"It's the hardest conversation I've had to have" – A psychosocial exploration of teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism.

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Abstract

The UK government threat level, used to mark the likelihood of a terrorist attack, has fluctuated between 'critical' and 'severe' over recent years. As a result, increased consideration is being given to the impact of terrorism on schools. This study is a psychosocial exploration of the experiences primary school teachers in Central London have of talking to the children about terrorism. Existing research in this area is limited, with the majority of research pertaining to the unique context of the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in New York. This study aimed to add to the literature teachers' individual experiences of talking to children about terrorism, with a view of exploring the impact this responsibility on the teachers themselves. The psychosocial approach considers responses to a phenomenon by drawing attention to unconscious processes that may be contributing to a behaviour or language. By bringing attention to these underlying processes, this study aimed to help professionals be more informed in understanding and supporting teachers to talk to children about terrorism. The methodology for this study was psychoanalytically informed, using Free Association Narrative Interviewing (FANI) to interview seven participants. Two interviews were conducted per participant, with points of interest from the first interview being extended on in the second interview. Thematic Analysis was used to analyse interview data, supported by contextual information from participants and reflexive field notes. Five themes were identified; 'Context', 'Content', 'Process', 'Role of the Teacher' and 'Impact on Children', and a further, interpretive layer of analysis explored these themes on a deeper level. The findings are discussed in relation to existing literature and psychological theory. Strengths and limitations of the current study are proposed, with consideration to possible

further research in this area. The implications of the findings to current Educational

Psychology practice are explored.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Chapter Overview

The aim of this research was to explore the experiences of teachers in London of discussing the recent terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom (UK) and across Europe with their students. This chapter will first explore the background and context in which this thesis is situated, incorporating a discussion about the nature and definition of terrorism from a psychosocial position alongside an overview of the current legislation and government initiatives regarding terrorism. The rationale for this study will then be presented, focusing on the impact of terrorism on children and on the adults supporting them. Finally, this chapter will consider what contribution may be made by this study to the way in which teachers are supported to discuss terrorism in schools, and what implications there may be for the Educational Psychology (EP) profession.

1.2. What is Terrorism?

The word 'terrorism' is one which has been redefined and debated over many years, with conflicting views about what a definition of the term should encompass. The term 'terrorism' may hold different meaning for different individuals and groups around the world. Hess and Stoddard (2011) referred to a 'conceptual confusion' regarding the definition of terrorism. The psychosocial approach of this study accepts the nature of language as nuanced and unfixed, understanding meaning as socially constructed but recognising the influence of our own internal world on how we process and understand a concept. Whilst it is not

the goal of this study to suggest a definition of terrorism, it is important to try and establish a shared understanding of what is being explored.

Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of 'terrorism', there are several elements which are increasingly agreed upon as being characteristic of a terrorist attack. These elements include the use or threat of violence, the intention to create fear or intimidation, and the presence of an audience of indirect victims, making the impact far wider-reaching than those directly involved in the incident (Pfefferbaum, 2003; Larsson, 2004). Additional features which may differentiate a terrorist attack from other types of disaster are the human culpability and intention to harm others. Terrorist attacks are usually premeditated, indiscriminate in terms of their victims, and unpredictable (Wilkinson, 1990). These characteristics allow for feelings of blame and anger that may not be present in other disasters.

This piece of research is situated in Central London, and so the national understanding of what the word 'terrorism' refers to is an important consideration. The UK government defines terrorism as:

"the use or threat of an action (that) involves serious violence… endangers a person's life… creates serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public… for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause" (United Kingdom Terrorism Act, 2000).

For the purpose of the present study, the word 'terrorism' will be used to refer to an act or threat of violence used to terrify or intimidate those who the perpetrator has deemed as 'other' in their ideologies. The term 'direct victim' will refer to individuals who have suffered injury, lost their lives, or lost loved ones as a result of a terrorist incident. The term 'indirect victim' refers to individuals who

have experienced some negative impact as a result of a terrorist attack, without having been a direct victim. Often discussions between teachers and students about terrorism will occur in the aftermath of a terrorist attack, meaning that the concept of 'terrorism' is laden with fear and shaped by emotional responses to the event. By focusing on the effect of an attack on the school or community, it may be that the cause, meaning or motivation for the incident are given less consideration, and thus the definition of terrorism is married only to the event itself and its reaction. The current study will explore teachers' experiences of talking to their students about terrorism in a context of on-going threat. This may mean there is increased scope for exploration about terrorism as a concept, meaning teachers may find themselves in a position of having to answer questions about a topic they lack confidence in. Teachers are generally regarded by their pupils, particularly in primary schools, as 'having the answers' (Saleem and Thomas, 2011). Therefore, how teachers present terrorism and terrorist attacks to pupils may become perceived as the only truth.

1.3. A Psychosocial Understanding of Terrorism

The psychosocial position of this study is grounded in a psychodynamic understanding of the mind as having unconscious as well as conscious motivations responsible for shaping our behaviours. The psychosocial methodology also draws upon systemic psychology, which considers how the individual interacts with their environment and different systems around them, for example their family, school, and community. This theoretical perspective is applied to the concept of terrorism and how it is understood in this study; a psychosocial understanding of terrorism gives equal consideration to the internal, psychological world of individuals and the external forces that are acting upon those individuals. This conceptualisation of

individuals can be applied to both those who commit terrorist acts and those impacted by terrorist attacks, in order to help build an understanding of the social construct of 'terrorism'.

Drawing upon theories of group psychodynamics can help to build an understanding of extremist groups. Volkan (1988) offered a compelling account of the psychodynamics of terrorist groups, based on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974; Abrams and Hogg, 1990) and highlighting the heightened perception of an 'in-group' and 'out-group'. Volkan suggested that extremist group cohesion occurs as a result of a perceived threat to identity from society. Risk factors may include social deprivation, alienation or prejudice by majority groups or lack of integration or opportunities. A poor sense of core identity increases an individual's vulnerability to assume and internalise a group identity (Tajfel, Turner, Austin and Worschel, 1979). Fonagy, Leigh, Steele, Steele, Kennedy, Mattoon and Gerber (1996) suggested that being in a group activates the attachment system and leads to an increased sense of belonging and safety. Once a group has been formed, and their core values and principles established, there emerges a mutual understanding of those not part of the group as significantly 'other'. Melanie Klein suggested that 'splitting' is a function of the paranoid-schizoid position of infancy, in which young infants are unable to integrate the good and bad (Klein, 1921; Klein, 1930). Later in life, individuals may revert to this position as a psychological defence. In this context, the insecurities and unbearable feelings of the 'in-group' could be described as being 'split off' from its own members and projected into an 'out-group' (Tajfel, 1974). These group dynamics are also at play at a societal level. Here too, we can see this defensive process of splitting, in which the terrorists are viewed as 'all bad' and the rest of society as 'all good'. Oppenheimer and Mandemaker (2008) reflected on how a

group can feel as though it is becoming more human as the enemy becomes less so.

The level of human culpability in terrorism attacks allows for the projection of bad

feelings into the perpetrators of the attack. This is particularly prevalent in the

media, where large groups of people are associated with terrorism and stereotyped

as inherently 'bad'.

This propensity to want to locate the 'bad' in an out-group can be

problematic in terms of stereotyping and assumptions about terrorism. A divided

understanding of terrorism and the war against terror as 'good' vs 'evil' is over

simplified and reductionist (Saleem and Thomas, 2011). The socio-political,

religious and ideological motivators driving terrorism have long been subject of

discussion and debate, resulting in dominant discourses about *who* commits

terrorist acts. Since September 11th, 2001, when members of terrorist group Al-

Quaeda flew commercial aeroplanes into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre

in New York, the term 'terrorism' has often been associated with Islamic extremism.

This is an association that has been perpetuated based on the profile of the

perpetrators of recent, high-profile, incidents. In 2017, in England, there were four

high-profile incidents treated as acts of terrorism motivated by Islamic extremists.

These incidents received a high level of media coverage, perhaps reinforcing the

association between terrorists and Islamic extremism, with this stereotype

becoming more salient through a process of confirmation bias (Oswald and

Grosjean, 2004). However, the causes for which terrorist acts are committed are

wide ranging and certainly not isolated to Islamic extremism. Previously, terrorism

has been synonymous in the UK with attacks by the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

More recently, there have been highly-publicised attacks, which have been treated

as acts of terrorism, committed by white nationalists, for example the murder of Jo

Cox in 2016 and an attack on Muslim worshippers at a mosque in Finsbury Park in 2017. The media and the government appear more reluctant to attribute the label 'terrorist' to perpetrators of violent crimes who are non-Muslim, compared to Muslim counterparts (Saleem and Thomas, 2011). The world over, terrorism acts are committed based on a wide range of extreme political and religious views and it is important to discuss terrorism with an understanding of all that it encompasses.

A psychosocial understanding of terrorism and those impacted by terrorism at the individual level is also applied throughout this study. Not all members of groups with ideologies that are considered extreme become terrorists. Meloy and Yakely (2014) aimed to ascertain what individual, psychological differences separate a terrorist from someone with the same ideology who does not carry out a violent act. Yakely (2014) suggested terrorist behaviour could be understood by drawing upon attachment theory and object relations theory to understand an individual's developmental course, as well as considering their exposure to environmental or societal risk factors. Psychic determinism, an idea introduced by Freud (1914) refers to the notion that our conscious thoughts and actions are controlled by unconscious fantasies, wishes and defences. Freud proposed that violent behaviour is a re-enactment of previous trauma, either experienced by the individual or observed by the individual and experienced vicariously. With this understanding, we can begin to consider the experiences, and the psychological impact of those experiences, that may lead to people to committing terrorist offences. Individual, psychological factors are also integral to how direct and indirect victims of terrorism experience and process attacks and make meaning about them. Terrorism is by definition traumatising, with the intention to harm and horrify (Waugh, 2007), but the way in which people respond to terrorism depends

on several factors. Somasundaram (1998) suggested that the proximity to a terrorist attack, the duration of exposure, including any anticipatory period, and the severity of the incident were the key factors that affect how individuals are impacted. Quarantelli (1985) suggested that whilst terrorism attacks are universally experienced as traumatic, the extent to which this impacts an individual depends on their previous life experiences and unique psychology.

1.4. The National and Local Context

In England, in recent years, there has been a series of successive terrorist attacks, with multiple high-profile incidents in 2017 alone. In March, a 52-year-old man drove a car into pedestrians on Westminster bridge, before fatally stabbing a police officer in the grounds of the Palace of Westminster. In May, a 22-year-old man detonated a suicide bomb at Manchester Arena, killing 22 and injuring 139. Many of the victims were children and adolescents. In June, three men wearing fake suicide vests drove a van into pedestrians on London Bridge, before attacking people in Borough Market, killing 8 people and leaving 48 injured. Also in June, a man drove a van into pedestrians near Finsbury Park Mosque, killing one and injuring at least nine. In September, a bomb failed to detonate completely on a London tube train at Parson's Green station, leaving several injured; several other aborted or prevented attacks were reported in the media. All of these incidents were investigated by counter-terrorism police as terrorist attacks.

As a result of this spate of incidents, significant legislation has been produced to counter terrorist acts, raise the public's awareness, and offer support to adults and children impacted by acts of terror. Fremont (2004) suggested that when

national threats are of a political nature, people are more likely to respond with fear and anxiety, and therefore it is important to consider the government's response and its contribution to the current context. A notable contribution to the perceived sense of threat are the government's threat levels, used to mark the likelihood of a terrorist attack happening. The threat level has fluctuated between 'critical' and 'severe' over the last year (National Counter Terrorism Security Office, 2017), inferring to the public that another terrorist attack is highly likely or imminent. Government incentives have also appeared in the last two years which focus on informing adults on how to respond to terrorism. These include the PREVENT incentive, issued in 2015 and the Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) campaign (National Counter Terrorism Security Office, 2017). The ACT Campaign has recently developed a new incentive 'Run, Hide, Tell' which is aimed at 11-16 year olds and features many celebrities emphasising 'Real Champions Run' in relation to responding to a terrorist attack. A supplementary package is due to follow titled 'TREAT' which will include First Aid advice that can be applied by 11-16 year olds.

As the government have begun to increase their focus on terrorism, so have the national media. National campaigns and statements made by the media will inevitably influence and impact on social groups and systems. In recent years, the nature of media and how we consume it has changed drastically. Media and news reporting have moved largely online, resulting in tighter deadlines for journalists. Kingston (2005) raised concerns that a demand for instant news could result in less informed reporting. Kingston also described the consumer as seeking the 'shocking' rather than the mundane and that competition to achieve more traction could result in media sites sensationalising incidents. Terrorism in the media is also a significant source of debate and discussion, and the reporting of an incident almost inevitably

breeds further media coverage, resulting in a multitude of varying opinions and views being shared. A salient example of this was the controversial return of British citizen Shemima Begum in 2019, who left the UK in 2015 to join the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) at the age of 15. Begum's return to the UK was headline news, sparking debates about whether or not Begum should be allowed back into the country. Begum's association with terrorist groups was central to these disputes, and her case divided the nation.

The increased accessibility to the media also means we are more likely to engage in international news, thus increasing our exposure to global as well as local terrorist incidents. In March, 2019, 49 people were killed in a terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, and in April 2019, a series of coordinated bombings in Sri Lanka killed more than 320 people in an attack claimed by terrorist group Islamic State. Both of these incidents made headline news in the UK, contributing to people's beliefs and fears about terrorism, as well as triggering debate and discussion across the nation.

There are generally conflicting views about what should be reported about terrorism in the media (Elmquist, 1990). Whilst most would agree that it is important for the public to be kept informed at times of disaster, such as in the aftermath of a terrorist incident, the media can also be a significant weapon for terrorists whose motive is to spread their message as publicly as possible (Nacos, 1994). The goal of a terrorist attack is not just death and injury, but also the intimidation of a wider group (Pfefferbaum, 2014). Waugh (2007) highlighted that the media plays a key role in the impact of terrorism reaching not only the direct victims, but also a much larger audience. There is research evidence that media

coverage of terrorist attacks could promote fear (Otto, Henin, Hirshfeld-Becker, Pollack, Biederman and Rosenbaum, 2007), lead to higher perceptions of risk of being involved in a terrorist attack (Comer, Furr, Beidas and Babyar, 2008) and even lead to symptoms of trauma (Wang, Nomura, Pat-Horenczyk, Doppelt, Abramovitz and Chemtob, 2006). Schuster, Stein, Jaycox, Marshall, Elliott and Berry (2001) found that 90% of respondents reported at least low levels of stress symptoms as a result of media coverage of 9/11. Gaffney (2006) commented that '*sometimes distance affords a more complete and therefore more terrifying view of the entire event*' (p.1004).

Religion is frequently credited as a key motivation behind terrorist attacks. 9/11 is perhaps the event most prominently featured in the media and literature when it comes to remembering terrorist attacks in modern history, and much of the media focused on the Islamism of the perpetrators. Schools and the discussions within them are shaped by the wider political and social climate, so teachers may be confronted by this view of terrorism as affiliated with religion, particularly Islamism, in school. It is important for teachers to incorporate into discussions examples of terrorism where the perpetrators have been from different societies and faith groups. In a multicultural context, teachers can be conscious of offending, and discussions about difference can be avoided as a result. This study has been undertaken in Central London, where there is a large amount of diversity in schools. The borough from which participants were recruited is representative of this diversity. The 2011 Census found that 55.1% of the borough's population are from an ethnic group other than White British; a proportion that is the same as the London average, but significantly higher than average for England and Wales.

An anxiety about acknowledging and celebrating difference in beliefs, background and cultures can lead to neutralised conversations in which important cultural factors are skipped or ignored. In a bid to be inoffensive and 'politically correct', the outcome can often be that of 'culture-blindness' in which people do not feel seen or heard. In the context of discussing terrorism, teachers may feel compelled to remain neutral and avoid discussions about different cultures, this could lead to children 'filling in the gaps' and making assumptions about their peers of different cultures.

1.5. The Impact of Terrorism on Children

National and social responses to terrorism and the coverage given to terrorism in the media could position the threat of a terrorist attack firmly in the minds of many children and young people. John Cameron, the head of the NSPCC, stated in 2018 that since April 2017, the charity had received more than 300 contacts from young people anxious about terrorism. Even children who have not been directly impacted by a terrorist attack are vulnerable to increased fear as a result of these incidents (Burnham and Hooper, 2008). Garakani, Hirschowitz and Katz (2004) proposed that people could suffer adverse, long-term consequences of terrorism simply by hearing about incidents, and that children could be particularly susceptible to this due to limited understanding. Silverman and La Greca (2002) and Becker-Blease, Finkelhor and Turner (2008) highlighted the additional negative impact of identifying with a victim presented on the media. Following the terrorist attack in Manchester in May 2017 where several young people lost their lives, children may feel even more vulnerable to being implicated in a terror attack.

Additionally, children may be more vulnerable than adults to being influenced by dominant narratives in the media. Oppenheimer and Mandemaker (2008) conducted a study in which they explored how 7-11 year olds perceive and understand the concept of 'terrorist'. Their findings suggested that as children near the end of primary school, their concept of 'terrorist' becomes associated with particular religious or cultural backgrounds. These findings reinforce that this age group is one that can be significantly influenced by the dominant narratives they are exposed to and so teachers of this age group have an important role in challenging problematic discourse and facilitating supportive conversations.

The extent to which exposure to terrorist incidents will impact children depends on the child's individual psychology and protective or risk factors in their social environment (Cicchetti and Lynch, 1993). Ayalon and Waters (2002), found that a child's family had the most profound impact on how the child coped with experiencing or hearing about a terrorist attack. Comer and Kendall (2007) suggested that fear or anxiety about terrorism could result in attention problems, irrational fears, sleep problems and intrusive thoughts in children. Children concerned about being involved in a terrorist attack may present as hypervigilant and unable to engage fully in a learning task or social interaction. Maslow, in his study of human motivation (1943), proposed a hierarchy of needs, in which he suggested that for an individual to thrive educationally, socially and emotionally, it is important that they feel safe and secure. For a child hearing about terrorism, it is important to feel their anxieties are contained. Containment refers to the capacity of another person to manage or hold some of the anxiety and fear of a child in order for them to feel safe and free of these difficult feelings (Bion, 1985).

1.6 The Role of the Teacher

Crabbs (1981) stressed the incredible potential schools have to support children and families in times of crisis and disaster. Within schools, teachers are well-positioned to act as the aforementioned 'container' of the difficult feelings that children may be experiencing (Bion, 1985). The responsibilities of teachers have grown such that they are expected not only to teach, but also to create a safe and caring environment whilst addressing the emotional health and wellbeing of their students. In the context of current legislation, this is especially salient - the Run Hide Tell incentive is proposed to eventually become part of the national PSHE curriculum, meaning teachers will have explicit responsibilities in terms of discussing terrorism with children. The PSHE Association (2016) state that it is important for teachers to help children to understand terrorism and to combat inaccurate or speculative thoughts.

However, this places pressure on individual teachers to have discussions about terrorism, when teachers are notoriously short of time and are experiencing increasing demands to deliver the curriculum and evidence the academic progress of their students (Haas and Waterson, 2011). It is important to consider, therefore, the extent to which the teacher has the capacity to contain a child's difficult feelings, particularly if they themselves are feeling anxious or concerned, which could feasibly be the case with a topic such as terrorism. If a teacher is experiencing personal distress, their willingness or ability to support a student could be decreased (Wolmer, Laor, Dedeoglu, Siev and Yazgan, 2003). Pfefferbaum, Pfefferbaum and Gurwitch (2005) stressed that if teachers perceive themselves to be struggling with their own emotional wellbeing, they were less able to support

children. Even more crucially, research suggests that children's own attitudes towards and reactions to traumatic events are closely linked to how they perceive their teacher to have responded (Hoven, Duarte and Mandell , 2003). The child's level of fear regarding terrorism is closely related to the teacher's reactions (Pfefferbaum, Nixton, Tucker et al., 2003). It is therefore a worthwhile area of study to consider the experiences of teachers when talking to children about emotive topics such as terrorism and consider how best to support their needs.

1.7. Implications for Educational Psychology Practice

The role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) is primarily to support teachers and school staff to provide the best possible school experience and learning opportunities for children. Sewell and Hulusi (2016) highlighted how the role of the EP encompasses critical incident response, the promotion of emotional wellbeing, and safeguarding. These aspects of the role are all relevant in supporting schools to respond to terrorist attacks and discuss terrorism with children. The current World Health Organisation (WHO) and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines recommend a period of 'watchful waiting' following traumatic exposure in children, before involvement with a mental health professional is sought. During this time, teachers are expected to support children in class, and this provides an opportunity for EPs to offer valuable support such as training or supervision for staff (Pfefferbaum et al., 2004a). EP involvement is mostly indirect, aiming to equip through consultation the adults who already have relationships with the child to support them. The aim of this study is to facilitate discussion about how Educational Psychologists can support teachers to engage in conversations about this controversial topic with their students. In turn, this may lead to teachers

having more open discussions with pupils, ultimately reducing levels of fear, anxiety and uncertainty, as well as challenging harmful stereotypes.

Chapter 2:

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will critically review the existing literature relevant to the current study. A systematic search of the literature regarding teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism revealed that the topic has not had a great deal of attention. There exists a wealth of research into the psychological impact of terrorism on children and young people in the aftermath of terrorist attacks, however there is a significant gap in the literature in terms of how schools respond to terrorist incidents and incorporate discussions about terrorism into their teaching. Currently this is an area which has received little attention in the field of educational psychology. The existing literature has almost exclusively been carried out in the United States of America (USA), with the vast majority pertaining to the aftermath of the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks. All of the seven papers determined to be appropriate for this review were in response to the events of 9/11. Whilst this research is valuable and provides a helpful context and interesting insights, the focus of the current study is not on critical incident response, but rather on the conversations that teachers have with children who are indirectly impacted by terrorism. A search of the literature demonstrated that this is a gap in the current literature base. The literature search also revealed a scarcity of personal narratives of the teachers having these conversations. For this literature review, two literature questions were identified:

- What does the existing literature tell us about how schools respond to terrorist incidents?

- What does the existing literature tell us about teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism?

The first question will address the 'bigger picture' of literature regarding the impact of terrorism on schools, and the second question will focus on teachers' experiences. This chapter will consider each of these questions in turn, discussing how existing literature can contribute to our understanding of the phenomena addressed by these questions. Prior to this literature review being written, each included paper was critically appraised using a checklist adapted from existing tools by Walsh and Downe (2006) and Long and Godfrey (2004).

2.2 Literature Searches

A literature search was conducted across four databases: PsycINFO, PEP archive, Education Source, and SocINDEX. PsychINFO and PEP archive are both key databases for psychology, with the first being created by the American Psychological Society and storing notable educational and psychological journals. PEP archive stores key psychoanalytic journals which would be of interest due to the position and methodology of the present study. Education Source stores education research which was felt to be relevant to this study given it is situated in the context of primary schools. SocINDEX stores sociology research and this database was included to reflect the aim of a psychosocial approach to transcend the split between psychology and sociology in research.

EBSCO host was used to conduct multiple pilot searches in order to determine the most appropriate terms for the final search, before the final searches were conducted across the databases outlined above. These terms were then expanded using the thesaurus function, and the truncation symbol (*) was used to

ensure all variations of key words would be found. The Boolean operators "OR" and "AND" were used to combine key terms. Due to a limited return of papers through each search, two different searches were completed to ensure the search was as comprehensive as possible. The key terms selected for the literature searches were as follows:

Search 1	*Search 2*
Terror* OR extremis* OR political violence	Terror* OR extremis* OR political violence
AND	AND
Teacher OR educator	School OR education OR classroom
AND	AND
Experience OR feelings OR perspective OR perception	Response OR reaction

Table 1 - Key Terms for Literature Review

The search was limited to papers published between 2000 and 2019 to provide a review which reflected a recent picture of terrorism. The rationale for choosing the year 2000 as a cut off is based on this being the year of the UK government's first Terrorism Act, offering a national definition of terrorism for the first time and suggesting the start of a modern understanding of terrorism. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for research papers were ascertained prior to searching the databases. The aim of the inclusion and exclusion criteria was to ensure the papers returned were suitably relevant to the literature review questions of the current study. Selected inclusion and exclusion criteria are stated in the table below. Initially, an inclusion criterion was set to be research conducted within the UK only,

due to the differences between educational systems in the UK and other parts of the world. However, thorough searches of the literature with this criterion applied demonstrated that there is not presently sufficient research from the UK to satisfactorily answer the literature review questions.

Inclusion Criteria	*Exclusion Criteria*
Language: published in English	Position papers, editorials, book reviews
Empirical papers	Papers whose focus was on populations other than teachers, e.g. school counsellors, social workers, parents
Peer reviewed	Papers with a focus on measuring or evaluating a particular intervention or crisis response
Literature which focuses on the response or experience of the school or teachers to terrorism	Research published prior to 2000
	Papers focusing specifically on the impact of terrorism on children without considering the role of the school or teacher
	Papers focusing on general crisis response, or conversation about sensitive subjects in general within schools, rather than with a focus on terrorism

Table 2 - Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Literature Review

After filtering by date and limiting the search to peer reviewed papers, 92 papers were found using the first search terms and 297 papers were found using the second search terms. 264 of these papers were excluded at the database search stage, based on their titles making it clear that they were not relevant to the

literature questions. This left 125 papers, the abstracts of which were read and either included or excluded based on the criteria listed above. This process left 36 papers, which were read in full to establish whether they met the inclusion criteria. Studies excluded at this stage are included in Appendix 1. This left 4 articles, which have been included in this literature review. In addition, 3 further papers were included following a 'snowballing' technique, with the originally selected papers signposting to other relevant papers which had not initially been returned through the database searches. Therefore, 7 papers have been used to address the literature review questions.

2.3 Method of Critical Appraisal

2.3.1. A Word about Critical Appraisal

The role of critical appraisal in a literature review is to help consider the strength of the included studies, and how they contribute to the literature base. For quantitative research, critical appraisal traditionally adopts positivist criteria such as validity and reliability. Assessments of these qualities assume there is an objective reality that the research should be able to discover, and using these qualities to inform a process of quality inclusion assumes the philosophical assumption that research can be flawed. Whilst this is consistent with most quantitative research, which usually assumes a positivist position, there have long been different perspectives about how to assess the quality of qualitative papers, whose epistemologies often reject notions of universal truth (Garside, 2014; Sparkes, 2001). For qualitative data, terms such as credibility, transferability and dependability replace traditional criteria (Garside, 2014).

2.2.2 Critical Appraisal Tool

There are many different established checklists of criteria for critical appraisal in existence (Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor, 2003). To support a critical review of the existing literature regarding teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism an adapted version of the checklist by Walsh and Downe (2006) was used. This checklist was selected based on the acknowledgement of the importance of reflexivity, and the inclusion of this as a criterion. Some of the studies returned by the literature search had quantitative methods, and so selected criteria from a tool for appraising quantitative papers by Long and Godfrey (2004) were added to the Walsh and Downe checklist. This produced a tool for critical appraisal which was appropriate for all papers returned by the literature search. All three checklists can be found in Appendix 2. A full critical appraisal of the studies included in this chapter can be found in Appendix 3. In this chapter, these observations will be drawn upon to review the existing literature base.

2.4 What does the existing literature tell us about how schools respond to terrorist incidents?

2.4.1 Inconsistencies in approach

School may be seen by some children as a protective resource in times of stress and therefore should be promoted by school staff as a place where help can be sought. The emphasis of the importance of schools in crisis response was consistent across studies in the literature review, but the studies demonstrated that schools do not have a universal response to terrorism; there is significant variation in schools' approaches following an incident or when discussing terrorism with children. Felix, Vernberg, Pfefferbaum, Gill, Schorr, Boudreaux, Gurwitch, Galea, and Pfefferbaum

(2010) surveyed 331 teachers across schools in Washington DC following 9/11 and found a high amount of variation in terms of how their schools responded to the attacks. Similarly, Noppe, Noppe, and Bartell (2006) found by surveying adolescents and teachers in Midwestern schools that the extent to which teachers were open and honest about the events of 9/11 varied largely. Across the literature, there was evidence that this variation in teachers' approaches was heavily influenced by the message they received from senior leadership within their schools about how to broach the subject with children. Noppe, Noppe, and Bartell (2006) found that, of the schools involved in their study, teachers of younger children were encouraged to withhold information from their students. Teachers reported being told to minimise the attacks and strive to maintain normal routines in their classrooms. Burns and Schaefer (2002) reviewed the reflective journals of 30 teachers from 9/11 and the days and weeks following the attack. Teachers' narratives included frustrating accounts about receiving mixed messages about what they should and shouldn't share with children, suggesting they felt hindered by the way in which their schools were choosing to respond to terrorism. Conversely, a piece of action-research by Helfenbein (2009) highlighted the role of one teacher's school in providing a context in which she felt she could respond to terrorist attacks with freedom and flexibility.

This inconsistency in how schools respond to terrorism could be problematic in terms of how children and young people develop an understanding about terrorism. What is chosen to be discussed or taught in schools contributes significantly to the dominant narrative regarding terrorist attacks and how terrorism is understood within communities. Felix et al. (2010) suggested that co-ordinating with other services in the community, and increasing the joint working

between schools and other professionals, is crucial in improving crisis preparedness in schools.

2.4.2 A range of activities to address terrorism

The literature highlighted the range of different activities that schools use in response to terrorism in order to address incidents and support their students. Pfefferbaum, Fairbrother, Brandt, Robertson, Gurwitch, Stuber and Pfefferbaum (2004a) conducted a case study of one New York school following 9/11 and found that different ways of responding to the attacks included facilitating art projects, puppet plays and co-ordinated assemblies for their students, as well as holding more in-depth discussions in class. Noppe, Noppe, and Bartlett (2006) found that schools promoted two main ways of supporting children following terrorist incidents; planning classroom activities focused on the events, and also maintaining routines to help children to feel safe. Their study also differentiated between how schools would support children of different ages. For younger children, helping them to express their feelings through art, drama, and play was considered the best approach, whilst there was an acknowledgement that older children needed opportunities to ask questions and learn more about what had happened.

There is wide acknowledgement across the literature that schools respond to terrorism by teachers holding discussions within their classrooms. Pfefferbaum et al. (2004a) found that 93% of the teachers they surveyed held class discussions and Felix et al. (2010) also reported that most of the teachers in their study had held discussions with children about terrorism following an incident. Whilst the fact that teachers are having these conversations with children is well documented, there is little information about the nature and content of these discussions.

2.4.3 Support for staff

Another theme that arose when reviewing existing literature was that of
what support is available for staff in response to a terrorist incident. Pfefferbaum et
al. (2004a) found that teachers felt a significant amount of pressure to support
children following an attack, and raised the question of what school systems could
do to reduce this burden on teachers. Felix et al. (2010) found that the more
prepared teachers felt to discuss terrorism with children, the more likely they were
to facilitate discussions with their classes following an incident. Their study also
highlighted the importance of training and supervision in influencing teachers'
perceptions of their preparedness and capacity to intervene with children's
emotional responses to terrorism. Whilst Felix et al. found that schools they
surveyed were seeking more mental health training for their staff, this was not
echoed amongst schools in other included studies. Ray and Pemberton (2010) found
that only 20.7% of the teachers they surveyed had received any professional
development opportunities on issues surrounding terrorism.

As well as receiving formal training, the literature highlighted how teachers
felt their schools could better support them in response to terrorism by facilitating
opportunities for them to talk to other teachers. Ray and Pemberton (2010) found
that the majority of the teachers they surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they
would benefit from discussing issues regarding responding to terrorism with other
teachers in a professional development setting. Felix et al. (2010) showed that
teachers are unlikely to talk to other members of staff outside of sessions organised
by the school, and that teachers are more interested in learning about how to deal
with emotional reactions in children following a terrorist attack than learning about

how to manage their own reactions. Furthermore, Pfefferbaum, Pfefferbaum, Gurwitch, Doughty, Pynoos, Foy, Brandt Jr, and Reddy (2004b) demonstrated that teachers were unlikely to seek support at all in the aftermath of terrorist attacks, so it would be a positive focus for schools to consider how to resource additional opportunities for support for teachers who were less likely to seek support themselves.

2.4.4 External influences

Another important factor in how schools respond to terrorism is the influence of external sources such as the media in how terrorism is discussed in classrooms. There are contrasting opinions reflected in the literature about how the media should be used to support responses to terrorist attacks when working with children and young people. Noppe, Noppe, and Bartell (2006) found that many teachers felt that drawing upon media coverage of 9/11 helped them to explain the events with children. Ray and Pemberton (2010) asked teachers explicitly about their use of media in response to 9/11 and found that several teachers chose to live stream the news coverage in their classrooms, explaining that they felt this was the most honest and transparent way of sharing the news with children. Participants in this study reflected in their responses to the survey that this may have led to increased distress in their students. Helfenbein (2009) also explored the use of the media in schools' responses to terrorism, and shared the thoughts of one teacher who was unsure about the appropriateness of sharing potentially frightening images with children.

2.5 What does the existing literature tell us about teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism?

2.5.1 Dealing with personal feelings and fears

As well as playing a vital role in support for children regarding terrorism, teachers are also individuals who will personally be dealing with their own feelings about terrorism, particularly in the aftermath of an incident. Expecting a teacher to be completely neutral and objective when discussing these matters with children is therefore unrealistic and possibly unhelpful (Helfenbein, 2009). Teachers' own responses to terror attacks and the threat of terrorism were made explicit in several of the studies in this review, and were linked to how teachers experienced talking to children about terrorism. Felix et al. (2010) aimed to understand in their study how the teachers' own emotional responses to an incident related to their interest and involvement in supporting children post-crisis in ways such as class discussions. Their study found that 20% of teachers surveyed thought that the terrorist attacks had had an impact on their performance at work. Pfefferbaum et al. (2004a) also explored teachers' personal responses to terrorism, finding that teachers reported reacting to terrorist incidents with 'intense fear, helplessness and horror'. 84% of teachers surveyed reported experiencing stress in response to terrorism and reported an ongoing impact of terrorist attacks in both their work and free time. Teachers reported not being able to concentrate on their work in the aftermath of 9/11. Additionally, teachers agreed that there had been some changes in their behaviour as a result of exposure to terrorism, for example being more alert and avoiding crowded places, with 63% of respondents claiming they were worried about their safety 'very much' following the 9/11 attacks. Pfefferbaum et al. (2004b) suggested that being indirectly exposed to terrorism either through interactions with people who were directly involved, or via the media, was a risk factor for post-

traumatic stress symptoms. This finding was supported by Noppe, Noppe and Bartell (2006) who conducted their study in Midwestern schools so as to examine the responses of teachers working within a 'psychological proximity' to the 9/11 terrorist attacks rather than in physical proximity. Noppe, Noppe and Bartell found high levels of stress in response to terrorism in their sample, despite teachers not working in schools near to the event.

In a qualitative study of teachers' journals from the day of September 11th, Burns and Schaefer (2002) presented teachers' narratives about their efforts to cope with their personal feelings of shock and horror whilst trying to remain professional in front of their students. Teachers' own experiences of fear and stress are presented in the literature as being significant in how they spoke to children about terrorism. Noppe, Noppe and Bartell (2006) explored this further, and found that teachers reported that trying to manage their own feelings was made additionally difficult when they perceived their students to be 'unphased' by the attacks. Helfenbein (2009) also found that teachers described a jealousy of children's resilience in the face of traumatic events.

2.5.2   Perceptions of preparedness

Teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to talk to children about terrorism are given significant consideration across the existing literature, with three out of the seven studies aiming explicitly to understand how prepared teachers felt to discuss terrorism with children. Felix et al. (2010) found that 68% of the teachers they surveyed felt unprepared to handle student responses to 9/11, and that this had impacted their willingness to intervene with these responses following the crisis. Pfefferbaum et al. (2004a) found that 93% of their respondents

had held class discussions following 9/11, but stated that they wished they had had more support in facilitating these discussions. The existing literature suggests that teachers experience feelings of inadequacy in terms of their role in the face of a tragedy, and are particularly concerned about the questions that children may ask when difficult subjects are raised (Helfenbein, 2009; Burns and Schaefer, 2002). Burns and Schaefer (2002) found that teachers struggled to know how to focus their classes during conversations about terrorism, with teachers acknowledging that it was difficult to focus their own minds, let alone those of the children they were supporting.

Conversely, Ray and Pemberton (2010) found that teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy were positively modified by their experiences teaching about terrorism, with teachers in their study reporting feeling significantly more prepared to teach about terrorism as a result of having done so on 9/11. Ray and Pemberton differentiated between components of teachers' self-efficacy about talking about terrorism. They found that participants were relatively confident in their knowledge and understanding of terrorism as an academic topic, with 96.5% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they were confident to plan discussions about terrorist attacks for their class. However, teachers felt significantly less prepared to identify age-appropriate strategies for teaching about terrorism. Participants were equally lacking in confidence about addressing ethical issues related to terrorism.

These issues raised by existing studies would be useful to consider in the future, in terms ofthe extent to which teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to sensitively discuss terrorism with children. Teachers also highlighted wanting to understand more about how to identify and support children who were

experiencing difficulties relating to terrorism. This could be an area in which Educational Psychologists would be well employed.

2.5.3   Managing competing demands

Many teachers across the seven studies reviewed highlighted the difficult dichotomy of being a teacher whilst also offering emotional support and guidance. This would suggest that teachers may need more support in understanding their responsibilities in terms of talking about terrorism, how to incorporate discussions into their teaching, and when to enlist the support of other professionals. Pfefferbaum et al. (2004) found that 41% of the 32 teachers included in their study found responding to the emotional needs of their students stressful, and struggled to manage challenging behaviour and lack of concentration in their students that they attributed to being a result of the attack. In their retrospective study conducted 9-12 months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Pfefferbaum et al. (2004a) found that 41% of their respondents were still experiencing stress related to managing the additional demands associated withterrorist attacks.

2.5.4 Anxiety about offending

An anxiety about offending or speaking out of turn is demonstrated in the literature. The studies examined in this literature review approach the subject of terrorism in schools by focusing on how significant terrorist attacks, with particular attention given to 9/11, have been responded to in schools. With the topic of terrorism come other complex and emotive subjects, not least issues of religion, culture and race which teachers find difficult to talk about (Helfenbein, 2009; Felix et al., 2010). Felix et al. (2010) reported that 45% of their sample of teachers

responded that their views about certain groups had changed following exposure to a terrorist attack. Pfefferbaum et al. (2004b) found that participants' scores on a survey instrument based on the Diagnostic Statistical Manual's (DSM) criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms were influenced by feelings of distress about their own attitudes about and towards perpetrators. This suggests that teachers are conscious of their own attitudes and beliefs towards certain groups of people being judgemental and stereotyped in the immediate aftermath of a terrorist attack, and are anxious about this not being relayed in conversation with children about terrorism. Teachers represented in the existing literature were keen to avoid being seen as racist or having stereotyped views (Helfenbein, 2009)

2.6. Research Methodologies

2.6.1 Limitations of quantitative research in reporting teachers' experiences

In terms of research methodology, a high proportion of the studies included in this literature review utilised quantitative methods of data collection and analysis to examine the responses of schools and experiences of teachers regarding terrorism. Only two of the studies adopt a qualitative methodology (Burns and Schaefer, 2010; Helfenbein, 2009), with a third (Noppe, Noppe, and Bartell, 2006) incorporating some open-ended questions into their survey designed to elicit qualitative data. Five out of the seven papers used surveys and questionnaires to elicit responses. This raises questions about the extent to which meaningful data about individual's lived experiences has been gathered. Hollway and Jefferson (2008) have argued that survey or questionnaire style research is insufficient for examining individual experiences as the questions are limited, set by the researcher and assume shared understanding of both the content and the scale of responses. This can leave

participants' responses vulnerable to being skewed by the researchers' priority. Surveys were designed based on existing, evidence-based measures such as the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1996), suggesting some validity of the instruments used. However, this could be considered a limitation in that it does not allow for open exploration of individual experiences. For example, one question asks participants to answer 'yes' or 'no' to the question 'did you react with intense fear, helplessness or horror?'; this question assumes shared meaning of these descriptors but also leaves no room for discussion or elaboration, potentially minimising or reducing the experience of the participant. The current study will address this by using a qualitative, psychosocial research approach which will employ a free associative narrative interviewing style (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013) to elicit responses which are not constrained by previously determined questions.

Across existing literature, researchers acknowledge some of the limitations of their own studies, highlighting the absence of contextual information such as the amount of support or supervision received by the teachers, or their own traumatic history, which are likely to be significant in influencing their experiences of difficulty supporting children.

2.6.2 Lack of reflexivity in existing literature

Using the Walsh and Downe (2006) tool for critical appraisal highlighted the lack of reflexivity in the existing literature regarding teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism. The psychosocial position of the current study recognises the researcher's influence as inextricable to the data and therefore transparency, reflexivity and an acknowledgement of subjectivity are valued in understanding the findings of a piece of research. None of the seven studies

reviewed here spoke explicitly about the philosophical positions of the researchers or what position was adopted for the research. There were some instances of researchers acknowledging their own reflexivity and its role in their research. Helfenbein (2009) referenced his investment in a previous research project and motivation to investigate the impact of terrorism on a particular school. Helfenbein also reports the use of a reflective journal throughout his active-research project and explores how this shaped the research process. Similarly, Burns and Schaefer (2002) acknowledged their own emotional reactions to the reflective journals written by teachers regarding their responses to 9/11. The lack of reflexivity on the part of the researcher in existing literature is something that will be addressed in the current study.

2.6.3 Range of scope, purpose and samples in existing literature

Another limitation of the existing literature relates to the narrow scope of previous studies. All of the studies included in this literature review, and indeed almost all of the studies returned by searches of relevant databases were conducted in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and focused on teachers working in schools within a close proximity to the events of that day. The extremely tragic and horrific nature of this incident, as well as the significant amount of media attention the attacks received, perhaps make the experiences of teachers in the aftermath of 9/11 lack transferability to other cohorts. Thorough searches of the literature at the time of writing did not return any studies of the experiences of teachers in the United Kingdom regarding talking to children about terrorism. Terrorism is broad topic and one that affects a significant number of communities around the world. This study aims to provide the perspective of teachers in a different context, and

hopes to provoke interest in continued research in this area in schools across

Europe and around the world, and in relation to recent terrorist attacks.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will define the aims, questions and purpose of this research, as well as describing the ontological and epistemological position from which this study has been approached. The research design and method will then be discussed, including the sampling and recruitment of participants, the process of data collection and the method of data analysis. Finally, this chapter will consider ethical issues and how these have been addressed, as well as exploring issues of reflexivity, trustworthiness, coherence, transparency and impact.

3.2 Research Questions, Aim and Purpose

3.2.1 Research Questions

This research aimed to address the following questions:

- What are teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism?
- What can be understood about the experiences of teachers talking to children about terrorism from a psychoanalytic perspective?

These questions were chosen to be deliberately broad, allowing for the experiences brought by participants to shape the research, rather than it be shaped by the researcher's own preconceptions about the topic.

3.2.2 Research Aims

This study aims to explore teachers' experiences of talking to children in their schools about terrorism. The introductory chapter outlined the context for this study and highlighted the increased expectation for teachers to discuss terrorism

and terrorist attacks with their pupils (Pfefferbaum et al, 2004a). By inviting teachers to share their individual and subjective experiences, and reflecting on these through the research process, it is hoped that their experiences and valuable insights can contribute to further consideration about how to support schools in this context. Additionally, it is hoped that this research will contribute to developing ideas about how Educational Psychologists can incorporate meaningful support into their practice in this area.

3.2.3 Purpose of the Research

This research aims to be exploratory, accounting for the distinct lack of existing research which privileges teachers' individual experiences of discussing terrorism with children. Being exploratory in its purpose means this research is not aiming to arrive at an objective conclusion about the experiences of all teachers, but rather to present a thorough and rich picture of the experiences of participants. The use of psychosocial methods in this field also represents a gap in the literature. By employing a psychosocial approach, the author hopes not only to give attention to the narratives of teachers, but also to access the unconscious processes underlying these narratives, with a view of achieving a richer understanding of participants' experiences.

3.3 Ontology and Epistemology

In research, the ontological position refers to how the researcher understands the nature of truth. The epistemological position describes how the researcher believes one can come to know about this truth. Researchers' positions shape the research because they inform the way in which the data is gathered (Hunt,

1989). This research is a qualitative, psychosocial study in which both the ontological and epistemological position are 'psychosocial'. Psychosocial research aims to study how social and cultural concepts and contexts influence and impact on an individual and their internal, psychological world.

3.3.1 Psychosocial Ontology

Ontology refers to the position taken on the nature of reality. Different ontological positions can be understood to fall largely on a continuum between the belief that there exists an external, objective reality and the opposing belief that reality is uniquely constructed by each individual based on our social context and experiences. Psychosocial ontology acknowledges the dynamic of an individual's internal mind interacting with the external social world and considers this interaction the basis of each of our individual realities (Hollway, 2011; Hollway and Froggett, 2012; Weber, 2013). This interleaving of an individual with their social world forms the basis for an ontological position which understands reality as unique to each individual, based on how they experience an objective external world.

Similarities may be drawn between this approach and other ontological positions such as social constructionism, which explores how individuals construct social worlds to make sense of their experiences (Gergen, 2015). There may also be shared perspectives between the psychosocial ontology and critical realism (Bunge, 2003; Watkins 1995), which also describes the interaction between the individual and shared experience. However, what distinguishes the psychosocial ontology from other positions is that it draws upon psychoanalytic theories of the mind, assuming

that thoughts, feelings and interpretations of the world exist in both the conscious and unconscious minds. Psychosocial research often tackles the experiences of individuals in the context of difficult or complex social, political or personal contexts, and applies psychoanalytic perspectives as a means of accessing participants' unconscious minds as well as their conscious narratives.

In psychosocial research, the researcher is also acknowledged as a participant, with their own psychological and social realities influencing the research process (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009). These realities influence how the researcher interacts with participants in the interview space, as well as how they interpret the data produced from these interviews. Not only does this ontological stance recognise that each individual's experience is unique, but also that the researcher's interpretation will also be unique, based on their own psychic and social realities and how these are embodied within the interview process. My psychosocial position as a researcher has developed through my participation in the Child, Community and Educational Psychology training course at the Tavistock and Portman clinic. Through this course, I have been encouraged to adopt a reflective stance and consider the role of my own internal psychic world in the work I am doing. The course has also helped me, through exposure to psychoanalytic concepts and theories, to make sense of my emotional experiences during my interactions with other professionals and families, using my interpretations of these to inform hypotheses about the emotional and psychological processes at play. This course also places value on exploring and examining the social context of the children and families we work with. The systemic theories and frameworks for practice prioritised in my training have also enhanced my understanding of how an individual's narrative may be shaped by their experiences (Hollway and Froggett,

2012). Psychosocial ontology encompasses the above and it is for that reason I chose to adopt a psychosocial ontology and epistemology to guide this research.

3.3.2 Psychosocial Epistemology

When adopting a psychosocial position, it follows to apply a psychosocial approach to the data collection and analysis, thus employing a psychosocial epistemology (Hollway and Froggett, 2012). A psychosocial epistemology explores the psychological and social worlds of the participant, using inference about participants' internal realities based on their narratives about the subject matter. In applying this epistemology, the focus is not on either the psychological or the social, but rather the complex relationship between them. It is my belief that by exploring teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism in this way, it is possible to come to a meaningful response to the research question. However, this research does not aim to provide an exclusive response to the research question; rather it acknowledges that alternative experiences exist, and alternative interpretations of those experiences could be proposed. The findings of this study propose one interpretation and invite further exploration to continue to add to the literature base regarding teachers' experiences of talking about terrorism in schools.

3.4 Research Method

3.4.1 Qualitative Research

The method of a piece of research refers to how data is collected and analysed, as well as how participants are selected. The literature review in Chapter 2 of this thesis discusses previous explorations into how terrorism is talked about in

schools. One of the fundamental assertions of the literature review is that existing research in this area is limited by its methods. The majority of the research found and discussed in the review uses survey-style questionnaires to gather data from participants. Mischler (1986) described survey style interviews as 'inadequate' as a way of conducting research, referring to the decontextualization of the data. Survey questionnaires also assume a shared meaning of language between researcher and participant, which may lead to a lack of integrity in their responses.

Quantitative research, in which participants' responses are collated in order to infer a shared truth within a population, has long been considered a 'gold standard' in terms of scientific enquiry. However, it has more recently been argued that the study of human consciousness and interactions requires a different approach (Robson, 2011), and that quantitative approaches are neither suitable, nor sufficient, to meaningfully explore the lived experiences of individuals. In using quantitative approaches, there is no consideration of meaning (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000), leading to a reductionist representation of the experience of the participant group.

Qualitative methodology is seen to pay due attention to context and meaning (Hayes, 2000). Qualitative methodologies, which usually involve a smaller sample of participants, can be used to gain deeper and more meaningful insights into individuals' experiences. In this study, this was important in order to enable the application of psychological and social theories to explore the complex processes underpinning these experiences, and therefore do justice to the aims of the research. Hammersley, (1992) outlined some of the features of qualitative data, including it

being undertaken in a natural setting, its focus on meaning rather than behaviour and an inductive rather than deductive approach to analysis. These factors are true for this study, which aims to explore the lived experiences of participants and interpret them using a psychosocially informed analysis.

3.4.2 Psychosocial Research Method

The psychosocial method used for data collection and analysis will be described in this section, alongside an explanation of why this method has been chosen for this research. It has been argued that many qualitative methods are 'too thin' for use in psychological research (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000), failing to adequately explore and interpret the human experience. Froggett and Wengraff (2004) suggested that the use of narrative methodology generates rich data which would benefit from psychoanalytically informed analysis. The use of psychoanalytically informed psychosocial methods, as described in this section, aims to address methodological limitations in the existing literature as reviewed in Chapter 2, and propose a more robust and defensible way of exploring this research question.

3.3.4.1 Application of psychoanalytic theory

"Will you believe everything you are told? If not, how will you distinguish between truth and untruth? Even if you believe everything you are told, will you be satisfied that you have been told everything that is relevant? How would you define this, and how would you know? What do you assume about the effect of people's motivations and memory on what they tell you? What will you assume about your effect as interviewer on the answers given?" (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000)

Psychosocial methodology is informed by psychoanalytic theory, enabling the researcher to understand their interpretations of the data on a deeper level. In the above extract, Hollway and Jefferson (2000) refer to the assumption made in much qualitative research that participants are able to 'tell it like it is'. To believe that a participant's narrative reflects accurately their experience is to believe that they have complete knowledge of themselves, can access that knowledge, and are telling the truth. This assumption also assumes a shared meaning of language; that the researcher is able to understand, with integrity, what the participant is trying to communicate.

Psychoanalytic theory is based on the belief that we have thoughts at both conscious and unconscious levels, and those outside of our consciousness we cannot be aware of (Freud, 1900; 1905). Whilst we cannot access our unconscious mind, it comprises processes which influence our behaviours, choices, feelings and how we experience and interact with the world (Wilson, 2002). Freud employed psychoanalysis as a therapeutic technique with his patients to uncover those unconscious fears and conflicts (Freud, 1915), which he believed to originate in early childhood, and bring them to the surface. Freud's influence on modern psychology is often viewed with a critical eye, as many of his theories and assertions are difficult to objectively test (McLeod, 2015). It has been suggested, however, that evidence from neuroscience (Music, 2011) and social psychology (Greenwald and Banaji, 1995) confirms that mental processing does indeed occur on both conscious and unconscious levels.

Melanie Klein (1952) expanded on the idea of early childhood experiences influencing the way in which we make sense of the world in her object relations theory. Klein suggested that our psychological self is shaped by unconscious defences against anxiety, which are formed in the presence of threat. These anxieties go on to influence our actions, beliefs and the stories we choose to tell. Hollway and Jefferson (2008) recognised that these unconscious defences would also be present in the interview process within research, and may prevent participants accessing their true thoughts and feelings about the subject matter. Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2001) differentiated between conscious anxieties, which we can rationalise with language and acknowledge the influence of, and unconscious anxieties – the effects of which we cannot often recognise.

Psychosocial methodology is commonly used to explore concepts or experiences which are perceived to affect an individual on both a psychological and social level. Hollway and Jefferson (2012) suggested that conflict, suffering and threats to the self are factors that impact on the psychic and social and therefore create anxiety. The current study aimed to explore the unique, subjective experiences teachers have of talking to children about terrorism, in the context of ongoing threat and considerable anxiety within the community and nationally. I anticipated that this topic would evoke emotional responses in the participants driven by unconscious processes they perhaps could not fully access in conscious thought. Applying psychoanalytic theory to the research process means that the researcher pays attention not only to the content of their participants' narratives, but also to how unconscious processes are structuring those narratives (Hunt, 1989;). In psychosocial research, consideration is given to the jokes, intonations,

pauses, inconsistencies and repetitions within narratives, which may allow the researcher to infer something about the unconscious process beneath the words the participant has chosen to present (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000).

The use of psychoanalytic ideas in research has long been a source of tension. It has been argued that only those with formal training in psychoanalysis are qualified to work in a psychoanalytically informed way (Hoggett, Beedell, Jiminez, Mayo and Miller, 2010). This has been contested, with other researchers suggesting that the use of psychoanalytic ideas is consistent with the aims of qualitative psychological research and is therefore justified (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). For the present study, I am confident that my exposure to, and exploration of, psychoanalytic concepts and approaches through my study at the Tavistock allow me to employ these ideas with integrity in this research. Further criticisms of psychoanalysis include that it has historically been seen as colluding with a doctor-patient model, with the psychoanalyst, or in this case researcher, suggesting they can know the subject better than they know themselves (Frosh and Baraitser, 2008). The exploratory purpose of this research explicitly addressed this criticism, highlighting that its aim is to gather data and present the findings in a way that privileges the unique experiences of participants.

3.3.4.2 The role of the researcher

The psychoanalytic underpinning of psychosocial methodology encourages the researcher to use themselves in the research (Walkerdine, 1986), by noticing the impact the participant has on the researcher and thinking about this as information about the participant's unconscious mind. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) proposed

that the acknowledgement of a dynamic unconscious and its impact on the interaction between the researcher and researched is central to psychosocial methodology. Klein (1952) suggested that defences are intersubjective, meaning that they are apparent during interactions between people. Applying psychoanalytic theory to psychosocial research allows the researcher to consider concepts used to describe the interactions in a therapeutic relationship, and how they may be apparent between the researcher and researched.

The dynamic unconscious can be understood through concepts of transference. Freud referred to transference as a process of displacement of feelings from the original person, object, or event to which they relate and on to a new person, in this case the researcher (Freud, 1937). An early experience can be repeated in the interaction between researcher and participant, and can influence the way in which the researcher responds (Hollway and Froggett, 2013). Klein's explanation of transference was as a process in which emotions are projected out of the self and into the relationship as a means of dealing with anxiety (Klein, 1946). The researcher, receiving these emotions or previous experiences, may identify with them or respond to them, therefore impacting their role in the interaction. Bion (1984) referred to 'unconscious intersubjectivity' in which emotions continually pass between people. Bion's notion of projection refers to the process of rejecting an undesirable or uncomfortable feeling by positioning it into someone else who acts as a container for these difficult feelings. Klein suggested that this process begins in infancy, where the infant projects their unmanageable, painful feelings into their mother who processes them for the infant and returns them in a way that they can be re-introjected (Klein, 1946). The researcher, who may be the recipient of projections by the participant, may be influenced by strong feelings they do not

identify with. Observing the researcher's communications within an interview may give some insights into the unconscious emotional processes at play (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013).

Hollway and Jefferson (2013) also openly acknowledge the 'defended researcher' within the psychosocial methodology, recognising that just as the participant is driven by unconscious mental processes, so is the researcher. Their own unique personal and social experiences will influence the participant within the interview. The psychosocial researcher is therefore intrinsic to the data, as well as being personally involved in the analysis and interpretation of the data. It is important to acknowledge the role of subjectivity; a subjective researcher has frequently been viewed as a disadvantage of qualitative research methods, leading to researcher bias. However, Hollway and Jefferson (2000) argue that in recognising their own subjectivity, a researcher can use this as a tool in obtaining and interpreting narratives. Walkerdine, Lucy and Melody (2001) claimed that there is always a subjective element to a research process; the researcher is responsible for how the data is gathered, analysed and interpreted and therefore imposes their subjective views about the nature of truth and how we can come to know it. In recognising my own role in this research, I was able to openly consider factors such as projective identification and transference to make sense of my own emotional responses to interviews with participants, and therefore build my awareness of processes at play beneath the surface of the narratives I was hearing. It is the aim of this research that this additional information can support a deeper analysis of the participants' experiences.

3.4 Research Design

3.4.1 Participants and Recruitment

Hollway and Jefferson (2000) recommend using a small number of participants in psychosocial research, usually between four and six, due to the depth of the analysis. This research included a sample of seven primary school teachers who had experience of talking to children about terrorism. Primary school teachers were chosen as they spend the majority of the school day with their students, as opposed to a limited number of lessons a week, as in secondary schools. Participants were recruited according to the following criteria:

- Are currently teaching Key Stage 2 aged children in a Central London primary school

- Have been a teacher in Central London for at least a year

- Have not been personally involved in or significantly impacted by a terrorist attack or terrorism-related incident

I chose to conduct this research in two schools, both within close proximity to a terrorist incident during the time of planning the research, but whose school communities were not directly impacted in terms of injury or fatality. This decision was made on the basis that teachers would have experiences of talking to children about terrorism, but would not be in a position where they would have to relive or reflect on a traumatic personal experience.

The schools were contacted via their Assistant Principal and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) to seek permission to conduct the research in the schools. A brief explanation of the research aims was given in a staff briefing in each

school, and prospective participants were fully informed of the purpose of the research and what would be expected of them in a follow up information letter. A copy of this information letter can be found in Appendix 4.

3.4.2 Data Collection

Two interviews were conducted with each participant, following the Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) technique (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). This approach, often used in psychosocial research, involves using semi-structured interviews and providing participants with the opportunity to reflect upon their experience of their first interview, and for the researcher to expand on salient themes in the second interview. This resulted in a total of fourteen interviews recorded, ranging from 14 minutes 34 seconds to 59 minutes 12 seconds, providing data for analysis.

Participants were interviewed in the school in which they were teaching, at times that were suitable for them, usually whilst their class was at lunch. Interviews were recorded using a voice recorder, and then transferred to MP3 files, before being transcribed. I chose to transcribe all of the 14 interviews myself, based on recommendations by Hollway and Jefferson that this allows for the researcher to become fully immersed in the data and therefore build familiarity with both the data and their responses to it. My focus during transcription was on both the words spoken by the participants and also the patterns of their speech such as hesitations, repetitions, emphases and pauses. An example transcript can be found in Appendix 5. All other transcripts can be found in Appendix 6.

In addition to the interviews, I also asked participants to provide information about themselves that they were happy to share, which allowed me to situate their narratives in their own personal context and consider the interactions between the two. This information was used to create a pen portrait of each participant, which can be found in Appendix 8.

3.4.2.1 Free Association Narrative Interviewing

This study used the Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) technique (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000) to gather the unique stories and perspectives of participants. The approach involves using semi-structured interviews, acknowledging the value of both interviewer and interviewee shaping the interview, placing value on the relational aspect of the interview process. This is well suited to a psychosocial methodology in which the researcher and researched are both considered active participants in the interviewing process.

Traditional semi-structured interviews are designed in such a way that means the researcher can pre-determine the structure of the interview. The FANI technique is distinct from this approach, encouraging the researcher to follow the participant's line of narrative, asking them to elaborate on, or give examples of, their experiences and repeating their own words back to them to affirm their stories. The FANI technique is a narrative approach which employs the psychoanalytic principle of free association, and is regularly used in psychosocial research. Free association as a concept can be traced back to Francis Galton (1879) who suggested that speaking freely about a stimulus revealed unconscious content. Freud later employed the technique as a primary therapeutic tool in psychoanalysis.

During the FANI interview, participants are invited to speak without interruption, bringing to the interview whatever comes to mind, whilst the researcher listens without using pre-determined questions to guide the participant's response to the topic. In this study, participants were asked to share their narratives in response to the invitation to 'please talk to me about your experiences of talking to children about terrorism'. The use of an open question allowed participants to speak without being influenced by the direction of the questions. The FANI technique is grounded in the fundamental belief that there is part of our unconscious that we cannot access, but which drives our motivations, choices, fears and the way in which we experience the world. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) suggest that encouraging participants to freely associate this way can enable the researcher to notice unconscious mental content in the narratives of interviewees, rather than accept what the participants have shared at surface level. The assumption that participants are not able to be entirely aware of what leads them to feel and think about a subject in a certain way (Nisbett and Wilson, 1977) leaves traditional interviewing techniques wanting.

This psychoanalytic influence also invites the researcher to consider the role of defence, as discussed previously in this chapter. The FANI approach asserts that by paying attention to incoherencies, contradictions and inconsistencies in the narratives of participants, we may evidence the unconscious anxieties of the participant. Within the interview, both researcher and participant are defended subjects. Each is responding to projections from the other (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000) and these unconscious dynamics provide valuable data about the both interviewer and interviewee. To make use of this data, I kept reflexive field notes

which I shared and explored during supervision, tracking my experiences and

emotions throughout the interview process.

3.4.2.2 The Grid Elaboration Method

To further ensure the interview was guided by the participants' experiences

rather than my own ideas as a researcher, I used the Grid Elaboration Method

(GEM). The Grid Elaboration Method (Joffe & Elsey, 2014) involves presenting each

participant with a blank grid with four boxes. At the beginning of the interview, the

participant is asked to write in each box a word or phrase that comes to mind when

they hear the initial interview question. The participant is then invited to elaborate

on each word or phrase in turn, in the order in which they wrote them. Each

participants' 'grid' can be found alongside their individual Pen Portrait in Appendix

7.

Using this approach ensured that the structure of each interview was guided

as far as possible by the participant, rather than by myself as a researcher. Within

this structure, prompting questions were used to further explore aspects of the

participants' narratives.

Exploratory prompts used in the interviews:

- *What did you do when X happened?*

- *How did you feel when X happened?*

- *How did that make you feel?*

- *How did (other person) feel when X happened?*

- *Could you tell me a little bit more about X?*

- *You said X, could you explain what you meant by that?*

- *You said X, have I understood that right?*

- *Could you give an example of X?*

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Thematic Analysis

Once the data was collected, thematic analysis was used to analyse and derive meaning from the interviews. It is a methodology which allows the researcher to identify and analyse prevalent patterns within a dataset (Joffe, 2012) and is a tool which underpins a large amount of qualitative research (Willig, 2013). Thematic analysis was chosen due to its capacity to be applied to a wide range of data types and topics. Thematic analysis is generally considered to be theoretically flexible and not associated with any particular ontological or epistemological position (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This is not to say the methodology does not involve theory and interpretation, rather that it allows for the analysis to be shaped by the researcher's own subjective position.

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested two distinct approaches to thematic analysis. The first approach assumes that there is meaning in the data waiting to be discovered, and can be revealed through the process of analysis. Employing thematic analysis in this way largely involves deductive coding; taking a 'top-down' approach in which codes are determined in advance of the data analysis and applied to the data. Braun and Clarke then proposed a second approach, based on their belief that seeking objective findings in the data is problematic. They acknowledged the subjectivity of the researcher and considered this a valuable aspect of the analysis. This technique involves inductive coding, a 'bottom-up' approach in which

codes are drawn out based on familiarisation of the data. This study employed the second approach, based on the congruence between Braune and Clarke's model with the subjectivity of the researcher integral to the analysis, and the psychosocial methodology of the research. I have spoken previously in this chapter about the interpretive nature of psychosocial methodology. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasised a key aspect of their model of thematic analysis as the researcher interpreting not only the narratives given by participants, but recognising how the words chosen produce a particular reality for the researcher and participant.

The inductive coding process was completed at two levels. Initially, semantic codes were used to identify themes within and across the participants' narratives. This provided a structure within which latent coding could be employed to facilitate understanding of the data on a deeper level. This latent analysis involved searching for patterns and inconsistencies in the participants' responses and was sensitive to my subjectivity as a researcher, drawing upon my reflection on my experience of the data.

3.5.2 Process of Analysis

The analysis of the data began during transcription. The repeated listening to the recordings of the interviews, and re-reading of the transcripts allowed me to begin to notice patterns within the participant's narratives and within my responses. In their review of thematic analysis in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2006), Braun and Clarke highlighted the importance of immersing oneself in the data in order to become familiar with the content. During transcription, I used a reflexive diary to note down my own emotional responses to the participant's

narrative as I listened to it. In order to complete the thematic analysis process, the MAXQDA (V18.0.3) software was used. This software enables integration of the raw data with reflexive field notes in the form of memos, which allowed me to continue to consider latent themes whilst explicitly analysing semantic themes. Inductive codes were drawn out using the software, initially generating as many codes as possible. In thematic analysis, the focus is on generating codes whilst initially avoiding the desire to construct themes or begin to group codes based on the researcher's expectations of the data.

Once generated, these codes were grouped into themes and sub-themes through an iterative process of examining the codes, and combining them according to meaningful patterns in order to make larger groups. I then discussed these groups in personal and group supervision to ensure they were viable and to help explore my justifications for grouping them in this way. During the process of analysis, I held in mind the research questions and aims, and endeavoured to relate themes accordingly. I then engaged in a process of reviewing and defining themes until I felt confident that the themes meaningfully represented the narratives of the participants at a conscious level.

4.2. Data Analysis in Psychosocial Research

The psychosocial approach recognises that participants' narratives represent their conscious, processed experiences. The FANI approach aims to mediate this to some extent by encouraging free association and providing opportunities to revisit and explore inconsistencies and points of interest. However, we cannot assume that participants are truly transparent in the narratives they share. Therefore, to do justice to the experiences of the participants, their narratives were subject to a

second, interpretive layer of analysis in order to explore and expose latent themes within the data. The purpose of this second layer of analysis was to consider what could be inferred from the data about the experiences of participants at an unconscious level. This layer of analysis draws on psychoanalytic theory, as well as referring to Pen Portraits of the participants, to explore beyond the manifest data.

The second layer of analysis involved listening to the interviews again and generating codes based on patterns of speech, inconsistencies in participants' narratives, and my own emotional responses to participants during the interview process and when listening back to the interviews. These codes were generated based on psychoanalytic concepts and were then grouped to form an interpretive analysis of each of the themes presented in the first layer of analysis.

In psychosocial research, there is an understanding that the researcher becomes inextricably linked with the participant. Accordingly, reflections on my experiences as a researcher have been integrated into this part of the analysis, using reflexive field notes to illustrate my interpretations of the data. It is important to appreciate that these interpretations are based on my own experience of the data and the relational space between myself and the participant within interviews. Therefore, the assertions made may not have been reached by another researcher. Whilst psychosocial research acknowledges and celebrates the interpersonal aspect of the research process, these assertions were also brought to individual and group supervision to help expand and explore my understanding of unconscious processes which may have been at play during the interviews and the analysis.

3.6 Credibility and Trustworthiness

Quantitative research is evaluated by means of reliability and validity, but these constructs have long been thought to be inappropriate measures of the strength of qualitative research. Armstrong, Gosling, Weinman and Marteau (1997) commented on how the appraisal of qualitative research must have a different purpose that the appraisal of quantitative research. Ellis (1998) proposed that research which aims to be explorative, and story-telling in nature, as the current study does, may be '*best judged by whether it evokes in the reader a feeling that the experience described is authentic, believable, and possible'.* The psychosocial position of this research is consistent with this view, and I have not therefore sought objectivity, reliability or generalisability. In order to demonstrate the strength of this research, I have instead referred to Yardley's four principles four assessing the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research (Yardley, 2008). Each of these principles is outlined below, with reference to how each principle has been addressed in the planning and execution of the current study.

3.6.1 Sensitivity to Context

For a topic such as terrorism, I was conscious that it would be particularly important to demonstrate sensitivity to the current socio-political context. In order to situate the experiences of teachers, it was important to explicitly consider the social understanding of, and attitude towards, terrorism. In order to attend to this principle, I kept a research diary, in which I documented relevant events in the news and from different media sources. I reflected on my responses to these in order to acknowledge my subjective position on these sources. I also created a timeline of events, documenting recent incidents claimed by terrorist groups, and responses by the local, national and international government. I also met with members of the

local authority who were working with schools on the subject of terrorism, including other EPs supporting schools affected by London-based terrorist attacks, and the Prevent team's school liaison officer. This all served to ensure sensitivity to the social context in which this research was being undertaken.

This principle was also considered when planning interviews with participants, in order to ensure sensitivity to the context within which the teachers were working. Teachers are under a considerable amount of pressure and therefore I was careful to arrange interviews to be convenient for teachers. This involved holding the interviews at their schools, and often at times that fit in with their school day, such as before lessons or at lunch time.

The design of this research was carefully chosen to ensure, as far as possible, sensitivity to the views and experiences of the participants. In order to attend to the individual context of each participant, I gathered background information about them, in the form of pen portraits, which enabled their narratives to be situated within their own unique contexts. It was hoped that these measures would allow them to access and engage in the interview process more meaningfully. The psychosocial approach is in itself sensitive to the unique experiences of the participants, in its attempt to reduce the impact of researcher bias in the data collection process. Using the GEM and open-ended questions allowed participants to engage in free association and explore their views in depth within a structure determined by themselves rather than by myself as a researcher.

3.6.2 Commitment and Rigour

This chapter has outlined in depth the systematic and thorough approach to data collection and analysis that was adopted. In using a psychosocial methodology,

I endeavoured to provide an interpretation of the data which demonstrated the complexity and depth of participants' experiences, whilst also considering how this may inform new insights into how teachers experience talking to children about terrorism. I undertook both semantic and latent analyses in order to ensure a rigorous exploration of the data, and to demonstrate commitment to the psychosocial approach of this research.

At each stage of analysis, emerging themes were shared and discussed in supervision to ensure flexibility in my responses to the data, leading to greater breadth and depth in terms of how the data could be interpreted and represented.

3.6.3 Coherence and Transparency

The decision to employ a psychosocial approach was made early in the process of designing this research. The understanding of individual experiences as shaped by one's internal and external worlds, as well as by the interaction between these, is consistent with my position as a researcher. My position has been shaped by my participation in a training course which encourages reflection and the consideration of unconscious factors in our work, and emphasises the social and systemic factors which influence our work. Making this decision early enabled me to apply the psychosocial approach at each stage of planning, carrying out, and reporting the research.

Another way in which coherence and transparency was addressed in this thesis was in the use of reflexivity throughout the research process. This is something that is considered a requirement of the psychosocial researcher (Jervis, 2009). I kept a research diary (Thomson, 2009) throughout the process in which I

recorded my responses to the researcher experience and to the participants and their data. Included in the diary were field notes examining the interactions between myself and the participants and how both parties impacted upon each other (Thomson, 2009). During the research process I referred to these field notes to reflect upon how myself and the participant had co-constructed accounts and how my responses to the data illuminated my own unconscious biases. When it came to analysis, the research diary allowed me to consider how these biases influenced my interpretations of the data.

The interpretations of the data were also shaped by making meaning from the emotional experiences I felt when interacting with participants, or later revisiting and immersing myself in the data. Reflexivity enables the researcher to begin to understand that which is unavailable to the conscious mind. In line with the psychoanalytic underpinnings of a psychosocial approach, I understood I may not be entirely aware of the emotional and psychological impact of the participants' narratives on me, and therefore how these were driving my interpretation. In order to be able to make use of this data and explore it in more depth, I sought additional supervision in which a group of researchers and a facilitator explored the psychosocial aspects of this research. I brought transcripts and field notes to these sessions to discuss possible interpretations for my responses to the data. These additional supervision sessions employed a psychoanalytic methodology in which we were encouraged to maintain a curious and reflective stance whilst still remaining emotionally engaged in the material.

3.6.4 Impact and Importance

It can be argued that the purpose of psychological research is to produce findings which are generalisable to a wider population and demonstrate an objective 'truth' which can inform understanding or a change in behaviour. This research does not aim to be generalisable, consistent with my psychosocial ontological and epistemological position as a researcher within which I understand reality to be co-constructed through interactions between our internal minds and our social world, and through interactions with each other. This means that each participant's unique experience is considered, without aiming to extrapolate this to apply to all teachers who have experienced talking to children about terrorism.

The data provided in this study gives thorough accounts of the experiences of seven teachers. Willig (2001) suggested that knowing an experience exists within society demonstrates relevance without needing to be generalisable. I hope that the data may have some transferable value in other schools in which teachers may have had experiences of talking to children about terrorism. This research aims to have an impact in these settings by presenting a rich analysis of teachers' experiences, which may have some resonance with other teachers.

This study aimed to add to the literature base by providing insights directly from teachers who have experienced talking to children about terrorism. It is hoped that the use of the psychosocial methodology will invite a new way of thinking in depth about the psychological and social processes that may be at play when teachers are engaging in this type of work. The intention is for the practical implications of this research to include changes to the way Educational Psychologists support teachers in schools to have conversations with children about terrorism.

Whilst this study does not aim to achieve generalisability, it was undertaken with a view of contributing to further consideration within the educational psychology field about how to support teachers and schools in responding to terrorism. It may be that the insights gained from this research may inform work within and between schools, developing more robust ways to support their teachers when dealing with difficult subjects, in turn having a positive impact on the children they are working with.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In any piece of research there are a number of important ethical considerations. Permission to proceed with this research was provided by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust Research Ethics Committee and by the local authority within which the research was carried out. A letter stating that this permission had been granted can be found in Appendix 7.

Participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the aims and methods of the research before agreeing to be interviewed. This information sheet outlined the study concisely and clearly. It was made clear that participants' identity would be protected and kept anonymous, and that their research data would be handled and stored securely. Throughout the research process and writing of this research consideration was given to how to maintain confidentiality whilst also referencing individual and social factors which may have influenced participants' experiences. All reasonable efforts have been made to remove information which would identify the participants. The participants' right to withdraw from the study at any point was outlined, with the caveat that past a certain point of analysis, I

would no longer be able to extract their data from the research. Once participants

had been recruited, I sought written consent from each participant via a consent

form. This consent form can be found in Appendix 9.

As I am currently the link (Trainee) Educational Psychologist for the schools

in which this research was undertaken, I was mindful that my role as researcher and

educational psychologist may become conflated. I made it clear that involvement in

this research, or preference not be involved, would in no way affect the educational

psychology service received in the schools.

A major consideration when designing this piece of research was the possible

emotional impact that discussing a sensitive subject such as terrorism may have on

participants. A debrief was offered at the end of the interview process for

participants who felt this would be necessary or helpful. Participants were made

aware that if they felt they needed further support as a result of involvement in this

research, I would be able to signpost them to alternative sources of support. The

psychosocial research method additionally raises some queries about ethical

considerations, due to the rigorous analysis which the data is subjected to.

Participants were informed about the psychosocial process and made aware that

their narratives would be explored using psychoanalytic ideas to consider

unconscious processes underlying what they shared. Interpretations of the data

have been made sensitively and are based on psychoanalytic theory, as well as

having been shared with supervisors to ensure they are reasonable and justifiable.

There is a possibility that participants reading this study may disagree with some of

the interpretations made about their experiences based on the interviews, and to

some extent this would be expected, as the assumption is that participants would be defended against these insights. Should a case arise in which a participant wanted to discuss the way in which their data had been analysed and presented, this could be offered in a follow-up conversation.

3.8. Dissemination

Following the completion of this research, it will be presented to members of the Educational Psychology teams in the authority in which the research was conducted, as well as two neighbouring local authorities. A summary of the research findings will be shared with participants and the schools in which they work. Additionally, the research will be presented to fellow trainee educational psychologists at the end of the academic year.

Chapter 4. Findings

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will explain the findings of this study. MAXQDA software was used to support a thematic analysis of the manifest content of the data, and the identified themes have been presented here. Thematic maps, created in MAXQDA, have been used to illustrate the relationship between initial codes, subthemes and themes. This chapter will present these themes and codes alongside a description of how they were identified, and what each captures. Extracts from the participants' narratives have been included to support this analysis and evidence the themes. A second layer of analysis is then used to make inferences from participants' narratives, and how the relational space within the interview was experienced by the researcher, to provide further insight into what these narratives can tell us about participants' experiences.

The full analysis can be found in Appendix 10, providing evidence of themes, subthemes, codes and segmented text.

4.2 Overview of Themes

I invited participants to tell me about their experiences of talking to children about terrorism. A thematic analysis grouped the data into five over-arching themes, using an iterative, deductive process. During the data analysis, the aim was not to assume shared or universal experiences across participants. Rather, the aim was to help capture participants' narratives, and provide a structure for discussion about what they tell us us about their experiences. The table below provides an overview of the themes and subthemes.

Theme	Subtheme
Context	What is Happening? - Frequency - Proximity - Severity
	What are Children Exposed to? - At Home - Media and Social Media - Misinformation
Content	Socio-Political Issues
	What is Terrorism? - Who are they? - Why do they do it?
	Issues around Religion
Process	School Ethos and Approach
	Processes and Policies
	Timing
	Language
The Role of the Teacher	Containment
	Self-in-Role
	Fears and Uncertainties - Lack of Confidence - Not Knowing
	Expectations and Demands
	Working with Parents
Impact on the Child	Can they Cope?
	Emotional Reactions

Table 3 - Themes and Subthemes

Reflecting on these themes, both independently and with my supervisor, I was interested by how difficult the thematic analysis process was. I felt a tension between trying to represent the participants' narratives and the task of presenting a

sophisticated piece of academic research. After many iterations of theme headings, I began to consider that I was intellectualising the content of the data. In noticing this, and trying to separate my own anxiety as a researcher to produce 'good research' from the data I was able to arrive at the above themes that I feel stay true to the participants' narratives and words. In my reflective journal, I also commented on how the themes have a sense of order and structure, and hypothesised that this might serve a purpose of mediating anxiety about the topic of terrorism:

"The themes have a structure which at first glance is very organised and reminds me of how a school or another system within children's services might organise their ideas. The titles are simple and familiar. Is there an unconscious need for structure and familiarity to contain this subject which is messy, problematic, complex, dangerous?" – Reflective Journal 03.03.19

A brief overview of each theme is given below, in order for the reader to understand what is captured in each theme, and how the themes sit alongside each other to represent the dataset.

Theme 1: Context
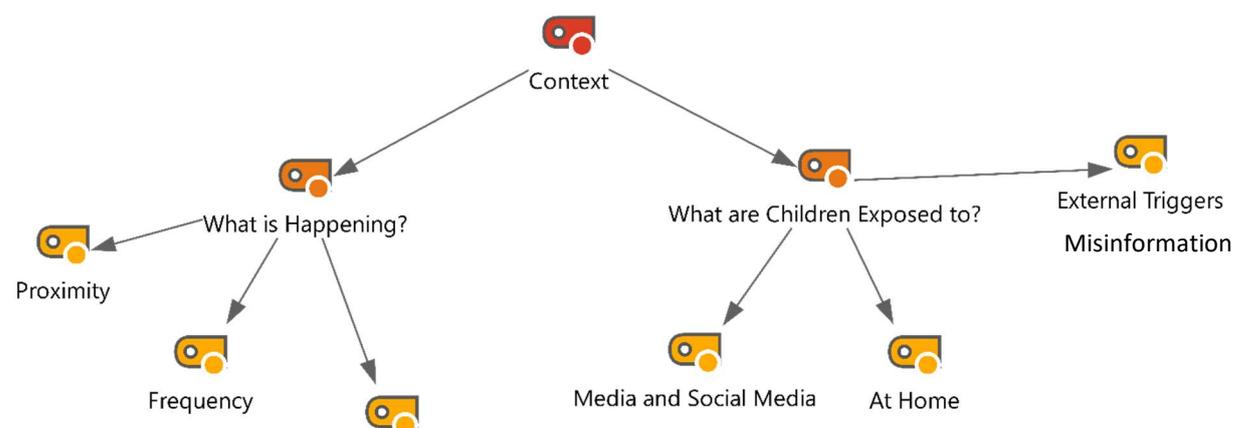
Figure 1 - Theme 1 'Context'

This theme encompasses participants' reflections on the current socio-political context and the impact of this in schools. The sub-theme "What is Happening?" captures what participants said about the proximity, frequency and severity of terrorist attacks, and the impact of this on their experiences of talking to children about terrorism. The subtheme "What are Children Exposed to?" captures participant's thoughts about the influence of the media and social media on children's perceptions of terrorism, as well as what they hear from others. Crucially, this subtheme also explores participant's feelings about the nature of the information children are exposed to outside of school.

The second, latent analysis of the data within this theme explores how participants talked about threat, and considers the differences between individual narratives of a shared, objective experience. Using an interpretive approach, hypotheses are drawn about how psychological factors and individual experiences shape how each participant is impacted by and responds to the current environment, and the subsequent influence of this on their experience of talking to children about terrorism. This layer of analysis also considers my own response to the current context and provides a reflection on where this is visible within the data.

Theme 2: Content

Content

Socio-Political Issues

Issues Around Religion

What is Terrorism?

Who are they?

Why do they do it?
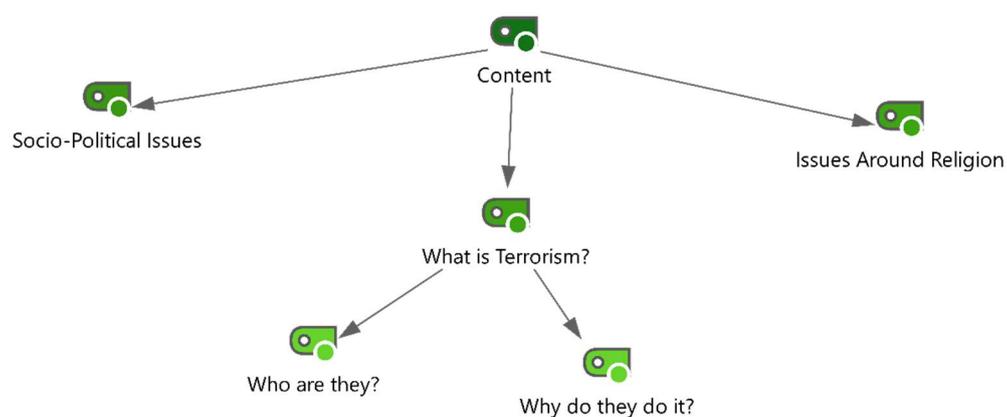
Figure 2 - Theme 2 'Content'

This theme captures the key topics participants identified in the discussions they had with children. These included concepts such as evil, death, and war, and also complex issues around race, religion, and politics. The subtheme 'Socio-Political Issues' captures the complexities within the social or political environment that teachers felt they needed to discuss within conversations about terrorism. These include topics such as immigration, democracy, and war. The subtheme 'Religion' represents participants' experiences of exploring religion within the context of terrorism. The subtheme 'What is Terrorism?', covers participants' ideas about who terrorists are, and the motives behind terrorist acts.

A second, latent analysis of the data within this theme reveals a further depth and complexity to participants' narratives about the content of their discussions. Participants' individual unconscious biases and defences about the content of their discussions are considered, as well as how these may influence their experiences of talking to children about terrorism. My own reflexive field notes are used to support these interpretations.

Theme 3: Process
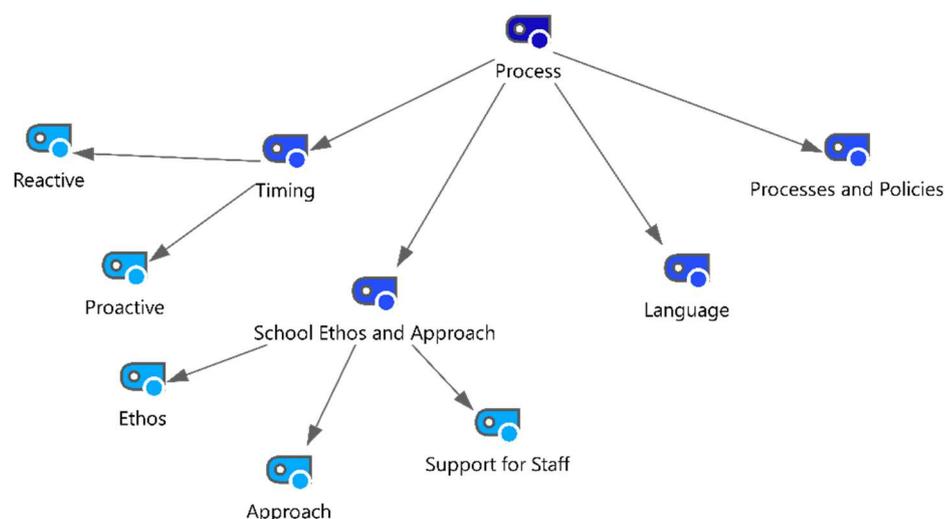
Figure 3 - Theme 3 'Process'

Whilst the theme 'Content' focused on 'what' is being discussed, this theme captures participants' reflections on 'how' these discussions happened, as well as when and where these discussions should be had, and by whom. The first subtheme, 'Processes and Policies', encompasses participants' thoughts about the structures and systems set up within schools for responding to terrorist attacks, and how these shaped their experiences of talking to children about terrorism. The second subtheme, 'School Ethos and Approach', illustrates participants' views about the ethos of their school and the support that staff receive in relation to conversations about terrorism. The subtheme 'Timing' highlights participants' views about when these conversations were had, differentiating between speaking to children proactively or in reaction to a terrorist event. Participants' also spoke about the language they used when talking to children, and the importance of this. This is captured in the fourth subtheme 'Language'.

The latent analysis of this theme captures ideas about how processes and policies provide containment for the emotions present in difficult conversations. Psychoanalytic theories of group dynamics are applied to suggest possible meaning behind some of the participants' narratives. Reflections on my experience of the relational aspect of the interviews are shared to evidence my assertions about the unconscious processes underlying the data.

Theme 4: The Role of the Teacher
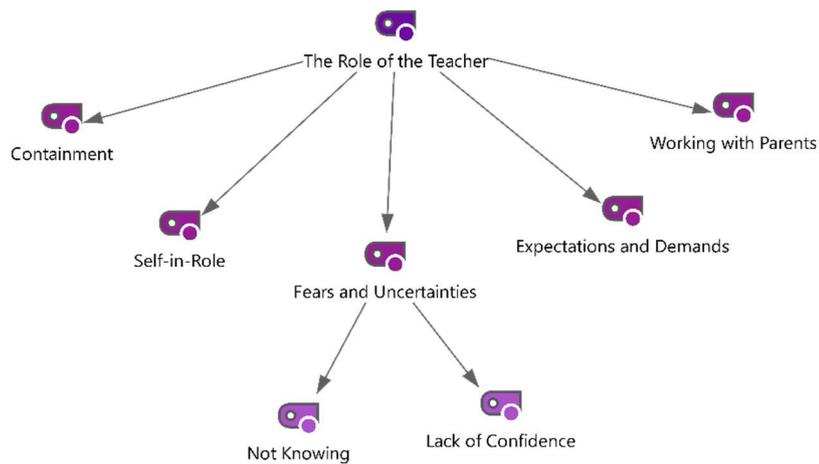
Figure 4 - Theme 4 'The Role of the Teacher'

This theme captures participants' perspectives about their roles as teachers. The subtheme 'Self in Role' encapsulates participants' descriptions of themselves as teachers, including their reflections on the experiences that influence the way they take up this role. The subtheme 'Expectations and Demands' captures participants' explanations of the pressures of their role, how these have evolved and how these differ to their expectations at the start of their career. Teachers also spoke about how they perceived their own competency to talk to children about terrorism, sharing their lack of confidence and concerns about how valid the information they were sharing was. This has been captured in the theme 'Fears and Uncertainties'. The subtheme 'Containment' reflects participants' experiences of managing children's emotional responses to conversations about terrorism. The final subtheme, 'Working with Parents' encompasses what participants' shared about times when their role as a teacher overlapped with the responsibilities of being a parent.

The second layer of analysis explicitly considers psychosocial factors that influence the way participants take up their role as teachers. In addition,

unconscious processes are explored, using my own field notes to illustrate my reflections on emotional and relational aspects of the interviews. These reflections are used to provide an interpretation of what can be understood by looking beyond participants' processed narratives.

Theme 5: Impact on the Child
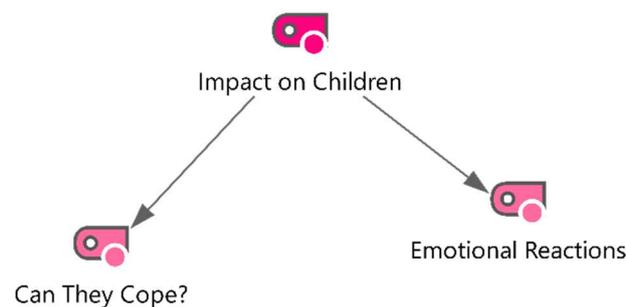
Figure 5 - Theme 5 'Impact on the Child'

This final theme, 'Impact on the Child' captures aspects of the participants' narratives, that explored children's responses, both anticipated and actual, to conversations about terrorism. The subtheme 'Can They Cope?' reflects what participants said about the capacity of children to understand and cope with conversations about terrorism. The subtheme 'Emotional Reactions' incorporates what participants shared about the emotional impact of these conversations on children, and how this shaped their experiences.

A latent analysis explores ideas of projection, asserting that the way in which participants describe the impact of conversations about terrorism on children may reveal something about their own experiences of terrorism and discussions about it.

4.4. Analysis in Full

4.4.1 Theme 1: Context

4.4.1.1. What is Happening?
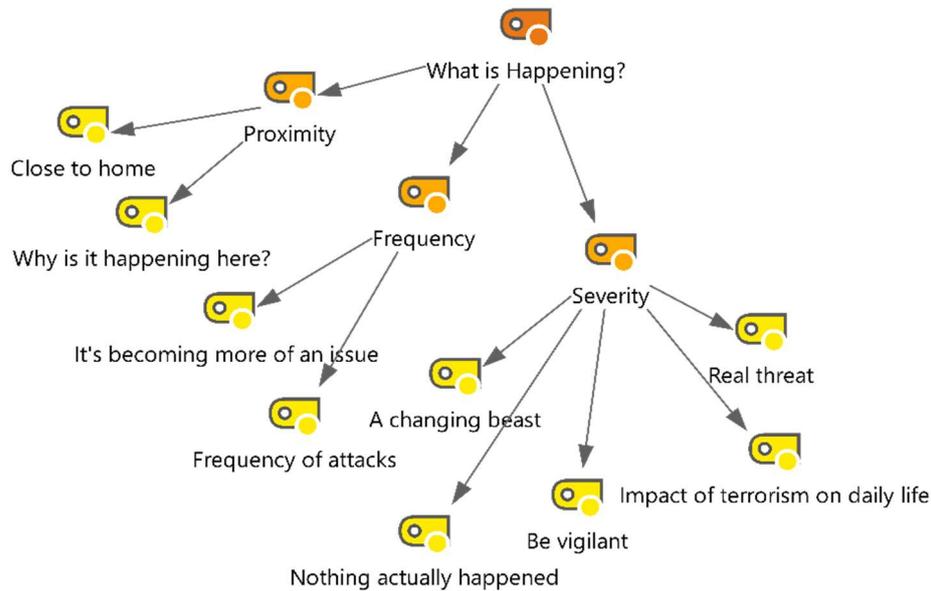
Figure 6 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'what's happening?' including the categorised codes

Within the findings, the term 'context' refers to the context of London at the time of a succession of terrorist attacks, and where the national threat level has been at 'Severe' or 'Critical'. Participants acknowledged that the present context is, in some way, different to previous contexts, and that this was meaningful in terms of their experiences of talking to children about terrorism. Participants expressed the need they felt to respond to the attacks and threat of future attacks. Several participants expressed their feelings that this necessity was something that was new, and directly related to a change in the national and local context. Alistair stated that he felt terrorism was a new topic for discussion in schools:

"We just… didn't have to talk about it before" – Alistair.

Alesha, reflecting on terrorism in the modern day, stated:

"Terrorism is now kind of a global issue, it's not just an issue that affects one group of people" – Alesha.

Participants discussed the impact of the recent terrorist attacks on their role as a teacher in London, focusing mainly on three areas; the proximity of the attacks to their homes and school, the frequency of terrorist related incidents and how severe they perceived the attack to be.

Proximity:

Participants expressed that the proximity of terrorist attacks to their homes and schools was an important factor in how conversations about terrorism played out. Participants spoke about how the proximity of incidents had impacted children in their schools:

"I think it was just so close to home that they… they were… deeply affected by it… and… anxious about it happening again" – Alistair.

"I remember when we had the Parson's Green terror attack, and it was just before school, and they're all coming in, and children were panicked…" – Natasha.

Participants shared how the proximity of recent terrorist attacks had made the threat feel more real to children, and so increased the importance of conversations about terrorism. Some participants also discussed how recent terrorist attacks in London and the rest of the UK had led to them feeling unsafe in their home city. For example, Joanna's description of her commute into school highlighted her perception of the terrorist attacks as uncomfortably close to home:

"I take that train into school, it came from [names home borough]*, and that, when it happened was 'oh my goodness, it happened on a Friday, my goodness, but I*

don't work on a Fridays, and what if I had been working on Friday' and you go to that

place" – Joanna.

Alistair also described an occasion of feeling like he was in an unsafe situation, and attributed this to recent terrorist incidents in his local area:

"…you are more… hypersensitive to things… and… I think there was – not that one, but another one of the terrorist attacks was… when something weird was going on in- at one of the stations I was at, and I just got off the train… cause I was like… just… needed to know… that it wasn't… wha- what it might've been" – Alistair.

Frequency:

As well as being closer to home, terrorism-related incidents were described as being more prevalent in the current context. Participants recognised feeling anxious about the threat of another terrorist attack, and highlighted the number of attacks in recent years as evidence of an on-going and increasing issue, as outlined by Natasha:

"We're Londoners, and it's happening a lot, and so the reality of terrorism has changed, and… the reality is it feels closer now" – Natasha.

Participants related the increased frequency of terrorist incidents to conversations with children about terrorism becoming more necessary, as the following quote from David highlights:

"Because… it is becoming more of a real thing so you probably do have to talk about it more often, because it's happening more often" – David

Severity:

Participants also spoke about the severity of recent terrorist incidents, and the severity of the current threat level, in relation to how and why they were talking to children about terrorism. Participants expressed that the nature of recent incidents had made terrorism feel more real, and described the impact this had on themselves and on their students:

> "*you're just nervous about… actually, if it was a real threat – something could happen, so it's not just nervous about talking about it, it's actually nervous about the actual reality of… or the potential reality… for what could've happened*" – *David*

> "*It is alarming, and concerning, and frightening*" – *Stephen*

4.4.1.2 What are Children Exposed to?
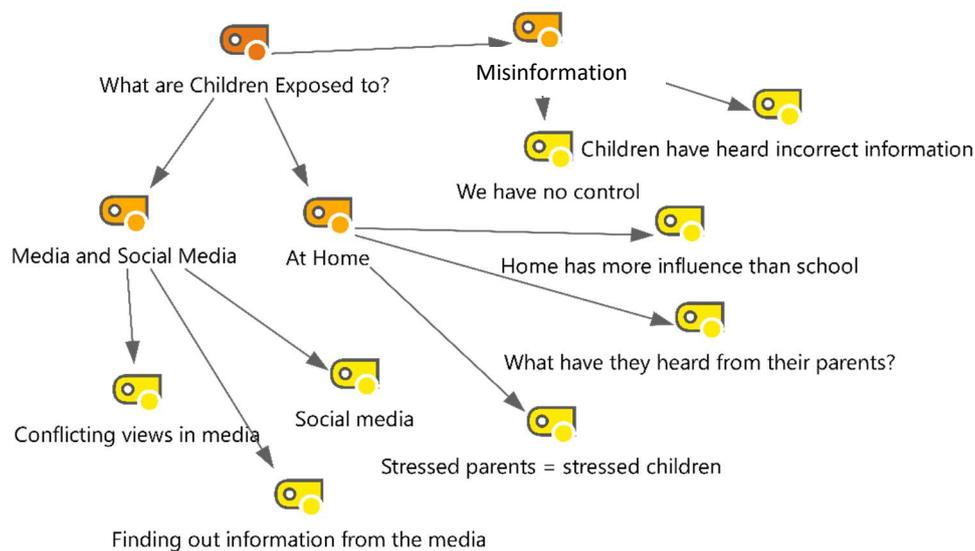
Figure 7 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'what are children exposed to?' and the categorised codes.

This subtheme encompassed what participants shared about what they believe children are exposed to regarding terrorism.

Misinformation

Participants expressed their concerns that children are exposed to incorrect information and that this is something teachers have no control over. Participants shared that when children spoke about terrorist attacks in the hours or days following an incident, much of what they said did not reflect, objectively, what had happened, and was based on opinion or hearsay:

"Actually, a lot of their information was incorrect" – Alistair.

Participants acknowledged, too, that children have access to information from a wide range of perspectives and beliefs about terrorism. Participants shared that they felt children may not be able to differentiate between facts and extreme or controversial opinions.

"They have access to see more images, and hear more, diff- other people's truths" – Natasha.

Media and Social Media

Staff shared their concerns about the role of the media and social media in how children were forming opinions about terrorism. Alesha spoke about how children find it difficult to challenge opinions they are exposed to via the media:

"I think a lot of that brainwashing comes from that media, they are so susceptible, so… I'd say so open to it, and sometimes unable to challenge it – because they don't have the discourse, the language skills, themselves. They don't have the ability to… to maybe see between the black and white and the shades of grey" - Alesha Again, participants focused on the inconsistent nature of this information and how children may struggle to differentiate between factual or sensationalised reporting.

"There's fake news, there's real news, there's the facts and then there's fiction," –
Alistair

Participants reflected on how the media had changed in recent years, and how children's exposure to information about terrorism feels unavoidable. The following quotes from Debbie, Natasha and Joanna illustrate this concern:

"they have access to… they will have access to iPads, to mobile phones, to YouTube, to social media… and you can't control what they read, or what they- what they read and how they interpret it" – Debbie

"It's everywhere, and with social media – they can't avoid it. It's on every news stand, every TV" – Natasha

"I think, and because it's – it's right there in their hands, and it's just all over the media, in a way that it wasn't when I was their age…" – Joanna.

At Home

Participants also recognised that children's views about terrorism are influenced by what they hear at home. Participants shared preoccupations with what children were hearing from their parents and how this impacted the conversations they had with children at school:

"The next day coming in having spoken to their parents they were coming in and they'd jumped to conclusions or they'd heard stuff or overheard stuff," – David.

Participants shared their experiences of feeling it necessary to challenge parent views where they were problematic or discriminatory. Debbie remembered hearing problematic views from her students' parents:

"we have… we do pa-parents will sort of say well all- all immigrants need to leave the country, or all Muslims are bad" – Debbie.

4.4.1.3. Interpretive Analysis of the Theme 'Context':

This second layer of analysis explores what can be interpreted about participants' experiences of talking about terrorism, based on their descriptions of the current context. Reflections and interpretations are organised into three sub-headings.

Perceptions of Threat

The thematic analysis of the data within this theme made it clear that participants' perceptions of the current context regarding terrorism were not universal. Individuals had their own conceptualisation of the severity of recent incidents, and the level of threat. The psychosocial approach of this research understands these individual ways of making sense of a phenomenon as being influenced by internal, psychological factors that interact with the individual's environment. Whilst there is some shared experience amongst participants of working in schools in London during a succession of terrorist attacks, how these experiences have been processed is unique to each participant.

Some participants' descriptions of the current context revealed a perception of high threat. During Stephen's description of being close to incidents, he talked about not having a support network, and in particular referenced his mother and father, referring to their absence as distressing in times where he felt threatened. This was consistent with my experience of Stephen as childlike in his use of language and presentation within the interview, in turn triggering a valency in myself for caregiving, that was acted out in our interview. Joanna's understanding of the on-

going threat of terrorism was that it would impact her daily life, in such that she would need to take greater precautions when moving through the city, and would avoid crowded, public spaces. For Joanna, who spoke about her feelings of anxiety about talking to children about terrorism, perceiving her freedom as compromised may shape the way in which she approaches these conversations, projecting her feelings of concern and worry into the children, and anticipating that these conversations will be difficult:

"Um, I think, yeah, living in London, is, it's… becoming more and more apparent that we are at a risk… a very high risk… I wouldn't really go to crowded places, I wouldn't go into the city centre unless it was absolutely necessary" – Joanna.

Conversely, some participants were keen to express their belief that the current context did not warrant panic, and described terrorism as a constant that we must learn to live alongside. Debbie, for example, described the current terror threat as follows;

"…they've got far more risk of being run over by a bus or a car crossing the road than they have of being blown up in a tube station, you know".

In interviews where participants described feeling unthreatened by terrorism, I reflected on how this may be a way of participants' avoiding their own fears. Emotive language in the interviews could be interpreted as indicators of these feelings being present, but not conscious. For example, in Debbie's interview, despite being very matter-of-fact and rational about terrorism, she repeatedly referred to highly emotive and distressing themes such as child abduction, car crashes, loss of loved ones, and heart attacks, perhaps indicating an unconscious association with her experience of the current context and previous experiences of fear.

How to Respond

As well as having disparate views about the current context, there also existed a range of views about how to respond to terrorism. Participants' narratives about the way in which societies, schools and individuals should respond to terrorism often mirrored how they spoke to children in conversations about terrorism. Debbie's narrative that *'these things have always happened, and they always possibly will- and don't get hysterical about it'* is consistent with her approach to talking to children about terrorism; that it should be on an 'if-and-when' basis, and otherwise things should carry on as normal.

For other teachers, their increased sense of fear or anxiety about the current context was tangible in their descriptions of their experiences of talking to children about terrorism. Natasha lamented that she could no longer reassure children that they were unlikely to be implicated in a terrorist attack, suggesting a previous defence of splitting the danger off from her community and placing it elsewhere, which had been undermined.

The Role of the Researcher

Acknowledging the role of the researcher is central to psychosocial research, and reflecting on the data in this theme, I considered my need for the context to be perceived as 'dangerous' or 'scary' in order for me to feel my thesis to be meaningful. This is likely to have had an impact on how I responded to the data. Being aware of this potential bias allowed me to guard against it to some extent, but nonetheless it is important to acknowledge that its influence may still be present in the analysis. The following extracts from my reflective journal evidence my reflections on this matter:

"There is an exchange of energy as Natasha talks about the severity of terrorism in the current context – makes me feel engaged as it confirms my reasons for doing study" – 21.02.19

"Noticing myself feeling pleased/excited that Stephen is acknowledging "tragedy" – 22.02.19

"Frustrated – feeling like research is being undermined? Or stupid for feeling anxious about it?" 03.03.19

4.4.2 Theme 2: Content

4.4.2.1 Socio-Political Issues
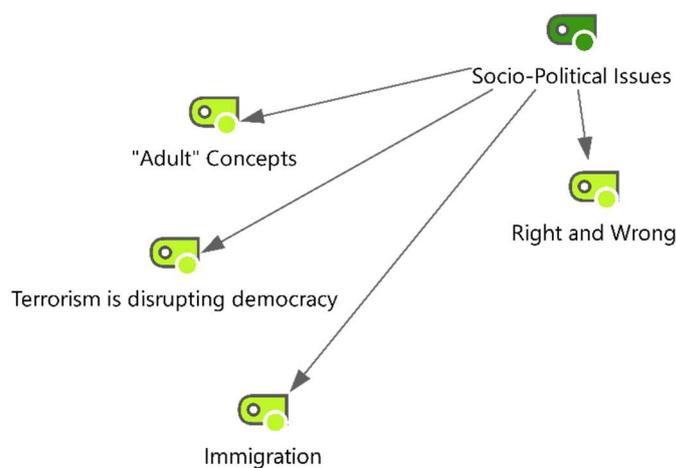
Figure 8 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'socio-political issues' and the categorised codes.

Participants explained that many of the concepts linked to terrorism felt too complex to be discussed with children:

"You're talking about very adult themes, of violence, and politics, and geography, and… terror, and evil" – Natasha.

Participants shared their experience of trying to metabolise these concepts, before sharing them with their students. In attachment theory, metabolising refers to the process of an adult breaking down unmanageable feelings for an infant in order for them to be able to process them (Schore, 2003). For example, Alistair used the following analogy to describe immigration, providing an example of how one might describe a supposed link between immigration and terrorism to a child.

"And at the end of the day, you know, it's like, it's almost like you invite someone into your home… you trust that they're going to be nice in your home and look after your house, but actually, you know, when your kid brings a friend round, they might trash the place…" – Alistair

Participants also described trying to explain right and wrong in relation to terrorism. Participants explained that they felt it was important to help children view things impartially and be able to make their own judgements about right and wrong, but reflected on this being easier in subjects where there was a structure in which to do so:

"…in guided reading we give them news articles so they can have a look at them, the pros and cons of both articles" - Debbie

4.4.2.2 What is Terrorism?
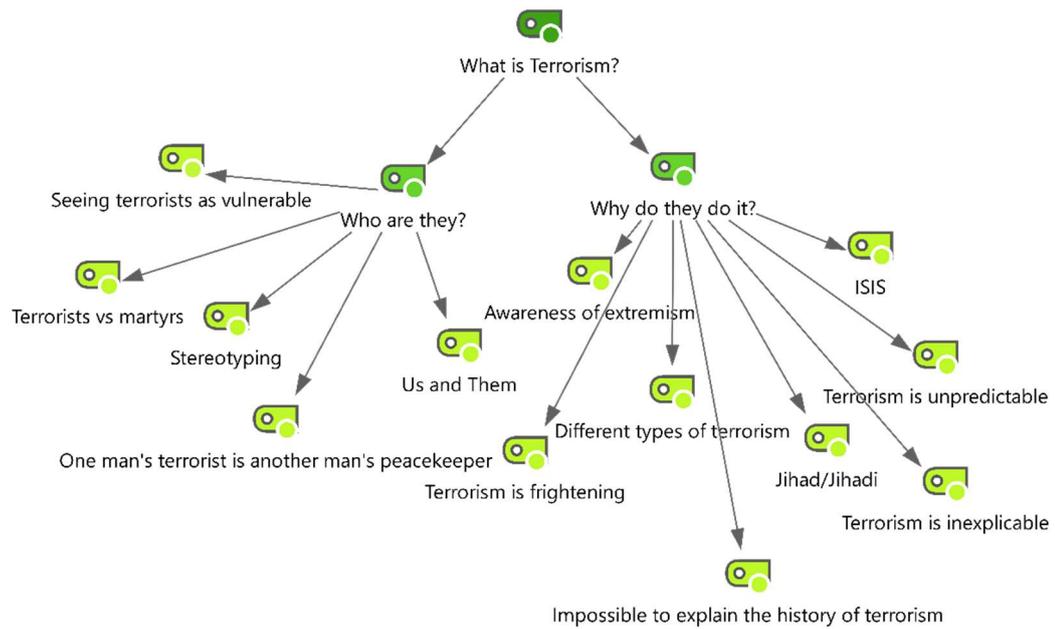
Figure 9 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'what is terrorism?' and the categorised codes.

Who are they?

Participants spoke about their experiences of having conversations with children about the perpetrators of terrorist attacks. Participants expressed a feeling of duty to shape children's perceptions of terrorism, including how they viewed the those responsible. Participants spoke about the stereotyping of terrorists in society; Alesha said the following about the assumptions she had encountered regarding terrorists:

"it's going to be… young, Muslim, vulnerable person, who has now… become so religious that they have gone off – and they've done something horrible, they have blown themselves up, they have attacked someone, they have taken someone else's life" – Alesha

Participants also reflected on how this stereotyping was played out by the children in their classrooms:

"everyone that [the children] see… that they think fits into a terrorist category… is a terrorist" – Alistair

"he was coming in and saying 'there was this type of people, and that type of people and they did this'" – David

Participants described a felt responsibility to challenge these stereotypes, whilst also addressing an 'us and them' narrative about terrorists:

"There's very much a 'them versus us' and whilst that exists, tha- that divide will lead to young people committing terrorist acts" – Alesha

Debbie and David both shared ways in which they were trying to provide a more balanced view for children:

"You know, one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter, and all that kind of stuff" – Debbie

"These are people making bad choices, and there's people on the other side making bad choices" – David

Participants also spoke about the difficulty of trying to explain how someone might become a terrorist. Participants spoke about feeling the need to share with children that terrorists may themselves be vulnerable, or even victims in some way:

"I think it's just something that a lot of people have just fallen into. I think it's like, like the three-hundred-and-ninety million on the side of the Brexit bus. You know, I think that a lot of people have been promised things in countries far away... they've turned up, and they've been, kind of, in-in- in- indoctrinated into this ISIS group, without knowing, and then have been gradually told that this is the right thing to do and then probably didn't really know, fully, the extent of what they were about to do. But, um, you know... it's a sad world..." – Alistair

"when you talk about terrorists, often it's those that are vulnerable, those that are… so they, they recognise that part of it is maybe the inequalities of society, um… rather than it being just a religious nut… as they say a religious nut job… it's not a religious nut job, it's people who feel lost" – Alesha.

Participants emphasised that this was a difficult thing for adults to understand, and so the task of exploring these concepts with children felt incredibly hard. A desire not to overcomplicate these conversations conflicted with a fear of colluding with the reductionist narrative that terrorists are inherently evil.

Why do they do it?

This subtheme expands on the last, detailing participants' experiences of trying to explain and explore the motivations behind terrorist acts to children. Participants spoke about how challenging this was, with some even describing it as an impossible task:

"It's challenging to talk about… but it's also challenging to understand and it's mainly due to the fact that you can't explain these things, really" – Alistair

Participants felt that it was important to emphasise extremism – divorcing terrorist acts from the views or beliefs of communities or groups of people:

"Every religion has a group that can be extreme in their views" – Alesha

Participants described trying to explain the motivations behind terrorist attacks, and shared how difficult this was, based on the immense amount of historical social and political context that must be drawn upon:

"I think, um, you know, you can't really… with the amount of things that make up this current situation that we're in, in the world, all the religious history, with all of

the social history, with ev- with all of it, combined, you just can't... you could not explain it well enough" – Alistair

Participants highlighted the importance of recognising that there are different types of terrorism, and helping children to appreciate that acts of terrorism are not always committed by Islamic fundamentalists:

"...you need to- need them to have a bit of an understanding of what terrorism itself is – rather than just associating it with terrorism - Muslim, or terrorism - guns, or terrorism - bombs, y'know – there's so many different types out there that actually, terrorism is a very large subject, and quite a lot for a child to, I guess, understand" – Alistair

Acknowledging and validating the fear created by terrorist incidents was something that participants felt was important when talking to children about terrorism. Participants recognised that one of the central motivations of acts of terrorism was to shock and terrify, and that sharing this with children helped them to understand their emotional responses:

"Because the actual truth, of terrorism, is- is- it's very, very scary" – Natasha

4.4.2.3 Issues Around Religion
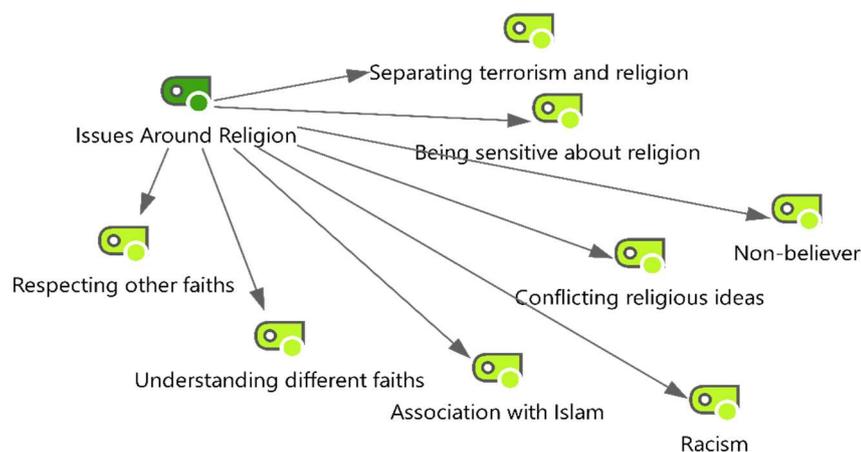
Figure 10 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'issues around religion' and the categorised codes.

Participants described the complexity of the associations between terrorism and religion, and spoke at length about trying to confront this with primary school aged children. Participants frequently referred to the need to be 'sensitive' when talking about religion in the context of terrorism:

"So… I've chosen sensitive… I feel, um… It can be a… very… particular topic, um… I think just being particular with… your choice of words, um… describing these radical, um, organisations, and not… mis… portraying a certain… religion?" – Stephen

Participants referenced the portrayal of terrorist attacks in the media and acknowledged a bias in reporting incidents that were claimed by, or attributed to, Islamist fundamentalist groups. Alesha highlighted that, nationally, the focus of media attention is on one particular group:

"Our fixation and focus is on a minority group within a majority country" – Alesha

Participants felt that children were also exposed to this association and this played out in their understanding of terrorism:

"…children are seeing images of Hijabs, of… of Muslim people, and of course their minds - they go for the simplest answer" – Natasha

"I think lots of children, when you talk about terrorism, these days they're probably just associating it with Islam… cause of Isis and what we know of- of the most recent terrorist attacks in England" – Alistair

Natasha shared her concerns that children of Muslim faith may feel stigmatised by this association between Islam and terrorism:

"and we have children who are Muslim here, and it's… it's even harder for them. Because there is a stigma now for those children" – Natasha

Participants described feeling that it was important to incorporate religion into discussions about terrorism in a way that helped children to understand more about different belief systems:

"Um… and, yeah, actually, a better understanding of the religions and their core beliefs… would probably help a bit, but… I don't- I don't really know how" – Alistair

Joanna, in the following extract, shares her own experience of trying to explain that some terrorism has religious motivations, whilst also honouring the values of the Catholic school she works in:

"And we would have to go down the route of, well, others believe in, in… and we know about these other people who believe in other Gods, and other religions, and we can't explain their actions, what we can do is just try to live our lives as God wants us to, and we have to do everything we can to help every- to- to help others feel safe by our words, by our actions. But that's… mad… for three year olds and four year olds" – Joanna

Above all, participants emphasised their feelings of needing to promote respect for all faiths within their conversations with children about terrorism.

"It's not about your belief over someone else's," – Alesha

Interpretive Analysis of the Theme 'Content'

There seemed to be a general agreement amongst participants that the content of these discussions was often complex and sensitive. When listening back to recordings, my own valency for the dramatic was noticeable in my over-emphasis of certain points, and this awareness was helpful in moderating my interpretation of

the data. Within this second layer of analysis, the unconscious processes underlying participants' narratives about the topics discussed in this theme will be explored, and assertions made for what this may reveal about teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism.

Splitting

Participants reflected on the nature of terrorism and the people who become involved in terrorism. Within this, participants explored concepts such as race, religion and culture. When talking about terrorists, the language participants used seemed to serve a purpose of separating terrorists, and their actions, from the participant:

"They believe one thing, and we believe another" – Joanna

"...these people are making the wrong choice" – Debbie

"...this is what we believe, this is what they believe" – Alistair

The use of 'we' suggests participants are identifying with a group which is distinctly different to the group that has been identified as 'other'- the terrorists. At times, participants described the horrific acts of the terrorist group, creating a clear divide in one group as 'all bad', leaving the group the participant identified with to be 'all good'. This process, known as splitting, is suggested to be a protective defence mechanism to expel undesirable or uncomfortable characteristics away from an individual or group by projecting them into another (Klein, 1952).

Intellectualising

Participants often used sophisticated language and referred to theoretical or subject knowledge regarding terrorism or related socio-political issues. Alistair

spoke about historical issues of terrorism and war in his interview, and Alesha

spoke at length about complex theories to support her assertions:

"...theories around it in sociology, that, you kind of, you look at subcultural

groups... there's a Merton theory about retreatist and rebellion subcultures" – Alesha

Enveloping these sensitive topics in theory may be a signal that participants are

unconsciously avoiding the emotional experience of talking about these subjects to

children. During interviews where the language was very intellectual, I noticed

myself feeling more anxious and, on occasion, a sense of inferiority in comparison to

the participants. It is plausible that the process of intellectualisation also served to

project participants' own insecurities, which I then received via a process of

countertransference and experienced myself. This may indicate an anxiety and lack

of confidence on the part of participants about talking to children about terrorism,

or reluctance to relive uncomfortable experiences of doing so.

Avoidance

Whilst participants were able to share their experiences of exploring difficult

topics such as death, evil and war with children, these parts of the interviews were

often short, and diverted away from quickly. Stephen used the phrase '*elephant in*

the room' to describe his experience of there being some issues that were left unsaid

in his discussions with children about terrorism. This was mirrored in his

interviews, where often he would trail off mid-sentence, leaving a sense that there

was something further to be said that he felt uncomfortable talking about. Where

participants did attend to issues that were more typically avoided in the interviews,

it felt confronting, as I reflect on in the following extract from my reflective journal:

"Alistair was confident to 'dive straight into' issues about religion and stereotyping where other participants shied away or avoided – I felt somewhat taken aback, like when someone smiles at you on the tube – intrusive?" – 16.01.19

This avoidance was apparent in myself as a researcher as well as the participants. Re-reading the transcripts, it became apparent that on several occasions, I missed an opportunity to ask a question that would prompt the participant to expand or reflect further on a complex topic, instead moving them on or asking a very simple, closed question that served the purpose of re-directing the interview away from something that felt uncomfortable.

Paralysis

There were moments in the interviews where I felt frustrated with what participants were talking about. Sharing this in psychosocial group supervision, we considered how this can be evidence that the narrative is masking something deeper that the participant is not able to, or is unwilling to, access. In this case, where the interviews were approaching complex or sensitive issues, I felt a sense that participants were paralysed by not wanting to say the wrong thing, and appear to have prejudiced views. This may be a response to the current social climate, commonly referred to in the media as the 'age of outrage', in which people are fast reprimanded for having views that are seen to be problematic. For example, Natasha acknowledged 'racism' as a concept, but was quick to clarify that it wasn't present in her current school. Alistair, too, began to speak about immigration, but was quick to caveat '*I have no problem with immigration'*. Alesha spoke explicitly to this idea of feeling paralysed by not wanting to present a potentially problematic view:

"I think teaching staff feel very ill equipped to deal with conversations around terrorism, um, especially maybe… teachers from a non-e… like a, maybe not, um, an ethnic background, because I think they believe they might come across as racist…" – Alesha.

Containment

Participants acknowledged the difficulty of translating some of this content for children:

"It's hard when you're an adult*, but when you're a child, to, to explain evil, or… murder, or… y'know, brainwashing…" – Natasha.*

In contrast to the intellectualised narratives described previously, some of the narratives captured in the theme 'content' provided examples of participants using childlike language or imagery, as if this made the difficult topics easier to talk about. Below is an extract of my reflective journal, referring to Stephen talking about terrorists being 'in cahoots' with each other.

"This conjures an image of three bandits being tied together with a rope like in a cartoon – if we make something comical it's easier to cope with? Or is this childlike representation of a 'criminal' easier to understand than 'terrorist'." – 21.01.19

This notion of 'child-proofing' certain subjects to make them more manageable for children was common throughout most of the interviews:

"They, they don't get that. You know, we can try and tell them that people who are bullied have sometimes been bullied, or might be sad, but it's very hard to bridge that gap between what they understand, and a terrorist." – Natasha.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Process

4.4.3.1 School Ethos and Approach
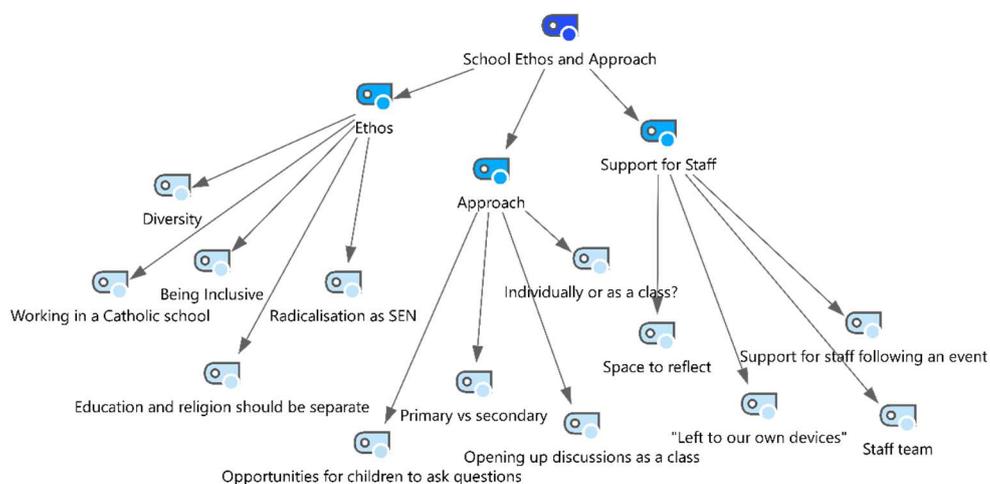
Figure 11 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'School Ethos and Approach' and the categorised codes.

Ethos

Participants cited the ethos of the schools in which they were teaching as having a significant impact on the way in which conversations about terrorism were held. Participants felt like the school's guiding principles and values were important in how they spoke to children, although acknowledged how individual differences may override this. David, for example, described how each teacher may have their own way of interpreting the school's ethos:

"Or, like, different teachers might have different opinions, so it's not going to be… the message isn't going to be convenient – isn't going to be the same the whole way across" – David

Alesha expressed that issues around extreme behaviours or extreme views were not tolerated, and how this made it more complex to have balanced conversations about terrorism:

"we're excluding students… you know?" – Alesha

Participants spoke about diversity within their schools, and highlighted this as something that made talking to children about terrorism more complex, due to the motivation to be sensitive to children from a variety of backgrounds.

"We are so diverse in this school of… families from all over the world" – Joanna

Alesha reflected on how children are not always sensitive to the differences between themselves and their peers:

"I think they just assume, in a very kind of cocooned way, that everyone is the same as them" – Alesha

Participants spoke about diversity of religions within the school, and the way in which religion was brought into conversations about terrorism. There was a clear divide between teachers who worked in a faith school as opposed to teachers who worked in a non-denominational school. Participants who worked in a faith school spoke about the school's ethos being grounded in the beliefs and values of the faith, and this being a positive influence when having complex and difficult conversations with children. Debbie, in the extract below, reflects on how conversations about terrorism required her to draw upon Catholic values with her class:

"we can't afford for the happy balance of the school to be upset by 'my mum said this' or 'my mum said that' so it turns into playground banter, and you, y'know, as Catholics, we're teaching our children to treat everyone in the- the same- in the way we want to be treated, even in times of terrorist attacks" – Debbie

Similarly, Joanna reflected on working in a faith school, and was grateful to have a strong ethos and set of values to guide her conversations with children:

"I think, in some ways, we're lucky that we work in a Catholic school… we have that grounding, we have that basic commonality that helps us to set off on one foot, on one, I suppose… ethos… and strategy, and 'this is what we believe' and 'this is what we are… this is what we would try to do in that situation…" – Joanna

Alistair offered an alternative view of working in a faith school; expressing his concern that learning about other religions may not be given enough focus within the curriculum, to promote true respect and understanding of other faiths.

"…it does seem, in terms of religion, in terms of the teaching, it seems, in Catholic school, in this Catholic school, it seems… this is what we believe, this is what they believe, we believe this" – Alistair

Alesha, who works in a non-denominational school, felt that education and religion should be kept separate. This was consistent with her view that religion and terrorism should not be conflated, suggesting that the ethos of her school impacted her experience of talking to children about terrorism.

"Whilst I respect religion, I don't want it in a place of education because we are here to educate" – Alesha

Approach

Participants also spoke about the way they approached conversations about terrorism, and how this was influenced by the school's ethos and what staff were told to do. Stephen explained that, following an incident close to the school he works in, members of the senior leadership team initially gave limited information about how to respond. Stephen spoke about his priority being to reassure children they were safe:

"I-I-I I suppose the approach of making it seem… that we're all in a safe environment, you're all valued, you're all getting the same bit of information, and, the way I approached it was let's wait, lets reassure everyone it's a safe place where we are, and from there I'll speak and then you can speak as well" – Stephen

David described being told by a member of the senior leadership team to only share with children key facts following a terrorist incident.

"We were all told, 'this is what you can say, this is what you should say" – David.

Alistair and Stephen, in the following extracts, describe how focusing only on key facts was sometimes difficult in the classroom:

"So um, having that discussion – loads- loads of questions came of it obviously" – Alistair

"With the holes not plugged by conversations of staff members, or just anyone with… like, contextual information, and then it's just getting bigger"- Stephen

Stephen went on to describe his experience of feeling that without sharing further information with children, their concerns could escalate:

"I suppose… again, if I didn't let them talk, I feel like it probably could've… continued on throughout the rest of the day. Like… even more heightened in their mind. Cause they won't… get those answers that they may have been thinking about" – Stephen

Participants also spoke about giving children the opportunity to ask questions within conversations about terrorism, describing this as a positive way of approaching these conversations:

"when I was in class I would always raise things and have a class discussion and I would put it out to the children and this was very much more so in key stage two where 'what do you think of that?' and 'why- why do you think that?' and then if they came back with an answer, we would discuss that as a group and 'what do you think?' and 'what do you think?' and just opening up that- that dialogue – Joanna

Participants, when reflecting on how their school approached conversations about terrorism, identified that the approach would be different for a primary rather than a secondary school. David suggested that working in a primary school made it harder to initiate and explore terrorism as a topic:

"I think that's more… it's- it's hard in primary school… it's harder in primary school. Cause I think in secondary school you can have more… mature conversations about it" – David

Conversely, Joanna felt that working in a primary school meant that conversations did not need to be as complex, and that some more testing aspects of the conversation might not come up:

"Because [secondary school aged] *children are older and they can come with questions and they would come with 'well why does that happen' and 'why do they believe that'. We don't get so much of that here and I think it's because we're in a primary setting and children are the- the majority of them are still very much 'what the teacher says is the right thing' and 'what they says goes' and I think as they get older they do begin to question the adults in their lives and begin to develop their own thoughts and ideas around certain things" – Joanna*

Support for Staff

Participants reflected on how these conversations usually happened when they were alone with their class, which could feel isolating and placed a lot of responsibility on them.

"I don't know… because when you're in your classroom you're in your little class bubble and you don't really know…" – Debbie

Participants spoke about how prepared they felt to have conversations like this, and how further support or guidance would increase their confidence in these situations.

"I felt a huge amount of responsibility to do it properly, but you don't really have any guidance for that…" – Natasha

"You also have to have the… I'd say the… tools, the strategies, the confidence to challenge it. I think a lot of staff feel very… I think teaching staff feel very ill equipped to deal with conversations around terrorism" – Alesha

As well as thinking about preparation and guidance *before* talking to children about terrorism, participants also talked about the support they received following times where they had had these discussions. Stephen reflected on the support teachers received in his school following having to discuss a recent incident with students:

"the staff, we got spoken to, not directly as it was happening, but afterwards, umm… however, I feel like it-it-it, it just, it was like – okay, this happened…" – Stephen

Participants suggested that a debrief would be beneficial following such a conversation:

"It takes a debrief as well, afterwards" – Alesha

"I would love to see somebody answer those questions, just to make me feel better, to just say 'you're doing okay, you're doing okay" – Natasha

Participants spoke about the importance of teachers supporting each other. Stephen shared his experiences of being supported by his fellow staff members, saying that working as a team was crucial for him.

"I would hate for a staff member to be like, texting away, or just sitting back then that's… it really shows that it's – what he's saying – it doesn't really matter" – Stephen

Natasha wished she would have someone to talk to after having such complex and emotive conversations with children, reflecting on how difficult the conversations themselves were:

"it's a big ask, and you really have to dig deep for that conversation, and then you need to be working in a place where you have support. Adult support. So you can then come out of that room, and get somebody else to take over, or just, have a cry, or… speak to another adult and offload. But I think, the people that are having those difficult conversations need support from adults afterwards." – Natasha

4.4.3.2 Processes and Policies
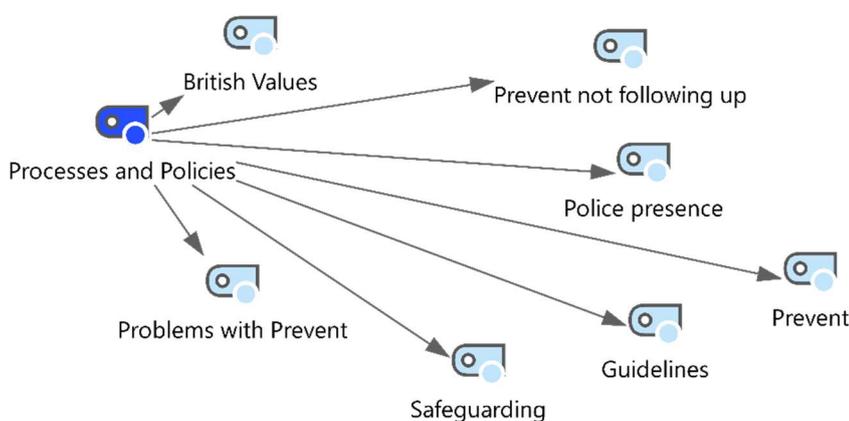
Figure 12 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'Processes and Policies' and the categorised codes.

Participants spoke about processes, policies and guidelines that were central to their role in school. Participants acknowledged that there were certain guidelines in place that should inform their practice in terms of talking to children about terrorism. David spoke about incidences of terrorism providing a framework within which to discuss radicalisation, which teachers are required to talk to children about in line with the Prevent agenda:

"...it's part of our – part of the like, guidelines, you have to talk about radicalisation and ways to prevent that, so you probably – you probably would just have to discuss incidents" – David

Natasha also acknowledged there 'must be' guidelines about talking to children about terrorism, but reflected on never having had to seek them out before:

"I don't know, maybe there are guidelines of how to talk to your children about terrorism – there must be – but I don't think we've ever felt the need to read that before" – Natasha

Alesha referred to the British Values framework and how this might influence discussions about terrorism:

"And one of the British Values is to, like, treat one another's faiths equally, and like to treat one another equally, and um, we have worked on British Values quite a lot, I don't know if they really still understand them, but, you know, the whole concept of 'we respect one another's faiths and beliefs'" – Alesha

Participants spoke, too, about the safeguarding policy in their school and how this now incorporated the Prevent agenda. Participants spoke about receiving Prevent training:

"…yeah, and, we've had people come in, and talk about ex- like, about being groomed, for extremism, and- to the teachers obviously, and we talk about online safety, and, generally, from another point of view" – Alistair

"Prevent came on the radar I'd say roughly around twenty-thirteen in terms of our, kind of, or maybe just before twenty-twelve, just in terms of our awareness, and… um, so a group of very specialised trained officers who came in to deliver the new prevent agenda" – Alesha

Participants expanded on this by reflecting on how the Prevent agenda had impacted their role in school. Participants felt that having to implement the learning from the Prevent training had added another layer to the already difficult job of talking to children about terrorism. Natasha spoke about this in terms of feeling an 'added pressure':

"…the added pressure of checking their innocence before attacks, when we're looking at Prevent manage- Prevent training and stuff like that, and thinking about children who could potentially be in danger of being groomed to become a terrorist themselves…" – Natasha

There was also an agreement amongst participants that whilst the Prevent training had provided them with an increased understanding of the threats of radicalisation, and the agenda had good intentions, in practice the processes and policies were not always effective:

"And so I'm not sure, always, that the prevent agenda… y'know, it's… whilst it has steps and stages and processes, it's not always the best fit" – Alesha

4.4.3.3 Timing
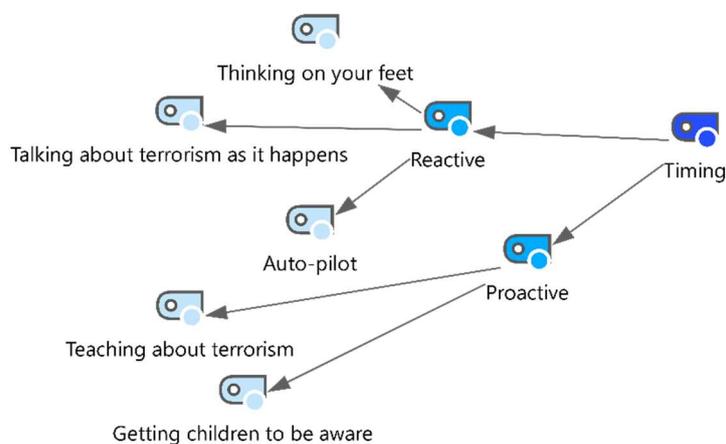
Figure 13 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'Timing' and the categorised codes

Proactive:

This first part of this subtheme captures what participants said about talking to children to terrorism in any context outside of response to an incident. Participants reflected on their experiences of talking about terrorism as part of the curriculum, sharing that it was not a topic that they were expected to cover in their normal lesson plans:

"…we don't tend to usually just talk about terrorism as a thing, it's not something we have in our daily lesson plans," - Alistair

Participants spoke about how integrating conversations about terrorism into their lessons was hard in a primary school setting. Alistair expressed his feeling that trying to teach children about the current context in terms of terrorism would be too difficult, based on a lack of time for reflection and understanding.

"But, I think, whereas there's been things in history that you'll talk about, and obviously, like, things in America like 9/11 will become history that will be taught in schools… you can't really… teach about this period in time" – Alistair

David spoke about the difference between secondary and primary school settings, highlighting the additional scope in secondary schools to make terrorism part of their lessons:

"there's major historical things that would be on the secondary school curriculum, that would be… linked to terrorism. So at least you could talk about modern day stuff and that to- kind of talk about that a bit," - David

Participants discussed the benefits of having conversations about terrorism as standard within schools. Many participants cited additional awareness about terrorism as a positive outcome of talking to children about terrorism prior to incidents occurring.

"But, just getting across to them that they still need to be mindful, they need to be aware, that they need to be… to know that there are people out there who believe certain things. And they will act in different ways to how we would… react to things, that getting that across to them, yeah," – Joanna

Debbie reflected on how having these conversations felt similar to other conversations she routinely had with children about safety and awareness:

"Which you would do… y'know, 'don't walk home, don't talk to strangers, don't eat sweets from people you don't know'. All those kinds of things, so treating it in exactly the same way" - Debbie

Some participants also shared their reservations about including terrorism as part of a normal plan of lessons. Debbie wondered about whether including terrorism as a topic in classrooms would lead to children becoming more anxious about being involved in an attack:

"...so I think you do have to be careful, but, um, and as and when it comes up... when it's necessary I think. Because if you start teaching it, they'll think it's the norm. And it's not." – Debbie

Reactive

Participants reflected on feeling disconnected to their experiences of talking to children about terrorism in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. directly after an incident, and used the term 'autopilot' to describe responding without the opportunity to think or reflect:

"I think, with the incident that happened last year, as I said, we just went into autopilot, and it was keeping everyone safe and getting everybody out and 'we're okay' and- and that kicked in" – Joanna

"...it's something that you have to, uh, kind of, um, talk to them about it on, the- um, the heat of the moment. So it depends on your ability to just, kind of, think on your feet really..." – Debbie

Natasha spoke about the opportunities within difficult conversations to build resilience and awareness, but shared that, in her experience, this couldn't happen when conversations were in reaction to a specific terrorist incident:

"…terrorism isn't the time to- for life lessons, is it? It really isn't, and I think,

staying… calm, and having your emotions in check, is a real challenge for a teacher

when they're talking to children about terrorism in the moment." – Natasha

4.4.3.4 Language
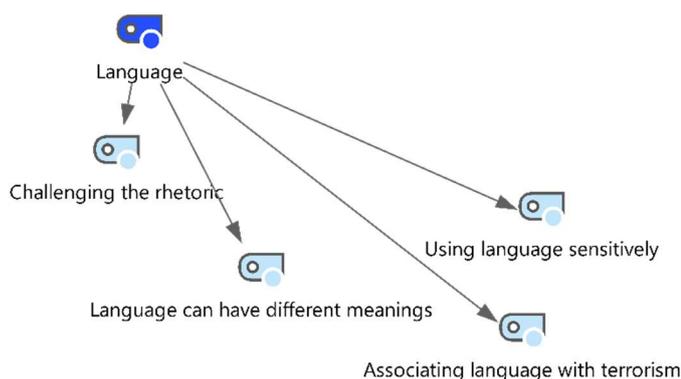
Figure 14 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'Language' and the categorised codes.

Participants spoke about nuances in meaning, how we cannot assume a shared meaning of language and, therefore, the importance of being sensitive and careful with the language used in this context. Participants also reflected on the power of language, both in terms of the associations that can be built around language, but also in the way language can be used to educate, share and challenge.

Participants emphasised that working with children made selecting the right language even more important. Stephen shared his feelings of needing to change his discourse in some way in order for his students to be able to access these conversations:

"Um, so… the children I teach are seven and eight years old… (sighs) so, obviously… I would probably… be using particular language… um… I would… try and… uh… um… it's a bit hard for me to try and explain without a proper example… but I would be using age-appropriate language" – Stephen

Participants also explored the power of different words and acknowledged how language can come to hold a great deal of meaning depending on how it is used. Alesha, in the following quotes, speaks about how language can have negative associations:

"a lot of language becomes negative because it becomes associated with a particular idea or ideology" – Alesha

"…there are certain words in language, in discourse, that… previously never have been used, and now, the minute they appear on the front page of a newspaper… some of the more awful newspapers… or just on a newspaper, it's always a negative story" – Alesha

Interpretive Analysis of the Theme 'Process'

A further interpretive analysis of the data within the theme 'Process' is presented here, exploring what can be interpreted from participants' experiences by looking beyond their conscious narratives.

The Need for Containment

Using my reflections of my experience interviewing the participants, and applying psychoanalytic theory to participants' narratives, I consider here how processes and policies may provide a sense of containment. It seemed as though participants spoke about processes as a way to provide structure within which difficult topics, and emotions could be contained. Participants appeared to favour talking about processes within their school and approaches to having conversations about terrorism over sharing their emotional experiences of these conversations. The following extract from my reflective journal is an example of my reflections

about how processes, policies and structure provided containment for anxieties and emotions, as well as offering a way of avoiding these feelings:

"Are participants hiding/stifling emotions by focusing on process in the moment? Control is providing a structure in which anxieties and insecurities can be managed?" –

12.03.19

I also reflected on my emotional experiences of the interviews, noticing how at times, with some of the participants, I felt anxious or uncertain myself. It may be that these feelings were examples of countertransference, where I was picking up on the difficult emotions being unconsciously avoided, split off and projected by participants.

As well as talking explicitly about process, this was also reflected in how participants shared their narratives within the interviews. In my reflective journal, whilst re-listening to the data, I make the following comment:

"are questions without answers dangerous?" – *12.03.19*

This reflection was in response to noticing an avoidance of open questions, the central method of the FANI approach, by both myself and participants in the interviews. Listening to the interviews back, I felt frustrated to notice myself asking some closed questions, as if colluding with participants' desire to avoid open questions which were harder to answer and left more room for reflection on difficult topics. Similarly, the way in which participants' spoke in their interviews often seemed careful and considered, characterised by pauses and comments like '*I'm not sure how to say it*". In these moments, I felt a frustration, perhaps signalling that this

rational and carefully presented narrative was providing a structure with which to mask the emotional content.

Group Dynamics

The theme 'Process' also captured what participants spoke about in terms of the ethos and approach of the school in which they worked. Within their reflections about how these shaped their conversations about terrorism with children, participants also spoke about their position within the school, their relationships with other members of staff and the school's group identity.

Participants spoke about hierarchy and power within the schools in which they worked. All of the teachers spoke about their role as teachers meaning they had a position of leadership. For some of the participants, I felt this was asserted as a powerful position, and felt a sense of inferiority in these interviews. Other participants described being a leader as a burden. Joanna and Alesha, in particular, spoke about their own positions of senior leadership within their schools, reflecting on the additional pressure this held for them. Stephen, who was not in a position of leadership, appeared to seek comfort in people who he perceived as senior to him. For example, in his repeated reference to the police:

"I think one of the police officers in the area had come past and popped her head in… like they're the officials of the country…" – Stephen

Participants often used words such as 'we' and 'us' to suggest cohesiveness and group identity. Emphasising a commonality, or 'sameness' perhaps provided safety for some of the participants, creating an 'in-group' identity from which uncomfortable beliefs and undesirable characteristics could be split and projected into an out-group – in this case 'the terrorists'.

Conversations about Terrorism Mirrored in the Interview

The theme 'Process' also captured participants' reflections on their approach to talking to children about terrorism, including factors such as timing and language. Reflecting upon what participants said about this, I wondered about how these processes were mirrored in the interviews. Participants spoke about the type of language they used when talking to children about terrorism. In the interviews, too, the way language was used may give some insight into teachers' experiences of these conversations. Participants spoke about being careful with words, and in many of the interviews, participants took long pauses to find the 'right' word to use, or corrected themselves where they thought their first choice of word wasn't appropriate. In the following extract of my reflective journal, I considered how, on occasion, I was drawn out of the researcher role to some way collude with this idea:

"I say 'yeah that's a really good – a really key point". Does this provide a value judgement and play into the idea that there is a 'right way' to talk about these experiences?" – 06.02.19

Participants spoke about the pressure of talking to children about terrorism 'in the moment'. Whilst talking about these experiences, the pace of participants' narratives was faster. Alesha reflected on a difficult conversation she had had to have and said:

"I'm talking to the safeguarding lead at like a thousand miles an hour" – Alesha

This very much mirrored my experience of Alesha within the interview; she spoke incredibly fast, particularly when speaking about something more emotive. At times, this made it difficult to keep up with her narrative. Similarly, following an interview with Natasha, I wrote the following:

"When talking about discussing incidents with the children, it became 'and this, and this, and this...' as if gathering momentum, and her story was becoming less and less was to control" – 21.12.19

In several of the interviews, the pace of the interview seemed to reflect a heightened emotional experience. At these times, the participants were also less coherent, perhaps suggesting a less processed, less conscious narrative as a result of emotion taking over.

Participants also spoke about the importance of giving children opportunities to ask questions in order to be able to clarify their understanding and leave fewer gaps for fantasising. When re-listening to the interviews I was interested to notice that this was something that was present in these conversations too, as the following two extracts from my reflective journal reflect:

"The idea of wanting to 'cut things short' or 'damage limitation' is consistent throughout – am I picking up some of this which is why I am also 'cutting things short'?" – 16.02.19

"Noticing myself interrupting/interjecting – to fill silences? Responding to discomfort/less fluent narrative – trying to fill the gaps in case something uncomfortable is said?" – 16.02.19

4.4.4 Theme 4: The Role of the Teacher

4.4.4.1 Containment
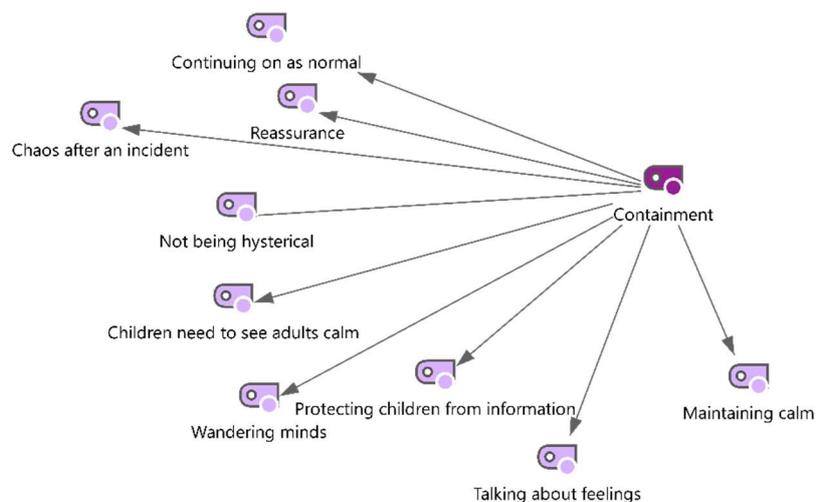
Figure 15 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'Containment' including the categorised codes.

Containment refers to the capacity of another person to manage or hold some of the anxiety and fear of a child in order for them to feel safe and free of these difficult feelings (Bion, 1985). Participants shared their experiences of supporting children to understand and process their emotions. Participants described their responsibility to provide boundaries and a sense of safety within conversations about a difficult topic.

"we'll talk about feelings, if we're – cause I know I'm going through them, or will potentially go through them, if I can talk to them about that, that's… relieving," - Stephen

Participants described feeling a responsibility to keep children safe as part of their roles as teachers, and shared their experiences of this extending to making sure children felt safe emotionally as well as physically. Participants emphasised the importance of remaining calm when talking about terrorism, and shared their experiences of how this shaped their discussions about terrorism:

"I think that another important- important point to make about emotion is that children… when they're panicked, they need to see adults calm. I think children get a lot of… get a big sense of- of calm, when they see the adults around them feel in control and calm." – Natasha

"…the first thing is, um, everybody's frightened. Theres, the, um, fear element. There's a fear that 'it's going to be us' and 'we're all doomed' and everything's going to happen. So I think the first thing you need to do is to be calm about it… even if it's… it was pretty close" – Debbie

In addition, participants spoke about the cost of *not* remaining calm, and how this compromised their ability to provide containment for their students. Debbie spoke about feeling it was her duty as a teacher to manage 'hysterical' responses to terrorist incidents by remaining calm:

"So I think that's… from the hysterical point of view that 'oh my gosh we're all doomed, to the other views… you have to kind of- it is a duty, I think as a citizen, but also as a teacher, to kind of level that out and sort of… try and give them an-a- an- a sensible view point of what's happening." – Debbie

During the interviews, participants spoke about their experiences of trying to remain calm whilst talking about terrorism, and reflected on how difficult this was when they were also having to manage their own emotional responses. This suggests that participants find it hard to provide containment for children when they are experiencing the same worries as their students.

"…it's just hard to know how to deal with the situation, 'cause you're kind of having to deal with it and process information yourself." - David

Joanna spoke about her concerns about her capacity to remain neutral, calm and objective:

"I think it's a very fine line that my scares- my fears- I wouldn't want to put on to them" – Joanna

Participants also spoke about needing to contain children's ideas and speculations about terrorism. Alistair described how children, if not given enough information or detail, will fill the gaps themselves:

"…getting the facts, before you explain it is, like, really important, I think, otherwise they do – as children do – create a… create this world of their own in which they completely… like… (laughs) hyper dra-dramatise, I guess" – Alistair

Stephen also shared his experiences of feeling that the amount of information he gave children was crucial in helping them feel safe and secure:

"…if I withheld information, or… didn't approach the situation properly, I feel that anxiety could build up in children" – Stephen

Participants felt that being honest with children helped them to feel more contained. However, participants also identified times where being completely honest with children may *not* be appropriate. Participants felt that part of their role, in order to provide containment, was knowing how much of the truth to share with children.

"'how can I let these kids know what's happening, or what we think is happening… without… scaring them?'" – David

"And in a situation where you're trying to calm children down, sometimes, I guess, you might meddle with the truth (laughs), a little bit?" – Alistair

4.4.4.2 Self-in-Role
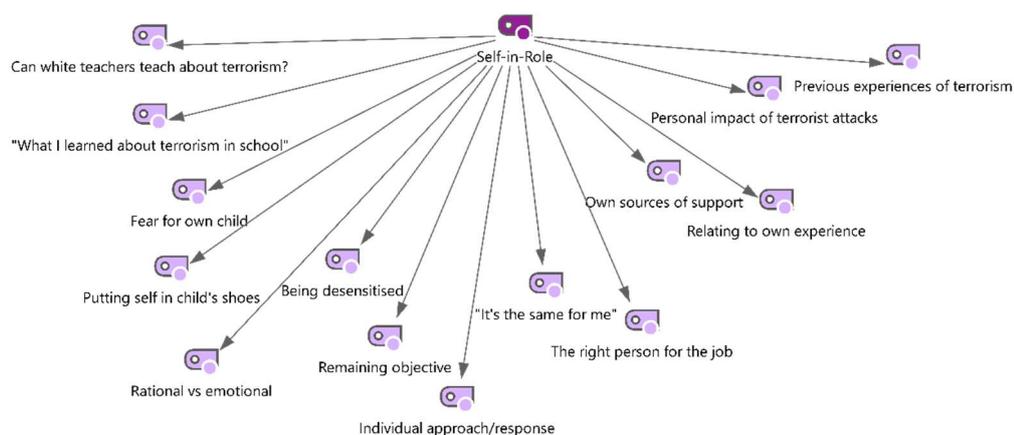
Figure 16 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'Self-in-Role' including the categorised codes.

Within the interviews, participants explored the social and psychological factors that shaped them as individuals. Participants spoke about their own personal experiences of terrorism, how these had affected them, and how this influenced their conversations with children about terrorism. For example, David spoke about where he grew up, in the context of on-going terrorism. David thought that his experiences of terrorism as a child had led him to feel less in danger in the current context:

"And I was almost like- it's almost like… desensitised to stuff like that. Like, the fact- whenever those- whenever those things happened, I just thought… well these things happen, cause… whenever I was, I think that age, whenever I was primary school age, like it was any news – bombs, bombs, bombs, and I just thought, this just happens everywhere, so, now that it's happening- not that it's happening regularly at all… but it's just kinda, like, I don't feel in danger… Cause I never felt in danger then" – David

David asserted that the impact of this on his experiences of talking to children about terrorism was that he was able to be more rational when discussing incidents. Debbie, similarly, attributed her "*keep calm and carry on*" approach to her childhood experiences of terrorism:

"*…this sounds really awful, and I don't mean to sound it, I grew up- when I- my first job in the city was with* [names terrorist group]*, and my building was bombed twice … So… not- not while we were there, but, you know, we were used to… parcels being left on the tube and all that kind of stuff, and my mum went into* [names city] *when the* [names city] *bombs happened in the 70's, you kinda- we kinda grew up with it, so you know that unless you're (laughing) unless you're in an ambulance you're okay, and you just carry on." – Debbie*

For Stephen, terrorism was a threat he had not been exposed to in early life, and he spoke about how this had left him feeling unprepared for conversations with children about terrorism:

"*…I suppose… f- (sighs) fingers crossed we haven't been that unlucky in… in… well, I'm from* [names city]*, and I don't think we've really experienced… much like that before, I think… I- I don't know wha- why these people are choosing these particular targets, Paris, London, stuff like that… couldn't comment on that, but- but yeah, it- it's been… a very unusual last year for me"* -Stephen

"*…and to be honest, in* [names home country]*, I would not have… in our plans, which… I don't think… we-well look, I haven't worked in* [names home country]*, but… there's nothing… I remember working at a school for quite a while as a- just a- like a- like a PE kind of teacher, sport teacher, and not once did, um, like, when we were going*

over our like, protocols in case things happened, did like… terrorists like… crop up. Eh, look, it may have, but I, like, I wasn't as privy cause I wasn't like, I wasn't a staffroom – I, uh, primary school, uh, classroom teacher then, but like yeah, I wouldn't think, going back to [uses name of home town]*, that that's probably something I would have to have a conversation with students about." – Stephen*

Previous experiences of terrorism were considered to be significant in terms of conversations about terrorism, with participants feeling that being able to draw upon experience made it easier to have these discussions. Stephen and Alistair both shared their views that without experiences of terrorism, it was more difficult to explore this topic with children:

"…it's properly throwing you in the deep end. And who's got experience? Dealing with something like that? Like, honestly." – Stephen

"But, um, cause the thing is, if you haven't been in a terrorist attack, you can't exactly… talk, first hand, and I guess you just, uh… yeah, you just… draw it from your own… I think it, well it's not- it's not just opinions, but I guess there must be some form of experiences in your life, bad times or scary times, or… that you can draw upon, but don't, they're not really the same." – Alistair

Participants highlighted the difficulty of talking to children about terrorism when they shared the same fears and anxieties as the children:

"I'm a human too, and I do get scared from time to time" – Joanna

"My husband and my son were coming through Parson's Green at the time, so I'm having to – counsel, but – listen to children's fears, whilst I'm panicking that my husband and my son are trapped in that terrorist incident" – Natasha

As well as thinking about their experiences, participants also reflected on aspects of their identity and character which influenced the way in which they were able to talk about terrorism with children. Participants explored individual differences which made it easier, or harder, to have these discussions, or which influenced these discussions in some way. In following extracts, Debbie shares how her own personal outlook on life impacted her response to a terrorist attack in the local area:

"... you don't know when your... when your time is up... you don't know when you're going to be run over, or blown up, or just die from natural causes, you know, so you've just got to make the most of what you've got. And that's the way I live my life..."
– Debbie

"so I just- 'right everybody, sit down' – it's the same, kind of, and treated it the same way as if there had been an incident in the playground 'somebody hit me' or 'threw a ball at me' – 'just carry on and we'll sort it out later' kind of thing, so that's what... and I- I don't think many other people were, but that's what I did, I just... carried on, you know?" – Debbie

Alesha reflected on how a teacher's ethnicity, race, religion or cultural identity could impact how they approached conversations about terrorism:

"I think teaching staff feel very ill equipped to deal with conversations around terrorism, um, especially... maybe... teachers from a non-e... like a, maybe not, um, an ethnic background, because I think they believe they might come across as racist..." -
Alesha

Participants also felt it was important not to let too much of 'themselves' into the conversations with children, and spoke about trying to remain objective within their roles as teachers:

"I would have to be very careful not to let my personal side of it- my personal beliefs and feelings about it come through" – Joanna

"So if I had have added fuel, or come up with my own bias- added my own bias to it then that's going to be dangerous for what they could add on to it, because children are going to believe what they hear. Especially from a trusted adult." – David

There was a feeling amongst participants that some people are better equipped, based on individual differences, to have conversations about terrorism with children:

"…it's difficult to choose the right people to do it." – Natasha

4.4.4.3 Expectations and Demands
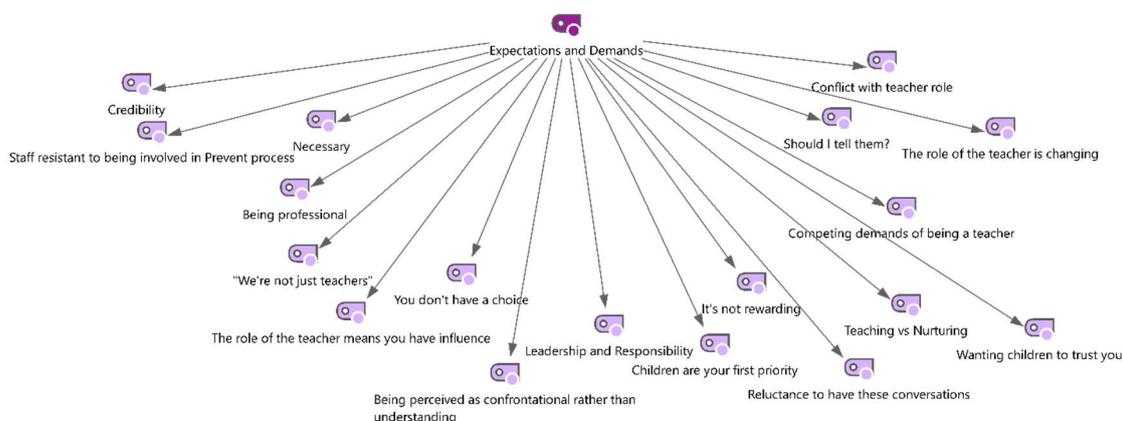
Figure 17 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'Expectations and Demands' including the categorised codes.

This subtheme captures how participants felt the expectations and demands placed upon them as teachers related to their experiences of talking to children about terrorism. The role of the teacher was described as developing, with responsibilities over and above delivering the curriculum: This extract, from Joanna, emphasises the significant scope of the teaching role:

"what is expected of us now is so much more than just delivering the curriculum. You are expected to be a counselor, sometimes a parent, sometimes a therapist between the parents of the child that you are working with and there's just more and more pressure I think, from just cuts and moneys and budgets and just – the roles and responsibilities of schools and the staff in schools is so much more than delivering the curriculum, because you're thinking about the whole child, and you're thinking about those children who come to you for breakfast club and don't leave until six o clock because their parents are out at work or their parents need childcare or whatever, it's so much more vast and then comes all of the extra responsibilities for those life lessons that you have to teach them and the questions that they come up with cause of what's going on in their lives. It's huge. – Joanna

Demands specific to certain roles within the school were also discussed. For example, participants spoke about responsibilities associated with a leadership role, and how this changed their experiences of speaking to children about terrorism to some extent, because of their role in safeguarding:

"…you are expected to question… their view, To challenge their view, um, but you come from a point of view where it's quite confrontational, and what you want to do is understand… where those views are coming from, because actually it may be that the student isn't the issue, the concern is what is happening in the background." – Alesha

This subtheme also captures participants' wonderings about whether or not their role *should* encompass having conversations with children about terrorism:

"I think we have to teach them about the outside world as well. Not just things that used to happen in the world… or how to write, or how to add and stuff so I think it is our responsibility to give a- to give them information." – David

The expectations of being a teacher, to educate and to nurture, were identified as conflicting with having conversations with children about terrorism, as there was often insufficient information to properly educate, and it wasn't possible to fully reassure children. Natasha shared her feelings of losing credibility in her role as a result of having these conversations:

"It- it, you lose- you feel like you lose your credibility, as, as an educator, and as a protector, because they're looking at you like 'no, tell me everything's going to be fine' and you can't lie to children." – Natasha

Participants expressed their feelings that the expectations and demands placed upon them could negatively impact their experiences of talking to children about terrorism, compromising the time they had to prepare for, and then reflect on, these discussions:

"I think we need more guidelines. And not stuff that we need to go and get ourselves because teachers are just too busy." – Natasha

4.4.4.4 Fears and Uncertainties
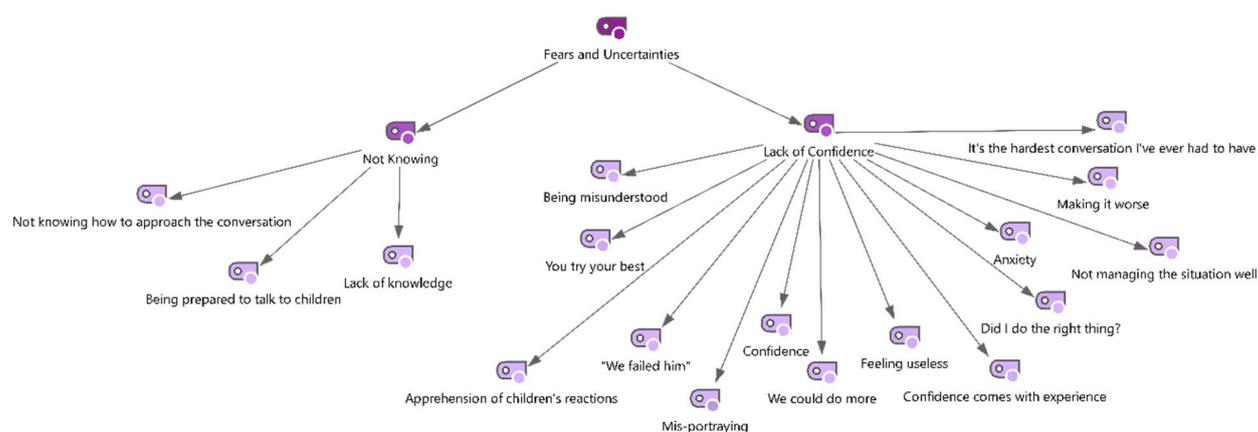
Figure 18 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'Fears and Uncertainties' including the categorised codes

Lack of Confidence

Within their interviews, participants expressed their feelings of incompetence and inadequacy related to having these conversations with children. Natasha, in the following quote, described how difficult she perceived the task to be:

"Well, it's the hard- hardest conversation that I've had to have in twenty years of working with children." - Natasha

Participants shared their concerns that they would be responsible for children being misinformed about terrorism:

"I would just worry that there would be one question that would throw me (nervous laughter) completely, and that would lead to the children asking more and I would become flustered and give them more doubts" – Joanna

Being older, having been a teacher for longer, and having more experience, were identified as being supportive factors in having conversations about terrorism. These factors were identified by teachers who were well established in their role, rather than newer and younger teachers.

"I'm just a l- a bit older than everyone else- the other teachers here, and it's kind of, you know, you put it more in perspective, and you've seen a lot more," - Debbie

"And I think, y'know, fresh out of, like… if I was an NQT, I definitely wouldn't have had that conversation." – Alesha

Throughout the interviews, participants spoke about their reflections on their experiences, sharing their lack of conviction that they had been successful in these discussions:

"Cause you- you do second guess yourself and you think have I- have I been too emotional? Have I given the right information?" – Natasha

"When I think back now, would I change the way I did it?" – Alesha

Not Knowing

The second part of this subtheme captures participants' concerns about not feeling as though they had the answers that they needed in order to have conversations with children about terrorism. Participants described feeling uncertain during these conversations. Not knowing enough information about terrorism, or about a recent incident was a concern for many participants:

"So yeah, my concern – I think one of the concerns is that, y'know- I'm not- I don't really have all the answers..." – Alistair

"...the whole time we were trying to get pieces of information, to tell the children, because they'll – they're just worried about their families, their mums, their dads... and there wasn't that much truth to tell them." – Natasha

As well as 'not knowing' in terms of information, participants also spoke about not knowing how to approach or handle these conversations:

"...it's just hard to know how to deal with the situation" – David

"So it- it's very, very hard to sort of, to work out how to pace it and where to- um, how... how to explain it, while being honest" – Natasha

4.4.4.5 Working with Parents
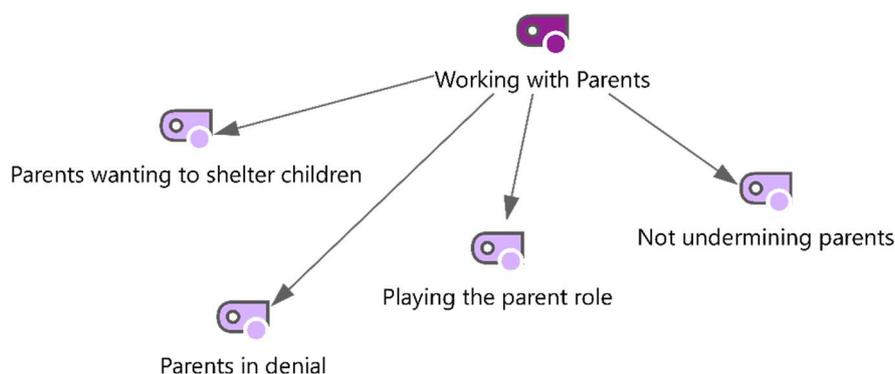
Figure 19 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'working with parents' including the categorised codes.

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Another component of participants' narratives about the role of the teacher, and how the role shapes their experiences of talking to children about terrorism was how they interacted and worked with parents. This subtheme captures participants' thoughts about this relationship. Participants described being preoccupied with how parents might respond to the conversations they were having with the children about terrorism. Participants' were anxious that their approach or message might not be in line with how parents wanted this sensitive subject covered:

"I was nervous about… if I do give them all this information – I'm nervous about their parents coming and saying 'you shouldn't have told them that'" – David

Participants also spoke about the impact of parental responses to terrorism. Parents who were particularly worried were described as being a detrimental influence on participants' experiences:

"y'know, if parents are hysterical, or the-they do hear gossip that's wrong, that I-th- I, um, correct it." – Debbie

"I found that was the most harmful thing that day. Parents that let them- let their children see them in an absolute panic." – Natasha

Interpretive Analysis of the Theme 'The Role of the Teacher'

This theme captures participants' narratives about themselves in their roles as teachers, and how the way in which they take up this role shaped their experiences of talking to children about terrorism.

Pressure and Expectation

An emergent theme in the thematic analysis was that participants perceived an increase in the pressures and expectations associated with being a teacher. Considering the data on a more interpretive level, this feeling of pressure seemed to be mirrored in how participants spoke about their roles as teachers. Both Joanna and Stephen spoke about the different roles they felt they needed to embody as teachers, and for both, the pace at which they listed these roles felt overwhelming and relentless, perhaps reflecting the way the responsibilities themselves felt. Participants used language such as 'stamina' and being 'pulled each way and 'thrown in the deep end' – evoking images of endurance and exhausting physical challenges. Following an interview with Alesha, I wrote the following in my reflective journal:

> *"The pace is quick and continuous, hard to keep up with what she is saying – perhaps mirroring how hard it is to keep up with the role" – 04.03.19*

Participants also reflected on the complex and often conflicting aspects of the job, particularly related to the expectation that they are able to be emotionally neutral. During the interviews, and upon reflection, I was aware of the myriad of emotions I had experienced during the interview process, many of which I

hypothesised to have been projected into me by a process of countertransference. It seems likely that these unconscious processes are mirrored in participants' conversations with children about terrorism, with teachers receiving projections from their students, and that this has a significant impact on participants' experiences of talking to children about terrorism.

The Past in the Present

As participants spoke about their experiences of being teachers, there were times at which I was able to draw parallels between what they told me about their personal lives and how they took up their role. Some of the participants reflected explicitly on their experiences of terrorism in childhood and how these shaped how, as teachers, they spoke to their students about terrorism. For example, in his first interview David spoke about not feeling threatened by terrorist attacks, having grown up amidst ongoing terrorism attacks. The FANI approach allowed us to revisit this in the second interview, and David reflected on this further:

"I was thinking, is there something wrong with me? Am I just completely desensitised to everything – And then I had a think back about it and I was thinking, especially after I wrote this, I was thinking… maybe it's kind of because… I've been hearing about this all the time and it's just kinda… it's normalised, almost."

For other participants, these reflections were more implicit. For example, Stephen spoke a bit about terrorism being a relatively new concern for him since moving to London, but perhaps more enlightening was the way he spoke about how he coped when he felt threatened:

"I spoke to my parents and stuff like that, but it was a bit of a- I find in times,

that c- might be a little bit challenging, it can be… I- I did- my- havi- not having my

safety net, of my parents here, was a… like an eye opener for me."

Stephen's admission that he felt vulnerable without his parents felt childlike, and

this was consistent with the way in which he related to the children in his class, and

positioned himself as one of them rather than their leader, when discussing how he

spoke to children about terrorism.

Interviewer and Interviewed

Further evidence about how the participant takes up the role of the teacher

when confronted with difficult conversations can be found by exploring the

relational space between researcher and participant within the interview. It is likely

that roles taken up within the interviews are re-enactments of roles taken up

elsewhere, such as in the classroom. This can be seen in the way I took up the role as

researcher; looking back at the transcripts, on several occasions that my role as

researcher was compromised; looking back at the transcripts, on several occasions I

highlight that I have never been a teacher, or that I haven't had much experience

working in schools. This highlights an insecurity of mine, although it could be argued

that having not been a teacher would be an advantage as I would be less likely to be

drawn into my own experiences. This insecurity is particularly evident in some

interviews where participants are speaking in a particularly intellectual way, where

I felt positioned as the child or inferior in some way. My predisposition to feel

uncertain about my role also meant I identified highly with participants when they

were expressing a preoccupation with 'doing it right' in their role. This often led to

both myself and the participant moving away from talking about feeling

incompetent, perhaps avoiding an important exploration of different ways of approaching talking to children about terrorism.

For participants, too, some aspects of their interviews appeared to mirror the way in which they took up their roles as teachers, and in turn the way in which they spoke to children about terrorism. For example, Joanna, throughout her interviews, repeatedly checked with me 'is that okay?' as if to ascertain if what she said was 'good enough'. This was consistent with how Joanna described her experiences of talking to children about terrorism – being preoccupied with being able to 'do it right'. In other interviews, I used my own reflections to consider what role I was being positioned into by the participant, and what that might suggest about their own unconscious defences or valences for certain roles. In some interviews, I am much less coherent, as if being stifled or silenced by the participants' narrative, perhaps being positioned as such in order to help the participant feel more powerful in a context where they have experienced feeling significantly powerless. In other interviews, I felt myself taking up more of an expert role, offering hypotheses for the participants despite this being outside of the FANI remit. When I took up this role, participants often emphatically agreed with me, as if by acknowledging this 'expert' role they were assuming a novice role and therefore feeling compelled to agree.

4.4.5 Theme 5: Impact on Children

4.4.5.1. Can They Cope?
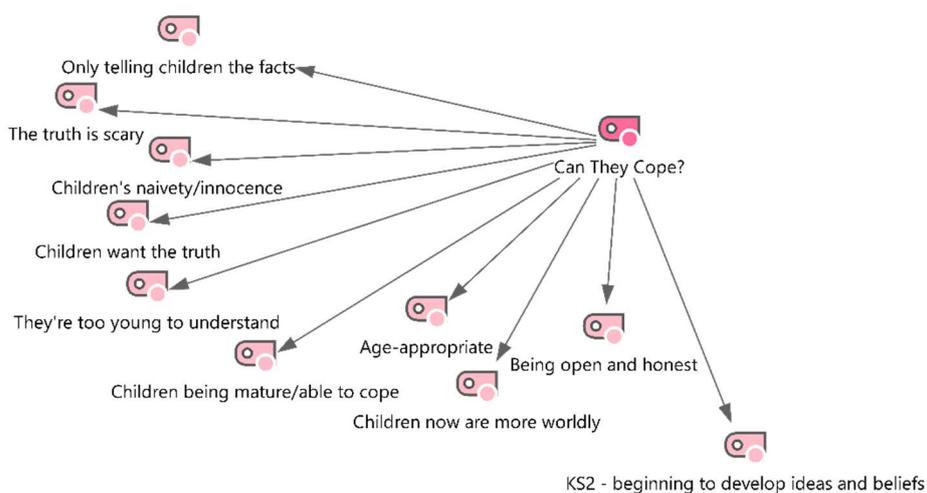
Figure 20 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'can they cope?' including the categorised codes.

Participants agreed that children could cope with more than they are generally given credit for, and that they felt it was important not to patronise them during conversations about terrorism:

"They are capable of understanding what's going on, if you communicate it to them in a way they can understand, without giving them too much graphic detail, without giving them all the gory bits of detail, but giving them information that you know they can, they can process" – Debbie

Being honest with children was a recurring theme, with participants speaking about their experiences of children wanting, and needing, honesty in order to feel safe:

"And I think if you're not being honest, then they're not going to feel safe – David"

"...children know when you're not being honest, and I think – I think that's the key, so we always try to be really honest." – Natasha

Honesty was also spoken about in terms of *only* sharing facts with children, rather than speculating or hypothesising:

"So when talking about it... I kept it fairly simple, but... so... factual, I think, to make sure there was none of this, kind of, expansion on ideas" – Alistair

"...it doesn't mean that it's all true. Where's the facts? Where's the... evidence? What are you basing it on?" – Alesha

The resilience of children was also described in terms of not understanding the reality of a situation in the same way as adults. David described showing children news coverage of the Westminster Bridge incident:

"...they were all 'oh there's Big Ben, there's this' but, there was no... threat... to them. They didn't feel threatened. It was kind of like, 'oh this is a million miles away'. Not a big deal. Almost as if it wasn't... real. Almost it – it wasn't close to home for them" – David

Although participants acknowledged children were able to cope with conversations about terrorism, there was also an understanding that the complex issues underlying and surrounding terrorism were mostly beyond what primary school aged children were able to understand and process.

"I think in order to go into the full ins and outs of it, would be extremely complicated for children to understand," - Alistair

"...it's very hard to bridge that gap between what they understand, and a terrorist. That - that's really hard." – Natasha

Finally, participants spoke about children's innocence, and how, although children were able to cope with conversations about terrorism, this compromised their

innocence. In the following quote, Natasha reflects on how this loss of innocence coloured her experiences of talking to children about terrorism:

"And by innocence I mean that feeling of safety, of 'I live in a safe place', that 'grown ups have got this, and I can just play'. I think… innocence is changing, it's- it's-it's sad that children have to have those very adult conversations when usually it should just be stranger danger," – *Natasha*

4.4.5.2. Emotional Reactions
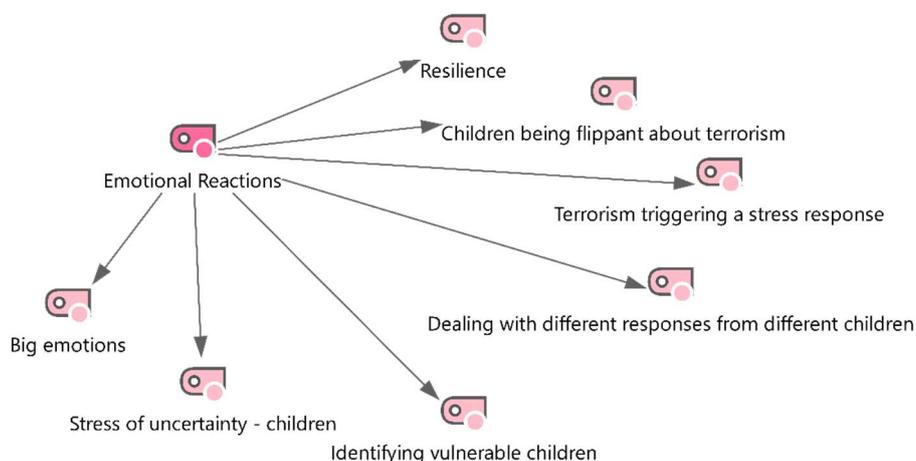
Figure 21 - Thematic map of the subtheme 'Emotional Reactions' including the categorised codes.

Participants reflected on how children responded to talking about terrorism, describing children's emotional reactions:

"I remember having… I think two students may have cried… like, they're just, sort of just – a bit petrified, a little bit, which is completely understandable," – *Stephen*

"…children were coming into school afraid," - *David*

"…because they… they weren't… well they were in pieces to be honest" – *Alistair*

Participants shared their experiences of having to assess the different emotional reactions within their classroom, and support different children accordingly:

"um, and then, um, for those individuals that seemed a little bit more... upset... and distressed... I consoled them afterwards, individually, or in su- really small groups, just gave them that extra... like, reassurance, um, I think that, in itself, it's just kind of honing in on those kids who might be a little bit more susceptible to... a stressful moment" – Stephen

Interpretive Analysis of the Theme 'Impact on Children'

This second layer of analysis considers what participants' descriptions of children's emotional reactions may reveal about participants' own experiences. For some participants, the way in which they described children's responses to talking about terrorism mirrored their own experiences. Many of the participants spoke openly about their own anxieties about being involved in a terrorist incident, living and working in Central London, and this was reflected in how they described children responding. Participants appeared to find it easy to describe children's vulnerability rather than their own, perhaps suggesting that projecting their difficult feelings into the children made them easier to talk about. In the following extract from Stephen's second interview, there is a sense that the emotion is overwhelming, but it is placed within the children:

"it's just getting bigger with anxiety, and pressure, and it could have dramatic effects on, uh, sleep, and eating disorders, and like... it's- it's- it seems like such a small situation that didn't even actually affect the kid physically... but they- emotionally and mentally, I think is more- can be more damaging and actual physical... harm and stuff... in times... like, espe- particularly over a long period of time".

During the data gathering process, I was aware that explicit references to the participants' own emotional experiences were sparse, and often appeared as seemingly involuntary interruptions of the narrative, in the form of a seemingly disjointed story about a past experience, or a reference to something shocking or frightening but unrelated to terrorism. For example, in Debbie's second interview, she maintained a very rational attitude towards terrorist incidents, but referred repeatedly to other tragedies in her personal life and community,

"I have had personal tragedies in my life, you know, my mum dying,"

"we had one child here whose mother died,".

Often, participants' descriptions of the impact of terrorism on children, and the impact of conversations about terrorism, did not seem to match how they described the current threat level or impact of recent incidents. Whilst participants were able to objectively describe the relatively low likelihood of being personally involved in a terrorist incident, the way in which they spoke about the impact on children was akin to a significant trauma or loss. For example, Alistair described children as '*close to tears'*, '*in pieces',* and *'deeply affected'*, despite speaking about his experiences of talking about terrorism in a generally rational and measured way. Perhaps splitting the emotional impact of talking to children about terrorism from themselves and into the children is an unconscious defensive mechanism being used by participants within these interviews.

I also reflected on how the participants' descriptions of how children reacted also seemed to serve a purpose in justifying the way participants chose to speak to children about terrorism. There felt to me a need for children to either be infantilised further, for example Joanna referring to them as '*the little people we work with'*, or presented as more robust, depending on the participants' perception

of their role. Some participants were emphatic about their role as nurturers and protectors within the school. Alesha, whose previous experience in a secondary school involved working within a safeguarding framework, perhaps positioned herself as being a protector. She often referred to her students as not having the capacity to understand complex subjects or as being vulnerable, perhaps to highlight the need for her to care for them. Similarly, Natasha, who has a role within her school supporting the most vulnerable children, spoke a great deal about the emotional impact on children, perhaps unconsciously highlighting the necessity of her role. Participants also appeared to be more reductive in their language about children when explaining their uncertainties or lack of knowledge about the subject, perhaps to protect their role as a leader or educator when facing into a perceived incompetency.

Conversely, other participants focused on children's resilience. David, who acknowledged his own 'desensitised' response to recent terrorist incidents, described the children in his class as not fully understanding the reality of what had happened, and therefore not having big emotional reactions. Interestingly, David also described how children in his class had begun to tell each other dramatic versions of events following a terrorist attack in the local area. I made the following comment in my reflective journal:

> *"Are children creating drama to create a place for emotions or heightened feelings which are not given a space in teacher's approach?" – 06.02.19*

Apparent in all the interviews was a sense that it was important for adults to be able to manage their own emotions in order to support children, and reduce the emotional impact of conversations about terrorism. However, both reflecting on my

own emotional responses throughout the interview process, as well as noticing moments of heightened emotion within the participants' narratives, it is clear that when discussing terrorism, it is difficult to remain neutral. It is therefore important to consider how teachers' own emotional wellbeing is supported either prior to, within, or following teachers' conversations with children about terrorism. With this in mind, I will close this chapter with the following quote from Stephen, who is talking about the children in his class, but makes a comment that is reflective of my experience of the participant group:

"Children comprehend things… like, take on stress differently, or… like, yeah more stressful times, um.. and I think, after speaking to everyone as a whole… some kids can register what's happened, and others are still… unable to?" – Stephen.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1 Overview of Chapter

This chapter will begin by discussing how the findings address the research question posed by this thesis. The findings will then be explored in relation to the existing literature, considering how the findings compliment or challenge those of previous studies, and what these findings add to the literature base. Proposed implications of this research for the Educational Psychology profession will then be presented, outlining key messages for future practice. Strengths and limitations, as well as recommendations for extending this study, are explored before the chapter closes with my reflections on the research process.

5.2 How the Findings Address the Research Question

5.2.1 What the findings tell us about teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism

This study has presented the experiences of seven teachers working in schools in Central London of speaking to their students about terrorism. The psychosocial methodology enabled a rich picture of individual participants' experiences about a shared social context, in this case, a period of successive terrorist attacks in London, Manchester, and the rest of the world, and a consistently high threat level as stated by the government. This study does not assume that the findings presented here can be extrapolated to the wider population of teachers. However, it is plausible that participants' experiences, concerns, fears, hopes and expectations are shared by other teachers. Within the participant group, there were several shared experiences, thoughts and feelings.

Participants' narratives suggested that their experiences of talking to children about terrorism were shaped by the proximity and frequency of terrorist attacks. A discrepancy was acknowledged between the experiences of talking to children about terrorism in response to an incident, as opposed to talking more theoretically about terrorism as part of their lesson plans, with the former being experienced as significantly more challenging. Participants suggested this was due to having to process their own anxieties and fears at the same time as preparing and managing these conversations with children.

Participants described the difficulty of discussing sensitive, emotive, and complex themes, and how they perceived their competence for having these conversations. Some participants expressed confidence in talking to children about

difficult topics, but explained that terrorism required them to talk about concepts and ideas that were beyond what they felt comfortable exploring with children. Participants shared their feelings of being unprepared in tackling issues surrounding terrorism, and cited a lack of guidance from senior leadership within their schools. Feelings varied amongst participants regarding the school systems they worked in, and how the ethos of the school influenced their experiences. Some participants found support and reassurance in being part of a wider system, and spoke about the ethos and approach of the school as having a positive impact on their experiences of talking to children about terrorism. Other participants felt that they had agency within their school to confront this topic however they saw fit, and felt that this was supportive in itself. For some participants, the policies and ethos of the school system inhibited the way would naturally approach these conversations and this made their experiences more difficult. Participants spoke about being mindful of being age-appropriate, offering opportunities to ask questions, and being honest, as factors that made their experiences more positive.

The findings of this study also highlight how different participants' experiences were. Participants described how individual factors such as previous personal experiences and belief systems influenced their experiences. Participants focused on different elements of their experiences, for some, the pressure and responsibility of their role was the most salient part of their narrative, whilst others were preoccupied with the nature of terrorism itself and the impact on themselves and their community. Using the FANI approach allowed for further analysis of the participants' data, revealing in more depth the individual, psychological factors which influenced participants' experiences of talking to children about terrorism.

Participants' narratives also illuminated the impact on teachers of how their students responded to these discussions. Participants spoke at length about the children in their classrooms, and how they perceived them to have coped with conversations about terrorism. For participants who perceived terrorism to be too complex a subject for children, or for them to not be able to cope emotionally with the topic, their experiences of talking to children about terrorism were more difficult.

5.2.2 What the findings tell us about how can psychoanalytic theory can help us to understand teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism

The psychosocial research methodology of this study draws upon psychoanalytic theory to consider what may lie beneath the processed narratives presented by participants (Hollway and Jefferson, 2008). Using a Free Association technique within the interviews (Hollway and Jefferson, 2008) encouraged participants to guide the interview and speak about what felt important to them, rather than being led by the interviewer. This aimed to reveal more about the participants' true experience. Applying a psychoanalytic lens in a second, interpretive layer of analysis aimed to help provide a richer understanding of teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism.

Alongside considering participants' commentary on the social context, the impact of this on their internal, psychological self was able to be explored in more depth. It is understood within psychoanalytic theory that sensitive and emotive topics can trigger defence mechanisms, as a way of avoiding the uncomfortable feelings they evoke (Freud, 1937; Paulhus, Fridlhandler and Hayes, 1997). Applying psychoanalytic theory allowed these defence mechanisms to be acknowledged and discussed, adding more depth to the findings, as the feelings they may have served to

avoid were explored. Furthermore, the acceptance of the researcher as a second, defended subject within the interview dyad (Hollway and Jefferson, 2008) allowed for the subjectivity and reflections of the researcher to be used as data. This offered a further layer of information with which participants' experiences of talking about terrorism could be understood.

5.3. The Findings in the Context of Existing Literature

5.3.1. How school systems and wider society shape teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism

The findings of the current study are consistent with the existing literature with participants describing how their experiences of talking to children about terrorism are influenced by the context in which they are working. In the theme 'Context', participants spoke about the frequency, proximity and severity of recent terrorist attacks, as well as the ongoing threat of future incidents. In the current study, participants spoke about the sensitive issue of how terrorism should be described and defined to children. Participants acknowledged the complexity of terrorism as a concept, and discussed how this made their experiences of talking to children about terrorism more difficult. The following extract from Alistair exemplifies many of the participants' feelings about the definition of terrorism:

"…there's so many different types out there that actually, terrorism is a very large subject, and quite a lot for a child to, I guess, understand"

Participants in this study spoke about the importance of how society portrays terrorism and what children are exposed to in terms of how they begin to understand what terrorism is. Whilst this context is different to that examined by existing literature, the findings of the current study support previous findings that

teachers feel the media plays an important role in how terrorism is conceptualised by both teachers and children (Ray and Pemberton, 2010; Noppe, Noppe and Bartell, 2006). Ray and Pemberton (2010) found that whilst teachers often used the media to help guide their teaching about terrorism, many of them reflected that this could have been distressing for children.

Participants shared their concerns that children are particularly susceptible to messages they receive from the media, as they are not yet able to discern between reliable and unreliable sources of information:

"I think a lot of that brainwashing comes from that media, they are so susceptible, so... I'd say so open to it, and sometimes unable to challenge it – because they don't have the discourse, the language skills, themselves. They don't have the ability to... to maybe see between the black and white and the shades of grey" - Alesha

The findings of this study also support the findings of existing literature that suggest teachers' experiences are shaped by the schools in which they work. In the theme 'Process', teachers shared how the ethos and approach of their schools influenced their conversations with children in response to terrorism. The existing literature demonstrates that teachers can feel either supported or hindered in their efforts by the school system. Felix et al. (2010) highlighted differences in how schools responded to terrorism, and Burns and Schaefer (2002) presented teachers' narratives that demonstrated how, even within one school, the messages and support being received were inconsistent. In the current study, too, participants had varying views about how the approach taken by their school had either made their experiences of talking to children about terrorism easier or more complex. Some

participants felt they were not given enough guidance, or 'left to their own devices', whilst other felt supported and protected by the ethos of their school.

Furthermore, the findings of this study support previous findings that teachers feel poorly supported when it comes to talking to children about terrorism. Ray and Pemberton (2010) found that less than a quarter of the teachers they surveyed had received any professional development regarding terrorism, and across the literature teachers claimed they received little support following holding discussions or activities with their students. In this study, too, participants reflected on how they had been supported before and after their conversations with children about terrorism, and shared that they would be grateful for more information about what to say, and more opportunities to reflect on their experiences following discussions with children. Pfefferbaum et al. (2004b) found that teachers were unlikely to seek help themselves, and Natasha addressed this too, in the current study:

"I think we need more guidelines. And not stuff that we need to go and get ourselves because teachers are just too busy." – Natasha.

5.3.2. The psychosocial factors that influence teachers' individual experiences of talking to children about terrorism

The use of a psychosocial methodology within this study is based on a belief that individual experiences of reality are shaped by their internal, psychological world interacting with their social environment. Within the theme 'Role of the Teacher' participants explored their individual differences and how these shaped their experiences of talking to children about terrorism. This is explored to some

extent in existing literature, but predominantly this is an area in which the current study adds depth to the literature base.

The existing literature considers some of the personal factors associated with having resilience regarding having difficult conversations, with a particular focus on teachers' perceptions of preparedness. Felix et al. (2010) stated intelligence, perceived self-efficacy, and communication skills were protective factors for teachers having to talk to children following a crisis or tragedy. Participants in the current study also shared some of the attributes they felt made their experiences of talking to children about terrorism easier. Debbie described feeling confident in her role due to having had a previous career and being older than her colleagues, which she associated with having more life experience. Alesha reflected on her professional experience and stated that she would have had much more difficulty talking about terrorism when she was a newly qualified teacher. Joanna, Natasha, and Debbie all spoke about the impact of being mothers, and how this shaped their experiences. Stephen, David, and Debbie reflected on their previous experiences of terrorism, and how this influenced their discussions with children. Several participants spoke about aspects of their personality that they felt shaped their experiences too, considering factors such as being rational, needing a lot of information, and how emotional they were:

"Anyway, that's just how I am. But… I try not to jump to conclusions and I try not to add stuff on, and I think it's important to be like that in the role." - David

The findings of the current study suggest that the more an individual is personally affected by terrorism, the more challenging they may find the task of talking to children about it. This is in line with Felix et al.'s (2010) finding that the

extent to which terrorism impacted teacher's usual work abilities, and the impact they perceived it to have on their students, related to their willingness and capacity to discuss terrorism with the children in their class. Joanna echoed many of the participants' feelings when she stated:

"I'm a human too, and I do get scared from time to time"

This statement highlights the difficult task of managing one's own anxieties whilst managing difficult and complex conversations with children. Helfenbein (2009) suggested that teachers may experience some jealousy in the resilience they perceive children to have, when they are feeling anxious. This may be what David was expressing when he said:

"…they were all 'oh there's Big Ben, there's this' but, there was no… threat… to them. They didn't feel threatened. It was kind of like, 'oh this is a million miles away'. Not a big deal."

The current study highlights that it is impossible to expect a teacher to be completely objective and devoid of their own emotions when discussing an emotive topic such as terrorism with children. This is a sentiment echoed in the existing literature by Helfenbein (2009) who suggested it was unrealistic and possibly unhelpful to approach the subject in this way. If we are to acknowledge that teachers bring their own anxieties and emotions to discussions about terrorism, perhaps the need for support for teachers becomes more salient. Felix et al. (2010) found that 68% of participants felt unprepared to handle student responses to 9/11, and Ray and Pemberton (2010) found that 41% of teachers found responding to the needs of children following 9/11 stressful. In a study by Pfefferbaum et al. (2004a), teachers expressed 'knowing how to balance one's own personal priorities vs student needs'

as one of their greatest concerns regarding talking to children about terrorism. The need for further support for teachers is consistent with the current study, with some participants describing feeling 'left to their own devices' and seeking reassurance:

"I would love to see somebody answer those questions, just to make me feel better, to just say 'you're doing okay, you're doing okay" – Natasha

5.3.3. What makes teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism different to their experiences of leading other complex or sensitive discussions?

The existing literature about teachers' responses to terrorism highlights teachers' fears about tackling the sensitive and emotive issues that are intrinsic to terrorism as a concept. The current study resulted in similar findings, with participants describing their experiences of having to incorporate challenging topics into their conversations about terrorism, captured in the theme 'content'. The existing literature suggested that one of the factors that made conversations about terrorism particularly difficult for teachers was the fear of being clumsy with these sensitive issues. Helfenbein (2009) found that teachers found issues of religion, culture and race especially difficult to talk about. In particular, teachers were found to be anxious about offending and concerned about being perceived as prejudiced. However, this is made more complex when, as discussed in the introduction, acts of terrorism can make people feel a certain way towards the perpetrators. Felix et al. (2010) reported that nearly half of their participants stated that their views about certain groups had changed following exposure to a terrorist attack.

The findings of this study mirror this complexity, with participants expressing the importance of remaining unbiased in the way they spoke to children about terrorism, and often caveating their ideas with phrases such as 'I have nothing

against…'. In their responses to the subject matter, participants seemed to be cautious in discussing emotive or sensitive topics, often faltering when subjects such as race, religion, culture, and politics arose. The findings of the current study suggested that teachers feel a pressure to be very measured and neutral in how they talk to children about terrorism. However, the free association technique used in this study allowed for a more in-depth analysis of participants' narratives, and revealed that despite explicitly stating their views as palatable, unprejudiced and neutral, their patterns of language and discourse challenged this. This is not to say that the teachers had problematic views, or were intolerant of difference, but reveals something about the unconscious defences triggered by the topic of terrorism. Melanie Klein (1917) suggested that when faced with issues such as death, terror, and evil, we unconsciously position the 'other' as bad so as to remain 'good', and safe.

Another theme within existing literature that has been replicated, and expanded on, through this study, is the preoccupation that some teachers feel of not being 'good enough' at talking to children about terrorism, or needing to 'do it right'. In the theme 'Process', participants reflected on which aspects of their conversations with children about terrorism had gone well or been more difficult. Ray and Pemberton (2010) found that teachers lacked confidence in addressing ethical issues related to terrorism, and Burns and Schaefer (2002) reported teachers struggled to feel 'good at their job' when having to discuss terrorism with children. Participants in this study, given the opportunity to speak freely about their experiences, elaborated on this and shared the uncomfortable contradiction between their role as 'information givers' and the lack of information they felt able to share regarding terrorism. The findings suggested that participants were

concerned that by not approaching or executing these discussions appropriately, they would be in some way harmful to their students. This is explored in the themes 'Process' and 'Impact on Children'.

In this study, participants reflected on being apprehensive about the questions children would ask, and whether or not they would be able to answer them.

"I would just worry that there would be one question that would throw me…"
Joanna

This is consistent with a study conducted by Helfenbein (2009) which found that teachers expressed concerns about their own inadequacy in the face of difficult questions from children. In the current study, even Alesha and Alistair, who spoke confidently about the historical and political underpinnings of terrorism, doubted their ability to explain this to children effectively. For some participants, this feeling of inadequacy was compounded by not feeling they could honestly reassure children that a terrorist attack would not happen again in the local area. Whilst lacking knowledge conflicted with the role of the teacher, this aspect conflicted with the role of nurturer that so many of the participants identified with, further complicating their experiences of talking to children about terrorism:

"(long pause) …because I can't guarantee it won't happen again. If a child's being bullied, we can put a stop to it. If there's a safeguarding issue, where we feel that a child is in danger… we've got steps to put a stop to it, we have control. Um, we have no control over terrorism (12:30). So it's… it's hard. It's much harder." – Natasha

5.3.6. How using a psychosocial methodology addresses gaps in the existing literature

The findings of the current study, overall, replicate and support the findings within existing literature. The findings add to the existing literature by providing the rich experiences of teachers in an Inner London borough. The literature review at the beginning of this thesis highlighted this perspective was lacking, and much of the existing literature recognised the depth and dimension this would add to the field. This study aimed to address the need to better understand teachers' experiences of supporting children, in the hope that this could lead to better informed practice in schools. This study also addressed the absence of contextual and personal information about their participants, the lack of which in existing literature has compromised the extent to which participants' experiences could be understood.

The current study also addresses the lack of coherence in aim and research method highlighted in the literature review, which cites Hollway and Jefferson (2008) and their argument that the closed nature of surveys or questionnaires is not adequate for examining individual experience. By using the FANI method, as well as undertaking two layers of analysis, this study presents a thorough exploration of participants' experiences of talking to children about terrorism.

5.4. How Wider Literature Supports Understanding of Teachers' Experiences

The range of issues that emerged through the interviews will now be considered in the context of reviewed and wider literature.

5.4.1. Perceptions and Experiences of Threat

The psychosocial ontology of this study posits that individual experiences of a shared social event or phenomenon are constructed differently based on internal,

psychological factors and how the individual interacts with their environment. The findings from this study demonstrated how psychosocial factors shape individual perceptions of threat and how these perceptions influence the way in which teachers talk to their students about terrorism. Both the internal and the external will be discussed here with reference to psychological theory.

5.4.1.1. Internal Working Models

An internal working model (Bowlby, 1969) refers to the mental representations which individuals hold to support their understanding of the world. Bowlby (1969) initially introduced this term in relation to how infants learn to relate to others based on their internal working models of relationships, shaped by their primary relationships with a caregiver. Bowlby's assertion was that our early relationships serve to protect and teach us, and so the quality of these early relationships informs how we experience the world, particularly in terms of how we perceive threat, fear, safety and security. In this study, the concept of internal working models can be applied to the mental representations that participants have built regarding threat and danger, and how these internal working models serve to shape their experiences of talking to children about terrorism. Within participants' narratives, these influences of their early experiences can be perceived in the way in which they describe terrorism and its impact. Debbie and David share their experiences of growing up in the context of ongoing terrorism , reflecting on how the way in which their families responded to these threats has led them to feel less threatened in the present. The following statement from Debbie perhaps indicates a mental representation of terrorism in close proximity as not to be feared unless you are directly impacted;

"...we kinda grew up with it, so you know that unless you're (laughing) unless you're in an ambulance you're okay, and you just carry on" – Debbie

Joanna, Natasha, and Stephen all explicitly referenced their own childhood too, sharing early experiences of threat and fear. Understanding these internal working models of the world is helpful in understanding how individuals differentially respond to threatening situations such as terrorist attacks.

5.4.1.2. The Role of the Environment

As well as internal working models influencing participants' perceptions and understanding of terrorism, the influence of external, social factors must be considered. Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed an ecological systems theory, in which he stressed the role of the social environment in shaping the experiences of an individual. Bronfenbrenner placed the individual at the centre of different, interacting systems. In the current study, the influence of a teachers' family, work, and community systems is relevant, but also important are influences from the 'macrosystem'; the social, political and cultural systems within which the individual exists.

5.4.2. Roles and Identity

5.4.2.1. Occupational Identity

In this study, the nature of being a teacher was discussed by participants, and the way in which their role was described and taken up was suggested to have a significant influence on their experience of talking to children about terrorism. Erikson (1968), in his psychosocial development theory, posited that our occupational identity forms a critical part of our identity as a whole. Marcia (1980)

built on Erikson's original definition of identity to describe the concept as '*an*

internal, self-constructed, dynamic organisation or drives, abilities, beliefs and

individual history' (Marcia, 1980, p. 109). Cieciuch and Topolewska (2017)

summarise identity as *'a personal, cognitive structure self-defining the individual,*

consisting of elements that the individual deems relevant to who he or she is'

(Ciechiuch and Topolewska, 2017, p.48). In providing a self-definition, we highlight

subjectively important and valuable aspects of ourselves so as to protect our self-

concept and self-esteem. In their narratives, participants described their role as a

teacher, and spoke about what it meant to them, with variance between accounts.

Natasha spoke at length about her role as a caregiver and counsellor. Joanna defined

herself firstly as a protector. Stephen emphasised his similarity to his students,

positioning himself as a peer or equal. David and Alistair were more inclined to

describe themselves as primarily being responsible for delivering an education,

whilst Alesha described herself as responsible for identifying risk and challenging

problematic ideas. For Debbie, the role of a teacher was to be a leader, to make

pragmatic decisions and to maintain the equilibrium of the classroom. This

exploration of the role and commitment to a certain facet is consistent with Marcia's

assertion about how identity is achieved.

However, tangible in all participants' narratives was the myriad expectations

and responsibilities of the teacher, and how this presented an insurmountable

challenge; it simply isn't possible to be everything at once. Bibby (2010) described a

simplistic view of the task of a school as 'to educate', referencing the multi-

dimensional role schools and teachers must play in modern society. This notion was

salient within the findings of this study, with participants sharing how

overwhelming they perceived the scope of their role to be. Also, participants

referenced how talking to children about terrorism made it difficult to carry out their role as either educator or nurturer, as they felt they could neither fully inform or fully reassure children. Erikson (1960) discussed how an individual's context shapes their identity. In this study, the context of recent terrorist incidents and ongoing threat seemed to present challenges to participants' identities, in turn threatening their self-esteem and triggering unconscious defences.

5.4.2.2. Belonging to a Group

The findings suggest that group identity and group belonging is also an important aspect of how teachers experience talking to children about terrorism. Participants spoke about the ethos of their school, how they worked with the staff team, and their experiences of support within their place of work as impacting the way in which they were able to have these conversations with children, and process them after. Where the individual's views and beliefs matched those of the school system, the system was described as protective, positive influence on their experiences. Joanna expressed gratitude for working in a school which shared her world view, using words such as 'we' and 'us' to indicate a feeling of belonging and shared experience. The 'primary task' of a group refers to the task the organisation or system must carry out in order to survive (Roberts, 1994). Roberts suggested that in order for the group to survive, all sub-systems and individuals must be aligned to this primary task. For Joanna, and some of the other participants, they described a system in which the sub-systems were aligned and the organisation worked successfully, providing them with a clear idea of the 'primary task' when it came to talking to children about terrorism. For other participants, they described feeling misaligned with the way in which their school proposed they approach these

conversations. Bion (1961) identified how, in a professional context, a dissonance in approach or ethos could lead to a basic assumption mentality – referring to the strategies individuals employed to manage the anxieties associated with their work, which are not being contained by the system they are working within. The findings of this study highlight the need for school systems to be clear about their primary task when talking to children about terrorism, ensuring that teachers feel supported, heard, and well-informed about the task. This is in line with Eloquin (2016) who asserted the importance of clarity and commonality of the primary task in a school context.

5.4.3. Defences Against Anxiety

5.4.3.1. Adoption of Defences

Freud (1894, 1896) identified psychological strategies which he believed individuals unconsciously employed to protect themselves from anxiety and unacceptable or unbearable thoughts or feelings. Melanie Klein (1975) described how the self is formed by unconscious defences against anxiety starting in infancy. Understanding the unconscious defences which may be in action within participants as they describe their experiences of talking to children about terrorism is a key component of this study. The presence of anxieties against which to defend can be determined based upon identification of these defence mechanisms, as well as examination of the researchers' emotional response to participants within the interview space.

Debbie and David both spoke about their experiences of the current context as being unthreatening and not provoking in them any sense of fear and anxiety. Both

David and Debbie talked about experiencing terrorism in their early lives, processing their current lack of emotion as a result of being 'desensitised'. However, another feasible conceptualisation of this response to the current context may be the employment of denial as an unconscious defence mechanism, protecting David and Debbie from revisiting early experiences of fear and anxiety. Anna Freud also suggested that 'rationalisation' is a defence mechanism by which individuals cognitively distort an event to make it less threatening. This, too, perhaps fits with David and Debbie's calm and measured description of terrorism.

In the findings, too, I present my own reflections on the interview process, positing times at which I felt I was the recipient of projections from the participants of unwanted or unacceptable thoughts. Youell (2006) considers how this particular defence mechanism is played out in the school context, where intense feelings are regularly projected into teaching staff by their students. Youell suggested that this could result in teachers feeling *'overwhelmed and unable to think'* (Youell, 2006 p. 28).

5.4.3.2. The Paranoid-Schizoid Position

In her Object Relations theory, Klein described two positions that are taken up in an infant's mind, the 'depressive' position and the 'paranoid-schizoid' position. The paranoid-schizoid position is characterised by the early splitting of the mother into the 'loved, good' mother and the 'hated, bad' mother. This position can be revisited in life, often provoked by threatening, challenging or anxiety-provoking experiences or circumstances. This position can lead to the primitive defence mechanism of 'splitting' (Klein, 1917), in which intolerable, uncomfortable or undesirable feelings are denied, and so 'split off' from the individual and redirected

at others. In this way, the 'bad' can be experienced as *all* bad, leaving the 'good', in contrast, *all* good. In this study, the concepts of splitting and projection can be applied to participants' narratives to help explain the way in which they talked about terrorism, and their experiences of discussing it with their students.

In their descriptions of terrorism, both in terms of their understanding of the concept, and how they would teach it, participants regularly used language such as 'they', 'them', and 'the terrorists' to define a group that was definitely separate. By creating this out-group, the participants unconsciously created a 'bad object'; a recipient for the intolerable feelings related to their experiences of terrorism, and of talking to children about terrorism. In this group, those feelings included fear, uncertainty, inadequacy and anxiety. This mirrors the process by which Volkan (1988) suggested terrorists themselves become motivated to commit acts of violence against a group they perceive as 'all bad'.

This process of splitting can be seen elsewhere in the findings too. For example, Debbie and Natasha both refer to the detrimental impact on children of mothers who became overly emotional when discussing terrorism, in contrast to their calm and containing approach. Waddell (2000) considered this a form of self-preservation that is characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position.

5.4.4. Keeping Them Safe; the Need for Containment

5.4.4.1. Early Experiences of Safety

Another psychological theory that can be drawn upon to consider the findings of this study is Attachment Theory, which began with the work of John Bowlby (1958, 1959, 1960), who presented a theory of development in which

infants are described to form attachments to a caregiver. In Bowlby's theory, this attachment, based on positive interactions, leads to the caregiver becoming a 'secure base' for the infant. Once a safe base has been established, the infant can successfully begin to explore their world, fulling what is known as the 'epistemophilic instinct' (Klein, as cited in Waddell, 2000). This theory was present in participants' narratives, as they spoke about the need for children to feel safe and secure before being able to explore and learn about difficult concepts such as terrorism.

5.4.4.2. Containment in the School Environment

Within the school environment, it is often teachers who act as this safe base for their students. Participants described explicitly the need for schools to act as a physically secure and safe place, but as Bion (1963) highlighted, children need psychological as well as physical containment, and it is this that teachers must provide in their interactions with children, particularly when discussing an emotive topic such as terrorism. Bion (1963) used the term 'container' to describe the recipient of difficult or excess feelings to help another, the 'contained' cope. As participants spoke about children's emotional responses to the subject of terrorism, their capacity for reverie, the ability to process the distress of their students, was demonstrated (Bion, 1962).

5.5. Implications for Educational Psychologists

Some proposed implications of this research for EPs are outlined here. Reflections about how this research now influences my own practice have been included, as well as some suggestions about how the findings of this study may be useful for other EPs. Whilst, as mentioned previously, the findings from this

research are not intended to be generalisable, implications outlined here suggest how EPs, in response to the findings, may broaden their explorations when working with teachers in this context.

5.5.1 Supporting Teachers to Respond to Changes to Policy and Practice as a Result of Increased Awareness Regarding Terrorism

One of the implications of this research for EPs is the increased awareness of the scope of practical implications of social and legislative changes related to terrorism. The teachers who participated in the study described having to respond to terrorist incidents, and there was a shared feeling amongst participants that they felt unprepared in doing so. Since The National Counter Terrorism Security Act became law in 2015, there has been guidance, advice, and recommendations available for schools in terms of how to discuss terrorism in schools and how to respond to incidents. However, much of this guidance is non-statutory, and the participants in this study were not familiar with available advice, or how to access it. Natasha, for example, described being sure that there must be advice available, but not having time to search for it.

In 2018, the Department for Education stated that security threats are becoming more prevalent, and as a result there exists several campaigns and resources designed to support schools to respond to terrorism. The Run Hide Tell resource pack provides schools with a toolkit for discussing terrorism with children in schools, and the PHSE Association, in 2016, published advice regarding increased conversation about terrorism in schools, including guidance about language to use, questions to ask and how to follow up with children following such discussions. The

findings from this research suggest that these resources are not being actively used in schools, and are not serving to help teachers feel adequately prepared in teaching and discussing terrorism in their classrooms. EPs are well placed to support teachers to implement available guidance in their classrooms, helping them to decide how to adapt strategies and resources to be cohesive with their school's ethos, values and the age of the children they are teaching. Teachers participating in this study described how a shared approach amongst school staff would help them feel more confident in approaching these topics, and EPs can also support schools at a strategic level to address this.

In 2015, a dynamic lockdown procedure was introduced in schools, and several schools across London have implemented intruder alarms and carried out drills to prepare children in how to respond should there be a threat to the school. Whilst participants in the present study did not have experience of these lockdown procedures, it is helpful to consider how participants' insights into their experiences regarding terrorism may apply to teachers in schools who have had to introduce and explain lockdown procedures to children. A further implication of this research may therefore be that EPs can use some of the insights and uncertainties shared by participants in the current study, and explore these with teachers who are navigating new procedures in their schools, to open up supportive and reflective discussions.

5.5.2 Supporting Teachers to Talk about Terrorism and Other Complex and Emotive Subjects

Within this study, the desire for more opportunities to share and reflect on practice was salient, with participants expressing their feelings of being isolated at

times and 'left to their own devices'. Some participants expressed their knowledge and experience, but felt they would feel more confident with additional guidance and support, as well as space to share their experiences and debrief following difficult conversations. In the context of terrorism, participants felt a lack of confidence knowing how to tackle the political and often controversial topics and debates that surround terrorism. This is consistent with Hulusi and Maggs (2015) who reflected on the lack of safe spaces teachers have access to in which to reflect on their daily work, compared to other professionals working with children. Hulusi and Maggs also suggest that this lack of space for reflection can lead to teachers not feeling adequately contained in their work, leaving them less capable to provide containment for their students.

In this study, this lack of time and space for recognition for their work had led to participants feeling uncertain and inadequate. Empowering teachers to recognise their own strengths and celebrate examples of good practice amongst staff teams may be a positive area for the EP to work. Within my own practice, these findings have prompted me to consider how time schools contract for training could be more effectively used to facilitate peer supervision, in which knowledge and experience can be shared and celebrated, thus empowering teachers and teaching staff rather than colluding with an idea they need to seek an 'expert' in order to improve their practice.

Participants spoke about wanting more guidance regarding ways of explaining terrorism in age-appropriate way to children. Supporting schools to agree on key messages that are consistent with the ethos of the school would help teachers to feel less alone when trying to approach conversations with children

about terrorism. Participants also highlighted the increased pressure of having to speak to children about terrorism in the aftermath of an incident. The findings suggest that teachers' anxieties can be mediated through process and structure. EPs are well positioned with schools to facilitate and support robust critical incident response processes, which may help to contain teachers' anxieties following an incident and increase their capacity to feel safe in responding to incidents with the children in their class.

The interpretive layer of analysis applied to the interviews also makes sense of relational data, as perceived through my reflections on my own emotional experiences within interviews. This interpretive analysis highlighted the potential for unconscious processes of defence to underpin teachers' narratives and experiences. It may be that providing a space in which these can be safely explored and interpreted would be a helpful way for teachers to process their experiences. EPs are well placed to draw upon psychological theory to facilitate such spaces.

5.5.3 Using a Psychosocial Approach Within the EP Role

EP practice is aligned with a psychosocial approach due to the nature of the role and its position within multiple, complex, and interrelating systems. Fundamentally, EPs work on the understanding that a 'problem' cannot sit wholly within one individual, rather existing in the relational space between that child and those systems around the child. This bringing together of the individual and social is inherently consistent with the psychosocial approach. Emphasising this facet of the EP role, and making it more explicit in our practice could serve to deepen and enrich our work at all levels, including assessment and intervention.

Eloquin (2016) discussed the role of systemic and psychoanalytic theories and the role of the EP. He focused on the role of the EP as a consultant, a method of service delivery that more and more services are turning towards. Eloquin asserted that unconscious processes such as projection and counter transference occur within all relationships, including that of the consultant and consultee. If both the consultant and consultee move through the consultation in a defended position, it is likely that the outcome of the consultation will not address the true nature of the concern which is being discussed, and will therefore be less likely to fulfil the aim of the consultation. Having some awareness and understanding of these processes may help the psychologist to mediate the impact of some of these within the consultation.

When considering how to introduce and implement psychosocial thinking in schools, it is important to consider how this methodology sits alongside models and interventions already employed by the school. Schools look to EPs to provide psychology to support their pupils, staff and school community, and it is the expectation of schools and the profession that EPs are able to draw upon robust evidence to inform their practice. It is often the case, therefore, that schools are drawn to evidence-based interventions such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Schools may be concerned about moving away from more established models of EP service delivery, and it is therefore important for EPs introducing psychosocial methods in schools to emphasise that these methods can complement rather than challenge or replace existing evidence-based interventions, strategies or practices.

It is the EPs role to present the psychosocial way of thinking in a way that is easy for schools to understand, and to be sensitive to where this way of working is appropriate. It is likely that implementing a psychosocial approach will be more

useful and appropriate as part of reflective practice within schools. EPs can use psychosocial methods when working with staff, parents and other professionals to complement and enhance the efficacy of established, evidence-based practice they are already involved in.

5.5.4. Engaging with Psychoanalytic Thinking

Increasingly, there is consideration being given to the role of psychoanalytic thinking in EP work (Pellegrini, 2010; Eloquin, 2016). Pellegrini (2010) was in favour of EPs increasing their levels of reflexivity, and working in ways informed by psychoanalytic concepts, suggesting that this would be a positive move away from the scientist-practitioner position which he proposed was a defence against the anxiety and discomfort of 'not knowing' in the context of the complex cases EPs often are involved in. Pellegrini also asserted that in not employing psychoanalytic thinking, EPs could miss a crucial opportunity to begin to engage with and understand their own emotional responses to their work, and to use these insights to help inform their practice. This study goes some way in illuminating the additional insight that can be gained from reflective practice and drawing upon psychoanalytic thinking.

5.6. Strengths, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research

5.6.1 Strengths of the Current Study

5.6.1.1 Free Association and 'Filling the Gaps'

As identified in the literature review, a gap in existing literature regarding how teachers address terrorism with their students, has been the rich and detailed personal experiences of teachers themselves. This study addressed this gap by not

only providing teachers with the opportunity to share their experiences, but also by utilising free association to ensure interviews followed a narrative arc directed by the participant rather than led by the researcher. This lack of structure provides the space for participants to speak in a way which can reveal aspects of their experience that would perhaps not be shared in a very structured interview. This free association approach also allowed for the exploration of participants' narratives beyond the manifest data, and in doing so, provided a rich reflection of their experiences.

5.6.1.2 Reflexivity and Reflection

Another strength of this study is the acknowledgement of the subjectivity of the researcher which is often omitted in psychological research. In attempting to share my own reflections, anxieties, and motives, an additional layer of data is provided, with which the data gained from participants can be explored and discussed with greater depth and transparency.

5.6.1.3 The Supervisory Space

The psychosocial research methodology stresses the importance of reflexivity on the part of the researcher, but also acknowledged that the researcher, too, is a defended subject who is unable to fully access their unconscious internal mind. The use of the supervisory space, both with a personal supervisor and in group supervision, helped me to make sense of my emotional experiences and reflections on the interviews and research process in order to better understanding the participants and their narratives.

5.6.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

5.6.2.1 Being Part of the System

One limitation of this study is that my role as the researcher may have been compromised by my other role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist working within the school system. It is possible that this impacted relational dynamics within the interview, with participants being wary about speaking openly about their experiences, their role as a teacher, and about the system around them.

5.6.2.2 Sample Size

The final number of participants was seven, higher than the recommended number for research employing a psychosocial methodology. It was helpful to reflect upon this following the research process, during which I lamented that the higher number of participants was perhaps compromising the depth in which each of the participants' data could be explored.

5.6.2.3 Anonymity and the Psychosocial Methodology

This study took careful measures to preserve the anonymity of participants by omitting information which would identify them to people reading it. Whilst this was an important ethical consideration, it is possible that maintaining anonymity compromised the psychosocial methodology at some level. A psychosocial approach emphasises the importance of the social context in which an individual exists, and this could not be fully explored in this study without compromising participants' anonymity in the study. It is also possible that, with anonymity in mind, there were occasions where I was more tentative with the interpretive analyses, for fear of making observations that would identify the participant in question.

5.6.2.4 Recommendations for Future Research

This study has provided an insight into the experiences of teachers talking to children about terrorism. However, the findings emphasise the impact of terrorism on the whole community, and participants repeatedly referenced the roles others within the school community played in the process of talking to children about terrorism. This study did not have the scope to consider the roles of other members of the school community in terms of how children are talked to about terrorism. Repeating this study with other cohorts would be a positive way of growing the literature base regarding talking to children about terrorism. Also, working with children to explore their experiences of conversations about terrorism would provide a valuable insight into how these conversations are received. Adapting the FANI process to be able to engage meaningfully with children, whilst also maintaining the use of psychoanalytic thinking to inform the research process would be an interesting and informative next step for future research.

5.7. Reflections on the Research Process

Goodson (1994) asserted that our previous experiences, in both our personal and professional lives, influence how we take up the role of the EP. It follows therefore that these experiences also shape the way in which one takes up the role of researcher. An important aspect of the psychosocial research methodology is its acknowledgement of the researcher as fundamentally part of the research process, and therefore able have an influence on, and be influenced by, the data. The researcher is crucially understood as a defended subject in the same way as the participants are. In the interest of transparency, in this section I will outline my reflections on the research process and on my experience of the role of the

researcher. As in previous sections of this thesis, I will refer to extracts from my reflexive journal, which I used to capture my reflections during the process. For the reader, this section should aid in better understanding the relational dynamics which may have shaped this research. I will also consider how my reflections on this process may influence my practice moving forwards as an Educational Psychologist, and this, too, may be helpful to the reader.

My first consideration when reflecting on the research process as a whole was how easy it was to recruit participants. I was anticipating finding this stage difficult, expecting that teachers would be reluctant to discuss such a complex and emotive subject. However, participants were recruited within two days of providing schools with information. Following securing my participants, I wrote the following in my reflexive journal:

"Is the high interest in being involved in this study indicative of teachers needing an opportunity to talk, where this is not always available?" - 16.12.18

Throughout the research process I experienced anxieties about my competence as a researcher. This preoccupation with being 'good enough' was mirrored by participants within the interviews, who spoke at length about their concerns regarding their competence to have these conversations with children. At times, participants' narratives became almost paralysed by them trying to find the 'right' way to express their ideas. In the extract below, I wonder about the direction of this mirrored pattern, and make an observation about how this might relate to the EP role:

"Are participants worried about 'doing it right' because I am projecting my own fear of 'doing it right' into them, or is it vice versa? Could it be both? If participants are

being led by my projections is this because I am, in defence, assuming an expert role

and making them feel inadequate and as if they have something to prove? In EP

practice, do parents and teachers monitor/edit what they share in order to be in line

with what they perceive is your 'expert' opinion? Does this shut down helpful and open

communication?" – 19.02.19

Thinking about this led to me contemplating how to ensure in my practice in the future participants feel empowered to share their views and experiences without feeling judged, or subject to perceived power dynamics.

There seemed a sense of 'keeping the peace' as if difference was not something that could be tolerated within the relational space in the interviews. This may be linked to an internalisation of stereotypes leading to both myself and participants feeling the need to defend our own character, and separate ourselves from the stereotypes in which we felt we were pigeonholed, and arrive together at some neutral space. In the context of discussing a topic as emotive as terrorism, where there is an entity clearly labelled as 'bad', to have a different or opposing view to the other person in the dyad feels dangerous. It is interesting to consider how this process may be at play within the work of an EP where particularly complex or emotional issues are being discussed.

Adopting a psychosocial approach in this literature is consistent with my world view within and outside of research, and allowed me to explore this topic in a way which fits with my approach to EP practice. Studying at the Tavistock and Portman has instilled in me a partiality for the use of psychodynamic and systemic theories within EP work, and this research process has supported and strengthened this view. Applying these lenses to the data allowed for a richer, more powerful, and

perhaps more honest depiction of participants' experience, and I hope to capture some of this in my role as an EP moving forward.

5.8. Concluding Comments

This study endeavoured to explore teachers' experiences of talking to children about terrorism. As has been discussed in this final chapter, the insights shared by participants can inform the practice of EPs at multiple levels of their work. The themes drawn from participants' narratives may support EPs to consider how to provide robust support for teachers engaging in complex and sensitive discussions with children about terrorism. Furthermore, this chapter has asserted how EPs may draw upon aspects of the psychosocial methodology when considering how to approach their practice within formulation, assessment, consultation and other elements of the role.

This research has shown that talking to children about terrorism is a complicated and difficult experience for teachers. This research offered an opportunity to explore the challenges presented by these conversations with consideration for the unconscious psychological processes and social influences which contribute to these challenges. Fundamentally this responsibility is one that calls for further guidance, opportunities for reflection, and recognition of the hard work teachers are expected to do for the children in their care.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Excluded Studies

Author, Date and Title	Reason for Exclusion
Alakoc (2018) Terror in the Classroom: Teaching Terrorism Without Terrorizing	From researcher's perspective
Waterson and Rickey (2011) 9/11: Maintaining relevance for the classroom student	Developing a curriculum specifically regarding remembrance of 9/11
Densmore-James and Yocum (2015) Heartsongs across the World: Using	Not specific to terrorism

Literacy and Emotional Pedagogy to Empower Communities of Compassionate Learners	
Rajuan and Gidoni (2014) Drawing as a tool to promote emotional health in the EFL classroom	Not specific to terrorism
Dekel, Hankin, Pratt, Hackler and Lanman (2016) Posttraumatic growth in trauma recollections of 9/11 survivors: A narrative approach	Relating to victims of terrorism not teachers
Berger, Gelkopf, Heineberg and Zimbardo (2016) A school-based intervention for reducing posttraumatic symptomology and intolerance during political violence	Specific school-based intervention for PTSD
Williams (2006). The psychosocial consequences for children and young people who are exposed to terrorism, war, conflict and natural disasters.	Not specific to terrorism
Williams (2006) How Schools Respond to Traumatic Events: Debriefing Interventions and Beyond	Not specific to terrorism

Taylor (2002) Facilitating Difficult Discussions: Processing September 11 Attacks in Undergraduate Classrooms	Pertaining to university not school
Chibbaro and Jackson (2006) Helping students cope in an age of terrorism: Strategies for school counselors	School counsellors not teachers
Gelkopf and Berger (2009) A school-based, teacher-mediated prevention program (ERASE-Stress) for reducing terror-related traumatic reactions in Israeli youth: A quasi-randomized controlled trial	Specific intervention
Chick (2004) Making meaning for children: The events of 9-11	Review of children's literature regarding 9/11
Saleem and Thomas (2011) The Reporting of the September 11th Terrorist Attacks in American Social Studies Textbooks: A Muslim Perspective	Textbooks specifically
Hess and Stoddard (2011) 9/11 in the curriculum: A retrospective	Focus on curriculum
Kus (2015) Science and social studies teachers' beliefs and practices about	Not specific to terrorism

teaching controversial issues: Certain comparisons	
Oppenheimer and Mandemaker (2008) Children's conceptions of terrorists: Exploratory studies	Children's perspectives
Phillips, Prince and Schiebelhut (2004) Elementary school children's responses 3 months after the September 11 terrorist attacks: A study in Washington DC	Children's perspectives
Quatermaine (2016) Discussing terrorism: a pupil-inspired guide to UK counter-terrorism policy implementation in religious education classrooms in England	Implementation of child informed intervention
Alisic, Bus, Dulack and Splinter (2012) Teachers' experiences supporting children after traumatic exposure	Not specific to terrorism
Haas and Waterson (2011) The Challenge of Teaching 9/11: Now and in the Future	Focus on curriculum
Auger, Seymour and Roberts Jr (2004) Responding to Terror: The	School counsellors not teachers

Impact of September 11 on K-12 Schools and Schools' Responses	
Rycik (2004) Teachers' Use of Text to Deal with Crisis Events	Reviews texts that help teachers respond to terrorism
Aziz and Quraishi (2017) Effects of Political Instability on Teachers' Work Decorum in Pakistani Universities: A Teachers' Perspective	Teachers' perspectives are about political instability in general, not how this is communicated to children
Niccolini (2016) Terror(ism) in the classroom: Censorship, affect and uncivil bodies	Study not related to teachers' experiences or school response to terrorism
Shacham (2015) Suddenly – War. Intervention Program for Enhancing Teachers and Children's Resilience Following War	Focuses on an intervention program not school or teacher responses
Schultz, Langballe and Raundalen (2014) Explaining the unexplainable: Designing a national strategy on classroom communication concerning the 22 July terror attack in Norway	Full text could not be retrieved in time for analysis
Tatar and Amram (2008) Israeli Adolescents' help-seeking behaviours in relation to terrorist attacks: The	Focus is on adolescent's experiences rather than teachers'

perceptions of students, school counsellors and teachers	
Kuthe (2011) Teaching the War on Terror: Tackling Controversial Issues in a New York City Public High School	Focus is on developing a curriculum rather than reflecting on response or experience
Yablon (2019) School safety and school connectedness as resilience factors for students facing terror	Focus is on impact of terror on students

Appendix 2 – Critical Appraisal Tools

Appendix 2.1 Walsh and Downe (2006) summary criteria for appraising qualitative research studies

Table 4 Summary criteria for appraising qualitative research studies.

Stages	Essential criteria	Specific prompts
Scope and purpose	Clear statement of, and rationale for, research question/aims/purposes	• Clarity of focus demonstrated • Explicit purpose given, such as descriptive/explanatory intent, theory building, hypothesis testing • Link between research and existing knowledge demonstrated
	Study thoroughly contextualised by existing literature	• Evidence of systematic approach to literature review, location of literature to contextualise the findings, or both
Design	Method/design apparent, and consistent with research intent	• Rationale given for use of qualitative design • Discussion of epistemological/ontological grounding • Rationale explored for specific qualitative method (e.g. ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology) • Discussion of why particular method chosen is most appropriate/sensitive/relevant for research question/aims • Setting appropriate
	Data collection strategy apparent and appropriate	• Were data collection methods appropriate for type of data required and for specific qualitative method? • Were they likely to capture the complexity/diversity of experience and illuminate context in sufficient detail? • Was triangulation of data sources used if appropriate?
Sampling strategy	Sample and sampling method appropriate	• Selection criteria detailed, and description of how sampling was undertaken • Justification for sampling strategy given • Thickness of description likely to be achieved from sampling • Any disparity between planned and actual sample explained
Analysis	Analytic approach appropriate	• Approach made explicit (e.g. Thematic distillation, constant comparative method, grounded theory) • Was it appropriate for the qualitative method chosen? • Was data managed by software package or by hand and why? • Discussion of how coding systems/conceptual frameworks evolved • How was context of data retained during analysis • Evidence that the subjective meanings of participants were portrayed • Evidence of more than one researcher involved in stages if appropriate to epistemological/theoretical stance • Did research participants have any involvement in analysis (e.g. member checking) • Evidence provided that data reached saturation or discussion/rationale if it did not • Evidence that deviant data was sought, or discussion/rationale if it was not
Interpretation	Context described and taken account of in interpretation	• Description of social/physical and interpersonal contexts of data collection • Evidence that researcher spent time 'dwelling with the data', interrogating it for competing/alternative explanations of phenomena
	Clear audit trail given	• Sufficient discussion of research processes such that others can follow 'decision trail'

Table 4 (*continued*)

Stages	Essential criteria	Specific prompts
	Data used to support interpretation	• Extensive use of field notes entries/verbatim interview quotes in discussion of findings • Clear exposition of how interpretation led to conclusions
Reflexivity	Researcher reflexivity demonstrated	• Discussion of relationship between researcher and participants during fieldwork • Demonstration of researcher's influence on stages of research process • Evidence of self-awareness/insight • Documentation of effects of the research on researcher • Evidence of how problems/complications met were dealt with
Ethical dimensions	Demonstration of sensitivity to ethical concerns	• Ethical committee approval granted • Clear commitment to integrity, honesty, transparency, equality and mutual respect in relationships with participants • Evidence of fair dealing with all research participants • Recording of dilemmas met and how resolved in relation to ethical issues • Documentation of how autonomy, consent, confidentiality, anonymity were managed
Relevance and transferability	Relevance and transferability evident	• Sufficient evidence for typicality specificity to be assessed • Analysis interwoven with existing theories and other relevant explanatory literature drawn from similar settings and studies • Discussion of how explanatory propositions/emergent theory may fit other contexts • Limitations/weaknesses of study clearly outlined • Clearly resonates with other knowledge and experience • Results/conclusions obviously supported by evidence • Interpretation plausible and 'makes sense' • Provides new insights and increases understanding • Significance for current policy and practice outlined • Assessment of value/empowerment for participants • Outlines further directions for investigation • Comment on whether aims/purposes of research were achieved

Appendix 2.2 Long et al (2002) summary criteria for appraising qualitative research studies

Review Area	Key Questions
(1) STUDY OVERVIEW	
Bibliographic Details	0. Author, title, source (publisher and place of publication), year
Purpose	1. What are the aims of the study? 2. If the paper is part of a wider study, what are its aims?
Key Findings	3. What are the key findings of the study?
Evaluative Summary	4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the study and theory, policy and practice implications?
(2) STUDY, SETTING, SAMPLE AND ETHICS	
The Study	5. What type of study is this? 6. What was the intervention? 7. What was the comparison intervention? 8. Is there sufficient detail given of the nature of the intervention and the comparison intervention? 9. What is the relationship of the study to the area of the topic review?
Setting	10. Within what geographical and care setting was the study carried out?
Sample	11. What was the source population? 12. What were the inclusion criteria? 13. What were the exclusion criteria? 14. How was the sample selected? 15. If more than one group of subjects, how many groups were there, and how many people were in each group? 16. How were subjects allocated to the groups? 17. What was the size of the study sample, and of any separate groups? 18. Is the achieved sample size sufficient for the study aims and to warrant the conclusions drawn? 19. Is information provided on loss to follow up? 20. Is the sample appropriate to the aims of the study? 21. What are the key sample characteristics, in relation to the topic area being reviewed?
(3) ETHICS	
Ethics	22. Was Ethical Committee approval obtained? 23. Was informed consent obtained from participants of the study? 24. Have ethical issues been adequately addressed?

(4) GROUP COMPARABILITY AND OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	
Comparable Groups	25. If there was more than one group was analysed, were the groups comparable before the intervention? In what respects were they comparable and in what were they not? 26. How were important confounding variables controlled (e.g. matching, randomisation, in the analysis stage)? 27. Was this control adequate to justify the author's conclusions? 28. Were there other important confounding variables controlled for in the study design or analyses and what were they? 29. Did the authors take these into account in their interpretation of the findings?
Outcome Measurement	30. What were the outcome criteria? 31. What outcome measures were used? 32. Are the measures appropriate, given the outcome criteria? 33. What other (e.g. process, cost) measures are used? 34. Are the measures well validated? 35. Are the measures of known responsive to change? 36. Whose perspective do the outcome measures address (professional, service, user, carer)? 37. Is there a sufficient breath of perspective? 38. Are the outcome criteria useful/appropriate within routine practice? 39. Are the outcome measures useful/appropriate within routine practice?
Time Scale of Measurement	40. What was the length of follow-up, and at what time points was outcome measurement made? 41. Is this period of follow-up sufficient to see the desired effects?
(5) POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS	
Implications	42. To what setting are the study findings generalisable? (For example, is the setting typical or representative of care settings and in what respects?) 43. To what population are the study's findings generalisable? 44. Is the conclusion justified given the conduct of the study (For example, sampling procedure; measures of outcome used and results achieved?) 45. What are the implications for policy? 46. What are the implications for service practice?
(6) OTHER COMMENTS	
Other Comments	47. What were the total number of references used in the study? 48. Are there any other noteworthy features of the study? 49. List other study references
Reviewer	50. Name of reviewer 51. Review date

Appendix 2.3 Adapted tool used for literature review

Bibliographic information

Scope and Purpose	
Design and Methodology	
Sample and Sampling Strategy	
World View and Theoretical Positions	
Analysis and Outcome Measurement	
Interpretation	
Key Findings/Conclusions	
Reflexivity	
Ethical Dimensions	
Implications, Relevance and Transferability	

Appendix 3 Critical Appraisal of Included Studies

Pfefferbaum, Fairbrother, Brandt, Robertson, Gurwitch, Stuber, and Pfefferbaum (2004) Teachers in the Aftermath of Terrorism – A Case Study of One New York City School

Scope and Purpose	- Aimed to report the reactions, needs and interests in preparedness training among teachers in the aftermath of 9/11 - Further aim to develop preparedness programs for teachers and schools for responding to terrorism -

Design and Methodology	- Survey study with three composite variables
	    ○ One to measure action taken by teachers
	    ○ One to measure teachers' need for help
	    ○ One to summarise posttraumatic stress reactions
	- Survey responses based on 4- and 5-point scales

Sample and Sampling Strategy	- 32 teachers - Voluntary participation - 91% Female - 72% White, remainder a mix of Asian, Hispanic, African American and other ethnicities - Age range from 25 to 72, with an average age of 40 - 32% of participants more than 10 years of teaching experience
World View and Theoretical Positions	- Not explicitly referenced although reference made to diagnostic criteria for stress

	responses, and quantitative methodology suggests a positivist world view. - Assumption of shared meaning of language
Analysis and Outcome Measurement	- Descriptive statistics computed for all study variables - Two-tailed Pearson r correlations computed with significance level set at *p=.05*
Interpretation	- Some reference to context within which teachers were working - Acknowledgement of factors which may influence their role, for example relationship with students and colleagues
Key Findings/Conclusions	- 41% of teachers found responding to needs of students stressful - 4 attributed subsequent difficulties in the classroom to the 9/11 attack - 93% of teachers held class discussions following 9/11 - 97% of teachers were more interested in supporting children regarding terrorism following 9/11
Reflexivity	- Not explicitly referenced
Ethical Dimensions	- Reference to receiving informed consent from participants - Anonymity of participants protected - Using diagnostic criteria could be problematic for respondents who could assume a judgement about their mental health
Implications, Relevance and Transferability	- Small private school in New York City – findings many not be transferable to all school contexts

	- Proximity to 9/11 to be taken into account when considered stress responses in teachers

Felix, Vernberg, Pfefferbaum, Gill, Schorr, Boudreaux, Gurwitch, Galea, Pfefferbaum (2010) Schools in the Shadow of Terrorism: Psychological Adjustment and Interest in Interventions Following Terror Attacks

Scope and Purose	- Two objectives:
	     ○ To assess the psychosocial adjustment of teachers related to terrorist attacks on multiple dimensions including trauma exposure, PTSS, posttraumatic growth, professional role performance and the use of mental health services
	     ○ To examine how their adjustment relates to interest and involvement in school-based psychosocial interventions to address terrorism-related concepts, such as holding class discussions, providing information, and communicating with parents

Design and Methodology	- Retrospective
	 - Self-report survey adapted from instruments used in prior research
	     ○ Questions regarding exposure to terrorism (yes/no responses)
	     ○ Questions regarding peritraumatic distress (yes/no responses)
	     ○ Questions regarding psychosocial adjustment (17 items from DSM symptom criteria for PTSD, response on 5-point scale)

Sample and Sampling Strategy	- Convenience sample
	- 399 teaching staff and non-teaching school personnel in Washington DC
	   o 331 teachers
	   o 32 other professionals e.g. school psychologists and speech therapists
	   o 20 office employees
	   o 16 administrators
	   o Average age 43.3 years
	   o 85% Female
	   o Average time in role = 7 years

World View and Theoretical Positions	- Reference to psychosocial adjustment and psychosocial interventions but a psychosocial world view is not explicitly stated. - Use of yes/no questions and diagnostic criteria suggests a positivist position. - Self-efficacy and coping psychology mentioned
Analysis and Outcome Measurement	- Descriptive statistics and zero=order correlations to address RQ1 - Hierarchical multiple regression to address RQ2
Interpretation	- Findings considered in the context of two terrorist incidents in close proximity to schools in which participants were working
Key Findings/Conclusions	- 63% reported feelings of helplessness, fear or horror to terrorist attacks - 68% of participants felt unprepared or barely prepared to handle student difficulties with terrorism - Teachers' willingness to intervene with children's responses to terrorism was affected by:

	o Feelings of preparedness
	
	    o Extent to which crisis had impacted usual work responsibilities
	
	    o A perceived increase in difficult behaviour amongst children in their class

Reflexivity	- Not explicitly referenced
Ethical Dimensions	- IRB approval explicitly stated - 79% of participants knew someone who was killed, injured or missing in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, perhaps suggesting an ethical issue with this study - Using diagnostic criteria could be problematic for respondents who could assume a judgement about their mental health
Implications, Relevance and Transferability	- USA school system – perhaps not transferable to UK schools - Proximity to 9/11 to be taken into account when considered stress responses in teachers - Assumption of shared meaning of language and assumption that DSM criteria for PTSD are appropriate for all participants

Ray and Pemberton (2010) *Engaging 9/11 as a Learning Event: Teachers' Perspectives Examined*

Scope and Purpose	- The purpose is descriptive
	
	- Objectives:
	
	    o To find out about teachers' media usage following 9/11
	
	    o To find out teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy regarding teaching

	about terrorism before and after having to do so following 9/11 o To what extent did these perceptions change as a result of experiences of teaching about 9/11
Design and Methodology	- Primarily quantitative, with some qualitative data derived from one open-ended question - Survey as part of a larger study examining teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach about terrorism - Researcher-developed questionnaire based on recommendations made by learning organizations in the field of trauma awareness to enhance instrument reliability and validity
Sample and Sampling Strategy	- 144 social studies teachers sent survey - 32% return rate (40 surveys) - 29 of these respondents reported using live media coverage to engage students in discussions about terrorism, and these 29 were included in the study - Average 16.5 years teaching
World View and Theoretical Positions	- Not explicitly stated
Analysis and Outcome Measurement	- Data analysed descriptively and comparatively - Qualitative data read and re-read, noting emergent themes (narrative data is limited but used to support quantitative data)
Interpretation	- Literature review provided to demonstrate sensitivity to the context within which research is being carried out

	- Researcher-developed questionnaire based on recommendations made by learning organizations in the field of trauma awareness to enhance instrument reliability and validity - Clear rationale for chosen sample and formation of instrument tools
Key Findings/Conclusions	- Teachers had increased feelings of self-efficacy following 9/11 - Teachers felt more aware of the importance of modelling appropriate coping strategies to their students following 9/11
Reflexivity	- Some acknowledgement of assumptions made by researchers prior to engaging in the study
Ethical Dimensions	- Not explicitly referenced
Implications, Relevance and Transferability	- Response rate recognised as a limitation - Acknowledgement that sampling strategy may have led to participant sample being 'more favourable to the issue involved in the questionnaire', which may skew findings - Likely that other teachers working in similar proximity to 9/11 had similar perceptions and experiences

Pfefferbaum, Pfefferbaum, Gurwitch, Doughty, Pynoos, Foy, Brandt Jr, Reddy (2004) Teachers' Psychological Reactions 7 Weeks After the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombings

Scope and Purpose	- To assess teachers' reactions to the Oklahoma City bombings - Exploring the relationships among teachers' exposure, their bombing-relating PTS and safety concerns, and their functioning

Design and Methodology	- Self-report survey using a questionnaire including items assessing:
	
	   o Peritraumatic reactions of fear and arousal
	   o Interpersonal and television exposure
	   o Distress associated with media exposure
	   o Distress about feelings towards perpetrators
	   o PTS reactions
	   o Functioning and use of counselling
	   o Stress associated with responding to post-bombing reactions of students
	
	- Items scored on a 4- or 5- point scale

Sample and Sampling Strategy	- Convenience sample of 894 teachers - Demographics roughly paralleled gender and ethnic distribution of teaching staff in district at the time of the survey
World View and Theoretical Positions	- Not explicitly stated but use of quantitative methodology assumes a positivist position
Analysis and Outcome Measurement	- Descriptive statistics computed for all study variables
Interpretation	- Factors such as prior trauma exposure and social support, which may have influenced trauma response, not considered
Key Findings/Conclusions	- 63% of teachers worried very much about their safety following the incident - PTSS scores were significantly associated with interpersonal exposure and television exposure - PTSS scores are also influenced by distress about their feelings towards perpetrators

Reflexivity	-
Ethical Dimensions	- Informed consent in accord with protocol approved by University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center Institutional Review Board - Using diagnostic criteria could be problematic for respondents who could assume a judgement about their mental health
Implications, Relevance and Transferability	- Large sample size and sample reflected demographic of teachers in the area - Less than 5% of teachers reported seeking additional support, so special efforts to reach teachers may be needed

Burns and Schaefer (2002) *Reflective Journal Writing of Vocational Education Teachers During the Week of September 11, 2001*

Scope and Purpose	- Exploring teaching logs of 30 teachers to examine their actions and feelings whilst teaching on 9/11 - Purpose is explorative
Design and Methodology	- The reflective journals of 30 teachers were explored and presented based on emergent themes - Reflective journals are written weekly, guided by questions based on Brookfield's suggestions for critical reflection
Sample and Sampling Strategy	- 30 provisionally certified trade and industrial and health occupations teachers at Georgia State University - 2 were teaching at elementary schools, 1 at a middle school and 27 at secondary schools
World View and Theoretical Positions	- Not addressed

Analysis and Outcome Measurement	- Teachers' reflections were organised into the following themes:
	    o Coping with personal emotions
	    o Quandaries with administrators
	    o Focusing lessons
	    o Handling students' responses
	    o Lending a hand
	    o Affirmations as a teacher

Interpretation	- Not explicitly addressed
Key Findings/Conclusions	- Teachers experiences were varied and demonstrated the range of complexities and challenges that teachers faced on 9/11.
Reflexivity	- Researchers' emotional responses to the reflective journals are recognised
Ethical Dimensions	- Reflective journals are part of an on-going research project, so participants understood they would be viewed
Implications, Relevance and Transferability	- One data source, but researchers suggest that these reflections could be generalised to academic teachers as well

Noppe, Noppe and Bartell (2006) *Terrorism and Resilience: Adolescents' and Teachers' Responses to September 11, 2001*

Scope and Purpose	- Purpose was to survey middle and high school students and their teachers about the reactions to the events of September 11th - Aim to learn how Midwestern adolescents and their teachers, who were not in close physical proximity to the attacks, were still impacted by the incident in terms of 'psychological proximity'

Design and Methodology	- Students and teachers completed surveys in in their classrooms - Two surveys with parallel items for students were created including items with Likert ratings, checklists, and open-ended questions - Surveys were designed to assess demographic background, initial reactions to the events, concurrent concerns, degree of personal loss, coping strategies and anxieties and concerns related to terrorism. - Additional items for teachers regarding implementation of school and classroom procedures, as well as observations about their students' reactions
Sample and Sampling Strategy	- 150 teachers - 823 middle school and high school students
World View and Theoretical Positions	- Not addressed

Analysis and Outcome Measurement	- Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were used
	    o Descriptive statistics
	    o Thematic analysis by individual researchers, and then common themes derived

Interpretation	- Survey was pilot tested and feedback used to modify final survey version

Key Findings/Conclusions	- Three central issues regarding impact of 9/11
	    o Adolescents and public tragedy
	    o Dialectical dilemmas of adolescents' conceptions of death
	    o Sources of adolescent resilience

Reflexivity	- Not addressed

Ethical Dimensions	- Permission obtained from five of six approached school districts.
Implications, Relevance and Transferability	- Indirect exposure to terrorist attack could mean findings have wider spread transferability than studies where participants have been directly exposed to terrorism - Parents, clinicians, and teachers can use findings to consider how adolescent responses to terrorism reflect their cognitive, physical and socioemotional needs and help teachers shape support, guidance, and educational opportunities.

Helfenbein Jr (2009) *Looking Through the Lenses: Culture in Classrooms, Curriculum, and the Crisis of September 11th*

Scope and Purpose	- Enquiry by a teacher and university researcher into how to return to or modify their curriculum following September 11th - Purpose is exploratory
Design and Methodology	- Qualitative, action-research study
Sample and Sampling Strategy	- Teacher and a university researcher
World View and Theoretical Positions	- Not explicitly stated but reference to personal perspectives and personal constructions of a concept - Some acknowledgement of a psychosocial position in the question 'how does where we are make us who we are?'.
Analysis and Outcome Measurement	- The teacher's reflections on her practice were considered together with the researcher in an action-research approach

Interpretation	- In depth consideration is given to the context of the individual teacher and reflective journals are used to explore her narratives thoroughly - The teacher's words are presented unedited for the reader to make meaning of
Key Findings/Conclusions	- N/A
Reflexivity	- Some reflexivity recognised; teacher's previous engagement in a research project and motivation to continue with research despite original project falling apart. The teacher recognises personal connection to the project. - The researcher references the use of a reflective journal by both himself and the teacher
Ethical Dimensions	- Not addressed
Implications, Relevance and Transferability	- Some features of a possible curriculum for discussing terrorism are proposed, from the perspective of a teacher who experienced having to support young people following 9/11 - Unique school context may not be transferable to other school settings

Appendix 4: Information letter for prospective participants

NHS
The Tavistock and Portman
NHS Foundation Trust

Information Sheet for Potential Participants of a in an Experimental Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants

Research Title: What Are Teachers' Experiences of Talking to Children About Terrorism?

Researcher: Emma Denholm

Research Supervisor: Dr Judith Mortell

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study. This is a research project for a thesis I will be writing as part of my Professional Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational Psychology. Participation or lack of participation in this study will have no impact on the delivery of the service level agreement between the Educational Psychology Service and your school.

Research Project:

The aim of this research project is to explore the experiences of primary school teachers talking to the children in their class about terrorism as part of their general class discussions, or in response to questions made by the children. Having to manage the anxieties of their whole class could have implications for the teacher's own wellbeing. It is hoped that by developing a better understanding of the experiences of teachers, Educational Psychologists can offer support where it is needed.

Methodology:

This research will employ a 'psychosocial' approach. This way of approaching research considers the impact of the social, cultural and political environment on individual experiences. The psychosocial approach pays attention to unconscious processes that may be contributing to the behaviour or language that is elicited when talking about a sensitive topic such as terrorism. Bringing attention to these underlying processes may help professionals, including Educational Psychologists, be more sensitive when supporting teachers to talk to their pupils about terrorism.

I will be recruiting between 4 and 6 primary school teachers for my research. Participants will need to meet the following requirements:

- ⬚ Has been a class teacher in a primary school in Central London for at least a year.
- ⬚ Currently holds a teaching position within their school which is not subject specific.
- ⬚ Has not been personally involved or significantly impacted by a terrorist attack or terrorism-related incident.
- ⬚ Has an experience of speaking to students about terrorism

Involvement in the proposed research will require participation in two interviews, which will be recorded for transcription purposes. It is estimated that each interview will take between an hour and an hour and a half. Interviews will follow the Free Associative Narrative Interviewing Approach (Holloway and Jefferson, 2008). In the first interview, I will ask participants to talk about whatever comes to mind regarding talking to children about terrorism. Between the two interviews, I will analyse the data, looking for points of interest to extend on in the second interview.

Analysis:

I will use thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to consider participants' responses. This will involve initially generating themes across responses given by participants, and then considering each participant individually, looking for themes within their responses.

All data collected will remain confidential. I will be writing a thesis reflecting the findings of the study and the process of undertaking this project. Data will be shared only with the relevant university staff and retained in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy. The small sample size may have implications for anonymity, but all measures will be taken to ensure your details, any organisation details or identifying details are anonymised.

The exception to the above confidentiality statement is where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

Involvement in this project is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw consent at any time and may withdraw any *unprocessed* data previously supplied.

This research as received formal approval from TREC. If you have any concerns about the conduct of the investigator, researcher(s) or any other aspect of this research project, they should contact Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

Appendix 5: Example transcript

Interview 7

I: This is interview seven. If you want to start with the first one?

PP: Okay so anxiety is something that I've witnessed in the classroom, from the children. Um, and, when we had the terrorist attack at Parson's Green, we had a couple of children who… struggled to come back… into school – because they were frightened that it was so close to home, that, you know, it could happen again... I guess. And- and they-they (00:30) seemed to be quite… most of the class were okay about it, but- ju- a handful of them were really… seemed to be… mentally affected by it – by the idea that something- I think that something they see on the news- being something that doesn't usually directly affect them, could've potentially affected them

I: Yep

PP: Um yeah, and we had to talk a couple of children into coming into school.

I: Wow

PP: On the day of- the day after the event… because they… they weren't (01:00)… well they were in pieces to be honest (*laughs dryly*). Um… very… teary, and-and they struggled, kind of, to explain… why… they were like that… The- the crux of it was that… I think it was just so close to home that they… they were… deeply affected by it… and… anxious about it happening again

I: Yeah

PP: So… that's really why (01:30) why I put anxiety

I: Yeah, and what did you, kind of, think was your role within that, in terms of, um, them coming back in, feeling so…

PP: Well I think discussing it, that's why I put necessary, actually

I: Uh-huh

PP: is um… we don't tend to usually just talk about terrorism as a thing, it's not something we have in our daily lesson plans, but, um, in that case, I think it's kind of necessary to discuss (02:00) kind of what happened, so that there's clarity, but also… the fact that… there's- there's different types of terrorism. I think lots of children, when you talk about terrorism, these days they're probably just associating it with Islam… cause of Isis and what we know of- of the most recent terrorist attacks in England. But actually, discussing the fact (02:30) that terrorism is- is more than just that… and it's not just associated with a religion, it's- well, it's not even associated with religion, it's- I- I've found it quite important… to get that across to them as well, because… obviously we… we talk about, um… kind of… I guess… bookmarking specific faiths with being associated with that… (03:00) that's not something that we want, to obviously… promote… in an environment where we have had a fairly close call with terrorism. We want the children to understand that, you know, tha- that these are very rare instances, but it's a time and a place where we do have to be vigilant, and it's not just being vigilant about specific people, it's being vigilant on a day to day basis, (03:30) and um… I think that… getting across to those children that- y'know- this is a very rare event, it's not something that you can make…

your… kind of… I- you can't let it affect your life for too long, because if you do you- you're constantly going to be looking over your shoulder. But obviously in the ti- in the times that we live in, you have to be… (04:00) a little bit vigilant. And you have to- if you're travelling in public transport, you have to keep your eye out, you… are out and about and you see something strange, you know, you need to be aware of what to do, but also… yeah, you can't… kind of… think that everyone you see of a certain type is a terrorist, or anyone, or anything you see that is strange is going to necessarily be that, just (04:30) to be that way you'd constantly be living in fear.

I: Yep

PP: And er, and um, obviously part of making those children feel better was explaining y'know this is a secure f- a secure facility- if- if anything, once you're inside these gates you- you're far more safe than you would be if you were out on the street.

I: Yep

PP: And… helping them to understand that once they're in school, y'know, everyone here is there to support them (05:00) we wouldn't… y'know, we- we do our best on a daily basis to make sure nothing happens to them and we certainly wouldn't- we'd certainly be vigilant in a case like this to make sure that it doesn't happen… here

I: Yeah

PP: So yeah, um, I think it's just… I think it's necessary because of awareness… of… terrorism – you have to be aware.

I: Mmhmm

PP: It doesn't just happen in England, it happens everywhere, and it can happen to anyone, but if you're (05:30) just a little bit more vigilant, then you're- you can work towards avoiding those situations – hopefully… um… so, um it's necessary because… the children need reassurance… that it's.. not.. something that happens all the time, and it is something which is very rare, and will not necessarily affect them. Again, it's just wrong place, wrong time (06:00). And obviously, necessary because you need to- need them to have a bit of an understanding of what terrorism itself is – rather than just associating it with terrorism, Muslim, or terrorism, guns, or terrorism, bombs, y'know – there's so many different types out there that actually, terrorism is a very large subject, and quite a lot for a child to, I guess, understand

I: Yeah

PP: But (06:30) we, I think in that situation, just helping them to understand a little bit more about what it was – and actually being honest about what you know – because children come in – the ones that did come in – you know, when some of them were upset, actually a lot of their information was incorrect. So… they were kind of saying 'oh, this guy down there had a knife… and he was doing this, and he was doing that (07:00)'. And it's like, no, that's not correct. Y'know… these are things that we associate with a terrorist attack – and they've obviously taken that and expanded on things and they're trying to make it worse. When in actual fact, it's what are the facts? At the time… we knew… not that much, so- there was a terrorist attack, but… we don't know exactly what happened, so… we can't create a situation around (07:30) it, and we had another situation in school we had to go off to church one day cause of tha- that scam email?

I: Sure – with the bags?

PP: Yeah, with the bags, and, I mean, that's a prime example of if- to be honest, you're in your safe place in school, because even though before we went we were almost certain that it was some sort of hoax because we'd spoken to other schools,

I: Mmm

PP: Other schools had been talking about it – um, (08:00) we got 'em out, just… to be safe. And we didn't say- we didn't actually… at that time they didn't tell the children why, and obviously the- the immediate instincts are that's probably the best way to do it – just blame it as a kind of… drill… if something were to happen, and… I think it went down quite well, generally, with the children. I- I had a chat with them (08:30) about it after, again, to explain, because I knew it would be in the news

I: Yeah

PP: And they… yeah, they took it quite well, you know, oh okay so… getting the facts, before you explain it is, like, really important, I think, otherwise they do – as children do – create a… create this world of their own in which they completely… like… (*laughs*) hyper dra-dramatise, I guess. So I think we- we need to kind of avoid that (09:00) But I do think it's something that… especially in London where… you're always semi-susceptible to these things… it's something that we do have to discuss, it's not something that we… shouldn't talk about because it's not a nice think to talk about, and th- they need to understand, because it's just about the dangers of it, really, and you're blind to it, then… you know, you're not just putting yourself at risk (09:30) you're putting other people at risk as well, so… so yeah, I thought it was necessary.

I: Yeah, and I guess those are… when you were talking I was thinking about how big some of those, you know you were saying about how it's necessary to tell children, but actually some of those concepts you're grappling with… you know, when you were saying about being quite clear about what terrorism is, that's a huge ask… even for adults to discuss

PP: Yeah

I: Um… let alone primary school aged kids.

PP: Yeah, well it's difficult to explain to anyone why somebody would want to kill other people (10:00)

I: Mmhmm

PP: On… on- on a train. You know, people that aren't doing anything wrong. And um, I think that a lot of children struggle to get their head around that – you know, we learn from day one, you know, hurting each other is bad and then you see these things happen… where people just do it… without any… kind of- remorse, or… (10:30) consideration for who they're targeting, and that's… kind of why I think it is necessary to talk about it with kids, because even though their kids… in this day and age they're a target. So they have to be aware as well. And obviously, when we go on trips we have to discuss… what could happen… and it's difficult to day what you would do… in that situation, but (11:00) you just have to talk about it, and then be aware that it- it's a possibility. In this day and age. So…

I: Yeah, so I guess as a- as a teacher, you've… I mean, you as well as some of your colleagues here, have had quite an unprecedented amount of experience talking to children about… like you said, the actual reality of terrorism. Is it something you feel like… was… comfortable for you? Or manageable? OR did it feel, quite… I don't know… difficult? (11:30)

PP: Look, I don't know what other teachers in the school did on that day… But… I… it was difficult, but it wasn't… um- no- no-one was in a- none of the kids were in a right frame of mind that day, cause of what was going on around… if they didn't know what was happening they were making up stories, and if they weren't making up stories, then they were just a little bit confused… and I knew I wasn't going to be able to get them to (12:00) really focus that much on their day. So actually having a discussion about it was something which…. Actually came quite naturally, because… it's… that- that was the day.

I: Yeah

PP: That really did define the day, you know? So um, having that discussion – loads- loads of questions came of it obviously

I: Mmhmm

PP: But um… I mean I'm not in the best place to necessarily answer them all (12:30), but it just… I think it just- from my perspective, when it… when it- when they started to discuss 'oh, this and that happened' and it was getting out of control, you know, it wasn't just so much about this class, it's about what are they going to say in the playground?

I: sure

PP: And how that's going to kind of spread. And even though we did have that discussion, it still- there was still one or two children who went out and… I don't even think they were listening to me… cause they went out and they were talking about things that didn't happen (13:00) to year threes,

I: Yeah

PP: So… if their mind can't comprehend it, do they think that a year three's mind is going to take it any better? I don't know…. That was a small quantity of children… anyway… so… there's always one, isn't there?

I: Yeah. There certainly is. Um, and you might have talked to some of these already, I know we've kind of talked about necessary, but did you want to say any more about your second word (13:30) concern?

PP: (*long pause*) Yeah. I-I- well, I think concern… and anxiety kind of go hand in hand don't they? I think my concern was… even though I could explain what terrorism was… I'm not an expert in it, and… really… one of my- one of my concerns was to ensure that I was impartial (14:00) as well… because… you know.. it's e- it's quite easy to give your own opinion on something… and then you start a kind of snowball yourself – so that whole thing of making sure that you… there's fake news, there's real news, there's the facts and then there's fiction… just speaking that, really… was my goal. That was my main concern – to ensure that it didn't kind of escalate (14:30) into something that- that, you know, they go home and tell a story that is completely

false, and then… tell other children in the school, and then it becomes… a sort of Chinese whispers gone wrong situation. So yeah, my concern – I think one of the concerns is that, y'know- I'm not- I don't really have all the answers. I can't tell you why somebody did it. I can't tell you (15:00) um… you know, why they did it here… all I know is what there is – I know the same as you – and I was on the train behind it – or the train before it, I think, so- or not before it, I was on the other side, but I just literally got out the station and… I didn't know anything was going on until I got into school. So… I can't make things up… they shouldn't make things up either (*laughs*) it's… y'know… and it's just, yeah (15:30) the concern is getting the facts straight. So when talking about it… I kept it fairly simple, but… so… factual, I think, to make sure there was none of this, kind of, expansion on ideas (*laughs*).

I: Yeah. Well I imagine for you, coming in as well, there was also an element of processing it yourself? (16:00) Y'know, having to kind of process it quick-time, before…

PP: Well yeah, I mean… like I said, I was probably two minutes ahead of it… and by the time I got in nobody was talking about, and about five minutes later everybody was talking about it, and it was a bit… um… all over the place and yeah… being in… even though it wasn't on my train… a f- I think it was about two days later I found the bag on the train in- at Parson's Green station, so… (16:30) you know, it has an effect on you, as well, you become more vigilant, certainly. On the day you go home from work, you are more… hypersensitive to things… and… I think there was – not that one, but another one of the terrorist attacks was… when something weird was going on in- at one of the stations I was at, and I just got off the train… cause I was like… just… needed to know… that it wasn't… wha- what it might've been (17:00) I think it affects everyone. But yeah, certainly… yeah… that was pretty close.

I: Yeah, definitely… um, thank you… and again, I think you've probably talked to this quite a bit, but if there's anything else you wanted to say about challenging?

PP: No, I just think it's a really challenging subject. It's challenging to talk about… but it's also challenging to understand and it's mainly due to the (17:30) fact that you can't explain these things, really. You can't explain motives – until you know the motives, obviously. So… when children ask you 'oh, why did they do it here, why did they want to hurt people?'…. I- I can't really tell them. I can tell them what I know of mainstream news, just as they know of mainstream news. But then, I didn't even know… the-the per- I didn't even know (18:00) about who had done it. So I can't say well 'he probably did it cause of this…' I had to say 'well, nobody knows'. And it may not have been meant to have gone off here, it might have been… who knows? So there's all these, kind of, connotations that make it challenging – because it's just a really difficult thing to understand. If you can't see yourself doing something (18:30) you can't understand why someone else would do it. And that's probably where their minds were at too.

I: That makes a lot of sense, thank you very much.

Appendix 6: Transcripts for all interviews

Please refer to attached memory stick.

Appendix 7: Confirmation of Ethical Approval

The Tavistock and Portman **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Quality Assurance & Enhancement
Directorate of Education & Training
Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane
London
NW3 5BA

Tel: 020 8938 2699

https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/

Emma Denholm

By Email

2 August 2018

Re: Trust Research Ethics Application

Title: Teacher's Experiences of Talking to Their Students about Terrorism: A Psychosocial Exploration

Thank you for submitting your updated Research Ethics documentation. I am pleased to inform you that subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee your application has been approved. This means you can proceed with your research.

If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Paru Jeram
Secretary to the Trust Research Degrees Subcommittee
T: 020 938 2699
E: pjeram@tavi-Port.nhs.uk

cc.   Brian Davis, Adam Styles, Judith Mortell

Appendix 8: Pen Portraits

Appendix 8.1 Alesha's Pen Portrait

"I think a lot of staff feel very… I think teaching staff feel very ill equipped to deal with conversations around terrorism"

PREVENT	JIHAD/JIHADI
NON-BELIEVER	ISLAM

Alesha is the only participant with a long history of working in secondary schools. Alesha has over fifteen years of experience working in schools and at the time of the interviews held a position of leadership within her school. Her experiences of talking to children about terrorism centre around safeguarding and radicalisation, a role in which I got the sense she was not entirely comfortable. Her interviews were rich with examples of difficult conversations with adolescents and their parents. Unlike other participants, Alesha also has experience of being a subject-specific teacher and she described having to talk about terrorism in the context of teaching social studies. The words Alesha chose for her Grid Elaboration Method exercise show her association between 'terrorism' and complex religious, cultural and societal issues. Throughout her interview, Alesha referred to academic theories and historical events to illustrate her assertions about terrorism.

In Alesha's interviews, she talks about being an Asian woman who is not religious, and reflects on how this influences how she talks to children and young people about terrorism. Alesha was thoughtful about what assumptions students may have about her and other staff members and considered how individual differences impact how people experience discussions about terrorism.

Alesha's interviews were the longest of the seven participants' and covered the most content. I reflected after the interviews about finding it difficult at times to keep up with Alesha, a fact exacerbated by the highly intellectual and sophisticated style of her narrative. Initially my hypothesis was that Alesha's approach to the interviews were a way of unconsciously avoiding her emotional responses to the difficult experiences she was describing. However, when listening back to the interviews, I was able to notice a level of

openness about feelings I had not initially been aware of, perhaps suggesting the defence was mine in the interview, choosing not to process certain, particularly complicated or sensitive parts of Alesha's narrative.

Appendix 8.2. Stephen's Pen Portrait

"My first year teaching… and when I go back and see my uni friends, they're probably not going to believe some of the stuff that happened to me"

SENSITIVE	ENVIRONMENT
APPROACH	REALISTIC

Stephen is the youngest participant that I interviewed, and had been a qualified teacher for less than two years at the time of data collection. Stephen often referenced his lack of experience, sometimes referencing this as a factor that made it more difficult to hold these conversations, but also on occasion framing it as helping him to feel more attuned to his students. Throughout his interview, Stephen aligned himself with the children in his class, drawing comparisons between how they would be feeling during discussions about terrorism, and how he himself was feeling. This positioning of himself alongside his students was heightened by his descriptions of terrorist attacks and how he responded. Stephen spoke about wishing he had his parents closer to act as a support network, and occasionally used child-like imagery in how he described the attacks and perpetrators.

At the time of interview, Stephen was relatively new to living in the UK. He described not having had any experiences of being exposed to terrorism growing up, and shared his shock at being in close proximity to two terrorist incidents in the space of a few months in his first year living in London. Stephen acknowledged that his own anxieties about terrorist incidents may be a result of this lack of exposure to this sort of event prior to leaving his home country.

Stephen's interviews were some of the hardest to transcribe; his narratives were disjointed in places and he frequently seemed unable to find the right words for what he wanted to say. Stephens interviews were also considerably shorter than some others, fitting a general pattern of the data collection process that interviews where participants named their fears more openly were shorter in duration. Listening to the interviews back, I noticed I was much quicker to fill silences and offered less opportunities for Stephen to expand on his

ideas, perhaps suggesting a desire to relieve Stephen, and myself, of having to sit with uncomfortable feelings.

Appendix 8.3 Joanna's Pen Portrait

"I would worry that I wouldn't have enough for them. That I wouldn't be able to make it clear for them"

APPREHENSION OF REACTION	OWN SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE
QUESTIONS FROM CHILDREN	OWN PERSONAL FEELINGS

Joanna was one of the participants who held a position of leadership in her school as well as having teaching responsibilities. For Joanna, this was significant in terms of her perception of her role in supporting children in relation to terrorism, and this shaped her narratives about doing so. Joanna spoke at length about the pressure she felt to do justice to her role and support children adequately. More so than other participants she spoke about her duty to 'keep children safe'. Joanna spoke openly about the difficult task of maintaining a professional and calm demeanour in front of children, whilst also experiencing a multitude of emotions at the same time. Joanna's choice of words for her Grid Elaboration Method are reflective of her interview, in terms of the focus on how capable she perceived herself to be.

Joanna spoke openly about her faith and how working in a school that shared her ethos and values felt like a protective factor in terms of having to discuss terrorism with children. Joanna was also generous with her reflections about being the mother of a young child and how this shaped her feelings about terrorism.

Joanna's interview was fast paced and there was a palpable tension in the room. Despite starting in a manner that felt quite rational and considered, Joanna's narrative became more emotionally laden towards the end.

Appendix 8.4 David's Pen Portrait

"You have to try and make them feel safe. And I think if you're not being honest, then they're not going to feel safe."

OPEN	HONEST
NERVOUS	TREAD CAREFULLY

David has worked in his current school for over three years, and currently teaches a class in Key Stage 2. Of all of the participants, David was perhaps the most reflective about his early experiences and personal circumstances and how these influenced his attitudes about terrorism and, in turn, his experiences of talking to children about terrorism. David shared his experiences of growing up in a part of the United Kingdom where terrorist attacks were not unusual. David spoke about how he felt he may have a different outlook on recent terrorist attacks as a result of being exposed to similar incidents whilst growing up. David described incidents being 'almost normalised' when he was a child and considered how this may have led to him feeling less fear and anxiety than he perceived some of his colleagues to have felt. David also reflected on his own personality and how this showed in the way he had experienced talking to children about terrorism, describing himself as matter-of-fact and good at being calm and measured in the way he thought about things.

The way David described approaching conversations with children about terrorism was mirrored in his approach to the interview. David spoke about being honest and giving children the information they needed without going into too much detail or leaving too much space for elaboration and fantasy on the part of the children. In our interviews, David mostly gave short, to-the-point answers, which at times I experienced as frustrating. In psychosocial group supervision, we explored how a closed narrative may be a defence, and my avoidance of pushing David to elaborate may be an example of my responding to an invitation to keep the conversation in a safe space.

Appendix 8.5 Natasha's Pen Portrait

"Because the actual truth, of terrorism, is- is- it's very, very scary and we don't want to be responsible for scaring children!"

TRUTH	REALITY
INNOCENCE	EMOTION

Natasha, at the time of our interview, had been working in the same school for over ten years, with extensive experience working with children in various roles prior to this. Natasha spoke about feeling an additional pressure regarding conversations about terrorism based on her role within her school co-ordinating interventions with vulnerable children. Natasha compared her experiences of talking to children about terrorism with other complex and emotive conversations she had had with children in her role. For Natasha, conversations about terrorism were the hardest she had been expected to have, and made her question her competence in her role as someone whom children turn to in a crisis.

Natasha was open about her personal life and how certain aspects of her life influenced how she responded to terrorism and therefore how she was able to talk to children about it. Natasha spoke with pride about being 'a Londoner' and, perhaps for this reason, described feeling threatened by the recent terrorist attacks in the capital. Natasha shared her worries about travelling around London in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks and explained how these feelings were exacerbated by being a mother.

Out of all of the interviews, I experienced Natasha's as the most emotionally charged. Natasha used plenty of emotional language, and there was an urgency in her interviews that I didn't notice in others. The interview oscillated between feelings of helplessness and a passion to make things better for children. Natasha was open about needing to be reassured she was doing the right thing, and explicit in her assertions that teachers need more support in their conversations with children about terrorism.

Appendix 8.6 Debbie's Pen Portrait

"...so you've just got to be.. ju- just, you know, kee- stay calm and carry on, basically"

FEAR	HYSTERIA
PARENTS	GOSSIP

Debbie is the oldest of the participants in this study, and referred frequently to how her age and experience helped her in her role as a teacher. Debbie shared her feeling that having more life experience allowed her to be more rational in the face of terrorist attacks; something she perceived to be a protective factor and one that made her experiences of talking to children about terrorism easier. Debbie reflected on difficult experiences in her own life, such as losing loved ones, and shared how comparing these events to the recent terrorist incidents helped her keep the latter in perspective. Debbie was open, throughout the interview, about finding the hysteria and panic of those around her regarding terrorism unhelpful and in some cases detrimental to how children coped with hearing about the incidents. Debbie spoke about her role in addressing what children had been exposed to outside of school and ensuring they saw a balanced and unbiased perspective about terrorism when in class.

Debbie, more than other participants, seemed to be comfortable addressing issues of race, religion and stereotyping. During the interviews, Debbie was able to reflect on childhood experiences of terrorism, and acknowledged that her perception of the current context was probably shaped by these.

During the interviews, I experienced some anxiety as a result of what I perceived as Debbie minimising the impact of terrorist attacks. In the interviews, I found this quite uncomfortable, and feel this may have pulled me out of the role of the researcher at times and into a position of asking more directive questions. On reflection, when listening back to the interviews, I considered my investment in this research, and how I required, on some level, the reader to agree with me that terrorism is a topic worth studying. It is likely that

this motivation was underlying my frustration about Debbie describing terrorism as less of an issue than other participants had done.

Appendix 8.7 Alistair's Pen Portrait

"I think my concern was… even though I could explain what terrorism was… I'm not an expert in it…"

ANXIETY	CONCERN
CHALLENGING	NECESSARY

Alistair has been a teacher in the same school for just under ten years, and at the time of our interview was teaching children towards the end of their primary school careers. Alistair presented in the interview as having a degree of knowledge about the history of terrorism and the political climate which other participants did not bring into their narratives. Of all the participants, Alistair seemed the least comfortable with the free association approach, and was relieved whenever we returned to the Grid Elaboration Method, as if grateful for the structure.

This was mirrored in the way Alistair spoke about his experiences of talking to children about terrorism. Alistair described the most challenging aspect being the lack of concrete information available to share with the children, and what he perceived as an impossible task of trying to provide context for the recent attacks.

I experienced Alistair as perhaps the most transparent of the participants. Alistair seemed less guarded about sharing his attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about complex and sensitive subjects, and this allowed him to explore concepts and lines of thought that I felt other participants may have got close to, but shut down for fear of saying something that could be perceived as judgemental. During the interview process, I wrote in my research journal about finding this abrupt at times, but on reflection I considered this was because it was in such stark contrast to other interviews where I had felt there was much being left unsaid. When re-listening to interviews, I found Alistair's some of the easiest to concentrate on and analyse, perhaps suggesting less defence existing in this narrative.

Appendix 9: Consent Form

Consent to Participate in an Experimental Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants

Research Title: What Are Teachers' Experiences of Talking to Children About Terrorism?

Researcher: Emma Denholm

Research Supervisor: Dr Judith Mortell

By signing this sheet I confirm I have read the information sheet relating to the above programme of research and have been given a copy to keep.

I confirm that the nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained adequately to me.

I understand that interviews may be recorded for transcription purposes and that anonymised quotes may be used in publication of this research.

I understand that my involvement in this study and particular data from this research will remain strictly confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1988). Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the experimental programme has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent, I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

Participant's Signature:

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

Researcher's Signature:

Date:

Appendix 10: Full Data Analysis

Please refer to attached memory stick.