for example through physical activity. Also the role of coping with escaping, commonly through physical exercise has long been recognised as having psychological benefits (Cohen & Williamson 1991).

In response to the second and third research question, regarding young people and professionals views on support, there were many positive experiences about the support the young people had received, but also many areas which could be improved as there is no one theoretical model of what a support service in this area should look like. As this is a relatively new area of support, professionals could also identify many areas for consideration in the future. These views have helped to clarify and consolidate what a useful support service may need to consider from the analysis of the young people and professionals spoken to in this research.

The young people's view on support services could be linked to their views on conflict. For example the importance that physical activity could have as a means of support, and how for some young people they had returned to this coping strategy as result of receiving support. The importance of self efficacy if this was a new intervention was also considered (Dishman et al 2004). The significance of challenge in

a support programme was also identified, that if a young person holds views that violence may be relatively 'normal', young people identified that challenge had helped them to think differently (affecting their views) about their behaviour and relationships. This was another positive aspect of any support programme. In turn the analysis on views of conflict revealed how an awareness of how families should not always be relied on for support, however outside support could improve this relationship, possibly through awareness raising with techniques such as challenging the young peoples' thinking and behaviour.

Another finding which was common to both young peoples' and professionals' views on support, was the recognition of the important role of particular professional qualities (such as being flexible) to the success of any programme in this area. However the background of the professionals (as identified during this research) was so varied, characteristics such as this had not been previously clarified (beyond just experience of working with these young people).

Another key finding was participants' views (and professionals') on the role of individual support and how this appeared to be valued over group work in this context. The implication was that the relationship which develops is important and should possibly be considered in addition to group work. The important role of individual long lasting support, in terms of the desire for an ongoing relationship with one individual was considered in the context of attachment theory. Attachment theory (e.g. Bowlby 1988) states that a relationship with one individual can help to develop healthy internal working models regarding relationships; this has implications for support in terms of time and access to a professional.

Finally the professionals' views included how the role of the system could potentially impact on any support programme as different people within the system may create barriers or facilitators to any form of support. An important finding was the recognition that this should be considered and addressed before an intervention takes place, possibly through awareness raising and adaptability of job roles.

Considerations of support interventions being part of a job description and the importance of multiagency working could be explained by systems theory (Bronfenbrenner 1963).

These findings will be amalgamated with the key findings from paper 2 and discussed and interpreted in the final discussion section.

Limitations and future areas of research

A qualitative approach was selected to gain an insight into the views of an often ephemeral group. However when the data is gathered in collaboration with the researcher, as it is with a semi structured interview, it is important to acknowledge the potential impact of researcher bias (Miles and Huberman 1994). The researcher acknowledges this limitation in this type of research and discloses her background and motivation (appendix 1), in order to create a transparent report that reflects both the participants' and the researchers' perspective. As the participants were being interviewed by someone they did not know that well the importance of 'impression management' must be considered as this may have influenced the participants' responses. This could affect the overall confidence one can have in the conclusions drawn as it is difficult to know whether the participants revealed their true feelings rather than socially desirable responses (Miles and Huberman 1994). Some response triangulation was achieved by having telephone feedback, individually, with two of the young people and two of the professionals, asking if they thought the themes identified in this report represented their views, it was felt that they did indeed portray some of the key issues they felt regarding support.

Due to the time constraints a relatively structured approach was necessary for data collection which meant that it was difficult to explore all themes that emerged within the data. This limitation and the small data sample mean that the findings are only a small illumination of the views of young people and professionals on support for witnessing domestic abuse. It is a subjective insight into what these people felt and thought at that time, therefore it is difficult to generalise any conclusions.

The participant sample only focused on those who had been referred for support as a result of displaying behavioural difficulties with a known background of witnessing domestic abuse. Therefore the opinions of support do not reflect those young people who are more likely to internalise their difficulties (possibly linked to gender differences demonstrated by the predominantly male sample) or not display any emotional or behavioural problems at all.

In terms of data collected some of the participants were reluctant to talk in depth about their previous experiences of domestic abuse, preferring to focus on their perceptions of support. Therefore it was hard to investigate some of the mediating factors linked to experiencing domestic abuse identified in the risk and resilience literature. Rutter (1985) summarized some of the key resiliency factors influenced by appropriate coping strategies discussed such as self esteem, an even temperament, attractiveness, a sense of humour, good social skills, support network, autonomy and purpose, secure attachments and connections to a wider community as being influential. Due to time and participant reluctance it was difficult to investigate the impact of all the mediating variables that could affect an individuals' risk and resilience in terms of the impact of domestic abuse on behavioural and emotional development, but investigation of these mediating variables would be useful in future research.

Future research could also focus on longitudinal work around barriers and facilitators to support for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse, considering the themes identified in this research over a period of time with young people and professionals. There is a lack of research in local authorities regarding what is actually needed in terms of support for domestic abuse. Therefore ongoing research might help to identify arising factors when considering how to best incorporate new support into pre existing structures.

Implications

Clear implications for policy include the embedding of domestic abuse awareness raising within school curricula's, with signposting to school support with appropriately trained staff (Aitken 2001). However they will need the time within their job role to provide ongoing support to an individual.

Another implication for policy is around the greater use of CAFs, to highlight the issue of domestic abuse, as well as promoting multi agency working within this area.

The implications of paper 1 will also be considered in paper 2, where some of the key findings will be used to qualitatively evaluate a new group intervention ('LINX'). LINX is a programme for adolescents who have experienced domestic abuse and are displaying behavioural difficulties. Some of the findings from this paper will be used to consider barriers and facilitators to support during the analysis of LINX.

For example thoughts around: *does/should the programme provide opportunities to have physical exercise? Do the facilitators challenge the normative beliefs of the young people? Are professionals characteristics such as the ones identified in this paper important? What is the role of individual support on comparison to group work? Are the systemic implications of LINX considered?*

Conclusion

This research was collected within the interpretivist paradigm which allowed for rich qualitative data collection in the under explored area of adolescents' and professionals' views on support for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse. The themes that arose from the data analysis linked to three research questions which created superordinate themes of 'experiencing conflict' and 'support characteristics.'

This research has identified that young people who experience domestic abuse have some similar views on situations involving conflict and how to cope with those situations. It can be concluded that adolescents have learnt to behave in a certain way in situations of conflict which could be explained by social learning theory. Support has helped to challenge some of these behaviours, but may not always have considered some of the more appropriate strategies to build upon.

Views on support were similar between the young people and many professionals who had worked with similar young people; there were practical implications for the implementation of any new support interventions within this local authority. Practical implications for support included: the role of physical activity during support sessions, facilitating access to clubs and sports sessions, possibly challenging young people's views, the role of individual work and how it should be used in conjunction with any group work, also group work would work best when it is carried out with familiar adults in a familiar environment so ongoing support with a key adult can continue if necessary. These findings provide a deeper understanding of the needs of adolescents who have experienced domestic abuse, and help to identify the role of theory such as attachment theory which identifies that an ongoing rapport with a key supportive adult can help to develop secure attachments, when can in turn impact on behaviour and relationships.

Clear implications for policy were also identified in the professional's views around promoting effective communication about domestic abuse, with a coordinated system with clearly designated roles that

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enable support to be better understood, and possibly facilitated. The role of school in awareness raising and Common Assessment Frameworks (CAFs) for multi agency referrals was identified.

Future research needs to consider new support interventions in light of these findings, with the need for longitudinal research around systemic facilitators and barriers which promote effective interventions.

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Paper 2: Experiences of a group intervention: LINX, investigating and consolidating guidelines for practice.

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Abstract

This paper looked at the experiences of a group of young people and professionals who were involved in a new group intervention aimed at supporting adolescents who had witnessed domestic abuse and were displaying behavioural difficulties. This programme is called LINX and is designed to target empathy awareness through experiential learning.

I elicited the views of participants of LINX, the facilitators of LINX and the views of people within the various institutions in which LINX is placed using semi-structured interviews. Seven participants of LINX were selected, using a voluntary sampling technique, from four groups undertaking weekly sessions of LINX over a 4 month period (5 males and 2 females, aged 15-17). A case study methodology allowed triangulation of a variety of sources of evidence: pre, mid and post intervention semi structured interviews, observations and questionnaires. A deductive thematic analysis of these data allowed for loose themes from paper 1 to be investigated in paper 2.

This analysis revealed that there were varied views on group projects such as LINX. Some of the positives were the identification of a greater range of behavioural coping strategies such as talking and walking way, this had impacted on their relationships and their comments reflected heightened empathy awareness. Some participants debated whether these changes would be long lasting. Identified negatives from this form of group work included: a preference for ongoing work with an individual.

A focus group with 7 educational psychologists (opportunistically sampled during a team meeting in the south of the county in which LINX took place) explored the findings and identified practical implications for this profession such as supervision of facilitators of interventions and raising awareness of the impact of domestic abuse systemically in schools.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to investigate a new intervention targeted at supporting adolescents who have witnessed domestic abuse and are displaying behavioural difficulties. The intervention is called LINX and uses group work to facilitate change. This is a relatively new area of support and this research is interested in beginning to develop principles which can be used to guide similar interventions in the future.

A national incidence study of 2,869 young adults indicated that 26% had witnessed violence between their parents at least once, and for 5% the violence was recurrent (Cawson, 2002). Domestic abuse can occur with the perpetrator being male or female; however research indicates that there are more attacks on women. For example the British Crime Survey indicated that amongst people subjected to four or more incidents of domestic violence by the perpetrator 89% were women and 81% of all incidents were attacks on women (Walby and Allen, 2004). Many of these incidents reported children in the house (Walby and Allen, 2004). These figures give some idea of how prevalent the issue of domestic abuse is and the extent to which it might be witnessed by children and young people.

The adolescents who have been referred to LINX often have behavioural issues, which may be linked to their experiences, so support is aimed at attempting to possibly modify their thinking to help identify why they are acting in this way. This paper is the second of two, the first paper examined perceptions of support available for adolescents who had witnessed domestic abuse in a local authority in the south of England. Paper 1 provided useful contextual information for this second paper, in the form of general themes for practice. This paper is examining views of participants and providers in relation to a new group intervention for adolescents in the same local authority, consolidating findings from paper 1 to begin to develop guidelines for practice. The key findings from papers 1 & 2 were considered by a focus group of educational psychologists to identify the role, and potential future role, of educational psychologists in providing support for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse.

Context

There are multi-national legal guidelines for educational work on domestic violence which have been recognized in international laws and conventions. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) specifies that 'State Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children from all forms of physical and mental violence' (1989, Article 19, pg 11).

Schools have also begun to realize the need to pinpoint resources for those children who have experienced domestic violence with government programmes such as STOP (1995). The STOP programme is aimed at encouraging schools to raise awareness of domestic abuse.

In 2001 in one particular local authority the Against Domestic Violence and Abuse Agency (ADVA) asked the educational psychology service to co-ordinate and evaluate a project which was about raising awareness of DV issues within school communities. The feedback was positive. However there appears to be an ongoing lack of awareness in schools about the needs of the children in this situation (Mullender, Hague, Imam, Kelly, Malos, & Regan 2002). Also many of the interventions for children who have experienced domestic abuse are not run by the schools themselves but outside agencies such as the youth offending team and have only worked with children of a primary school age (Mullender et al 2002). Yet it would seem that as schools are where children spend much of their time and can provide a safe haven, their role in the support of the aftermath of domestic abuse should not be underestimated in government policy.

The Childrens Act 2004 promoted the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for each local authority area, which is a statutory body promoting children's welfare. This board promotes the role of safeguarding procedures, therefore any group work with children or young people should consider the importance of child protection training and domestic abuse awareness training.

Recent government initiatives have targeted adolescent relationships (e.g. in 2009 the government introduced a coordinated strategy aimed at ending violence against women and girls by promoting education and understanding). This strategy clearly identifies this time of life as crucial in terms of forming relationships, possibly with past experiences influencing current interactions (Smith & Williams 1992). Yet there are few interventions which specifically target this age range. What support is available will be considered later in this paper.

Literature

This brief review is intended to demonstrate that there is a gap in the current literature around the experiences of adolescents who have witnessed domestic abuse and have received support. It focuses on the effects of domestic abuse on children and adolescents, and what support is currently available for them.

Effects of domestic abuse on children and adolescents

Children may not see the violence but hear it, and often women may only realize how much their children knew when they are no longer in the situation. Jaffe, Wilson and Wolfe (1990) found that the majority of children who had been in a situation where there was domestic violence could describe in detail the abuse that their parents were unaware of and that they had experienced. Research has predominantly focused on the direct victim (UNICEF 2009) but there are findings to show that children exposed to domestic violence may suffer a range of long lasting effects which can be similar to children who have been physically abused (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano 2002). Evidence has revealed a link between growing up with exposure to domestic abuse and developmental outcomes such as low self esteem, hostility and poor social skills (Baldry 2003). However there are many moderating factors (e.g. age, sex, support networks) which may impact on a child's development and whether exposure to

domestic abuse has an impact which is displayed internally (e.g. depression) or externally (behavioural issues) or not at all (Jaffe, Wilson & Wolfe 1990).

Current support for victims of domestic abuse

Developmental research suggests that early interventions for young people are important when considering how to best increase resilience to possible psychological damage caused by experiencing or witnessing domestic violence (Loosley 2004). Support can range from one to one therapy to group programmes. However many of the interventions do not appear to directly link theory to practice, and therefore systematic theoretical evaluation is made difficult (Mullender et al 2002).

Much of the pioneering work in domestic violence has originated in Canada where group work tends to work if best if age bands are narrowly chosen, considering developmental stage (emotional, physical and intellectual). Loosley (2004) identified specialist materials which were commonly used in the Canadian group work, for example video discussion scenarios. Loosley (2004) also evaluated the effectiveness of many of the groups in Canada and deduced that a 12 week period was better than 10 weeks. The programme that was evaluated in this research was a 12 week intervention.

In the USA there have been long running group projects such as the 'Domestic Abuse Intervention Project', this formed the origin of group work focusing on looking at young people operating together to identify relationship attitudes and roles. There are community-based programmes in the USA including: 'the Child Witness to Violence Project' in Boston. It is an outreach project which provides counselling and advocacy targeting young children who witness acts of violence (Groves & Zuckerman, 1997).

In the UK intervention projects originated out of women's refuges but often focused on normalizing what had happened to the children (Mullender et al 2002). This approach can be criticised for belittling what these children have been through, also it does not take into account any of the previous literature cited which considers the serious potential impact of domestic abuse in the home (Graham-Bermann 2001). Refuges have been running since the 1970s, but due to the confidentiality of their work it has

enabled what has happened within them to be largely ignored by practitioners and policy makers (McGee 2000).

A review of 15 projects which focused on children in this situation suggested that participating in groups or mother-child interventions resulted in reduced aggression and depression and improved social relationships with peers (Graham-Bermann 2001).

More recently the "Miss Dorothy" programme (2003) has been used to help children understand safety issues with a relationship component, with schools referring a cross-section of children some of whom have experienced domestic abuse. There has also been the Wolf & Water (2006) 'Home Ground' arts based package run in schools with curriculum work looking at healthy relationships and specific domestic awareness raising. These programmes have pre dominantly targeted primary school children. For adolescents (particularly those who did not live in a refuge), who probably missed out on this support, there are relatively few interventions.

In addition few interventions in the UK have targeted just children/adolescents, often being seen as just additional support for the mother and not being clinically based or incorporating psychological theory (Hester et al 2007).

Overall it has been identified that there is a gap in provision for children and young people exposed to domestic abuse (Save the Children 2002). There is not consistent application of support across the country and there has been relatively little work evaluating such interventions, which maybe the cause of the inconsistent application of these interventions and why they do not continue (Jaffe, Suderman & Reitzel 1992). Evaluation that has looked at the effectiveness of these interventions has tended to use standardised assessment tools with the dominant paradigm for research being a positivist scientific approach (Jaffe, Sudermann & Reitzel 1992). The need to listen to the voice of the young person in terms of more qualitative interpretivist data collection has been recognised in some research (e.g. Hester & Pearson 1998, Mullender et al 2002). However this has often focused on the voice of young

children who were easily accessible through refuges, identifying a need for research targeting adolescents who have experienced a group intervention.

LINX

LINX is an intervention at a group level aimed for young people who have witnessed domestic violence and is displaying behavioural problems. At the time of the research it was the only form of group intervention support of this type within the local authority in which the study took place.

LINX is specifically designed to target participants' feelings of empathy by exploring and challenging values. This issue links directly to the findings of paper 1. The aim of the intervention programme is to raise empathy awareness, which, in turn, is intended to reduce aggressive behaviour, resulting in improved outcomes for these young people. This research is only looking at adolescents who display externalising behaviour, rather than those who may internalise their feelings. LINX is focusing on 'offending'/aggressive behaviour, so these are overt behaviours allowing the target group to be more easily identified.

The LINX project is looking to improve the behaviour of young offenders through helping them to come to terms with the domestic violence they have experienced. The charity 'The Hampton Trust' and the Wessex YOT team have received funding for the programme from the European Commission and the Big Lottery fund. The programme is initially to be carried out in Devon, Gloucestershire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

LINX was developed by members of the Wessex YOT team and The Hampton Trust. The underpinning theory/idea is to support learning through experience, utilising experiential learning theory (Kolb & Fry 1975), using case studies and scenarios to help make 'LINX' between learning, feelings and behaviour.

The programme covers the following and more: *What is violence and abuse? Understanding why people are violent. Learning that people are in control of their own behaviour and can choose not to be violent.*

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Taking responsibility for behaviour: moral responsibility . Learning how to notice when you are becoming violent - and how to stop. Rights, respect and empathy for others, self esteem and safety & support.

A definition of empathy by Hoffman (2000, p.30) is; 'feelings that are more congruent with another's situation than with one's own situation.' There is evidence which indicates that children may lose the ability to feel empathy for others and exhibit more aggressive behaviour toward their peers as a result of witnessing domestic abuse (Fantuzzo and Mohr 1999). Empathy is a key factor linked with aggressive youth and interest in this area extends as far back as Redl and Wineman's (1951) seminal descriptions of 'wayward boys' where empathy was identified as being the core deficit.

Early studies such as Hinchey and Gavelek (1982) looked at the empathetic abilities of children whose mothers had been subjected to marital violence. They compared the performance of children whose mothers were abused by their husbands with children of non-abused mothers on tasks designed to measure their abilities in social inference, role-taking, role-enactment and social behaviour. They showed that the children in the domestic abuse group had significantly lower scores on these behaviours than the controls, illustrating a link between empathy and behaviour which is one of the targets of the LINX programme. However the researcher is aware that there are many factors that may elicit a change in behaviour and perceived levels of empathy (e.g. age, gender, motivation to engage, support networks), so any link is only associational and cannot be considered causal.

Rationale and Research Aims

This paper examines the views of participants (similar in terms of age and experience to participants in paper 1), facilitators and parents to a new group intervention (LINX) for adolescents who have experienced domestic abuse. The experiences are considered in light of themes from paper 1 to see if there are features which are similar, to develop a deeper understanding of what should be considered in the future when planning comparable support programmes.

Research question 1;

From the young people and facilitators' perspectives, is there a change in the young people's affect (empathy) and behaviour (offending) as targeted by the programme?

Research question 2;

What are the views of parents, LINX workers and participants in regards to what could be done to improve the LINX programme?

Research question 3;

Based on the findings of the research questions addressed in paper 1 and research questions 1 and 2 in this paper, what can Educational Psychologists learn from service recipients, parents and providers involved with support services for young people who have experienced domestic violence?

Design and Methods

Epistemological Stance

This research has taken an interpretative epistemological stance seeking to illuminate and explore what the individual perceptions are of a new support intervention for young people who have experienced domestic abuse in a particular Local Authority. The research will be looking at participants' perceptions of an intervention called 'LINX', to examine individual thoughts and feelings regarding this intervention, collecting in depth information of their views. These experiences will be triangulated with other relevant information from the programme.

Therefore the rationale for the research is to investigate views on support for young people who have experienced domestic abuse as it is a relatively new area; consequently the evidence base on the effectiveness of support with this ephemeral group is also small. This requires a more fluid approach to understanding how support is viewed and evaluated. LINX is a new intervention with no research on its effectiveness within this local authority.

This research acknowledges the subjective nature of the data and that it is time and context dependant.

This piece of research will use a case study methodology to collect rich holistic information from a variety of sources. A case study was chosen because it allows individual experience to be investigated in some depth using a range of methods to collect rich data. This, in turn, allows for data to be triangulated using these different sources of evidence available to the researcher. Elliot, (2002) advocates using multiple methods of data collection (e.g. different types of data from different sources) to look at process and outcome, with the researchers role being to systematically evaluate the evidence.

If the study had been experimental or quasi-experimental, the data collection and analysis methods are known to hide some details e.g. the participant perspective (Elliot 2002). Case studies, on the other hand, are designed to bring out details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data. As my purposes in this enquiry was to gain insights into the experiences of individual from their

perspective, the case study method was chosen in preference to a quasi-experimental design as it allowed for rich in depth exploration of individuals experiences of the LINX programme. Furthermore, due to the sensitive and often difficult background these participants have experienced, they may have been reluctant to be involved in research, which would have been inhibitive to collecting the quantity of data necessary for generalisation within the time frame available.

Participants

Seven adolescents were recruited for the purposes of this enquiry. Table 3 provides details of the names they were given for the purposes of this enquiry, their ages, their gender, and place where the intervention took place.

Table 3 – Participant details

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>LINX Group</i>
<i>Matt</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Education other than school group (EOTAS)</i>
<i>Anna</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Youth Offending Team (YOT)</i>
<i>Rachel</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>YOT</i>
<i>Tom</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Learning Centre Group</i>
<i>Mike</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Learning Centre Group</i>
<i>Pete</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Behavioural School Group</i>
<i>Dave</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Behavioural School Group</i>

The young people were selected from four different single-sex groups undertaking the LINX programme, using an opportunistic sample of young people were willing to take part in three interviews (pre, mid and post) and have their parents involved. A transcript of the brief used to recruit participants can be

seen in appendix 16. All who took part in the four groups involved gave verbal consent to being observed, the group size consisted of four to seven members. More information on the participants background can be found in appendix 17. All participants were identified as displaying behavioural difficulties and had been identified as witnessing domestic abuse through the referral process.

Four Facilitators

Four facilitators agreed to take part one from each of the groups (each group had 2-3 facilitators'). A LINX facilitator usually had half a day's initial training in the LINX programme, access to the LINX manual with information on the 12 sessions and some experience of working with young people with behavioural difficulties. Their role was to lead different sessions on subjects such as empathy and domestic abuse awareness raising. They were all of white ethnic origin and came from a range of different professional backgrounds; more information on their backgrounds can be seen in appendix 18.

Parents

It was difficult to recruit parents despite a letter being sent to the seven participant's parents homes (see appendix 19). This was likely to be partly due to the sensitive nature of the work. For this reason parents were only interviewed after LINX (not before or during). Two different parents (both mothers) from the seven participants were happy to be interviewed over the telephone. The letter (appendix 19) also gained consent for their child to take part, in addition to seeing if they would be interested in being interviewed.

Educational Psychologists

A focus group was carried out in a local authority educational psychology office with a group of 7 educational psychologists; all of the educational psychologists were of a white ethnic background.

Data collection instruments

Interviews

Semi structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data. Semi structured interviews were chosen as they allow flexibility in data collection to follow interesting points, whilst also providing a clear structure to follow. Interview schedules for the participants, facilitators and parents were developed using a conceptual map with questions connected to the aims of LINX and the experiences of the young people involved (Ausubel 1968) (appendix 20).

Pilot Study

The questions for the young people were piloted with two 15 year olds from a local secondary school to check wording and ease of comprehension.

One of the questions was amended as the participants found them difficult to understand: Originally I asked about evolving support networks but changed this to: Tell me about your relationships at home and at school since doing the programme, how have they changed?

The prompts from paper 1 were also used to elicit more in depth responses, where applicable. The piloting in paper 2 also identified the importance of speaking to the young people on their own as in the pilot study the young people were spoken to in a pair; they talked amongst themselves during the piloting and at times appeared to imitate each other's views to the questions. I also realised that the young people appeared to get restless towards the end of the interview so would need to ensure that if needed comfort breaks were suggested.

By interviewing the facilitators and parents, as well as the young people who took part it allowed for triangulation of the data collected about the experiences of LINX, increasing the validity of the findings (Everitt 1999). The final interview schedules can be seen in appendix 21 a-c.

Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire

To further triangulate the findings and increase validation of the common experiences, the young people who participated in the research were asked to complete Goodman's Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire. As this research is carried within the interpretivist tradition the questionnaires were not used to provide generalisable findings, but simply to illuminate the themes identified in the interviews by examining responses to individual questions. More information on the background of the SDQ can be seen in Appendix 21d.

Observations

Four unstructured observations were carried out of each of the four groups which took part. The observations provided the researcher an overview of the LINX experience to see whether any observed behaviours were reflected in participants' narratives.

A focus group with Educational Psychologists

A focus group meeting with 7 seven educational psychologists was conducted. A focus group is a form of group interviewing but relies on the information being elicited via the interaction between the participants. It was chosen as the data collection method for this part of the research as it allows for insight and interaction between the participants in a way that a one-to-one interview does not. It also allows for several perspectives around the same topic to be shared and a sharing of understandings of what the discussion involves (Powell & Single 1996).

The focus group schedule for the Educational Psychologists was developed according to the main themes identified from the facilitators, participants and their parents, who were involved in from both

studies that formed papers 1 & 2. This allowed investigation of their thoughts on current support for adolescents who have experienced domestic abuse, including LINX, as well as the potential role of educational psychologists in this area. The schedule can be found in appendix 22.

Ethics

Ethical approval was sought from Exeter University considering The British Psychological Society's Code of Conduct (2005). The registered approval can be seen in appendix 9. The approach was similar to paper 1 and can be seen in appendix 4c.

In Paper 2 an ethical issue arose which had implications for confidentiality and the protection from undue stress of the participants. Some of the participants in the girl youth offending group wanted to be interviewed together (joint interviewed), as they felt this would give them more confidence in their responses. This was an ethical dilemma as joint interviewing would mean that the participants would feel supported, however it may also mean that they could give more socially desirable responses in front of their peers. However the main ethical issue, which I felt meant that I should keep to my procedure and interview the participants separately, was confidentiality. I was involved in a very sensitive area of research any disclosures would need to be sensitively managed and potentially kept confidential between myself and the participant.

Procedures

Data collection was carried out at three time points during the four 12 week programmes, over a time period of 9 months (as the groups were all running at slightly different time points). It consisted of interviews: pre, mid and post, observations, and pre and post questionnaires.

Pre Intervention

Interviews were carried out individually with each of the seven young people and four facilitators. A Dictaphone was used in a quiet room in the building where each of the LINX interventions were

happening (a school, a YOT, a link education setting and an EOTAS centre). They were reminded of their ethical rights before and after the interview. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 40 minutes.

The SDQ questionnaires were read to the young people at the end of each interview, to ensure that literacy difficulties did not affect their responses.

Mid data collection

Midway through the intervention, a second round of data collection was carried out. This took place 4 weeks after the pre intervention interviews with the same seven young people and four facilitators. The interviews were carried out in the same manner as above and lasted between 20-30 minutes.

Unstructured observations of 4 sessions were carried out to explore emergent themes in the experiences of the young people. The sessions were sampled from each of the different groups.

Post intervention

Again at the end of the intervention interviews were carried out with the young people and facilitators in the manner above. The final interviews were carried out approximately 12 weeks after the first interviews during the final session of LINX, lasting 30-40 minutes.

Phone interviews with 2 of the young people's natural mothers were also carried out and recorded using a Dictaphone, they lasted between 20-30 minutes.

The post SDQ questionnaires were also completed, again being read to the young people to ensure that literacy difficulties did not affect their responses.

Information from focus group of 7 Educational Psychologists

After all data was collected and analysed themes which were common between papers 1 & 2 were used as prompts in a focus group with 7 educational psychologists. The focus group was held in a meeting

room in the local authority and lasted for approximately forty minutes and was also recorded with a Dictaphone.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected from the semi structured interviews was analysed using a thematic analysis as it was appropriate for the research questions and epistemological stance of this research.

Initially the recordings of the interviews were transcribed into Microsoft word documents, (examples of the transcripts of interviews with the young people, parents, facilitators and focus group with EPs can be seen in appendices; 23-26 respectively).

These were then analysed using a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006). This thematic analysis was partly deductive (considering codes from paper 1) and inductive (issues arising from the LINX programme). Considering, overall, whether these themes, connected to barriers and facilitators of support, were consolidated in paper 2.

Themes were compared across the interview schedules (pre, mid and post). All the emergent themes can be seen in appendix 27.

The information from the SDQ questions were scored and pre and post test scores was categorised according to pre determined standardised categories (Completed SDQ can be seen in appendix 30).

Individual responses were used to highlight support for the common themes identified by the thematic analysis. Observations were also analysed to look for supportive elements to the themes identified in the semi structured interviews (appendix 28).

Finally information from the educational psychologists' focus group was analysed using a thematic analysis. The views of this professional group in relation to support on domestic violence is an under researched area so it was appropriate to look for inductive themes about their views. Themes were re visited and re defined until saturation of the data was achieved.

Analysis and Discussion

This section will initially consider how LINX participants', parents' and facilitators' narratives were analysed for themes which helped to evaluate the programme and consider whether its aims were met. Next the analysis will consider further investigation of common themes regarding support interventions, as identified in paper 1. Subordinate themes emerged from the data and were grouped into superordinate themes. A detailed account of the themes and their groupings can be found in appendix 27. In order to approach the analysis in a systematic way and achieve coherence in the presentation of the analysis, each emerging theme has been organised under the research question to which it relates.

Research Question 1

Initially themes were identified which reflected research question 1 (*From the young people and facilitators experience of LINX is there a change in the young people's affect (empathy) and behaviour (offending) as targeted by the programme?*).

I approach this first subsection of the analysis by considering (i) what the young people said about changes for the better in their empathetic and offending behaviours and (ii) the extent to which these changes as articulated by the young people themselves were reflected in the views of the facilitators. I then drew on my two other data sources, SDQ and my observations, to gain further insights into behavioural changes as a result of LINX. Two themes emerged; behavioural coping strategies and enhancing prosocial behaviour.

An in depth example of the analysis undertaken in paper 2

This example used Braun and Clarke's 6 steps thematic analysis approach. Stage one was transcription. Stage two involves coding the data. Stage three involves the searching for themes (sorting different codes into potential themes and collating the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes). Stage 4 involved reviewing themes and stage 5 was about clarifying and identification of themes and moving beyond the surface level meaning to a deeper understanding based on interpretation. Stage six is the production of the report.

This example is looking at how the interviews were coded to theme generation to investigate the research question: *From the young people and facilitators experience of LINX is there a change in the young people's affect (empathy) and behaviour (offending) as targeted by the programme?*

Data within each individual case was coded and then cross compared. First I was looking at change across 3 time points – pre mid and post intervention in the responses of each of the young people to the Semi Structure Interviews (SSIs):

Matt: Pre, Mid, Post SSI with young person

Anna: Pre, Mid, Post SSIs with young person

Rachel: Pre, Mid, Post SSIs with young person

Tom: Pre, Mid, Post SSIs with young person

Mike: Pre, Mid, Post SSIs with young person

Pete: Pre, Mid, Post SSIs with young person

Dave: Pre, Mid, Post SSIs with young person

Then common themes were identified *between* interviews. (Facilitator interviews were coded in a similar manner then all SSI codes were cross compared to identify similar codes, then themes)

Stage 1 Example of a Coded interview from paper 2

Matt - Pre LINX SSI

I: What did you hope to get out of the LINX programme?

M: I would like to be able to not get so angry all the time, I feel like my relationships are hard cos I people don't always listen to my point of view. So I guess to just be a bit more confident maybe in explaining where I'm coming from. **Do you think about their point of view?** No I guess not, I hadn't really thought about it.

Comment [E29]: 1. Difficult Relationships

Comment [E30]: 1. Difficult to see others view

I: What are your relationships like at the moment with your family and friends?

M: Hard sometimes, I get on with my mum and my younger brother, but I don't always get on with my older brother cos he always tells me what to do. You know just cos he's older than me he tries to boss me around all the time. I don't want to be told what to do anymore, that's all I'm saying on that one.

Comment [E31]: 1. Difficult Relationships

I: What do you do when you get angry?

M: Lash out normally, hit first speak later. After everything that's happened to me I don't feel like anyone else understands where I'm coming from, so what's the point in talking about it? No one else would understand anyway. If anyone is going to help me, they will have to understand me.

Comment [E32]: 2. Physical violence

Comment [E33]: 3. Understanding the individual

I: Who do you speak to when you're upset?

M: I speak to my mum, but often I will just go and lock and myself in my room.

Comment [E34]: 4. Talking

Mid SSI

I: What are you enjoying about LINX?

M: Doing something different I guess.

I: Can you tell me a bit more about how it's made you feel?

M: dunno really

I: What has been your favourite session so far?

M: The one where we all had to take on different characters and then get rid of someone, it was really interesting seeing the different reasons people gave for doing that, some people in the group were annoying though.

Comment [E35]: 1. Difficult relationships

I: Can you tell me a bit more about that?

M: well I guess it made you think about others point of view and that.

Comment [E36]: 5. Empathy

I: What have you not enjoyed?

M: Sometimes the others in the group really do my head in.

Comment [E37]: 1. Difficult Relationships

I: What do you do when you feel angry?

M: There's a chance to talk in the group which is good, so I might do that. You know I feel like there are people in the group who understand me and can relate to my point of view, as they've been there you know? I don't think you can understand otherwise. But I really enjoy the time I get to spend with Mr.....as I don't always want to talk about my problems in front of the group

Comment [E38]: 4. Talking

Comment [E39]: 6. Similarities to the group

Comment [E40]: 7. Importance of individual support

Post SSI

I: Did you enjoy the LINX programme?

M: I dunno, I preferred it more than going to school, as it was a laugh sort of thing, they made it funny, tried to make it a bit more fun than just getting down to work sort of thing. Tried to make it into a game.

Comment [E41]: 8. Fun

I: Do you think that you look at relationships differently as a result of doing LINX programme?

M: Dunno, I guess that I try to not rush into acting in a particular way, try to stop and take a deep breath and you know relax and walk away. A lot of the discussion was about thinking about others and their point of view, I guess that I do think about that sometimes.

Comment [E42]: 9. Behaviour change

Comment [E43]: 10. Relax, walk away

Comment [E44]: 5. Empathy

I: Do you think about things differently in different situations?

M: In a way it has, it has shown me stuff, like the time when we put a bit of tape across the floor, half way you had to be nice to the person, then you had to say its rubbish. It shows what it makes them feel like because they don't want to do it when people are saying harsh stuff to them, I guess it makes you realise what you say can really effect someone. It shows you what happens when you say to someone they are rubbish, the effect it has. You don't think you're doing nothing, putting people down makes them upset. *Do you think this will change your relationships with others?* Sometimes, maybe I guess, it depends on what I'm thinking at the time and how angry they've made me, I might still lash out.

Comment [E45]: 5. Empathy

Comment [E46]: 11. Anger/aggression

I: What other sessions/activities did you enjoy?

M: I dunno, it was quite funny, few tasks were good fun and that.

Comment [E47]: 7. fun

I: Did you get on well with the others?

M: Yes, I feel now that if I saw them outside of school I would talk to them.

Comment [E48]: 4. Talking

I: Anything else you feel that you can take away from LINX that might be useful at school?

M: General knowledge about relationships and being able to walk away when I feel upset with someone, as before I would always stay and try to get my point of view across.

Comment [E49]: 10. Walk away

I: What did you think about how long the programme was?

M: Its alright because it was spread out.

Comment [E50]: 12. Appropriate length

I: Would you like it to continue?

M: No, I think it was good because they made a reward of being able to go to Crealy. I would still like to be able to talk to Mr.....cos he gets me you know?

Comment [E51]: 13. Ongoing individual support

I: Do you think others have learnt how to deal with relationships differently?

M: yes, think before you act and walk away. Everything they've been trying to tell us is treat others the way you want to be treated. I think that was the main goal of it.

Comment [E52]: 10. Walk away

Comment [E53]: 5. Empathy

I: Do you think you will do this in the future?

M: Dunno.

I: Would you recommend LINX to someone similar to you?

M: No, because it sounds stupid.

I: How does that make you feel?

M: Ok I guess, I think that in a way yes and in a way no it was useful, learnt a few more things but I think I would have learnt those over time anyway.

Comment [E54]: 14. Uncertainty of value of LINX vs own learning experiences

I: If you would to create LINX what would you improve/change?

M: It's alright at the moment. Having a nice teacher and making it fun are the most important things I reckon. I think it would be better at mainstream, as there's more people to learn and participate. You have the odd naughty kid how gets kicked out, but most people would want to learn.

Comment [E55]: 15. Facilitator characteristics and 7. fun

Comment [E56]: 14. LINX setting

I: Did you get on well with the people who ran LINX?

M: Yes but it's also the people you are with in the group it helps if they're mates from school and that.

Comment [E57]: 6. Similarities to the group

I: What do you think about being just boys? Do you think it would work with girls?

C: No because you talk about things like what would you call a girl who has slept with loads of boys? If she was in with you couldn't really ask her that. You wouldn't want to be harsh on her.

Comment [E58]: 16. Preference for single sex

I: Do you feel within the group you could talk about things and it would stay within the group?

C: Yes, because they're the sort of the people of I get along with – you know like me, I can respect what they say because it makes sense, if I don't like someone then what they say means nothing to me. What they say is OK as I think that they understand where I'm coming from, so I can accept it if they challenge me or question what I say.

Comment [E59]: 6. Similarities within the group

I: Do you think this was thought about?

C: No it just worked out like that. It could work out good or bad.

I: Anything else you would like to say?

C: No

Stage 2

The following list is a summary of the codes from the interview above. Some of the codes from paper 1 were considered in the analysis and are starred where they appear below, other codes were also identified which were connected specifically to the LINX programme.

Matt – Codes (Pre, Mid, Post)

1. Difficult Relationships (Pre, mid)*
2. Physical Violence (Pre)*
3. Understanding the individual (Pre)*
4. Talking (Pre, Mid, Post)*
5. Empathy (Mid, Post)
6. Similarities to the group (Mid, Post)*
7. Individual support (Mid)*
8. Fun (Mid, Post)
9. Behaviour Change (Post)*
10. Relax/Walk away (Mid, Post)

This is: An investigation of perceptions of individual and group support provided for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse.
By Eleanor Ley

11. Anger/aggression (Post)*
12. Appropriate length (Post)
13. Ongoing individual support (Post)*
14. Uncertainty of LINX vs own learning experiences (Post)
15. Facilitator characteristics (Mid, Post)*
16. Preference for single sex (Post)

Stage 3 Involved the cross comparison of codes from the young people's interviews for the code:

Talking (later part of the main theme: Development of Coping Strategies)

This stage cross compared the code of 'talking' between the young people's interviews. The quotes below reflect the change in the young people's narrative from feeling they would like to speak to someone or even just locking themselves away, to identifying they would now talk to someone else if they were upset.

Matt –Pre, Mid & Post SSI

Pre: *Who do you speak to when you're upset?*

I speak to my mum, but often I will just go and lock and myself in my room. (P4, L15)

Mid: *There's a chance to talk in the group which is good (P10, L28)*

Post: *Yes, I feel now that if I saw them outside of school I would talk to them (P15, L54)*

Tom – Post SSI

Post: *Yeah, it was better than school, because you could actually talk to people properly – and the other people were like proper people not just another kid. (P13, L30)*

Mike – Pre/Post SSI

Pre: *I would like to be able to talk to people about my point of view (P3, L8)*

Post: *Yeah, especially Mrs Smith, she's easy to talk to, but I know her from school and so will find her there if I need someone to talk too – it's really helped when I'm feeling upset to know that someone will listen to my point of view, and just understand where I'm coming from you know? I think The programme is brilliant. (P10, L.40)*

Anna - Pre /Mid/ Post SSI

Pre: *Difficult, I don't always get along with everyone, I find other people difficult to speak to (P2, L 5)*

Mid: *there's a lot of conversation which is good (P4, 12)*

I might go and try to talk to one of the IINX teachers, they're normally good at being able to help you think about what to do differently, otherwise I just find myself doing the same over and over again (P7, L20-22).

Post: *Yeah, it gets out your emotions, which is really good and whatever happens in your week you can always tell them about it. (P9, L27-28)*

It's been really and I've really liked it. It's helped me a lot through hard times, it's like I can share my problems with group, which is something I've never had before. I really like speaking to Mr.....I felt that for the first time in a long time I had someone to share my problems with (P 11, L 36-39)

See Appendix 27, pg 212 for all themes, subthemes and initial codes from participants, facilitators and parent SSIs (and whether they were pre/mid/post) and for another example of coding into theme development.

Stage 4 Data Matrix showing illustrative excerpts from Young People SSIs for Theme: Coping

strategies

This table reflects the change in coping strategies that young people developed during their support – and the corresponding impact on behaviour often from an angry response/desire to control their temper, to learning to walk away or talk about things.

Codes: leading to theme coping strategies	Matt	Anna	Mike	Tom
Behavioural Changes	<p>Post: <i>Dunno, I guess that I try to not rush into acting in a particular way, try to stop</i></p>	<p>Pre: <i>Maybe help me control my temper sometimes. I know that I can get angry and sometimes I feel like I lash out, I guess that's why I am here (P1, L1-2)</i></p> <p>Post: <i>It will be hard to, but I think it will be useful to think about calming down before acting (P 15, L69).</i></p>		<p>Pre: <i>I get angry quite often (P1, L5-6)</i></p> <p>Post: <i>I think I'm different now, I think people would notice in the way I act. (P14, L.37)</i></p>
Talking	<p>Pre: <i>I speak to my mum,</i></p>	<p>Mid: <i>there's a lot of conversation which is</i></p>	<p>Pre: <i>I would like to be able to talk to people</i></p>	<p>Post: <i>Yeah, it was better than</i></p>

<p><i>but often I will just go and lock and myself in my room.</i></p> <p>Mid: <i>There's a chance to talk in the group which is good.</i></p> <p>Post: <i>Yes, I feel now that if I saw them outside of school I would talk to them.</i></p>	<p><i>good (P4, 12)</i></p> <p><i>I might go and try to talk to one of the IINX teachers, they're normally good at being able to help you think about what to do differently, otherwise I just find myself doing the same over and over again (P7, L20-22).</i></p> <p>Post: <i>Yeah, it gets out your emotions, which is really good and whatever happens in your week you can always tell them about it. (P9, L27-28)</i></p> <p><i>It's helped me a lot through hard times, it's like I can share my problems with group, which is something</i></p>	<p><i>about my point of view (P3, L8)</i></p> <p>Post: <i>Yeah, especially Mrs Smith, she's easy to talk to, but I know her from school and so will find her there if I need someone to talk too – it's really helped when I'm feeling upset to know that someone will listen to my point of view, and just understand where I'm coming from you know? I think the programme is brilliant (P10, L. 40).</i></p>	<p><i>school, because you could actually talk to people properly – and the other people were like proper people not just another kid.</i></p> <p><i>(P13, L30)</i></p>
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		<p><i>I've never had before.</i></p> <p><i>I really like speaking to Mr.....I felt that for the first time in a long time I had someone to share my problems with (P 11, L 36-39)</i></p>		
Walk away	<p>Post: <i>being able to walk away when I feel upset with someone, as before I would always stay and try to get my point of view across.</i></p>	<p>Post: <i>Yeah to walk away. (P10, L 33)</i></p>		<p>Mid: <i>I've learnt strategies like being able to walk away when I'm feeling mad. (P10, L23).</i></p>

Main themes and Illustrative examples from Facilitators SSIs (relating to coping strategies)

This table is part of the step 4/5 analysis and demonstrates who the facilitators noticed a change in the behaviour of the young people.

SUB	Sam	Richard	Jill
THEME			
Talking	<p><i>Actually a lot of those young men, one in particular, who had witnessed his mum being severely beaten at the weekend had been talked to, and wanted to after LINX, by different professionals about what to do, but it relies on facilitators own backgrounds and experience in terms of what advice they may give</i></p> <p>(mid)</p>	<p><i>It can be difficult to build relationships in just 12 weeks in order to do some of the more challenging activities. But I think they're starting to trust us and learn to talk to us, when that happened we seemed to be able to get through to them a bit more</i></p> <p>(mid)</p>	<p><i>So it all came from them, and the learnt to open and talk more - one of the great things was they felt confident enough to say 'my mum did this, my dad did this, my brother did this.' This was a positive they shared experiences if they wanted to</i></p> <p>(post)</p>
Walking away	<p><i>I think they've learnt new strategies to deal with difficult situations – you know like walking away</i></p> <p>(post)</p>	<p><i>Yes, lesson exclusions seem to have gone down, so the teachers have received the programme really well and</i></p>	

		<p><i>commented that there has been improvement in terms of the pupils using strategies like walking away (post)</i></p>	
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Stage 6 Report Writing: The theme of coping strategies was considered in the context of how young people had changed from often angry and aggressive responses to learning to deal with situations differently by walking away or talking about things. This was linked to theory, with connections being made to Social Learning theory as many of the responses were potentially learnt by modelling the facilitators in the group interactions during the LINX programme and discussion of appropriate behaviour. This in turn had an impact on their relationships and thinking about others.

Theme 1: Behavioural coping strategies

This theme relates to changes in the way in which participants said they coped with conflict and other difficult situations. Before LINX many of the young people had said they would have used physical or verbal aggression to deal with a difficult situation, for example in the pre interview Matt said: *‘I would lash out normally, hit first speak later. I sometimes talk to my mates but after everything that’s happened to me I don’t feel like anyone else understands where I’m coming from, so what’s the point in talking about it? No one else would care anyway.’*

After LINX many of the young people, including Matt, demonstrated that they had at their disposal a greater range of behavioural strategies when dealing with difficult situations. These included:

- Being able to walk away (Tom: *‘Now if somebody said something which annoyed me I would just walk away rather than stay and fight’*)

- Talk about things (Rachel: *'It makes you more aware of stuff that you might not have known how to deal with. Like getting aggressive, or a difficult situation – you know how to get out of it, **How would you get out of it?** You know talk to the person and try to calm down. I do think that I've changed because of it, but I'm not sure now it's finished whether those changes will last'*)
- Time out (Matt: *'I guess that I try to not rush into acting in a particular way, try to stop and take a deep breath and you know relax or count to ten. A lot of the discussion was about thinking about others and their point of view, I guess that I do think about that sometimes'*)
- Awareness of the role of physical activities to improve their sense of well being and build bridges to more fulfilling future (Pete: *'I've also started playing football again did you stop? Yeah I guess I didn't really feel like doing it when everything was difficult'*)

These findings were reflected by many of the facilitators. For example, they identified a reduction in the number of difficult behavioural issues within later sessions. They put this down to the young people drawing upon some of the techniques they had acquired from the LINX intervention. For example Sam (EOTAS facilitator) noticed how walking away and the physical activities had helped boost confidence and improve behaviour: *'for people like Matt the physical activities have been really useful, bridge building, having to get across the water on planks and who can build the biggest tower.....built his confidence and changed him as a person – now he can walk away rather than have to stay and argue till the end.'*

This concurs with the findings from paper 1 where some of these coping strategies (such as physical activities) were found to have had a similar effect in terms of supporting young people to deal with conflict often after support.

The parents who were interviewed also supported this view identifying that their son or daughter had been involved in less confrontational situations, choosing to speak to a trusted member of staff

instead for example Kathy parent of Tom commented: *'One thing I can say is that when I went to parents evening, it was the best one yet, Tom has been in a lot of trouble in the past with his behaviour. But nearly all the teachers commented how he seemed to have calmed down and seemed more co operative in lessons. He really seems to be maturing and acting differently, asking for help.'*

Theme 2: Enhancing Prosocial Behaviour

This theme reflects changes in the young people's self awareness in relationships and in their empathy towards others.

Many of the young people demonstrated a shift in awareness about how to behave in relation to others but this often tended to reflect more of a cognitive than an affective awareness. Some of the participants recognised the feelings other people may have but did not necessarily feel this would change their behaviour. This reflected a change with many of the young people not displaying much thought about others' feelings initially, for example in the pre-interview with Tom he said: *'I would like to be able to not get so angry all the time, I feel like my relationships are hard cos people don't always listen to my point of view **Do you think about their point of view?** No I guess not, I hadn't really thought about it.'*

Then in the post Interview with Tom he talked about a LINX activity which helped him to reflect on other's point of view, but how it would not necessarily change his behaviour long term: *'It shows what it makes them feel like because they don't want to do it when people are saying harsh stuff to them, I guess it makes you realise what you say can really effect someone. It shows you what happens when you say to someone they are rubbish, the effect it has. You don't think you're doing nothing but putting people down makes them upset. **Do you think this will change your relationships with others?** Sometimes, maybe I guess, it depends on what I'm thinking at the time and how angry they've made me, I might still lash out if they've really upset me and not care what they think no one else seems to think about what might happen.'*

Mike post interview: *'With my girlfriend its better, yeah. I listen more. I get on better with my mum cos I'm not as gobby with her as I used to be. I guess I think about things more. Do you think feel differently when you're in an argument? No, I think it's the same I guess I just think a bit more about what they're thinking and what I could do differently.'*

Many of the facilitators noticed changes in their relationships within the group. For example Jill the facilitator from the specialist behavioural school commented: *'I think the first 6 weeks were incredibly challenging at any point it could have folded. Once we got through those first 6 weeks, it was a real turn around, such a change in the boys and my relationship with them – they seem to care a lot more now about my feelings. It's almost like it's been 6 months, for me personally.'*

The following excerpt reveals how one of the facilitators felt that improved relationships were probably because of changing perceptions linked to empathy and understanding of others' views. However Jill also reflected that she thought this behaviour maybe context bound: *'someone like Matt never questioned the way he was, that's part of his problem, sauntering through life doing as he pleases, bullying, being typically racist. A lot of the others have had all sorts of problems and he didn't care, we have tackled all of those issues and he has now questioned the way he talks to other people, realising that he can sometimes cause offence, I'm not sure if that's carried on outside of the group though.'*

Analysis of data obtained from SDQ

The seven participants also completed Goodman's Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire to provide further information about their views and to see if these changed over time – possibly as a result of the intervention. There is the possibility that their responses (as with most questionnaires) were influenced by a social desirability bias, but in this context they are only being used to illuminate the themes.

Many of the questions linked to behavioural coping strategies and relationships with others, specifically examining four areas of difficulty: hyperactivity, peer problems, conduct problems and emotional symptoms (combined to make a total difficulties score). There is one area of prosocial behaviour.

Table 4 – Pre and Post Scores on the SDQ after LINX

Participant	Pre Prosocial Score Category*	Post Prosocial Score Category	Pre Total Difficulties Score Category*	Post Total Difficulties Score Category
Anna	<i>Abnormal</i>	<i>Borderline</i>	<i>Abnormal</i>	<i>Abnormal (lower score)</i>
Rachel	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Abnormal</i>	<i>Normal</i>
Matt	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Borderline</i>	<i>Normal</i>
Tom	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Normal (lower score)</i>
Mike	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Borderline</i>	<i>Abnormal</i>	<i>Borderline</i>
Pete	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Normal (lower score)</i>
Dave	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Abnormal</i>	<i>Borderline</i>

*The SDQ has three categories Normal, Borderline and Abnormal, going from a low to a high score.

These results indicate that all the participants' total difficulties scores were lower after LINX.

However Mike's prosocial score dropped, this is interesting and may indicate that his empathy and

behavioural coping strategies were not influenced by the LINX intervention. This is despite the previous quote which suggested he was thinking about his behaviour more; however this may be reflected in the improvement in his total difficulties score. These results are of course only a small sample therefore not generalisable to a wider population. However it is interesting to draw out changes by some of the individuals in terms of the responses to some questions. For example a change with two of the young people which linked to the theme of *behavioural coping strategies* was a move from 'somewhat true' to 'not true' *regarding fighting and anger*. This may indicate they were possibly choosing to fight as a strategy when in a difficult situation, perhaps using one of the other ways of dealing with conflict identified during the interviews.

Another positive move in responses before and after LINX, which linked to the theme of *relationships* was a move from 'somewhat true' to certainly true by three of the young people in relation to being nice *to other people and caring about their feelings*. This suggests that empathy around thinking about others and what their feelings are may have changed.

Analysis of data from Observations

Four observations, where I made notes of individual sessions, were carried out. An example some of the observational notes I took can be seen in appendix 26.

The development of self awareness in relationships and empathy development/awareness as a result of realisation of prejudice was a common theme during the sessions I observed. For example during a role play, discussion and challenge of views was clearly evident:

'You might try to rape me' said one participant to another who was playing a gay character, they replied 'I'm not a stereotype, your upsetting me', 'yeah I guess.'

These sort of comments led onto group discussions with the facilitator often challenging the beliefs of the student 'why do you think that?' 'How do you think that would make that person feel?'

Interestingly the other students were also often quick to challenge each other's beliefs as well, an example of such a comment was: 'You're tight to the disabled' when someone used the word cripple.

Overall a change in the young people's behaviour and affect was acknowledged through the observation, questionnaires and interviews. Behavioural coping strategies and changing relationships were the predominant themes identified. Both link to how young people changed how they managed their behaviour, which in turn had an impact on their relationships and their understanding of others' viewpoints (empathy). The themes will be considered in the context of existing literature to reflect how they may provide new understandings about the role of support.

The evidence of growing self awareness in relationships and in empathy towards others identified in this analysis links to the theme of 'conflict' as discussed in paper 1. It has a clear impact on how young people react in times of difficulty (such as arguments between family members or friends) which in turn affects their relationships. Many of the young people began to identify different ways of coping in difficult situations; at the start of LINX it tended to be an aggressive response. Speaking to the young people during and after LINX they started to identify other ways of dealing with situations, such as talking or walking away. However some of the young people involved with LINX identified that they may not be able to stick to these strategies. This links to Social Learning Theory (Bandura 1977) and the impact that observing and learning different behaviours can have on their own behaviour, which would indicate that positive role models are important.

Other theoretical models could be used to further develop intervention programmes targeting behaviour change. Dodge and Schwartz (1997) suggest a social-cognitive theory where social information processing occurs in six stages: *encoding social cues, interpreting them, clarifying a goal, selecting a response, evaluating the response and acting*. Some research has demonstrated that

aggressive children attend to fewer cues than their less aggressive peers (Dodge & Timblin 1987), interpret ambiguous cues as aggressive and select hostile goals (Slaby & Guerra 1988).

This theory, and its associated research, provides a mechanism for developing programmes such as LINX further in terms of identifying different interventions for each stage of Dodge and Schwartz's theory. For example activities which encourage aggressive individuals to attend to more cues in their environment, discussion around response evaluation and goal options. This has implications for many group interventions in relation to following a more structured theoretical background, which would help to provide further organization and help to locate and evaluate any claims made (Mullender et al 2002).

One of the primary targets of LINX was to encourage empathy awareness in the young people involved, which is likely to be linked to behavioural changes in conflict situations. The evidence from the interviews was that the young people who took part did start to identify how others may feel as a result of their actions, but did not always think this would mean that their behaviour would change. There is a difference between a cognitive understanding of empathy (understanding how other people may feel) and a possibly longer lasting affective empathy (caring about how others feel) (Feshbach 1997). This finding is supported by previous research such as Schehtman (2003) who identified that there is a difference between cognitive and affective empathy in aggressive boys compared to controls with affective empathy being lower. The relationship between cognitive and affective empathy is complex as this research would suggest it may be easier to develop cognitive rather than affective empathy. However other research, which has specifically focused on training empathy, found it was easier to develop affective empathy in aggressive females than cognitive awareness (Pecukonis 1990). This is possibly a result of gender differences in empathy awareness; this has implications for design of activities within an intervention.

To summarise, the narratives have reflected a change in behavioural strategies and way of coping with situations where there is conflict. With enhanced prosocial behaviour possibly reflecting a

heightened sense of empathy, which was a primary goal of the LINX programme. The themes were reflected in the participants' narratives, as well as questionnaires and observations which have helped to triangulate these findings. The literature above has identified that new programmes may need to consider different activities for different genders in relation to literature on cognitive and affective empathy. This would support the importance of a clear theoretical background (which has been often identified as lacking with these type of interventions, Mullender et al 2002) to facilitate evaluation.

Research Question 2

The next part of the analysis considered the second research question: *What are the views of parents, LINX workers and participants in regards to what could be done to improve the LINX programme?*

This research question was predominantly answered from the themes identified during the interviews with the participants and facilitators of LINX, as they actually experienced the programme and were therefore best positioned (beyond observations and questionnaires) to identify what could be done to improve LINX.

Theme 1 Facilitators' qualities

This theme relates to the knowledge skills and overall qualities that each facilitator brings to the intervention.

A theme which was identified in paper 1 as being important, and was part of the LINX programme was 'challenge.' This was about challenging young people's views of their often normative justification of violent behaviour. This was recognised in the LINX programme and by the facilitators as being an important part of the programme for example Sam EOTAS facilitator: *'(they) will be listing all the monstrosities that have happened at home to go on to say but I will raise my child exactly the same, if my child wants to smoke I will give them 20 fags to make them sick. The idea*

that somehow you can't escape the structure you were brought up in, that's quite important to challenge why does it have to be like that?'

This sub code feeds into the overarching theme of the importance placed on the facilitators knowledge, skills and background, this experience seemed to be in addition to the training of the LINX programme itself, Sam: *'I feel that it can rely too much of the facilitators own skill & knowledge, and where they're coming from is it's a big course about self awareness and I don't know whether it puts many strategies in place that say OK this is what you do, we do have safety planning and risk management and it may be the case there isn't a simple answer. It relies on the facilitators' skills to consider – what else do I replace it with, what do I have to do/be? I think it's nice that the LINX programme is flexible so it can respond to the needs of the group, but that requires skill to feel confident and open to change. It was very heavy on the self awareness and empathy and it didn't have much of – this is the strategy you put in place. So sometimes you've got a process where you are raising their awareness which can be a horrible emotional thing which needs to be managed really well.'*

In this excerpt Sam identifies some of the same professional qualities which were identified as important in paper 1, such as flexibility and experience. This is supported by Jill (Behavioural School facilitator) in relation to flexibility and the needs of the individual: *'Sometimes I felt we had gone too far from the manual – but I think we needed to do so much more ground work and respond to the needs of the individual or we wouldn't have been able to achieve anything with them. There is no point in sticking to the manual if it doesn't achieve anything.'*

The young people also identified the importance of the certain facilitators' qualities such as being able to listen, challenge and be knowledgeable, which were again themes in the narratives of paper 1, Mike: *'they're the sort of the people of I get along with – you know like me, I can respect what they say because it makes sense, if I don't like someone then what they say means nothing to me. What*

they say is OK as I think that they understand where I'm coming from, so I can accept it if they challenge me or question what I say.'

These excerpts reflect how facilitator characteristics are important for the success of interventions such as LINX. This may indicate that just choosing facilitators from areas that currently work with similar young people and training them in LINX may not be enough – instead selection may also need to be linked to certain pertinent characteristics. Rye (1998) identified that effective leaders of group programmes tended to have had at least 1 hour plus 1 hour per week supervision. However Rye also identified that characteristics of leaders that are effective at running groups are often not determined.

This theme was also triangulated during an observation which reflected how the skills of the facilitators need to be flexible and adapt the material provided to create thought provoking discussions for example:

'A couple of the students mentioned they had had a tag. This initially led to a lot of comments from their peers 'no way', 'really', which the facilitator skilfully used as an opportunity to discuss why much antisocial behaviour was committed in groups.'

The LINX handbook also identifies the importance of skilled facilitation but only cites that young people may respect facilitators who have empathy themselves, and a strong skilled leadership which can provide boundaries aiming to develop a therapeutic relationship. This research (papers 1 & 2) has helped to further clarify and consolidate what key skills may be useful. Facilitators themselves identified the importance of confidence to challenge the young people's views (which LINX initially identified as being crucial), but also key was the openness to changing the programme (flexibility) and knowledge of strategies which can be put in place to help the young people deal with their experiences.

Theme 2 Structural issues of the programme

This theme links to difficulties found once the LINX programme had begun, and could be useful consideration points if LINX expands to other counties, or for consideration in the design of other, similar, interventions.

Administration difficulties and the amount of paper work caused problems for the facilitators running the LINX groups. As the time allowed in their schedule often did not account for the amount of additional planning and form filling that was required e.g. Jill: *'I think constraints by the school may inhibit it.....It's just a logistical thing that would stop it. It's also the timing involved, it's not just the group time it's the preparation and the group work. We needed more facilitators; it became 4 rather than 3.'*

Inherent in Jill's narrative is how minor issues such as paperwork can inhibit a programme's success.

Another subordinate theme identified by a facilitator is the target **age range** of adolescence, as there was a suggestion by a facilitator that the playful element could possibly be expanded to a younger age range, Sam: *'There has been a lot of enquiries from primary schools, and talking to women's aid workers, they sort of feel it's too late, because it such a playful course it could be structured for a younger age group. I think it is tied into a zeitgeist at the moment of looking at abuse within teenage relationships. But certainly if they were looking at where could be radical work to do it would be developing a programme for primary schools.'*

Many of the young people valued the lack of literacy and playful element of the programme e.g.

Kate: *'Yes I always remember what happened the week before; they make it quite fun which is really helpful. Team work was also a big part of it which is good. You get to watch videos as well which can be nice way to take the pressure of sometimes.'*

Another subordinate theme under structural issues was the **single sex** nature of the groups. This was mostly a positive experience with many commenting it allowed for the expression of thoughts

and ideas, Kate: *Um, I don't know some boys could laugh about what you say if its girls speaking and it would it put you off speaking. I think it's better with girls because it might be girls' problems. I think you'll feel really embarrassed talking about stuff because you're a different sex and you don't know how they will react whereas you know how girls will react. You know girls' feelings whereas boys don't really show their feelings. Boys take the mick out of you, they won't take the mick out of you right in front of you but take advantage when you're not around, that's how boys are sometimes and if they are around a group of friends, they will try and level up themselves. You don't fit in but might act like them.*

However a few of the young people thought that in order to build empathy and greater understanding a mixed group may have been beneficial, for example Tom: *I think having girls in the group might have been good – just to hear their feelings about things, especially cos some of the stuff was about relationships between men and women.*

This was supported by some of the facilitator views e.g. Sam: *It would be interesting to do a mixed group as it may help to be build empathy around domestic abuse.* However this was acknowledged in the context of careful group selection and thought around age, Sam: *but you would have to be careful, especially with some of the issues that come up around sexual relationships and specific age related behaviours – linked to maturity of boys and girls.*

To sum up support may need to consider the following factors: reducing paper work, lowering the age range to target younger children and the possibility of mixed sex groups.

Some research has suggested interventions which target younger children have a greater chance of success (Mullender et al 2002), and the playful element of LINX lends itself well to this possibility. A possibly flaw of this idea is the adult nature of some of the themes, which would need to be adapted.

The choice of single sex groups in LINX has been connected to the differences between males and females, with male antisocial behaviour often being cited as different to females (Steffensmeier and Allan 1996). Some of the feedback also suggested that empathy could be further facilitated by mixed sex groups, in order to hear about each other's experiences, and possibly promote affective empathy. However some interventions for young women in the UK (e.g. Ellis, 2004) consider the differences for girls and women marginalized through ethnic background, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or disability. In terms of feminist research this is a growing area which could be explored in the future in terms of considering a woman's point of view as being different from a man's when targeting skills such as empathy.

However empathy may be facilitated by listening to different viewpoints (particularly in the area of domestic abuse) through careful consideration of mixed sex groups. As considered in the early section on *enhancing prosocial characteristics* there may need to be a consideration of targeting different activities for each gender.

Theme 3 Group Work Vs Individual Support

This theme is self explanatory in that it relates to how the intervention was conducted using group work rather than one to one support. In paper 1 young people who had experienced support other than LINX either group or individual commonly said they preferred individual one to one support over working in a group situation. I therefore saw this as an important theme to consider in LINX which is based on a group approach.

Many of the participants of LINX did say that working in a group with a facilitator allowed them to share experiences and identify similarities with other young people their own age, for example Rachel: *'I will miss everyone in the group, it really brought us together – and I was just starting to feel that I could rely on people.'*

Mike: *'Yeah I liked being in a group, I preferred that to working individually. I think it was good because we shared ideas and experiences.'*

Some of the facilitators thought the group was positive (as well), Sam (EOTAS facilitator): *'for him he realised that he's not the only one. He would never have got that, even though he didn't like that as he thought he should have got all the attention, or more attention as he's been hard done to. But the others in the group were saying – hang on it's not just about you. I think the group has been powerful and brilliant.'*

However others within the group identified that they would have preferred more individual time e.g. Anna: *'possibly have more time just me and Dave to discuss things, I sometimes got worried the group got bored with listening to me talk about me problems.'* One other found it difficult when other group members did not take the session seriously e.g. *'it's just some of them need to stop mucking about as much, it was annoying you couldn't always pay attention to what the teacher was trying to show you.'*

A common experience amongst the young people was an ongoing relationship with one key LINX facilitator, which often seemed to permeate outside of the LINX sessions; this was reflected in many of the positive responses they gave about the programme for example Pete: *'Yeah, especially Mrs Smith, she's easy to talk to, but I know her from school and so will find her there if I need someone to talk too – it's really helped when I'm feeling upset to know that someone will listen to my point of view, and just understand where I'm coming from you know.'*

This was often a relationship which had time and circumstance to develop which extended beyond the LINX sessions into school time, Tom: *'Yeah, when I'm at school and I'm pissed off I would go and talk to a teacher. I would have got in a fight before. Now I would probably go and talk to..... as I've got to know her through LINX. **Why would you choose her?** Because she understands me, she*

picks me up on stuff, but in a good way. I feel that I can trust her and she makes things interesting, I just feel like she gets me.'

Mike: *'I think having a closer relationship with.....which has really helped me to feel like I can speak to someone if I've got a problem, that's taken time though..... I'm getting to know Mark and have a relationship, I'm worried that when LINX stops I won't be able to see him anymore and I've only just started being able to tell him stuff.'*

This was also supported within a parental interview: *'there is also one teacher in particular who he has developed a relationship with. Mrs B, I think there is a bit of hero worship going on there really. There was a situation at school where Mike had a big row with a teacher, I was called but unfortunately I was at work and couldn't be involved, Mrs B stepped in and helped to sort it out. I don't know if that is anything to do with the LINX programme though, as that relationship is sort of separate.'* This extract reflects how this relationship went beyond the LINX programme and was likely to be an ongoing supportive type of relationship.

Some facilitators (particularly from outside agencies) commented that it was difficult to form relationships in the time period, especially if they did not see the young people at any other time of the day for example Richard from the YOT group commented: *'The trouble with the boys is there can be a macho culture of trying to impress each other, which may mean disrespecting you.....it can be difficult to build relationships in just 12 weeks in order to do some of the more challenging activities'.*

Some of the participants valued the sharing of experiences and the realisation that there were other young people who had similar experiences, allowing them not to feel so alone. This is reflected in the literature on group work (e.g. McGee 2000). However some of the young people felt that being in a group detracted from the quality of the support they may have received if it been on an individual basis. This was a theme that was identified in paper 1 amongst previous recipients of different forms of support in this particular local authority. The common thread was the role of

ongoing support, it has been identified in the literature that 12 week interventions are more effective than 10 week interventions (Loosley 2004). This research would suggest that young people who have witnessed domestic abuse would prefer something more continuous than just an intensive course.

A practical implication for group work would be that the trained facilitators should still be accessible by the adolescent after the intervention. This links to possibly training those who already work in the setting where the young people attend. Some of the groups were run by people who were nothing to do with the setting, so would be unavailable once the programme finished. Key factors also include having the time and circumstances to have an ongoing relationship, and support that young person at difficult points within their life.

This finding has links to attachment theory, as Bowlby (1988) and later Geddes (1999) identified that a caring nurturing relationship can be developed with one key adult over time that can be used to promote a more secure attachment and potentially affect their behaviour. Secure attachments allow healthy internal working models to promote healthy relationships and progress in other areas of life such as work (Greenberg et al 1990), therefore the development of attachment relationships would be likely to have a large impact on the behaviour of these young people in other situations. For example where previously they may have been aggressive as a result of insecure attachments creating insecure internal working models (Greenberg et al 1990), creation of healthy working models could allow these young people to move forward.

In summary new interventions should consider combining ongoing individual/therapeutic support for adolescents with group work, using knowledgeable staff from the same setting as the adolescent (likely to be in a school).

Theme 4 Systemic Influences

This theme relates to wider issues in the context which the intervention takes place. All the facilitators identified the lack of systemic support from the setting in which the LINX programme took place, often relating to the **organisation and management** of the LINX programme - including its timetabling and the resources made available to it.

Sam: *'You need to give time to deliver as well as the training, as people who were trained would want it to be recognised in their time. If there isn't the time given by management you are relying on good will, trying to be charming, some people say they will get it done some won't.'*

Often a lack of understanding about the nature of the programme led to confusion and concern amongst other people within the system that LINX was taking place and about what the programme was designed for. Jill specialist behaviourist school facilitator: *'Haven't had any specific feedback from other members of staff but there seems to be an expectation that we are opening a can of worms that means children kick off when they go back to lessons, which doesn't reflect that well on the LINX programme. This is because this is a behavioural school where we have to contain a lot of behavioural issues instead of talking about them, this may lead to resentment from other teachers as they think this isn't the role of this school.'*

This was counteracted in one setting during the programme (it was not a regular feature of the intervention) by additional training by the creator of LINX which helped to allay concerns about what the programme was about and the lesson time students missed to take part in the two hour sessions each week, Jill: *'I think whencame and did some inset on what LINX was about for the staff here it changed their perceptions – they had been pretty negative before that, it took organising. I thought how interesting that was, she really did her stuff and the change in the atmosphere from apprehension to people going up to her and saying that was really good and we think LINX was really good. In hindsight that would have been really good to have at the start.'*

This excerpt reflects a key influence within the system which was identified as important by the facilitators of LINX; awareness raising for other members within the system. Possible resentment was also identified as an important consideration in paper 1, as confusion about what the programme covers could occur, even causing negativity.

This is reflected in the literature for example Belsky (1984) highlighted that the impact of domestic abuse must be considered in the context of the system upon which it occurs, using aspects of Bronfenbrenner's Systems theory (1963). Therefore the impact of domestic abuse may be moderated according to the system and the attitudes and behaviours of different people within the system.

Using organisational models of change such as Lewin's (1951) model of change there are various strategies to create readiness for new interventions, such as challenging existing mindsets and creating motivation for change. This can be achieved through: highlighting the difference between current and future performance, creating an appealing vision of a future state of affairs, and creating a confidence that this future state can be achieved. An awareness of collective efficacy, as highlighted by Bandura (1997) i.e. that long lasting change will only occur when there is a collective belief regarding members' collective capabilities to change by organizing and executing any required courses of action. This may mean information sharing about how any new intervention works and why the impact is important.

A practical implication for any new support work would be more preparation time with whole staff training about the approach and its purpose in order for other professionals to understand its purpose (for example the goals of LINX) and prevent possible resentment about the time missed from lessons. This hope of awareness raising is cited in current policy as being important to help people to realise the widespread nature of domestic abuse (The 2009 the government coordinated strategy aimed at ending violence against women and girls through promoting education and understanding).

In this subsection, the second research question has been explored with interviews with different people involved with the LINX programme. The themes identified: facilitator qualities, structural issues, group vs individual support and systemic influences. These areas have helped to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the LINX programme, with many themes also being common to paper 1, suggesting these are common themes to these types of interventions in general. This has helped to clarify and consolidate what needs to be considered before a support programme such as LINX is put in place, providing new understandings in this under researched area where no such guidelines exist.

New understandings around the importance of a possible attachment figure were considered in the light of awareness raising through work occurring in schools, with possible further training being focused in this setting where there are available ongoing attachment figures.

Next **Research question 3** was investigated:

Based on the findings of the research questions addressed in paper 1 and research questions 1 and 2 in this paper, what can Educational Psychologists learn from service recipients, parents and providers involved with support services for young people who have experienced domestic violence?

The themes from papers 1 & 2 were considered in a focus group of educational psychologists (EPs), to consider the role EPs could have in supporting domestic abuse interventions for young people, as they are in a good position to provide both individual and systemic support. The findings from the analysis of the data which emerged from this focus group are presented in the following section which summarises the two key themes that emerged.

Theme 1: Role of the educational psychologist

The majority of the EPs thought that the role of the educational psychologist is to raise awareness of domestic abuse at a more systemic level, rather than focusing on working with the individual. This links to the systemic influences theme of the importance of understanding within the wider network

of domestic abuse and the importance of similar interventions. This is highlighted in the following quote: *I think our role is to raise awareness of the impact of that situation to the teachers, it's quite a throw away comment to say they have experienced DV suggesting it's not actually going to have that much effect, our role maybe to identify what effect it may have.*

Helping professionals know what support is out there and where to go for it, possibly in the form of training programmes e.g. *to make sure others know, we offer training on so many things but I've never been asked for training on domestic violence and we are probably in a really good position to talk about its effects, and that's never in our directory.*

Another role of the EP could be in the form of supervision for the people involved with the programme e.g. *We definitely have a role to support those and supervise those who are providing the support for those young people or other adults who have experienced DV. I think our breadth of experience possibly adds another dimension to that.*

Theme 2: Role of Group Work

Many of the educational psychologists reflected a common theme identified by the facilitators of LINX, the young people and professionals from paper 1 and 2, that group work should not stand alone and there should be follow up support e.g. *I don't think they can stand alone, there needs to be follow up work, within 3 months, then 6, then a year. Because what we know about children's behaviour especially in groups the changes don't endure unless you do that.*

Especially for those who would like ongoing work, possibly of a therapeutic nature – it needs to be available if you start awareness raising and challenge in the form of group work e.g. *Obviously in terms of raising awareness it (LINX) has value. In terms of a therapeutic relationship there is reference to that in the feedback and the desire for an individual relationship.....we can look at different ways to meet the needs of these children.*

In relation to practice there is a growing awareness regarding how prevalent domestic abuse is (e.g. HM Government 2009). Educational psychologists are in a good position to give systemic training on such issues to all members within a system e.g. in a school teachers, pupils and parents. Taket, Beringer, Irvine, and Garfield (2004) have already considered the wider role of health professionals in terms of routine and selective questioning about domestic abuse, in order for the stigma around the issue to be brought out into the open so support can be accessed. From the findings of this research this could be expanded to other professionals with training and supervision.

Overall Discussion and Conclusions

Key findings

In response to the first research question the young people could identify a change in their behaviour after LINX through a number of new coping strategies to deal with a difficult situation for example walking away or talking about things. A change in relationships appeared to reflect a heightened sense of empathy, with some of the young people recognising that they thought about others' view points more. This was reflected in the facilitators' comments, strength and difficulties questionnaires and the observations. This could possibly be explained through social learning theory and the presence of role models in the LINX programme exhibiting new ways of behaving.

In relation to research question 2 the analysis identified many strengths and weaknesses of the programme. It was identified that there could be an over reliance on qualities of the facilitator which were not previously identified in the LINX training. This research has helped to clarify what some of those qualities are such as; being flexible and openness to change.

Another area of development for LINX related to reducing the amount of paper work, which was a common difficulty amongst the facilitators and likely to inhibit their enjoyment of their role.

Another finding was mixed sex groups may have helped to facilitate empathy further (all the groups were single sex), with the possible expansion of the programme to a younger age range increasing success.

Similar to paper 1 another key finding, for the development of such programmes, was the importance of an individual, ongoing relationship with a key adult, yet benefits of group work were noted. This has links to attachment theory, as Geddes (1999) identified that a caring nurturing relationship can be developed with one key adult over time that can be used to promote a more secure attachment and potentially affect their behaviour. Secure attachments allow healthy internal working models to promote healthy relationships (Greenberg et al 1990).

The role of systemic factors was also identified. LINX was often just placed into a setting without much thought around how other adults may view the programme. Therefore an important finding was the role of awareness raising within the system to help to facilitate understanding and support of this sort of intervention. Organisational models of change (e.g. Lewin's (1951) three-stage model of change,) can be used to provide a theoretical understanding of systemic issues and help to create readiness for new interventions.

Key findings in relation to the final research question were explored by examining what educational psychologists could learn from this research on support services for adolescents who had witnessed domestic abuse. Educational psychologists felt that an important potential future role was around awareness raising, as they have potential access to schools and often work in a systemic way. Educational psychologists also recognised the significance of an ongoing relationship with a key adult.

This research has helped to consolidate what factors need to be considered when implementing an intervention programme such as LINX. As this is a relatively new area of research, programmes are often implemented without looking at the factors which may be barriers and facilitators to their success.

Principles guiding practice: first steps to drawing up a model to guide practice

Research which has begun to turn theory into practice

In summary the findings from both papers were:

- (i) Adolescents can hold views that domestic abuse is normal.
- (ii) That family can be resented or protected from an adolescent's viewpoint.
- (iii) Similar strengths and weaknesses of group and individual support can be used to build a model of intervention for young people who have witnessed domestic violence.

I have turned these findings into the key principles which form the headings of the sections below.

- *Challenging normative thinking around domestic abuse*

Other interventions, for example in prisons with offenders, have recognised the role of thought processes on behaviour, similar to how normative justification may influence behaviour of adolescents who have witnessed domestic abuse. Chavaria (1996) conducted a literature review that showed that prison interventions which had the largest impact were those that targeted an offenders' thinking, particularly those which seek to expand their empathy. These interventions were often based on more explicit cognitive behavioural techniques than LINX, so taking a more explicit cognitive behavioural approach in conjunction with the experiential learning could be a useful approach for the future.

- *The complex nature of family relationships, and that they should not be relied on for support during adolescence.*

Even though joint family and adolescent interventions were not considered appropriate in this research, the role of individual intervention for parents has shown benefits in research with juvenile delinquents, reducing time spent in institutions and their criminal activity (Woolfenden, Williams & Peat 2002). Hence possible interventions should consider working with the young person and working separately with the family to help extend their understanding and raise awareness of what the young person is going through.

- *The role of coping strategies such as physical exercise, and how these types of strategies should possibly be incorporated into a support programme.*

The role of channelling undesirable behaviours into desirable behaviours has also been recognised for some time in other interventions. There is literature which documents how sport and physical activity can have an impact on antisocial behaviour through targeting underlying protective factors such as self esteem and problem solving (Collis & Griffin 1993). This study supports this research and the role of physical activity as being beneficial to adolescents who have witnessed domestic abuse. However longitudinal research would need to explore the impact of this form of activity. Similar to many other forms of interventions the use of physical activity as a support intervention for antisocial behaviour has been criticised for failing to monitor its impact on levels of crime or drug abuse, as well as having no clear theoretical rationale (Smith & Waddington 2004). These are similar to criticisms for interventions targeted at young people who have witnessed domestic abuse and are displaying behavioural difficulties (e.g. Mullender et al 2002).

- *The characteristics of the facilitators being essential for the success of any intervention. These characteristics included: being flexible, considering the voice of the child, experienced and being able to demonstrate a lack of judgement.*

Rye (1998) identified that effective leaders of group programmes tended to have had at least 1 hour training plus 1 hour per week supervision. However Rye also identified that characteristics of leaders that are effective at running groups are often not determined, this research (both papers 1 & 2) has helped further understanding of these characteristics.

- *The role of ongoing individual support being important in addition to any group support. Intervention facilitators possibly being trained and working with young people in the same setting for example teachers/teaching assistants in schools.*

There are cautionary notes from the literature around group programmes, Sutherland and Cressey (1974) have suggested that delinquent values and skills are acquired through association with delinquent peers. This is another consideration for group models of this kind, and may suggest that individual support may be more beneficial in the long term (another possible area for longitudinal research). However there is research which shows that combined treatments are recognised as being beneficial when working with children with conduct disorder (Bailey 1996). This supports the finding in paper 2 which identified the role of group work and individual work as possibly being complementary for adolescents who have witnessed domestic abuse and should be a consideration for future interventions.

- *Systemic considerations - The context of the intervention needs to be considered for its success, such as awareness raising amongst different people about the purpose of the intervention. Clearly defined job roles also help to facilitate an interventions progress as it allows for time management and cultural acceptance of the intervention to be considered.*

Rye (1998) identified other important factors in group interventions which may influence their success these include: the setting, the culture and ongoing conflicts undoing the benefits of the group. All of these factors could be considered in more detail to improve the chances of success of any intervention. Brett (1992) identified that the culture of a setting – individualistic or collectivist, whether working independently or together, will influence a groups' success. This can be facilitated with flexible negotiators; which comes back to the principles of skilled facilitation and selection on the basis of these characteristics to support systemic success.

Limitations and future areas of research

This paper presents some preliminary findings from the first cohort of the LINX programme, the paper presented a rich detailed picture of the experiences of a few of the participants, the facilitators and parents involved with the programme.

The use of attachment theory to explain adolescent behaviour is also based on much research carried out in infancy (Hazan & Shaver 1990) and it is difficult to clearly identify the link between disrupted attachments and adult behaviour. A clear objective link between parent-child interactions, as well as self report about the quality of relationships would help to provide further credibility to the role of attachment theory in the area of the impact of domestic abuse and adolescent behaviour.

Whilst creating an insight into their experiences the findings are not generalisable to other participants within the LINX programme as a volunteer rather than a random sample was utilised, this could be considered a limitation and an area for future research. The collection of longitudinal data regarding the participant's progress after LINX would also help to provide insights into other mediating variables that may impact on the success of LINX, as well as its likelihood of ongoing success.

The role of the themes identified in paper 1, which were included in the analysis of paper 2, would have, ideally, if there had been more time, been used to possibly modify the programme and prepare the system for its implementation. However triangulation of the themes identified in paper 1 from young people who had experienced similar support (both group and individual) and those who took part in LINX, provides a good starting to use these key points (systemic influences, individual relationships and facilitator qualities) when planning future interventions.

Another useful area for future research would be to develop an intervention which combines both group and individual work. Much of the previous research has focused on individual therapeutic

work, or group work (Mullender et al 2002). Few group interventions in the UK have targeted just adolescents (without their parents present) (Hughes 1992) and many have not had much grounding in psychological theory. An intervention which had the possibility to draw the strengths from both approaches may allow participants to have an ongoing feeling of support which may be invaluable for some at providing long lasting change. Future research around developing a training programme for educational psychologists to deliver in schools could be useful.

Significance and contribution to knowledge

This research has identified principles for practice which need to be further investigated. For example currently school-based work could be considered disjointed and not available to all, with relatively few children having the opportunity to participate in such programmes (Ellis 2004). As previously considered training school staff may help to solve this problem and could be a contribution to the policy of domestic abuse awareness. However there is considerable debate in the literature concerning the advantages and disadvantages of having internal or external staff as facilitators (Avery-Leaf, Cascardi, O'Leary and Cano 2002). External staff may have specialist knowledge but require additional funding so be potentially unsustainable. In relation to the findings from this research (papers 1 & 2), the benefits of having an ongoing relationship with a member of staff would suggest that school staff may be preferable. There is research which suggests school staff can resist taking up this sort of work if they do not feel they can manage their competing demands, or have the training to deal with disclosures and some have undesirable or negative views and beliefs about domestic abuse (Aitken 2001). This research has identified the importance of systemic support and training (which will be considered in the next section) which could help to deal with some of these differing demands.

Implications

Themes identified in paper 1 and paper 2 includes facilitator qualities, specifically good facilitator qualities. A practical implication for educational psychologists is that they could help to identify tools which could be used to help identify facilitators who are confident and open to change.

Educational psychologists could also be involved in training which helps to empower teachers in schools in creating systemic awareness about domestic abuse, so that alongside knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse, staff can also manage group work and individual work which is recognised in their job role. This should be done in a way which creates an opportunity for safe learning where children and adolescents can discuss emotive topics such as domestic abuse by examining their own attitudes and the potential impact of their attitudes on others (Ellis 2004).

Conclusion

This research has identified some of the barriers and facilitators to group interventions such as LINX, whilst consolidating common principles regarding support for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse. There were mixed views about this specific intervention from the participants of LINX, the facilitators of LINX and people within the system in which LINX is placed. Some of the positives were the identification of a greater range of behavioural coping strategies and improved relationships; though it was debated by some participants whether this would be long lasting.

It is clear that this is an area where research is needed as group interventions for adolescents who have experienced domestic abuse are rare, therefore research on their success is limited. This project investigated views on support provided both individually and through group work (paper 1) attempting to create a framework which could be used to prepare local authorities for interventions and could be used in the design, implementation and evaluation of interventions (paper 2). Practical implications for support included: the role of physical activity during support sessions, facilitating access to clubs and sports sessions, possibly challenging young people's views, the role of individual work and how it should be used in conjunction with any group work. Also a finding that group work would work best when it is carried out with familiar adults in familiar environments so ongoing support with a key adult can continue if necessary. Theory such as attachment theory, has helped to identify the key role that an ongoing rapport with a key supportive adult can have in helping to develop secure attachments, when can in turn impact on behaviour and relationships.

Clear implications for policy were identified in this paper in relation to the role of practice of other professionals such as educational psychologists. A focus group with educational psychologists reflected on the findings of this research and identified that there could be a greater role for training staff within schools in terms of domestic awareness raising, which may help to facilitate staff in developing ongoing supportive relationships connected to group programmes such as LINX.

Future research needs to be around longitudinal research focusing on the long term impact of any changes noted within the LINX programme, and the success of the identified principles of practice. The role of educational psychologists could also be considered when thinking about developing a selection programme for support workers – using tools to select on the basis of certain characteristics e.g. openness to change, confidence to challenge, could be a valuable area for more research.

Reflection on the different approaches and methods used in the thesis:

A qualitative approach was selected in this research to gain an insight into the views of an ephemeral group (young people with behavioural difficulties who have previously witnessed domestic abuse). However when the data is gathered in collaboration with the researcher, as it is with a semi structured interview, it is important to acknowledge the potential impact of researcher bias (Miles and Huberman 1994). The researcher acknowledges this limitation in this type of research and discloses her background and motivation (appendix 1), in order to create a transparent report that reflects both the participants' and the researchers' perspective. As the participants were being interviewed by someone they did not know that well the importance of 'impression management' must be considered as this may have influenced the participants' responses. This could affect the overall confidence one can have in the conclusions drawn as it is difficult to know whether the participants revealed their true feelings rather than socially desirable responses (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Due to the time constraints a relatively structured approach was necessary for data collection which meant that it was difficult to explore all themes that emerged within the data. This limitation and the small data sample mean that the findings are only represent a small range of the possible views of young people and professionals on support for witnessing domestic abuse, the key points in this research could be explored in future interventions to further investigate their validity.

How the different theories used relate to the findings:

There were three main theories considered in this research: Social learning theory, Attachment theory and Bronfenbrenner's System theory, this section will consider how relevant and useful these theories were in helping to explain the key findings from this thesis.

The first key finding for both papers was that adolescents' can hold the view that domestic abuse is normal. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning theory suggests a person discovers how to act by modelling their behaviour on significant same sex adult role models with key processes including: close contact, imitation of superiors, understanding concepts and role model behaviour. In relation to domestic abuse this theory predicts boys will reproduce the behaviour of the abuser, with girls possibly internalising their mothers' passivity and potentially ending up in similar relationships.

Therefore the way that adolescents (in particular males) deal with conflict may be to get aggressive, or learn that this is 'normal' behaviour. The findings from this thesis revealed that the young people spoken to did tend to justify their behaviour in the context of their own experiences, often normalising aggression and physical violence. Professionals appeared to recognise this and the need to challenge this thinking when it was identified, which is a finding both papers has highlighted and illuminated in the context of Social Learning theory. Bandura (1977) does not mention the potential of differences in gender abuse for example women being the abuser, this is a potential limitation of Social Learning theory, as it does not clearly explain why woman may model these behaviours.

However this research only dealt with situations where the abuser had been male so this theory is appropriate for explaining some of the behaviours which appeared to have been modelled on past experiences.

A limitation to investigating the role of Social learning theory in this thesis was the methodology which incorporated an opportunistic approach to participant selection (as it was difficult to recruit participants with the appropriate background), leading to more males than females - so it was difficult to identify any differences between genders in terms of social learning. Therefore the

range of participants did not facilitate a sample which allowed a comparison of the views of the two genders to test out the theoretical ideas about same sex modelling set out above.

Also the sample reflected only those who had displayed externalising behaviours such as aggression, which may have precluded identification of those who had internalised their mother's response to domestic abuse. Therefore those young people who demonstrate a more passive and internalised response may mean that they are not as easily identified for support programmes, possibly meaning (as was the case with this research) less females are identified than males. The findings did indicate that girls were less likely to justify the normality of violence, but this is a finding which needs to be further explored, alongside other gender differences, in further research.

The second key finding linked to how feelings about family can be linked to resentment or protection from an adolescent's viewpoint. Attachment theory may help to explain why this was the case in young people who had witnessed domestic abuse. This theory suggests that if children are made to feel safe and develop secure attachments they can go on to experience age appropriate opportunities outside the home. In a household where there is domestic violence previous research has suggested secure attachments are unlikely to form (Sternberg 2005), with the possibility of insecure attachments developing which can be linked to the following behaviours; poor relationships, a difficulty understanding why other people behave the way they do and externalizing behaviour such as aggression. This thesis has identified that adolescents had mixed feelings towards family relationships and this may be linked to how internal working models of relationships were difficult and often aggressive as a result of their earlier childhood experiences.

I feel that the change that was noted by many of the young people, in terms of improvements in family relationships linked to the support they had received, is better explained by Social Learning theory. This theory clearly outlines how appropriate behaviours are learnt through modelling and in this case new behaviours were learnt from the professionals who worked with the young people, which in turn may have resulted in improvement in the family relationships. The desire for ongoing

support which was expressed by many of the young people (and was part of the third finding: characteristics of successful interventions), also has clear links to social learning theory, as a relationship between young person and support provider possibly helped to support the development of successful internal working models regarding appropriate behaviour.

The third key finding was: similar strengths and weaknesses of group and individual support can be used to build a model of intervention for young people who have witnessed domestic violence. Here systemic considerations were identified, with the context of the intervention such as job role and specification being important factors to consider. The final guiding theory in this thesis was Bronfenbrenner (1963) Systems theory which proposes that different levels can impact on the individual: microsystem – the direct relationships an individual may have with their family and friends, mesosystem – looks at the relationships between the different layers within the system e.g. school and home and the exosystem – the larger social system. However the usefulness of this theory is questionable as the data collection predominantly focused upon the microsystem. There were also difficulties gaining insights into some reciprocal relationships i.e. few parents took the opportunity to speak about the impact of this intervention on their child.

I feel that Social Learning Theory could more clearly explain the importance of job role in relation to working with these young people. This theory clearly highlights how modelling can lead to internalisation of new behaviours; therefore the facilitators of interventions need to be selected on the basis of their role model capability, the ability to demonstrate to young people new ways of behaving and to have the confidence to challenge their opinions regarding the normality of violence.

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An investigation of perceptions of individual and group support provided for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse. With a particular focus on a new intervention: LINX, developing guidelines for practice. Thesis. Eleanor Ley

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Appendix 1 – Background of the researcher, rationale and purpose of research.

I am a 30 year old single woman, who has worked with adolescents for much of her working life (as an A level teacher) and became interested in understanding the many complex pressures on young people at this age, which can be exasperated by difficult family situations or events.

During my first year placement as a trainee educational psychologist I worked in an office where 2 out of the 3 educational psychologists with specialist time for domestic abuse, in this particular county, were situated. Working closely with these specialists has helped to identify that there is currently a lack of consistent support for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse.

To develop my own knowledge I attended the ADVA level 1 training course which investigates what domestic abuse is and how far reaching its impact can be. I hope to attend the level 2 training course which looks at the effects of domestic abuse directly on children.

The Government and various researchers have begun to recognise the impact that witnessing domestic abuse can have at that time, or later on, on emotional and behavioural development. I wanted to investigate the common themes from who have experienced support about what is useful in order to facilitate new support in this area.

Group work is a relatively new area when working with adolescents who have experienced domestic abuse and the support that has been available has not lasted. I wondered what the reasons for this were, and the impact that this has on the support services ability to promote and sustain these projects. Working with these young people is a notoriously difficult area, in terms of identification, access and creating an atmosphere which allowed these young people to feel comfortable enough to talk about these sensitive issues. This made me feel that gaining access to their views and thoughts in this area, as well as those who worked with them, was important.

Appendix 2 – Background of the young people participants for paper 1

The following three participants were identified as being suitable candidates from contacting Women's Refuge and had received individual support. Due to time and access constraints two of the three interviews were conducted over the phone, the other interview was held at the school:

Todd

Todd was 18 at the time of interviewing and had received support from a counsellor for 10 sessions over a 10 week period. He had lived in a home where Domestic Violence had been an issue for many years between his step father and mother. At the time of the interview he lived at home with his mother, and his mother had had no contact with his step father for some time.

Dave

Dave was 17 at the time of interviewing and had received support from a Women's Aid Worker for 9 sessions over a 10 week period. He had lived in a home where Domestic Violence was an issue between his father and mother, he has been living with his mother and her new partner for 2 years now.

Sarah

Sarah was 17 at the time of interviewing and lived at home with her mother. Her mother had previously been in a refuge as a result of Domestic Violence at home. Sarah had 12 sessions with a Women's aid worker.

The following two participants were accessed through support from a Secondary school who had run a group intervention 'Changing Places.' Both were interviewed at the school:

Richard

Richard was 15 at the time of interviewing and lives at home with his mother. He was involved in 'The Changing Places Programme' which was a group support programme for adolescents who had witnessed domestic abuse which ran for 12 weeks in a Secondary School. This programme is no longer available.

Ben

Ben was 16 at the time of interviewing and lives in a foster placement. He is in care as a result of his a turbulent family background where he witnessed DV. He was also involved in 'The Changing Places Programme.'

their ethnic background was white British, their socio economic status could be described as working class as most of their parents had jobs and had not attended university. Due to time limitations it was not possible to investigate a range of ethnicities or socio economic backgrounds.

Appendix 3 – Background of the professionals

The following five participants were identified as key relevant support professionals who worked adolescents in this area. This information was ascertained by speaking to a strategic consultant with the Against Domestic Violence and Abuse agency who had an over view of support services in this local authority.

Specialist Educational Psychologist - Has specialist time for working with women and children in refuges that have experienced DV, providing support and advice. Also works in schools awareness raising.

Women's Refuge Worker - Works within refuges providing one-to-one support, but also does outreach work with older children, both in groups and individually. Mostly receives referrals from parents, police and teachers.

School Counsellor - Sees children individually who may have witnessed domestic abuse, during school time, receives referrals from police, women's refuges, parents and self referrals.

ADVA Strategist - Works systemically at a strategic level coordinating support services for those who need it.

CAMHS Worker - Provides mental health support for individuals who may need it following exposure to domestic abuse, also group work to support those who need some form of support following exposure to DV. Mostly receives referrals from teachers and refuge workers.

Appendix 4a – conceptual framework paper 1

Adolescents Views	Relationships	<i>What goes well.</i> <i>What goes badly.</i> <i>How is it handled</i>
	Hobbies	<i>What do you enjoy doing with others/alone?</i>
	Support	<i>Reliability</i> <i>Improvements?</i> <i>Individual or group?</i> <i>Role of others?</i>

Professionals Views/Perceptions	Behaviour	<i>Ways of dealing with difficult situations?</i> <i>Effectiveness of support?</i> <i>Role of others?</i>
	Professional Role	<i>description?</i> <i>Information sharing</i> <i>Training</i>
	Support	<i>Improvement</i> <i>Individual or group?</i> <i>Role of others?</i>

Appendix 4b – Ethics procedure for paper 2

Initially I liaised with the LINX coordinator for the county about suitable LINX groups; I then approached the facilitators about contacting individuals who may be interested in taking part in this research. I spoke to the four LINX groups to identify willing and suitable participants (appendix 16). I then obtained their contact details, a letter of consent of was sent to their parents and the participants, the letter also contained general information regarding the nature of my research (appendix 19), 7 young people agreed to take part providing verbal consent. All the other LINX participants were read a brief (appendix 16) which ensured they were happy to be observed.

At the start of the interviews all participants were fully briefed about the nature of my research (appendix eleven), they were also told they could withdraw at any time. To ensure that participants were not anxious about the recording of the information being identifiable as theirs they were assured that the transcripts would be made anonymous by changing all names and the audio recordings destroyed. After the interviews the young people, facilitators, parents and educational psychologists were debriefed and reminded of their right to withdraw (appendix twelve). The researchers contact details were also given to each of the participants in case they had any queries or decided they would like to withdraw at a later date. Similar to paper 1 the appropriateness of the ethics considered in this study were considered in line with previous research in this area which has involved adolescents and domestic abuse. Researchers tended to gain verbal consent from both parent and child using opt out letters (Buckley, Holt and Whelan 2007). These methods informed my ethics procedure. The questions asked of them were of their experiences, but they were given a choice not to respond and told they could leave at any time.

Appendix 5a –Interview schedules for the young people and professionals

For the Adolescents in Paper 1

1. Tell me about the different sorts of relationships you have with your friends and family?
 - Do you feel close to them?
 - What do you do enjoy doing together?

2. Before you had support how might you have handled an argument?
 - Has this changed since you've had support?
 - What are other ways of dealing with arguments? Do you ever use them?

3. What do you currently enjoy doing in your free time?
 - Do you have any hobbies/in any clubs/
 - Has this changed since you've had support?

4. What do you when you feel upset?
 - Any new ways of coping since you've spoken to someone?
 - What do you think are good and bad things to do when your upset?

5. Do you ever feel that using violence is an appropriate way to deal with a situation?
 - Do you think there are ever reasons why people use violence in a relationship?
 - What other ways do you think might be useful for calming a situation down?
 - When could be right, or wrong?

6. Did you find the support you had from an outside professional was useful?
 - Did you feel that you could rely on this support?

- Who put you in touch with them?
7. Was there any other support you had in addition to the outside professional?
- For example family or friends?
 - How was it different?
9. So you do think other people in your situation would benefit from similar support?
- Why do you think that is?
 - What were the other benefits of the sessions?
10. Is there anything you think that could be improved about the support you had from the outside professional?
- What would you like to be done differently?
11. Do you think in the long term it will have had an effect on how you look at things?
12. Do you think group work or individual work would be the most useful?
- Why do you think that is?
 - What are the good things about group work?
 - What are the good things about individual work?

5 b) For the Professionals in paper 1

1. To your knowledge what support is available in Devon for young people who have witnessed domestic violence and how do you value it?
 - Is this done in groups or as individual work?
 - Which do you feel is the most important?
2. What are your thoughts on your job role and its ability to provide support for adolescents who have witnessed DV?
3. Do you think parental involvement when providing support for DV is important?
4. Is there a threshold of need that determines support?
5. Do you think there should be a theoretical basis to work with young people who have witnessed DV and may need support?
 - OR Are there other less explicit practical underpinnings which have developed the support available, are these linked to qualities of the professional?
6. In your knowledge of what support is out there, do you think it is beneficial to young people? If so why?
7. How long do you feel the support needs to be put in place in order to make a change to a young person's feelings and behaviour after experiencing DV?
 - Is this currently monitored in any way?
8. Do you feel that the existing services within DLA are covering all areas of need for these young people e.g. emotional and behavioural?
9. Do you think multi agency co ordination is important when working with young people and DV?

- e.g. through referrals, meetings, CAFs etc.
- What agencies are involved?
- Do you feel that services work together?

10. What do you know about what is in place to evaluate the support available?

- What sort of evaluation do you feel would be most beneficial? What would this look like?
- To your knowledge has the feedback from the young people been positive (even in an informal way) in terms of their attitudes towards the support available?
- If not why not?
- Are long term changes in terms of attitudes/behaviour of the young people monitored?
(extension question) If so how is this monitored? Or why not?

11. What do you think are the barriers to providing support to young people who have witnessed DV?

- How might these barriers be overcome?

12. What additional forms of support would you like to see in place in the future?

- Do you know of physical activity being used as a form of support?

13. Who would be responsible for providing the support?

- How often?
- Do you think this is a realistic method of providing professional support?

14. (Brief description of LINX) Do you know about the new LINX programme?

- If so do you think it will be effective in increasing levels of empathy in the young people targeted?

- In an ideal world how do you think it could be improved?

15. Do you think there is a role for educational psychologists in this area?

Appendix 6– Interview with a young person: Dave.

I: What sorts of relationships do you have with your friends and family?

D: Before my work with a counsellor, my relationships weren't very good, isolated, alone I guess, I didn't let anyone in. **After the counsellor?** I sort of went back to how I used to be, I let people in and talked to people and sorted issues out rather than buried my head in the sand. It has had an impact on everything. **Can you give me an example?** It has helped me to deal with mum's mental illness, I didn't get on with my dad for years and years and now I'm round there all the time. Friends that I couldn't speak to for years, because for one reason or another I didn't get along with them, I can now speak to them again. All my relationships, my friends, girlfriend, everything – he just helped me.

I: How do you deal with conflict?

D: I don't avoid conflict, I'm very confrontational. I just deal with a difficult situation head on. **I: Can you tell me a time when that's happened?** Yeah well my friend told me to do something I didn't want to and it just sort of escalated until I was so mad. One thing the counsellor helped me with is when I'm too aggravated I should just walk away from the situation and then come back. I will still try to find a solution head on and not walk away if I can, sometimes after I've dealt with it I feel a lot better and I don't really think about it. **What would dealing with it head on look like, would it be talking or would you ever use violence?** No, well yeah a while ago I probably would have. I never use violence to my family, or my friends or my girlfriend. If a random guy comes up to you on the street you have to defend yourself. If I was falling out with a friend or something like that, then no definitely not, you've got to sit down and talk about it. Whereas before I probably would have used violence to my friends, or to my girlfriend, or violent actions – not ever hit her but punch things around her, or throw my weight around, which helps me to intimidate her. Now I've learnt to be more calm and talk about things.

I: Do you feel directly as a consequence of your work with a counsellor this has changed?

D: Yeah I would just stay there until it was sorted, whereas now I will walk away.

I: What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

D: I like to play rugby, surf and I like to skate. **Has this changed since you've had support?** No I don't think so.

I: What do you do when you feel upset?

D: I go out for a cigarette, don't talk to anyone for a bit.

I: Who put you in touch with the support you received?

D: It was a woman fromCollege.

I: Did you feel that you could rely on this support and talk about different issues?

D: Yeah.

I: What would you say were the benefits of the support you had?

To: He listens, and you know he's very easy to trust. Personally I just found there was something about him, he'd been there before, he wasn't just a person who didn't want to be there. He wanted to be there, he had possibly been there at some point in time. No matter what you said, he never, ever judged you. He didn't judge you, or make you feel like crap. I think him personally is what's good. I still see him now around and about. He sort of helps me without doing anything. Yeah I still keep in contact with him, if I've got a problem I might drop him a text. If I've got a little problem, my girlfriends trying to find her dad and didn't know where to start, I thought he would know so I would contact him, and he's always more than happy to help.

I: Do you think there is anything that could have been improved about the support you received?

D: Not for me. But there was definitely something I said to him, that if someone was in a different position, he said the policy was 8-10 sessions, now that for me was fine, but someone in a worse situation than me, I don't think that would be enough. I don't think there should be a limit, it just so happened I had 9, and it was just right for me, but it might not be right for someone else and I don't know what would happen after that as it seemed very set at 10 and no more. He said this was due to funding. **Do you think 8-10 sessions is enough to make a difference in the long term?** It has definitely helped me in the long term, one-to-one sessions, without a shadow of a doubt. I don't think there is a single thing which hasn't changed as a result of this work. I didn't used to play rugby – because I didn't want to, but then because of him I started again, I had played rugby all the life so it was very strange that I stopped. It has literally made me, I suppose mum said how happy I am now when I come home. I used to go into my room and not do a lot, whereas now I will go straight in and say hello to her.

I: What do you think of group work versus individual work?

D: Yeah and no. I suppose I'm a bit sceptical of group work, especially with younger children. It could go one of two ways, enjoy it and really get involved and it will help or essentially piss about and it won't be that good. I suppose people have got to be on the same page, I know it's aimed at 11-18 yr olds, but it would need to be 16-18 ages in a group, not an 11 year old and an 18 year old.

I: What do you think about single sex groups? I think it's a bad thing because if you've got a male who thinks its right to abuse a female, or vice-versa and then they heard the other side, you know if they heard the male or female side of it, it would be useful because it might help them to understand what they were doing to that person. **Would group work have been something you were interested in?** I would have done it and been open to it, but I think one-to-one allows you to be more personable, I would have struggled to get where I am in group work. I think one-to-one suits me and some other people. I didn't get the choice of doing group work, but I would have turned it down.

I: Was there any other support you had at this time?

D: Student support at college. Towards the end of the sessions I started to get some support from my girlfriend, I am very close to my mum usually but at the time my mum was very ill, so no not really. **What do you think about having someone within the family versus a stranger?** I think it's good to have both, but especially if it's a problem with the girlfriend or someone in the family than someone separate is definitely good. Because he gives you a very non-biased view, he makes you think, oh no, maybe I shouldn't have said that because it's obviously upset her. So it's very good to have someone separate, but I suppose it is good to have someone else because they are only there one or every two weeks. I always understood where the women's aid worker was coming from, and he wasn't afraid to confront you, 'why did you say/do this.' He was very confrontational if he thought what you doing was wrong. I think that not straight away I understood, I knew in my heart of hearts it was right but I didn't want to listen.

Appendix 7 – Interview with a professional (Women’s Aid Young People’s worker)

I: To your knowledge what support is available for young people in Devon who have witnessed Domestic Violence and how do you value it?

T: Quite a mixed bag – you could split that question into two parts, if you are talking about the provision for those people who are experiencing it in the here and now support from Women’s Aid, if it was recognised that it was such a level that it became tier 3 it is deemed to be neglect or abuse social services would also become involved, that would bring into effect child protection. Child protection conferences no doubt quite a lot of people involved at that point. Women’s Aid, Outreach support for parents, social worker, SIPs, that whole mechanism would swing into operation. However it wasn’t deemed serious enough or people were not quite aware what was going on then it becomes quite difficult, for example the school I have just been working in, those children identified by the school there was no guarantee that those young people had lived with it or are living with it. If you talked about what provision is out there for those people who have lived with it, I would say very little. Do these young people have the opportunity; a) are they confident enough to put their head above the parapet and say this is happening and I need help, are teachers going to pick up on it, youth workers etc, as they might only see a part of it and not have that overall picture. They might just think its them being naughty not turning up for school etc. **Do you think there is scope for awareness raising of these issues?** I think there is always scope for awareness raising, knowledge is power, my fear is what happens afterwards – are we going to give the provision to do anything about it?

I: What are your thoughts on how your job role provides support for adolescents who have witnessed Domestic abuse?

T: My referrals come internally from women’s aid. My remit is to work with young people from 14-25, men and women and the umbrella really is those effected by domestic abuse, this could be post

DV in past relationships, in the family, current DV in the family and also in personal and close relationships. So it could be them experiencing it in the home, not actually being part of it just witnessing it, the different control aspects, what the perpetrator might be doing. It might not be violence but subtle control. One of the ladies might make a referral who has a daughter, son, sibling within that age range, outreach continue to work with her, there only me working with this age range in north.....and there is who works with younger age range, then we go in and offer support over a period of 8-10 sessions. About an hour a session, one-to-one, it's voluntary. The session is quite holistic and fitted to the situation, for example I am working with a young person is currently experiencing it, it's really giving them an opportunity to say no judgement – you lead this, giving them an opportunity to talk about it, what's going on, what's gone on, what effect its having on them, looking at some behaviours that might be happening because of what's gone on. Those emotions of anger, blame and guilt both on their part and both parents. Why did you let this happen? Emotions that the young person may not understand at the time but certainly down the line start to come to the surface. **Why is there two children's workers working with two different age ranges?** Funding, ADVA fund me they state its 14-25 its current/post DV. This has been stretched into the repair programme, works with the young people linked to the perpetrators on the repair programme as well as her outreach work.

I: What do you think of group work versus individual work?

T: I think group work around DV is notoriously difficult. But you've also got to try to pull it back to their experience, to allow them to talk about their experiences to a point and challenge the impact of their experiences. What comes out is labelling, assumptions about normality of domestic abuse, all things they didn't like they were doing with others, and we were able to work with them around this. I think often these young people need an adult that they can rely on, who they can develop an ongoing relationship with.

I: Do you think parental involvement is important in the support?

T: When we get the referral from the average worker we meet with the parents – normally mum, give them a chance to ask any questions – I give them an overview of what we are about, to make them feel more reassured and secure. Then we go over the paperwork and the child protection stuff, and go over how what we talk about is confidential both with young person and their parent. We have a database and we ask the young person if they are happy for our notes to be kept there. I feel that I need to build up a relationship with involves trust and rapport, so my relationship is just with the young person, and how can I do that if they feel that everything they say is just going to go straight back to mum? I have made contact with mum to explain how I work so hopefully they understand. **What are your feelings in general about working with the young person and their parent together as some programmes do?** I think it will depend on where they are so far, I think it will be really good if you get to the point where they are able to express some of these feelings of blame and have the parent there to hear that and begin to process some of that I think it is very powerful. But the relationship is difficult.

I: Is there a threshold of need that would determine your involvement?

T: With us and our charity is that there isn't a threshold or any particular level, if there is a young person – DV has happened, it is led by them, it is quite bespoke to them because it all depends on their experiences and it depends on their needs. We get a lot of referrals because they are angry, but we also get the withdrawn – who may get missed.

I: Do you think a theoretical basis or a practical base is important when working with these young people, possibly linked to specific professional qualities?

T: Well we're not counsellors and we are very clear about that, it's a voluntary service to talk about what's gone on, certainly if we get referrals were they are kicking off a bit and anger is an issue, then we might look at some strategies and awareness stuff. I can only speak for myself personally I might use some CBT stuff, the solution focused side, trying to get within there, a lot of things aren't

working, how can we make it work despite all this. Trying to get from them what they need to be doing for things to be better, different, rather than saying you need to do a, b, c. What is there idea of better? Kinda of a CBT thing as well, a bit of the work is that A, B, C work by Ellis – whereby the event, the DV, what's happened is obviously seeing the event and the fallout – but there is that bit in the middle which is their interpretation of what went on, we might need to challenge their thinking, and that whole mix of resentment and blame. Resiliency factors can build into those irrational or rational thought processes. No doubt its quite fixed, so we are offering a chance to get an idea of how they view things and how they would want them to be different, it may be an opportunity to have somebody to blame, but in a positive way I think that is an important part to challenge their believes, because otherwise in DV work you can say it's alright – when we are trying to say 'no its not alright and your not to blame.' People find it difficult to ask the question and that's certainly what the perpetrator wants – and if we corroborate that what are actually telling people?

I: How long do you feel the support needs to be put in place in order to make a change to a young person's feelings and behaviour after experiencing DV?

T: Yes I think you can make a change in their inner believes and a shift in an awareness of their actions. I think there is a lot that can be done for sure. **In an ideal world would you like longer?** Ideally yes, but its depends on the individual, I think it is a bit double edged because it is so focused, whereas as those young people who need a bit longer – more therapeutic psychotherapy approach, where they are and what there are experiences are will influence how long they need. **From your experience do you notice a change in the young people over time?** Outcomes? I say to them I am not here to solve your problems, because my contact time is 8-10 hours spread out over 2/3 months, what realistically can you do to support someone in the long term – that needs ongoing contact.

I: Do you think multi agency co ordination is important when working with young people and DV?

T: If it is current DV then social services will be involved, after that there is us and CASP (Child activity support programme) – they are more about the holistic family, frontiers who are funded by social

services who will offer one-to-one work for those who have experienced DV. If they are on the cusp of offending there is LINX, YISP, but that is not the basis of their work – we will work with some of the same people, but our focus will be much more specific. I think it is ridiculous and multi-agency work could be expanded, there is a clear role for this to happen in CAFs, it is ridiculous for a service to only offer to those people who are experiencing it now, sometimes that is not the time they want to deal with it. This is the difficulty because unless we have worked with them when it's going on, it's about referral routes and funding – 6 months down the line its valid they may need support and can't access it. School may notice the impact later down the line, there is very few places they can refer to. Ysmart came to me with someone but because support hadn't previously been offered, you could go to counselling/connexions for some counselling – but is it the forum to address these issues? Why have a specialist service if it only addresses the needs of 20% of the young people out there? You've got the argument it's about resources, that's a valid point. There is only approximately 6 women's aid outreach support workers for all of A criticism of ADVA is the lack of joined up thinking – if the pots of money come up – they go bang, bang and scatter about without any joined up planning.

I: To your knowledge is the support provided evaluated?

T: You go in on many angles – if you say DV, there not prepared to open that box, but if you say healthy relationships it's a bit of a softer pillow to lay your head on. I would say no to there being a lot of evaluation, as there isn't much funding. My brief doesn't include KPIs, targets to work towards. From my experience I work in the areas that have been important before e.g. the boys and young men's project, I obviously keep records and give feedback at the end, and young people feedback, there is some quantitative (ages, numbers) and the qualitative we try to look at what's helped and made a difference, so we do try and get some feedback because you have got to. I think this could be looked at – you need to be specific about what you're going to do that SMART stuff.

I: Do you think there are barriers when providing support to these young people?

T: Sometimes there is an expectation that it is a quick fix, and when things don't start to happen, people/parents can get frustrated because things can even get worse for a short time. Barriers from the young people are certainly about engaging, who are you, I haven't asked to speak to you. Those are barriers that we have to try and address. Work needs to last as long as the individual needs it – I often stay in contact, by text or phone, just so they feel like they've got someone to go to'

I: In an ideal world what would be the best forms of support for these young people?

T: I think it's probably simple, I think it can be over-complicated. It's got to be that school awareness that joint working with school from schools and children in schools. Less prescriptive – not just identifying individuals but about providing awareness to all. Some kind of back up support for those young people, continuing support for those who are experiencing it now, and one of the biggest things is about providing support for those who have experienced it. All the research shows, that it comes back to that dirty rumour – it's not good enough to ignore it, it's not your fault, let's talk about give them the opportunity to talk about it.

I: Which professionals do you think would be best placed to provide the support?

T: CAMHS pick up, it came out of a multi-agency meeting there is a lack of provision, a PSA in N. Devon said this happened 2 years ago – CAMHS said we pick up a lot of that – but it may not be clear mental health problems. The skills of women's aid with their specialist knowledge with a joined up approach to CAMHS and JACAT would be ideal. Different ways in, we can meet them where ever they want to meet. We and other services can come in like school counsellors, over a cup of coffee and a game of pool, in school if you like – you've got to have different approaches. I feel it's a bit bity, more joined up, more services, more people who have experienced it, who have knowledge, women's aid are very good at offering adult support, young people's services to provide support. Talking to comic relief they want to be more reactive than proactive put money where it's actually

happening, because it's easier to measure those outcomes. Whereas this sort of work is not so easy to measure.

I: Do you know about the new LINX programme?

T: I think LINX is very good, I think there is a place for it and a need for it. Especially when there is talk about relationships is a great way of doing it e.g. the spaceship was a fun way of doing things. It gave them a chance to work together, discussions around the way they have been treated. Good programme, I don't think it suits all, it takes one or two to break down the whole group. Got to give it a go, why not? **What do you think are improvements that could be made to a programme such as this?** I would like to see more ongoing work with mixed groups. Maybe a relationship DVD played and then them to pull out and challenge the different aspects while they're together, what their values are, what is OK – it's not for us always to go that's not ok – but instead get it from their peers. I think the mix would be interesting, what are you trying to address? If your basing it in YOT – they're in the area they're in because possibly of because of DV but also offending. If you took it out of the YOT scenario would it work? I found some of the activities on LINX a bit tenuous to what they were trying to get at. Whereas on changing places they were a bit more specific, however changing places was a complete nightmare with the admin, pre work and work within the course. Whereas LINX is much easier to roll it out and get on with it at the end of the day you're running a group work course, whereas changing places course was a total nightmare with the amount of admin involved for each session. I liked the CBT focus of changing places but that's just the way I work. I think I like that LINX didn't focus so much on literacy or admin. **Do you think a follow up would be useful?**

Yes. I think the school may have different priorities are different would like to see a shift in behaviour, to what extent that has happened I don't know, although a couple of them have said they weren't on report, shouting out in class less. Overall I think they get so much out of both individual and group work, I just think individually you give them a chance to talk about stress, feelings, emotions that they are not prepared to go there with within a group. If they can build that trust

they can go to places that they're not prepared to go there within a group. Especially within a group where they might see each other again – it's hard.

I: Do you think there is a role for educational psychologists in this area?

T: I know the specialist ed psychs have a role here, I know they're there for support around education. You know what I would like to see is the ed psychs, the JACATs, the CAMHS share some of their tools with the specialists in this area – perhaps through group supervision with us, and I know they do and I know CAMHS are starting to do that. At least then if they're not doing the direct work then they can share some of their tools with us.

Appendix 8 – Codes from the data

Conflict	Escape/coping	19 Shopping
		5 Physical activity
		17 Reading
	Family Relationships	1 Difficult Parents
		18 Separateness from family
		23 Trust in relationships
		24 Isolation
	Normative Justification	2 Aggression
		7 Explanation of violence
		8 Normality of violence
Receiving Support	Change	4 Feelings
		3 Changing views
		22 Metamorphose
	Professional Qualities	20 Trust/reliability
		14 Equality
		34 availability to talk
		15 Non threatening challenge
		35 uniqueness
	Support characteristics	13 Preference for individual work
		10 group work
		9 Ongoing/relationship building
Providing Support	Family Relationships	16 Transient
		27 Support for parents

		29 Lack of trust
		1 Difficulties in communication/relationships
	Normative Justification	8 Normality of violence
		36 Challenging views
	Characteristics of support	26 Flexible
		11 Time
		31 Tailored to the individual
	Professional Qualities	12 Value of knowledge/experience
		36 Ability to challenge
		9 Relationship building
	Systemic support	32 Importance of job role
		37 Multi-agency approach
		25 Time allocation
		28 Awareness raising

Further example for Paper 1, Code: Preference for individual support, Main theme: Support

Characteristics

Stage 1/2 a young persons (Todd's) fully coded semi structured interview

Example of a coded interview (codes in blue):

E: Tell me about the different sorts of relationships you have with your friends and family.

T: Well before I did the course, I used to argue with my mum all the time and it was pretty crap

when you fall out all the time and have a massive row, I used to feel alot a lot of anger towards her

Comment [E60]: 5.Difficult family relationships

and sometimes shout or hit things, because I blamed her for what ever. But after I started to see the

Comment [E61]: 6.Anger, aggression

womens aid worker, we were at mums house and it helped me to start to get on with her. It

definitely helped to see her point of view, by discussing things using different words it helped to

understand it abit differently, I mean now ever since the course I have been able to speak to my

mum with no anger there. But I do still find that if I ask simple questions, for example I tried to take

Comment [E62]: 7.Language changing views

the dog out last night, she will try to make it difficult in a way, but now I cant be bothered to argue

and I'll just leave it because it's more hassle than its worth.

Comment [E63]: 8.Apathy to arguing

E: Before how might you have handled an argument?

T: Shouted, fallen out and felt angry, I would have just left gone out on my bike to a mate's house

Comment [E64]: 2.Agression

something like that. I would have just took time out.

Comment [E65]: 5. Physical activity

E: What do you currently enjoy doing in your free time?

T: I've got an expensive mountain bike that I use quite a lot, that's what I do. Well I work in a push

Comment [E66]: 5. Physical activity

bike shop and I can fix it up if I need to or play around with it there. Now I've got a driving licence I

can go to Wales and that sort of thing at the weekend. Down hill stuff. I've been to Haldon forest

and done some jumps and stuff. Its good fun.

Comment [E67]: 5. Enjoyment of physical activity

E: What do you when you feel upset?

T: I might go out on my bike. That's the sort of thing go out.

Comment [E68]: 5. Physical activity

E: Do you ever feel that using violence is an appropriate way to deal with a situation?

T: Not really, I never used against my mother, it was getting to the point before my counsellor where

she got up in face, pulled my hair and slapped me, when we were having an argument and I got up

and pushed her away and she fell into the wall. I mean I pushed and she just lost her footing. I

mean that was the last time, I moved out after that. That was it really, I don't feel any anger

Comment [E69]: 6. Physical aggression

towards her now. The only time I would feel that it would be appropriate would be if I saw my step

Comment [E70]: 2. Anger

dad again, but she knows that, and my counsellor knows how I feel about that.

E: Do you think there are ever reasons why people use violence in a relationship?

T: People do throw their weight about, to get their own way more than anything. I think it's

acceptable if someone does something to you that deserves it.

Comment [E71]: 7. Explanation for violence

Lots of people do it. You know I've seen my step dad shout or hit my mum, but it's not just them,

you know people at school might do it as well to get their own way.

Comment [E72]: 8. Normalisation of violence

E: Can you tell me a bit more about that?

T: Not sure really.

E: Did you find the work we a counsellor useful?

T: Definitely, it gave me something to look forward to sitting there and talking, I still see him now

Comment [E73]: 4. Language/talking

when I drive around town. He is somebody I rely on, who didn't judge me for what I said. To be fair

we have a relationship more as friends than what it was before, I still have his mobile number and

we still give each other texts now and then. When he was doing the counselling he was going

Comment [E74]: 9. lack of judgement in counsellor support

through a rough patch because his dad passed away so he missed a couple of appointments, and he

just texted saying give us a call if you need to chat.

E: So did you feel that you could rely on him then?

T: Yeah, yeah definitely.

E: Who put you in touch with him?

T: I don't really know, I think it was something that my mum got through women's aid.

E: Was there any other support you had in addition to the counsellor?

T: Just my counsellor I think. My counsellor was different because it was someone you don't know like that, so you think that they're not going to tell your whole family, it was good to spend time with him.

Comment [E75]: 9. Counsellor support: confidentiality

E: So you do think other people in your situation would benefit from seeing a counsellor?

T: Yes I definitely think it is, definitely a difference.

E: What other benefits did the sessions with the counsellor provide?

T: Cheer you up, have a bit of laugh sort of thing. We did do one thing where we went climbing with some others who were in his group, so you met other people who were in the same situation – not talk about it like that, but there was more of you there.

Comment [E76]: 9. Relationship Building

Comment [E77]: 10. Group Work

E: Have you kept in touch with any of those people?

T: No, it was only for an hour or so, and they were all younger than me most of them.

Comment [E78]: 10. Group factors

E: Is there anything you think that could be improved about those sessions you had with the counsellor?

T: No I can't really think of anything like that.

E: What about the time period?

T: I would have liked to have gone on for longer, I enjoyed the one on one time, the length of time each session was good. Like he said it was sort of a 2 year thing when he started it, I don't know if he's still doing it or if he's doing something a bit different.

Comment [E79]: 11. Enjoyment on individual support/Length

E: Do you think in the long term it will have had an effect on how you look at things?

T: Yeah in a way, now I think it will stick with me for life. Now if I fall out with anybody – like my girlfriend, I think I can't be bothered to argue, I've done enough of it.

Comment [E80]: 5.Change- apathy to arguing

E: (Brief description of LINX) Do you think group work sounds useful?

T: I think it would be, but if it's a similar age, because it would be useful for kids to open up in a group, or even if they just hang out with each other, because they might find it more useful spending time with somebody of their own age rather than somebody a lot older than them.

Comment [E81]: 10. Group factors; benefits of age similarity

E: Do you think that having single sex groups is a good idea?

T: I think that boys probably find it easier to talk to boys and vice versa for girls.

Comment [E82]: 12. Preference for single sex

E: If you could have had the chance to go along to something like LINX would you have done it?

T: Yes definitely.

E: Any final comments?

T: I think it was really helpful that when we finished the counsellor and I exchanged proper mobile numbers, and we've kept in touch, we'll always say hello and the other day do popped around to my work to say hello and to see how I was doing, and we had a cigarette and coffee. I know that if I ever needed anybody to talk to that would be someone I would consider. Somebody that I would rely on. I did say things to him like how does he deal with hearing things that people like me say and not getting angry – I asked how he deals with it, and he says he goes for a session at the gym so he can go and work it out so it doesn't stay in its head. I think its important that it carries on, I hope it carries on after the 2 years because it helped me and there will always be somebody who it will help. If it hadn't helped me it would be the same – me and mum would fall out and not speak for months, it just puts you in the wrong frame of mind, its your mum and you not speaking and your treating her like crap.

Comment [E83]: 13. Importance of ongoing support

Comment [E84]: 5. Physical Activity

Comment [E85]: 13. Importance of support

Comment [E86]: 1. Difficult family relationships

Stage 2 – The codes from the interview above were cross compared to identify similar codes across the YP and professionals interviews

Stage 3/4 Data Matrix showing how the similar codes from the Young People SSIs (group and individual work) were linked to develop the MAIN THEME: Support Characteristics

Codes:	Todd	Sarah	Richard	Ben
leading to subtheme group vs individual support				
Group work		<i>I think the sharing of experiences is useful, to know that you're not alone. It's nice to speak to people your own age.</i>		<i>I think group support is very awkward, especially at first because no one knows each other, people don't really say what they really feel, it got a little better but was still awkward most of the time.</i>

Preference for individual support	<i>I would have liked to have gone on for longer, I enjoyed the one-on-one time.....meeting other people who were in the same situation – not talk about it like that. To be fair we have a relationship more as friends than what it was before, I still have his mobile number and we still give each other texts now and then</i>	<i>But I think individual support is more personable, and I know that I could still contact the person I spoke to if I really needed to</i>	<i>It takes me a while to trust people and be sure that they are really there to support me.</i>	<i>It took time though for me to trust other people enough to discuss my experience.'</i>
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Appendix 9 – Ethics Form

Appendix 10 – Consent letter

Exeter University,

St Lukes Campus,

Heavitree

Dear Parent/Young Person,

I am writing a letter to ask for your consent and your child's consent to take part in some research into how young people have experienced support for behaviour and previous experiences of domestic abuse. I am a trainee educational psychologist who is conducting the research as part of my doctorate.

Your son/daughter will simply be asked some short questions about their views on relationships, the type of professional support they have received, and their views on it.

The interview will be very informal and relaxed, not lasting more than approximately 40 minutes. It will be part of research which will contribute to how best support such young people to achieve the best outcomes in the future. Please contact me if you do not wish for your child to be involved or have any questions on this matter on..... Thank you in advance for your time,

Yours Sincerely,

(Eleanor Ley)

Appendix 11 – Brief

Hello my name is Eleanor Ley, I am a second year trainee educational psychologist. I am completing some research into support for domestic abuse and young people as part of my doctoral research.

I will be asking you some questions about your experiences in this area, the interview should only last about an hour, if you feel uncomfortable at anytime please let me know and if you want to leave you can. All information will be kept confidential until no longer required, then it will be destroyed completely. I will give you my contact details so you can get in touch at a later point if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your time.

Appendix 12 – Debrief

My research is interested in the views of young people who have experienced domestic violence and those who work to support such people. I would like to thank you very much for taking part and say that the information you have provided will be kept confidential, with no real names used. If you do not wish for it to be used it will be disregarded completely. You can contact me at anytime for more information on

Appendix 15

Referral criteria for LINX

Eligibility: 12-18 years old

Priority area 1

- ☐ Young people who have committed or are at risk of committing a violent crime
- ☐ For young people who are living with or have lived with a backdrop of domestic abuse/violence

Priority area 2

- ☐ Young people who are living with or have lived with a backdrop of domestic abuse/violence
- ☐ Young people who are perpetrators of bullying or sexual aggression

Priority area 3

- ☐ Young people who are living with or have lived with a backdrop of domestic abuse/violence
- ☐ Who can be difficult to manage or engage, have low self esteem, problems forming and maintaining relationships etc

Different referral criteria from different agencies (e.g. YOT, youth workers)– but as we are hoping to work closely with schools; this is the school protocol;

School management identify a group needing intervention or other agencies working in the school in partnership may identify a number of young people, either as individuals across years or as a group.

Referral forms completed.

School or other agency worker contacts Linx Coordinator to look at viability and eligibility of running a group. Date, room, time for 10- 12 week programme agreed

Linx Coordinator meets with young person to explain programme and writes/visits parents/carers to explain programme and gain consent. Key member of staff identified to liaise directly with coordinator for duration of the course.

The young person is who is then referred will be asked several questions relating to their relationships with others (linking to group work), empathy skills, medical history, domestic abuse history and violent incidents – levels of denial and victim empathy. Also understanding of LINX Recent, support networks, health and concerns about being part of a group.

Appendix 16 – Brief used to recruit participants

Hello my name is Eleanor Ley, I am a second year trainee educational psychologist. I am completing some research into the effects of domestic violence and young people as part of my doctoral research. I would like to speak to you three times about your experiences of LINX and about your relationships. The questions should last no longer than 40 minutes and if you feel uncomfortable at anytime please let me know and if you want to leave you can.

All information will be kept confidential and I will give you my contact details so you can get in touch at a later point if you have any questions. I will contact your parents to ensure they give consent for you to take part and to also see if they would be willing to answer some questions about the effects of the programme. Who would be willing to take part? If no do you mind me observing a session?

Appendix 17 – Background of the participants

Additional information about the four LINX Groups and the Sample

Group 1- Education Other Than At School Group (EOTAS group). This group was run by two facilitators in the location where the EOTAS students usually engaged in learning throughout the week. One participant was willing to be interviewed at the three time points throughout the evaluation, **Matt**. **Matt** was 15 years old and lived at home with his mother and two brothers. He had been excluded from school for fighting.

Group 2- Youth Offending Team (YOT) Girl Group. All the participants in this programme had been referred to the youth offending team and went to different schools therefore completed the LINX programme on the YOT premises. Two were willing to be interviewed throughout the programme, **Anna and Rachel**. Anna was 14, still lived at home just with her mother, she had been involved in trouble in the community and that was why she had been referred to the YOT. Rachel was 16 and lived with her grandparents due to a difficult family background, the police were aware of Rachel for some intimidating behaviour (she had a curfew).

Group 3- Learning Centre Group. All the participants in this particular LINX group were still on roll at their local secondary school and had received internal exclusions. The learning centre is attached to a College and deals with fixed term internal exclusions of pupils generally for behavioural issues, there is also some out of education students. The students taking part in LINX were self referrals as students identified as being suitable candidates were made aware of the programme and then made self referrals. Two of the adolescents involved were willing to be interviewed **Tom and Mike**. Tom was 14 and lived at home with both parents and his sister. Mike was 15 and also lived at home with just his mother.

Group 4- Behavioural School Group. The participants of this group attended a full time residential school for behaviour. Two of the participants from the group were happy to take part, **Pete and**

Dave. Pete was a 15 year old residential pupil, he had been excluded from two school before this placement for fighting, swearing and other disruptive behaviour. Dave, also 15 and a residential pupil, had been excluded for intimidating behaviour.

Appendix 18 – Background of facilitators

Interviews with 4 facilitators were carried out, including the LINX coordinator for the county.

Background information about each of them:

Jill was a facilitator at the Behavioural School – Jill works at the school full time, therefore is in close contact with the students, as some of the students are residential. This is a specialist setting so the pupils have a wide range of behavioural needs.

Sam was a facilitator for the EOTAS group and the LINX coordinator (Sam is a facilitator with no previous background of working with these particular young people). Sam was previously a teacher.

Richard was a facilitator for the YOT Group (Dave is a facilitator with no previous background of working with these particular young people) Background on facilitator: Been at the EOTAS centre for 4 years, started working in the science department of College as technical support, then applied for the role of teaching assistant and wanted to develop a niche of working with students who have difficulties accessing the curriculum.

Mark was a facilitator for the learning centre group. He has been a geography teacher on the main site (.....college) prior to working in the learning centre. Was working in the area of SEN before began working at the learning centre. Been working with students with behavioural difficulties for 6 years.

Appendix 19 – Letter used to recruit parents and gain consent for their child to be involved

Dear Parent/Young Person,

I am writing a letter to ask for your consent and your child's consent to take part in some research into how young people have experienced support for domestic abuse. I am a trainee educational psychologist who is conducting the research as part of my doctorate.

Your son/daughter will simply be asked some short questions about their views on relationships, the type of professional support they have received, and their views on it. If you would also be happy to be asked some questions around their experiences and any changes you may notice please contact me on

The interview with your son/daughter will be very informal and relaxed, not lasting more than approximately 40 minutes. It will be part of research which will contribute to how best support such young people to achieve the best outcomes in the future. Please contact me if you have any questions on this matter on..... Thank you in advance for your time,

Yours Sincerely,

Eleanor Ley

Appendix 20 – Conceptual framework

1 – Aims of LINX	Relationships	What is difficult?
		What is enjoyable?
		Change in relationships?
		Role of others in support?
	Empathy awareness	Developing perspective taking?
		What strategies use when angry?
		Change in behaviour?
2 - Strengths & Weakness of LINX	Facilitator Qualities	Role of support
		Enough/too much?
		Personality
	Intervention considerations	Hopes for LINX
		Group vs Individual needs
		Positives of LINX
		Negatives of LINX

Appendix 21 – Interview schedules

21a - Pre intervention questions for facilitators

- What do you think LINX is aiming to achieve?

- What, hopefully, will be the positive outcomes for the children involved?

- If successful what will be the future of LINX?

- What do you think the difficulties might be?

Mid Intervention questions for facilitators

- What is going well?

- What is not going so well?

- Have you noticed any changes in the young people?

- Are there any changes you would make so far?

Post intervention questions for facilitators

- Were the desired outcomes of LINX achieved?
If yes, how was this measured?
If no, why not?

- What went well in the twelve week intervention?

- What qualities are important to run the programme?

- Were there any difficulties e.g. where all the resources you needed made available?

- What would you change?
- Have you noticed any differences in the young people?

21b - Pre Intervention questions for the participants

- What did you hope to get out of the LINX programme?
- What are your relationships like at the moment with your family and friends?
- What do you do when you get angry?
- Who do you speak to when your upset?

Mid intervention questions for the participants

- What are you enjoying about LINX?
- What has been your favourite session so far?
- What have you not enjoyed?
- What do you do when you feel angry?
- What do you do if you have an argument with someone?

Post evaluative questions for the participants of LINX

- Have you learnt any other ways of dealing with difficult situations since doing LINX?
- Tell me about your relationships at home and at school since doing the programme, how have they changed?
- Do you have frequent conflicts with them? If so how do you deal with them?
- Did you enjoy the programme?
- Did you like working in a group? Would you have preferred mixed groups?
- What were the facilitators like?
- What did you like the most?
- How do you think LINX could have been improved?

- Will you use things you learnt in LINX in other situations?

21c- Interview schedule for the parents

- Did your son/daughter enjoy the programme?
- Have you noticed any changes in behaviour after doing the programme?
- What about his relationship with others?
- Has told you about things he learnt, or done anything differently since doing the LINX programme?
- Have you noticed any thing negative about the programme or anything that could be improved?
- Any other comments?

Appendix 21d – Information on the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire

Goodman (2001) first developed the SDQ to look at the psychological adjustment of children and adolescents. It has been very popular and translated into 40 languages. The SDQ asks about 25 attributes, some positive and others negative. These 25 items are divided between 5 scales: 4 negative; emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems (these add up to give a total difficulties score) and prosocial behaviour (a prosocial score). There are different versions of the same questionnaire – and that is why it will be used in this research as the attributes being examined fit into what well into some of the areas LINX is targeting and can also be used to collect parent, teacher and child views. A full view of all versions of the SDQ can be seen at www.sdqinfo.com. The SDQ correlates highly with Rutter's 1985 questionnaire on similar psychological characteristics (Goodman, 2001). However, benefits of the SDQ are that it focuses on strengths as well as difficulties. The SDQ also correlated highly with the Child Behaviour Checklist (Goodman 2001). The SDQ is a validated and reliable instrument which is used nationally in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Australia and the United Kingdom and also has been validated in several European countries and the United States. Validity has been indicated Mathai, Anderson & Bourne (2004) who demonstrated moderate to high correlations between the SDQ and CAMHS clinician diagnoses. A nationwide sample of 10,438 British 5-15 year olds indicated internal reliability was good - Cronbach's alpha: 0.73 and retest reliability after 4-6 months was 0.62 (Goodman 2001). The reliability and validity of the SDQ make it a useful brief measure of the adjustment of children and adolescents.

Appendix 22 – Themes for the Educational Psychologists focus group

- What is your understanding of what domestic abuse is?
- What do you currently do in your work in relation to supporting young people who have experienced DV?
- Do you provide individual or systemic support?
- In an ideal world, with more time, do you think there is anything else educational psychologists could do, such as help to identify key characteristics of facilitators for similar group interventions?
- Do you think the LINX programme sounds useful?
- In terms of group work in the form of LINX do you think there is a role or is individual work more important?
- What are your thoughts on the following themes: *challenging young people's views, the role of individual work over group work, the importance of specific facilitator qualities, systemic influences and physical exercise.*

Appendix 23-26 – Examples of Interviews and the EP focus group

23 – Pre Intervention Facilitator interview

I: Tell me what you think the aims of LINX are?

S: Some very measurable outcomes, depending on the priority groups we are targeting. So for example if its YOT we would hope to see a reduction in reoffending, with school groups we would hope to see an increase in engagement with education. Those are measurable, we set boundaries of 3,6 and 12 months and part of our work is to look at exit strategies for those groups so we are responding to that. So I don't know as yet if we will see those results.

I: What would be the positive outcomes for the young people?

S: The other softer part of LINX is to build people's confidence, help them to think about other people and realise the impact they have on others. Particularly for the girls groups it's looking at self esteem, sexual respect, which I think is really important, as it is for the boy's group, in terms of tackling some of the issues they have in terms of 'what is a women's role', what a good relationship is as often their idea of what this as this often based around ideas of control and what a girlfriend should give to them as opposed to equality. That is underpinning the whole DV agenda where young people have been referred as they are aggressive within the family home or outside getting into criminal behaviour because they've come from a DV background. So the middle of the LINX programme is very much centred around 'what is domestic abuse' getting them to have an understanding of what it is, and working on self awareness so they can actually see and understand what has happened to them, as opposed to thinking it's the norm. The target for the Pilton group and the best success is actually getting the young people to look forwards, so they've actually been exposed to what makes a bad/good relationship – so they consider that in relation to how they treat their future partner and children, that's really important work that LINX covers – and opens up that really important discussion that many people aren't having. The weeks looking at DV, relationships,

life journeys are the ones that people will kick against on the whole, its really hard to do, but actually its the most profound bit because if we can say what happened to you was this, what we often encounter – this is my awful upbringing – listing all the monstrosities that have happened at home to go on say but I will raise my child exactly the same, if my child wants to smoke I will give them 20 fags to make them sick. The idea that somehow you can't escape the structure you were brought up in, that's quite important to challenge why does it have to be like that.

I feel that it can rely too much of the facilitators own skill & knowledge, and where their coming from is it's a big course about self awareness and i don't know whether it puts many strategies in place that say OK this is what you do, we do have safety planning and risk management and it may be the case there isn't a simple answer. It relies on the facilitators skills to consider – what else do I replace it with, what do I have to do/be? I think it's nice that the LINX programme is flexible so it can respond to the needs of the group, but that requires skill to be confident and open to change. It was very heavy on the self awareness and empathy and it didn't have much of – this is the strategy you put in place. So sometimes you've got a process where you are raising their awareness which can be a horrible emotional thing which needs to be managed really well e.g. CAMHS support, it's about knowing which individuals are going to need this support put in place. Those young men saying what do I do what do I do if my dad hits me? Trying to carry young people through a programme where they are asking questions where there is no straight answer, and encouraging them to stick with the programme almost like a baby learning to walk. They're using that in part in desperation and in part to sabotage the group – you don't know what you're talking about, you haven't lived it to the facilitators. Actually a lot of those young men, one in particular, who had been severely beaten by his mum at the weekend had been talked by different professionals about what to do, but it relies on facilitators own backgrounds and experience in terms of what advice they may give. How do you feel that LINX is different to other programmes that have been designed to support adolescents in similar situations? I think it's good that it's not literacy based, and these young people often tend not to have had any sense of play in their lives, the activities are well

constructed and I like the way they use tools to bring discussions indirectly. It's a good way of working with these young people because it's a non-threatening, non academic way of reaching them, which is really positive for them.

I: What do you think the difficulties might be?

S: Support and resources. Its often the same you try to run before you can walk, it's about people having the time and energy to give to something like LINX.

Mid Intervention

I: Do you think activities so far have been well received by the young people?

S: Yes they are, there is some that they find difficult, for example the boys find it difficult to do the thinking around the DV issues. Whereas the girls go along with the games, but very early on they want to talk about what's happened to them. I: Do you think the single sex nature of the groups is a strength or a weakness? Personally I think it's a strength, young women are initially reluctant to work with other young women, which is linked to self esteem issues, but working with other young women can be really empowering. Plus I think with adolescents mixing the group would change the group dynamic, the boys may like to have the girls there, but there is a comradey that comes from working with other boys. The press did interviews with one boy and one girl, and the boy said being with other boys like me doesn't make me feel like a freak any more. Being single sex cuts out all the distractions and helps to focus them. It would be interesting to do a mixed group as it may help to be build empathy around domestic abuse, but you would have to be careful, especially with some of the issues that come up around sexual relationships and specific age related behaviours – linked to maturity of boys and girls. I think for the purposes for LINX it works to be single sex. It does come back to the strength of the facilitator to choose gender appropriate activities. To know the manual – and not have to stick to it rigidly so that what happened last week can feed into what activity is appropriate for this week is important, it relies on the facilitators experience, I sort of discounted

having been a teacher and knowing what works when I just thought that's what everyone would do. Instead people think they have failed if they haven't stuck rigidly to the programme. The Hampton Trust have emphasised that it is flexible, but I think it takes a lot of confidence as a facilitator to say let's move on.

I: Have you noticed any changes in the young people?

S: They are starting to listen more, I think their learning to respect us a bit now. I've also had some positive feedback from the school. I guess we'll have to wait and see as there are still issues every day all the time.

I: Are there any changes you would make?

S: Yes more time for the facilitator role and possibly less training of just everyone, instead choosing the right facilitators.

Post Intervention

I: Do you feel the aims of LINX were met? Can you give any examples of this?

S: Yes. Well different pupils, for example someone like Hamy never questioned the way he was, that's part of his problem, sauntering through life doing as he pleases, bullying, being typically racist. A lot of the others have had all sorts of problems and we have tackled all of those issues and he has questioned the way he now talks to other people, and people have said, we did this chart where everyone had to write something about each other for example what their hobbies were and everyone put down drugs and alcohol for Hamish. Despite being an intelligent boy and a nice boy all the talks about drugs and alcohol, really pissed him off, with him saying 'is that all you see me as?' We said that is all you ever talk about, and he couldn't understand and yet he has moved on massively.

I: What do you think has gone particularly well in the LINX programme?

S:

I think you question are the young people going to enjoy it, and I've been really happy because the

young people have enjoyed it. I think particularly those who haven't been in education its giving them the confidence to be in a group with each other, which is a massive positive, building their confidence, getting them to think before they act. With the young male group, to get 6 hard core YOT clients to the end, who haven't been at school since yr 7/8, have been in prison are prolific offenders to sit and engage and talk about the issues they did is fantastic. I have had to work hard to build up LINX and to encourage people to listen, what has been positive is the response, particularly in schools about how they would like it in their institutions, the only danger is that they will refer all the people with bad behaviour without looking at the criteria of who should be referred. Also when it works well you've got brilliant multi-agency working, two facilitators, usually from different agencies, there is a whole range of additional support and knowledge from these facilitators.

I: What were important facilitator characteristics?

S: The course is flexible enough that you are bringing your own professional knowledge. The only problem of multi agency working is different targets, or a service just wanting a closed group, this is the complete opposite of the strength of LINX. A danger of multi agency is when a facilitator hasn't thought about their boundaries, what they see as unacceptable – as this could range. With the very tough male group one facilitator is coming forward and saying this person can't keep discipline I'm having to, this comes back to management and them choosing who is suitable to deliver to a particular group otherwise you are putting their health and safety at risk. That's where management needs to be more involved. In terms of multi-agency working do you think choice of facilitators should be centralised? That's what we are trying to move towards but it depends upon how dictatorial they are with their staff, people are always going to want to work with who they get on with, not who perhaps is the best person for the job. At the next steering group we review how many partnership agreements have been signed, currently there is a reluctance to sign up to releasing staff when everyone has a freeze on. Partnership agreements highlight two members of staff, who within an organisation in a certain geographical area commit to providing LINX and have the time to do so. I think this something that has only been done in this area. What has happened is

people have wanted to do training, but only notified at the time of training that they have a commitment to deliver at least one group in the next year, they know there is no compulsion to that so if they don't have time they won't.

I: What were the difficulties in implementing LINX?

S: There's been a lot of negativity within side YOT who were nervous about group work and bringing groups of YOT clients together. Thinking it can do more harm than good, there were concerns they would commit crimes together as a group and not learn in a positive way. Secondly there's a problem in that I'm employed by the Hampton trust working within YOT, you ask for male support within a group and when an incident happens they said you should have had this, but there is no operational support within YOT. There is YOT workers delivering it, YOT clients, but there is no operational support, people not identifying risk. If you are going to bring together groups of YOT clients there is going to be risk I think that's where they've been wary, some people have done groups before and they haven't worked and they've been waiting for it to fail. The other barrier is we've trained people – too many I think, initially heads of service identified people and signed partnership agreements, and those people would be the LINX people. This hasn't happened and would have helped with releasing of staff, budgeting – you look at the CAF training, trained thousands of people and you've still only got hundreds delivering it. I think it would have been better to have heads of service on board, they picked the people, then we delivered the training. We've sent emails out to heads of service and then seen whose come back, which isn't great, then in the first lots trying to actually getting people to deliver has been constantly selling and exhausting. You actually need someone like the head of YOT who liked the programme, its multi-agency nature e.g. a YOT worker and a youth worker and invested money to train. But then you need to give time to deliver as well as the training, as people who were trained would want it to be recognised in their time. If there isn't the time given by management you are relying on good will, trying to be charming, some people say they will get it done some won't. I work very hard to make sure they

know what their commitment is so I plan a group with them. We have no manual, it was sent in the seventh week of the first groups, you've got people who haven't seen a manual, and I said you can't get people to facilitate groups if they've got to resource, cut up, laminate materials as its even more time. So I raised money to fill 3 filing cabinets with resources for the Devon area. The big barriers were created centrally; an administrator in Southampton could have centrally resourced all the sessions and sent it to the county co coordinators, not in drips and drabs in a scrappy way. So people not having a manual to go away with have lost confidence. They are expecting more of the co coordinator to almost do everything. Some people don't want emails, they want a nice pack they can look at. So I almost think it was done backwards, there could have been a much clearer; approach heads of service, get partnership agreements signed, we wait to do groups till we've got that, instead there was a pressure to start groups and get as many people trained.

I: How would you improve LINX? If at all?

S: Training has be structured from session 1 to 12, not just one activity to deliver being able to see the structure would be really good. I think in terms of the actual content it doesn't need to be improved as the course has an integrity to it, possible more time with individual students if they need it would be helpful. I think, as mentioned, levels of support – from a strategic level.

I: Any changes in behaviour in the young people?

S: I feel that there has been changes. One session, in particular for Hamy, really shocked him – that that's what all people thought of him. He was really disappointed and upset, and it was a big turn around for him. For people like Chris the physical activities have been really useful, bridge building, having to get across the water on planks and who can build the biggest tower. He doesn't see himself as academic and he's not very good at reading and writing, things like that have been brilliant for him as he's realised that he's the only one in the group who can think like that and build a tower. Common sense, he's got brilliant common sense so for him its highlighted that he isn't useless and built his confidence and changed him as a person. Do you think the changes in the young

people will be long lasting in your opinion? Nobody can really say that, you would hope so but it would depend what they are around afterwards. But people have come up to me from the other centres and said what a difference it has made and how much they have changed – obviously we can't take all the credit for that, but the fact of the matter is they have. They have begun to recognise their faults. The thing is when they are in a group and they are all pretty similar it is much better because you are all actually the same, with the same issues.

I: What are your thoughts on the following themes linked to support services: *challenging young people's views, the role of individual work over group work and physical exercise.*

S: Well I definitely think LINX helps to challenge the young people's views, the activities designed just do that naturally. I think group work is great as it gets them to hear others opinions, but you can tell that some of them have just started to get a relationship started and might need more time to really feel comfortable to take about things. I hadn't really thought about physical exercise – but I guess it would be useful to include it.

Appendix 24 – Young person interview

Anna from the YOT girl Group

Pre Intervention

I: What did you hope to get out of the LINX programme?

A: To meet some new people, maybe help me control my temper sometimes. I know that I can get angry and sometime I feel like I lash out, I guess that's why I'm here.

I: What are your relationships like at the moment with your family and friends?

A: Difficult I don't always get along with everyone, I find other people difficult to speak to. I feel that they don't always listen to what I have to say.

I: What do you do when you get angry?

A: I walk away, go to my room, you know try to deal with whatever it is that is making me upset on my own, it's just easier that way as you don't have to rely on anyone else. Who do you speak to when your upset? No one.

Mid intervention questions

I: What are enjoying about LINX?

A: I like it when we get to make stuff, there's a lot of conversation which is good – not too much writing you know. I prefer it to school.

I: What has been your favourite session so far?

A: I really enjoyed the session where you had to blind fold someone and they walked on the rope – shouting good or bad things at them. I think it really made you think about what you say and how it affects someone.

I: What have you not enjoyed?

A: Getting to know other people in the group. I also think that learning what other people think and feel about stuff that you just thought effects you has been pretty cool.

I: What do you do when you feel angry?

A: I might go and try and talk to a one of the LINX teachers, they're normally pretty good at being able to help you think about what to do differently, otherwise I just find myself doing the same over and over again.

Post Intervention

I: Have you learnt any other ways of dealing with difficult situations since doing LINX?

A: Yeah I try to walk away.

I: Have you found that LINX has been useful in other areas of your life, such as relationships with your friends, family?

A: Yeah, it gets out your emotions, which is really good and whatever happens in your week you can always tell them about it. *What do you mean it gets out your emotions?*

Well you know you can tell people at LINX how you're feeling which makes quite a big difference when you're feeling angry or upset – you don't end up taking it out on them. Also during LINX you learn to think about other people. I have to say that sometimes I don't always use what I've learnt but at least it's there if I ever choose to use it.

I: Have you learnt any other ways of coping when you feel upset?

A: Yeah to walk away, count to ten and think about things.

I: Have you enjoyed LINX?

A: It's been really good and I've really liked it. Its helped me a lot through hard times, it's like I can

share with my problems with the group, which is something I've never had before. I really liked speaking to Mr.....I felt that for the first time in a long time I had someone to share my problems with. I still feel that I could go and speak to him now, I hope that feeling lasts, as I do try to do that now – even when I'm angry.

I: What were your favourite parts?

A: Doing the Wall was really good where you get out all your emotions and it shows how much you've lost and gained visually as you take bricks away and then put them back again.

I: What were the facilitators like?

A: Great, I really felt like I could trust them – you know tell them anything really. To start with it was hard as I didn't really know them, but over time you realised they knew what they were talking about – even if they made you feel uncomfortable at times. It took a while to realise there was a reason they were doing it. I think also often realised when we were bored and would change the session to suit us – which worked really well.

I: what about the overall LINX programme is there anything you would improve?

A: I'm not sure about that, possibly have more time just me and to discuss things, I sometimes got worried the group got bored with listening to me talk about me problems.

I: Have you felt within the group you can talk and share things with each other?

A: Yeah and they said whatever happens in this room stays within this room and between the people– you don't go around bragging about it, about what people have been doing and what they've been through. Me and Tracey talk about things between us too because we go to school together, but only when it's just us two and nobody else so they don't know anything. *Do you think being just girls is a good thing? Or would you like to have had boys in the group?* A: Um, I don't know some boys could laugh about what you say if its girls speaking and it would it put you off

speaking. I think it's better with girls because it might be girls problems. I think you'll feel really embarrassed talking about stuff because you're a different sex and you don't know how they will react whereas you know how boys will react. You know girls feelings whereas boys don't really show their feelings. Boys take the Mick out of you, they won't take the mick out of you right in front of you but take advantage when you're not around, that's how boys are sometimes and if they are around a group of friends, they will try and level up themselves. You don't fit in but might act like them.

I: Anything you would improve about the programme?

A: No. *Do you think LINX will have a long lasting impact, use bits from the programme in your real life?* It will be hard to, but I think it will be useful to think about calming down before acting. I always remember what happened the week before, they make it quite fun which is really helpful. Team work was also a big part of it which is good. You get to watch videos as well which can be nice way to take the pressure of sometimes. Length of time about right? Yes

Appendix 25 – Parent Interview

Interview with Kathy a parent from the learning community group

I: Did enjoy the programme?

K: Yes, he was just saying this Thursday that he was really sad not to be going this week, I think he liked meeting some new people and spending his time doing something a bit different.

I: Have you noticed any changes in L's behaviour after doing the programme?

K: There were times in the past where he would lose his temper over the smallest thing, but since doing the programme he really seems to try to think about things before he acts.

I: What about his relationship with others?

K: He seems to get on with his younger brother a bit better, there is also one teacher in particular who he has developed a relationship with. Mrs B, I think there is a bit of hero worship going on there really. There was a situation at school where Mike had a big row with a teacher, I was called but unfortunately I was at work and couldn't be involved, Mrs B stepped in and helped to sort it out. I don't know if that is anything to do with the LINX programme though, as that relationship is sort of separate to it. In terms of other relationships he has started to mix with a group of people, in terms of the LINX group, that he would never have mixed with before, he has started to socialise with them outside of school. To me that's a real positive, as one boy in particular I really like, I haven't always liked his choice of friends before.

I: Has told you about things he learnt, or done anything differently since doing the LINX programme?

K: Not that I've noticed. Nothing specific anyway

I: Have you noticed anything negative or anything that could be improved?

K: Well I would say that his teacher commented that he was behind in the subject he missed to go

and attend the LINX group. For me that is a concern, I understand they need a time to do it in, but couldn't that be moved around so it wasn't at the same point every week?

I: Any other comments?

K: Well do you know about his background? He has had to experience a very traumatic divorce as his father has mental health problems. I believe this lead onto a habit he developed of telling lies, however this seems to have stopped recently, again it could be linked to the LINX programme but it's difficult to tell.

One thing I can say is that when I went to parents evening, it was the best one yet, J has been in a lot of trouble in the past with his behaviour. But nearly all the teachers commented how he seemed to have calmed down and seemed more co operative in lessons. He really seems to be maturing and acting differently, asking for help.

Appendix 26 – Focus Group with 7 Educational Psychologists

I: What is your understanding of domestic abuse?

M: I think parents are more likely to be open about the issue of DV once the relationship has ended.

K: It might be useful on a referral form, as in a consultation you could discuss it. I think it's often an unspoken thing which goes on which teachers think we shouldn't talk about. Sometimes you get that look from a parent, mother which suggests it is but we can't say it.

M: You often get the relationship where the mother and father has split, and the mother is angry with the father and things he's done, so any behaviour in the child, often the male child, you get comments like 'he's just like his dad.'

E: What is the definition of DV anyway? Does it include emotional and psychological abuse as well?
It's difficult to make judgements on that anyway.

K: Does DV also include when the child is being violent towards the mother?

I: What do you currently do in your work in relation to supporting young people who have experienced DV? Is it individual or systemic work?

K: I don't think I do much work individually, its more about supporting the teachers, I guess, probably in the DPLS we have more children who we think have witnessed DV because of the background they have come from.

C: As I am the EP at, I was talking to the counsellor at – and she was talking about all the disclosures she gets linked to DV. So we set up the LINX project there, so this year I have been involved more than any other time – not with direct work, but helping to set up support networks to work with children in that situation.

L: I think role is to raise awareness of the impact of that situation to the teachers, it's quite a throw away comment to say they have experienced DV suggesting it's not actually going to have that much effect. Our role maybe to identify what effect we can have.

E: The one message they give from the ADVA training on DV is to ask the question, as it gives people the opportunity to say yes, they might say no but it still gives them the chance to answer. We were just discussing how it's quite difficult to ask the question. We don't know what's the reaction going to be.

K: Yeah, I was trying to work out is that why we don't ask it? Because we're not sure of what the reaction is going to be? Because we ask all sorts of questions don't we?

M: I think it maybe because it could be humiliating. I think how many times in a year I see maternal guilt, and triggering that guilt, because obviously there is a link. I think if it was a normal question to ask – on a checklist, you could say I'm just going to run through these as part of a consultation. I feel that you've almost got to work your way round to it, and then it might be an awkward junction, where it is just us. When someone has people they see all the time like classroom assistants, teachers, and you put them in a situation where they meet someone for the first time they might not want to divulge that information. It could be humiliating and not something someone is proud to admit.

C: It's not just that, it's such a dangerous question to ask if you don't know what to do with that information.

K: Yeah, exactly.

KP: The nature of job and that its time limited, even with the best will in the world, if you've got quite a few visits booked in with a school you've never going to get that sort of time with the parent or child.

C: That's key I don't think we should necessarily ask the question, it's about supporting those who do have that sort of relationship to ask the question, provide pastoral support.

L: One of my schools is very aware and have provided the 'Miss Dorothy' programme. There the parents are very aware because of the culture of the school.

A: Are we talking about the parents now? I continue to be surprised about how children will talk quite naturally about something. I think we should talk and can talk quite naturally with children. However it can be quite traumatising for children to communicate any emotional difficulty.

I: In an ideal world, with more time, do you think there is anything else educational psychologists could do, like identify facilitator characteristics?

S: Well I think there are three things that constrain an EP: 1. LA structures, 2. Opportunity to work with parents in the home, they need to be open, 3. Money to provide the time to do this. So it's: will, structures and money.

A: EP tends to have specialist time for roles such as this, similar to other areas, like adoption work. There is potential for private work around helping to set up a programme which identifies key facilitator characteristics.

M: Where there is the specialist time, I think great stuff has been done working in the refuges with parents.

Ka: That's clear that there's a definite role for some EPs.

L: The other thing about that is for us to know about it, you were saying it's a difficult question to ask if you don't know what to do with the information, so it would be important to have that information to know what to do.

K: And to make sure others know, we offer training on so many things but I've never been asked for training on DV and we are probably in a really good position to talk about its effects, and there's never in our directory.

E: I can't remember if there was anyone from schools on the one day training I went on.

M: Often when you do go on the training, you see how many people have been in that situation, once people start talking about it. That's like an indicator of the sheer numbers.

Mi: I think once you realise how encompassing the definition is it makes you think of people within that situation.

Ka: Is the definition domestic abuse or domestic violence?

A: I think violence is better, abuse covers deprivation.

E: you don't really say emotional violence though.

L: We definitely have a role to support those and supervise those who are providing the support for those young people or other adults who have experienced DV. I think our breadth of experience possibly adds another dimension to that.

I: What is a way to tackle the unspoken nature of DV?

C: We get children referred to us, more often for behaviour problems, and then it transpires through conversations that this is a feature. So sometimes we might superficially deal with behaviour and handle that situation, and the long term issues may still be there and the behaviour was just a symptom. If a child is working well and getting on fine and have experienced DV, we are less likely to get a referral than if they are acting out and throwing desks, the thing being if we help the child to deal with the behaviour this may help them to cope.

A: We are concerned with children's emotional and social well being, so rather than picking out a particular cause for distress, it may not be the most useful thing to do. It might be useful in

identifying where we are going to start the groups, if they are unhappy it may not be the most useful thing to put them in a group linked to a possible cause. Awareness raising, and the value of this in terms of signs for teachers and what to do would seem important.

Mi: Isn't there a link between those who witness DV and those who are likely to be negatively affected later on or become perpetrators? If that holds true then shouldn't we be targeting those who have been effected? Unless children with poor emotional well being generally end up becoming perpetrators.

Ka: Presumably the purpose of it is to stop the children repeating in their adult relationships? But how do we identify the children is it those who act out, or those who have been identified as witnessing DV?

KP: What about those children who are quite and withdrawn? They are those children who are more likely to become victims.

C: The LINX group at Ratcliffe have challenging behaviour, and once you start talking about DV where do you stop – so many have been in households where there is DV, and have been perpetrators themselves. I think it was known that the members of the LINX group had experienced DV.

M: I think it should be a discreet group – the way you might have a group for those who have experienced sexual abuse.

K: But would you want to be labelled like that within a school? You are going into a group for DV.

M: Well no. You would have to word it very carefully like they do for adults.

K: Children are wise though and would know very quickly what the group was for

C: Well in the group at Ratcliffe, as we have identified it is a feature that was in so many children that they wouldn't have necessarily thought about making it explicit.

I: Do you think the LINX programme sounds useful?

M: I think there could be improvements.

A: I think there needs to be rigorous research to support it.

I: In terms of group work in the form of LINX do you think there is a role, or is individual work more important?

M: I don't think they can stand alone, there needs to be follow up work, within 3 months, then 6, then a year. Because what we know about children's behaviour especially in groups the changes don't endure unless you do that.

I: What are your thoughts on the following themes: challenging young people's views, the role of individual work over group work, specific facilitator qualities, systemic influences and physical exercise.

M: Its beginning to be a bit of a young male culture to beat your girlfriend up it seems to be that staff know it happens amongst adolescent couples and adolescent couple share tales about what has happened to them. One of the things I think about group work is when you are talking about what ever trauma you have had, is that you think good god I am not on my own anymore about how awful it's been. I wonder what the wider cultural impact is on males, whether or not in the culture whether we are achieving this goal of awareness raising, this is a fundamental role, whether there will be an element of 'Oh well everyone else is doing it.' I wonder if that's one of the potential dangers of normalising it in a way that we possibly didn't intend to do in the beginning. I wonder if you have it in a single sex scenario then that means you don't take on board whichever it goes. I do think you've got to be confronted with what you've done in order to take on board the empathy aspect.

L: I think that has to be in the context of the whole school attitudes as well doesn't it, I think you need to be aware of the very high percentage of adolescent girls. So it has to be in the context of whole school staff awareness. The same information used for all students.

A: But then we are not in the realm of witnessing DV but we are in the realm of media influence for example which is massive. Like a programme about sexual behaviour – what teenage boys think is normal because they are exposed to pornography and think that is normal.

C: But I think the LINX programme does aim to challenge a lot of that thinking. The programme designer, Debbie, was very explicit about some of the things the young people said and how some of the staff were horrified about what the young people thought was quite normal behaviour. Debbie said once they've said it it's out there and you really need to challenge it and open up a whole can of worms. Four sessions of 2 hours – it's never limited to that as things happen people say things, you think that you are just having a contained group that's running but the ramifications are much broader. If we did it again there needs to be that whole school stuff at much greater depth so people understand and members of staff are aware, so it is potentially huge.

S: I think in terms of questions 3,4 & 5 then what Caroline has just said is significant, on the negative, not in terms of the experience but in terms of wanting more. Obviously in terms of raising awareness it has value. In terms of a therapeutic relationship there is reference to that in the feedback and the desire for an individual relationship. So you could spearhead if you like ways we can make it outed and then following on from that we can look at different ways to meet the needs of these children.

The role of the EP I think, is to be the consumers and conduits of ideas, and also messengers and we can signpost people to relevant information.

Appendix 27 – Themes from the Interviews

Research Question/Overall Theme	Sub ordinate theme	Code
1 – Empathy/behavioural changes	Relationships/development of prosocial actions	5. Empathy (Mid/ Post)
		17.Ongoing process (Post)
		1.Difficult relationships (Pre/Post)
		11. Anger/ aggression
		2.Physical Violence
	Coping strategies	9.Behavioural changes (pre/mid/post)
		19.Importance of physical activity (pre/post)
		10.Walk away (post)
		4, Talking (pre/mid/post)
	2. Improvements to LINX	Group vs Individual support
18.Time (mid/post)		
7. Therapeutic role of individual support (post)		
14.Uncertainty/Attrition (mid, post)		

		21. Issues around confidentiality (mid, post)
		16. Preference for single sex (pre, mid, post)
		22. Age issues – embed in younger age (post)
	Structural Issues of LINX	3. Adaptation of the programme/flexible to individual needs (pre, mid, post)
		23. Manual Issues (mid, post)
		20. More Facilitators needed (post)
		8. Positive of fun/no literacy (pre, mid, post)
		13. Meet individual needs/understanding (gender differences) (pre, mid, post)
		12. length (mid, post)
	Systemic Influences	24. Lack of systemic support (mid, post)
		25. Partnership agreements not signed (post)
		26. Lack of cross-county support (pre, mid, post)
		32. Time allowances (post)

		31.Admin difficulties (mid, post)
		29.Lack of systemic awareness of LINX (post)
	Facilitator qualities	28.Challenging views (mid, post)
		33 Valuing young person (pre, post)
		27.Openness (post)
		30.Overreliance on facilitator skills (post)
		15.Facilitator experience/knowledge (mid, post)

Example of code (valuing the young person) to theme generation (facilitator qualities)

Stage 1 Coding of Matt’s interview - Pre LINX SSI

I: What did you hope to get out of the LINX programme?

M: I would like to be able to not get so angry all the time, I feel like my relationships are hard cos I people don’t always listen to my point of view. So I guess to just be a bit more confident maybe in explaining where I’m coming from. **Do you think about their point of view?** No I guess not, I hadn’t really thought about it.

Comment [E87]: 1. Difficult Relationships

Comment [E88]: 1. Difficult to see others view

I: What are your relationships like at the moment with your family and friends?

M: Hard sometimes, I get on with my mum and my younger brother, but I don't always get on with my older brother cos he always tells me what to do. You know just cos he's older than me he tries to boss me around all the time. I don't want to be told what to do anymore, that's all I'm saying on that one.

Comment [E89]: 1. Difficult Relationships

I: What do you do when you get angry?

M: Lash out normally, hit first speak later. After everything that's happened to me I don't feel like anyone else understands where I'm coming from, so what's the point in talking about it? No one else would understand anyway. If anyone is going to help me, they will have to understand me.

Comment [E90]: 2. Physical violence

Comment [E91]: 3. Understanding the individual

I: Who do you speak to when you're upset?

M: I speak to my mum, but often I will just go and lock and myself in my room.

Comment [E92]: 4. Talking

Mid SSI

I: What are you enjoying about LINX?

M: Doing something different I guess.

I: Can you tell me a bit more about how it's made you feel?

M: dunno really

I: What has been your favourite session so far?

M: The one where we all had to take on different characters and then get rid of someone, it was really interesting seeing the different reasons people gave for doing that, some people in the group were annoying though.

Comment [E93]: 1. Difficult relationships

I: Can you tell me a bit more about that?

M: well I guess it made you think about others point of view and that.

Comment [E94]: 5. Empathy

I: What have you not enjoyed?

M: Sometimes the others in the group really do my head in.

Comment [E95]: 1. Difficult Relationships

I: What do you do when you feel angry?

M: There's a chance to talk in the group which is good, so I might do that. You know I feel like there

Comment [E96]: 4. Talking

are people in the group who understand me and can relate to my point of view, as they've been

there you know? I don't think you can understand otherwise. But I really enjoy the time I get to

Comment [E97]: 6. Similarities to the group

spend with Mr.....as I don't always want to talk about my problems in front of the group

Comment [E98]: 7. Importance of individual support

Post SSI

I: Did you enjoy the LINX programme?

M: I dunno, I preferred it more than going to school, as it was a laugh sort of thing, they made it

funny, tried to make it a bit more fun than just getting down to work sort of thing. Tried to make it

into a game.

Comment [E99]: 8. Fun

I: Do you think that you look at relationships differently as a result of doing LINX programme?

M: Dunno, I guess that I try to not rush into acting in a particular way, try to stop and take a deep

Comment [E100]: 9. Behaviour change

breath and you know relax and walk away. A lot of the discussion was about thinking about others

Comment [E101]: 10. Relax, walk away

and their point of view, I guess that I do think about that sometimes.

Comment [E102]: 5. Empathy

I: Do you think about things differently in different situations?

M: In a way it has, it has shown me stuff, like the time when we put a bit of tape across the floor,

half way you had to be nice to the person, then you had to say its rubbish. It shows what it makes

them feel like because they don't want to do it when people are saying harsh stuff to them, I guess it

makes you realise what you say can really effect someone. It shows you what happens when you

Comment [E103]: 5. Empathy

say to someone they are rubbish, the effect it has. You don't think you're doing nothing, putting

people down makes them upset. *Do you think this will change your relationships with others?*

Sometimes, maybe I guess, it depends on what I'm thinking at the time and how angry they've made me, I might still lash out.

Comment [E104]: 11. Anger/aggression

I: What other sessions/activities did you enjoy?

M: I dunno, it was quite funny, few tasks were good fun and that.

Comment [E105]: 7. fun

I: Did you get on well with the others?

M: Yes, I feel now that if I saw them outside of school I would talk to them.

Comment [E106]: 4. Talking

I: Anything else you feel that you can take away from LINX that might be useful at school?

M: General knowledge about relationships and being able to walk away when I feel upset with someone, as before I would always stay and try to get my point of view across.

Comment [E107]: 10. Walk away

I: What did you think about how long the programme was?

M: Its alright because it was spread out.

Comment [E108]: 12. Appropriate length

I: Would you like it to continue?

M: No, I think it was good because they made a reward of being able to go to Crealy. I would still like to be able to talk to Mr.....cos he gets me you know?

Comment [E109]: 13. Ongoing individual support

I: Do you think others have learnt how to deal with relationships differently?

M: yes, think before you act and walk away. Everything they've been trying to tell us is treat others the way you want to be treated. I think that was the main goal of it.

Comment [E110]: 10. Walk away

Comment [E111]: 5. Empathy

I: Do you think you will do this in the future?

M: Dunno.

I: Would you recommend LINX to someone similar to you?

M: No, because it sounds stupid.

I: How does that make you feel?

M: Ok I guess, I think that in a way yes and in a way no it was useful, learnt a few more things but I think I would have learnt those over time anyway.

Comment [E112]: 14. Uncertainty of value of LINX vs own learning experiences

I: If you would to create LINX what would you improve/change?

M: It's alright at the moment. Having a nice teacher and making it fun are the most important things I reckon. I think it would be better at mainstream, as there's more people to learn and participate.

Comment [E113]: 15. Facilitator characteristics and 7. fun

You have the odd naughty kid how gets kicked out, but most people would want to learn.

Comment [E114]: 14. LINX setting

I: Did you get on well with the people who ran LINX?

M: Yes but it's also the people you are with in the group it helps if they're mates from school and that.

Comment [E115]: 6. Similarities to the group

I: What do you think about being just boys? Do you think it would work with girls?

C: No because you talk about things like what would you call a girl who has slept with loads of boys? If she was in with you couldn't really ask her that. You wouldn't want to be harsh on her.

Comment [E116]: 16. Preference for single sex

I: Do you feel within the group you could talk about things and it would stay within the group?

C: Yes, because they're the sort of the people of I get along with – you know like me, I can respect what they say because it makes sense, if I don't like someone then what they say means nothing to me. What they say is OK as I think that they understand where I'm coming from, so I can accept it if they challenge me or question what I say.

Comment [E117]: 6. Similarities within the group

I: Do you think this was thought about?

C: No it just worked out like that. It could work out good or bad.

I: Anything else you would like to say?

C: No

Step 2 – Identify similar codes across interviews

Step 3/4 Data Matrix showing illustrative excerpts from Young People SSIs which link similar codes of challenge and valuing young person to develop the MAIN THEME: Facilitator Qualities

SUB THEME	Anna	Mike	Tom
Challenge		<i>they're the sort of the people of I get along with – you know like me, I can respect what they say because it makes sense, if I don't like someone then what they say means nothing to me. What they say is OK as I think that they understand where I'm coming from, so I can accept it if they challenge me or question what I say. (post)</i>	I would like someone I can get on with and knows where I am coming from (Pre) They were so easy to relate to but told you if you said something stupid (Post)
Valuing Young Person	<i>I really enjoyed spending time with him(post)</i>	<i>I think having a closer relationship with.....which has really helped me to feel like I can speak to someone if I've got a problem, that's taken time though..... I'm getting to know Mark and have a</i>	<i>Because she understands me, she picks me up on stuff, but in a good way. I feel that I can trust her and</i>

		<i>relationship, I'm worried that when LINX stops I won't be able to see him anymore and I've only just started being able to tell him stuff (post).</i>	<i>she makes things interesting, I just feel like she gets me (mid).'</i>
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Appendix 28 – Observation

Observation of a Session at the Learning Centre

7 participants in the group: five year 9 students and two year 8 students. Most of the young people were still on a full time at school and came to the learning centre once a week for the LINX sessions. There were three adults facilitating this session two were full time members of staff at the learning centre and the other facilitator was a learning support assistant from College.

The session began with a discussion around an 'ABC Contract' with the police. Many of the students within the group were currently on this contract or had been at some point. First the progression of what an ABC contract could lead to were talked about – such as an ASBO or a tag. A couple of the students mentioned they had had a tag. This initially led to a lot of comments from their peers 'no way', 'really', which the facilitator skilfully used as an opportunity to discuss why much antisocial behaviour was committed in groups. The group were quick to throw around ideas:

'Make yourself look better', 'Peer pressure', 'Showing off', 'Trying to impress their mates',

I think that some members of the group started to realise that the reasons why they committed antisocial acts was to do with wanting to be part of a group.

The session then moved onto an activity about living on an island and a nuclear bomb was about to be dropped, everyone was allocated a character, all of home fitted certain stereotypes linked to race, age, gender, sexual orientation, job role. The group then had to decide who could fit into the nuclear bunker and who would be left out. It initiated a controversial discussion around the groups stereotypes, as one boy said to another who was a gay chef:

'You might try to rape me' who replied with 'I'm not a stereotype', these sort of comments lead onto group discussions with the facilitator often challenging the beliefs of the student 'why do you think that?' Interestingly the other students were also often quick to challenge others beliefs an example

of such a comment was: 'You're all tight to the disabled.'

I think the discussion was thought provoking for many of the students involved.

This activity was then followed by a final game called 'Justice.' This basically involved dividing the group in 2 and thinking of a forfeit for the other members of the team, which each group would ultimately have to do themselves unbeknownst to them. First the group discussed what the word 'Justice' meant: 'Getting your own back', 'Paying someone back', 'More extreme, harsher punishment.'

The young people found it extremely difficult to think of a forfeit that was not physical or too hard. In the end each group came up with one, the first group thought of asking the others to sing a song and do a dance, the second group thought of asking the others to clean up. When they realised they actually had to do it themselves they didn't really want to especially the group who thought of singing and dancing as they were quite embarrassed. A lively debate followed around the consequences of punishment, 'don't do it if you might have to do it', 'I Wouldn't do it anyway', the realisation that you should be willing to do something you ask someone else to do was again an interesting discussion.

An investigation of perceptions of individual and group support provided for young people who have witnessed domestic abuse. With a particular focus on a new intervention: LINX, developing guidelines for practice. Thesis. Eleanor Ley

Appendix 30 – Example of completed SDQ

Appendix 31 –Literature Review: This Literature review has been marked and examined separately from the examination of the thesis. It is appended here for completeness and to give coherence to the whole thesis.