New Technology: How Do Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists Understand it and is it Illuminated by the Concept of Transitional Objects?

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To my supervisor, Dr Lucia Genesoni and all those who have made this possible,

thank you.

Abstract

In the last 30 years, new technology and the use of the internet has increasingly become part of people's daily life and this is even more evident within the lives of young people. However, little research has investigated the impact of technology on young people and on psychotherapy practice. The research explored child and adolescent psychotherapists understanding of new technology in their therapeutic work with children and young people, and if their understanding of technology is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects. The research was conducted using the qualitative method approach, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Eight child and adolescent psychotherapists reflected on their therapeutic work with young people, during individual semi-structured interviews.

The IPA method requires an in-depth analysis of interview data, as it focuses on participant's experience of an individual phenomenon. The analysis of the interviews retrieved 4 recurrent super-ordinate themes; Therapeutic task, Relating, Shortcuts and Transitional Objects. The analysis of the interviews also found 4 sub-themes; Technology as defence, Exposure, Identity and Technology as positive. The results found that child and adolescent psychotherapists had wide ranging views on technology and whether it is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects.

The majority of the participants viewed that for young people, their use of technology is intertwined with their identity, attachments and their attempts to manage stages of development and emotions. Technology is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects, based upon the commonly shared function of relieving anxious feelings and helping to

manage feelings of aloneness. Some child and adolescent psychotherapists view that technology does not have the same qualities that fulfil the traditional concept of transitional objects. Irrespective of these differences, child and adolescent psychotherapists employ their psychoanalytic technique, to work with what a young person brings, technology or not.

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Introduction

New technology, such as smartphones and tablets, which is referred to as 'technology' in this paper, is a relatively new advancement. Moreover, and precisely, linked to technology is the internet, which is formally in operation since 1989 ('History of the Web', n.d.). These two components, supported by the development of infrastructures, have evolved to the level that, by the end of 2019, internet usage – and therefore technology usage - is estimated to have spread to 4.1 billion users worldwide (International telecommunications Union (ITU), 2019).

For humans, these advancements provide an opportunity for substantial change in ways of relating and being. Given it is estimated that modern humans, Homo sapiens, are in existence for 195,000 to 200,000 years (Greshko, 2017), it can be wondered how such high-speed technological developments in the connectivity of people sit alongside ordinary human development. In a short space of time, technology has facilitated the capacity for humans to be connected to others, essentially all of the time if desired. For those born since the establishment of the internet and digital devices, their experience of the world and connectivity knows no difference. In modern society, indeed, many children are being provided with electronic screens from infancy and somehow, this provides an experience of never having to feel alone.

It is a fact that children and young people are growing up in a technological culture and different strands of technology are now part of everybody's quotidian practices. However, little has been written in psychoanalytic literature about the impact of technology on psychic structure and development or its use in psychotherapeutic setting. The objective of the study is to explore the role of technology as experienced by child and adolescent psychotherapists in their work with young people and if technology is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects.

These specific interests in technology and transitional objects also derives from the researcher's personal clinical experience of individual psychoanalytic psychotherapy work with a young person and a paper by Lemma (2016) titled 'The Black Mirror: Identity, Body, Technology' - presented at the London Conference on 'Identity, Mind and Body'. The conference examined the relation between technology and the body and it spurred thoughts for the researcher on the "never have to feel alone" nature and function, on the development of a child, and it made the researcher wonder about whether technology plays a role in such experience, considering the increasing adhesive use of technology in modern society.

The personal clinical experience was individual psychotherapy sessions, where a young person displayed a strong connection to a teddy that she had from a young age. The teddy was frequently physically present in the sessions or in the narrative of the young person. It was curious, the unique bond and attachment between the young person and the teddy, sometimes as though in symbiosis. Could this be viewed as a transitional object from a Winnicottian (1958a) perspective or perhaps from a more Kleinian position (1998), seen as a defence, where part of the young person is split off and projected into something else? As the

individual sessions continued with the young person, it became clear that the object represented more of a turning away from separation.

The term 'transitional objects' comes from traditional psychoanalytic theory where transitional objects are considered to be items such as soft toys or blankets that children get attached to as a substitute to their attachment figures or primary carers (Winnicott, 1958a). The object serves a purpose of allowing the child to never feel alone, while their personality and their capacity to deal with reality are developing. The theory follows that when the child has developed sufficiently to tolerate feelings of being alone, the child is able to separate from the transitional object and from their attachment figures. It is a question about the role technology may have in a person's experience of feeling connected, if like a transitional object it may support healthy development or it adjusts the process in a way that is yet to be understood. With little literature linking the concept of transitional objects and technology (Grayson, 2013 and Dauphin, 2013), it is a question as to how both of these new and old phenomena can be understood through a psychoanalytic lens today. As technology facilitates a plethora of new ways that young people can relate and live, it is hoped that by exploring this research question it may add understanding to young people's ways of being through technology. Consequently, it is hoped the research question may expand psychoanalytic understanding of young people and technology. Finally, it is hoped the research question may inform clinical practice.

Therefore, using a qualitative research design, through interviewing child and adolescent psychotherapists, this study aims to explore in depth the relatively new lived experience and understanding of technology use by young people in therapy sessions, and whether child and

adolescent psychotherapists understanding of new technology is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects. Technology in therapy sessions is considered as each time a young person uses something physical, like a smart phone or a game console, or something external, by talking about, for example, Facebook, Snapchat or internet sites, that are internalised and spoken about in the session.

Following a review of the literature on technology, technology and psychotherapy, transitional objects and any link with technology, the research project is presented by: outlining the aims and research questions, describing the sample and the methodology, presenting the results and their discussion and finally providing some conclusions.

Literature Review

A literature review was carried out to find the most relevant literature available to address the research question: 'New Technology: How Do Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists Understand it and is it Illuminated by the Concept of Transitional Objects'?

The process of the literature search was to establish what studies have established understanding on the specific topics of the research question that includes technology, child and adolescent psychotherapists understanding of technology and if such understanding is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects.

The literature review also involved a lengthy examination of a broad range of literature relating to the research question, largely on literature related to technology. The search included investigating literature covering the following topics;

- Technology today
- Child and adolescent psychotherapy and technology
- Transitional object theory
- Winnicottian theory
- Technology and transitional object concept
- Technology and communication
- Internet and social media use

Methodology

To explore these questions and associated existing literature, included are some of the keywords that were searched: technology, psychotherapy, internet, transitional objects,

communication and development. Literature was collated through the use of an EBSCOhost account. Papers were sourced using Boolean operators 'AND' and 'OR'. Other techniques were applied such as double quotes in the search engine or * when searching for plurals. Relevant books, journals and articles were hand sourced from public and private libraries and personal resources. During the search literature was compared and contrasted on several topics.

The literature review is organised in topics that address different aspects of the research question. In particular technology, benefits and implications of technology use, online engagement and related internal and external experiences, transitional objects, technology and psychotherapy, and what was absent from the literature search. The literature is diverse as it includes a range of evidence from several research fields and individual clinical work reports. The diversity is an attempt to represent the dynamic elements connected to this research question. There is an abundance of literature that informs the research question and also promotes the development of further questions.

1.1 Technology

Technology is defined as 'methods, systems, and devices which are the result of scientific knowledge being used for practical purposes' ('Technology', 2019). The use of modern technology, such as mobile phones and tablets, means it is possible to access the internet and exchange communication with others using the internet, in vast parts of the world. In this literature review, therefore, technology is referred to as any new way to connect with others or disconnect from others, through electronic equipment.

Internet

Sir Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web in 1989 ('History of the Web', n.d.). Internet accessibility has quickly grown. At the end of 2018, it was estimated that there were 3.9 billion internet users and this was expected to rise to 4.1 billion internet users by the end of 2019, which corresponds to 54% of the global population (International telecommunications Union (ITU), 2019). UNICEF (2017) estimates that one in three children and adolescents under eighteen years of age are internet users. The majority of internet use is for social networking and communicating with peers (Byrne & Burton, 2017).

For a more specific breakdown of young people's online activity, research with young people aged 9-17 in the Czech Republic, found that 84% of children and adolescents connect daily to the internet using a phone (Bedrošová, Hlavová, Macháčková, Dědková & Šmahel, 2018). Data from UNICEF (2017) shows that approximately only 29% of youth globally are not online. In Europe this percentage is reduced to just 4%, meaning that 96% of youth are online (UNICEF, 2017). In comparison, in the United Kingdom, data shows that the use of technology devices starts very early on. Nineteen percent of 3-4 year olds in the UK have their own tablet and 52% of 3-4 year olds go online for almost 9 hours per week (Ofcom, 2019). In comparison, 83% of 12-15 year olds in the UK have a smart phone. Ninety-nine per cent go online for 20.5 hours per week (Ofcom, 2019), showing young people's high level of internet use.

Advantages of the Internet

Research indicates advantages and disadvantages to the accessibility of new technology and internet usage by young people**.** Most of the benefits of access to the internet were reported on children from disadvantaged backgrounds and seem linked to external situations such as

allowing access to training, education, jobs and communications. Such internet access is recognised as having the potential to enable the realisation of many 'sustainable development goals' that impact directly on children's well-being (Byrne & Burton, 2017), particularly in remote locations and during humanitarian crises (UNICEF, 2017). Access to technologies can help make changes to intergenerational cycles of poverty (UNICEF, 2017).

1.1.a Relations

Online platforms such as Facebook are designed to facilitate the development of relationships that may be of a highly public nature, potentially complex and sometimes built only from behind screens. Such public platforms allow a young person to receive any possibility of responses, immediately, and potentially on something of a very sensitive nature, from other people, anywhere in the world. It has a boundariless quality to it. A study on the social media platform Facebook found that the site encourages voyeurism and narcissism. It concludes that problems associated with the social networking site are reflective of wider societal issues that lead to alienation (Seligman, 2011).

Many social media websites and apps display user's popularity status such as how many fellow platform users like for example; a photo someone has uploaded or how many online 'followers' or 'friends' they have. In the United Kingdom, 78% of 12-15 year olds reported feeling there is pressure to look popular. Ninety per cent reported that people are mean to each other on social media, at least 'sometimes' (Ofcom, 2018). These pressures are particularly felt among girls. Seventy-seven per cent of females aged 12-15 with a social media

or messaging profile feel that there should be rules about what people can say online to prevent hurtful comments (Ofcom, 2019).

Many social media apps have filters on images that adjust the face and body, for example, altering physiques to appear thinner or larger and adding glamourized effects. The social media app Snapchat fosters the idea of a disposable form of images and videos. Snapchat has 210 million daily active users and 3.5 billion daily snaps (Snap Inc., 2019). In the United States, 90% of 13-24 year olds spend an average of 25-30 minutes daily on Snapchat (Snap Inc., 2019). Snapchat has a feature that encourages daily messaging contact with a peer to maintain a 'strike'. This is a symbol of daily consecutive contact and postulated as a sign of the strength of a Snapchat relationship. Moreover, centennials – who are true digital natives, a generation emerging right in the midst of the digital age - view social media as a virtual platform for building a greater sense of community (Snap Inc., 2019). Two-thirds of 12-15 year olds in the UK who use social media reported they send messages of support to friends who are having a difficult time (Ofcom, 2019).

Like online gaming, online dating apps open the possibility of connections with others in private online spaces that may result in real life engagement or not. Online dating is a popular way for people to now meet, a change from traditional ways of meeting. The dating app Tinder has a user profile containing a few photos of a person that best describes the person. The app indicates swipe right if you like and swipe left to dismiss. Tinder has 57 million users and 1.6 billion daily swipes (Iqbal, 2019). Over 20 billion 'matches' have been made on the app. On average people check the app 11 times per day.

Emotional Attachment and mobile phones

Research identified particular emotional responses associated with the use of mobile phones, including; panic, irrational behaviour, thrill and anxiety (Vincent & Harper, 2003, cited in Vincent, 2006). The research included people speaking about their phone in emotional terms, such as, 'We often have a panic situation when the battery runs down', or 'I'd feel really lost without my phone now' (Vincent & Harper, 2006, p. 42). Other research studied the senses involved in mobile phone use, including touch, hearing and sight, and through association, smell and taste. The author explained that 'the sentient relationship between the mobile phone and the user invokes so much more than the physical contact achieved through the making or the receiving of a call' (Vincent, 2006, p. 43). This seems to indicate that individuals may form strong attachments to their phones and the experiences they have as a consequence of their phone use.

1.1.b Identity

One of the ways technology was reported to have an impact on young people's internal world, is on their identity. Technology 'de-objectifies' the human body and it establishes distance from the limitations of reality (Lemma, 2015, p.72).

Experimentation and trying out new identities is something that has always been part of adolescence. As shown above, children engage in the online world at a young age, pre-adolescence. Technology and being online provide new avenues for such experimentation. Indeed, the online world can be understood as a transitional space that facilitates experimentation with new identities (Turkle, 1995). The internet denies 'corporeality' and it allows the establishment of numerous identities (Lemma, 2015, p.59). Online engagement

denies the reality of separateness and it alters the relationship between a person's internal and external worlds (Lemma, 2015).

Disavowing of the body

Disavowing of the body, and its undesired parts is possible via technology. Technology can play a part in a young person's attempts to escape feelings of a perceived disgusting body and the 'critical eyes of the object' (Lemma, 2015, p.68). A young person could easily seek an alternative version of herself, created through virtual identities and the young person's fantasies of cosmetic surgery. The young person however broke down in the moment it arose that she was not able to access and engage as her online identities (Lemma, 2015).

Development of sexual Identity

Technology has been shown to have a great impact particularly on sexual identity (Lemma, 2015). A young man who was preoccupied with his sexual body, feared if he let his sexual body come into being in real life relational ways, he would experience it as proof that he had lost his mother forever. Online relating was his attempt at bypassing his body and these developmental challenges (Lemma, 2015).

Indeed, technology through the use of the internet provides different avenues for young people regarding their sexuality. A more mature sexual identity can be achieved by the working through and modification of incestuous oedipal drives, assisted by adolescent masturbation and masturbatory fantasies (Singer, 2013).

For those struggling with their sexual identity, the opportunity to seek out internet pornography related to their sexual internal conflict, may help normalise it (Kort, 2005, cited in Singer, 2013). For others, internet pornography-assisted masturbation can interfere with

the ‘salutary socialising and normalising effects of the central masturbation fantasy’ (Galatzer-Levy, 2012, cited in Singer, 2013, p. 53). In ordinary adolescent masturbation fantasies, there are highly personal meanings whereby the physical aspects of genital sexuality are combined with psychological intimacy, affection and sensuality. Internet pornography is in many ways opposite to this thus, resulting in an experience that is void of personal meaning and turns away from the processing of internal psychic reality (Singer, 2013).

1.1.c Implications Linked with Technology Use

As technology is so much part of everyday reality, different implications for a young person’s life and internal world have been observed and studied. In the following sections; private identities, the darknet, problematic internet use, gaming and gaming disorder are explored.

Private Identities

Humans have always had parts of themselves both consciously and unconsciously withheld from others’ view. The internet and online communication opened up the possibility for people to live completely private identities online (Kingsley, Stockmann & Wright, 2017). Risks associated with online use include searches for suicide. Most searches related to suicide lead to supportive websites and prevention messages (Kingsley, Stockmann & Wright, 2017). However, a number of websites offer pro-suicide opinions. There are websites that relate to suicide methods, moreover joining up with others to create cyber suicide pacts. Seeking out others with communal internal struggles is also found in pro-anorexia websites. In pro-anorexia websites, one’s identity is central to the competitive divisions that strongly feature in that online community (Giles, 2006).

Darknet

Further concerns are raised by the accessibility to the 'darknet'. The darknet also known as the 'dark web' is an online search engine that requires special software to access it. Due to the encrypted nature of the software, it is almost impossible to track an individual's activity on the darknet. It has several websites that allow for the sale and purchase of illicit products. Moreover, there are pro-suicide websites that can guide individuals to websites where it is possible to privately source lethal means to complete suicide (Kingsley, Stockmann & Wright, 2017).

Problematic Internet Use

When a person has an inability to control their use of the internet which leads to negative consequences in their daily life, it is identified as a person with Problematic Internet Use (PIU). Problematic internet use does not have validated diagnostic criteria and it is separate to 'Gaming disorder'. PIU appears to be more prevalent in a different demographic to people with gaming addiction (Ganser, 2019).

The negative consequences of PIU include an impact on 'everyday functioning, interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being' (Anderson, 2001, cited in Anderson, Steen & Stavropoulos, 2017, p. 431). Its symptoms include unpredictable behaviour and mood, which are similar symptoms to individuals suffering from substance addictions (Hsu, Wen & Wu, 2009, as cited in Anderson et al., 2017, p. 431). Indeed, being unable to access the internet may lead to feelings akin to withdrawal (Fineberg et al., 2018). A study found that, for adolescents who are hospitalised and have existing psychiatric conditions, those with PIU are more likely to exhibit suicidality and aggression than adolescents hospitalised, without PIU

(Ganser, 2019 cited in Ganser et al., 2019). High ADHD associated symptoms and low autistic traits in children and adolescents, have been linked with higher risk and severity of PIU (Chen, Chen and Gau, 2015, cited in Anderson, Steen & Stavropoulous, 2017). Other research has found that the internet may be a platform where aggression and hostility is communicated, that would not be perceived as acceptable in real life engagement (Ko, Lui and Hsiao, 2009).

Gaming and Neural Responses

A popular use of technology is for gaming, such as playing digitally designed games on an Xbox or mobile phone. The games may also include online playing, in groups with voice chats, which can be referred to as Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGs). MMORPG's design creates in the player, an emotional attachment through the role playing character aspect of the game and also a sense of community (Hsu, Wen & Wu, 2009, cited in Anderson et al., 2017). Some young people find it a challenge to regulate their gaming engagement. This may be connected to findings from a study (Ko et al., 2009) where the authors found that the urge/craving neural responses of young people with gaming addiction is similar to the craving response of people with substance dependence. Similarly, gaming has been found to be associated with dopamine release of a similar level to those of drugs abuse (Weinstein, Livny & Weizmanc, 2017).

Brain imaging studies on individuals with gaming addiction have evidenced changes in parts of the brain that apply control functions such as impulse control, sensory-motor and regulation of emotions (Weinstein et al, 2017). A high percentage of adolescents with gaming addiction have been found to be attracted to aspects such as; the feeling of control, hidden identity, and the capacity to self-represent (Ko et al., 2005). Moreover, young people found

gaming to be an escapism from life challenges, where they were able to find intimacy and friendship.

Excessive gaming seems to be recognised widely as an area of concern in the well-being of young people. For example, in response to growing concerns about young people's excessive engagement with gaming technology in South Korea, in 2011 the government implemented an online game shut down policy. The law prohibits access for under 16 year olds to online gaming at night between 00.00 and 06.00 (Choi et al., 2018). More recently, in 2019 the UK introduced treatment for 13-25 year olds via the NHS, for gaming addiction (NHS England, 2019).

Diagnoses

Other moves to define and understand excessive gaming include the recently released ICD 11, although not due for use until 2022, which contains a diagnostic category 'Gaming Disorder', categorised according to;

> 'impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences' (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2018).

There are mixed views on the introduction of this gaming disorder diagnosis, as there are concerns it may incorrectly diagnose pathological behaviour in healthy gamers (Gansner, 2019). Individuals with only gaming disorder are more likely to be male (Billieux, Demetrovics & Kuss, 2016, cited in Gansner, 2019).

This first section of the literature review concludes with a reflection on the diversity of the literature outlined in this section. In a relatively short space of time the internet created the capacity for entirely new ways of relating and being on a global scale. Taking into account the rate at which technology and social media platforms have developed, Seligman's (2011) study could be considered relative to its time but now outdated. It would be interesting to see the outcome if the same study was conducted in present times.

Throughout the literature there is vast variation on the methods of collating information; for example, Ofcom's (2018) large scale statistics were derived from self-reporting individuals, which is in contrast to Lemma's (2015) individual case reports. Different stances may be taken on these reports such as large scale evidence bases, thought of as rich sources of data. However, self-reporting can also be critiqued from the point of potential bias such as concern for how one may feel they may be perceived by others, which might influence the participants' responses. In comparison, individual case reports could be seen as influenced by the writer and their interpretation. On the contrary case reports may be viewed as rich in quality, details and individual experiences that contributes to existing evidence based literature.

The following section of this review continues to add insight into the diversity of literature related to the research question. It will differ from some of the generalised studies reported in the section on technology, because there is an emphasis on clinical theory and reports related to the concept of transitional objects.

1.2 Transitional Objects

The phenomenon of transitional objects was largely theorised from a Winnicottian perspective. Winnicott (1958a, p.231) referred to the 'not-me' object as the first possession with the 'intermediate area between the subjective and that which is objectively perceived'. In traditional Winnicottian terms, a transitional object supports the fragile ego as it develops a sense of security and identity. According to Winnicott (1958a) the special qualities in the relationship between an individual and a transitional object are as follows:

> " 1. The infant assumes rights over the object, and we agree to this assumption. Nevertheless, some abrogation of omnipotence is a feature from the start.
>
> 2. The object is affectionately cuddled as well as excitedly loved and mutilated.
>
> 3. It must never change, unless changed by the infant.
>
> 4. It must survive instinctual loving, and also hating and, if it be a feature, pure aggression.
>
> 5. Yet it must seem to the infant to give warmth, or to move, or to have texture, or to do something that seems to show it has vitality or reality of its own.
>
> 6. It comes from without from our point of view, but not so from the point of view of the baby. Neither does it come from within; it is not a hallucination.
>
> 7. Its fate is to be gradually allowed to be decathected, so that in the course of years it becomes not so much forgotten as relegated to limbo. By this I (Winnicott) mean that in health the transitional object does not 'go inside' nor does the feeling about it necessarily undergo repression. It is not forgotten and it is not mourned. It loses meaning, and this is because the transitional phenomena have become diffused, have become spread out over the whole intermediate territory between 'inner psychic reality' and 'the external world as perceived by two persons in common', that is to say, over the whole cultural field" (Winnicott, 1958a, p. 233).

Winnicott (1958a) suggested that the engagement with transitional phenomena begins from four to twelve months of age. The transitional object is symbolic of some part –object, for example, the breast. Winnicott (1958a, p. 233) stressed that the main point is not its symbolic quality, but rather the object's 'actuality'. Its value is not in 'being' (for example the part object – the breast) but that it stands for the part object. Winnicott (1958a) proposed that contrary to symbolism, the transitional object gives room to the process of becoming able to accept difference.

Winnicottian transitional object theory describes that, in optimal situations, children are then able to transition from the object as it becomes decathected. This implies there is a development of the child's; interests, expansion of the child's awareness of their separateness and a development that is symbolic of an internal identity of self as an individual (Winnicott, 1958a). This extended range is maintained even when depressive anxiety is near. For some infants, the attachment to the object may continue into childhood, such as the object being necessary at bedtime or in times of distress. For others, at a later stage, the need for the object may return if deprivation threatens (Winnicott, 1958a).

The foundation for transitional objects begins with the infants evolving capacity for illusion (Applegate, 1984). This capacity arises from the earliest relationship with what Winnicott (1958a, p.238) termed a 'good-enough mother'. The experience, repeated time and time again, supports the infant to establish a framework of an external reality that appears to align to an internal need (Applegate, 1984).

Winnicott (1991, Chapter 1) wrote of the complexity that occurs when hope is absent and the object 'represents a denial of separation'. He said that to overcome that is a greater struggle because of 'the secondary gains that arise out of the skill that develops whenever an object has to be handled in order to be mastered' (Winnicott 1991, Chapter 1). If there is a denial of separation and the object does not become decathected it may develop into a perversion at a later stage (Winnicott, 1991). In Lacanian psychoanalytic circles there has been some investigation into the denial of being alone and that people can be satisfied through other means and turn away from separating (Loose, 2002). Winnicott (1958a) expanded his concerns for objects that are not decathetected to question whether on investigating an addiction, transitional object psychopathology would be explored.

There was recent exploration into what happens when a transitional object is 'shunted into a dissociated realm of experience with a deeply negative grandiose co-constructed narrative' (Pauley, 2018, p.131). It was postulated that splitting, which is a person's attempts to cut-off unwanted parts of the self, instead of finding ways to process and manage them in a healthy way, can expand a vulnerability towards addictions and compulsions in adulthood. Such structures can prove challenging to the transitional space of the analytic relationship (Pauley, 2018).

The literature in this section is rich in particularly long established Winnicottian psychoanalytic theoretical concepts. As transitional object theory is conceptual it is open to various interpretations and critique. It could also be argued that this is an old, outdated theoretical concept that is no longer applicable. Contrary to that, in the later stages of this

section the concept of transitional objects is illuminated in current literature by Pauley (2018). While a concept can be open to wide ranging critique, Pauley's modern interpretation and use of the concept can contribute to understanding on potential modern challenges and modern symptoms. In comparison to the depth and range of literature that was found on technology, there was less literature available on this more specific literature search on the concept of transitional objects. The exploration of literature related to the separate topics of 'technology' and 'transitional objects' sets the foundation for the next section which looks at existing literature combining technology and transitional objects.

1.3 Technology in The Consulting Room: Clinical Case Vignettes and Evidence

In recent years, mainly only two authors have started to reflect on the function of mobile phones and technology when brought in a psychotherapeutic context.

Grayson (2013, p.40) viewed the mobile phone as a transitional object; he made a comparison between a transitional object being relinquished when 'self-object and ego functions are beginning to be established'. Grayson (2013), as a therapist, believed that the phone can support a young person in a self-object function, long enough for the young person to establish enough feelings of safety within the therapeutic relationship to feel confident in talking to the therapist without simultaneous use of his phone in therapy. Indeed, he described the experience of a young person in psychotherapy who was able to let go of the mobile phone connection to peers during his sessions (Grayson, 2013). This case illustration will be further developed in the section below.

Singer (2013) wrote that it is antiquated to think that technology is an attempt to resist and defend against the psychodynamic treatment. Highlighting the importance of keeping an open mind about what an object may mean to a young person, Singer (2013) provided an example of a 3-year-old patient taking a doll into her session. Singer (2013) pondered that, it is as possible for the doll to be a transitional object as it is for technology to be a transitional object. When reflecting on what an external object may represent, it can be beneficial to hold in mind that 'every defence contains in its dynamic structure and expression, that which it defends against, it reveals even as it hides' (Schafer, 1968, cited in Singer, 2013). This appears to be a helpful reminder of the importance of looking for meaning behind a young person's communications, in whatever way they communicate.

Therapeutic engagement that could be understood in transitional object theory

Grayson (2013) reported on the clinical experience of the use of a mobile phone by one young person during therapy sessions. Grayson (2013) explained how the young person used his mobile phone to remain connected to friends during his session. At first, the use of technology was experienced by the therapist as in intrusion, provocative and irritating. Over time, however, the use of the phone in the session was understood by the therapist as a support to a 'vulnerable and weakened ego and a potentially disintegrating self' (Grayson, 2013, p. 40). Grayson also reported that the young person was fearful of being rejected by the therapist. Applying Winnicott's (1958a) view that a transitional object supports the fragile ego as it develops a sense of security and identity, a comparison could be drawn to the function of the phone for the young person. Moreover, the young person's fear of being rejected by the therapist may link to Winnicott's (1958a, p.238) theory on "good-enough mother" experience, which can be replicated in the therapeutic environment. The experience,

repeated time and time again may support a young person to build ego strength and therefore feel able to let go of his mobile phone and to connect with the therapist.

Lemma (2015) wrote of witnessing a young person during a session with her technology gaming device and how the device and the body appeared almost merged. Lemma (2015) understood that the experience appeared to evoke for the young person a feeling of fusion with the maternal object. This implies that for the young person there was a developmental challenge in experiencing separateness and perhaps a disavowing of internal identity of self as an individual. In ordinary transitional object decathecting, these developments are an ordinary part of internal processes (Winnicott, 1958a). This seems like an example of what may happen if a young person is unable to transition from an object, attempting to maintain a feeling of control, and denying loss and separation.

Others working with technology in the room view that technology can be a place where omnipotent fantasies are acted out within a boundaried space. It was conceptualised that the computer screen can be seen as a concrete boundary, a 'glass boundary' (Longo, 1997, cited in Carpi, Lapi, Fattirolli & Pini, 2018, p. 222).

Others have found that when compared to physical acting out, video games are not thought to affect external reality, in this way providing a type of transitional space, a 'psychic incubator' (Canegalli, 1998, cited in Carpi et al., 2018, p. 222). This appears to reflect an internal experience where the Id (Freud, 1923) can remain in charge - with its bodily needs, wants, desires, impulses, and sexual and aggressive drives unmediated by real life experiences, that support healthy development of the ego.

Technology as an object that Supports Therapeutic Engagement

In therapeutic work with young people there is evidence of technology facilitating the therapeutic work through the medium of mobile phones and digital music. Grayson (2013) reported on another young person who used music from an iPod and a laptop in his sessions. This young person was suffering from depression and he struggled with anxious feelings. The music was a way the young person communicated more of his 'fantasy life, identifications and motivations' (Grayson, 2013, p. 38). The lyrics and feelings contained in the songs brought by the young person facilitated mutual understanding for the young person's desire to be a protector. Working with the technology promoted a developing idealising transference. The therapist believed that in this case the use of music within the session enhanced the analytic space and it enabled the therapy to arrive at such internal challenges sooner than if the technology was not present.

Other therapists have adapted approaches creatively to working with young people where technology is brought into the sessions. Lovegrove Lepisto (2013) reported on a 15-year-old girl who consistently used her phone in her sessions, often with one ear bud in, listening to music. The therapist's verbal attempts to connect with the young person were unrequited. After a time, the therapist took up her phone in the session, while the young person was engaged in texting her friends. The therapist texted the young person who responded with a laugh and curiosity as to why the therapist had texted her. That point of engagement signalled the beginning of a 3-year productive treatment. The therapist felt that she needed to meet the young person, as she explained, 'on her own ground using her own language before she was willing to use my language' (Lovegrove Lepisto, 2013, p. 35).

Challenges linked to technology and risk in therapeutic work

In therapeutic work with young people, their private online engagement can add further complexity to risk and acting out. Moreover, it can be a challenge to the framework of working within the transference, in a psychoanalytic framework.

Lovegrove Lepisto (2013) provided an example of such challenges in weekly psychotherapy work with a 10-year-old boy. There was concern about the boy's sexualisation of relationships and his parents struggled with boundaries. One day the boy brought a new laptop to his therapy session. He showed that he had a Facebook profile and he boasted of having many friends, some of whom he did not know. On his Facebook page, questions of a sexualised nature popped up on the screen which the boy did not understand. Afterwards, the therapist felt conflicted and uncomfortable in her countertransference. The boy was previously blamed for viewing pornography on a home computer although it was unclear if it was the boy or his father. The therapist did not disclose about the Facebook page but shortly afterwards in a parent session informed the parents that many young people know how to use a computer better than they think they can.

Internal hidden worlds

Other online places, out of supervision that can be of concern for therapists include people's access to suicide websites. Such risk concerns can be difficult to detect within sessions, and have been conceptualised as an occurrence where the inner split in the psyche cuts off the 'suicide-part' (SP, the part of the self-invested in annihilation, and a wish for death) and instead presents the 'non-suicide part' (NSP, life affirming and tolerating) (Kingsley, Stockmann and Wright, 2017, p. 163). A clinical report postulated that the digital life of the patient, which was split off and hidden in the therapy, was in essence, a triangular relationship

with fatal consequences (Kingsley et al., 2017). Triangularisation may occur with the 3 points being the patient, the therapist and thirdly, the unidentified split off location of the suicide part of the patient. The split off suicide part, may be experienced as intolerable and for an individual experiencing its intensity, the individual may resort to fatal means to get rid of the intolerable feelings (Kingsley et al., 2017).

The psychical process of splitting relates to early infancy experiences of intense feelings of love and hatred towards the first object, the mother (Klein, 1998). These extreme feelings are intertwined with the persecutory fears of the infant which are evoked by discomfort and frustration. If for whatever reason, the feelings are experienced by the infant as intolerable, it may lead to excessive splitting, as an attempt to get rid of what feels intolerable, and possibly implications for healthy ego development and long term mental health well-being (Klein, 1998).

Trying to Understand Communications

Seligman (2011) wrote about technology in the therapy session, as providing a felt experience for a young person, of control and controlling how communication happens. An example of working with a young person using their phone continuously in therapy sessions led to the therapist texting the young person, in a way using the means of communication that the young person could tolerate. Such an approach, as detailed previously, was also reported by Lovegrove Lepisto (2013), as a way to open up communication. For both therapists, this way of relating, was the catalyst for a shift in the therapeutic engagement, the transference relationship and talking.

Contrary to this approach, theories such as Steiner's 'psychic retreat' are employed to assist in understanding the escapism the internet may offer, moreover evading the reality of

therapy, fulfilling a need for instant gratification and a turning away from tolerating frustration (Carpi et al, 2018, p.222). It has been postulated that mixing human and non-human objects, 'makes it easier to not care for the pain for others as human beings' (Seligman, 2011, cited in Carpi et al., 2018. p. 222). This implies that technology as a medium for communication, potentially creates an illusion that an individual and their individual emotional and psychological make-up, is less effected by another's communication, if it is made through technology.

Singer (2013) reports that formidable developmental challenges such as oedipal conflicts and separation and individuation, will continue irrespective of technology's advancements. The internal world is unchanged in the face of unprecedented external changes. He reported that the task of understanding the fantasy and communication of a young person remains the same whether it is via phone use or dolls and toys in the therapy room.

Challenge to Working Psychoanalytically with Technology

Dauphin (2013) found that there is a resistance from therapists to understand the importance of new technology as a medium of communication for young people. Dauphin postulated the possibility of professionals too quickly thinking that a young person's use of technology may indicate a schizoid process or a regression to a disconnected or autistic state. He acknowledged that therapists often draw on their own childhood experiences when working with children and young people. Dauphin reflected on the fact that at the time of his writing, the average age of the professionals within the Board of Division of Psychoanalysis was 62, and of the American Psychological Association (APA) was 50. Dauphin highlighted the importance of working with the relatively new experience of young people and their technology, irrespective of a therapist's personal experience of technology.

In working with young people and technology, the use of the countertransference is viewed as key to understanding communications made by young people in their sessions.

As child psychotherapists are 'digital immigrants', some authors advise that child psychotherapists must be mindful of the potential for judgement and 'unconscious feelings of suspicion, fear and ambivalence' (Capri et al., 2018, p. 224). It is suggested that the correct recognition of such feelings is central to differentiating between a young person's developmental use of technology and pathological use (Capri et al., 2018). Having awareness of feelings of frustration, powerlessness and confusion within the countertransference is important information to guide the therapist to the young person's attempts at maintaining distance and a position of psychic isolation from the therapist. Understanding these feelings and experiences in the countertransference is pertinent to attempting to establish more connection in the transference relationship and therapeutic endeavour (Carpi et al.,2018).

Variations on technique explored by child psychotherapists included consideration on whether viewing material brought into the therapy on a computer alongside the young person was potentially of benefit or if it would be better to refrain from such approaches (Carpi et al., 2018). The authors did not reach a definitive answer. The authors reflected on certain patients presenting with psychopathological traits that can be enhanced and expressed by the web; in such cases technology is thought to be best kept out of the therapy room (Carpi et al., 2018).

Relational Adaptions

The use of technology in the home allows for additional ways of relating and being within family systems. For young people who have used technology and the internet since they were children, referred to as 'digital natives' ('Digital native', 2019), their experience of being able

to be in contact with others outside of the home, away from knowledge or supervision of parents, can be postulated as an alternative version of oedipal conflicts. It is the case that often parents are left out, forbidden from viewing what happens in these private online spaces (Singer, 2013). This may be associated with some of the 'left-out' experiences for psychotherapists when working with young people.

The relationship between parent-child-smartphones appears complex. Research explored the connections between mobile phones, adolescents and their parents (Ling, 2004, cited in Ribak, 2009). The research found conflicts and contradictions within such relationships for both young people and their parents. Parents often contributed to the payment of their children's phones, had a desire to foster independence and security, and also always had accessibility to their child through the phone. Despite the emergence of what was defined in the research as a 'remote control' dynamic, linked to dependency versus independence factors between parents, children and mobile phones, the study found that over time, separation between a parent and child would naturally occur alongside the young person's individuation (Ling, 2004, cited in Ribak, 2009, p.185)

Perhaps another side of this development, in dynamics between parents and their children due to technology, is the level of accessibility that parents may have, an ability to always 'check in' with their child when they are not together.

Research explored the 'parent-child-telephone triangle' by evaluating the influence of the home telephone on a young person's independence in the context of a mother working outside of the home (Vestby, 1994, cited in Ribak, 2009). The research found that the possibility of a telephone call framed or limited the space and the independence of the child, not the actual contact. The use of smartphones may transfer a similar experience, and

perhaps this is an area that would be helpful to research more, to determine how such relational ways of being influence separation and individuation.

Building on the two previous sections, this final part of the literature review shows how technology and the concept of transitional objects - either traditional or modern - have been explored in psychoanalytic theory and psychoanalytic work. Singer (2013) and Grayson (2013) use single case examples to illustrate their beliefs that technology can be thought about as a transitional object. Single case studies in isolation may be critiqued as previously noted, however, when combined in number they establish a stronger evidence base. Long established theory from Freud (1923) and Klein (1998) elucidates how although the objects to hand in modern times may be different, people's internal worlds have not necessarily changed; technology may just facilitate the expression of the internal world in a new way. Like all theory, Freud (1923) and Klein (1998) may be critiqued and interpreted in many ways. Overall, there was a small amount of literature on the specific topic of technology and transitional objects. The literature in this section extends to a broad range of theory and case studies reporting on the use of technology inside or outside the consulting room. The expanse of conceptualisation found in the literature on how the use of technology may be thought about psychoanalytically appears a fitting way to conclude a diverse literature search.

Conclusion of literature review

The literature review returned a wealth of information on the topics explored including; technology, transitional objects and therapeutic work. Many interesting connections were found in the crossover of these topics.

There is a growing base of research on young people's engagement with technology and experiences of online relating. The search found a lot of research on problematic internet use (PIU) and gaming disorder, with important developments in understanding the neural experience for young people experiencing PIU and gaming disorder. The search found a smaller but rich amount of literature on psychotherapy and technology. The search returned a limited amount of literature specifically making a link between technology and transitional objects.

From the topics explored, it transpires how young people in developed countries make considerable use of technology and the internet; it is part of their daily reality and relational modality. This engagement can have an impact on their internal world and development, adding risk factors and new potential problematic areas, the repercussions of which are still mostly unexplored. The ways that technology is used and its function and meaning within the therapeutic setting varies. For some, technology is viewed like any other communication in the room, and for others, it may be viewed as defensive. The link between transitional objects and technology was not commonly found. Where links were made, there were views that technology and transitional objects are related such as the way technology may support a young person in a self-object function while they develop internal resources that facilitate the establishment of their individuation. The literature also showed that technology can function in ways similar to a transitional object such as technology assuaging anxious feelings or serving the function of people always feeling connected to others through technology and not feeling alone.

The literature review evidences a breath of literature on technology and its almost limitless ways of intertwinement in modern living. It found a rich but smaller amount of literature on

and how child psychotherapists view technology and again a smaller amount of literature on how and whether technology is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects. These findings - which highlight gaps in child psychotherapy and technology literature and more specifically technology and transitional object conceptualisation literature - mean that the literature review has, in a limited way, provided insight into the research question. Therefore, through the empirical study it is aimed to further directly explore how young people's use of technology inside or outside of the therapy room is understood by child and adolescent psychotherapists and whether their understanding is illuminated by the theoretical concept of transitional objects.

Research Project

2.1 Aim

The primary area of enquiry in the research project is the experiences and perspectives of child and adolescent psychotherapists, interviewed by the researcher. More specifically the research aims to investigate the experience of child and adolescent psychotherapists who have encountered new technology in their therapeutic work with children and young people and whether child and adolescent psychotherapists view new technology as illuminated by the concept of transitional objects. Given that technology use is prevalent both within and external to therapy sessions, it is important to try to understand more about how young people relate to technology and through it. This in turn would add to the established literature and expand psychoanalytic knowledge.

This research aims to answer to the following questions:

- What is child and adolescent psychotherapists experience of working with young people in psychotherapy sessions where technology is present in the room or in the young person's narrative?

- What is child and adolescent psychotherapists experience in psychotherapy sessions with young people where internet influences, social media and website access is present in the narrative of the young person?

- How do child and adolescent psychotherapists understand online engagement is internalised by young people and what is the impact on their developing egos?

- What do child and adolescent psychotherapists view as transitional objects in modern times?

- Do child and adolescent psychotherapists view new technology as illuminating the concept of transitional objects?

- What do child and adolescent psychotherapists believe is a progressive approach to understanding young people's communication through the use of technology?

Methodology

3.1 Preparation and Ethics

Before carrying out the research, the project was examined for ethical approval. This research project was formally approved by the Health Research Authority (HRA) and Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW), in conjunction with Surrey and Borders Partnership Foundation Trust (SABP) Research and Development Department (R&D), and the Tavistock and Portman Research Ethics Committee (TREC). The process of data safety undertaken, following the Ethics guidelines and the University Data Protection Policy, fully described in the procedure section below.

3.2 Study design

Rational for method selection

A qualitative method involving interviews, was assessed as appropriate for the research question based upon: an exploration to gain insight into child and adolescent psychotherapists' lived experience and understanding of technology within their work with young people and to ascertain if participants understanding of technology is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects. Each experience of working therapeutically with a child is an individual experience and a lived experience as is each child's relationship to new technology. IPA takes an intimate focus on one person's experience in its own terms. It requires 'rich data' and as such is thought to be appropriate for the qualitative interviews (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). With this in mind, IPA was chosen as the most appropriate qualitative research method.

The small scale size of this research participant group, as it is going to be described below, reflects IPA's approach to valuing individual perspectives while maintaining a wide appreciation of all participant's experiences. Each individual perspective is valuable when attempting to examine unique personal experiences and responses that can be reflected upon and interpreted by the researcher. In this way, IPA gives a space for the experiences of participants which could perhaps slip away more easily in a quantitative based approach and aggregates of statistical analysis (Smith et al., 2009). This is part of the evidence that suggested a qualitative method approach was more suitable for this research project.

Procedure

The Recruitment Process

The research project inclusion criteria were; the participants were qualified child and adolescent psychotherapists registered with the Association of Child Psychotherapists (ACP) and had experience of working with young people and technology within their therapeutic work. Exclusion criteria was training child and adolescent psychotherapists or non-ACP registered child psychotherapists.

The recruitment process included the distribution of research project 'Invitation letters' (see Appendix A), both in paper copy and email, to several child and adolescent psychotherapists. This advertisement indicated that the researcher would follow up within one week, to ascertain if the potential participant was interested in receiving further information on the research project. When the potential participant was interested a 'Participant Information' sheet (see Appendix B) was sent. The sheet included a more in-depth explanation of the research such as; the background and rationale of the study, information on interview duration, data protection and ethical approval. The researcher approached child and adolescent psychotherapists at staggered time intervals to ensure there was no over recruitment. In total 13 child and adolescent psychotherapists were approached and 8 accepted to be participants.

Over email or in verbal contact, the time to undertake the interview was arranged with participants. Prior to the interview, the participants were offered a chance to ask further questions. The consent forms (see Appendix C) were then signed at the interviews and a copy was given to the participant.

The participants were recruited from Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust (SABP), the trust where the principal researcher works, and externally. The researcher was mindful of the time constraints of participants and their generosity by sharing their precious time resource.

Participation was voluntary. If at any time the participants decided not to continue they were free to withdraw without further comment.

Participants

The participants were 8 child and adolescent psychoanalytic psychotherapists, 6 females and 2 males, working in CAMHS clinics and private practice. As previously reported, the sample size is in line with guidance on IPA (Smith et al., 2009). The ages of participants ranged from approximately early 30's to mid- 60's. The participants had a range of theoretical orientations including Freudian, Klienian, Jungian and various Independent School theorists due to their mix of training school experiences. The participants experience ranged from those working in their first year post qualification as a child psychotherapist to those with approximately 15+ years' experience. In the findings section the pseudonyms were assigned in a non-gender specific way due to the small number of child psychotherapists in SABP, aiming to maintain the highest level of anonymity for participants.

Data collection - the Interviews

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule, consisting of 6 questions; 3 questions related to technology and 3 questions related to transitional objects (see Appendix D). The interviews were semi-structured to facilitate the prospect of a broad span of results. The semi-structured interview provided an opportunity for the participants to give time and reflection to their thoughts on the questions asked, moreover to the very specific experiences, that were perhaps prompted by one of the semi-structured questions

and subsequently described in rich detail. The semi-structured interview allowed for further enquiry by the researcher, at times encouraging participants, if they were able to, to expand on certain experiences they described. The researcher took brief notes during the interviews.

The interviews were audiotaped. The primary recording device for the interview was a Dictaphone. As a back-up, the interviews were also recorded on a mobile phone. The audio recordings of the interviews were saved on a password protected device, and deleted from both the Dictaphone and the mobile phone. The duration of each interview was approximately 60 minutes, amounting as a total, to approximately 8 hours of data. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, by listening and re-listening to the audio recordings, as soon as possible following the interviews. All of the interviews were conducted and transcribed before moving to the analysis stage.

IPA Text Structure

It was helpful to create a structure for the typed interview text to prepare for the analysis of the data (Flowers et al., 2009). The structure involved dividing the page into 3 columns. The centre column contained the transcription of the original text. The left column was a blank space for emergent themes, and the column to the right of the original text set out a blank space for the exploratory comments.

Safety of Data

The data about the identity of each participant was anonymised with identification letters from A to G. The participants' names remained anonymous, until pseudonyms were assigned,

at the time of writing up the findings. Only the researcher could access the names and audio recording data. Any sensitive and identifiable data discussed during the participants' interviews, such as patients and other professionals' names, was also anonymised in the transcripts. All recordings and transcripts are stored in a locked cabinet, encrypted or password protected file, for the minimum required length of time, before being safely deleted and disposed of confidentially, in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy. All the participants were informed, verbally and in writing in the consent and information sheets, of steps that would be taken to protect their confidentiality.

3.3 Data Analysis

The complex process of the data analysis focused on reflecting effectively the rich experiences of the participants and the interpretative experience of the researcher, a combination of the individual and the whole, the hermeneutic circle. 'The part is interpreted in relation to the whole and the whole is interpreted in relation to the part' (Smith et al., 2009, p. 92). The process included reading and re-reading the interviews on an individual basis. The close analysis of the interviews was applied on a sentence by sentence basis.

As IPA guidance recommends (Smith et al., 2009), the analysis of each individual interview included;

- Initial free association noting

- Description comments

- Linguistic comments

- Conceptual comments

These comments were made in handwriting on the column to the right of the original text. The initial free association noting involved noting any words and phrases that were of initial specific interest. The description comments were reflective of the general content of the interview and sometimes mores specific phrases. The linguistic comments related to specific instances within the text, such as pauses in speech, laughter and the use of metaphor by participants. Conceptual comments were established from a deep level of reflection and interpretation from the researcher. The researcher's own experiences influence the establishment of conceptual comments. Conceptual comments often created questions owing to broader perspectives and meanings from the text.

The process of deconstruction was applied to some texts. This was done by reading the paragraph line by line backwards. Deconstruction provides focus on the participant's words and avoid taking simplistic meanings out of what the participant is saying (Smith et al., 2009). The written outcomes from these analysis methods were reviewed several times by the researcher to develop 'emergent themes'. The emergent themes were hand written in the blank column to the left of the original text.

Drawing Themes Together:

When all of interviews were individually analysed, the emergent themes from each interview were analysed with the application of abstraction, polarization and numeration (Smith et al.,

2009). The process of abstraction was used to identify patterns between themes that partially contributed to the establishment of master themes. Polarisation was applied to some texts to focus on oppositional relationships and not just similarities within the texts (Smith et al., 2009). Polarization afforded an opportunity to reflect on the digression that occurred on occasion within a text and the sometimes conflicting themes. Numeration was applied to assess the frequency of the use of certain language and themes (Smith et al., 2009); this highlighted repeated patterns, compared to what was not repeated but nonetheless illustrated a valuable part of the analysis. Subsumption occurred when an emergent theme became a master theme.

When all of the interviews were analysed, 61 master themes emerged from the data. A version of abstraction and subsumption was applied to the themes, as is recommended with larger studies which include more than 6 participants or interviews (Smith et al., 2009). The data was compared and contrasted and some of the master themes were clustered together. Moreover, the master themes were reviewed at a group level by identifying recurrent themes across interviews. At different stages of the analysis of the data the researcher's supervisor reviewed the IPA methods process applied by the researcher. This provided triangularisation in the analysis and importantly a monitor for bias. The analysis process led to a refining of the breath of data in order to establish a richness of similarities and difference. It is important to note that specific individual occurrences were highlighted, holding on to the individual experience within the whole.

Findings

Introduction

To protect anonymity, pseudonyms are used throughout the dissertation to represent the participants. The researcher will refer to them as Alex, Bella, Charlie, Dominique, Eric, Flo, Gregor and Hasan. Pseudonyms are not determined to the specific sex of the participant. Young people referred to during the interviews with participants are referenced in the dissertation as 'he'/ 'she', his/her and 'young person'.

The analysis unveiled 4 recurrent super-ordinate themes and what are referred to as 4 sub-themes. Each sub-theme relates to the super-ordinate theme they are referenced with and as such, is a sub-theme. Between 75% - 100% of the participants reported on 4 communal participant super-ordinate themes: therapeutic task, relating, shortcuts and transitional objects. Fifty percent or more of the sample reported on sub-themes: technology as a defence, exposure, identity and technology as positive.

In the presentation of the results, the researcher mainly focuses on the 4 super-ordinate themes. Moreover, the researcher introduces within each of the super-ordinate themes, one sub-theme that relates to the super-ordinate theme. Each sub-theme, even if not represented by all of the participants, is relevant in further understanding the super-ordinate themes. Table 1. on page. 62 illustrates the compositional structure of the IPA themes.

The following transcript notation is used in quoted extracts (Smith, Flowers & Larkin 2009);

- [ ] material omitted

- [technique] an example of explanatory information added by researcher.

- Citations are referenced in brackets that contain – super-ordinate/sub-themes, interview transcript page (p.) and line (L.).

3.1 Therapeutic Task

The theme shows the diverse ways in which participants respond therapeutically to young people and their experiences of technology. It encapsulates participants' capacity to sit with uncertainty while trying to nurture their curiosity. The theme shows that working with the transference and countertransference remain central to work with young people and their technology and, despite the challenges that may evolve through the use of technology, such experiences present new opportunities for potential growth within the therapeutic relationship. The importance of participants processing and reflecting upon their therapeutic position, is an on-going part of the psychoanalytic frame, whatever content is brought by young people.

Technique ebbs and flows with technology in the room. Hasan reflected that the experience involves on-going learning while the psychotherapeutic task remains the same;

> 'I don't know that our technique needs to shift that much. [ ] It's just because it's such a new thing, [ ] the external world coming into the room. [ ] Our ability to be uncomfortable in the therapy room [ ] isn't really any different. It's just that maybe that's newer for some and feels alien. But its alien for the young people, it's something foreign and unnatural [ ] they are, they are bringing it because they want thinking about it' (Therapeutic approach; Hasan, p. 25, L. 13).

In this extract, Hasan also emphasised the importance of letting a young person know that he is interested to know about all parts of the young person, including their technology; communicating this through curiosity and the capacity to sit with the unknown. Hasan indicated the shared inexperience of young people and child and adolescent psychotherapists with technology, as an important relational component to the therapeutic engagement, to be worked with.

The efficacy of such an approach, of remaining curious about all parts of the young person, including their technology, is shown for example, in a therapy session, when a young person told their child and adolescent psychotherapist - Charlie - about a one player game that had challenges, bosses and threats. Charlie explained how this was explored and understood as the way the young person found therapy 'quite threatening'. Charlie said, 'So we kind of built up a bit of a conversation about jumping between and over and around threats during this game' (Therapeutic task; Charlie, p. 3, L. 18). It is noteworthy how Charlie worked with the narrative of the game, to gain insight into the young person's internal world and experience of therapy.

Dominique reported on a young person who had his phone in a therapy session. Dominique suggested to him that they look at his phone together. The game on the phone involved jumping through hoops. Similarly, to Charlie, Dominique used the transference, countertransference and interpretation in making understanding from the young person's communication through technology. Dominique explained:

> ‘It was a bit of a helpful communication to me to say actually that’s, that’s what I’ve actually felt like with them [young person and young person’s family], that sense of like, well you’ve got to jump through hoops to get to me actually. [ ] Eventually the phone went away and we could think a bit about what he was playing. I think interpretation helped that put some meaning to it’ (Technology use is communication; Dominique, p. 8, L. 18).

Symbolism of games, TV and media figures who are in young people’s narratives in therapy sessions, can be avenues for conversation, and understood in the transference by a child and adolescent psychotherapist. Flo shared that there was a particular TV series a few years ago about a young person who made a plan to commit suicide. Many young people spoke about this TV series in their psychotherapy sessions with Flo. Flo comprehended it as another form of understanding the emotional world of young people in a less direct and intense way, Flo explained: ‘So sometimes that’s helpful because it’s a medium of discussion [ ], not having the focus on them’ (Internet interpretation; Flo, p. 8, L. 20).

Awareness of a young person’s use of technology outside of the therapy room remained a form of insight even when a participant was faced with a difficult challenge; a young person who was attending psychotherapy sessions with Gregor, searched him out on social media. Indeed, as a consequence of the young person’s action, it mobilised the child and adolescent psychotherapists capacity to address and explore complicated transference parts of the therapy. Gregor explained that it was a turning-point in the therapy. Gregor said:

‘It’s interesting actually how much opportunity these em, these ways of being through technology, allow acting out in a different way and [ ] different sides of the transference to be expressed’ (Transference; Gregor, p. 5, L. 2).

Instead of the young person's invasion being responded to in a defensive, invalidating manner, the action was capitalised upon by Gregor, who used it to open up new areas in the therapeutic work.

The frame of psychoanalytic psychotherapy stays the same, whatever the challenge posed by technology. Alex reported on a therapeutic group for young people where phones were not allowed in the group session. In response to this, the group set up a WhatsApp group, about the group:

'It just created this very current, brilliant challenge that they had to manage as psychotherapists within themselves and within the group obviously. And try to understand [ ] what was it about really' (Responding to technology; Alex, p. 25, L. 28).

Alex emphasised the importance of working with the creative minds of young people, assisted by technology. Creative responses are encouraged for therapists, with the focus on understanding, to support meaningful engagement in therapy.

The importance of understanding what is meaningful within therapeutic engagement, is also highlighted by Eric;

> 'So I think em, analysing why you're doing what you're doing and what's going on in the therapy is fundamental to whatever you do. So if you allow somebody to bring in their phone you have to have analysed really why you're doing that, what you might be avoiding by doing it or what you're colluding with or what you're hoping for' (Technology and psychotherapy; Eric, p. 21, L. 27).

All participants seem to share the view that each treatment is individual, to the young person and the participant, and the unique therapeutic relationship that is between both individuals.

3.1.a Sub-theme - Technology as a defence

In some instances, while participants evidenced creative responses to technology, showing that the therapeutic task involves adaption, there were also times when participants experienced technology in the room as a defence and consequently what that meant for the therapeutic relationship. This sub-theme shows that there are times when young people's engagement with their technology, and the need it fulfils, can leave participants in the position of having to bear being disconnected from the young person, while the young person appears more connected to their technology.

Participants evidenced a stunted therapeutic experience as a consequence of the use of technology by the young person. Charlie explained, that experiences of phone use in sessions can feel, 'quite defensive and quite blocking' (Technology as a defence; Charlie, p. 1, L. 24). Charlie elaborated, that when the young person attaches to the phone, she loses the young person for 'whole swathes of sessions' (Technology as a defence; Charlie, p. 6, L. 11). This seems to indicate an adhesive connection made by the young person to their phone, to the exclusion of another.

Similarly, another barrier to therapeutic engagement was represented by young people wishing to plug in their phone during sessions. Flo reported on a young person who had a need to charge her phone during their session, a need that was felt like 'life blood' (Life blood;

Flo, p. 2, L. 12). Despite this sometimes leading to distractions, in the session, it was understood as necessary at the time. Moreover, similar to Charlie's experience with the phone in the room reported above, Eric described how a young person used their handheld game console in the therapy session. When the young person engaged with the handheld game console in the session, it proved a challenge to engage therapeutically with the young person. The game console appeared to be a block to communication (Technology block to therapy; Eric, p. 17, L. 20).

3.2 Relating

This theme highlights participants' reflections on how young people's relating via technological devices comes in many forms and may serve many purposes. This includes relating via technology to avoid being in touch with other relational or internal experiences, how real the experience of online relating is for young people and what this may mean for their regulatory capacities, their attachments and their identity. This theme illustrates how during psychotherapy sessions, participants work with young people for whom their ways of relating to others is highly intertwined with technology, as is very well expressed by Flo when she commented; 'I mean it's their lingua franca isn't it' (Internet and social media experience for young people; Flo, p. 6, L. 26)

Bella made links between technology use and conduct disorder, and how it can be thought about as a flight from real relational experiences, expressed particularly by young boys. Using her own words;

> ‘I’m thinking about boys [ ] and conduct disorder and sensation, [ ]rather than [ ]experiencing the pain of feelings and emotions, they might fight. [ ]. Being on the PlayStation, all the time, so they don’t have to hit anybody [ ] but the concrete world, it’s like it’s still some sort of scary place where [ ]if you’re not doing it on the game you’ve got to do it in reality, fight. In therapy session, young people may feel, ‘*without my concrete computer in my hand [ ], how can I sit with this person and start to think about my feelings, I’m terrified*’ (Conduct disorder; Bella, p. 19, L. 12).

This may be thought about as a sublimation, where, similar to Bella, Flo also made links to young people’s online gaming and the process of sublimation. A sublimation is a turning away from painful feelings, by placing the feelings into something else, like internet clouds or video games. Such responses may indicate the overwhelming emotional and psychological experiences that young people are struggling to process and to cope with, and the role technology might play.

The latter can be seen in Eric’s description of a young person who told him about his activity on gaming consoles:

‘He could create a whole apparent network of friends which wasn’t real. So I’m not quite sure what it does to the internal world but I think it distorts it’.’ (Human development; Eric, p. 8, L. 27)

Online communication platforms afford the opportunity for relating in an impulsive way with others, whilst being physically alone. For some young people, this is a challenging experience, particularly if they have challenges with emotional regulation. Eric described a young person who struggled with Instagram; the young person ‘couldn’t regulate’ and would say things that were ‘not helpful or get upset by the things other people said’ (Social Media influence; Eric,

p. 2, L. 9). Online communication opens up the opportunity for online relational experiences that, in this instance, are of a negative impact for this young person.

The strength of emotional responses that can be elucidated from relating to another online is demonstrated by a young person seen by Gregor. Gregor highlighted adaptions in relational ways of being, as he explained about a young person in therapy who, 'fell in love passionately with a girl that she met online and they started their distance relationship, that was really intense without ever meeting' (Change in relational ways of being; Gregor, p. 9, L. 26).

Online relating via social media apps appears to become a form of dependency for some young people. Charlie, Dominique and Flo demonstrated several ways such relating can be experienced by young people. Charlie highlighted that young people may relate to others online, in what is essentially a quest for responses that fulfil internal emotional challenges for young people;

> 'You know superficial and critical kind of way in which people can relate to each other on social media about kind of commenting on photos, [ ] self-esteem issues and um, sort of using social media to try and kind of get a bit of sort of complimentary response [ ] but being, being reliant on getting those' (Experiences due to a world with technology; Charlie p. 15, L. 23).

On a similar thread of thinking about young people's internal emotional challenges and the use of technology, Dominique wondered about young people's attachment relationships and how they may be intertwined with technology. Some social media apps require people to communicate daily in order to maintain an in app connection. Dominique wondered about this experience for young people;

> ‘Understanding how important it is to them that um, somebody will commit to them and in sort of fantasy always be there even if just to message you back each day and to keep you in mind. Um, I think it really plays into children’s attachment needs’ (Relating; Dominique, p. 16, L. 10).

Other popular ways for young people to communicate online via social media apps, is through group based chats. Flo queried what the public aspect of this way of relating may be like for young people, where their communications are viewed by all members of the group;

> ‘They are very worried about what people will think of them and for those young people does it help them to do it through a social media or is it more anxiety provoking because it’s shared with so many people’ (Internet and social media experience for young people; Flo, p. 18, L. 5).

The physicality of the phone is also an important aspect for young people and their relations to peers. Dominique understood that the phone can be viewed as a means of displaying one’s status as she explained; ‘The phone is ‘the equivalent of like the trainers’ and how there is a need to show that one is part of society, symbolised in this way (Society; Dominique, p. 27, L. 11).

3.2 Sub-Theme – Exposure

The sub-theme of exposure shows participants’ experience of young people’s attempts to relate with others via technology that consciously or unconsciously leads to them being exposed in various ways. There appears to be something about these attempts at relating via technology that aims to receive in return a communication or a relational experience that

fulfils a need. However, the challenge to anticipate the potential wider audience and the risk it may entail, is evident. It shows participant's experiences of young people's vulnerabilities, and how the vulnerabilities may be evidenced by young people's relating on online platforms.

Gregor reflected on his experience of working with a young person, who engaged in risky 'catfishing' activity online. The young person, who was looked after, would create new identities and steal identities on social media. The manner in which the young person exposed herself, was understood by Gregor, as an attempt by the young person to be 'visible', in the hope that she could find something of herself, and perhaps be found by a biological family member (Exposure; Gregor, p. 3, L. 11). These appear to be endeavours full of uncertainty driven by an internal sense of identity uncertainty.

Exposure of a different kind may occur through the sending of intimate images online. Eric described the painful experience of a young person who sent 'inappropriate photos of herself and they had gone viral. So there was the shame. But actually she was so ashamed of it, she couldn't engage in the therapy' (Immediacy of online communication; Eric, p. 6, L. 20). The level of exposure sustained by the young person due to the speed at which the images travelled online, meant that for the young person, the experience of engaging therapeutically appeared to evoke associated feelings of exposure, that were too overwhelming to be worked through at the time.

3.3 Shortcuts

This theme shows that young people may use technology in a plethora of creative ways in a bid to deflect from real life challenges. In some instances, such deflection may appear as a more obvious attempt to avoid engagement with internal processes and parts of the self and in other instances it may be less obvious. Online worlds may provide experiences for young people that allows them to feel they exist in a boundariless way. Such experiences can facilitate an opportunity to turn away from psychical processing and discomfort, leaving an open question about what is occurring in real life and in the real internal self that one wishes to turn away from? Participants gave several examples of how technology may be used to turn away from painful realities, a shortcut from reality. Alex elaborated on this theme, as he explained about a young person in his psychotherapy session, who showed Alex a video of himself, taken when outside of his sessions;

> 'I think in the end it was a short cut to you, you've got to see how mad it can get, so whereas in the past I think he would have had to rely on, em, ya, just trying to explain to me, [ ], so I'm not sure how helpful it was really' (Shortcuts; Alex, p. 3, L. 10)

Despite the sharing of videos and images on social media being an ordinary experience for young people, as a form of communication, it appears that Alex was wondering if the addition of the video in the therapy session, results in the absence of something else within the therapeutic engagement. It may be that, communication through the video detracts from the opportunity of the relational aspect of therapeutically working through emotional and psychological experiences with another, which has the aim of supporting psychical processing of painful experiences.

Similarly, Bella seemed to wonder about the implications to young people's internal processing as a consequence of technology use, when she said, 'So I don't think that

technology is absolutely terrible. But it is, I suppose it's like junk food or something, it's easy. [ ] It needs more regulation' (Technology as a comforter; Bella, p. 11, L. 11). It appears that Bella believes technology is most suitably used in moderation, as it may be similar to junk food, which is quick and accessible but often lacks nourishment, and does not support healthy growth and habitual behaviour.

While writing about what seems to be favourable conditions or the opposite, for the emotional and psychological development of young people, online gaming is another part of the technology world, that may be used by young people as an attempt to by-pass psychical and felt experiences of physical challenges. Gregor reflected on his experience with a young person who is transgender and engaged in online gaming;

> 'She wanted to 'come in and out of a gender, [ ] something fluid'. [ ]'She would play these anime inspired games online and day dream , being someone else completely. [ ] And I thought in her case something like her biological sex and her gender were, were almost like one of these painfully real things that she just couldn't deal with' (Boundaries; Gregor, p. 16, L. 11).

It seems that this young person's gaming was an attempt to turn away from dealing with an overwhelming reality. Online gaming provided the young person with a fantasy like, boundarilessness experience that was unattainable within her own body. Similarly, Alex wondered about what young people can get from online games, that is otherwise missing from their lives.

Social media language has evolved with young people's use. Charlie and Alex elaborated on the presence of online language in therapy sessions. Charlie reflected on a young person who

would talk in the therapy sessions about online peer interaction, that involved a lot of language of having 'blocked' someone for having 'fallen out', [and the] 'ends of relationships' (Pick and choose lifestyle; Charlie, p. 14, L. 7). The use of technology in this way, appears to perpetuate a desire to cut challenging relational experiences off or perhaps parts of oneself, projected into others, possibly in an instance and without an attempt to work through the emotional experience.

Alex expanded on this theme, combining both the online relational experience of young people and the potential for inclusion and exclusion via technology in the therapy room. Alex said,

> 'That sense of who's in and who's out, who we communicate with and who we don't and how much control we can have over it does come through a lot. I think the flip side is this idea [ ] they can have control over who comes in and therefore what is happening in the therapy is part of that but also how immediate phones are, [ ] people's comments can just be there'. (Masquerading of internet; Alex, p. 10, L. 11)

Indeed, Hasan highlighted that child and adolescent psychotherapists can offer a way of working with such immediate intrusions, or somewhat fragmented ways of relating by young people, who may impulsively cut off online relations with another. Hasan reported that supporting a young person to separate from their phone and the possible shortcutting it may offer, can be a task of the therapeutic work;

> 'The parents are struggling to help them to separate from this phone and at some point there needs to be a boundary around it. [ ] It's kind of tapping into our internal experiences. Wanting that good breast all the time and being able to get it' (Good breast – bad breast; Hasan, p. 23, L. 13 & p. 22, L. 17).

It seems that Hasan associates the immediacy and the endlessness of mobile phone possibilities, to the fantasy of there being a life without boundaries and access at all times to a life that does not disappoint or frustrate. This fantasy 'shortcut' aligns with an expectation to meet every individual need, and turns away from developing a capacity, to know that there is difference and there is ordinary disappointment and delayed gratification in life.

3.3.a Sub-Theme – Identity

This sub-theme carries on reflection on young people's use of technology to deflect from certain things, with a specific focus on 'Identity'. Identity development is a formidable experience in young people's lives and the internet provides avenues for young people whereby they may attempt to develop their identities through the eyes of other online users. Moreover, online engagement can allow young people to convey or present themselves in a certain way online, irrespective of whether it is a true reflection of the self or not. Hasan proposed that the task of development remains the same, albeit with a thread of technology through it which changes the way young people are 'navigating' their development (Negotiating development; Hasan p. 13, L. 16).

Dominique reported on the experience she had in a therapy session, when a young person showed pictures of herself dressed up with a friend. Dominique said 'She's a completely different child, just so different to this very unformed person that I have in therapy' (Online/offline splits; Dominique, p. 11, L. 27). This seems a clear example of how the online experience, seems to allow the capacity to portray oneself in a specific way, irrespective of the internal world of the person.

Other platforms that facilitate identity exploration, may also contribute to uncertainty of identity. This is elaborated by Dominique when she reflected on 'Those 'Am I Ugly' websites, [ ] how do you sort of work out your own identity when you are constantly asking other people to comment on it and work it out for you' (Online/offline splits; Dominique, p. 14, L. 10).

The detrimental role of other people on identity exploration, was touched upon when participants reported on how girls and boys can be 'nasty' on social media. Bella wondered about what alternative a young person might have when their reality is so much based on technology; 'What do you do if you're not doing that. Who are you if, if that's not your life, your identity really, em' (Identity; Bella, p. 8, L. 21).

3.4 Transitional objects

This theme shows participants' reflections on transitional objects and their varying views about what kind of link exists between technology and transitional objects. Participants indicate agreement that there is a link between technology and transitional objects. Participants reflected on a traditional view of transitional objects and how this can be applied to technology such as technology helping with anxiety at times of transition when by oneself. For some participants there was ambivalence about a link between technology and transitional objects noting qualities of traditional transitional objects that they thought did not correspond with the qualities of technology.

Bella, Charlie and Flo, in different ways, supported the idea of the link between technology and transitional objects. Bella expressed surprise of not having thought about it before when she said, 'I would say definitely. In fact, I hadn't really thought about it' (Surprise connection between technology and transitional objects; Bella, p. 15, L. 22). Charlie thought about the fluid nature of a transitional object, 'I suppose I think anything can be a transitional object [ ] but sometimes it's a more subtle thing' (Transitional objects; Charlie, p. 21,L. 7). While Flo reflected on the relationship between a more traditional transitional object and one that can be represented by technology, when she said;

> 'They [children] have an innate understanding that this teddy stands for the parents, it helps the child tolerate separations and all the rest of the meanings of a transitional object. It's exactly what happens when people lose their phone, it's the same thing [laugh] so that's how we know it's a transitional object. [ ] Represents being cut off from your objects' (Transitional objects; Flo, p. 23, L. 16).

At the same time, participants expressed their ambivalence about a relationship between technology and transitional objects. This was highlighted in various ways. In contrast with Flo's reflections, Dominique thought about the function of a transitional object for young people or adults, similarly as for the child, as something to hold on to during times of transitions;

> 'I don't know if it's the same when you're older because I think, you might still be in that stage but like, say using a mobile phone when you walk into a room, say at a party [ ], that is a transition, does that make the phone a transitional object? I think it's something that helps with the anxiety of the situation, perhaps it could be thought about in that way' (Title came as a surprise; Dominique, p. 21, L. 13).

Hasan, reflecting on traditional transitional objects, differentiated young people's relationships to technology versus transitional object attachments, when he said;

> 'I think of transitional objects traditionally and stuffed animals that have a name and a gender and they have particular smells [ ]. They are more than just what they look like. And when that becomes the phone, that would become a transitional object. [ ] I haven't seen the point where I see someone talking about their phone as a she or a he or an it[ ]. But that feels more like an attachment difficulty or pattern or struggle that perhaps is related to transitional experience or the task of transitioning' (Traditional transitional object; Hasan, p. 21, L. 13).

Eric and Alex remained close to the definition of transitional object in traditional terms;

'I think a transitional object is something that becomes imbued [ ] by the child with more meaning often of the mother but it could be of the father to facilitate a transition[ ]. That's traditionally I think where Winnicott described' (Transitional objects; Eric, p. 13, L. 14).

'We have to be thinking about a moving away to, from one thing to another'. (Transitional objects; Eric, p. 16, L. 27).

> 'I'm struggling with a bit is transitional objects somehow need to be symbolic and on that basis I would hope that they [laugh] remain somehow the same as they always were and I'm not sure about how technology would step into that space, it might do, it's just maybe I haven't used this in that way' (Ambivalent link between technology and transitional objects; Alex, p. 18, L. 21).

3.4. a Sub-Theme – Technology as positive

Despite there being similarities and difference in the way participants viewed the link between transitional objects and technology, participants had many shared views on the function of technology being similar to the function of a transitional object – whereby technology can become an object imbued with internal and interrelation meaning. In this way the sub-them 'technology as positive' encapsulates how technology may be beneficial to young people both within and outside of the therapy room. This includes technology aiding young people's regulatory capacities and technology facilitating a tolerable form of communication for some individuals that assuages anxious feelings and feelings of being alone.

Some participants seemed to express that it is a challenge to differentiate if an object is a transitional object or not. Eric reflected that an object may be 'not necessarily transitional but might have correlation to the internal world' (Beneficial objects that are not transitional; Eric, p. 18, L. 14). This seems to indicate that technologies may become objects with meaning and/or objects that help separation, therefore having some element of a transitional object.

Eric and Charlie reported on the positive role technology had during their session, when young people were able to use it to play certain music, as a form of emotional regulation or communication. Eric reflected on the work he had been doing with a young person and her mum, and how 'Music definitely helped her [young person] to regulate, [ ] she would sing along and sometimes her mum and this girl and I would all have to sing (Benefits to technology; Eric p. 1, L. 25). For some young people, technology may allay challenging feelings; 'Sometimes people can find it helpful because it sort of helps their anxiety. [ ] If it

means they come into the room and they can bear to be with you then to me that's helpful' (Positives of technology; Bella, p. 4, L. 13).

Charlie's experience, instead, showed that other young people played songs via technology in their sessions, to communicate about their internal world. Charlie described that a young person used his phone in the session to play a song and sing a little. Charlie understood it as a show of willingness by the young person to creatively share important parts of himself, and perhaps a desire to feel understood. Moreover, it was an insight into the young person's heritage. These communications were welcomed by Charlie, and contributed to further develop the therapeutic engagement between Charlie and the young person (Music via phone as communication; Charlie, p. 4, L. 5).

Alex expanded on the benefits of technology for some young people, noting that technology can be helpful for young people, who have a particular autistic organisation;

'I think it actually really allows them to feel that they have contact so you know they are with these people called friends, with whom they play eh, whatever games it is' (Positives of technology; Alex, p. 8. L. 8).

Closing summary of results

The analysis of the data evidenced a vast breath of responses. The findings show the application of psychotherapy technique, as something that can be adapted and open to change. Participants showed a capacity to work with young people and their communication where it involved technology. The findings showed a deep desire for understanding of the

individual, irrespective of the means of communication and relating. There was openness to learning and allowing a young person a new experience with the use of technology that can be important to the therapeutic work. The potential for technology as a means of acting out and to disavow reality was also evidenced and how this can be understood in the transference and countertransference. Indeed, participants were paying close attention to their own responses, thought process and motives for engaging with technology while being mindful of reflecting on their clinical practice. The final theme of transitional objects evidences a variety of views on the concept of transitional objects, from traditional up to present day. The findings indicate technology is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects. The overall link is based on similar positive functions shared between technology and transitional objects, such as managing anxious feelings and feelings of aloneness rather than technology being imbued with the same meaning that is associated with the traditional concept of transitional objects.

Table 1: Compositional structure of IPA themes: super-ordinate, sub-themes and master themes

Thematic levels				
Super-ordinate Themes	**Therapeutic Task**	**Relating**	**Shortcuts**	**Transitional Objects**
Master themes	Therapeutic approach	Internet and social media experience	Shortcuts	Surprise connection between technology and transitional objects
	Therapeutic task	Conduct disorder	Technology as a comforter	Transitional objects
	Technology use is communication	Human development	Boundaries	Title came as a surprise
	Internet interpretation	Social media influence	(Dis)connected	Traditional transitional object
	Transference	Change in relational ways of being	Pick and choose lifestyle	Ambivalent link between technology and transitional objects
	Responding to technology	Experience due to a world with technology	Masquerading of internet	
	Technology and psychotherapy	Relating	Good breast – bad breast	
		Society		
Sub-Themes	**Technology as a defence**	**Exposure**	**Identity**	**Technology as positive**
Master themes	Technology as a defence	Exposure	Negotiating development	Benefits to technology
	Life blood	Immediacy of online communication	Online/offline splits	Music via phone as communication
	Technology block to therapy		Identity	Positives of technology
				Beneficial objects that are not transitional

Discussion

By interviewing child and adolescent psychotherapists, the research project aimed to explore the participants understanding of technology and whether their view of technology is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects. Moreover, it intended to investigate how child and adolescent psychotherapists understand these two subject areas, in particular how technology is lived out by them and the young people attending therapy with them, what the young people communicate through it and whether it has an impact on their inner world and development. The analysis of the interviews retrieved the following recurrent super-ordinate themes; Therapeutic task, Relating, Shortcuts and Transitional Objects. The analysis of the interviews also found 4 sub-themes; Technology as defence, Exposure, Identity and Technology as positive.

The results indicate that child and adolescent psychotherapists hold a broad range of views on young people's use of technology and what they communicate through their narrative such as communication about their attachment relationships and their identity. The results also show that participants understanding of technology is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects by sharing the mutual functions of assuaging anxious feelings and feelings of aloneness.

However, the findings also indicate ambivalent feelings about technology being illuminated by the concept of transitional objects as some results evidence that technology does not have the same qualities and symbolism as indicated by traditional transitional object theory.

Despite the variation in participants' responses, the findings indicate that all the participants reflected on the fact that they work with what a young person brings, technology or not.

In the following paragraphs the super-ordinate and sub-themes are discussed in relation to the literature on technology and transitional objects and their relationship. The implications of these results are then interpreted in terms of clinical significance. The limits of this research are then discussed and suggestions for further research are given.

A large amount of the findings – which are under the super-ordinate theme "Therapeutic task" - referred to the use of psychoanalytical technique to try to develop understanding of the communication a young person makes through technology either present in the session or in their narrative. The specific psychoanalytic techniques of working with the transference and the countertransference were thought to provide a framework from which this is possible. Indeed, the participants' experiences show how it is not just possible but it is important and meaningful work. These results, and their clinical relevance, are mirrored by what was previously reported by Carpi et al. (2018), on the importance of the transference and the countertransference when working with young people and their experiences of technology.

The participants also emphasised the necessity of closely analysing their working practice as child and adolescent psychotherapists when working with young people and technology, acknowledging that it was a new experience, and noting transference relationships and the countertransference feelings that can occur. The participants reflected that when young people were pre-occupied with their technology during their therapy sessions, it could lead to the presence of the technology having a defensive quality. Child and adolescent

psychotherapists maintaining a close analysis of such feelings was reported as highly important so to respond to the need of a young person, enveloped in the technology, while maintaining a psychoanalytic framework.

Moreover, child and adolescent psychotherapists own uncomfortable experiences of 'not – knowing' how to deal with new technology in the room were compared with their own important role of bearing witness and processing the uncomfortable feelings that young people may also experience through technology, highlighting that technology can have unfamiliar aspects for both young people and child and adolescent psychotherapists.

In the relevant literature, Dauphin (2013) compares and contrasts with the findings from this study. In accordance with this research, Dauphin reports on the importance of a close analysis of the psychotherapists' work with young people when faced with new technology. In contrast, Dauphin (2013) sheds light on the possibility that psychotherapists may be resistant to working with technology, influencing their responses with young people. The author contrasts the findings from this research by reflecting on the importance of considering technology as a new kind of truth for young people, irrespective of the natural lived technology experience that is brought to the dyadic therapeutic relationship. Carpi et al. (2018) mirror this stance.

Curiosity about a young person's communication through their technology was illuminated as an important part of the therapeutic work for the participants of this research. This requires creative approaches from child and adolescent psychotherapists and the findings included being curious – for example by listening to young people's songs and music in sessions and looking at their games on the devices - in both the online and internal worlds that such experiences brought about for these young people. Seligman (2011) and Lovegrove Lepisto

(2013) also reported on their own experiences as psychotherapists and the role of their curiosity in relation to the kind of communication they were receiving from a young person through the presence of technology in the therapy session. Interestingly, both authors, after assessing what might be a tolerable form of communication for the young person, communicated with the young people via technology. Taken together with the results from this research, creative and more active approaches, aiming to reduce the gap in communications modalities between the psychotherapists and young people, led to developments in the therapeutic work.

Therefore, in relation to the use of psychoanalytical technique when a child and adolescent psychotherapist is faced with a young person communicating through technology, the results indicate that child and adolescent psychotherapists' technique does not need to change much. They work with what a young person brings, technology or not. This is despite the potentially overwhelmingly uncomfortable feeling that the newness of technology and its unknowingness can bring. There was a consensus that child and adolescent psychotherapists work with the unconscious communications of young people and that technique continues to apply when working with technology. The presence of technology in the therapy room or through a young person's narrative is all information for the child and adolescent psychotherapist. It is all for reflecting upon, processing and understanding as communication and can be worked with to support the development of young people's ways of relating and being.

The findings on the super-ordinate theme "Relating" and sub-theme "Exposure" reflect the variety of alternative ways of relating and being that are possible via technology. Moreover,

the findings indicate some questioning on how relating via technology may have some impact on the internal worlds of young people and their relating capacities.

Participants showed awareness about the vastness of the ways that young people communicate via technology such as through gaming, app use and various other forms of online platforms. The results also show that there is great importance attributed to the way that young people feel seen by others; how they are presented in these media channels all contributes to ones feeling of position and status. The exposure young people may encounter is indeed noted. For young people, there is a consensus of the online relating being highly authentic, as noted by the child and adolescent psychotherapists when seeing them in therapy. The participants showed awareness about working with the beliefs of the young people, contrary to their doubts, on the authenticity of such online relational experiences for young people.

In support of the authenticity of the experiences of online relating that young people have reported to the participants of this research, Ofcom (2019) and Bedrosova (2018) reflect on the large amount of time that young people are spending with technology and online. Ofcom (2019) confirms the sensitivity that young people feel regarding how they are perceived by others online, the pressurised feelings young people experience regarding social media use and the experience of feeling hurt by online comments from people.

Experiences through technology that evoke feelings of dependency were reported in the findings. Participants reported on young people engaging in therapeutic treatment, looking for feedback from others through online platforms. Moreover, they reflected on the design of online platforms that can encourage and entice consistent contact; on internal levels it seems to link to the attachment capacity that a young person has. For example, the literature

from Snap Inc. (2019) reported that the Snapchat app encourages daily contact with fellow app users, fostering dependency, as well as a greater sense in the young person of being part of a wider system.

On the same direction, the findings of this research propose that online gaming may be an attempt to turn away from the challenges of relating in real life, consequently, having an impact on the internal world of young people. The participants' experiences of young people in therapy showed a desire for some young people to be with friends in the 'clouds', as the risk to real life relating could lead to being in touch with feelings that are perceived as too dangerous and painful. This way of relating is reported for some as developing into a dependency. In therapeutic practice, this can prove to be a challenge for a young person to be able to move away from relating in this way, to relating face-to-face with a child and adolescent psychotherapist.

The literature on this topic shone light on these findings, from relational, emotional and neurological descriptions. This area of literature was heavily informative about on-going developments in these ways of relating and the seriousness of this matter when there is an excessive use of technology and a turning away from relating in real life. For some young people there are serious implications. Literature from other authors showed that young people with Problematic Internet Use (PIU) display symptoms and withdrawal states similar to people with substance addictions (Hsu et al., 2009, cited in Anderson et al., 2017, and Fineberg et al., 2018). It was also found that there is a similar neural crave response for gaming addiction and substance addiction (Ko et al., 2009). In addition, there is a similar dopamine release for gaming and substance addiction (Weinstein et al., 2017). Moreover, brain imaging highlights changes in the brain of young people with gaming addiction. The

changes relate to brain functions such as impulse control and emotional regulation (Weinstein et al., 2017).

The above studies are just some examples of the magnitude of the impact that technology might have when used in high dosage. These example are not exhaustive of the literature on this subject, indeed the amount of research in this area is much wider and beyond the scope of this research study. However, the information on the neurological and emotional functions of young people is highly important and informative when it comes to understanding in psychoanalytic practice, what may be the neurological changes/imbalances perhaps that young people are living with, unawares, as well as the professionals and people involved in their care and treatment.

The findings on the super ordinate theme “Relating” seem to indicate the depth that is unknown about, the implications of vast access to technology and the online world for young people; what inner needs are fulfilled by the use of technology, and what impact the response they achieve through technology – a response that perhaps could not be attainable by a human - has on their inner world and relating capacities.

The super-ordinate and sub-themes “Shortcuts” and “Identity” seem to complete and complement the findings of “Relating” and “Exposure”.

Indeed, the findings related to “Shortcuts” and “Identity” show how the participants viewed the challenge that some young people face when they relate to a device – such as a phone - and feel for example that some young people cannot survive without enough charge in their phones. A question raised was what kind of need this charge is fulfilling. The findings show

that technology appears to have a capacity to shortcut to gratification, devoid of frustration. Furthermore, given that technology is so advanced, and designed to meet at a fast pace, young people's needs in complete fashion, the results seem to indicate how hard and risky it can be for a young person to separate from something that promises all of that; a human is sure to disappoint, unable to compete with the unlimited algorithms the online world can offer. Moreover, the findings show that young people attempt to use technology to find easier ways – therefore shortcuts - of communicating, when what they need to reveal is too emotionally painful. Participants indeed reported that young people may use a video as a shortcut to talking in a therapy session, or may engage with online platforms in order to act out whatever persona she/he desires to portray, on a given day.

The latter, the characters and falsification of self that young people live out online, was evident in the findings as reported by the participants. What also emerged were some painful reflections about the young people's un-grown egos, where, despite the purporting of internet characters and online experiences, these endeavours were understood by the participants as an attempt to deny one's sexuality. The development of one's sexuality is central to human being's growth and such negation was experienced with deep pain. Lemma (2015) explains how young people through their online relating, attempt to disavow the body in psychological and sexual means. The complexity of the impact of technology on growing young people, was also expressed by the participants' reflections about what it could be like for a young person, should they become disconnected from living with and through technology. Participants expressed concerns about some young people's potentially fragile psychical structures and their challenges to sustain psychological well-being, if disconnected from technology. Like Lemma (2015) these findings highlight how online engagement can be experienced as necessary for a young person, in order to maintain a sense of togetherness.

These findings raise a series of yet unanswered questions; What is it about the boundarilessness promise of online worlds that can nurture such hopes and impart such pain? Moreover, what is happening in the internal worlds of young people when there is a desire to instead exist as another? and when denial of reality is not entirely possible, what has happened to the psyche and the soma that it is not able to withstand the separation?

On a different note, the findings on “Shortcut” also complement the findings on “Therapeutic task” as they show how the participants in their therapeutic work are sometimes faced with the challenge of establishing boundaries with technology; participants noted that such challenges might mirror the parents’ struggle to establish and adapt appropriate boundaries with their children’s and teenagers’ technology engagement. Participants, indeed, made links to technology as something that could benefit from moderation. Technology is taking the place of fast food, as a quick fix that attempts to bypass the hard work and time that may go into making and taking in, a nutritious and sustaining food experience. It may reflect on a wider symbolic level the parts young people may attempt to choose to bring into sessions, the parts they consciously want looking at. It could be, that by moderating the technology ‘intake’, there could be less shortcutting, as there would be more opportunity for growth through relational experiences, therapeutic or not, which are sometimes impeded due to the presence of the ‘screen’.

Similarly, this relates to the experience of inclusion and exclusion, that was reported by participants as an occurrence, within the young person’s online engagement. Participants noticed young people’s capacity to ‘block’ and cut-off people online. This action could perhaps also be thought about as an attempt by young people to cut off people that they have unconsciously projected into, unwanted parts of themselves; an attempt to shortcut what is

too painful to face in themselves. This observation by the participants, in addition to their own experience of sometimes feeling excluded by young people within the sessions, appears to highlight the capacity young people can have when it comes to separating off parts of themselves online and offline. This way of being is a concern if a person's online communication becomes very cut off from their real presentation. In this way the internet, especially sites such as suicide sites, may give strength to the part of the young person that wishes to remain hidden. This relates to literature that highlights the risk of cutting unwanted parts of the self off and engagement with online websites such as suicide pro websites (Kingsley et al., 2017)

Participants experienced that young people's identity is very intertwined with their online relating and engagement. Participants reported the mode in which young people are finding their way through development is altered with the presence of technology. Despite this, young people's internal process of negotiating identity is found to be the same by the participants. Singer (2013) mirrors these research findings when she explained that the task of separation and individuation, within the negotiation of identity, is the same with and without technology influence. Similarly, the task of the child and adolescent psychotherapist remains the same - to work with whatever the young person brings.

As highlighted at the beginning of the discussion, the results show that there is a relationship between technology and transitional objects. Results from the super-ordinate theme "Transitional object" and sub-theme "Technology as positive" show that the use of technology, particularly the mobile phone, was thought of as an object that can relieve anxious feelings, at times of transition; for example, technology can facilitate a young person

to be able to enter into the psychotherapy session. This process of alleviating anxious feelings is central to the function a transitional object - of any kind - serves for a young person.

The findings also reported on the attachment relationship that young people may have to their technology device. Some participants propose that there is the same emotional response evoked for a young people if they lose their phone and if they lose any other object that may be thought of as a transitional object, such as stuffed animals. Vincent (2006) explained that the relationship between a phone user and the phone has many layers of complexity, indicating the phone it is not just a phone. Some findings reflect the view that there is no cause for differentiation between what object a child brings to a session, whether categorised as a traditional transitional object or technology (Singer, 2013). As explained by Winnicott (1958a) it is important what the object stands for, rather than the actual object.

The scarcity of the findings of this research linking technology to transitional object appear to match with the small body of literature that was found directly linking these two subject topics, represented by two authors Grayson (2013) and Singer (2018). In this research, technology was illuminated by the concept of transitional objects with the shared role of assuaging anxious feelings, and tolerating separations and feelings of aloneness.

For some participants it came as a surprise to think about technology being similar to the concept of transitional objects. Some participants thought that technology could not have all of the characteristics that are traditionally associated with the concept of transitional objects. In such instances, objects represented by technology were thought of as helpful for separation but not necessarily as transitional objects.

Winnicott (1958a) explained that in healthy development there is a separation from the transitional object, which is symbolic of the separation that is happening for the young person

and signifies their developing individuation. There was little in the findings about what may happen if a young person struggles to separate in a healthy way from a transitional object. Pauley (2018) highlighted that challenges for young people to separate in healthy way, can impact on psychological development and evolve into vulnerability in psychic structures and challenges to engage in the transitional space for the analytic relationship. Further research seems important in this area, to ascertain how such experiences may be manifesting and developing, particularly given the level of attachment that young people are displaying towards technology and relating online.

3.1 Clinical Implications

Challenging feelings may be experienced by young people in a heightened way when transitioning to a therapy session or during the session. Technology can be positive for young people and support them to tolerate difficult feelings, such as anxious feelings. Moreover, the presence of technology can support some young people to engage in a therapeutic experience.

When young people take their technology into sessions, it can function as a support to the parts of them that want to bypass difficult feelings. Child and adolescent psychotherapists have the capacity to sit with the unknown and perhaps understand the meaning below the behaviour in these unconscious communications, continuing to work with what the young person brings.

Child and adolescent psychotherapists' technique remains the same with technology present or without; working with the transference and the countertransference. Moreover, being

curious about what is of interest to young people remains central to the work and this expands to technology or the online narrative that young people may bring into the therapy session. It may involve being creative and actively engaging with technology.

It is important to work with young people and their technology, which may be used in a defensive way. It is the task of the child and adolescent psychotherapist to work with defences and in such cases, should technology, like any defence, prove an impediment to treatment, it is the role of the child and adolescent psychotherapist to assess such challenges and indeed, in light of such information, establish how to proceed.

3.2 Suggestion for Further Research

The research leaves us with the unanswered questions about what it is that may lead some young people to have such strong attachments to their technology and what is happening internally to their psychological development when relating in specific ways to technology? Further research seems important in this area, to ascertain how such experiences may be manifesting and developing, particularly given the level of attachment that young people are displaying towards technology and relating online. There are many avenues which could be further explored, as the literature is evidence of the seriousness and the potential implications for young people who are engaged with gaming and online relating. A greater understanding in this area may perhaps contribute to informing NHS treatment pathways and how certain neural conditions are thought about.

The findings from this research open a wide array of research questions that could be investigated in future studies.

For instance, it would be beneficial to explore how young people can negotiate online and offline life experiences through an investigation into young people's experience of the boundarilessness of the internet and trying to answer whether the denial of reality is possible.

Moreover, a psychoanalytic exploration into young people's biological, psychological and social desires to exist as another in the online world, would provide an insight into the experiences of young people who use technology and the implications on their developing sense of self and internal world.

It would also be of great importance to gain further understanding on the adaption of relational ways of being amongst 'digital natives', and the potential consequences of this on society as a whole. Research could explore a question about what functions technology serves in young people's identity development.

Moreover, in the literature review there were surprising findings on gaming and excessive phone use. It would be of interest to research further how online and gaming physiological experiences are contributing to the developing shape of the internal worlds of children. Moreover, such information could provide additional ways of understanding the relational ways of being amongst 'digital natives'. It would be helpful in modern day psychoanalytic psychotherapy theory and practice to expand understanding of neurological experiences.

Developing on current research on technology and the neurological experiences for children and young people, may over time, provide additional ways of assessing young people's presentations that may include; high levels of impulsivity, finding it difficult to sit still, outbursts at the prospect of the end time of screen time and gaming, limited peer relationships and challenges in social situations. More information may guide and support

adults, on the potential implications for young people, if they are allowed excessive engagement with technology.

The development of evidence on the relationship between technology and neurology may in time contribute to additional ways of thinking and planning of pathways, diagnosis and treatment in services such as National Health Service (NHS) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

More research may inform what are the specifics of the relationship that has developed between a young person and technology that can substitute face to face relating and the consequences of this on society as a whole.

3.3 Limits of Research

The results are not generalisable due to the qualitative and explorative nature of the research study which focused on the lived experiences of a small number of participants. Therefore, the findings cannot be representative of the view of all child and adolescent psychotherapists, on this subject.

The research only focuses on child and adolescent psychotherapists' views. It does not give the direct voice of the experience of the young people and their technology use and its relation to transitional objects.

The methodology of IPA is not exhaustive and it could be enhanced by a quantitative research methodology to establish additional understanding of the research question.

The format of the interview schedule could be reviewed, particularly questions 3 and 4. Question 3 asks participants how they view technology is shaping the internal worlds and

developing psyches of young people. Question 4 which asks participants how they view the argument that there is a connection between technology and transitional objects; both questions may benefit from rethinking as they potentially could be worded in a more open ended way to be more facilitative for participants.

Drawing Conclusions

The research showed on one hand, the added layers of complexity that the presence of technology brings to the therapeutic encounter between a child and adolescent psychotherapist and a young person. On the other hand, it showed how the main task and work of child and adolescent psychotherapists remains the same, regardless of whether technology is present or not. Through the words of the child and adolescent psychotherapists, the impact of technology on young people's inner development and world, is evident.

The research has found that technology is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects. The way in which these two sets of objects are related is primarily through the assuaging of anxious feelings and the attachment that young people display related to their technology, which helps manage feelings of aloneness. The research also found that there were ambivalent feelings about there being a link between technology and transitional objects. Some views indicated there was not a relationship in terms of how traditional transitional object conceptualisation illustrates that transitional objects become imbued with meaning for example, of the mother. Moreover, there were some ambivalent views about technology having the same function of a transitional object in terms of the concept of a transitional object supporting a young person to transition from one developmental phase to another.

The research leaves unanswered questions about what it is that may lead some young people to have such strong attachments to their technology and what is happening internally to their psychological development when relating in specific ways to technology.

Reflexivity

This section includes observations on carrying out IPA research, more specifically on the process of the interviews and transcription, analysis of the data and bias.

The process of carrying out the interviews evoked some anxiety in the researcher. It was a learning and development experience of interview skills, that was enriched with every interview. Having a direct dialogue with each participant, was a rich experience. The information heard by the researcher during the interviews and the brief notes taken during the interview complimented the audio recordings of the interviews. While transcribing the interviews by listening to the audio recordings, on occasion it was as though for the first time, the researcher heard something that was said in the interview. This illuminated the different ways that information was processed by the researcher.

It took some time to establish a flow in the analysis of the interviews. During the conceptualisation of the data, the analysis evoked experiences of fragmentation that made it challenging to wade through the analysis. However, over time, connections and oppositional links were made and the data began to re-organise in a new shape, with outcomes that represented the diversity and convergence of data. It was trial and error between; reading, writing, highlighting, colour coding, typing, printing and cutting out, before moving emergent

themes around on large sheets of paper and eventually settling on outcomes. It was most ideal conditions for the researcher to be able to consistently analyse data from one interview in consecutive days as it created a flow.

The process of analysing the data was experienced as happening from the first moment of encounter with the participant in the interview, and it continued during the entire analysis and writing up process. There was something unique and unexpected for the researcher in the experience of having the data 'live in' in the researcher and be processed and analysed. It is a process that has to be experienced to be known. It is an individual experience that places the researcher and their research and analysis capacity as a central component to the research project.

For the researcher, using IPA was a process like finding one's way around in the dark. The researcher acquired different experience from the knowledge of each participant as well as developing interviewing capacities with each new interview. Similar to the individual experience that each participant reported on in their respective interviews, the researcher had an individual interview experience with each participant, moreover, in the analysis of each interview. The process appeared to mirror and illuminate the individuality of relational experiences. Applying the IPA method was a thoroughly enlightening experience. It was a time heavy experience to complete the analysis following IPA recommendations, however the method is as such, to support the development from rich data to rich findings.

Reviewing the process of the research project opens up several reflections on potential unconscious and other bias that may have affected the collection and analysis of the research material. The researcher chose to undertake research on subjects including young people's experiences with technology and child and adolescent psychotherapists experience of

working with young people and their technology in addition to exploring if this relates to the concept of transitional objects. The researcher chose these subject areas due to an interest in the subjects, and a desire to understand the subject areas more, partially linked to concern for what is not yet known about how young people internalise experiences created through vast engagement with technology. In this way it appears there may be unconscious bias.

Recruiting participants began by communicating with individuals whom the researcher had prior knowledge of. Other participants were not previously known to the researcher. In either instance, familiarity or an absence of it, may have influenced the researcher in the collection and analysis of data in an unconscious biased way. Equally, participant's prior knowledge or not of the researcher may have influenced their communications, consciously or unconsciously during the interviews.

On occasion it was interesting to notice the faster pace at which the researcher could interpret the data compared with for instance, other topics interpreted in the interview text. As referred to previously, there was also occasions on listening to the audio recordings where the researcher heard things from the interview as though it was the first time. Both of these occurrences may indicate potential bias from the researcher, whereby certain data was experienced as more accessible by the researcher and other information was either not taken in the first instance or omitted from conscious memory. This seems to indicate the real presence of the researcher within the process of IPA, whereby the analysis of the data is only possible through a deep exploration of the participant's experience, that meets in the analysis with the researchers own experiences. These examples appear to illuminate that there is place for potential bias in many aspects of interpreting the data and indeed, throughout the entire research project.

Conclusion

The combined literature review and qualitative research study explored the experience of child and adolescent psychotherapists, who have encountered technology in their therapeutic work with children and young people. It investigated child and adolescent psychotherapists understanding of technology and if their views on young people and technology are illuminated by the concept of transitional objects. This concluding section provides reflections on how the findings relate to the overall objective and each of the questions explored and it draws conclusions on what emerged from the lived experiences of child and adolescent psychotherapists in their therapeutic work with young people who brought technology – either in their narrative or physically - into the room.

The objective of the study was to explore child and adolescent psychotherapists experience and understanding of technology and if the concept of transitional objects illuminates their understanding. This research aimed to answer six specific questions as follows;

- What is child and adolescent psychotherapists experience of working with young people in psychotherapy sessions where technology is present in the room or in the young person's narrative?

It was discovered that child and adolescent psychotherapists had a wealth of experience of working with young people in psychotherapy sessions where technology was present in the room or in the young person's narrative. Child and adolescent psychotherapists experienced

young people using technology frequently in sessions or referring to it in their narrative. Participants found young people used their technology to support them transitioning to their therapy sessions as well as it helping them to manage anxious feelings within sessions. Technology was sometimes necessary in the room in order for some young people to manage the experience of trying to build a therapeutic relationship. In some instances, technology was experienced in a defensive way in therapy sessions which meant participants had to work with what the young person brought in that way.

- What is child and adolescent psychotherapists experience in psychotherapy sessions with young people where internet influences, social media and website access is present in the narrative of the young person?

Child and adolescent psychotherapists had a range of experiences in psychotherapy sessions with young people where internet influences, social media and website access was present in the narrative of young people. There are several ways that young people communicate via technology such as through gaming, app use and various other forms of online platforms. Young people engage frequently through technology, assuaging feelings of aloneness with an emphasises on the importance of how they perceive they are seen, by others, on these online platforms. Young people communicate a desire to seek feedback from others online. In a bid to present certain parts of the self and not other parts, young people may establish online characters leading to the falsification of self, through various online means. There is also a desire for some young people to relate to friends in the 'clouds', more so than, in face-to-face friend interactions.

- How do child and adolescent psychotherapists understand online engagement is internalised by young people and what is the impact on their developing egos?

Due to the presence of technology, child and adolescent psychotherapists view the way that young people are finding their way through development, is thought to be altered. Young people's desire to seek feedback from others online can highlight a desire to assuage feelings of loneliness and vulnerability and increase feelings of dependency. The way young people are perceived by others online, contributes to young people's feeling of position and status. Moreover, it can have implications for a young person's attachment capacity.

Online gaming with other players, can provide a short cut to the challenges and risks of face to face interactions, that may highlight vulnerabilities. Like the attempt of young people to live out other existences online, these bids for otherness, which may indicate un-grown parts of the ego, can be attempts by a young person to deny their sexuality. However, the internal process of negotiating identity remains the same, as without technology. Despite experiencing exposure on various levels through technology, young people believe that online relating is authentic.

- What do child and adolescent psychotherapists view as transitional objects in modern times?

Child and adolescent psychotherapists are of the view that transitional objects in modern times may still be stuffed animals, imbued by the child with meaning, often of the mother. Such objects may help the child to tolerate separations and manage times of transitions. Some

child psychotherapists are also of the view that technology can be viewed as a transitional object, sharing the same functions as traditional transitional object concept.

- Do child and adolescent psychotherapists view new technology as illuminating the concept of transitional objects?

The use of technology, particularly the mobile phone, is viewed by child and adolescent psychotherapists as an object that can relieve anxious feelings, such as facilitating a young person to be able to enter into the therapy session. The process of alleviating anxious feelings is central to the function a transitional object of any kind serves for a young person. Moreover, technology was found to impact on young people's attachments whereby frequent connectivity through technology reduced feelings of aloneness.

For some child and adolescent psychotherapists there was certainty that technology can be a transitional object. For other child and adolescent psychotherapists, although technology objects were recognised as objects that can assuage anxious feelings, they did not think technology fulfils the characteristics that are traditionally associated with transitional object concepts. A technology object was thought of as helpful for separation but not in the same conceptual terms a transitional object can support that function.

- What do child and adolescent psychotherapists believe is a progressive approach to understanding young people's communication through the use of technology?

Child and adolescent psychotherapists view on working with young people's communication through technology is that the task remains the same whatever a young person brings to their session, whether in speech or with the presence of technology. The task of being curious and using the new opportunities that technology may bring in the therapeutic engagement were highlighted as important. Staying with what is meaningful in the therapeutic engagement and child and adolescent psychotherapists continuing to analyse what they are doing and why were also views expressed by child psychotherapists in working with young people's communications through the use of technology.

3.1 The conclusions that emerged from the study

The conclusions of the study include that child and adolescent psychotherapists understand technology and young people's use of new technology in many ways. This includes technology's link with young people's identity, attachments and their attempts to manage challenging feelings and stages of development. Child and adolescent psychotherapists are open to working with the new experiences young people's engagement with technology may bring.

Technology is illuminated by the concept of transitional objects, based upon the commonly shared function of relieving anxious feelings, facilitating transitions and helping to manage feelings of aloneness. In terms of technology being thought of as a transitional object in traditional terms, some child and adolescent psychotherapists view that technology does not have the same qualities that fulfil the traditional concept of transitional objects.

Regardless of whether there is or is not a relationship, psychoanalytic technique, notably the transference and the countertransference, can be applied to whatever a young person brings to their session or whatever they talk about in their narrative, irrespective of whether it is technology or not. The task of internal development remains the same for young people, despite the alternative options that technology may purport to provide. Moreover, the psychoanalytic psychotherapy frame work stays the same, in its endeavour to support young people to work through their experiences and establish healthier ways of relating and being.

Clinical Research Portfolio:

Reflective and Framing Passages Paper

Introduction

The process of engaging with and completing the various components of the Clinical Research Portfolio, is the culmination of vast experiences, over a long period of time, as part of the Professional Doctorate and Clinical Training in Psychoanalytic Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy. The streams that comprise of the Clinical Research Portfolio, encompass the creation of a Clinical Conceptualisation paper (CC4), that presents a lengthy therapeutic case, called an 'intensive case', as required by the clinical training requirements. Moreover, the Clinical Research Portfolio encompasses the Research Project, a project that could be designed from a small number of possible qualitative, quantitative or mixed method frameworks, with the aim of my chosen framework, to focus on child and adolescent psychotherapists' experience of a particular clinical experience.

The data used for the requirements of the Clinical Research Portfolio is derived from therapeutic work with young people under the age of 18, an age cohort for which there is growing concern about their mental health. It has been reported that mental health problems often develop early; more specifically, 1 in 9 young people between the ages of 5-15, have significant mental health challenges and half of all mental health problems for young people, are established by the age of 14 (A report from the independent mental health taskforce to the NHS in England, 2016). In recent years, in response to the growing concerns for young people's mental health, the government agreed to various processes to try to meet the

growing need for mental health support, such as implementing the 'Five Year Forward View For Mental Health' in 2015-2016. This plan set out to expand access to mental health services, so 70,000 more children and young people will access treatment each year by 2020/21 (NHS Digital report, 2018).

More recently the government also committed to the NHS Long Term Plan. Amongst devising plans to facilitate change for supporting mental health in all age ranges, there are specific plans focused on transforming planning, pathways, procedures and outcomes in mental health for young people. As part of the Long Term plan, the NHS made a commitment to increase funding for children and young people's mental health services with the intention that it will grow faster than both overall NHS funding and total mental health spending (NHS Digital, 2018).

Holding such developments in mind, alongside such increasing challenges for young people and their mental health, the combined training requirements of the Clinical Research Portfolio, brings together two important strands. Firstly, the longstanding task of sufficiently developing a clinical capacity to reach accreditation standards set by the Association of Child Psychotherapy (ACP), the necessary accreditation to be able to work as a child and adolescent psychotherapist in the NHS. Secondly, that the research project afforded the opportunity to develop my research skills and explore on a wider level, experiences that are relative to young people and perhaps help to contribute to the development of understanding of life for young people at present, their experiences and like every generation before them, how they are adapting to their environments. Expanding the evidence base for child and adolescent psychotherapy, already developed by people such as; Midgley, Anderson, Grainger, Nesic-Vuckovic and Urwin (2009), is an important contribution to the profession, and essential for

maintaining funding for child and adolescent psychotherapy trainings and the continued provision of child and adolescent psychotherapy treatments in resource strained NHS services. On reflecting on present times, it seems evident that research evidence, trainings and treatment must be interlinked, as in the long term, it is possible that none of these components can sustain without the other parts.

Outline of the paper

Both the CC4 paper and the research project share specific excerpts into the experiences of young people. Excerpts from the CC4 paper are reported from my personal experience and analysed by me, whereas the research project excerpts are reported by the research participants and analysed by me.

The case that I wrote my CC4 paper on does not have a specific connection to the objective of the research project. In the following paragraphs I will explain the process of the CC4 paper and the research project with the aim to link and reflect on the specifics of each experience, also highlighting where the processes converge and diverge. I will reflect on the empirical status of the Clinical Research Portfolio, the methods, generalizability and concepts relative to the choice of methodology.

The Clinical Conceptualisation Paper

Understanding the empirical status of the Clinical Conceptualisation paper

The CC4 paper must be written on an intensive psychotherapy case of a child or young person. The requirements of an intensive case are that the young person has 3 psychotherapy

sessions per week and the trainee psychotherapist has once weekly individual supervision for 1 year, at least. My CC4 paper explored the internal world of an adolescent boy and his external presentations. It included detailed excerpts from psychotherapy sessions with the young person, facilitated by me. The sessions were written up by me and analysed by me. A small amount of psychoanalytic theory, linked to themes in the paper, is referenced.

The two components of the Clinical Research Portfolio differ vastly in most ways, including; in terms of the application of a research methodology, participants and the original understanding of what the purpose of the data collection was. At the time of writing CC4, I was unaware that the CC4 paper and the research project would converge for a Clinical Research Portfolio: Reflective and Framing Passages paper.

This experience for me mirrors part of the experience of compiling session notes (data) from the adolescent intensive case, that I eventually wrote the CC4 paper on. While in child and adolescent psychotherapy training, there are a total of 3 intensive cases. One intensive case must be seen for a minimum of 2 years and 2 of the cases for a minimum of 1 year. It was only in the later stages of the therapy with the adolescent young person, that I decided I would write the CC4 paper on the case. Up until that point, and still until the end of the treatment, in effect, the data was gathered for the purpose of learning from the clinical experience. The frequent individual supervision with a specific supervisor, supported me to develop my clinical capacity.

Data Collection

From the point of deciding to write the CC4 paper on the particular case, the majority of the 'data' had already been collected. This differs vastly from the research project experience. Moreover, the session notes or data, now had an additional purpose. I believe an adjustment to the purpose behind gathering information, can have an influence on the process of how it is collected. Again, this differs in ways from the research methodology applied in the research project which had a specific data collection framework.

Method

Recording of data

For the intensive case therapy, 1 session per week was written up. The material included the narrative of the young person, the experience for the therapist – thoughts, associations. It is in retrospect that technical terms are thought about, technique is guided, and a lot of this comes from the individual supervision sessions. As I was a strong presence in the relational therapeutic experience, inevitably I was also a large part of how the data was received in the moment in sessions and how I recorded it. The recording of information for the CC4 is done through recollection, written up after the session. This differs hugely from the gathering of data for the research project. The interviews for the research project were voice recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Analysing Data

The analysis of the data did not follow a specific methodology. The process of analysing session material for the CC4 paper included printing all of the session material, reading the material and re-reading and highlighting sections that appeared important to reflect more on.

This is comparable in part with the process of IPA. The approach differs in the specifics of making sense of the data. For the CC4 paper, themes were drawn by reflecting on particular selected sections I chose. Drawing themes out of the data centred on showing the therapeutic journey of the young person. The themes highlighted challenges and developments for the young person – internally and externally. Moreover, it included reflections on the process the therapist, me, sat with, such as the not knowing, or at times appeared to recognise something via the transference relationship and countertransference feelings, and perhaps meet the young person with an interpretation at a suitable time and sometimes not at the correct time. The therapeutic endeavour is a joint endeavour and as such, reflection on the therapist's processes is necessary in the session write ups.

Like the process of IPA, the write up of the CC4 paper contained excerpts directly from the session material as well as analysis of what was thought to be happening in the treatment. The CC4 paper tracked the 19-month treatment from the start until the end. The duration over which data was available to be analysed, differed immensely from the process of data gathering for the research project where each interview was a single interaction.

In the CC4 paper there was no specific written literature review section. Throughout the CC4 paper there was some reference to psychoanalytic literature. Specific theories, that related to the case material, were referred to including, challenges and progression and hypothesising about what was happening in the transference. There was no reference to research literature.

Routine Outcome Monitoring Forms

Routine monitoring outcome (ROMs forms – Goal Based Outcome (GBOs)) were used to monitor the progress of the young person. This was first completed at the beginning of the treatment and it involved the young person, with the support of his mother, choosing 3 goals to work on. The goals were given a rating. The goals were reviewed during the therapy treatment and at the end of the treatment. Improvements in all 3 goals were highlighted at the end review as well as the challenges that were still present. The goals in part linked to the themes of the CC4 paper, as there was some cross over between the goals and the themes from the CC4 paper.

Generalizability of the paper

The possibility of generalisability is diminished by the following factors;

- My active role in the therapeutic process/dialogue, in that way, inextricably influenced the data available for analysis. I had already been an active participant in the relational exchanges with the young person, a highly important factor in the gathering and analysis of data.

- A specific research methodology was not applied. Consequently, in the absence of a methodology framework, there is no comparison to check for consistency of results in line with methodology protocol.

- The data was taken from one case study. The information gathered through the analysis of the material varies greatly to a study such as the Adolescent Depression Study, undertaken in London, Helsinki and Athens (Midgley, Anderson, Grainger, Nesic-Vuckovic and Urwin, 2009).

Other concepts relevant to the choice of research methodology

What could have been applied;

The qualitative method, Grounded Theory could have been applied to excerpts selected from the clinical qualification paper. It can be applied to psychological studies and it can generate a high level conceptual account (Smith et al., 2009).

Thematic analysis, another form of qualitative analysis, could have been applied in a formal way to selected excerpts of the session material.

The qualitative method of Narrative analysis, which has some crossover with phenomenological and discursive analysis could have been used to organise and analyse the data. Narrative analysis is concerned with attempting to make sense of a person's stories and how the stories place structure on human experience (Smith et al., 2009).

The Research Paper

Understanding the empirical status of the research paper

To develop the research proposal into the research project, it was necessary to first gain ethics approval for the project. This was an unexpectedly large undertaking and timely process. There were unforeseen ethics requirements, extending past my training school ethics

approval board –the Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC) and my NHS trust approval – Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Research and Development Department (R&D). I was also required to gain ethics approval from the Health Research Authority Health Research Authority (HRA) and Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW). The process involved fulfilling a large amount of ethical criteria to ensure that it was safe and appropriate to carry out my research according to the research plan and supporting evidence that I provided. The ethics approval process necessitated a vast amount of liaison between the aforementioned ethics approval bodies. I spent a lot of time communicating between these ethics bodies, which, although a timely experience, I also feel assured by the precautionary, rigorous process that the ethics bodies follow, to ensure that my research and others, is of a safe and valid nature. I believe this is important when examining the empirical status of the research paper.

Research Question and Format

The research project followed a specific approved format as chosen from the options in the course handbook. The format included a literature review, in addition to analysis of 8 research interviews where the focus was on child and adolescent psychotherapists' experience and views. The paper followed the format of an Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Findings, Discussion and Conclusion sections. The sections specifically addressed parts contributing to the overall attempt to answer the research question, 'New Technology: How do child and adolescent psychotherapists understand it and is it illuminated by the concept of transitional objects'? I chose this topic due to a clinical experience with a young person and enthusiasm spurred in me following attendance at a conference called, 'Mind, Body and Identity', which included a presentation that touched on young people and technology. This,

combined with my interest to understand more about the clinical experience I had been part of with a young person and how it may link with transitional object theory, was the starting point for my research question.

The research project is a small scale study with an in-depth exploratory stance; its design is qualitative and its results are not generalisible like results from empirical studies as Randomised Control Trials (RCT).

The Research Paper

Method

The qualitative research method of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), was the chosen research method for the project. IPA was chosen, as the research looked at the individual experience of the participants and a specific phenomenon they experience. A great deal of attention to detail was necessary in pursuit of carrying out the method appropriately.

Recruitment and Data collection process

Previous to collecting the data, I had to clearly establish the inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants and embark on the recruitment process. This involved the compilation of research related sheets including a research letter of invitation, a participant information sheet and a consent sheet.

The process of actively seeking out several participants to take-part in the study evoked some anxious feelings in me, linked largely to the unpredictability of this new experience for me. I communicated with professional connections and I was fortunate with subsequent secondary connections people first made on my behalf, by sharing the topic of my research with people. Within the population of potential participants, I was highly conscious of maintaining the anonymity of all of the potential participants.

Also, I designed a semi-structured interview schedule for use in each participant interview in order to explore the research question. Each interview was a unique process that was rich in the quality of information provided by the participants and for my own development as a researcher and interviewer. The experience of transcribing the interviews verbatim, was an important part of the analysis, as I believe it helped me to process the data on new level.

Data analysis

The detailed, and thorough process up to the point of the individual interviews was mirrored in the subsequent stages of applying the analysis to the data. The method called on me, the researcher, to engage with the data on several levels. This included, developing an awareness of my role within the interview experience, which as per research method, mirrors something different in each interview experience. The interviews, as aforementioned, were analysed in an iterative way, thereby the data was analysed in multiple ways, leading to rich findings.

Levels of Interpretation

When analysing the data, the different levels of interpretation, as outlined in the research project, required a large time investment and psychological investment from me. It was at

times an exhausting process, compounded by what felt like seas of data to wade through. At times, analysing 8 interviews, of approximately 1 hour in duration, in multiple ways, felt like an overwhelming experience. In ways this linked with an overwhelming feeling I experienced while reviewing material for the CC4 paper. For the research project there was approximately 65,000 words of data. What differed immensely between analysing the data from the research project was that I was aware from the beginning of the research project of my active role.

Role as Researcher

This role reached another level when I was present in the interview and thus inextricably part of the interview process, which followed through to the analysis of the data, and the importance of reflecting upon and taking into account my part in the data analysis. For the CC4 paper, on the whole I was not aware that my session (data) material was going to be for another purpose, until near the end of the therapeutic intervention. On writing the CC4 paper it drew my mind to thoughts on my experience of the young person, during sessions, our relational experience and the figures in the transference. This differed to the research interviews as the interviews were about the participant's experience of their work with young people and not my direct experience. Consequently, on one level I think I was more removed at that point from the data, whereas on another level I believe that my conscious awareness of my data gathering made me in ways closer to the experience.

I felt satisfaction on making my way through the first analysis of an interview. My capacity to analyse the data got faster when I had consecutive days engaged with the data. My capacity decelerated when I had inconsistent time with the data. The analysis process was highly detailed, and for that reason I think it led to the establishment of rich findings.

Generalizability of the project

Due to the size of the study, results as a standalone study are not generalizable. It is hoped that the description of the method contained in the project, in conjunction with the reflective and framing passages papers, highlights the process sufficiently that it could be repeated by another researcher should they so choose. However, due to the nature of a qualitative research design, even more so when using IPA, replicating the study and the results would expand the knowledge on this topic, instead of replicating the results in an objective way.

Concepts relevant to the choice of research methodology

IPA is founded on 3 central theoretical concepts, as outlined by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). These concepts support the frame of IPA that focuses on the individual experience within the whole, and the active role of the researcher. The first of these concepts is that IPA has an ideographic focus. This means the analysis aims to find out the meaning of the content in the participant's narrative, of their individual experience, information which without such potential for fluidity, could perhaps be difficult to capture in a quantitative based approach and aggregates of statistical analysis. This added to my decision to use IPA.

According to Flowers and colleagues (2009) another concept is hermeneutics and the hermeneutic circle, informed by theorists Schleiermacher and Gamer amongst others. This concept is about the process of understanding the meaning of a word, in light of the words (sentence/context) that surround it. In summary, the singular, primarily has meaning, within a whole. This links to an important aspect of IPA, in that the process of analysis of the data is iterative. This means it is not a linear analysis, but there is the possibility for movement in the

application of the method, which will be expanded on further in the section on concepts relevant to the choice of research methodology. Thirdly, IPA is concerned with phenomenology. This relates to the work of Husserl and Heidegger, and the approach IPA takes whereby it aims to make sense of the lived individual experience of participants (Smith et al., 2009). I think the theoretical underpinnings of the method, supported an effective analysis of the data, and importantly, the exploration, of the individual experience of each participant.

Other concepts relevant to the choice of research methodology

Each individual interview was analysed following an analysis process, as guided by Smith and colleagues (2009) which included; initial free association noting, description comments, linguistic comments and conceptual comments. The conceptual comments require a deeper interpretation and they necessitated me to reflect on my experiences and place within the research interview. The process sometimes felt confusing as it perhaps generated a lot of questions. Part of my role in analysing the data, meant I had to tolerate the 'not knowing' and proceed, trusting that the entire framework of the analysis would support more clarity on data processes going forward.

The process of deconstruction, abstraction and polarization was used at various stages of the analysis of the data. All of these processes allow for a focus on the participant's words to ensure as rounded and rich meaning as possible can be derived from the material (Smith et al., 2009). The written outcomes from these analysis methods were reviewed several times by the researcher to develop 'emergent themes' in an attempt to reflect the richness of the

data processed through the various IPA techniques. The emergent themes were hand written in the blank column to the left of the original text.

The movement from individual analysis of the interviews to a shared analysis of the data, employing further abstraction, polarisation and identification of convergence and divergence as guided by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) regarding the concepts of IPA lead to both enhancing the areas of divergence within the data and also highlighting specific, important areas of divergence. This seemed to make for a rich contribution to the findings of the project. Throughout the project I was supported by my research supervisor.

Complex issues in the field of child psychotherapy research,

Child psychotherapy research, is a complex area of research. Like the individual case written about in my CC4 paper, a lot of studies in child psychotherapy are single-case studies. These are important contributions to child psychotherapy and spreading the potential therapeutic value it may be for a young person. However, with the challenges at present on mental health settings to provide financially viable, time and resource efficient treatments, it is important that psychotherapy and the individual value of all single case studies, can in a way be represented on a larger scale. Psychotherapists have worked hard to find what methodologies or research designs may best facilitate the gathering and subsequent reporting on data that can display the value in the therapeutic approach.

Reflections on the value of Child Psychotherapy Research

Given the individual nature of psychotherapy and the implications of the relational experience of the work, requiring the child and adolescent psychotherapist to be engaged with the transference and countertransference, projections and associations of the young person, the application of research in child psychotherapy may be viewed as something that can have infinitive shapes, which is in essence, true. Qualitative research can provide invaluable insight and developments as a consequence of these experiences.

Several variations of child psychotherapy and child psychoanalysis research have been applied over the last few decades, particularly by the Anna Freud Centre (AFC) in London. These studies (Midgely et al. 2009) include the AFC Retrospective Study led by Dr Mary Target which was the first large scale psychotherapy study to attempt to move away from the single-case study, and more recently, the AFC Long-Term Follow-Up Study, led by Dr Abby Schacter. These research studies returned varied results, experiencing some challenges linked to incomplete data and challenges with retention and a control group.

Research studies such as these, in conjunction with rich insights gained through qualitative research studies are incredibly valuable to the development of on-going research in child psychotherapy. Learning from these processes, and their individual and combined strengths it is hoped, can enable a variety of studies going forward to achieve more generalizable findings; thus adding to the growing body of child psychotherapy research, and continue to validate the profession within services such as the NHS and the provision of treatment for young people experiencing high levels of distress. Moreover, that a growing body of evidence can continue to emphasise the importance of funding for training in child and adolescent psychotherapy.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to review the experience of the Clinical Research Portfolio, namely the Clinical Conceptualisation paper and the Research Project. The paper was an opportunity to reflect on the similarities and difference of these two training requirements. In a way, I return to my comparison to the process of IPA, whereby I think the process highlights the importance of the individual (the CC4, single-case study) within the whole (the research project). Both experiences are of great importance and I believe that the combination of such experiences has supported my clinical development and my capacity to review information, whatever the nature, in a curious and inquisitive manner, aiming to distil from the individual occurrence, within the whole, while being conscious of my active part in the process. I think this experience will transfer to my ways of being, as I proceed within the wider system of the NHS. I think, and I hope, that these skills will support me to be able to assess and negotiate my way within the wider political systems that influence services and systems, and in this current age of technology, to be creative in expanding awareness of the contributions of psychotherapy and how it has much to offer in the face of some of the challenges of this new phenomenon.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Research Project Invitation Letter

Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Invitation Letter 20.07.2018, version 1.0, IRAS ID:244907

To Whom It Concerns,

You are receiving this letter as I wish to seek your permission to proceed with enquiring, if you are in agreement with me sending you further information, as a request to take part in a research project.

Title of the Study

'New Technology and Transitional Objects: Are They Related and How Do Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists Understand It'?

Purpose of the Study

As part of my training with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust I am undertaking a research project. The purpose of the study is to ascertain Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists' understanding of communications they receive through new technology, whether internal or external to the individual therapeutic session and if therapists understanding of such may link with traditional Winnicottian approaches related to transitional objects.

Participants will be asked to take part in an individual interview. The interview will last up to 60 minutes. In some cases a second interview, also lasting up to 60 minutes, may be requested should the material from the first interview require further exploration. The interview(s) will be audio recorded and subsequently transcribed by me. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time, without disadvantage and without giving any reason.

The material from the interviews will be analysed using a qualitative research method. The results will be used in my doctoral research project and potentially for presentation and academic journals in the future.

If I do not hear from you within seven days, I will conclude that you are open to receiving further information about the study.

Principal Investigator contact details

Rhona Gilhooley, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist in Doctoral Training

Email: Rhona.gilhooley@sabp.nhs.uk

Phone: 01737288700

Address: CAMHS Redhill, Gatton Place, St. Matthew's Road, RH1 1TA

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Rhona Gilhooley

How am I managing this study under the General Data Protection Regulation (2018)?

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust is the sponsor for this study based in the United Kingdom. I will be using information from participants in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. This means that I am responsible for looking after participants' information and using it properly. I will keep identifiable information about participants from this study for two years after the study has finished.

Participants rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as I need to manage participant's information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. To safeguard participant's rights, I will use the minimum personally identifiable information possible. I will use participants' names and the contact details participants provide, to contact participants about the research study. I am the only person who will have access to information that identifies participants. I may be assisted in the analysis of this information by senior colleagues, but they will not be able to identify participants and will not be able to find out participants' names or contact details.

You can find out more about how participants information will be managed by contacting the sponsoring Trust's Clinical Governance and Quality Manager, Irene Henderson: IHenderson@tavi-port.nhs.uk

This research project has been formally approved by the Health Research Authority (HRA), the SABP Research and Development Department and the Tavistock and Portman Research Ethics Committee (TREC).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the conduct of the research program you have been asked to participate in, the conduct of the investigator or any other aspect of the this research project, please contact SABP Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), responsible for complaints/quality assurance in SABP.

Or

Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

Appendix B

Participant Information Sheet

Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

You are receiving this information sheet as you are being asked to take part in a research project. This information sheet delineates the study and it explains what will be involved should you wish to participate.

As part of my training with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust I am undertaking a research project. The research aims to investigate the experience of child and adolescent psychotherapists who have encountered new technology in their therapeutic work with young people and whether understanding around new technology may be related to transitional objects.

Title of the Study

'New Technology and Transitional Objects: Are They Related and How Do Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists Understand It'?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to ascertain Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists' understanding of communications they receive through new technology, whether internal or external to the individual therapeutic session and if therapists understanding of such may link with traditional Winnicottian approaches related to transitional objects.

Researcher and Principal Investigator

Rhona Gilhooley – 3rd year Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy trainee.

Participant Involvement

If you agree to participate in the research project, I will invite you to take part in an individual interview with me, at a time and location that is convenient for you. The interview will take a semi-structured format, seeking to learn about your experience of new technology in child and adolescent psychotherapy sessions and if it relates to traditional theory on transitional objects. The interview will last up to 60 minutes. In some cases a second interview, also lasting up to 60 minutes, may be requested should the material from the first interview require further exploration. The interview(s) will be audio recorded and subsequently transcribed by me. You may withdraw from the study at any time or withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied, without disadvantage and without giving any reason.

Participant Information

Any information shared by you will be stored confidentially. Your contact details and name will be stored separately from interview transcriptions. The information from the interviews will be anonymised and pseudonyms will be given to participants and any other persons you might mention in the interviews. All information will be encrypted and password protected.

All recordings and transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet or password protected file for two years before being safely deleted and disposed of confidentially, in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy. Any extracts from your interview that are used in the written work will be anonymous.

Although I will use pseudonyms, as the sample size is small (up to eight Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists), this may have implications for confidentiality / anonymity. I will encourage you to contact me (see details below) at any point prior to or following the interview to discuss any concerns about confidentiality.

Where participants are in a dependent relationship with the researcher, that participation in the research will have no impact on assessment / treatment / service-use or support.

There will be limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

Research Outcome

The material form the interviews will be analysed using a qualitative research method. The results will be used in my doctoral research project and potentially for presentation and academic journals in the future.

By taking part

You will be contributing to extending the information and knowledge base on how young people communicate through means of new technology, whether it is something physical within the session or externalised internet sites and social media platforms spoken about in the session and whether or not there is a link between these experiences and transitional objects.

Are there any risks?

No. There are no known risks.

Principal Investigator contact details

Rhona Gilhooley, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist in Doctoral Training

Email: Rhona.gilhooley@sabp.nhs.uk

Phone: 01737288700

Address: CAMHS Redhill, Gatton Place, St. Matthew's Road, RH1 1TA

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet. Three days after sending the information sheet, I will contact you. If you wish to part-take in the research, I will seek your informal consent to participate and I will invite you for an interview. Prior to the interview, you will be offered a chance to ask further questions and asked to sign the formal consent form.

How am I managing this study under the General Data Protection Regulation (2018)?

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust is the sponsor for this study based in the United Kingdom. I will be using information from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. This means that I am responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. I will keep identifiable information about you from this study for two years after the study has finished.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as I need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. To safeguard your rights, I will use the minimum personally identifiable information possible. I will use your name and the contact details you provide, to contact you about the research study. I am the only person who will have access to information that identifies you. I may be assisted in the analysis of this information by senior colleagues, but they will not be able to identify you and will not be able to find out your name or contact details.

You can find out more about how your information will be managed by contacting the sponsoring Trust's Clinical Governance and Quality Manager, Irene Henderson: IHenderson@tavi-port.nhs.uk

This research project has been formally approved by the Health Research Authority (HRA), the SABP Research and Development Department and the Tavistock and Portman Research Ethics Committee (TREC).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the conduct of the research program you have been asked to participate in, the conduct of the investigator or any other aspect of the this research project, please contact SABP Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), responsible for complaints/quality assurance in SABP.

Or

Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

Appendix C

Consent Form

Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Consent Form – 13.06.2018, version 1.0, IRAS ID: 244907

One signed copy of the form to be given to the participant and one signed copy to be stored by the researcher.

Project Title: 'New Technology and Transitional Objects: Are They Related and How Do Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists Understand It'?

Please initialise the boxes

- I confirm that I have received an information sheet dated 13.06.2018, version 1.0 that explains the nature of the research project. I have read and understood the requirements. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to the research and I have them answered in a satisfactory manner ☐
- I understand that I am voluntarily participating in the study and if I so wish, I may withdraw from the research project at any time, or to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied, without disadvantage to myself and without giving a reason ☐
- I understand that there will be an audio recording of the interviews that will also be transcribed ☐
- I understand that the audio recording and transcripts and any identifiable information about me will be anonymised and stored securely and confidentially ☐
- I understand that as the sample size is small (up to eight Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists), this may have implications for confidentiality / anonymity ☐
- I understand that the information from the interview and research project may be used in the future for further research purposes, presentations and publications ☐
- I hereby freely consent to participate in this study, which has been fully explained to me ☐

Name of Participant (Block capitals):
Signed:
Date:

Name of Researcher (Block Capitals):
Signed:
Date:

Principal Investigators: Rhona Gilhooley

Email: Rhona.gilhooley@sabp.nhs.uk, Phone: 01737288700

Address: CAMHS Redhill, Gatton Place, St. Matthew's Road, RH1 1TA

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Semi-Structured Interview Questions – 13.06.2018, version 1.0, IRAS ID: 244907

Research title: 'New Technology and Transitional Objects: Are They Related and How Do Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists Understand It'?

1. What is your experience of working with young people in psychotherapy sessions during which technology belonging to the patient is present within the room or within their narrative?

2. What is your experience of working with young people in psychotherapy sessions during which internet influences, social media platforms and website access is present within the narrative of the patient?

3. What is your view on how the use of new technology is shaping the internal worlds and developing psyches of these young people?

4. What do you view as a transitional object in modern times?

5. How do you view the argument that there could be a connection between new technology and transitional objects?

6. What do you understand as a progressive approach when trying to understand what is being communicated by young people through their use of new technology and their narrative around it?