The paradox of using trauma informed practices in mainstream schools: a psycho-social exploration of educators' experiences

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Abstract

This thesis presents an exploratory study grounded in psycho-social ontology and epistemology, utilising qualitative methodology to investigate the unconscious and systemic influences on educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices in mainstream schools. Employing Organisation in the Mind (OiM) drawings and Free Association Narrative Interviews (FANI) for data collection and Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) for data analysis, the research identifies five interconnected themes. These are Emotional labour in being trauma-informed, Integral role of relational practice, Personal and professional identity, Having sufficient knowledge, and Internal systems and surrounding contexts. Through the application of a psychodynamic lens, the study discusses various defence mechanisms: splitting, projection, transference, countertransference, and projective identification. Additionally, systemic and systems-psychodynamic concepts including positioning, circular causality, social defences and basic assumption behaviours are explored. The implications for practice highlight the importance of re-emphasising the relational aspect of trauma-informed practices to mitigate unconscious anxieties among educators. Findings also suggest implications for Educational Psychologists (EPs) in designing and facilitating training programmes focused on trauma and associated practices, aiming to enhance educators' understanding and awareness of unconscious and systemic processes when using trauma-informed pedagogies. The study also highlights a number of paradoxes whereby educators, when engaging in trauma-informed practices, experience heightened emotions and relational disruption and do so within a system that is not designed to hold the emotional and relational complexities present within it. This creates more complexity within the system and perpetuates the paradoxes. To address this, a systemic shift within education is proposed, advocating for the widespread implementation of containing spaces to help alleviate the paradoxes and support educators in their use of relational, trauma-informed practice.

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List of Abbreviations

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder
AEP	Association of Educational Psychologists
APA	American Psychological Association
BESD	Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties
BPS	British Psychological Society
CASP	Critical Appraisal Skills Programme
CPD	Continued Professional Development
DECP	Division of Educational and Child Psychology
DT for LAC	Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
FANI	Free Association Narrative Interview
GEM	Grid Elaboration Model
GT	Grounded Theory
HCPC	Health Care Professional Council
IPA	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
ISPA	International School Psychology Association
KCSIE	Keeping Children Safe in Education
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
OHID	Office of Health Improvement and Disparities
OiM	Organisation in the Mind
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PHE	Public Health England
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses
RTA	Reflexive Thematic Analysis
SEMH	Social, Emotional, Mental Health
SENDCO	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-Ordinator
SMHL	Senior Mental Health Lead
TREC	Tavistock Research Ethics Committee
VRU	Violence Reduction Units
WDG	Work Discussion Group

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction overview

This chapter provides the context for this research and will:

- Define how trauma is understood in this research, outlining how and who trauma affects and explore the prevalence of trauma in society.
- Highlight the implications of trauma in education, making reference to governmental legislation and guidance.
- Discuss the difference between traditional behaviour management methods and trauma-informed approaches.
- Explore the theory-practice gap when implementing trauma-informed practices, and examine the psychological contributions to this disparity.
- Introduce the concept of the unconscious and the contribution it may bring to the emergence of the theory-practice gap.
- Present my connection to and motivation for conducting this research.

1.1 Defining Trauma: the what, the how and the why

1.1.1 What trauma is

A consensus on what trauma is has not been achieved in education, primarily because of the varied interpretations educators derive from the multitude of existing definitions (e.g Ferrara et al., 2023; Luthar & Mendes, 2020). However, establishing an agreed definition facilitates a

common language for supporting trauma-experienced children. In this research, a definition of trauma that amalgamates various perspectives and accommodates the different types of trauma that could occur (Table 1) is conceptualised as:

Exposure to physical or emotional harm beyond typical human experience, resulting in enduring adverse effects on an individual's well-being and functioning (de Thierry, 2017; Diagnostic Statistical Manual V – text revision (DSM V-TR), 2022; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 2014).

Table 1: summary of trauma types (Van der Kolk, 2017).

Trauma Type	**Trauma description**	**Trauma example**
Acute	Single significant event	Car accident, bereavement
Chronic	Continued exposure to event	War and conflict, acrimonious caregiver separation, parental incarceration, bullying
Complex	Exposure to multiple traumatic events	Abuse (all forms), neglect, witness to domestic abuse
Vicarious	Close contact with an individual who has or is experiencing trauma becomes traumatised themselves	Foster or adoptive parent supporting child, educator in school supporting child, close friend or family member supporting child

1.1.2 How it impacts

Trauma impacts various aspects of child development, encompassing cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and neurological domains (e,g Cross et al., 2017; Winder, 2015; Yoches et al., 2011). For effective learning to occur, children need to feel physically, emotionally, socially, and relationally secure (Beauregard et al., 2022; Shean & Mander, 2020; Twemlow et al., 2002;). However, a child who has experienced trauma often has heightened feelings of threat, leading to a diminished sense of safety compared to their peers (Perry, 2003; Pine et

al., 2005; Tobin, 2016). Consequently, this heightened state of alertness impedes cognitive capacity and thus can limit learning (Howard, 2019; Little & Maunder, 2021).

Furthermore, responses to traumatic experiences can manifest in challenging behaviours and relational difficulties within school settings (Van der Kolk, 2017). Such behaviours include swearing, physical aggression, self-harm, and dissociation (Bowes et al., 2023). These behaviours reflect a trauma-experienced child's almost persistent state of fight, flight, or freeze responses in order to protect themselves (MacLochlainn et al., 2022; McInerney & McKlindon, 2014), illustrating the profound fear inherent in a trauma-experienced child's world (Neil et al., 2022). Additionally, trauma-experienced children often build psychological barriers as a defence mechanism against further trauma (Garland, 2018). This exacerbates challenges in forming relationships and managing behaviour for educators (Chafouleas et al., 2016; Thomas et al., 2019). One common way to manage the often persistent difficult and dangerous trauma responses exhibited by trauma-experienced children has been to suspend and exclude them (Hemphill et al., 2017). The life-long effects of such punitive measures are detrimental to children (Briggs, 2010) and these effects are compounded further due to the trauma within their lives (Howard, 2019). Reports indicate that children exposed to trauma are at increased risk of long-term mental health difficulties (Copeland et al., 2018; Sugaya et al., 2012), subsequent engagement in unhealthy future relationships (Colman & Widom, 2004), and engagement in risky behaviours like substance abuse (Ayres, 2021; Kerig, 2019).

Moreover, the impact of trauma extends beyond the individual child, affecting educators and adults within school environments as well (Bowes, et al, 2023). Vicarious trauma among adults can further complicate the dynamics of supporting traumatised children as their own triggers and sense of safety can begin to influence how they respond and work with trauma-

experienced children (Morrissey & Higgins, 2022; Olsen, 2022). Consequently, conducting research in this field is imperative, with Educational Psychologists (EPs) playing a vital role in training educators and effecting organisational change to support school staff (Alisic et al., 2012). By responding to and supporting schools, educators and EPs can help mitigate the adverse effects of trauma and enhance the overall well-being and educational outcomes of trauma-experienced children.

1.1.3 Why might prevalence have increased?

In the past five years, there has been a notable increase in the identification of trauma-experienced children (Newlove-Delgado et al., 2022; NHS, 2023; NSPCC, 2024). However, this increase may be an underestimation: many cases fail to meet the threshold for formal recognition and remain undocumented (Sadler, 2018). Furthermore, existing assessment measures often overlook trauma in preschool children, relying on instruments designed for adults (Woolgar et al., 2021), suggesting that the actual prevalence of trauma could be higher than reported.

The underlying reasons for this prevalence are multifaceted. One possibility is simply there are increased occurrences of traumatic experiences within society. Statistics from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) indicate that approximately 20% of the adult population has now experienced some form of childhood trauma (ONS, 2020). Moreover, reported cases of physical abuse of children (Bentley, 2020) and emotional abuse due to witnessing domestic abuse have consistently risen (Sharratt et al., 2023), particularly during periods of heightened societal stress such as the Covid-19 pandemic (Stripe, 2020; Williamson et al., 2020). These trends may suggest a link between environmental stressors and increased trauma incidence.

Another possible contribution to the rising prevalence of trauma may be improved recognition and reporting mechanisms. Professionals working closely with children, such as educators, may have become more adept at identifying signs of abuse due to strengthened safeguarding legislation (Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE); DfE, 2023a). Additionally, the rise of support avenues, including helplines and online platforms, could facilitate disclosure of traumatic experiences by children themselves (Schonbucher et al., 2012), potentially enhancing the prevalence of trauma. Therefore, while the causes of increased trauma prevalence may be uncertain, the increased prevalence does necessitate a responsive approach from schools, educators, and EPs to effectively support traumatised individuals amidst evolving societal pressures and influential contexts.

1.2 Trauma and education

Prior to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (COP) in 2015, children who persistently behaved in a difficult and dangerous manner, irrespective of their exposure to trauma, were classified as having Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). However, from 2015, there has been a shift in terminology from BESD to Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH). This suggests that the focus on understanding and supporting the SEMH needs of a child rather than labelling the child as having a difficulty has been made. However, within the COP there is no mention of trauma and of the 26 references made to behaviour, only one is associated with contextual, environmental factors such as ‘domestic circumstances’ (SEND COP, p.96). Instead alternative documents are signposted for more guidance on ‘managing mental health and behaviour difficulties’ (SEND COP, 2015, p.98) indicating that no such substantive shift has occurred.

Nevertheless, governmental departments (Department of Education (DfE) and Public Health England (PHE)) have published numerous documents outlining the requirement for schools to identity and support the mental health needs of children (DfE, 2015; DfE, 2018; DfE, 2023; PHE, 2021). One publication, *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools* (2018), makes the link between mental health and a child's behaviour, referencing how traumatic life events can impact both. This document states that behaviour should be supported and that school staff should be aware of how to identify mental health needs due to traumatic experiences, implementing provision to support them accordingly. Guidance is provided within this document that encourage schools to become more trauma-informed in their practice, with a number of organisations cited as being able to support in accomplishing this. This is further supported by PHE (2021) who also promote the mental health and well-being of pupils, advocating for a whole-school trauma-informed approach. Furthermore, the KCSIE document instructs schools to show 'sensitivity to the needs of the child, irrespective of how overt their distress is' (KCSIE, 2023, p.129). These documents suggest that the government endorses practices that support a child through their trauma responses and address the need rather than punish the behaviour.

However, in contrast, other governmental publications do not address trauma or adversity while offering guidance on behaviour management. For instance, the *Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff* (DfE, 2022) document outlines several 'preventative measures to reduce incidents of misbehaviour' (p.15), including provisions like movement breaks for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), uniform adjustments for those with sensory needs, and staff training on conditions like Autism. Yet, the document lacks recognition of how trauma-related SEMH needs influence behaviour. This omission may implicitly convey to educators that trauma-experienced

children are expected to behave similarly to peers: a generalised approach to behaviour management suffices. This implication is further reinforced by the Ofsted framework which emphasises consistent sanctions and equitable consequences (Ofsted framework, 2023). However, the framework does acknowledge that schools who demonstrate awareness of underlying issues contributing to behavioural challenges and are able to present clear strategic plans for improvement will be viewed favourably by inspectors.

1.2.1 What is it to be trauma-informed?

The importance of having trauma-informed practices within public service systems was highlighted by Harris and Fallot (2001). However, it wasn't until 2022 that the UK government published a working definition of what trauma-informed practice is. The definition aims to establish a shared understanding among helping professionals and highlights that trauma-informed practice understands that trauma impacts an individual's neurological, biological, psychological and social development (Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), 2022). Moreover, trauma-informed practitioners should have knowledge that traumatised individuals will have difficulty feeling safe and developing trusting relationships. In essence, trauma-informed practice should 'see beyond an individual's presenting behaviours and ask, what does this person need? rather than what is wrong with this person?' (OHID, 2022, p.1). In trauma-informed practice, practitioners should also avoid re-traumatisation of individuals by not evoking memories of past traumas or triggering feelings of fear and helplessness. Having said this, the role of a trauma-informed practitioner is not to treat an individual's trauma but rather help remove barriers that trauma creates in accessing provision and services (OHID, 2022). These principles underpin what trauma-informed practice is and compliment the six principles espoused by SAMHSA (2014) (Figure 1).

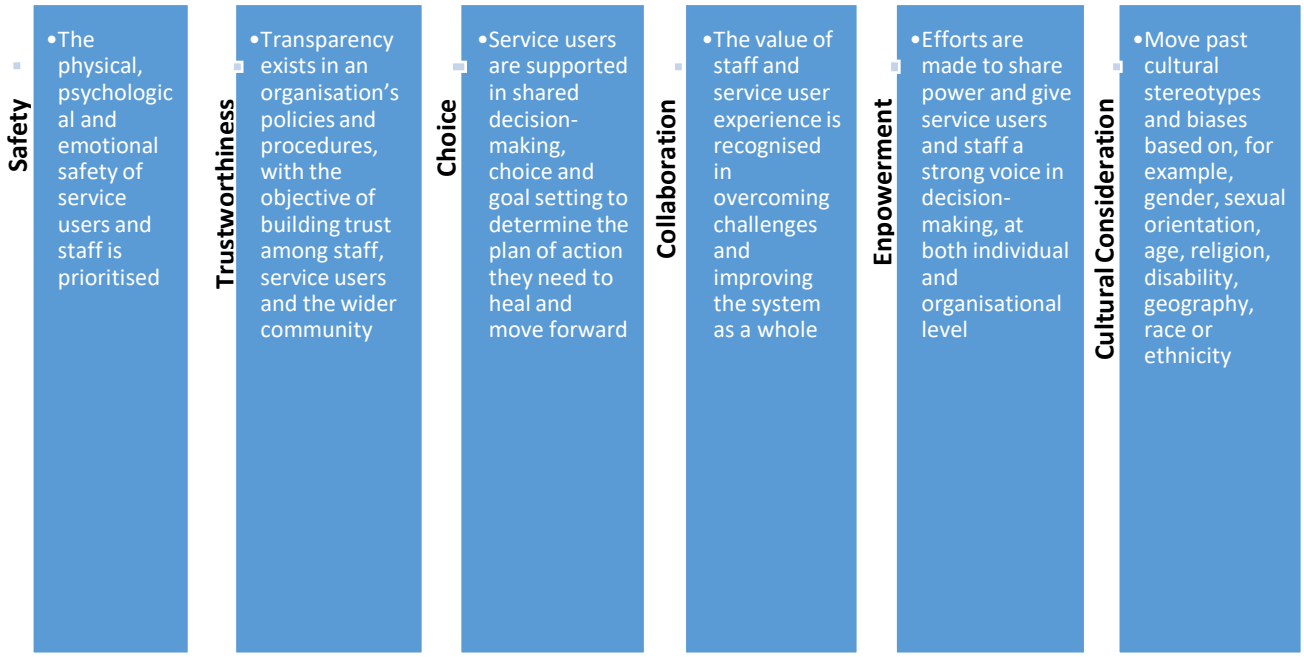

Figure 1: summary of the 6 foundational principles of trauma-informed practice (OHID, 2022) and SAMSHA (2014).

A further definition of trauma-informed practice was recently published by the Home Office (2024), with similar concepts as OHID and SAMSHA. These governmental definitions help provide clarity on what is and is not trauma-informed practice for professionals, however, the clarity that these definitions provide does not extend to the field of education. The definitions are for Health and Social Care and Violence Reduction Units (VRU) professionals respectively. Having a working definition for what it is to be trauma-informed within education would enable a clear governmental directive for how schools should support trauma-experienced children, as opposed to the current situation in which certain documentation advocates for trauma-informed approaches whilst others do not. This, arguably, has created a sense of unknown for schools on how best to support children who have experienced trauma and as such a shared understanding of how to do so is currently missing. This has meant that trauma informed practice is disparate across schools (Chafouleas et al., 2016; Fox et al., 2021; Roseby & Gasgoine, 2021).

1.3 Education and trauma training

1.3.1 Behaviourist behaviour management to trauma-informed approaches

Despite the lack of governmental clarity on expectations for trauma-informed practices in schools, educators remain obligated to educate the trauma-experienced children on their roll. However, educating trauma-experienced children can be challenging due to the often difficult and risky behaviours exhibited. Traditionally, schools have relied on behaviourist methods to manage student behaviour (Sinclaire-Harding & Grinham-Smith, 2023), including use of reward systems, removal of privileges, detentions, and suspensions or exclusions. Some of these behaviourist methods, if not used sensitively, risk re-traumatising trauma-experienced children and triggering feelings of shame (de Thierry, 2017). Furthermore, they overlook the emotional experiences of both children and adults during the administration of sanctions (Sinclaire-Harding & Grinham-Smith, 2023) and this downplays the impact emotions have in shaping the relational dynamics between educator and pupil during instances of dysregulation. This, however, is key for effective trauma-informed practice (Brunzell et al., 2019; Harris & Fallot, 2001; Fallot & Harris, 2008; Roseby & Gascoigne, 2021). Behaviourist approaches therefore counter what is thought to be good trauma-informed practice for numerous reasons: they often do not accommodate for the emotional aspects of behaviour, they tend do not consider the role of relationships and they risk re-traumatising individuals (OHID, 2023; SAMSHA, 2014).

However, an increasing number of schools are engaging in trauma-informed training to provide educators with the knowledge and strategies necessary to support behaviour rather than punish it (Sonsteng-Person & Loomis, 2021). Trauma-informed approaches recognise escalated behaviour as a communication of unmet needs (Alisic et al., 2012; Chafouleas et

al., 2021; Douglass et al., 2021) and emphasises the educators' role in deciphering and meeting these needs. Central to a trauma-informed approach is the establishment of attuned relationships with students (Berger et al., 2021; Brunzell et al., 2019). When educators and pupils develop an attuned relationship, educators can better understand the emotions and needs of the pupil. This fosters a sense of safety, trust and empathy for both adult and child alike (Douglass et al, 2021). The appreciation of how emotions affect behaviour and the emphasis on the relational principles of safety, trust and empathy are key differences between trauma-informed practices and traditional behaviourist approaches: the focus becomes on meeting needs not punishing behaviours.

1.3.2 Types of trauma training

Various trauma training programmes, emphasising the importance of addressing underlying needs rather than presenting behaviours, are available to schools across the UK, (e.g Bomber, 2020; Education Scotland, 2018; Hughes et al., 2015; Perry & Daniels, 2016). The government has created Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL) training which incorporates trauma-informed approaches (DfE, 2021). Other government endorsed training includes the Trauma Informed Schools training and the Adverse Childhood Training, which is funded by the Home Office. Organisations like the UK Trauma Council and Beacon House (a therapeutic service specialising in trauma and loss) provide training and resources. Beacon House also provides supervision for education professionals (Beacon House, 2024). Additionally, national programmes like “Thrive” promote whole-school approaches to fostering relationships for the mental well-being of students (Thrive, 2024). Regional initiatives also provide tailored training for schools. The researcher's placement county, for example, offers behaviour support training with a therapeutic focus, while the Virtual School utilises innovative virtual reality technology to immerse educators in the trauma-experiences

of children. These examples highlight some of the opportunities educators have to engage in national, online or regional professional development in trauma-informed practices.

1.4 Trauma-informed theory into trauma-informed practice

Although there is currently limited evidence on the impact of trauma-informed training within schools (Maynard et al., 2019), it could be assumed that effective trauma-training might lead to a reduction in the use of behaviourist approaches amongst educators (Chafouleas et al., 2021). Using data that monitors the use of fixed-term suspensions and exclusions might be considered as a measure to indicate the uptake of trauma-informed practices after trauma-informed training. However, national data shows an increase in the percentage of suspensions for secondary and primary aged children in the last academic year of 36% and 23% respectively (DfE, 2023c). With an even larger increase of permanent exclusions 48% (secondary) and 67% (primary) (DfE, 2023c). Furthermore, the majority of suspensions (55%) and exclusions (49%) were attributed to behavioural incidents (DfE, 2023c). This suggests that despite increased trauma-informed training, schools may increasingly be resorting to punitive measures rather than reducing them. This gives impetus for a brief examination of why additional training may not necessarily lead to increased adoption of trauma-informed approaches.

Translating theory of trauma into trauma-informed practices within schools presents a known challenge (Chafouleas et al., 2021). The gap between theory and practice, often termed the theory-practice gap, acknowledges the challenge of translating theoretical knowledge into practical application (Bansal et al., 2012; Roth et al., 2014). This ‘metaphorical void’ (Greenway et al., 2019, p.1) highlights that training individuals in a certain topic area, such as trauma, is no assurance for implementation of practice change. Despite this recognition,

models of implementation often portray knowledge acquisition and practice change as a linear, progressive and timely process (Figure 2).

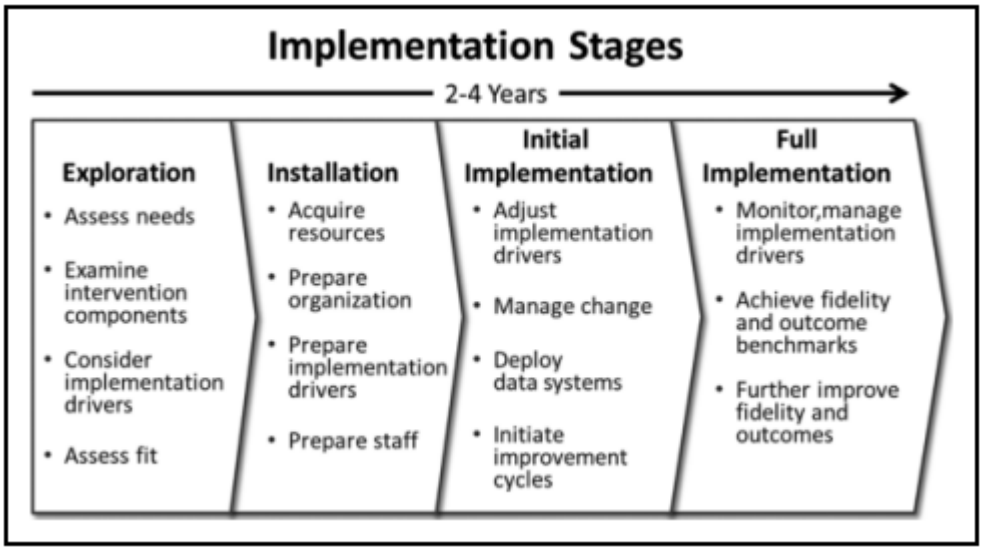

Figure 2: implementation stages (Bertram et al., 2015; Fixsen et al., 2009)

The translation of theory into practice is often, however, ongoing, complex and influenced by various systemic factors such as staff turnover, leadership changes, or funding cuts (Bertram et al., 2015). Therefore, representing implementation as depicted in Figure 3 may be more appropriate. Of particular interest to the present study is the psychological processes that might occur within the theory-practice gap highlighted in Figure 3 and how these processes might impact educators' experience and conversion of trauma theory into trauma-informed practice.

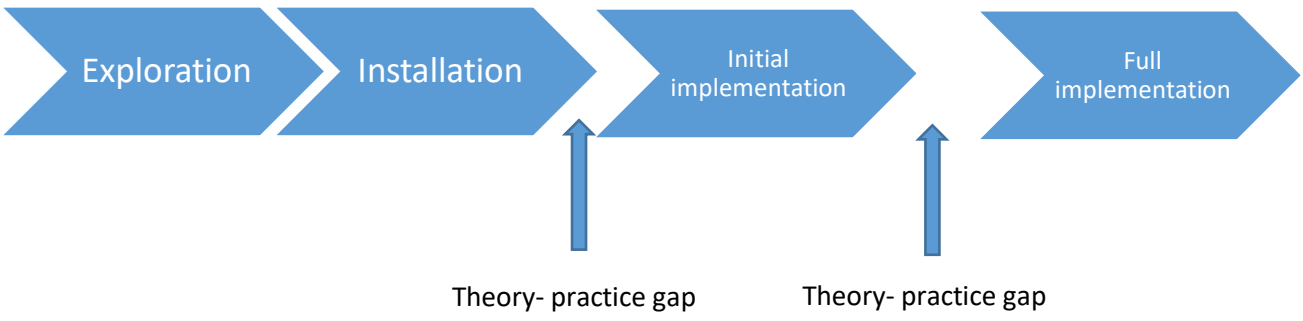

Figure 3: amended implementation stages to highlight theory-practice gap

1.4.1 Mind the gap: using psychology to explore the metaphorical void

Trauma-informed training often prioritises the experiences of children, emphasising the impact of trauma on their development and the necessary practice change required to support them within school (MacLochlainn et al, 2022). However, systemic and environmental influences on practice change may be overlooked (Chafouleas et al., 2021; McIntrye et al., 2019). In this thesis, systemic thinking aligns with Fox (2009), who suggests that systemic thinking incorporates and extends beyond organisational structures and functioning to explore how 'systems create meaning' (p. 247). Therefore, irrespective of educators' enthusiasm for trauma training and their positive perception of its value, the actual implementation of such training may be constrained by aspects considered beyond educators' control. Thus, it is important to recognise the intricate interplay between the context and content of training: this interaction significantly influences the success of implementing new professional knowledge in to practice (Fixsen et al., 2019).

In addition to systemic influences, individual educators can respond differently to trauma-informed training. For instance, upon learning about a traumatised child in their class, some teachers are motivated to engage in training and implement more compassionate, empathic practices (Collier et al., 2022), while others feel overwhelmed by the responsibility and still feel they lack adequate training (Brown, 2022). The emotional toll of practising empathy and navigating complex situations can, however, lead to burnout and compassion fatigue among educators (Berger et al., 2021; Brunzel et al., 2019; Luthar & Mendes, 2020). This emotional strain is compounded by feelings of guilt and powerlessness which can cause some educators to abandon trauma-informed approaches altogether (Berger et al., 2021). Thus, it appears that the psychological role of emotions can impact the size and sustainability of the theory-practice gap, influencing educators' use of trauma-informed practices.

Additionally, the role of teachers' past traumatic experiences and attachment relationships affect their response to trauma-informed training and implementation of suggested practices (Brunzel et al., 2019; Riley, 2009). Insecurely attached teachers, for instance, are more likely to find it difficult to relate with dysregulated children which limits their trauma-informed practice (Riley, 2009). However, while insecure attachment affects educators' use of trauma-informed approaches, being exposed to past traumatic experiences themselves does not (Brunzel et al., 2019). This may be because if educators have trauma-experience, they might either become more inclined to use trauma-informed approaches due to increased empathy or less inclined to use them due to the risk of being triggered. This complexity and variability highlights the need for better understanding of educators' experience in implementing trauma-informed approaches.

1.5 Applying a psychodynamic lens: the role of the unconscious

Given the influence of emotions and attachments (Berger et al., 2021; Riley, 2009), examining the dissonance between theory and practice through a psychodynamic lens seems appropriate. Psychodynamics, also known as psychoanalytics, posits that psychological functioning is driven by internal forces and that much of these forces operate unconsciously (Bornstein et al., 2018). Psychodynamics also suggests that individuals unconsciously defend against feelings of threat (Klein, 1946). As such, threatening emotions of fear, guilt and helplessness, or reminders of past relationships activate unconscious survival mechanisms known as defence mechanisms (Freud, 1937/1992). These mechanisms serve to defend against psychological harm which can result in particular actions or inactions occurring (Bovey & Hede, 2001; Krantz, 2010). Therefore, educators may disengage from practices that evoke threat, such as adapting their approach to be more trauma-informed. The application of psychodynamics in this example may help frame the persistence of the theory-

practice gap for some educators while others engage more readily in trauma-informed practices.

The extension of psychodynamics to encompass the unconscious dynamics within systems and organisations is termed Systems-psychodynamics. Theorists using this perspective attribute organisational behaviours to the emotions, relations, and political views within it (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010; 2015; 2020). The unconscious responses to these emotions and group dynamics within a workplace often impede developments and change (Krantz & Trainor, 2019). When a group perceives a threat, such as being asked to change, it activates social defences in an attempt to safeguard itself (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014). These social defences, analogous to individual defence mechanisms, are unconsciously employed by groups to shield against psychologically demanding situations like interpersonal conflicts and overwhelming tasks (May, 2017; Mnguni 2012). The request to adopt trauma-informed practices may be perceived as threatening by educators, leading to the activation of social defences that result in resistance to change (Bovey & Hede, 2001; Halton, 1994). Therefore, according to systems-psychodynamics, what appears to be a perpetuation of the theory-practice gap is instead a defensive group response to threat of change.

The functioning of groups and how they aim to protect themselves is encapsulated in Group Relations Theory (Bion, 1961). Accordingly, groups aim to distract from the psychologically overwhelming work of performing the primary task by engaging in unconscious survival behaviours known as basic assumptions (Rustin, 2015). It is considered that there are five basic assumptions: pairing, fight/flight, dependency, meness and oneness, each of which serve a nuanced function in protecting the group from the psychological overwhelm of the primary task (Lawrence et al., 1996). This may help understand the presence of the theory-

practice gap, in so far as educators are employing basic assumption behaviours to protect themselves when faced with the change. Thus, the application of systems-psychodynamics, incorporating elements of both systems thinking and psychodynamics, seems relevant. More discussion of the theories and concepts introduced in this chapter will be had throughout this thesis. The mentioning of them here helps contextualise and introduce the lenses through which this research will be conducted.

1.6 Researcher's connection to trauma, training and implementation

Before the professional doctorate, I was as a teacher and senior leader. As a senior leader, I was responsible for Pastoral Care and Safeguarding, and received extensive training on abuse and neglect, however, there was little focus on the impact of these traumas on behaviour. I was also the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (DT for LAC). This role required more training and unlike previous training, DT for LAC training introduced me to the impact of trauma. I remember the moment when I became aware of the link between trauma and behaviour. I remember feeling immense guilt for how I had managed behaviour previously: behaviourist approaches which likely induced shame for trauma-experienced children in my class. Realising my school's behaviour policy was not sufficiently trauma-informed, I began initiating changes so the school became a more supportive, relational environment. I embarked on developing practice and planned training sessions to aid in this. However, the response from staff was mixed. I recall feeling confused and frustrated that not everyone felt the same passion about this as I did. The feelings of frustration, confusion and passion were exacerbated when Chloe (pseudonym), who had experienced significant and complex trauma, enrolled at our school.

The subsequent two years were challenging as Chloe's behaviour was often difficult and dangerous. Teachers were hurt as Chloe kicked and scratched them. Children were scared as Chloe ripped displays and threw chairs. Chloe would also run away, hide in cupboards and lock herself in offices. Whenever Chloe became emotionally dysregulated, I was called to help. After each incident, I would debrief with the adults involved, emphasising the importance of addressing needs rather than focusing on behaviour. I had hoped, naively, that others would do this too but this was not the case. I was struck by the language used by colleagues, such as needing to "sort her out". When I questioned this, I received responses of "that's your job". I struggled to understand why some educators wanted to punish Chloe despite knowing of her traumatic experiences. It was working with Chloe that prompted me to apply for the doctoral programme; it was colleagues' response to Chloe, however, that motivated my interest in this thesis and research area.

Since becoming a trainee EP (TEP), supervision has helped me reflect on past experiences as a senior leader and what it has and hasn't afforded me in my new role. Being aware of this whilst conducting this research is important: I am no longer a senior leader frustrated at those resisting change. Supervision has also provided me the space to reflect that I have grown up connected to trauma and that my parents, for varied reasons, experienced trauma themselves. Their experiences have, I now realise, impacted how I behave in all relationships – professional and personal. Acknowledging these connections and my beliefs in trauma-informed approaches is imperative whilst conducting this research: without doing so I would remain ignorant to the subjectivity in the interpretations I am likely to make because of them.

1.7 Summary of Introduction

In this chapter, trauma and its implications for children, young people, and educators in schools are introduced. The prevalence of trauma among children in the UK and its impact on schools are also highlighted. Expanding on this, the chapter outlines how trauma is addressed in education, including the inconsistencies in governmental legislation. Educators' uncertainty about educating traumatised children is emphasised and this is exacerbated by the lack of a clear definition of trauma-informed practice in education. Despite increased trauma training for educators, national data suggests a rise in punitive measures rather than the expected shift towards supportive, relational strategies. This indicates a theory-practice gap, explained as a disparity between training knowledge and classroom application. Systemic and psychological processes, including psychodynamic perspectives, are proposed to shed new understanding of this gap. Additionally, a personal connection to the research underscores its reflexive nature. In the subsequent chapter (Literature Review), the application of psychodynamic theory in pedagogical practice is further explored.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Literature Review Overview

This chapter will present the systematic literature review conducted in order to identify, analyse and critique the current literature on the application of psychodynamics within education. The content of the literature review will:

- Outline the questions asked to guide the interrogation of the literature.
- Describe the systematic search strategy employed to select relevant research.
- Critically evaluate selected papers using an appraisal tool.
- Provide a summary of the key findings from each paper selected for review.
- Discuss the themes that are shared within the literature.
- Reflect on the thematic limitations within the selected papers.
- Arrive at the research aims for this thesis, giving the rationale for the current study in context of the literature reviewed.

2.1 Literature Review questions

The Introduction emphasised the complexity of implementing trauma-informed practices post-training, highlighting both the emotional and organisational challenges that can impede this. Through a psychodynamic lens, educators' implementation (or lack thereof) may reflect defences against threats and suggest the presence of group dynamics that deflect from the primary task. However, the extent of literature on unconscious processes influencing trauma-informed practices remained unclear. Therefore, the initial question asked of the literature was: "*what is known about how psychodynamics has helped understand the implementation of trauma-informed pedagogy?"* Despite this focus, the literature search yielded zero relevant results. Subsequently, the inquiry expanded to investigate the broader application of

psychodynamics in classroom practices, removing the trauma focus of the search. This led to a revised literature review question: "*what is known about how psychodynamics has been applied to help understand educator's classroom practice/pedagogy?"*

2.2 Search strategy

Seven databases were used to search the literature for this review: APA PsycINFO, APA PsycArticles, Psychological & Behavioural Sciences Collection, PEP Archive, ERIC, Education Source and Web of Science. The first six of these were accessed via the EBSCO search facility within Shibboleth on the Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation NHS Trust library website. The seventh database, Web of Science, was accessed via the University of Essex library website. An alert was also set up on Web of Science for notification if any articles that complimented the inclusion criteria were subsequently published. Zero articles were found due to alerts.

Databases used were selected for both their trustworthiness in the field of academia, especially Web of Science (Adriaanse & Rensleigh, 2013; Zhu & Liu, 2020) and their relevance to the topic. Predominant for psychological research were the databases of APA PsycINFO, APA PsycArticles, Psychological & Behavioural Sciences Collection; for their educational focus the databases ERIC and Education Source were used; with PEP archive utilised due to its psychoanalytic positioning. The database Web of Science was used, in addition to its reputation, due to its coverage of all domains of the sciences, including social science (Chadegani et al., 2013), and because of the depth and quality of the bibliographic data it has (Boyle & Sherman, 2006; Pranckutė, 2021). It was found that Web of Science yielded the most fruitful search returns. The articles found using this database not only returned research found by other databases but also provided additional papers. In addition to

literature search databases, Google Scholar was also used to help find additional articles via snowballing and the "cited by" function available on this web based search engine. Google Scholar is known to have substantially more citation data coverage than other search databases (Martín-Martín et al., 2018). Therefore, to maximise likelihood of finding all relevant articles, Google Scholar was used as a fail-safe and confirmation tool when reviewing the literature.

2.2.1 Search terms

It was found that when certain terms were used, the searches were too narrow and yielded zero return once limiters were applied (Figure 4). The terms relating to trauma were removed from the search because when included the scope of the search became too narrow. After this refinement the final search terms were decided upon (Table 2). The use of the (*) within the table signifies truncation which allows for all possible suffixes to be applied and used within the search. The application of the Boolean function OR allowed for searches to include all refined terms within each separate search conducted. The use of the of Boolean operation AND cross referenced the returns within each separate search and reduced the yield so that articles found were relevant to all search components required.

Table 2: final selection of search terms used for literature review

Search components		
Lens	**Role**	**Activity**
Unconscious	Educat*	Implement*
Psychodynamic*	Teach*	Practice
Psychoanalytic*	Classroom*	Use
	School*	Change
	Pedagogy	

	Number of papers after limiters							
Search Terms	**Date 2013-2023**	**Academic Journals/article**	**Peer reviewed**	**Restricted categories**	**Written in English**	**Based in Western education systems**	**Reading titles and abstracts**	**Reading full text**
Unconscious OR psychodynamic OR psychoanalytic AND Teach* OR educator* OR classroom* OR school OR pedagogy AND Implement* OR use OR change OR practice AND Trauma OR trauma informed OR trauma sensitive OR trauma responsive OR adversity	39	34	34	15	13	9	0	0

Figure 4: screenshot of search tracker to illustrate 0 yield when trauma related terms included in search

2.2.2 Inclusion & exclusion criteria

To help ensure that the research reviewed was contemporary, relevant and would help answer the literature review question, articles were screened and scrutinised in accordance to inclusion/exclusion criteria (Table 3). If an article did not meet the inclusion criteria, it was discounted for review. The process in which papers were extracted and selected is depicted in the PRISMA flowchart (Moher et al., 2009; see Figure 5). The titles and references for the final selection of papers can be seen in Appendix A. As can be seen in the PRISMA flowchart below, a final total of 9 papers were found and selected for review.

Table 3: inclusion and exclusion criteria for article selection in literature review process

Inclusion	Exclusion	Rationale
Empirical research with a defined methodology.	Commentary, reviews or opinion pieces, papers without a methodology.	Empirical research is more robust and rigorous, generating trustworthiness. Having a methodology ensures systematic, considered methods were used to collect data.
Within a peer reviewed journal.	Not in a peer reviewed journal, published in a book, blog, magazine or other publication medium.	Peer review increases rigour and trust in the quality of the findings of the research.
Conducted within the past 10 years (at time of conducted research and review 2013 was considered within 10 years).	Research published before 2013.	Research and findings change over time. Desire for research reviewed to be contemporary.
Written in English	Not written or translated in to English	Most reputable journals are published or translated in to English. Researcher is unable to speak any other language.
Acknowledges existence of an unconscious, applies the use of psychodynamic/psychoanalytic theory	No acknowledgment of the existence of an unconscious, exclusive application of theory other than psychodynamic/psychoanalytic	Literature review is concerned with application of psychodynamics
Participants were educators which was inclusive of teachers, teaching assistants, support staff and leaders.	Participants were other stakeholders in schools such as pupils, parents, governors	Literature review is concerned with the application of psychodynamics to help understand educators' classroom practices.
Research conducted in a state funded educational setting, inclusive of nursery, primary, secondary or post 16; mainstream or special.	Research conducted in private or independent schools. Higher education settings. Adult learning facilities or courses.	Majority of children in the UK attend a state funded school. Most local authority EP work is within state funded settings
Research conducted within the UK, US, Canada or Europe	Any research conducted outside of the UK, US, Canada or Europe	Education systems within the inclusion territories are most similar to the education system in the UK.

After deliberation, it was decided that attachment would not used within the search terms of the literature review. The decision to exclude "attachment" within the inclusion criteria was guided by the want to maintain a clear focus within the review on psychodynamic concepts, even though the overlap between psychoanalysis and attachment theory was acknowledged (Fonagy & Campbell, 2015). Including attachment as a search term would likely have returned studies with a broad and varied range of theoretical stances and would have made the literature review too broad (Gulllestad, 2001). By narrowing the focus to studies that adopted a purely psychodynamic lens, the review remained concentrated. Secondly, psychodynamic theory encompasses specific and complex concepts such as transference, countertransference, and defence mechanisms; focusing on studies that embrace this theoretical approach allowed for a deeper and more nuanced analysis of these concepts and how they influence educator practice, helping to contextualise this study more robustly. This may have been diluted had studies that utilised attachment been included within the inclusion criteria (Fonagy & Campbell, 2015).

Moreover, the geographical limiters were decided upon after several scoping searches which disapplied geographical considerations. Within these preliminary searches, there was one article from New Zealand which spoke about using psychodynamics in education. However, this article was not a piece of empirical research and did not outline any methodology. Ergo, this article was unsuitable for the literature review. Due to this, the final literature review applied geographical limiters to research conducted in the UK, US, and Europe, excluding Australia and New Zealand. This decision was made despite acknowledging that Australia and New Zealand are Western cultures with educational systems similar to those in the UK, US, and Europe.

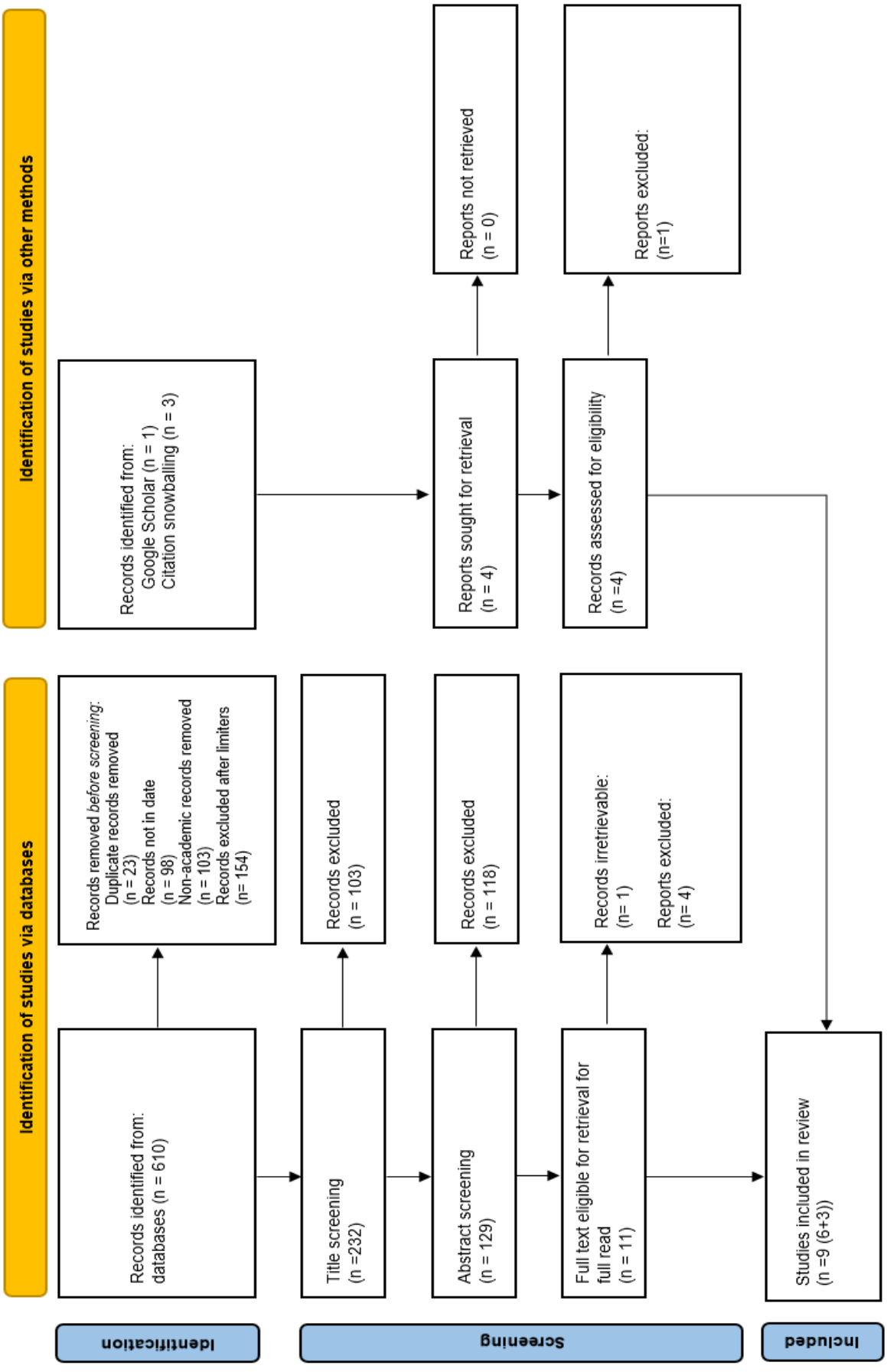

Figure 5: PRISMA diagram to illustrate screening and selection process of literature review

2.3 Critical review

Each paper in the final caucus (Table 4), was quality assured using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) tool. The CASP was selected for its widespread use amongst qualitative researchers (Long et al., 2020) and its accessibility to novice researchers due its straightforward language and manageable number of ten questions (Hannes et al., 2010; Soilemezi & Linceviciute, 2018). These questions enable researchers to systematically appraise the trustworthiness, relevance and results of published papers (CASP, 2021). Each paper selected for review was assessed on its aims, methodology, participant recruitment, data collection and analysis, consideration of the researcher-participant relationship, findings, and ethical considerations. For this thesis, a CASP rating out of 10 was given for each article: a credit given for each "yes" response to questions levelled at the research. The completed collection of CASP documents can be seen in Appendix B.

2.4 Executive summary of each selected paper

An overview of each of the final papers selected for review is outlined in Table 4. For an expanded summary of the methodology and key findings for each paper, please refer to Appendix C.

Table 4: summary overview of final papers selected for review

Authors, date	Methodology	Location	School Type	Key findings	Psychodynamic concepts/ structures present	CASP rating
Ellis (2018)	Mixed methods Teachers	England	Primary	1) Emotional factors of working with children who have witnessed domestic abuse 2) Working within the school system 3) Relationship with the child and family 4) Uncertainty about what teachers knew and need to know.	Containment Denial	10
Ellis & Wolfe (2019)	Action Research Teachers & Teaching Assistants	England	Special school Alternative provision	1) Staff well-being 2) Physical space 3) Being heard 4) Group readiness	Work Discussion Groups[1] Basic assumptions	10
Eloquin (2016)	Case Study Teachers	England	Secondary	Examples of unconscious processes present in the system and how these can be enacted which creates dysfunction in the system. Reflecting and discussing these processes help ease and disrupt the dysfunction	Systems-psychodynamics	5
Fitzsimmons et al. (2021)	Mixed methods Teachers	England	Alternative provision	1) Connecting and tuning in 2) The look and feel of the relationship 3) Bringing the whole person 4) Struggling with disconnection	Attachments Containment	10
Garret (2020)	Case Study Teachers	USA	Secondary	Highlights that educators need to be able to hold emotions	Containment	8

[1] Work Discussion Groups are structured reflective spaces underpinned by psychodynamic theory

				generated in the classroom		
Jopling & Zimmerman (2023)	Comparative "mini meta-analysis" Teachers	England Germany	Primary Secondary	Highlights that both pupils and educators feel vulnerabilities and both seem reluctant to share these due to fear of judgement	Self-identity Relational dynamics	10
Ramvi (2017	Ethnography Teachers	Norway	Middle school	Leaders and teachers unconsciously avoid intolerable feelings: frustration, failures in relationship and violation of identity	Self-identity Relational dynamics Containment	10
Sherry et al. (2021)	Hermeneutic phenomenology Teachers	Canada	Unsure	1) schema 2) relationship 3) context 4) unconscious 5) background/personal experience 6) self-awareness 7) self-reflection	Transference & Counter-transference	8
Stammers & Williams (2019)	Reflective case study Teacher	England	Infant & Nursery	No themes. Highlights the emotional content of the classroom and how these can affect and impact both pupils and educators	Containment Relational dynamics	7

2.5 Thematic synthesis of the literature

A thematic synthesis of the literature highlighted four themes: the emotional impact of teaching and learning, relationships and what makes them important, the need for containment and systemic influences. The themes are not mutually exclusive: each one interrelates to the other. However, for ease and structure, each theme will be presented discreetly. The application of psychodynamics and related processes will be discussed throughout in order to help answer the literature review question: Table 5 summarises the definitions of key concepts provided within the literature. It is acknowledged that differing, nuanced definitions of each concept exists, however, this review, utilises the definitions

provided by the selected authors: the review focussed on how authors applied *their* understanding of psychodynamics to classroom practice.

Table 5: amalgamated definitions of key psychodynamic concepts as provided by the literature reviewed

Psychodynamic term	**Definition**	**Associated references**
Splitting	A defence mechanism that involves categorising conflicting perceptions or stimuli into polarised extremes, disregarding nuances or complexities. It allows individuals to manage internal conflicts or anxieties by compartmentalising contradictory elements into discreet categories, often "all good" or "all bad". In group settings, splitting may lead to polarisation as members align themselves against perceived threats. In educational contexts, splitting can manifest as the projection of internal conflicts onto external objects or individuals, influencing emotional dynamics within classrooms and schools.	Eloquin (2016 Ellis & Wolfe (2019 Stammers & Williams (2019)
Projection	A defence mechanism to evade acknowledging or confronting uncomfortable or unacceptable aspects of oneself. It is a psychological process wherein individuals attribute their own unwanted thoughts, feelings, desires, or qualities onto external objects, individuals, or situations. This unconscious process allows individuals to avoid threatening knowledge that contradicts their self-concept and relationships, thereby preserving a sense of psychological safety.	Eloquin (2016) Garret (2020) Stammers & Williams (2019)
Projective identification	A psychological process in which individuals project aspects of themselves onto others who then identify with those projections, influencing the behaviour and perceptions of the recipient.	Eloquin (2016)
Transference	The unconscious redirection of feelings, attitudes, or expectations from past relationships onto current individuals, shaping perceptions and interactions. This unconscious process involves projecting unresolved emotions, desires, or conflicts onto present relationships, potentially distorting interpersonal dynamics and reactions.	Sherry et al (2021) Eloquin (2016)
Countertransference	Countertransference refers to the emotional reactions, biases, and responses that individuals, such as therapists or educators, experience towards clients or students based on their own unresolved issues, personal history, or unconscious processes. This phenomenon can influence perceptions, judgments, and interactions, potentially impacting the quality of support or guidance provided. Countertransference highlights the importance of self-awareness and boundary maintenance to ensure effective communication and relationship dynamics.	Sherry et al (2021) Eloquin (2016)

Primary task	The primary task refers to the central purpose, goal, or function that an individual, group, or organisation is designed to fulfil. It encompasses the main focus of a session, interaction, or entity, guiding actions and decisions towards desired outcomes. In educational contexts, the primary task of schools may involve fostering effective collaboration among educators and professionals to enhance students' learning experiences and outcomes.	Ellis & Wolfe (2019) Eloquin (2016) Jopling & Zimmerman (2023)
Basic assumptions	Unconscious, shared beliefs, attitudes, or expectations that shape group behaviour, decision-making processes, and communication patterns. They influence how individuals within a group perceive reality, interact with one another, and respond to external stressors. These assumptions can include beliefs about authority, dependency, conflict, or task orientation, which impact group cohesion, collaboration, and performance within organisations. Basic assumption mentality may manifest as different states of functioning, where emotional responses override task focus.	Eloquin (2016) Ellis & Wolfe (2019)
Containment	The capacity to hold, manage, and regulate emotional experiences, conflicts, and interactions within a safe and supportive environment. In educational settings, it involves teachers creating a nurturing space where students feel emotionally supported, facilitating effective learning, and development. Additionally, containment entails tolerating uncertainty, managing strong emotions, and providing constructive support for individuals to express and work through their emotional experiences in the presence of another.	Ramvi (2017) Ellis & Wolfe (2019) Stammers & Williams (2019) Eloquin (2016) Garrett (2020)

2.5.1 The emotional impact of teaching and learning

It was universally accepted within the papers reviewed that teaching and learning is emotionally demanding for children and educators. The varied emotions in schools can be present for numerous reasons. These include working with children (Ellis, 2018; Stammers & Williams, 2019), working with colleagues (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016), working within the school system per se (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Garret, 2020; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023) and how all of these interact with an educator’s sense of self (Ramvi, 2017; Sherry, et al, 2021). When working with children, educators can experience vicarious trauma due to the painful situations children are in, such as domestic abuse (Ellis, 2018) or be

triggered by a child and be reminded of personal and emotionally painful events (Sherry et al., 2021). This emotional toll can be compounded when educators are exposed to difficult and dangerous behaviours of children (Eloquin, 2016; Jopling & Zimerman, 2023; Stammers & Williams, 2019). This interplay of emotional experiences can leave educators feeling confused and helpless because they assume they are unable to help (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Jopling & Zimerman, 2023; Stammers & Williams, 2019). This creates further emotional toll as educators become stressed and anxious when they know what support they want to provide but limitations in the system means that they cannot provide it (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Ramvi, 2017). Moreover, teachers have to emotionally hold the emotions evoked within children due to content of certain lessons and in the learning process more generally (Garret, 2020). Navigating all of this daily leaves educators often feeling emotionally drained and exhausted. This was suggested in all papers reviewed.

The dynamics between staff can be as equally emotionally charged as interactions with children (Eloquin, 2016). Educators often face disagreements and professional conflicts related to content, process, or practice, especially when time is limited or perspectives differ (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). These conflicts can give rise to complex emotions, potentially leading to dysfunctional behaviours within the system that reduce professional collaboration (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). This dysfunction can be seen when educators begin to spend more time on tasks unelated to their core role or having to take on more work as others do less (Eloquin, 2016).

Balancing the demands of workload, completing administrative tasks, and having children achieve good outcomes adds to the emotional burden of being an educator, contributing to feelings of overwhelm and stress (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023;

Stammers & Williams, 2019). However, educators often feel unable to share these feelings for fear of being judged as vulnerable or weak (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). This reluctance is considered to manifest from institutional accountability measures that prioritise attainment outcomes over emotional well-being which leads educators to believe that displaying vulnerability reflects poorly on them and their practice (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Ramvi, 2017; Stammers & Williams, 2019). Consequently, educators may suppress their emotions, leading to emotional build-up over time; exacerbating feelings of vulnerability and overwhelm (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). It seems, paradoxically, that attempts to suppress emotion often results in its intensification.

Educators' emotions are not confined to the school environment; often educators bring a range of pre-existing emotions to work (Ramvi, 2017; Stammers & Williams, 2019). These emotions may originate from experiences earlier in the day or be deeply rooted in past life events (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Ellis, 2018; Sherry et al., 2021). The role and work of an educator can trigger personal traumas and evoke strong emotional responses (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Sherry et al., 2021). Consequently, educators' behaviours, decision-making processes, and emotional responses in the classroom are profoundly influenced (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019). This detrimental impact is evident in how educators manage pupil behaviour, interact with colleagues, and plan lessons in accordance to their emotions (Eloquin, 2016; Garret, 2020; Ramvi, 2017).

However, past experiences can also positively shape pedagogy. Educators who have endured trauma are often more empathetic toward traumatised children, adopting supportive teaching approaches rather than punitive measures (Garret, 2020; Sherry et al., 2021; Stammers & Williams, 2019). Drawing from their personal experiences, educators can better understand

and address the emotional needs of their pupils (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Ramvi, 2017). This relational aspect of pedagogy is a recurring theme in this review and will be explored further in section 2.5.2 in this chapter.

2.5.1.1 Applying psychodynamics to the emotional impact

Much of the emotional demand experienced by educators appears to be borne out of the emotional exchanges between those they interact within schools (Eloquin, 2016; Stammers & Williams, 2019). Psychodynamics can help to understand this and offer some insight in to how classroom practices might therefore be impacted. One emotionally intensive aspect of teaching is related to supporting the behaviour of children. This was referred to as scary and intimidating but also sad and frustrating (Fitzsimmon et al., 2021; Ramvi, 2017). It was, however, posited that some of these feelings may not fully belong to the educators themselves and that a proportion of those emotions felt during interactions of escalated behaviour would likely be projections from the children (Garret, 2020). For example, children who have witnessed trauma, such as domestic abuse, will feel intolerable emotions of fear, anger, and sadness which are likely projected on to their teachers as a defence mechanism (Ellis, 2018). This means that educators are then likely projectively identifying with these feeling and feeling them too (Ellis, 2018; Sherry et al., 2021). The complexity is compounded by the likelihood that teachers may project their own intolerable emotions onto the children, perpetuating this exchange and contributing to emotional burnout within this dynamic (Ramvi, 2017).

Projections are often as a result of another psychodynamic defence: splitting. Splitting may frequently be used among educators as a response to emotionally overwhelming situations (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Stammers & Williams, 2019). Environmental factors

were identified as influential in facilitating splitting behaviour. The physical aspects of school layout, such as separate buildings or split sites, provided opportunity to apportion blame (project negativity), quite literally, over there in another place (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019). Additionally, the presence of distinct teams with defined roles and responsibilities contributed to the ease with which splitting occurred. Having such discreet teams allowed educators split off and attribute dysfunction within the school to other departments rather than addressing internal issues within their own team (Eloquin, 2016).

Assigning blame on to other groups aligns with the psychodynamic concept of the basic assumption of fight/flight which serves to distract groups from focussing on the primary task. Educators' frustrations and anger towards others within the educational environment can serve as a diversion from the daunting task of educating children or reflecting on their own well-being (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). For instance, when educators perceived their Work Discussion Group as overly structured, rebellion and reluctance to engage in the primary task were observed (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019). Similarly, when there was confusion about the primary task and role remit this led to anger and frustration, hindering effective functioning within the school system (Eloquin, 2016).

Dependency, another basic assumption, was seen when individuals in leadership roles were relied upon by educators and expected to provide answers and solutions to difficulties (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). However, when leaders were unable to meet these expectations, they became targets of educators' projected anger and frustration (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). Thus, while basic assumptions serve as defences against the emotional demands of the primary task, they paradoxically generate additional emotions that

are equally demanding as the ones educators sought to avoid initially (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016).

The presence of so many emotions within schools make both the settings and the task of being an educator not only emotionally complex (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Garret, 2020) but also emotionally exhausting (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Ramivi, 2017; Stammers & Williams, 2019). In discussing this theme, it has been highlighted that emotions are generated due to the work with pupils, the work with colleagues but also because of past experiences. The application of psychodynamic theory has helped understand the defensive practices that can occur within school due to and in creation of overwhelming emotions (Ellis, 2018; Eloquin, 2016; Sherry et al., 2021) and offered possible reasons why certain practices are employed.

2.5.2 Relationships and what makes them important

Connected to the emotional dynamics within a school are the relational ones. The importance of relationships within teaching and learning was considered as equally important as the emotional content of pedagogy across all of the studies reviewed. This is because relationships help create a sense of psychological safety which is needed to learn (Stammers & Williams, 2019). Conversely, when relationships are disrupted or damaged, psychological safety is reduced and learning becomes secondary (Ramvi, 2017). The focus instead becomes on how children and educators both navigate and survive in a world in which they feel alone and threatened by those around them (Ellis, 2018). The power of relationships in education is not to be underestimated.

Pedagogically, teachers seek to build positive relationships with children as they know the learning will benefit (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Stammers & Williams, 2019). However, when relationships are strained or damaged this affects both how children behave toward the educator but also how the educator behaves toward the student (Ramvi, 2017). For example, behavioural incidents may increase, more punitive measures may be adopted and empathy for a child can reduce (Ramvi, 2017). Moreover, the ability to discuss sensitive topics also decreases (Garret, 2020): children do not feel safe enough to engage in such vulnerable talk with a person they have a poor relationship with (Ellis, 2018) However, when relationships are positive, the empathy between pupils and educators increase and measures to support behaviour rather than sanction it are utilised more readily (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023).

In addition to the importance of the relationship between educators and pupils, is the importance of the wider relational context involved in educating a child (Stammers & Williams, 2019). This involves the importance of relating and communicating with parents/families (Ellis, 2018) but also how educators relate with one another (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). It was found that if relational dynamics between educators became strained, then collaboration and communication between them decreased which had an adverse effect on both interactions with the pupils but also the functioning of the school as a whole (Eloquin, 2016; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). Being able to work through these relational conflicts is paramount to ensure that children continued to be educated in a positive environment (Eloquin, 2016; Garret, 2020; Ramvi, 2017).

The relationships between educators and students, as well as among educators themselves, are premised on the personal and professional identities that educators hold (Ellis & Wolfe,

2019). This identity is formed due to past experiences (Ramvi, 2017; Sherry et al., 2021; Stammers & Williams, 2019) and the social, political and cultural contexts in which professionals work (Garret, 2020; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). The interconnection of past experience and socio-cultural contexts help determine educators' professional ethics (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023) which in turn influenced how and who they related with during their work (Sherry et al., 2021). For example, when educators believed their professional identity gave them a moral imperative to support children who had experienced trauma, they did so (Ellis, 2018) but when educators felt that this was beyond the remit of their role, they were less inclined to do so (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021).

Differences in identities among educators can give rise to power dynamics that may lead to conflict, miscommunication, and tension (Eloquin, 2016; Ramvi, 2017; Sherry et al., 2021). These power dynamics, whether perceived or actual, influence communication styles and collaboration possibilities, which are inherently relational processes. Understanding how one's own past experiences can influence their professional identity is valuable, as it enhances educators' ability to empathise and comprehend the needs of the children, and at times the adults, they work with (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). However, excessive knowledge about a child's past trauma can overwhelm educators, impacting relationships and reducing connection: a form of defence against the emotional pain of knowing too much (Ellis, 2018; Ramvi, 2017).

Unconscious biases among educators can also hinder relationships (Ramvi, 2017). Therefore, understanding one's self and professional identity also helps deepen reflections which aids in the identification of such biases, assumptions, and values that may impact interactions with others in schools (Ellis, 2018; Garret, 2020). Having increased self-awareness enables

educators to engage more authentically with those in school (children and colleagues), fostering meaningful relationships based on mutual respect and understanding (Ramvi, 2017; Stammers & Williams, 2019). Teachers strive for neutrality and objectivity to maintain these equitable and fair relationships with pupils; this can be challenging, particularly when faced with difficult situations or students (Ramvi, 2017). Such challenges may lead educators to question their relational capabilities which has adverse effects on both their professional identity and emotional response to such a situation (Ramvi, 2017). This highlights how relationships and emotions are interconnected and demonstrates how such a connection impacts the practice of educators within schools.

2.5.3.1 Applying psychodynamics to relational importance

Educators, despite recognising the importance of relational engagement, often unconsciously avoid it because they anticipate the accompanying emotional distress (Ellis, 2018; Garret, 2020). This avoidance becomes evident through the application of a psychodynamic lens, revealing the utilisation of unconscious defence mechanisms in navigating challenging relationships (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Sherry et al., 2021). One such mechanism is denial, defined by Ellis (2018) as when a ‘piece of perception and reality is obliterated’ (ibid., p.414). This defence was apparent when educators cited lack of time to develop close relationships, attempted to normalise traumatic experiences, or used phrases such as “I don't need to know" (Ellis, 2018, p.421). Ellis (2018) posits that denial is used by educators to justify their avoidance of connecting with children and families in difficult situations: engaging with their pain and knowing more details about their lives would lead to psychological overwhelm. Ellis (2018) suggested that without the use of denial, the truth can be ‘lethal’ (ibid., p. 421), illustrating the potential of psychological hurt inherent in

relationships and highlighting why educators may employ unconscious defence mechanisms to protect against it.

Another form of protection unconsciously used by educators is what is referred to as defensive identification. This process allows educators to avoid anxiety inducing self-reflection by advocating for students with challenging needs: focusing on defending the child rather than reflecting on themselves and the burdensome emotions within a relational dynamic (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019). This has close similarities to another defence mechanism known as rationalisation. This sees educators being over analytical and providing rational reasons for why they are relating (or not) with pupils as a method of detaching themselves from the emotional toll within relationships (Ellis, 2018). Paradoxically, the emotional detachment that educators develop as a defence mechanism to protect themselves from psychological harm can inadvertently exacerbates relational difficulties. This detachment fuels a cycle of emotional and relational distance, leading to escalating behaviour in pupils and further hindering authentic connections (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Ramvi, 2017).

Educators' relational connections within schools are deeply influenced by unconscious attachment dynamics (e.g Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). Secure attachment styles foster trust, empathy, respect and collaboration, enhancing positive interactions with colleagues, students, and stakeholders alike (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Sherry et al., 2021; Stammers & Williams, 2019). Such relational qualities significantly impact professional practice, communication skills, and collaborative efforts, shaping inclusive and supportive learning environments (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). In contrast, insecurely attached educators may resort to avoidant classroom practices when confronted with difficult

pupil behaviour (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021): emotionally or physically distancing themselves as they struggle to connect with students and provide necessary support. Influenced by unresolved attachment issues and emotional insecurities, educators' inconsistent responses can exacerbate challenges in managing dangerous behaviours, thus highlighting how influential attachment dynamics are in guiding relational approaches and classroom practices (Ramvi, 2017).

Pedagogy can be further influenced by past relationships when considering transference: the unconscious ‘emotional storm’ from previous connections influencing those in the present (Sherry et al., 2021, p.137). The presence of a transference gives rise to a counter-transference which is how the other person in the relational dynamic reacts in accordance with the transference (Eloquin, 2016; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Ramvi, 2017; Sherry et al., 2021). These unconscious processes can affect relational dynamics, positively or detrimentally (Eloquin, 2016; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Sherry et al., 2021). For instance, a student may experience a transference of needing care and empathy when with their teacher, reminiscent of prior relationships where their emotional needs were unfulfilled. This may prompt empathic and nurturing countertransference in the educator (Sherry et al., 2021). Conversely, a student may transfer negative experiences with authority figures onto the educator, manifesting in challenging behaviour indicative of relational discomfort. This engenders a countertransference, making it difficult for the educator to connect with the student and increasing the likelihood of adopting an authoritative, punitive stance (Sherry et al., 2021). This perpetuates the cycle of negative interactions (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Sherry et al., 2021).

Similarly, adults within schools can also experience transference and countertransference between each other. These too affects relationships, impacting not only educators' practice but also the system more widely (Ramvi, 2017). For example, a leader may transfer idealised thoughts on to a member of staff who reminds the leader of either a previous positive mentor or a younger self who had ambition and drive. This however, could create a countertransference in the staff member which creates feelings of pressure and ineptitude at not being able to live up to the leader's expectations (Eloquin, 2016). When occurrences of transference and countertransference between adults in schools occur, this can and does affect team-work, collaboration and professional interactions (Eloquin, 2016; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Sherry et al., 2021), which by extension also impacts classroom practice (Ellis, 2018).

The final psychodynamic concept discussed in the literature that aims to help understanding of relational dynamics and subsequent pedagogies is Group Dynamics Theory. Although this theory was applied when reviewing the theme in section 2.5.1.1, the theory also provides benefit when reviewing the current theme (Relationships and what makes them important). Group Dynamics is underpinned by relational dynamics when exploring group behaviour. School communities are deeply influenced by underlying basic assumptions, such as fight/flight, dependency, pairing, in service of avoid the primary task (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). Basic assumptions play a significant role in shaping group functioning, communication patterns, and emotional responses amongst and between all in schools. For instance, educators employing fight/flight tendencies may resort to frustrated defensive behaviours (fight) or avoid conflict all together (flight), thereby impeding effective communication and collaboration with colleagues and students (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). Moreover, dependency sees perceived authority figures, such as school leaders, fellow teachers, or Educational Psychologists relied upon to provide solutions. This

can, ironically, diminish educators' autonomy and empowerment, hampering their ability to foster trust within the school community; inadvertently disrupting the functioning of the system (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). Additionally, pairing characterised by the formation of cliques or rivalries often resulting in the emotional work being confined to smaller groups rather than being addressed more broadly within the school community. This can lead to divisions within the school, giving rise to in-groups and out-groups, ultimately undermining cohesion among educators and students (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016).

On the other hand, embracing a work group mentality fosters productivity, cooperation, and alignment towards achieving common goals. This not only improves communication and teamwork among educators but also cultivates a supportive and inclusive learning environment working more cohesively toward the primary task (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). Recognising and addressing basic assumptions and other unconscious influences are important for navigating interpersonal challenges, fostering self-awareness, and nurturing supportive relationships within the educational context. Similarly, understanding and acknowledging the emotional impact of teaching and learning are crucial. These two themes illustrate the complexity of both emotional and relational aspects within schools, and the application of psychodynamics aids in understanding these complexities. Such understanding ultimately influences educators' classroom practices and educational outcomes for students. Therefore, contemplating strategies to manage these emotional and relational complexities becomes imperative. The subsequent theme within this literature review explores this.

2.5.3 The need for containment in education

The need for and importance of the psychodynamic concept of containment to help manage the emotional and relational complexities within schools was unequivocal within all reviewed literature. Educators who prioritised containment of emotions rather than suppression of them in their pedagogical approach helped students navigate challenging emotions, build self-regulation skills, and engage more productively with learning (Ellis, 2018; Garret, 2020; Stammers & Williams, 2019). Containment-oriented pedagogy also emphasises the significance of emotional regulation, empathy, and attunement in fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021). This in turn contributes to a holistic approach to education: recognising the interconnectedness of emotional well-being and cognitive development (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Stammers & Williams, 2019). Moreover, educators who promote emotional containment are able to enhance students' ability to engage with emotionally difficult content, manage stress, develop positive coping strategies and derive significance from their past experiences (Ellis, 2018; Garret, 2020; Stammers & Williams, 2019). Educators proficient at containing and managing children's emotional distress contribute to creating a sense of safety and stability within the school environment (Ellis, 2018). This fosters an atmosphere where children feel understood, validated, and empowered to process their difficult emotions and experiences with an increased sense of agency (Garret, 2020; Stammers & Williams, 2019).

However, the ability for educators to contain emotions and relational complexities is limited if they themselves are not contained (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). When educators lack support and opportunities for reflection on challenges such as exposure to difficult behaviour (Ellis, 2018; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021), difficulty in connecting with students (Jopling & Zimmerman,

2023), or frustration with colleagues and students (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Ramvi, 2017; Sherry et al., 2021), it leads to persistent difficulties and contributes to educator burnout and exhaustion (Ellis, 2018; Stammers & Williams, 2019). Across numerous papers, the opportunities that supervision spaces brought in helping educators reflect on these experiences was highlighted (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). It was believed that by engaging in supervision, even informally by off-loading with peers, educators would be more contained and emotionally regulated themselves (Ellis, 2018; Eloquin, 2016; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Ramvi, 2017). This would not only enable them to provide the emotional containment needed for the children and some colleagues with whom they worked (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Sherry et al., 2021) but also would enhance their own sense of emotional well-being and reduce the emotional demand that led to feelings of burnout (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Ramvi, 2017; Stammer & Willimas, 2021).

Having said that, engagement in supervision spaces has to be tailored specifically for educators needs. If the structure of the supervisory space is too rigid, it can be too daunting and exposing (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019). This reduces participation and increases basic assumption behaviours such a dependency on the facilitator and fight/flight behaviours such as talking over other group members and splitting blame on to others (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). Additional basic assumption behaviours were also noted when group supervision spaces were too intimidating for educators. One such basic assumption was that of oneness where the group is assumed to think the same (quaint essential idiom: safety in numbers). By employing basic assumption oneness in group supervision spaces no one person can be targeted, isolated and exposed (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019). Another basic assumption witnessed was that of meness - the opposite of oneness. The group dismantles

and becomes inherently selfish because group members are so threatened that they revert to self-interest as a means for psychological survival within supervisory spaces (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016).

The physical setting itself also served as a source of containment, as educators felt safer working within a single building rather than split-site schools (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019). Furthermore, teachers reported feeling less emotionally drained in enclosed classrooms with less visibility to others (Stammer & Williams, 2021). This suggests that the physical structure of the school can act as an emotional container for educators during teaching. Other aspects of school life also influenced emotional containment, with unpredictability being a significant factor. Changes in procedures, uncertainty about leadership responses (Eloquin, 2016), unpredictable student behaviour (Ramvi, 2017) and policy ambiguity (Ellis, 2018) were cited as circumstances where emotions were heightened. However, when predictability increased, educators reported feeling more contained and experienced less emotional toll (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021).

Educators often pursued professional development as a means to attain a sense of containment, believing that acquiring knowledge would alleviate the uncertainties they faced (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019). This desire for increased knowledge was seen as achievable through specialised training on topics like trauma and safeguarding (Ellis, 2018), or by gaining deeper insights into the backgrounds of individual students (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). However, there was a recognised limit to the utility of information acquisition. As mentioned earlier, when educators encounter an excessive amount of information, this may activate unconscious defence mechanisms to mitigate any feelings of overwhelm and distress that are

generated in gaining such knowledge (Ellis, 2018; Eloquin, 2016; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Ramvi, 2017).

Instead, the literature suggests that educators should enhance their understanding of the unconscious processes present rather than seeking details of a child's trauma to understand more about them (Ramvi, 2017; Sherry et al., 2021). Some studies propose that offering such psychoeducation could also act as a form of containment by enhancing educators' comprehension of behaviours exhibited by both students and colleagues (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Stammers & Williams, 2019). This increased awareness is thought to improve and adapt their practice (Fitzsimmons, et al., 2021; Ramvi, 2017). This, in turn, fosters the development of empathetic pedagogy but also potentially mitigates emotional burnout resulting from the unpreparedness inherent in the current educational landscape (Ellis, 2018).

Educational Psychologists (EPs) are uniquely positioned to provide emotional support and containment within schools and help reduce the emotional demands often felt by educators (Eloquin, 2016). EPs can lead on continuous professional development (CPD) sessions and facilitate supervisory, reflective spaces, both of which have been identified as conducive and containing (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Ramvi, 2017). With their training in psychological theory, consultation skills, and group dynamics, EPs are well-equipped to engage in this facilitative and supportive work with school staff (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019). Such work would support educators to feel empowerment and contained when involved with both complex student needs and difficult staff interactions (Eloquin, 2016; Ramvi, 2017). However, the ability of EPs to engage in this work is contingent upon the readiness and willingness of the system. EPs can only provide the support if school leaders

recognise the value of the EP contribution and allocate the necessary time and resources to facilitate their involvement (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Stammers & Williams, 2019). This speaks to the importance of systemic influences and the interconnection with both the unconscious and pedagogy: giving rise to the final theme within this review.

2.5.4 Systemic influences

Systemic influences affect educators' classroom practices and interact with the unconscious processes within schools (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021). The institutional structure and organisation, including site division, teacher timetables, departmental affiliations, and teaching locations influence pedagogical decisions, educator behaviour, organisational functioning and meaning making (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). Opportunities for collaboration among educators are also impacted by these structural factors, with collaborative environments being viewed positively and conducive for sharing best practices (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021). Conversely, limitations on collaboration opportunities due to organisational constraints and policies can lead to a diminished sense of staff well-being and increased emotional burden (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Stammer & Williams, 2019). The perceived lack of support within the system to help educators navigate these emotional challenges exacerbates the impact of systemic influences (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Stammer & Williams, 2019). This often leads to school leadership being held accountable for the discord within schools (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023).

Leadership within educational systems is an important systemic influence and directly affects educators' teaching practices (Eloquin, 2016). The focus and direction of a school are often determined by the leadership's values and objectives, which may themselves be influenced by external factors such as accountability measures, budget constraints, and resource availability (Ellis, 2018; Eloquin, 2016; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). For example, leaders can emphasise achieving higher academic attainment and prioritise curriculum and cognitive development, as evidenced in various studies (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Stammers & Williams, 2019). However, educators expressed concerns that this focus neglects the emotional needs of students, leading to pedagogical practices that fail to address holistic development (Eloquin, 2016; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Garret, 2020; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Sherry et al., 2021). The emphasis on cognitive outcomes can affect the emotional containment of students which can lead to increased behavioural challenges and thus greater emotional labour for educators (Stammers & Williams, 2019). Consequently, the educational system, influenced by governmental mandates and leadership directives, reciprocally impact educators' practices, student well-being and teacher morale (Eloquin, 2016; Garret, 2020; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). Negotiating these systemic dynamics creates unique cultures within schools, placing additional pressure on leaders to balance external demands with the well-being of their staff and students (Eloquin, 2016). This interplay of systemic influences compounds the emotional and relational complexities within schools and illustrates the interconnectedness of the themes presented within this review.

Adding to this complexity is the pressure educators feel in terms of the limited time they have to achieve all that they feel is expected of them (Stammers & Williams, 2019). This is compounded by the increased workload (Garret, 2020) and additional responsibilities that

educators simultaneously have (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019). These responsibilities include assisting vulnerable children with complex special educational requirements (Ramvi, 2017), addressing social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021), and fulfilling bureaucratic protocols (Eloquin, 2016). All of these tasks must be managed alongside their primary duty of teaching children. Educators recognised the need for additional training to effectively manage these aspects of their roles (Ellis, 2018; Stammers & Williams, 2019), and without appropriate CPD, educators felt inadequately prepared (Stammers & Williams, 2019). Consequently, this created a sense of anxiety and stress (Garret, 2020). Yet, despite this emotional response there was a perception that educators were expected to 'ignore those feelings' (Stammers & Williams, 2019, p. 41). The pressure to fulfil their roles irrespective of the emotional strain of doing so likely led to the sense that emotional support was lacking within the system (Ellis, 2018). Support structures within the education system, such as supervision or reflective spaces, are often overlooked in favour of focusing on student outcomes (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Stammers & Williams, 2019), which adversely affects staff morale and plausibly contributes to the low teacher retention rate that is current in today's education system (Ellis, 2018; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Garret, 2020).

Political ideologies of the government also impact the education system and thus contribute to the emotional and relational dynamics within schools. Current Western education systems are perceived to have declined in their sense of community which has created heightened competition between schools and increased focus on accountability (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). This presents a systemic plausibility for why schools and leaders may increasingly focus on attainment levels and Ofsted gradings more than on emotional literacy and general well-being, in addition to the aforementioned unconscious defensive purpose that doing so may serve (Stammers & Williams, 2019). Moreover, schools must navigate societal and

political divisions among students and staff (Eloquin, 2016; Garret, 2020; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023), further influencing the emotional and relational climate within classrooms. This is known as the 'psychical economy of the classroom' (Garret, 2020, p.5). For example, a white teacher teaching a lesson about race and confederate memorialisation to a cohort of pupils who are predominately black will have profound contextual significance to the intra and inter psychic dynamics within a classroom (Garret, 2020). This is one demonstration of how systemic influences intersect with the intra and inter psychic dynamics within teaching and can influence classroom practice (Garret, 2020; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023).

There is a perception in the literature that the educational system expects educators to manage these complexities without adequate training or support (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Ramvi, 2017), which ironically leads to further anxiety, frustration, and burnout (Ellis, 2018; Stammers & Williams, 2019). This emotional strain feeds back into the system, intensifying emotional demands and impacting relational dynamics within schools (Eloquin, 2016; Ramvi, 2017). Structures and spaces for exploring, processing, and containing these emotions are limited due to systemic influences such as time constraints, budget cuts, and competing priorities (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). This perpetuates the cycle of emotional feedback within the system (Figure 6).

Figure 6: feedback loop which highlights the interconnectedness of the themes within the literature review

The application of psychodynamics however can provide some insight which may help disrupt the cycle. For example, systems-psychodynamics can draw together the complex interplay between conscious and unconscious behaviours within an organisation so that patterns can be spotted, reflected upon and reduced (Eloquin, 2016). Systems-psychodynamics additionally highlights the benefit that containment brings to the system and literature suggests that this can and should be facilitated by EPs in Work Discussion Groups (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Stammers & Williams, 2019) or other psychodynamically informed reflective spaces (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Sherry et al., 2021). This is especially true for leaders who can use reflective spaces and knowledge of unconscious processes such as splitting, projection and transference/countertransference to consider how they lead their teams in the face of numerous systemic pressures (Eloquin, 2016).

Systems-psychodynamics also posit that when organisations feel under threat due to excess pressure or impending change, social defences are used to protect itself (Eloquin, 2016).

Social defence behaviours can see relationships become strained and disrupted (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Stammers & Williams, 2019), power dynamics trigger deep rooted transferences of past experiences (Eloquin, 2016; Sherry et al., 2021;) and splitting which creates us/them cliques of those who are in and those who are out of the group (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). These unconscious defences all serve to protect from the threat of change and the potential dismantlement of what is known and comforting. However, these defence mechanisms provide only short-term relief from the anxiety and paradoxically become counterproductive: the 'gap between external and internal [perceptions of] reality' widens (Eloquin, 2016, p.165). The systemic influences on not only the pedagogy within schools but also the psychology is prominent within the literature and the application of a psychodynamic lens provides insight in to why this might be.

2.6 Limitations

The literature reviewed has several notable limitations that warrant attention. The limitations are presented thematically based on the commonalities within the literature. However, specific limitations for each study is summarised within the appendices (Appendix D).

2.6.1 Thematic overview of limitations within the literature

Studies were typically conducted within a one setting type with all participants involved in the research working in that setting. The exception to this was Jopling & Zimmerman (2023), who interviewed educators from both secondary and primary schools in both England and Germany. The largely narrow range of settings within each study may restrict the generalisability of findings and overlook the diversity of educator experiences across educational contexts. There is also a lack of demographic diversity among participants, with

the majority being white and female, indicating a potential skew in representation and thus experience.

Additionally, the literature does not explore how psychodynamics can help understand the use of specific pedagogical approaches, such as the trauma-informed pedagogy. However, numerous studies within the reviewed literature spoke around what could be considered trauma-informed practices. For example, studies that involved children who witnessed domestic abuse (Ellis, 2018) and some children who had trauma-related SEMH needs within specialist alternative provision (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021). However, no explicit link was made to apply psychodynamics to help elucidate educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices.

Furthermore, while discussions of the unconscious are prevalent, there is a notable absence of attempts to *access* the unconscious of participants. Data collection designed to unearth the unconscious was not used, instead application of a psychodynamic lens was applied to data that was either observational within case studies (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Garret, 2020; Stammers & Williams, 2019) or collected after semi-structured interviews (Ellis, 2018; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Sherry et al., 2021).

Finally, the literature neglects the incorporation of reflexive accounts from researchers to critically examine their own unconscious assumptions throughout the research process. Addressing these limitations is important for advancing the appreciation of psychodynamics in educational settings and enhancing the methodological robustness of future research endeavours.

2.6.2 In response…rationale for current research

In addressing the limitations within the literature, this research aims to explore what the influence of unconscious processes may be on the use of a specific pedagogical approach: trauma-informed practice. To do this, three research questions will be asked. These are shared within the next chapter. This will be the first study that applies a psychodynamic lens to explore the usage of such classroom practice and hopes to contribute to the knowledge base in this area by doing so. To add a further unique contribution, this research will adopt a psycho-social methodology that attempts to access the unconscious of participants, moving beyond surface-level data collection.

Additionally, efforts will be made to broaden the demographic representation of participants, recognising the challenges in recruitment within the literature. It is intended that recruitment processes will allow involvement of participants from diverse backgrounds. However, it is also acknowledged that voluntary participation may also skew demographics. Moreover, this thesis, although will not attempt to generalise findings to claim universal truths, will attempt to increase the scope of settings involved to address critiques within the literature that psychodynamically framed research tends to be conducted in a limited number of schools. Furthermore, the study will aim to shed light on how broader organisational structures shape individual experiences and vice versa, elucidating the complex interplay between systemic dynamics and psychological processes within educational settings. This study thus seeks to access both conscious and unconscious aspects of participants' experiences and will apply systemic, psychodynamic and systems-psychodynamic lenses throughout: helping align with the psycho-social nature of the study.

Finally, researcher reflexive spaces will be employed throughout the study to critically reflect on personal assumptions, experiences, and identities, enriching the interpretation and understanding of the collected data.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review

In this chapter, the search strategy and terms have been outlined which produced nine papers that were reviewed. Within the thematic synthesis of these papers the interconnectedness between emotions, relational dynamics and systemic influences in educational settings is explored. Educators navigate a complex emotional landscape, grappling with personal triggers, institutional pressures, and relational challenges within their work which can cause exhaustion and burnout. Psychodynamic insights shed light on defence mechanisms and attachment dynamics that were shown to shape educators' interactions and pedagogical approaches. Moreover, the chapter emphasises the crucial role of containment in managing emotional and relational complexities, underscoring the need for support within the system and reflective spaces for educators: understanding and addressing these dynamics are vital for fostering supportive learning environments, increasing self-awareness and promoting educator well-being. Limitations within the literature were highlighted and a rationale for this current thesis was provided.

Chapter 3: Methods

Methods Overview

This chapter presents the methodological considerations taken in this research (see Table 6 for an overview). In doing this, the chapter will:

- Outline the purpose of this study.
- Share the research questions guiding this research.
- Present the ontological and epistemological positions underpinning the thesis.
- Discuss relevant principles of psycho-social research.
- Describe the research design and method.
- Present the data analysis process.
- Note the importance of researcher reflexivity.
- Reflect on the ethical precautions taken.
- Outline how quality assurance was considered.

Table 6: Overview of research design

Purpose	Exploratory	**Methodology**	Qualitative
Ontology	Psycho-social	**Methods**	Free Association Narrative Interview
Epistemology	Psycho-social	**Data Analysis**	Reflexive Thematic Analysis

3.1 Purpose

This research is exploratory, aiming to explore how unconscious and systemic processes might influence educators' experiences and use of trauma-informed practices. Due to the underrepresentation of this topic within the current literature, an exploratory research purpose

was deemed most appropriate. This purpose is employed when research seeks new information about previously unasked questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

3.1.1 Research questions

This study aimed to respond to three broad yet connected research questions. The phraseology of which is purposefully tentative to compliment the exploratory nature of this study.

1) How might unconscious processes affect educators' experience and use of trauma-informed approaches in mainstream schools?
2) How might systemic influences affect educators' experience and use of trauma-informed approaches in mainstream schools?
3) How might the intersection of unconscious processes and systemic influences affect educators' experience and use of trauma-informed approaches in mainstream schools?

3.2 Ontology, epistemology & methodology

As outlined in the Introduction, my interest in this research is based on personal experience of leading implementation of trauma-informed practice. It is acknowledged that the resulting subjectivity will have influenced the motivation for the project, design of the research, data collection, analysis and interpretation (Clarke & Hogget, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Similarly, my ontological, epistemological, and methodological positions will also have influenced each aspect of the research process (Clarke & Hoggett, 2019), as 'differing ontological and epistemological positions lead to different research approaches being taken' (Grix, 2004, p. 64). Therefore, outlining the ontological, epistemological and methodological paradigm underpinning this research is necessary. These terms will be defined when

discussed subsequently, however, it is important to note that within high quality research these three positions must be cohesive with one another (Guba & Lincoln, 2005): this cohesion was considered when designing this research.

3.2.1 Ontology

Ontology is the philosophical study of how an individual determines what is true and real in the world (Al-Ababneh, 2020; Smith, 2012). There is a spectrum of perspectives on how this truth is defined. At one end of the spectrum, a positivist/realist perspective posits that truth can be found and objectively known (Cohen et al, 2007; Scotland, 2012): a 'discoverable reality exists independently of the researcher' (Pring, 2000a, p. 59). Whereas, at the other end, a constructivist/relativist perspective suggests truth is constructed by each individual (Mertens, 2015): reality is individually constructed and there are as many realities as individuals (Scotland, 2012). For this study, however, a psycho-social ontology is employed. This paradigm indicates that an individual's belief of what is true is based on their internal, psychological experiences which then interact with their external/ social contexts (Hollway & Froggett, 2013). This interaction between the internal and external can occur consciously and unconsciously, meaning that a psycho-social ontology acknowledges the existence and contribution of an unconscious when constructing a worldview (Hollway & Froggett, 2013). This makes a psycho-social ontology mutually exclusive from other ontologies on the positivist to relativist continuum: other ontologies do not attend to the role of the unconscious in their positions on reality (Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2018). If the interaction between the unconscious and social contexts informs what is true, then this also relates to the researcher and brings to light the concept of subjectivity in the psycho-social research process.

3.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology refers to how knowledge can be known and is intrinsically linked to ontological beliefs (Al-Ababneh, 2020; Mertens, 2015). For this research, a psycho-social perspective is adopted which, aligning with psycho-social ontology, believes that truth transpires in the interactions between the internal and external experiences of individuals (Hollway & Froggett, 2013). In approaching research with this epistemological standpoint, the intersection of researcher subjectivity and participant's unconscious relationship with the world is accepted to contribute to the knowing of knowledge: a researcher's subjectivity can be used as 'an instrument of knowing' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p159). Additionally, a psycho-social epistemology deconstructs the notion of a rational and conscious subject and instead intends to draw out the 'multitude of motives, drives and meaning that humans attach to both their inner and outer worlds' (Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2018, p251). This means that data interpretation must go beyond face value and acknowledge the 'in-between' aspects of experience (Hollway & Froggett, 2013, p.140). This, therefore, necessitates researcher introspection when conducting psycho-social research (Andersen & Dybbroe, 2017).

3.2.3 Methodology

A research methodology provides the paradigm through which knowledge is gathered and must align with a researcher's ontological and epistemological positions (Al-Ababneh, 2020; Crotty, 2003;). The current psycho-social project affiliates more with a qualitative approach due to the focus and assumption that the interpersonal relations present between participant and researcher help create knowledge (Kvale, 2003; Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2018). There are, however, certain nuanced differences compared to typical qualitative methodologies. For example, a psycho-social methodology does not ascribe to the views that the participant is providing rational or conscious responses nor that the researcher is able to

remain objective (Mersky, 2015). This is different from other qualitative approaches which implicitly assume that participants and researchers contribute to research in a rational and objective manner (Smith, et al., 2009). Instead, psycho-social methodologies go beyond and beneath the face value responses given by participants and draws on the researcher's subjectivity as part of the meaning making and knowledge generating process (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). This corresponds cohesively with both the psycho-social ontology and epistemology previously described.

3.3 Principles of psycho-social research

Conducting psycho-social research requires the researcher to take account of and reflect upon key psycho-social concepts. These include (in)coherence, how and what questions a researcher asks and how the data set is considered as a whole (Hollway &Jefferson, 2000). Each of these concepts are reflected on within the following section. This provides transparency on how the research was designed but also begins to highlight how credibility and trustworthiness for this project were considered. More detail on quality assurance will be provided later in this chapter.

3.3.1 (In)coherence

The notion that data must be coherent to be considered valid is often associated more with positivist ontologies and epistemologies (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Psycho-social research, however, embraces the idea of 'incoherence as an integral part of the data, recognising its value in revealing underlying unconscious logic and emotional motivations' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p. 34). By allowing participants to freely express themselves, researchers can uncover the unconscious, abstract connections participants make within their experiences, offering insights into their inner world (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). It is the

responsibility of the psycho-social researcher to then interpret and derive meaning from the seemingly incoherent data through a psycho-social lens. Psycho-social supervision can assist in this meaning making.

3.3.2 Questioning in psycho-social research

Psycho-social researchers are acutely aware of how questions asked may inhibit an authentic reflective account of an experience by implying desired responses (Clarke & Hoggett, 2019). Furthermore, timing is also considered within psycho-social interviews as questions posed at certain times may disrupt a re-telling or stifle further details (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Therefore, interview schedules within psycho-social research should be kept to a minimum, have open-ended questions whenever possible and avoid 'why' questions (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). This is because 'why' questions can lead participants to rationalise their responses which is counter to the principle that incoherence is rich and valued in psycho-social research (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Moreover, asking "why" questions supposes that the response will be illustrative of reality whereas psycho-social research is premised on the assumption that what participants say is not always what participants mean (Clarke & Hoggett, 2019; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). The intention of a psycho-social researcher is to be 'almost invisible' during the interview (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p34) and allow the participant's unconscious connections to take them where it wants to take them in responding.

3.3.3 Considering the data as a whole

Qualitative methodologies often fragment individual experiences by compartmentalising them during analysis, focusing on specific aspects through coding and comparison with others' responses (Taylor & McAvoy, 2015). However, a psychosocial approach emphasises

understanding the participant as a whole, aiming to identify a gestalt or 'meaning frame' to understand and learn about their experience holistically (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p. 34). Each participant within psycho-social research contributes to the overall dataset: psycho-social research prioritises individual experiences before addressing shared (or divergent) experiences within the dataset (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). This, it is argued, makes the approach no less valid than other approaches and in fact provides maybe more than other paradigms as the role of the unconscious and the relationships with the participant within this is central to the methodology (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

3.4 Psychodynamic principles in psycho-social research

An aspect of psychodynamics that entitles scepticism about its utility is the lack of an empirical evidence base that illustrates its effectiveness (Rustin & Rustin, 2019; Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2019). However, increased use of this theory beyond the clinical setting enables deeper understanding of how the unconscious can impact everyone and not only those who engage in therapy (Rustin & Rustin, 2019). For example, within educational psychology, psychodynamics has been used to explore a number of pedagogically relevant processes: consultation (Farouk, 2004; Pellegrini, 2010), supervision (Hulusi & Maggs, 2015; Kennedy et al., 2019) and the functioning (or dysfunction) of school systems (Bibby, 2010; Eloquin, 2016b). This therefore gives credence for the utility and application of psychodynamics beyond clinical settings and specifically highlights the relevance of this theory within education (Bibby, 2010).

3.4.1 Object Relations

Psychoanalytic concepts offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricate dynamics between people, and within the context of research, between the researcher and

participant (Greenberg & Mitchell, 2002; Mitchell, 2014). This perspective, rooted in the seminal works of Klein's (1946, 1957) Object Relations Theory, initially explored the mother-child relationship but extends to other relational dyads. Central to this approach is the concept that 'objects' represent both external and internal representations of 'others', influencing the perceptions and interactions adults have (Dunning et al., 2005). Klein posited that the mother-infant bond serves as a foundational template shaping future relationships, leading to the formulation of key concepts such as projection, splitting, projective identification, and transference/countertransference (Spillius, 2005). Building upon Klein's theories, Bion (1961) introduced notions of 'containment' and 'reverie', describing how the mother metaphorically holds and processes the child's unconscious emotions for them. These processed emotions are then offered back in a coherent manner so that the child can begin to navigate the overwhelmingly emotional and anxiety inducing world in which they live (Fonagy et al., 2018). While these concepts originally emerged from child development studies, their relevance can extend to explore broader human experiences of coping with anxiety and emotional pain. With respect to this research, the anxieties and emotions experienced by educators in their work within schools.

3.4.2 Splitting & projections

The psychodynamic processes of splitting and projection are fundamental defence mechanisms with significant implications for research dynamics. These processes serve as defences against internal conflicts, particularly those that generate painful or threatening contradictions (Halton, 1994). Individuals and groups may protect themselves by splitting their feelings into different elements and projecting the problematic feelings onto others or external entities (Likierman, 2001), relieving themselves of the burden of acknowledging and dealing with these feelings (Klein, 1946; Spillius, 2005). In the context of psycho-social

research, these defence mechanisms may manifest in participants' perceptions and interactions with the researcher (Pellegrini, 2010). Psycho-social researchers must therefore be attentive to participants' tendencies to idealise or vilify aspects of their experiences, as well as their unconscious propensity to project their own emotions onto others. This is also true of the researcher themselves and highlights the need for structures to be in place to help attend to this. More detail on how supervision can help in this is discussed later in this chapter.

3.4.3 Transference, counter-transference & projective identification

Concepts such as transference, countertransference, and projective identification play pivotal roles in understanding the intricate dynamics between individuals. Examples of these in school would be when a child reminds a teacher of a past pupil which generates feelings of anger and maybe guilt of feeling this way (transference in the teacher). These feelings are then picked up by the pupil and they too begin to feel frustrated and misunderstood by the teacher (the countertransference). The reminder of the past relationship is the central tenant of transference and countertransference. Without the connection to past relationships, the same process of projecting intolerable emotions onto another which are then received, causing a change in behaviour is known as projective identification (Klein, 1946; Sandler, 2018). Relevant to the research interaction, the researcher may become the recipient of participants' transferences which could lead to countertransferences or projectively identify with intolerable emotions split off and projected by the participant (Clarke & Hogget, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Furthermore, psycho-social researchers may also experience transferences themselves: participants may remind them of individuals from their past, generating emotions within the researcher which are projected in to the participant creating a countertransference. Researchers should not assume they are immune from such unconscious

processes (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Again, engaging in supervision and reflexivity is imperative during psycho-social research so that processes such as these can be reflected upon.

3.4.4 Containment & reverie

Containment is an active process which helps restore the capacity to think (Douglas, 2007). This is why containment is a key psychodynamic process to be mindful of during psycho-social research: researchers can act as containers for the uncontained emotions of participants (Ruch, 2014). This will enable participants to think more freely when sharing their experience. This links to the concept of reverie which is, in psycho-social terms, the process in which individuals become unaware of what they are saying and seem to drift in to topics or content that were maybe not intended (Bion, 1962; Ogden, 1997; 1999b). In some ways, this pertains to the concept of incoherence: reveries could create disjointed or seemingly non-logical narratives. Notwithstanding, reveries are deemed to be symbolic of a containing relationship (Bion, 1962). This highlights the potential for the researcher to contain the unconscious emotional content generated by the participant and once more the need for engagement in supervision and reflexivity becomes apparent. Embracing supervision and reflexivity helps minimise researcher's defence against potentially painful and intolerable content brought by the participant (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

3.4.5 Defended participants & defended researcher: defence mechanisms

One of the grounding principles in psycho-social research is that participants are considered 'defended' against deep rooted anxieties whilst making meaning in the narratives that they are sharing (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p.24). This means that defence mechanisms such as splitting, projections and other aforementioned processes are used unconsciously to protect

the participant from the intolerable and distressing thoughts associated with their experiences (Curtis, 2015; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Klein, 1946). The presence of defence mechanisms should therefore be expected whilst conducting psycho-social research. For example, participants may use what seems like 'well-rehearsed generalisations' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p.31) to avoid the possible discomfort making personal connections to questions posed could bring.

Psycho-social researchers also need to be mindful that they themselves are defended researchers (Cummings & Williams, 2020). This is not only because they have their own emotional connection with the content of the research but also because they are likely to receive projections and transferences split off by the participant throughout the process. For example, as a defence against the emotions expressed within narratives and projected out, researchers may feel compelled to offer reassurance to ease the emotional discomfort of the participant. However, this may be more likely done to ease the emotional discomfort the researcher is feeling internally (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Researchers may also defend themselves by interrupting narratives or asking questions to unconsciously redirect the participant away from emotionally laden content (Cummings & Williams, 2020). The use of supervision and reflexivity will assist in reflecting on the implications of the presence of defence mechanisms for both participants and researcher more widely.

3.5 Research Design

3.5.1 Participants

Participants in this research were all educators in mainstream schools: teachers, teaching assistants, or school leaders. Purposive sampling was used to recruit the small number of participants required for this study because it is likely to 'yield appropriate and useful

information' relevant to the research question (Kelly, 2010, p317). With the focus of this research being on educators' experience of using trauma-informed practices, homogeneity across the participants (e.g age, gender, years of service) was not sought. The inclusion criteria for recruitment is outlined in Table 7.

Table 7: inclusion and exclusion criteria for participant selection

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion criteria	Rationale
An adult in school who works with pupils.	An adult in school who does not work directly children.	The use of trauma-informed practices is considered to be taken up by educators who work with children in order to support success in school, therefore the participants required for this research need to be working with children and have opportunities to use the trauma-informed practices.
Work in a mainstream school setting, inclusive of primary or secondary.	Work in an education setting that is not a mainstream school setting, for example special school, alternative provision or pupil referral unit on site.	The research is intended to explore the experiences of educators in mainstream school settings as a starting point for exploration in this topic.
Must have had a form of trauma training in the past two academic years. Must have had input on what trauma is and how practices could be adapted in schools to be more trauma-informed.	Trauma training received but outside of the 2-year academic time frame. CPD that does not attend to both the theory of trauma and the practical adaptions educators can make to become more trauma-informed in their practice.	Time frame of 2 years was specified as practice change takes time to become embedded (Bertram et al., 2015). Moreover, training that only attends to the theory of trauma does not allow for participants to be able to experience the process of implementation of practice change and so both aspects were specified as necessary within attended training.

3.5.2 Recruitment

Initial scoping recruitment conversations was had with two Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-Ordinators (SENDCOs) of two schools in which it was known a form of trauma training had taken place within the last two academic years. Conversation with the

first SENDCO provided a key contact within their Trust of schools: the Training and Professional Development (TPD) co-ordinator. The Trust included 31 mainstream schools across numerous counties, including and bordering my placement county. After contact was made with the TPD, additional information about the project, participant guidance and recruitment poster was sent (Appendix E). On my behalf, the TPD Coordinator forwarded the bundle of project information to the SENDCO network within the Trust and asked them to cascade this to all educators within their schools. The same bundle of information was sent to the second SENDCO with whom I had a scoping conversation with who also cascaded it on my behalf within their school.

The cascade approach yielded seven interested educators. Contact details for each were shared and introductions were made via email. Participants were given opportunity to ask questions about the information sheet and study in general before confirming they wanted to proceed with participation. At this stage, one participant withdrew due to personal circumstances. The remaining six confirmed their participation (Table 8) and interviews were organised and booked. It was sought to conduct the interviews within participants' schools to help provide a 'scenic understanding' (Hollway, 2015; Lorenzer, 2016). This would aid in researcher reflexivity with regard to the 'affective and embodied experience' that occurred whilst collecting data (Redman et al., 2010, p.217). Participants signed informed consent forms (Appendix F) before commencement of the first interview.

Table 8: summary of recruited participants

Participant pseudonym	Educator's role	Type of School
Jane	Teacher and alternative provision leader	Secondary
Gina	Senior Leader and SENDCO	Primary & Secondary
Lara	Teaching Assistant	Secondary
Carl	Student Support Assistant, Deputy Safeguarding Leader	Secondary
Kate	Attendance Leader and Well-Being Mentor	Primary & Secondary
Bree	Teacher	Secondary

3.5.3 Data collection

To align with the psycho-social paradigm of this research, data collection had to be such that it attempted to access participants' unconscious and subjective aspects of their experience (Kvale, 2003). An established psycho-social data collection approach used for this is the Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; 2013). Free association techniques are considered helpful when collecting data on the human experience and accessing the unconscious, as they offer a window into implicit content; they are designed to induce the symbolic, emotive, and experiential material that informs an individual's representation of an issue (Joffe & Elsey, 2014; Kris, 2002). This is unlike other qualitative data collection methods, such as semi-structured interviews, in which researchers ask how? when? and where? questions which are argued to create more intellectualised responses (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Jefferson & Hollway, 2012). The role of the researcher within free association methods, however, is to create a stimulus that allows for free associations to occur, encourage elaboration from the participant by using non-verbal indicators and well timed reflections (Joffe & Elsey, 2014), and then interpret the responses provided by the participants (Archard, 2020). The proceeding sections provide detail about the free association methods used in this research, namely the Organisation in the Mind (OiM)

drawing as a stimulus and the Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) to collect the substantive data for this study.

3.5.4 Organisation in the Mind (OiM) drawing as a stimulus

The use of stimuli to activate unconscious free associations is longstanding in psychoanalytics (Freud, 1924/1961; Jung, 1910). Given the psycho-social paradigm underpinning this research, employing stimuli to elicit free associations was therefore deemed fitting. Often the Grid Elaboration Model (GEM) (Joffee & Elsey, 2014) is used as a stimulus prior to the FANI, intending to aid participants to begin freely associating around the topic of interest (Joffee & Elsey, 2014). However, in critically reflecting upon the GEM, it was thought that the presentation of a grid could appear restrictive and may limit possible unconscious free associations. In response, the Organisation in the Mind (OiM) drawing was considered as an alternative stimulus.

An OiM drawing is a picture that individuals draw that represents the mental images and fantasies held about an organisation in which people work (Shapiro & Carr, 1991): it helps illustrate the perception that individuals have inside their head about the activities, relationships and experiences within an organisation (Hutton et al., 2013). OiM drawings also often give rise to visual representations of the emotions, values and unconscious responses influencing behaviours within the workplace for an individual (Wilson, 2012). Thus, asking participants to draw an OiM drawing prior to interview was considered appropriate for numerous reasons. Firstly, the visual nature of an OiM drawing meant that it is was free from the restrictions that were considered to be present within the GEM. Secondly, OiM drawings are by their nature related to organisations and workplaces and seek to expose the unconscious connections participants make with it. Moreover, they highlight the interaction

of the internal (unconscious) and external (systemic) elements of their work. This aligns with both the paradigm of this research but also maps on to the research questions that frame this exploratory study. Ultimately, the use of an OiM drawing as a stimulus prior to the FANI enabled participants and myself to look beyond the conscious and normative issues that arise within an organisation and become more alert to the inner experiences that interact with the environmental elements of their workplace (Hutton et al., 2013; Wilson, 2012).

3.5.5 Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI)

The FANI is a form of data collection that is designed to unearth emotional and unconscious responses, drawing out where avoidances have been used as a defence (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Additionally, the FANI enables researchers to think about the intersection of the psychological and social (Frogget, 2012). These aspects of the FANI helps form the "meaning frame" a participant has of a subject (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p34). In this research, the FANI was used to explore the experiences of educators when implementing trauma-informed approaches. This exploration was conducted whilst attempting to adhere to four key facets of the FANI method (Archard, 2020; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; see Table 9)

Table 9: four facets of conducting a FANI

Facet 1	ask open ending questions
Facet 2	elicit a story
Facet 3	avoid using 'why' questions
Facet 4	use participants phrasing and ordering of events

The FANI protocol also recommends that a second interview be conducted (Archard & O'Reilly, 2022). Within the second interview (known as Part 2 in this thesis), areas of curiosity from the first interview (Part 1) are brought back to the participant and time given for further exploration. Part 2 was also utilised to clarify understanding from Part 1 and

sensitively seek additional information on the avoidances and defences noted in the transcribing of Part 1.

3.5.6 Developing the FANI interview

Researchers conducting a FANI must be mindful not to over plan or become too rigid in the preparation of interview schedules to avoid the interview becoming a structured or semi-structured interview (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). This is because the FANI is designed to encourage participants to follow the 'association pathways' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p. 34) that the questions or prompts lead them to: participants are free to follow whatever path their unconscious responses take them down. In this study, participants often freely associated during and upon completion of their OiM drawing. This meant that on several occasions questions did not need to be asked to initiate conversations or association pathways: the OiM drawing acted as prompt enough for participants to begin sharing their experiences. This, at times, resulted in narratives that did not always pertain to conscious logic or rational intention but instead to unstructured, unconscious logic (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). Exploring these moments further in Part 2 allowed participants to either clarify, expand or freely associate again.

Both Part 1 and Part 2 of the FANI were designed so that participants could respond to questions with as little interruption as possible. Prompt were used to elicit further information if the participant stopped talking for a sustained length of time. Prompts used asked participants to speak more on a point they had made, explain more about their experience of a particular situation or simply repeating a word. These prompts enabled participants to continue their response and take them further down their association pathway. To maintain the meaning frame of participants, follow up questions or prompts would use the phraseology

of participants and not language that implied my interpretation of what was being said. The interview questions prepared for both Part 1 and 2 can be found in Appendix G. However, it should be noted that these questions may not have been adhered to strictly: FANI requires flexibility and pragmatism. Researchers should be led by the participants and not by the completion of set questions (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Twelve interviews were conducted in total. Most interviews were held in participants' schools, except for two, which took place in county council buildings due to constraints that prevented in-school interviews at that time. Six Part 1 interviews took place in the Summer Term, just before the end of the academic year. Six Part 2 interviews took place during Autumn term of the subsequent academic year. Informed consent was obtained by providing participants with a copy of the information sheet and allowing them to ask questions before giving consent. After obtaining informed consent, the process of the two interviews and the recording of the interviews was explained verbally for clarity. The interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone and transcribed by myself upon completion. The recordings were transcribed verbatim, inclusive of tonal characteristics, pauses, and filler words (e.g erms), as advised by Hollway & Jefferson (2013). Transcripts were also reviewed for any mis-hearings of words and/or inaccuracies on initial transcription. Reflexive notes were made during transcription to capture my thoughts during data processing.

3.6 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is key in psycho-social research and integral to the triangulation of knowledge generation (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). It allows researchers to identify and address their subjective responses during data collection and within participant interactions (Patnaik, 2013). However, while reflexivity can enhance transparency and integrity in research

(Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Yardley, 2017), it should be balanced to avoid overshadowing participants' experiences (Parker, 2015). Despite this caution, reflexivity remained invaluable for me during this research. It facilitated greater self-awareness in my responses to the process, participants, and myself, while also ensuring transparency in the analytical process (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Yardley, 2017), thus supporting the integrity of this research (Etherington, 2004). As a psycho-social researcher, employing a psychodynamic lens, acknowledging and exploring my own unconscious influences was deemed imperative. To do this reflexive work, I engaged in both research supervision and psycho-social supervision. Moreover, I kept a reflective research diary throughout the process, took field notes after the interviews and was part of a peer supervision group that met monthly. These processes provided me with space to explore and reflect on the process and highlighted when and where defence mechanisms might be present for me.

3.6.1 Research diary

An electronic research diary was created and thoughts were added to it when they occurred both along the research process and when writing up the thesis. The diary also served the purpose of tracking and noting topics I wished to take to supervision, such as questions about my subjectivity and emergent thoughts on any reactions or feelings felt in relation to the research. I also used my research diary to reflect on my thoughts after supervision: the key elements I had taken from the session. Maintaining the diary was at times difficult but undoubtedly helpful in being transparent about my role within the process and the relational engagement I had with participants during the thesis (Elliott et al., 2012). Reflexive notes from diary entries are shared throughout the thesis.

3.6.2 Field notes

After the interviews, field notes were taken to capture key memories of the interaction (Appendix H). These notes intended to capture feelings toward something that was said, certain intonation used by the participants, turns of phrase that I thought were interesting and general summary of the experience (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). This aided in establishing a "scenic understanding" (Lorenzer, 2016) of the interview which was then taken to supervision to help provide the context of the interactions and my responses to it. The process of taking field notes continued throughout the data collection process to capture the 'here and now' element of the experience: research diary was used to reflect on the 'there and then'.

3.6.3 Psycho-social supervision

In addition to monthly research supervision, specific psycho-social supervision with a member of the Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust research teaching team was also engaged with. Within this space, the supervisor facilitated reflections about myself (Figure 7), helped explore the defended researcher position and scaffolded thinking about potential enactments of projective identification and countertransference (Elliott et al, 2012; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). In speaking about my experiences of conducting the research, psycho-social supervision also enabled me to see where and how I might have been avoidant, employed defence mechanisms due to my own sense of overwhelm or been influenced by my subjectivity. Engaging in psycho-social supervision provided the opportunity to utilise another's subjectivity to help identify my own (Schwaber, 1992) and I found this invaluably helpful.

Reflexivity questions October 2023	Within my reading on and around psycho-social supervision and reflexivity, I have come across a collection of questions which I think are incredibly helpful to hold in mind. I will share these questions with my psycho-social supervisor. I feel that these questions encapsulate the key questions I should be asking myself throughout this process. **Reflexivity questions: (Greenaway, 2010; Hsiung, 2008):** • How has my personal history influenced the choice of topic? • What are my personal value systems that may influence the process of research? • How do my gender, culture and professional background influence my positioning in this topic and my relation with the participants? • What are the alternate roles I might be called upon to play while interacting with the participant, apart from my primary role as researcher? • What are the possible advantages that I have in terms of personal history and professional competence? • What might be the barriers that my personal history and professional competence can create during data collection? • How are the emerging data assimilating with my prior knowledge; making me revisit an earlier stance?

Figure 7: screenshot of reflexive diary where key reflexive questions were considered

3.7 Data analysis

When conducting research, the data analysis method must be coherent with the ontology, epistemology and data collection methodology (Saunders et al., 2012). With this in mind, the decision of which data analysis approach to use was between two: Grounded Theory (GT) and Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA). A final decision was made to use RTA for this thesis. A brief overview of each approach will be presented, drawing attention to why each approach was considered but why ultimately RTA was selected.

3.7.1 Grounded Theory (GT)

GT is frequently used in exploratory research, particularly in examining influential processes (Braun & Clarke, 2021a; Charmaz, 2014). GT is also known for its comprehensive and robust nature and seen as a credible method for qualitative data analysis (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2020). Moreover, GT allows for reflection on any subjectivity during analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Charmaz, 2014). Given its rigor, applicability for exploratory research, and acknowledgment of subjectivity, GT was strongly considered as the data analysis method for this research. However, the use of a theoretical lens seemed at odds with the assumptions of GT: interpreting data without a preconceived lens or steer from the research questions is more in keeping with GT (Braun & Clarke, 2021a; Cutcliffe, 2005). This study used specific theoretical lenses and has such a steer: the research questions for this study specifically intend to explore unconscious and systemic influences. Ergo, GT was considered a close fit rather than the best fit for this exploratory study.

3.7.2 Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA)

After discounting GT, Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) was selected for data analysis for numerous reasons. Firstly, RTA not only permits subjectivity but encourages it (Braun & Clark, 2019; 2021b; 2023). This is known as 'knowing practice,' (Braun & Clarke, 2023, p.1) and involves researchers consciously incorporating their perspectives into their analysis (Elliott et al., 2012). This aligns well with this study’s psycho-social paradigm's emphasis on reflexivity (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Secondly, RTA enables the interpretation of data beyond surface-level semantics, allowing for latent themes to be generated using theoretical lenses (Braun & Clarke, 2019b). Again, this resonates with the depth of analysis required in psycho-social research (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Additionally, RTA shared positive attributes with GT: its suitability for exploratory research, its recognition as a credible qualitative analysis method, and how it allows for data to be themed holistically (Braun & Clarke, 2023). A further decisive reason was that RTA offers actionable outcomes with practical implications (Sandelowski & Leeman, 2012). This was considered important due to applied nature of the doctorate and thesis. Finally, RTA compliments research focused on exploring personal experiences within broader socio-cultural contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2021a), aligning with this study's research questions well.

The RTA process (outlined in section 3.8) implicitly emphasises the inductive nature of theme generation: initial individual-level coding informs later theme development. Following this, integration of psychoanalytic theory and researcher subjectivity provides not only complementary perspectives for analysis but also acts as a form of methodological triangulation (Braun & Clarke, 2019b; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Maintaining transparency throughout the analysis ensures methodological coherence, as expected in RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2023). The recommendations for conducting a methodologically coherent RTA (Table 10) were held in mind throughout the RTA analysis to help with the trustworthiness and credibility of this study (Braun & Clarke, 2023).

Table 10: summary of recommendations for how to conduct a methodologically coherent thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2023)

1	Recognise the plurality of TA; determine where chosen TA approach is located on the scientifically descriptive (small q) to artfully interpretive (Big Q) spectrum.
2	Determine underlying research values and philosophical assumptions; locate use of TA theoretically.
3	Consider analytic practice; ensure all methodological procedures and concepts cohere with the research values and TA approach.
4	Justify divergences from established practice and “mashups;” ensure these are theoretically coherent.
5	If using reflexive TA, link personal reflexivity to the analytic practice; don’t mention bias.

6	Discuss how exactly you engaged with your chosen approach to produce your analysis
7	Recognise the differences between topic summary and meaning-based interpretative story conceptualisations of themes; ensure type of theme is coherent with the TA approach (and justify any divergences)
8	Ensure language around theme development is coherent with the TA approach.
9	Provide a clear overview of themes/thematic structure in the form of a list, table or thematic map.
10	Ensure the quality standards and practices used cohere with the TA approach and underlying theoretical assumptions

3.8 The six phases of RTA

The word ‘phase’ was used purposefully within the subheading of this section in an attempt to move away from the misconception that RTA is a linear, staged approach (Nowell, et al., 2017; Xu & Zammit, 2020). Instead phase helps frame it as a ‘progressive and recursive process’ (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 36). This following section aims to detail the robust guidelines that organise the six phases rather than attempting to justify how the research followed rigid rules in conducting the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). First person pronouns are also used in this section to illustrate the reflexive nature of the process.

3.8.1 Phase 1: Familiarisation with dataset

During this phase, I initially familiarised myself with the data by listening to the recordings in full: Part 1 and Part 2 separately and then together as a full interview. At first, I listened without taking any notes so that I was able to actively listen to content and not be distracted by the task of transcribing. After the ‘pure listen’, I then re-listened and transcribed the audio of each participant verbatim. Transcription is considered to be a key element of familiarisation which was why I decided to be responsible for the transcription of the data rather than outsourcing this process (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). To transcribe, I used a dictation software on Microsoft Word online: uploaded the audio file of the interview, allowed the software to transcribe and then listened and proof read the transcription. I edited

for accuracy when necessary and added in elements like pauses, intonation, and non-verbal cues. I used Braun and Clarke (2013) guidelines for notation when transcribing the interviews (Appendix I).

After transcription of Part 1, 'post transcription reflections' (Appendix J) were created in preparation for Part 2. These reflections allowed for initial musings, possible patterns and psychodynamic processes to be noted. The content of these notes were offered back to the participants during Part 2 as a member reflection process: reflections shared and participants invited to comment on their resonance (Tracey, 2010). After each interview (Part 1 and 2) field notes were also taken so that initial responses to the interaction were captured. Immersing oneself within the data as soon as possible after the interview helped with capturing feelings and important aspects of the interview. Once all interviews were transcribed, the audio recording for each participant was played back once again whilst reading the transcript alongside (Appendix K for transcript extract). This helped check for any remaining inaccuracies in replication and allowed for yet further immersion. The raw data (transcripts and audio recordings) was also referred to regularly during the coding and theming phases.

3.8.2 Phase 2: Coding

After immersion, I began to systematically generate preliminary code labels, both semantic and latent where appropriate (Clarke, 2018). Code labels were given to data that I deemed relevant to the research questions. Using the guiding principle of "does this help answer a research question?" was helpful in containing how daunted I often felt in coding and processing the data for this thesis. Once code labels were assigned, numerous iterative cycles off assessing, re-labelling and reviewing for relevance ensued. Within RTA, code labels are

consolidated within each participant's dataset and are influenced by the researcher's subjectivity (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). The researcher's reflexivity guides the analysis process and underpins how decisions about the what, why, and how of analysis are made (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). It was this principle that led to an acknowledgment that although the iterative process of reviewing and relabelling code labels could have continued indefinitely, there needed to be a point where the code labels were sufficiently relevant. For me, this point was when I was revisiting the data and no longer felt compelled to adjust code labels. At this juncture, I transitioned into the next phase of the RTA process.

Microsoft Excel was used to help organise the code labelling for my data. Each participant's transcript was copied and pasted in to an Excel workbook and the line-by-line facility of Excel enabled the systematic process of code labelling. When a new code label was required, a new code label was added to the developing list. This created a growing drop-down list from which to choose from or add to during the coding process (Figure 8).

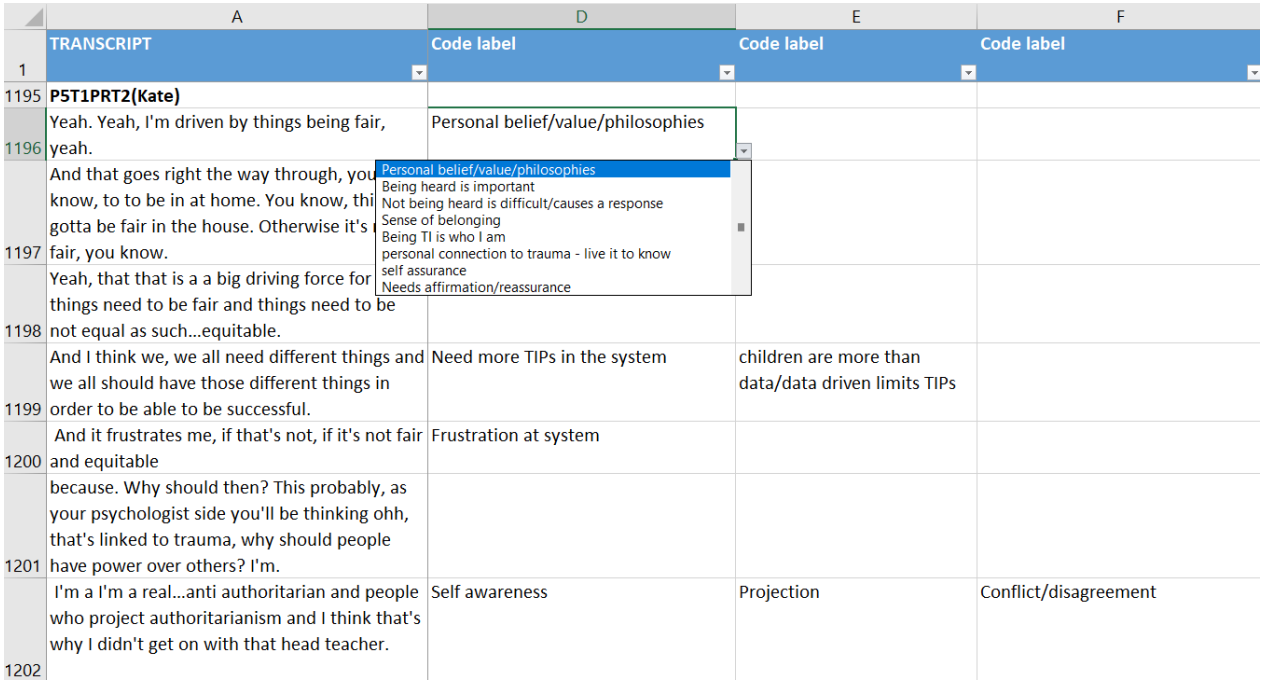

Figure 8: screenshot to illustrate the developing drop down list used within Excel to help systematically assign code labels

The coding process was conducted one participant at a time which allowed me to see their data as a whole before reviewing codes across the entire data set (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

3.8.3 Phase 3: Generating initial themes

Again, the wording of theme generation is deliberate to reflect the active process of theme development. Within this phase, code labels are consolidated into broader representations of meaning which are referred to as themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). The clustering of code labels that share a core idea or concept are only deemed similar due to the subjectivity that the researcher brings to the analytical process. The spotting of patterns and shared meanings are impingent on the researcher's interpretation of the code labels and data more generally (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Microsoft Excel was used to collate 'candidate themes' (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.35) according to their perceived likeness or connection. This was done by assigning a possible candidate theme name next to each code label within each participant's data set. Once this initial naming of candidate themes was complete, the filtering functionality available in Excel organised all candidate themes together. In having all candidate themes and their adjoining code labels grouped together, the process of developing and reviewing themes could begin. To do this participants' individual data with candidate themes were imported on to one master workbook in readiness for Phase 4.

3.8.4 Phase 4: Developing and reviewing themes

It is recommended that researchers do not create too many themes: themes should be reviewed in accordance to their meaning, quality and boundaries to keep number of themes down (Clarke, 2018). This phase requires explicit reflexivity as reviewing and developing is by nature a subjective task. Moreover, the concept of 'getting the right one' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p51), although seemingly counter to the psycho-social paradigm, is still pertinent for credibility's sake. It would be damaging to the trustworthiness of the research if theme development and review did not resonate with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). To assist in this, reference back to the research questions was helpful and allowed me to adapt themes, assimilate them or tease them apart to become more nuanced. This process was again completed within Excel: repeating the assign and filter function from the previous phase (Appendix L for example). With each repetition of the cycle, themes were reviewed and developed so that the central organising concept became more apparent (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

3.8.5: Phase 5: Refining, defining and naming themes

Although this phase is presented as the penultimate phase, the recursive nature of RTA meant that this phase was passed through more than once before completion of the data analysis process (Bryne, 2021). This is because defining the themes requires "fine tuning" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p36). During this phase, themes are not only named but also summarised with pithy descriptions that elude to the content (sub themes) within each: a defining narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). Furthermore, in this phase, I ensured that each of the generated themes provided a coherent and consistent overview of the data. These themes should also collectively present a narrative that aligns with the dataset's content and provide valuable insights into the research question(s) (Bryne, 2021; Clarke, 2018). Once I had finalised the

themes, I was then in a position to present the themes and write them up in the Findings chapter of this thesis.

3.8.6 Phase 6: Writing up

The final phase of the RTA process is the writing up of the results (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). The findings within this study are written up within the following chapter (Findings) and presented as overall themes rather than as individual cases. This decision was made to both adhere to the RTA principle of considering the data set as a whole but also for the message of the study to be communicated clearly. This is not, however, at the detriment of considering each participant as a whole. Rather, it was in attempt to highlight and amplify the shared experiences of educators when using trauma-informed approaches. Application and impact of my own subjectivity is also discussed and presented both in the Findings chapter, where relevant, and within the Discussion chapter when making sense of the results.

Although there is no attempt to generalise the findings to wider populations other than those recruited within this study, there was an intention to highlight commonalities and demonstrate the extent to which unconscious processes and systemic influences were similar (or not) across settings and participants. Presenting themes based on the entire dataset was deemed the most fruitful way to do this (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). It was also thought that by presenting themes from across the data, this would help draw attention to the key aspects to consider when applying the findings to practice.

3.8.7 Application of psychodynamic lens

Once the six phases of RTA were concluded and themes were generated from the data, the process of integrating theory commenced. This stage involved employing the 'Object

Relations' theories previously mentioned to examine the experiences of both the researcher and participant. In addition, the researcher's subjectivity and tentative exploration of defences against anxiety as defined by Freud, Object-Relations theorists and group relation theory (Bion, 1961; Freud, 1937; Klein, 1946) were reflected upon. To provide insight on the second and third questions, systemic and systems-psychodynamics lenses were used. These three theories were applied across the data set with individual participants used to qualify or exemplify the presence of such unconscious or systemic processes. The application of the theoretical lens will be explored and discussed within the Discussion section.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

For this study, ethical approval was granted by the Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC) (Appendix M). In maintaining ethically high standards across all aspects of the research, this meant adherence to the TREC approval conditions but also to both the British Psychological Society (BPS) and Health Care Professional Council (HCPS) ethical expectations (BPS, 2021; HCPC, 2024). The principles of doing no harm, consent, representational ethics, right to withdraw, power dynamics, confidentially and data protection were all considered. Each of these will be discussed in turn, briefly.

3.9.1 Do no harm

Inviting participants to share their experience can create unexpected feelings. This is particularly pertinent with the FANI where participants could begin to discuss experiences that are personal or distressing. While acknowledging that some components of the interview may elicit this for participants, it was imperative that the principle of do no harm was upheld. The relational context in which distress is experienced is what ultimately decides whether it is perceived as harmful (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Thus, interviews were conducted in a

considerate manner, giving participants a sense of being heard. At the end of each interview, recording was stopped and there was opportunity to converse: I did not simply ‘grab the data and run’ (Barbour, 2007, p. 92). Moreover, upon completion of Part 2, participants were offered an additional de-brief for further discussion, if required. No invite was taken, suggesting no additional de-brief was necessary. The manner in which interviews were conducted and the offer of an additional de-brief demonstrate the values of integrity, decency, and compassion which assist in averting harm (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

3.9.2 Informed consent

Participants were given information which outlined: purpose of the research, requirements of participation and information about what and where participants could go if they were worried by anything within the research experience. Upon receiving this information, participants then chose to participate via email and signed an informed consent letter at the beginning of Part 1 interviews (as outlined in Recruitment section 3.5.2). Care was taken with the wording of the information sheet and associated consent form so not to overshare and dissuade participants to participate by using phrasing such as "exploring unconscious protective processes" as this may have been intimidating and also affect participant responses in interview (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). However, transparency and informed consent were crucial and so the wording chosen, authorised by TREC, was “exploring how the unconscious, or psychological influences that individuals are not aware of, affect the implementation of trauma-informed practices”. This wording was chosen in light of Hollway and Jefferson (2000) who recommend using a straightforward, non-technical explanation to inform participants.

3.9.3 Deception & representational ethics

In this research, relevant information was provided to participants prior to interview. Also, before, during and upon completion of the interview process participants were informed and reminded that the findings would be interpretations generated within the analysis and not claims of truth. This relates to the concept of representational ethics (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Here, the ethical consideration of 'how does the data represent the participant?' is central. By openly communicating my intention to present a thematic overview of the data as a whole rather than individually, it was hoped that any concerns individuals may have had about their representation within the data would be addressed. To aid in further transparency, member reflections were used within the Part 2 interview to share how the researcher was reflecting on and interpreting their experiences. Additionally, all participants were informed that a number of their quotes may be used in the final write up on the informed consent/ information sheet and during the interview process. Contact details for the Quality Assurance Officer was also provided in case participants wished to complain about researcher conduct: being open about channels through which complaints could be made was hoped to decrease deception and increase openness and trust.

3.9.4 Right to withdraw

The right to withdraw was shared with participants both within the information sheet and after signing the informed consent form. The right to withdraw was also repeated before commencement of Part 2. Once interviews had been completed, participants were informed one more time of their right to withdraw. They were also informed that any aspect of their data could be retracted from the data set at any time up until the point of data analysis commencement. All participants confirmed they understood this and all were happy to remain within the study along with their full dataset.

3.9.5 Power dynamics

A further ethical consideration was the intrinsic power imbalance within interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2022). While psychosocial research embraces the intersubjective dynamic between the researcher and participant, the concept of power is equally pertinent within the interaction. Instances highlighting the power dynamics inherent in the researcher's position include their control over the interview setting, the predominantly one-sided conversation aimed at extracting viewpoints, and their role as the primary interpreter of participants' narratives (Kvale, 2007). Therefore, interviews were arranged at times and locations convenient to the participants rather than the researcher. At least one out of the two interviews for each participant took place in the educators' own schools. It was hoped that being somewhere familiar hopefully helped reduce any power differential. If an interview was unable to be in the educator's setting, an alternative location convenient for the participant was arranged. On the two occasions this occurred, a local county council building was used and a private room booked for privacy. Furthermore, the assumption with a FANI is that the researcher becomes "almost invisible" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p34) as stated previously. This too hopefully helped reduce the power dynamic: I aimed to be an active listener rather than actively seeking answers to questions on a predetermined agenda.

3.9.6 Confidentiality

It was imperative that participants trusted their confidentiality would be maintained so they felt able to authentically share their experience. To help with this assurance, participants were informed that pseudonyms would be used for all people mentioned in the data, including themselves. It was also confirmed that any identifying information from quotes, such as names of local authorities, schools, or towns would be removed. This was indicated by using [square brackets] when necessary within transcription. If any images (OiMs) had defining

features (school emblems), these were redacted. However, it is challenging to guarantee that participants will not be recognised by those who know them and their turns of phrase well due to the intimate nature of the data created. Participants were asked at the end of each interview if they would prefer anything that that had said not to be used in the final write for confidentiality reasons. All participants confirmed their approval of their dataset.

3.9.7 Data protection

A further aspect of maintaining confidentiality is how participant's data is stored. All participants were informed how their data would be stored and how long it would be stored for. Audio, transcript and analysis data was secured on a password protected device that had local authority firewalls. Data was kept during the research process and will be kept no longer than 5 years. All hardcopy data (OiMs) underwent secure disposal using a shredding machine with specificity at P3 level, the recommended level for most secure documents: shreds documents in to "confetti sized particles" (Ministry of Justice Security Guidance, 2023). All electronic data will be disposed of securely within the aforementioned timeframe and/or is no longer needed for publication purposes.

3.10 Quality assurances

For this thesis, the quality assurance tools referenced will be that of Hollway and Jefferson (2013), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Yardley (2017). It is acknowledged that Lincoln and Guba (1985) cannot be thought of as contemporary, however, its relevance and significance is undeniable and considered seminal when reflecting on quality qualitative research (Treharne & Riggs, 2015). The shared principles are grouped and discussed based on their alignment with one another.

3.10.1 Credibility & confirmability – transparency & coherence – honesty

Research that is credible, transparent and honest will be such that after reading the study, another researcher should be able to understand and replicate the key procedural elements therein (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yardley, 2017). Increased credibility and coherence of a qualitative study can be achieved with triangulation of the data gathered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yardley, 2017). Within this research triangulation was sought by interviewing participants twice, engaging in supervision and recording field notes/research diary entries. Transparency and honesty resonate with reflexivity (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Yardley, 2017) and within this research reflexivity was central. As a reflexive researcher, I interrogated the significance of my personal circumstances, privileges, identity, experiences, and location and how they informed the research trajectory (Treharne & Riggs, 2015; Willig & Stainton-Jones, 2017). Specific psycho-social supervision, in addition to personal reflexive practice, aided this ongoing process throughout this research project.

3.10.2 Dependability - commitment & rigour - respect

A further aspect that contributes to the determination of quality is the commonality between the frameworks which highlight the importance of honouring the participant and the research topic. For research and researchers to be thought as dependable, they should be able to provide documentation and have an audit trail, available for inspection upon request (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To adhere to this principle a range of records are provided in the Appendices of this thesis (Appendix A – O). According to Yardley (2017), commitment and rigour are demonstrated through the researcher's dedication to and engagement with the topic, illustrated within this research via the contextual scene setting within the introduction. Further commitment to the approach was also shown in the selection of a psycho-social method of data collection and data analysis that required reflexivity. The concept of

reflexivity pertains to the value of respect, especially for the participant (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). In respecting the participant, I had an ethical duty to engage in reflexivity during this psycho-social, qualitative research to ensure that my impact on the results are acknowledged.

3.10.3 Transferability – sensitivity to context –importance - sympathy

For this study, the research questions incorporate the individual, the systemic and their interaction and thus demonstrates an inherent sensitivity to context. Moreover, reflexivity and supervision were used to reflect not only on participant's contexts but also how mine intersected with theirs and how this then shaped the research design and conduct thereafter (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). The use of a Part 2 interview and member reflections also helped highlight the importance that participants felt heard (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and that their contexts had been sensitively considered in my interpretation of their experience (Yardley, 2017). Sensitivity also relates to how data is analysed and to what extent pre-conceived categories are imposed upon the data: more respect is shown if data is analysed diligently and organically (Yardley, 2017). Within this research, the cyclical process of refinement for theme development aided in the resistance of swift theme generation. Finally, transferability is considered within the Discussion chapter where application of the findings, resultant implications for EP practice and the unique contribution this research makes to the knowledge base will be discussed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yardley, 2017).

3.11 Summary of Methods

This Methods chapter outlines the research design and approach adopted for exploring educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices in mainstream schools. The

purpose of this study was stated as exploratory, aiming to fill a gap in existing literature. The researcher's ontological and epistemological positions are grounded in psycho-social theories which, it was argued, resulted in a coherent research design. Justification of the use of qualitative methodology with data collection methods of Organisation in the Mind (OiM) and Free Association Narrative Interviews (FANI) to explore the psycho-social aspects of educators' practice are presented. A description of the data analysis procedure described how a Reflexive Thematic Analysis was conducted and the importance of reflexivity and ethics were emphasised. Finally, with the assistance of frameworks, how the quality of this research was considered was discussed.

Chapter 4: Findings

Findings Overview

Within this chapter, the key findings from this research are presented. Whilst each of the six participants were coded discreetly, the data set was analysed and themed as a whole. To present these themes this chapter will:

- Present an overview of the findings inclusive of themes and sub themes.
- Provide a thematic definition for each of the generated themes.
- Offer evidence in support of each theme, giving illustrative quotes for each of the sub themes within it.
- Utilise reflexive accounts to demonstrate how reflexivity contributed to data analysis.

4.1 Overview of themes

After reflexive thematic analysis, five themes and 17 subthemes were generated in response to the research questions (Figure 9). All participants contributed to all themes: each participant provided illustrative quotes supporting the generation of each theme. The evidence for each theme will be provided by quotes from interviews conducted. A transcript reference of participant name (pseudonym) and transcript line number (Jane, 123) is provided for each quote used for transparency.

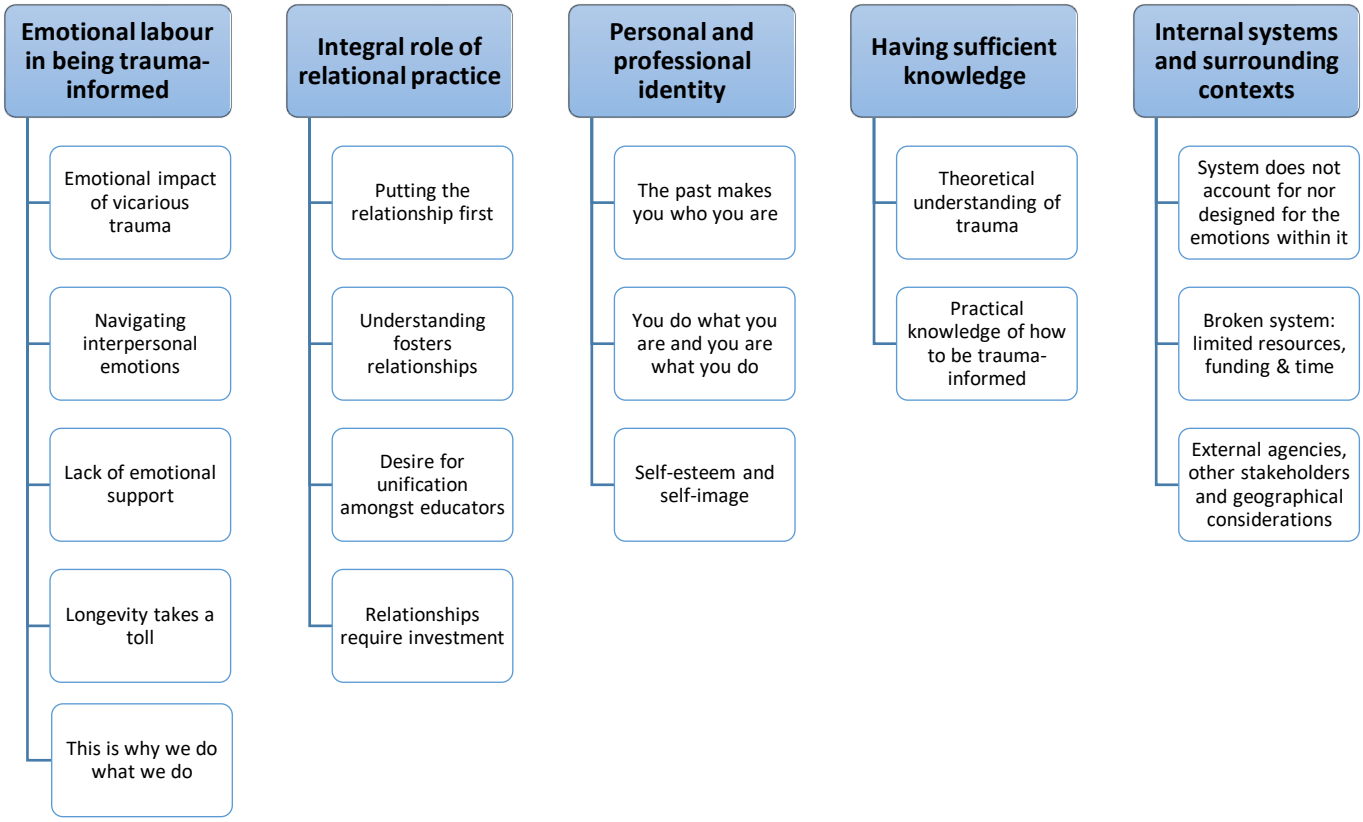

Figure 9: thematic overview of themes and sub themes generated

4.2 Theme: Emotional labour in being trauma-informed

This theme captures the emotional labour experienced when being trauma-informed. It encompasses the emotional impact of vicarious trauma, the emotional complexities of navigating interpersonal dynamics, the lack of adequate emotional support, and the emotional toll of ongoing involvement with those who have experienced trauma. Additionally, the positive emotions that provide recompense for the emotional labour are acknowledged.

4.2.1 Emotional impact of vicarious trauma

During interviews, participants referred to how difficult their work was in relation to being trauma-informed. This experience was shared across interviews, with each participant noting the emotional difficulty they felt whilst using such an approach.

> *"the emotional labour, I suppose, of teaching"*
> *(Bree, 986)*

> *"Difficult. It has been difficult because…easy for me to physically do, but emotionally..."*
> *(Carl, 183)*

Participants recounted emotionally difficult situations they had experienced or learned about, which gave rise to feelings such as sadness, frustration, and helplessness.

> *"meeting in here and saying bye to each other. It's just heart-breaking, because they're kids"*
> *(Lara, 594)*

> *"his younger brother disclosed that there's been some sexual abuse and I can't do anything about that, can I?"*
> *(Gina, 199)*

There were also numerous comments made about children who had behaved in ways that were physically, verbally or emotionally hurtful.

> *"he came in and was, like, really violent towards our male assistant head."*
> *(Gina, 374)*

> *"She was saying to the teacher you're a fucking bitch"*
> *(Lara, 642)*

> *"I'd be called the C word like several times a day. … you know, blonde, fat bitch, all this stuff."*
> *(Bree, 881)*

This behaviour was recognised as a child's trauma response: children were behaving in this way due to their trauma. This saw their survival mechanisms being activated.

"their default is fight mode"
(Jane, 327)

Participants knew that witnessing a child's distress and being exposed to trauma responses could lead to experiencing secondary trauma.

"you're hearing the secondary trauma; you're dealing with the secondary trauma…"
(Jane, 112)

The impact this had on Jane and Carl was explicit.

"just feels battering" [points to OiM drawing] (see Appendix N)
(Jane, 117)

"Shit. It feels really, shit."
(Carl, 1254)

It was posited that for colleagues in school, experiencing these situations was likely daunting or too difficult.

"it might seem overwhelming to look at bigger pictures"
(Carl, 1202)

"huge sense of dread, I would say of him coming here and people thinking like…how are we gonna cope?"
(Lara. 1410)

Participants shared that they felt a greater sense of emotional labour whilst using trauma-informed practices due to their empathy or sensitivities.

"being a huge empath, I feel really unsettled if someone experiences…negative feelings."
(Jane, 684)

> *"I think perhaps I'm… I'm quite an over sensitive person anyway"*
> *(Bree, 481)*

These traits were, however, seen as helpful.

> *"makes you better at your job, doesn't it?*
> *(Gina, 1006)*

Nevertheless, participants also noted that being overly emotional could detrimentally affect their use of trauma-informed practices.

> *"a member of staff who was extremely upset […] she had just got so much going on that she just couldn't even focus on what we were doing."*
> *(Kate, 671-672)*

> *"I then raised my voice…for me that felt…out of control and it was out... I was shouting out of anger…not trauma-informed at all."*
> *(Jane, 383)*

4.2.2 Navigating interpersonal emotions

Participants expressed frustration, particularly with colleagues. Participants perceived colleagues as resistant towards trauma-informed approaches and assumed that they lacked comprehension in how trauma-informed approaches worked.

> *"the frustration of feeling like we are trying to be trauma-informed…but because I come up against so much…* [Kate takes a breath] *not backlash…what's the word?"*
> *(Kate, 121a)*

> *"it is funny that they think… that it's a quick fix and that is, that is the most frustrating thing is that."*
> *(Jane, 723)*

Participants often felt as though they were in a battle with their colleagues in their efforts to promote trauma-informed practices. This experience created additional stress and frustration,

as participants struggled to reconcile their trauma-informed beliefs and practices with what felt like institutional norms and expectations.

> *"I shouldn't feel like I've got to battle up with that."*
> *(Carl, 1550)*

> *"me and anybody else that's trying is constantly battling between…trying to support children and get other people to realise that…it might be trauma* [Kate laughs]."
> *(Kate, 95)*

> *"battle is how it absolutely feels […] carrying the people that are on the floor […] and there's this bloody trench and you're carrying people over your shoulders. God it feels like that sometimes."*
> *(Jane, 1455)*

Jane summarised her experience of feeling as if she were the only one using trauma-informed practices succinctly as:

> *"I feel like a lone wolf"*
> *(Jane, 582).*

It was particularly frustrating for participants to witness others not embrace trauma-informed approaches. This was portrayed as institutional apathy by participants and compounded their emotional labour whilst attempting to navigate the interpersonal emotions.

> *"I think I just get frustrated with staff more than anything, cause I think you should be doing it."*
> *(Gina, 476)*

> *"feels like…people just would rather not because it's effort to know, isn't it?"*
> *(Lara, 1231)*

Participants also experienced frustration when colleagues claimed to understand the importance of being trauma-informed but acted in ways that contradicted this. Witnessing

colleagues' non-trauma-informed practice, especially after participants had made progress with the young person, increased this frustration and added to participants' emotional burden when using trauma-informed approaches.

> *"I couldn't really do my job because every time I sort of did something and made progress…it kind of was undone, so it was quite frustrating"*
> *(Carl, 1046)*

> *"it's just frustrating when teachers do things and you think, or TAs, "Why have you just done that?" so that is frustrating."*
> *(Gina, 471)*

Holding in emotions was considered a professional expectation within the workplace and was required in order to help navigate the interpersonal emotions within their schools.

> *"I suppose the difference is I'm very good at holding it in and what I mean by holding is masking."*
> *(Jane, 1199)*

> *"I can't be the person to lose it or be cross. So it's a lot of internalising of emotion"*
> *(Jane, 75)*

> *"[I] tried to remain professional. Yeah, but it's difficult."*
> *(Carl, 1104)*

This suppression added an additional layer of emotional labour for participants as often what they wanted to say to colleagues they were unable to.

> *"[I] really have to bite my tongue with that"*
> *(Gina, 1085)*

While necessary for maintaining professionalism, Jane, in particular, felt that the emotional suppression was taxing. This gave rise to emotional episodes at other times.

"I put Whitney Houston on in the car and have a cry and then I move on. Because of the bottling."
(Jane, 1239)

"The laugh was probably a nervous laugh because I think if you don't laugh, I'm going to cry and I've done that a few times because I'm good at holding and masking so…"
(Jane, 997)

4.2.3 Lack of emotional support

Participants felt that they received little emotional support within their work, despite how emotionally difficult it was. The experience of conducting this work with a lack of support made the use of trauma-informed approaches more difficult and increased the sense of emotional labour for participants.

"you've don't have that sort of support around you for that emotional support."
(Carl, 1150)

"you don't get supervision or anything like that"
(Jane, 117)

Due to the lack of emotional support, participants shared that they had developed a number of strategies to cope with the emotional demand. These strategies had become common place within their practice and formed a key part in their experience of what it was to use trauma-informed practices.

"you have to sort of find moments of shutting it off "
(Bree, 779)

"quite often I'll be like right before we start, let's just sit and breathe shall we? And like, let's clear all this…shit that's going on."
(Kate, 665)

> *"I'm having to have a lot more conversations with myself to regulate my own stress,"*
> *(Jane, 979)*

Contrastingly, participants highlighted that when they had spaces to share their difficulties, they saw the emotional benefit: it bolstered their motivation to continue practising in a trauma-informed manner.

> *"I think reflecting and articulating on what you're doing or what you want to change, that kind of thing, is something that's really helped me."*
> *(Bree, 1009a)*

> *"she text me later that day just to say, thank you. I just felt so different after I had offloaded."*
> *(Kate, 678)*

However, interviewees recognised that the current system design did not allow for this regularly.

> *"You're never going to get that emotional support, so when I say it's difficult it is."*
> *(Carl, 1152)*

> *"Without systems in place to support our staff we're kind of on to a loser, aren't we? [Kate laughs]. We end up going down the slippery slope to kind of feeling like we're... not doing things well and feeling really stressed.*
> *(Kate, 685)*

An unintentional outcome of the interviews was that they were was seen supportive and reflective spaces. Bree and Kate both stated that the interview process was helpful and provided a sense of the emotional support that they felt was lacking in the system. Bree explicitly named how being a participant had given her renewed positivity in using trauma-informed practices: reflecting on her experience had confirmed her belief in the approach.

> *"so I do think like what we've been doing together in these interviews has made me feel more purposeful about what I'm doing …So thank you …"*
> *(Bree, 1009b)*

> *"Yeah, thank you. It's been quite cathartic, actually."*
> *(Kate, 1339)*

4.2.4 Longevity takes a toll

Within the interviews, participants communicated that ongoing exposure to emotionally labourious aspects of their work took further toll. Sustained worry about pupils; ruminating on past actions; and having to consistently manage their emotions were given as indications of this increased emotional labour.

> *"I still think about that quite a lot. And I worry about, I know this sounds really silly, but if approaches I've taken have had an effect on that or not?"*
> *(Bree, 484)*

> *"I went through a time of like, oh my God, I feel so…ashamed of doing it like that. I should have done it differently."*
> *(Kate, 1091)*

The energy it takes to consistently utilise trauma-informed approaches as an educator was also shared.

> *"When you know that that child is taking up a lot of time and…energy."*
> *(Gina, 1203)*

> *"it is exhausting"*
> *(Carl, 600)*

This was particularly relevant for Bree who explicitly shared her experience of feeling fatigued by her ongoing use of compassion, which she saw as a key aspect of trauma-informed practice.

> *"Sounds awful, but like compassion fatigue, that kind of thing,"*
> *(Bree, 950)*

Longevity also took a toll when it came to having to shield pupils from colleagues who were less trauma-informed. The sense of having to protect was acutely felt by Jane who recounted feelings of emotional labour in having to maintain her role as advocate.

> *"I'm having to hold this shield for all of these students…all the time"*
> *(Jane, 67)*

Sustaining roles of advocate whilst maintaining professionalism, connected to withholding emotions outlined in previous sub theme, also took an emotional toll. The energy needed to maintain the suppression of frustration was described by Kate as:

> *[picks up OiM drawing] "waiting for a bomb to go off!" (see Appendix O)*
> *(Kate, 100).*

Similarly, Jane foretold of explosive responses if she couldn't continue suppressing her emotions to maintain professionalism. For her, the necessity of ongoing restraint felt synonymous with her experience of using trauma-informed practices.

> *"I felt like saying "actually, George, how about you go fuck yourself because he was on the verge of perm exclusion and he's got a shit home life as well. So you try being abused, George, see how you get on with your day". That's what I felt like saying. Instead I said that in my head."*
> *(Jane, 1404)*

Participants also alluded to the emotional burden of feeling that their efforts weren't leading to any change in the system's adoption of trauma-informed practices

> *"that's quite tiring to have to…keep saying it, keep doing it"*
> *(Carl, 633*)

> *"you can tell someone that 100 times, yet they continue to shout at them and you just think how many times are we having to tell you."*
> *(Lara, 1228)*

It appeared that the aforementioned experiences were emotionally draining on participants. This seemingly affected not only their energy levels but also their physical and emotional well-being.

> *"that stress has kind of taken its toll on me physically."*
> *(Kate, 946)*

> *"I can't do this anymore because you're on burnout."*
> *(Jane, 627)*

Despite being emotionally and physically exhausted, participants still persisted in being trauma-informed. This also contributed to their emotional labour as it required stamina and determination to continue practising in this manner.

> *"just gotta keep going and going"*
> *(Lara, 260)*

> *"I know it's the right thing, but it's really hard to…constantly do it"*
> *(Jane, 1085)*

4.2.5 This is why we do what we do

Amidst the negative feeling expressed, participants also shared positive experiences. Numerous participants spoke about the effectiveness of trauma-informed practices and how in these instances the emotional labour seemed worthwhile. For example, participants either directly expressed feelings of pride and happiness when witnessing the progress made by young people or implied such sentiments.

> *"He came to the prom, got out of a Porsche with a suit on. This is a lad that always wore a hoodie."*
> *(Carl, 332)*

> *"I just cry when people do really well anyway, because I'm just like, I don't have kids, and I'm like a proud mum"*
> *(Lara, 523)*

Witnessing the positive effects of a trauma-informed approach helped Jane see the reasons why she does what she does.

> *"More pride for her that her whole life is made better… I feel…. happy and content that she isn't battling that. And she is at peace with it. It makes me feel at peace with why I do what I do"*
> *(Jane, 351)*

Gina provided insights into her experience with trauma-informed approaches both at school and at home. As a mother who adopted trauma-experienced children, she shared how these approaches have been beneficial for her son at his school and at home. For example, use of supportive strategies instead of punishments and educational consequences rather than unrelated sanctions.

> *"in my son's school if he's finding something hard they'll go for a walk or something like that…[he can now]…de-escalate himself far quicker."*
> *(Gina, 1425)*

> *"the other day, my son went out without his cycle helmet, which he knows he's not allowed to do so he wasn't allowed to have his bike the next time for a period of time that he went out. He accepts that now, never used to [tolerate consequences]."*
> *(Gina, 222-223)*

Similarly, Carl expressed pride in his adopted son's progress, attributing it to the support of trauma-informed approaches which have helped increase his son's sense of belonging.

> *"I suppose in creating a family and seeing that actually my input, you know…made a difference"*
> *(Carl, 1379)*

Carl's personal experience of employing trauma-informed practices with his son, illustrates his belief that the emotional labour in being trauma-informed is worthwhile when it leads to transformative progress.

From:

> *"Pulled clumps out of the deputy head's hair."*

To:

> *"he's at Uni now studying law."*
> *(Carl, 1381- 1382)*

My own sense of pride for Carl's son was notable for me in listening to his account. Other emotional responses that I had in relation to this theme are shared in my reflexive diary extract (Figure 10).

Emotional Labour Reflexivity *January 2024*	*In reflecting on my response to the emotional labour theme during the research process, I found myself deeply affected by the narratives shared by participants, particularly by individuals like Bree, whose struggles resonated with me on a personal level. There was a profound sense of sadness that emerged as I listened to her story, and I felt a strong desire to offer support and assistance. This emotional reaction persisted throughout the transcription, coding, and writing phases of the research. It became evident to me that the emotional labour involved in this line of work extended not only to the educators being studied but also to myself as the researcher.* *Moreover, alongside the sadness, I experienced a significant amount of frustration during the coding and theming process. This frustration seemed to parallel the feelings expressed by participants in their struggles with implementing trauma-informed practices in their schools. Seeking clarity on my own emotional response, I turned to psychodynamic supervision, where I explored the roots of my frustration. It became apparent that my feelings of being stuck in the research process mirrored the experiences of participants who faced obstacles in their professional settings. This realisation led me to understand that I was projecting my frustrations onto the data, a phenomenon that surprised me given the passage of time since my interactions with participants. This highlighted the enduring impact of emotional labour within the research context, even when mediated through the analysis of data.* *In essence, my reflexive account highlights the interconnectedness of emotions between researchers and participants in qualitative inquiry, emphasising the profound influence of emotional labour on both the studied individuals and the researcher themselves.*

Figure 10: screenshot of reflexive diary extract in which the emotional labour theme is reflected upon

4.3 Theme: Integral role of relational practice

This theme emphasises the integral role of relational practice within trauma-informed pedagogy. The four sub-themes include the necessity of prioritising relationships, fostering understanding, wanting to unifying educators' approaches, and investing in building meaningful connections with students. This theme posits that through relational practice, educators create environments that promote safety, trust, and emotional well-being which are key in trauma-informed pedagogies.

4.3.1 Putting the relationship first

Educators emphasised the importance of building and maintaining relationships with students when working in a trauma-informed manner. This was demonstrated when participants shared that they prioritised relationships above other aspects of teaching and learning.

> *"relationships with pupils, although I've left it till last is probably the thing…that I consider most important."*
> *(Bree, 76)*

> *"we have to build a relationship with them first."*
> *(Carl, 781)*

Across the data, participants highlighted how communication helped develop their relationship with the young people.

> *"talking to them saying how can we make it better"*
> *(Carl, 229)*

> *"giving them a chance to sort of…talk through it."*
> *(Bree, 384)*

On the other hand, talking was not always necessary:

> *"that's where the well-being with the therapy dog comes in because we don't have to talk."*
> *(Lara, 582)*

It was also acknowledged that relationships with students should be individualised: generalised approaches to relationship building were not effective. This included not only how relationships were built but who was building them. This was especially true for children

who have experienced trauma and was considered an integral aspect of what it means to be trauma-informed.

> *"I think it's OK to say that sometimes a relationship between those two people just isn't gonna work."*
> *(Carl, 1290)*

> *"if we've got a child that needs some extra support, erm, I will look at all the TA's … or teachers … and look at which TA would work best with that child."*
> *(Gina, 710)*

However, Carl and Lara highlighted that what was needed in all relationships was the need for trust and honesty.

> *"I'll often say you might not like what I'm saying, but I'll always be honest with you."*
> *(Carl, 788)*

> *"because he's got attachment issues, so obviously… building that trust up with him is a must"*
> *(Lara, 433)*

Participants believed that balancing support and accountability was possible when consequences for actions were upheld within a supportive, relational framework.

> *"there's still consequences for actions […] there's still boundaries, but the delivery is different."*
> *(Jane, 1620)*

> *"a restorative conversation is a consequence, isn't it?"*
> *(Gina, 1196)*

Educators acknowledged the positive impact relationships can have on student well-being, attendance, and engagement with learning more generally. Comments made highlighted

experiences where having strong connections helped create environments where students felt valued, supported, and welcomed.

> *"the student has come back here… I think the exact words used by the Med[ical] needs team is that this feels like a school that wants you now. It didn't before."*
> *(Jane, 487)*

> *"…started building a relationship with her…And she started coming in to school."*
> *(Kate, 451)*

4.3.2 Understanding fosters relationships

Educators felt possessing knowledge about their students (personal backgrounds) better equipped them to develop more meaningful relationships. For example, understanding that their traumatic experiences will give rise to certain behaviours or certain relational patterns. This understanding was thought to be important for the trauma-informed approach that participants adopted within their work.

> *"Unless we understand what her world meant to her and impacted on her, we can't tell, who are we to say that that's right and that's wrong, maybe because that's her experience."*
> *(Carl, 879)*

It was thought by participants that having understanding of the child's adversity allowed them to see past the trauma-response behaviours.

> *"I mean the biggest one I think is sort of…inability to communicate and then comes out in physical violence."*
> *(Bree, 342)*

> *"you don't know, they might have a bravado thing. They might be feeling really crap about themselves."*
> *(Carl, 673)*

This then enabled participants to be curious about why the young person was behaving the way they were.

> *"I do think we have to see underneath behaviours and we've got to practice that more."*
> *(Carl, 969)*

> *"well let's find out why they're running away."*
> *(Gina, 231)*

4.3.3 Desire for unification amongst educators

In addition to relating with the students, participants highlighted that relating well with colleagues was also important, especially when using trauma-informed approaches. This was particularly pertinent for Lara who referenced her relationship with colleagues on numerous occasions.

> *"building up relationships with the people you work with because I get on really well with the people involved"*
> *(Lara, 1172)*

> *"kind of employee relationships, so that's really nice and I think it's a good combination of people"*
> *(Lara, 1176)*

The desire for teamwork was prevalent within the data and participants emphasised the importance of collaboration when working in a trauma-informed manner. Participants recognised the value of involving other staff members and stakeholders, such as teachers, teaching assistants and parents so that the approach could be unified for the young person.

> *"You know, if you needed to tag out […] having a sort of team-based approach."*
> *(Bree, 292)*

" you want it from the whole staff body where you're just really united in your front." (Jane, 621)

It was suggested that having a team around the child allowed for consensus on both approach and language used.

“I think it is best when staff have like a shared language and a shared sort of approach,”
(Bree, 536)

“a lot more communication with other staff and you know, go into meetings and liaising with parents and other agencies and stuff”
(Lara, 1347)

This was considered important in unifying the trauma-informed approach and deemed necessary so children knew that all adults were consistent and supportive.

“like he sees that everyone's vested in him”
(Carl, 748)

“if a child could feel in school like they've got good relationships and they belong and they're listened to, valued by all staff, surely that's going to make our attendance job a lot easier”
(Kate, 985)

Trust again was spoken about and regarded as a unifier. It was the experience of participants that when trust was present in professional relationships, trauma-informed approaches were more readily employed by colleagues.

“if you don't trust the team that you're working around with, like, not that you need them to have your back for anything kind of wrong, but you need to be working this team.”
(Carl, 1213-1214)

> *"I think as a school we are very good at working together and trusting that people are doing"*
> *(Lara, 1211)*

This was even at times when other educators might not agree with the approach in its entirety.

> *"but I think that they would trust us, even though they sometimes just think…just tell them to come in."*
> *(Gina, 313)*

However, there were also challenges in creating a unified trauma-informed approach with participants feeling as if consistency was lacking. This generated a relational strain amongst colleagues which highlighted and reinforced participants' desire for unification.

> *"It's harder to be…you can still be trauma-informed, but it's harder to get people all working together"*
> *(Gina, 903)*

> *"So that's frustrating because I want everybody to…to be on board with it"*
> *(Kate, 126)*

4.4.4 Relationships require investment

It was noted by numerous participants that meaningful relationships are not created quickly and require investment.

> *"the ones that really need it do need a lot of time… like a lot of time."*
> *(Carl, 528)*

Moreover, the nurturing of these connections can take longer than other colleagues maybe expect or want.

> *"So I've spent time with kids and sometimes when, you know… I need to be a bit quicker like but I can't."*
> *(Carl, 517)*

> *"Yeah. And I think sometimes in school, staff don't realise that some children, it takes them a long time"*
> *(Gina, 1456)*

The time restrictions that were placed on the development of meaningful relationships were counter to beliefs about what constituted trauma-informed practice.

> *"I think the time and that sort of reflection time with the pupil, for example, just isn't possible day-to-day, and that's a shame"*
> *(Bree, 685)*

> *"if I'm gonna say right, I've gotta get this done in 5 minutes [then] I'm not gonna be able to use a trauma-informed approach because I haven't got the time to invest in that child"*
> *(Carl, 520)*

The relationships I had with participants was subject to numerous discussions within supervision. Key reflections on this were noted in my reflexive diary (Figure 11).

Relational Reflexivity *January 2024*	*In the interviews, I found myself navigating various dynamics with the participants with each relationship having its own nuances. While I established good rapport with all participants, some connections felt more natural and intuitive than others to me. Notably, my relationship with Jane stood out, and during discussions in psycho-social supervision, I began to draw parallels between our rapport and the bond I share with my younger sister. This realisation sparked a sense of protectiveness over Jane, which felt like the urge I have to advocate for my sibling. I realised that my connection with Jane may have influenced my interpretation of her data. While she provided valuable insights, she tended to share a lot of information, occasionally slowing down the analysis process. At times, I found myself feeling annoyed by the volume of her contributions. In reflecting on this, I came to recognise that as reminiscent of how I might feel towards a sibling for slowing me down in a task. Despite these occasional frustrations, Jane's input proved invaluable to the depth and richness of the data and so too did the transference I experienced.* *Furthermore, reflecting on my core beliefs as a practitioner, I recognised the importance I place on relationships within my practice. This prompted introspection during the coding and data analysis phases, as I contemplated whether my inclination towards prioritising relationships had influenced the generation of the relational practice theme. Whilst acknowledging this potential influence, I did also observe and note explicit references to the significance of relationships within the data itself. Guided by the principles of Hollway & Jefferson, regarding the utilisation of researcher subjectivity in data analysis, I embraced my perspective and continued with the analysis process.*

Figure 11: screenshot of reflexive diary extract in which the relational practice theme is reflected upon

4.5 Theme: Personal and professional identity

This theme encapsulates the interplay between personal and professional identity when using trauma-informed practices. The four sub-themes demonstrate how past experiences, individual capabilities, and core values shape educators' sense of self. It highlights how educators can feel as if they have to protect their self-esteem and how their identity is intrinsic with the role that they hold. The theme suggests some educators do not adopt trauma-informed approaches which consequently places additional onus on other educators to uphold these practices to a greater extent.

4.5.1 The past makes you who you are

Past experiences were referred to on numerous occasions during the interviews. Educators reflected on how their personal backgrounds and professional interactions had shaped their use and perspective on what it was to practice in a trauma-informed manner.

> *"maybe it's because of coming to education from fostering as well, that I've kind of come in at a completely different angle."*
> *(Carl, 1333)*

> *"Well, we're made-up of every experience, interaction that we ever have, isn't it?"*
> *(Kate, 1330)*

Educators often advocated for trauma-informed approaches due to their own experiences of adversity or witnessing the struggles of others. These personal experiences motivated participants to create supportive learning environments where all students felt understood and valued.

> *"I would have loved somebody like me and the other people trying to do this trauma stuff to have made that better for me when I was at school"*
> *(Kate, 106)*

> *"bringing my personal experience in and then I'm like, is that why, you know, is that what's driving it so much so"*
> *(Jane, 1547)*

The participants emphasised the importance of self-awareness in trauma-informed practices. Reflecting on oneself was seen as important, enabling educators to recognise and manage personal triggers stemming from past experiences when supporting young people.

> *"what my triggers might be"*
> *(Carl, 301)*

> *"that's more linked to my own personal kind of experiences and need to…have harmony, [Kate laughs] which is what I try and create most of the time"*
> *(Kate, 165)*

This was in comparison to the perceived lack of self-awareness that other educators in schools had.

> *"confused how someone can't be self-aware"*
> *(Jane, 1528)*

4.5.2 You do what you are and you are what you do

It was a shared experience for participants that being trauma-informed was who they were and was part of their identity. This, it was thought, made practising in this manner feel natural and easy.

> *"I can come in and I can talk to them and I don't find that a challenge. I find it natural,"*
> *(Lara, 1121)*

> *"Trauma-informed approach…it comes second nature for my personality"*
> *(Jane, 361)*

Some participants were motivated to adopt trauma-informed practices by a sense of moral obligation. However, they found that these core values occasionally conflicted with expectations other educators had or those imposed by the broader system.

> *"Well, because I think I'm a person that [has] really strong beliefs and I struggle with seeing like an injustice, you know?"*
> *(Carl, 1193)*

> *"my core beliefs are quite different to what is expected from…some head teachers and…the government, I suppose"*
> *(Kate, 180)*

However, participants became relied upon to support children who had experienced trauma, especially when their behaviour was difficult. There was a sense of participants being expected to act as the saviour when circumstances became unmanageable for colleagues.

> *"I'm expected to fix everything and have answers to everything…You will get "well they're naughty so, you know, that's your bag.""*
> *(Jane, 444)*

> *"She said I'll leave all of that stuff for Gina."*
> *(Gina, 1475)*

Participants however, recognised a sense of irony: other colleagues positioned them as trauma-informed saviours whilst also viewing their role in, what felt to participants, a derogatory manner.

> *"I think people can think it's too fluffy as well, that it's not, erm……If you're not careful, I think sometimes what can happen is people can look at you like you're making excuses for the kid."*
> *(Carl, 360-361)*

> *"being fluffy, pandering, airy fairy is some of the language that would be used to describe my role. Errmm …. you like doing that fluffy stuff… and you like doing the airy fairy stuff"*
> *(Jane, 61)*

Due to the assumed perceptions held by others, participants shared that this resulted in them adopting additional roles. These included advocating for children and encouraging trauma-informed thinking amongst colleagues.

> *"I've had to take a role of, "well, what if?" because they had quite a fixed view about it. So what if it's this?"*
> *(Kate, 754)*

> *"feels like a constant shielding without looking like I'm making excuses, pandering, undermining"*
> *(Jane 99)*

The roles that participants have in schools were referred to numerous times, specifically needing to be aware of the boundaries within those roles. It was believed that boundaries helped identify what was within or beyond the remit of their role.

> *"I'm not… a psychologist or anything like that so I think that's…important, it's getting that balance, isn't it?"*
> *(Gina, 746)*

> *"[is] that our responsibility?... I don't know? Where does the responsibility lie?"*
> *(Carl, 606)*

It was the experience of participants that teaching and being trauma-informed were, to some extent, mutually exclusive. The distinction in the identity between those that teach and those that are trauma-informed seemingly affected the use of trauma-informed practices for participants.

> *"because actually they're [teachers] not here to do…you know, they've got three/four lessons a day, that's what they've got to do."*
> *(Carl, 163)*

> *"in their head they're like, well, I'm the teacher so this is what you do and this is what I do."*
> *(Jane, 128)*

A number of participants noted how determined they were to maintain a trauma-informed approach irrespective of how other educators respond to such practice.

> *"So I think it's just absolute determination"*
> *(Carl, 598)*

> *"[it's] one person, me, preaching, "let's try this people!""*
> *(Jane, 903)*

Carl summarised what he felt were the key difference between his identity, as a trauma-informed practitioner and the identity of others who he felt were not trauma-informed:

> *"They don't have that in them, maybe to do that, I think."*
> *(Carl, 638-639)*

4.5.3 Self-esteem and self-image

Participants shared how they felt about their own self-esteem and the extent to which this affected their work, experience and use of trauma-informed pedagogies.

> *"the doubt and the low self-esteem is definitely a personal thing outside of school that I bring into school,"*
> *(Jane, 1069)*

> *"Yeah, I would say that the idea of self-image and esteem does resonate, I think…"*
> *(Bree, 703)*

Participants also recounted instances where they reflected on threats to their self-esteem or took actions to protect it from harm.

> *"And failure. Protecting myself from failure."*
> *(Kate, 1144)*

> *"my vulnerabilities are what I'm scared of people finding out,"*
> *(Jane, 1307)*

Carl suggested that changes in educator behaviours and the adoption of trauma-informed approaches were connected to concerns about self-esteem and the protection of self-image.

He thought that challenges to adult authority caused discomfort for his colleagues which hindered their use of trauma-informed practices.

> *"I think sometimes people feel like completely disempowered by a student's behaviour,"*
> *(Carl, 234)*

> *"I can't help but think that sometimes you've got an adult and a child and an adult who wants to maintain the adult part because they are the adult. It's like a hierarchy."*
> *(Carl, 495)*

It was Kate who emphasised the importance of educators knowing themselves, believing that this self-awareness contributes to a more positive experience when implementing trauma-informed practices.

> *"I think our own acceptance of our self, who we are, what we are and why we are is so important because it brings self-esteem and confidence in what you're doing and being."*
> *(Kate, 841)*

Kate's comment about self-acceptance resonated with me. Additional reflections on my identity and its impact on the research were noted in my reflexive diary (Figure 12).

Identity Reflexivity *January 2024*	*In the interviews, I became aware of my own personal and professional identity as a researcher, a former educator and past leader. Throughout the process, I encountered challenges in maintaining the research role, especially when I felt compelled to ask supplementary questions or offer advice based on my own experiences. However, I attempted to adhere to the data collection method I chose (FANI) and avoid disrupting the participants' free association.* *During discussions in psycho-social supervision, I reflected on how certain interviews triggered a transference to my time as a school leader, reigniting feelings of frustration and confusion for why staff were resistant to implementing trauma-informed approaches. These experiences reminded me of the complexities of leadership, particularly in advocating for and implementing practices that were trauma-informed. Recognising these transferences was crucial during the analysis phase, allowing me to be mindful of how they might influence my interpretations of the data.* *I found a deep alignment with Carl, due to what felt like shared passions for trauma-informed approaches. This connection was strengthened by our shared identity as gay men, adding an additional layer of resonance to our interactions. Acknowledging this shared identity provided insight into Carl's perspectives and I felt like it enriched my understanding of his experiences of using trauma-informed practices.* *Acknowledging these transferences helped bring insight and added depth to my understanding of the participants' narratives and provided valuable context for interpreting the data in a nuanced manner. Despite the difficulties in maintaining a purely researcher role, navigating these challenges ultimately enriched my analysis and deepened my insights into trauma-informed practices in education.*

Figure 12: screenshot of reflexive diary extract in which the identity theme is reflected upon

4.6 Theme: Having sufficient knowledge

This theme encompasses two sub-themes: acquiring theoretical knowledge about trauma in order to understand the need behind the behaviour and the practical application of such theory to facilitate change and support those who have experienced trauma. The changing nature of theory and practice is also incorporated in to this theme. Moreover, the application of how such knowledge would benefit all children and not only trauma-experienced children is highlighted.

4.6.1 Theoretical understanding of trauma

For the participants in this study, their experience was that other colleagues in their schools did not understand trauma or the impact that it can have on a young person's behaviour.

> *"I think a lot of staff just don't… get it."*
> *(Gina, 553)*

> *"People don't really know what it is. I feel like I'm always explaining to people like what it is."*
> *(Lara, 111)*

This, it seemed, was in comparison to participants' knowledge about trauma which was insinuated to be more developed than their colleagues'. These differences in understanding mainly pertained to participants' appreciation of how trauma can affect behaviour, learning and relationships. This theoretical understanding of trauma enabled participants to see past the behaviour and be curious about the need the young person had. It was assumed that other colleagues were unable to do this due to their limited, theoretical understanding about trauma.

> *"Because if we don't think root cause of whatever problem we're solving, all you're doing is sticking a plaster on. That is going to come off."*
> *(Kate, 922)*

> *"But in terms of my knowledge, it's probably more than them."*
> *(Jane, 466)*

There was a recognition that training helped increase theoretical understanding for participants, which in turn increased participants' alignment with trauma-informed approaches. There was mention of key training experiences which were considered prevalent due to the impact and knowledge base they provided.

> *"One of the things that, I think's made this real for me, was in one of the pieces of training that I've had."*
> *(Carl, 807)*

> *"you can just see it once you're privvy to that and you've, you've had the training and you've worked with students like that... you just see it a mile off..."*
> *(Jane, 745)*

Several participants also made comment on how the theoretical understanding of trauma has developed over the years. It was posited that schools had a responsibility to maintain current thinking around trauma-informed pedagogies and that perhaps not all colleagues were thinking in line with the contemporary view of trauma and its impacts.

> *"there needs to be significant shift… now the children that we're dealing with do have more mental health difficulties. They do have more trauma. They do need more pastoral and that kind of care. So has the balance shifted and we need to shift with the balance?"*
> *(Carl, 1748- 1750)*

> *"We only know what we know at that point. And if you don't know any different, that's what we do. Now you know different. We can can't go back and change it but we now know differently so we can now do differently."*
> *(Kate, 1093-1094)*

4.6.2 Practical knowledge of how to be trauma-informed

Participants provided a number of examples of when they had practically applied their theoretical knowledge of trauma. These examples highlighted what participants did or didn't do when using the approach and illustrated that using trauma-informed practices was different to what might be considered traditional behaviour management methods.

> *"actually having that conversation instead of telling them off."*
> *(Carl, 224)*

> *"So rather than, 'stop rocking on your chair,' it'll be like "Ashley, I can see that you're rocking on your chair" and then walk away and give them take-up time, and it's those kind of implementations that diffuse the possible escalation"*
> *(Jane, 335)*

Numerous comments were made suggesting that participants had witnessed interactions in which colleagues' practices did not match with the trauma training they had received. This resulted in some colleagues practising in a way that participants considered not to be trauma-informed.

> *"unfortunately the person in school responsible for student welfare, behaviour, pastoral…thinks they really get it. But they don't necessarily. Well, there's no necessarily about it. They don't. They don't act in a trauma-informed way."*
> *(Carl, 1076)*

> *"and they're saying, "yeah, I'm doing those things. I have done that." And then you've got them not letting them in the room because of something that's happened last academic year"*
> *(Jane, 1526)*

Some interviewees suggested that certain colleagues weren't applying theory into practice as effectively as maybe they were, possibly due to a lack of keeping up with broader pedagogical developments. On numerous occasions, colleagues who were not utilising trauma-informed practices were considered old school.

> *"I'll use…old school"*
> *(Jane, 230)*

> *"like old school, you know"*
> *(Carl, 1165)*

The notion of being old school seemed to equate with practices that did not apply theoretical knowledge to practice and being incongruent with the current educational climate more generally.

> *"we've moved on so much from the kind of 1950s, sixties kind of ethos of...really strict education system. I think it's a different world"*
> *(Kate, 145)*

> *"old schoolers, you do as I say, they should respect me. I am the teacher. I'm the person of authority. And that is it. That's enough. But it's not. Not anymore. Then, because times have changed."*
> *(Jane, 252)*

There were suggestions from participants that, in their experience, employing a trauma-informed approach was advantageous for a significant portion of children, even those without a history of trauma. Participants speculated that applying their theoretical understanding of trauma in practice would benefit all children.

> *"why can we not be trauma-informed for everyone instead of actually ticking a box of they've got trauma so I'll be nice to them."*
> *(Carl, 956)*

> *"you can support all children in this way can't you?"*
> *(Gina, 1469)*

During interviews, I felt that participants' knowledge and experience of trauma-informed practices resonated with me, reminding me of previous work as an educator. Further reflections on my knowledge in this area and the possible impact this may have had during this research can be seen within my reflexive diary (Figure 13).

Knowledge Reflexivity *January 2024*	*I have had a number of reflections on my own level of theoretical understanding of trauma and its influence on participant interactions. Upon embarking on this research, I felt confident in my knowledge of trauma-informed practices, stemming from both theoretical and hands-on experience as a former educator. This, I felt, helped me to resonate with the experiences shared by participants.* *However, during interviews, there were instances where participants seemed to perceive me as an authority figure on the topic, evidenced by their apologies for potential inaccuracies in their terminology or inquiries about the correctness of their understanding. Initially, I didn't fully appreciate the significance of these interactions. However, upon deeper reflection, particularly during the analysis phase, (familiarisation, transcribing and coding particularly) I began to question whether my behaviour and presumed expertise in the field were shaping the participants' responses, perhaps through forms of projective identification. Was my own confidence in the approach being projected out and so they became worried about "getting it wrong" in front of me?* *This realisation prompted me to revisit my role and the potential impact it may have had on the dynamics of the interviews. In psycho-social supervision, I contemplated how my roles, both past and present, might have influenced my demeanour during interviews. In supervision, I also acknowledged feeling discomfort when confronted with instances where trauma-informed approaches were not employed. I explored how this discomfort may be rooted in my intrinsic belief in the importance of such practices and as such will have likely influenced how I viewed and interpreted the data.*

Figure 13: screenshot of reflexive diary extract in which the knowledge theme is reflected upon

4.7 Theme: Internal systems and surrounding contexts

This theme highlights the systemic influences on educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices. It outlines how the education system does not account for nor is designed for the emotions within it and emphasises that a trauma-informed ethos must originate from policymakers and school leadership. The challenges arising from limited resources, funding constraints, and time pressures are highlighted, so too is the influence of external agencies, additional stakeholders, and geographical considerations.

4.7.1 System does not account for, nor is designed for the emotions within it

Many comments indicated that participants' experience of using trauma-informed practices were hindered by the systems in which they worked. This caused a sense of tension between participants' want to be trauma-informed and the scope to do so. The rigidity of school policy was referred to, with particular emphasis on how policies often limited how educators could support children who were emotionally dysregulated.

> *"I had like the school policies saying our process [is] informal warning, formal warning, which results in our school detention and then removal and nothing different"*
> *(Bree, 600)*

> *"So before you've even started you're looking at like that [knocks on table] – there's rigidity and hardness of policy kind of approach Yeah. [sighs]. The policy was rigid, really rigid…"*
> *(Carl, 1679)*

However, at times, policies offered participants a sense of security and safety: they sometimes were perceived as helpful and necessary.

> *"but at the same time when there are those clear structures in place and expectations and sanctions, life is a lot easier."*
> *(Bree, 681)*

> *"there is an element, if I'm being honest, where I feel safe by the school rules, school policies too,"*
> *(Jane, 1607)*

The feeling that policies limited participants' freedom and flexibility to address the emotional dynamics of children was paralleled in their experience with the curriculum.

> *“the more stressed I feel about the content of what we're doing [reading Jekyll and Hyde by October], the less able I feel to take…more of the pupil centred approach and the more I feel like I need to be more enforcing on them,”*
> *(Bree, 456)*

It was noted that schools often prioritised the attainment and quantitative outcomes, often at the expense of the more emotional and social aspects of school.

> *"And those outcomes are much easier measured on an exam result than they are looking at someone's well-being."*
> *(Carl, 86)*

> *“data and perceived success is much higher, more highly regarded than doing the right thing by children and families.”*
> *(Kate, 1128)*

Kate suggested that the current education system may be unable to recognise the complexities within schools, speculating that this might be due to its preference for more easily measurable aspects such as grades and attendance.

> *"It's almost like the education system is neurodiverse because they need it black or white, and actually life's not black or white, is it? It's so grey."*
> *(Kate, 334)*

A number of participants proposed that the system is in a self-sustaining cycle which maintains the difficulties faced by schools, educators and therefore inevitably pupils.

> *“I think it's just this vicious circle, isn't it?”*
> *(Gina, 1131)*

> *“inevitably the pupils that get caught in the cycle are the pupils who have the lowest of self-worth.”*
> *(Bree, 624)*

It was wondered whether this cycle was, in part, maintained by how teachers are trained. A number of participants commented on how beneficial it would be to have more content on topics such as trauma, safeguarding and therapeutic behaviour support within teacher training.

> *"I do feel that trauma-informed approaches should be more a part of teacher training"*
> *(Bree, 1006)*

> *"if they were taught like trauma-informed, even learning about… like trauma on your teacher training, absolutely beneficial."*
> *(Jane, 834)*

However, Bree, as an early career teacher, shared that her training programme advocated for more punitive measures instead.

> *"my tutor from my training programme was like I would have removed that pupil in the 1st 30 seconds,"*
> *(Bree, 619)*

> *"[*teacher training programme*] takes quite a behaviourist approach"*
> *(Bree, 642)*

Having said this, Bree also noted that when she used more behaviourist approaches, her teaching became easier. This however was not the educator Bree wanted to be.

> *"when I have been sort of stricter or harsher or more black and white, I have also simultaneously found classes easier. It's not the approach I want to take but…"*
> *(Bree, 675)*

Another concern for Bree was how teaching might affect her, with comments made about whether those who remain in teaching for longer are only able to do so because they become less emotionally invested.

> *"I think there's a reason why I've noticed more experienced staff members have more…. detached sort of relationships with pupils"*
> *(Bree, 508)*

Bree did not feel comfortable with this and alluded to the notion that the system required teachers to emotionally detach in order to remain in the profession.

> *"I don't want to have to become…indifferent"*
> *(Bree, 990)*

Several participants expressed desires for a different culture within their school, and the broader system, to one where vulnerabilities could be shared and emotional well-being was important. It was believed that such a culture would lead to more widespread adoption of trauma-informed practices with experiences of using such approaches being more positive for all.

> *"it needs a like a massive cultural shift that everybody's thinking about it that way."*
> *(Carl, 151)*

> *"And it's the realisation that for me it is a whole culture shift that I'm very passionate to happen to make it better for everyone."*
> *(Jane, 353)*

All participants made comment on how integral school leadership was in initiating such a culture shift. Participants emphasised that without support, buy-in, or a commitment from

school leadership to adopt trauma-informed approaches, their ability to implement broader reforms in their schools would be limited.

> *"So I think a lot of it comes from SLT* [senior leadership team] *and if the SLT aren't trauma-informed, it cannot be implemented."*
> *(Gina, 179)*

> *"I don't know what to do about that, but it needs to go… it needs to come from up top, I'm not up top, I'm middle"*
> *(Jane, 879)*

4.7.2 Broken system: limited resources, funding and time

Across interviews, the idea of the system being dysfunctional was evident and this caused a collection of responses ranging from frustration to acceptance.

> *"I think as much as the system's completely and utterly broken, and it's a nightmare to work within, it really is awful at times."*
> *(Carl, 1376)*

> *"[I] decided a long time ago you have to work within the system, don't you? And the system is broken…you know."*
> *(Gina, 480)*

It was believed by participants that working within systems short on resources, money and time was intrinsic to their experience of using trauma-informed practices. Resources were thought of in terms of support school could provide, materials that they could use or the space in which therapeutic interventions could occur.

> *"Yeah, the difficulties can be sometimes practical in terms of… space"*
> *(Bree, 449)*

> *"the resources to actually put provision in place are just not there."*
> *(Kate, 745)*

The notion of systems being stretched also became apparent when participants raised the issue of funding. This was discussed in terms of school budgets, particularly with regard to how the tight financial constraints impacted participants' use of trauma-informed practices.

> *"of course, all the funding for special needs is just too low."*
> *(Gina, 717)*

> *"at the end of the day, a school is a business, and if you don't have a diagnosis, you don't get the money. You don't get the provision, that's how horrible it is."*
> *(Jane, 746)*

Budget cuts also affected the recruitment of staff who were considered key when providing support for children within a trauma-informed framework.

> *"budget and recruitment challenges in the area and obviously there's the retention challenges in teaching in general."*
> *(Bree, 51)*

> *"there's not enough TAs, there's not enough… So it's harder…"*
> *(Gina, 951b)*

Recruitment challenges often resulted in educators having to take work home: workload exceeded what could be accomplished with the number of staff available and within the number of hours within the working day.

> *"then that's capacity, isn't it?"*
> *(Carl, 194)*

This affected family time and disrupted work-life balance. Carl shared his experience of this and appreciated his partner's understanding, even though they sometimes pointed out that Carl might be taking on tasks that others should be doing.

> *"Luckily, I had a partner that was supportive to a point."*
> *(Carl, 1578)*

> *"he'd get a bit pissed with all the time it took sometimes, and say, where's so and so, what are they doing?"*
> *(Carl, 1591)*

Time was also noted as a systemic influence, often referred to in terms of how time poor educators were. It was insinuated that time restraints meant that participants were unable to be as trauma-informed as they wanted to be.

> *"I think generally staff working in education are really time poor."*
> *(Bree, 556)*

> *"there isn't enough time within schools to be able to sometimes to be able to do this part of the role well"*
> *(Carl, 76)*

Jane also shared experiences of colleagues referring to trauma-informed practices and associated training as:

> *"a waste time [because they had] so much to do"*
> *(Jane, 160)*

Participants also expressed that their implementation of trauma-informed practices was impeded due to insufficient time for reflection on children's needs, restricted ongoing professional development, and limited school-wide adoption of such practices.

> *"I wonder if when you get back from that training is there time within the systems that we work to really reflect on that?"*
> *(Carl, 1652)*

> *"actually have the time to sit and reflect a little bit more and go OK, what are we going to do next"*
> *(Lara, 940)*

4.7.3 External agencies, other stakeholders and geographical considerations

In addition to the influences of internal school systems, participants shared that their experience of using trauma-informed practices was also affected by other external, surrounding contexts, beyond educators' control.

> *"So it's that outside, external things that you can't always do anything about,"*
> *(Gina, 404)*

Aspects within the wider systems, such as external agencies, additional stakeholders (caregivers) and aspects of catchment areas were noted as being influential. Two main external organisations that exerted influence on how participants experienced using trauma-informed practices were Ofsted and the local authority. For those who spoke about Ofsted, their experience was mostly negative.

> *"when Ofsted came around that really sort of worried me."*
> *(Bree, 745)*

> *"how can you say to an Ofsted inspector…I'm really sorry, but this child's been holding all day and it's like the Coke bottle effect. So they basically are so unregulated they can't sit down, they're swearing and shouting…"*
> *(Jane, 1650)*

For those who spoke about the local authority or other governmental departments, their experience was similarly negative. There was a sense that these agencies increased the challenge of being trauma-informed rather than supported it.

> *"Well the county tells you off, and if you recommend this for that, they don't like it."*
> *(Gina, 1366)*

> *"Whereas if the DfE had caught up with how learning actually is now,"*
> *(Kate, 372)*

Participants raised the issue of how support and services were different depending on which locality the family or school were in. For example, those in certain areas were in receipt of more support compared to other regions: those in more middle class areas were perceived to access more support compared to those within lower socio-economic areas. The notion of social (in)justice because of this was evident in accounts shared by participants.

> *"different areas of the county, you get different amounts of support."*
> *(Gina, 617)*

> *"in terms of areas, this is one that a lot of our families don't have much money"*
> *(Lara, 769)*

> *"where I live you've got very middle class families that can fight for their children."*
> *(Gina, 528)*

A further systemic influence that affected educators' experience of being trauma-informed was the impact caregivers had as key stakeholders. Without apportioning blame, participants shared circumstances in which caregivers had contributed to situations at school.

> *"So although we were still being therapeutic and doing all the kind of steps that we've been advised to do, he still had his own work room, could go into class if he wanted. He couldn't cope with that because mum wasn't like that at home."*
> *(Gina, 400)*

It was also acknowledged that caregiver experience of schooling might have an effect on how they interacted and collaborated with school.

> *"parents and families that have got [trauma-experienced] children, you know, what's their experiences been at school?"*
> *(Carl, 1711)*

Moreover, participants noted that sometimes caregivers felt judged by the system which also affected how they communicated with school.

> *"parent wants to be heard and they're feeling judged rather than heard."*
> *(Jane, 66)*

> *"she'd [mother] been penalty noticed and [said] the system's against me."*
> *(Kate, 516)*

Educators were acutely aware that caregivers were key stakeholders within the school system and readily shared how they influenced the experience and use of trauma-informed practices within their work. This was especially true when parents contributed positively to the trauma-informed approach.

> *"Obviously mum could see that she was happier in school. So therefore, mum's stress levels went down, her communication with school was then less…. I don't say aggressive …less… arsey [Kate laughs]"*
> *(Kate, 452-453)*

> *"his dads are so on board and they just appreciate anything that we can do."*
> *(Lara, 1427)*

Throughout the interviews, the varied systemic influences reminded me of my time as a senior leader. Details of this were noted in my reflexive diary (Figure 14)

Systemic reflexivity *January 2024*	*During the interviews, I noticed that I resonated with the frustrations expressed by participants regarding the educational system for two main reasons. Drawing from my experience as a trainee educational psychologist placed within a local authority, I'm aware of the impact that budget constraints and limited resources has had on the provision, support and services that County Council is able to offer or provide. Additionally, reflecting on my past role as a senior leader, I can also recall grappling with similar challenges and the feeling of frustration at the systemic constraints. These experiences are echoed by many participants who characterised the system as broken.* *Throughout the data collection and analysis process, I found myself continually drawn back to my previous role as a senior leader, particularly when the importance of leadership in fostering trauma informed practices was emphasised by participants. Given my professional opinion that school leaders play a key role in creating climates conducive to trauma informed approaches, I notice I align with participants who share similar views.* *As I immersed myself in the data analysis process, I questioned the extent to which my personal experiences and beliefs have influenced my interpretations of the data. In supervision, I considered the possibility that generating the theme of "Internal systems and surrounding contexts" was as a means of validating my own feelings about the system being broken and my own desire for systemic change.*

Figure 14: screenshot of reflexive diary extract in which the systemic theme is reflected upon

4.8 Summary of Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the exploration in to educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices within mainstream schools. Through a reflexive thematic analysis, five overarching themes and 17 subthemes were generated. These themes include the emotional impact of being trauma-informed, the integral role of relational practice, the importance of personal and professional identity, the significance of having sufficient knowledge, and the influence of internal systems and surrounding contexts. The chapter presents illustrative quotes from participants to support each theme and subtheme, highlighting both the varied and shared experiences of educators when implementing trauma-informed approaches. Additionally, the chapter incorporates researcher reflexivity by providing insights into the researcher's reflections throughout the research process.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Discussion Overview

This concluding chapter discusses the findings in relation to existing literature using theoretical lenses, namely psychodynamics, systems thinking, and systems-psychodynamics. This chapter will:

- Restate the aims of this study and remind of the key themes generated.
- Discuss the findings in relation to their interconnectivity.
- Offer responses to the research questions by applying pertinent theoretical frameworks.
- Outline the paradoxical nature of using trauma-informed practices.
- Highlight implications for Educational Psychologists' practice.
- Explore limitations of this study.
- Suggest possible future research.
- Reflect on the impact the research has had on the researcher.
- Present the conclusions of the research.

5.1 Commentary on findings

This study aimed to explore the unconscious and systemic influences on educators' experience and use of trauma-informed approaches within mainstream settings. To do this, the research sought responses to three research questions (Section 3.1.1). Through Reflexive Thematic Analysis, five key themes were generated: Emotional labour in being trauma-informed; Integral role of relational practice; Personal and professional identity; Having sufficient knowledge; and Internal systems and surrounding contexts. These findings will be discussed in relation to each other and existing literature more widely.

5.1.1 Interconnectivity

Themes and subthemes were presented discreetly within the findings chapter. However, separating them was challenging: supporting evidence often highlighted more than one theme simultaneously. This interconnectedness will be highlighted using literature to demonstrate that the interplay between emotional labour, relational practice, personal and professional identity, knowledge acquisition, and systemic influences is common within education and thus relevant when exploring educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices.

Emotional Labour in being trauma-informed

Emotional labour, as manifested through the subthemes pertaining to vicarious trauma, interpersonal emotions, longevity challenges, positive emotions, and lack of emotional support, entwines with other themes. The emotional impact of vicarious trauma, for instance, not only affects practitioners' well-being but also influences their relational dynamics with students and colleagues (Ellis, 2018; Stammers & Williams, 2019) and professional identity (Ramvi, 2017). Similarly, the lack of emotional support exacerbates the toll of emotional labour which highlights systemic limitations that impact practitioners' ability to provide sustained compassion (Jopling & Zimmermann, 2023).

Integral role of relational practice

Relational practice, with its emphasis on the primacy of relationships, understanding, and investment, is connected to all other themes in this study. The quality of relationships established with trauma-experienced individuals directly influences practitioners' emotional experiences and sense of efficacy (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Ramvi, 2017). This then affects not only educators' sense of professional identity (Sherry et al., 2021), but also their capacity to connect with the children and colleagues with whom they

work (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Ramvi, 2017). Moreover, systemic factors such as limited resources and organisational constraints can impede the development of meaningful relationships as educators become overwhelmed by the systemic constraints which can lead to relationships being neglected (Eloquin, 2016).

Personal and professional identity

Personal and professional identity has profound links with emotional labour, relational dynamics, and systemic factors. For example, past experiences which shape personal identity and self-esteem influence practitioners' emotional responses (Ramvi, 2017) and relational patterns in their work (Sherry et al., 2021). Furthermore, organisational cultures and resource constraints impact practitioners' sense of self and professional identity, highlighting the reciprocal relationship between individual identity and systemic influences (Garrett, 2020; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023).

Having sufficient knowledge

Knowledge acquisition intersects with numerous themes within this study. Theoretical understanding helps educators navigate the unconscious emotional responses and relational approaches within a school (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Ramvi, 2017). The development of theoretical concepts can translate into actionable strategies which also affects relationships (Eloquin, 2016), and can lead to positive systemic change (Jopling & Zimmermna, 2023). Furthermore, systemic factors such as limited training opportunities and funding constraints can hinder knowledge acquisition, highlighting the interplay between knowledge acquisition and systemic influences (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021).

Internal systems and surrounding contexts

Systemic influences permeate the findings of this study. The sense that the system fails to account for emotions, the perception of the broken system, and external agencies not only influence practitioners' experiences but also impact their emotional labour, relational dynamics, personal-professional identity, and knowledge acquisition (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Garrett, 2020; Jopling & Zimmermann, 2023; Ramvi, 2017). The interconnectedness of systemic effects highlights how both individual and systemic influences might affect educators meaning making, experience and use of trauma-informed practices.

Time as a practice parameter

Time shapes educators' experiences with trauma-informed practices in this study. Within the emotional labour theme, prolonged exposure to emotionally challenging situations increased the emotional impact on educators, leading to signs of ongoing vicarious trauma such as professional disengagement and burnout (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Ramvi, 2017). Having to consistently hold in emotions, particularly frustration, further drains emotional energy (Garrett, 2020; Ellis, 2018). Relational practice requires ongoing investment to nurture meaningful connections with students and colleagues (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Ramvi, 2017): trust-building takes time and was key for participants in fostering genuine connections (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). Moreover, personal and professional identity develops over time and influences educators' perceptions, beliefs, and use of certain practices (Eloquin, 2016; Sherry et al., 2021). Systemic barriers, including time constraints within busy schools, can hinder educator’s engagement with trauma-informed approaches, impacting the depth and quality of support provided to students (Stammers & Williams, 2019). Thus, while time may not be explicitly categorised as a standalone theme in this study, its presence permeates

participants' experiences and acted as a parameter in their use of trauma-informed practices within their mainstream schools.

Visualising the interconnection

To visualise these interconnections, I created Figure 15. This figure is not explanatory. I purposefully refrain from referring to it as a model as such terminology often aligns with positivist ontology and is suggestive of theory development (see Figure 16 for further reflection on this).

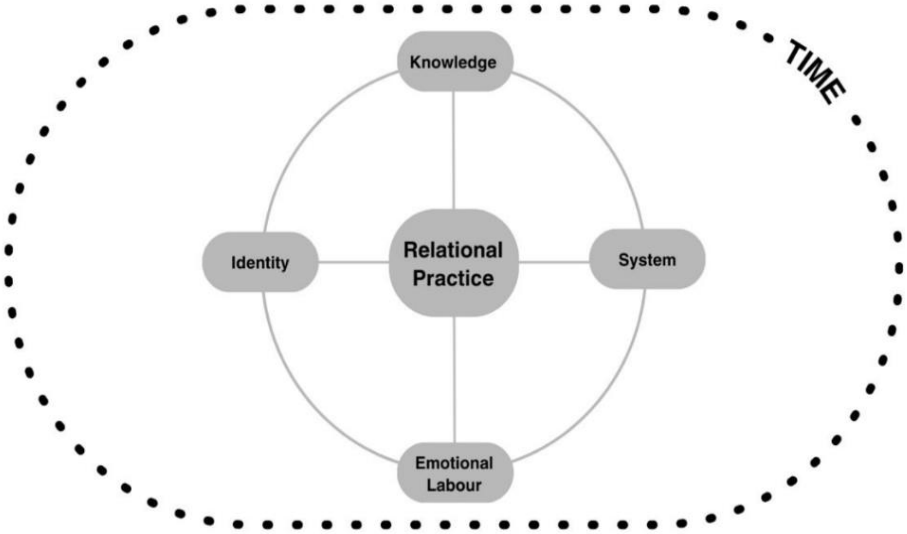

Figure 15: connective constellation to illustrate the integrity of relational practice within the themes of this research all bound by the concept of time

Participants emphasised the integral role of relationships in their work and it appeared that all other themes influenced the relationships educators had with both pupils and colleagues in some way. This aligns with broader pedagogical research (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Garrett, 2020; Jopling & Zimmermann, 2023; Ramvi, 2017; Sherry et al., 2021; Stammers & Williams, 2019). Relational practice is therefore positioned centrally in the connective constellation. Moreover, time often acted as a

limiting parameter for educators in this study, an experience not uncommon within teaching more widely (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Garrett, 2020; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Ramvi, 2017). Thus, time acts as a boundary line within the constellation to represent its influence on educators' implementation of trauma-informed approaches within the constraints of busy school schedules.

These themes, and their interconnections, are also evident in wider literature (Wassink-de Stigter et al., 2022) and their presence and/or absence within a system have been reported as both facilitators and barriers to implementing trauma-informed approaches in schools. For example, it was found, much like in the current study, that the presence of emotional burden impeded the implementation of trauma-informed approaches, whereas when emotions were supported, implementation increased. Moreover, the presence of supportive leadership acted as a further facilitator to implementation whereas the absence of such leadership was deemed a barrier. Other systemic influences such as resources and finances were also reported to contribute to how and why educators utilise trauma-informed practices, which again is similar to the findings of this study. However, the Wassink-de Stigter review did not find the notion of educator identity nor the centrality of relationship impacted on the application of trauma-informed pedagogy. The role of the educator's "self" in using trauma-informed practices and how this may affect relational practice was notably absent from their findings. Additionally, the Wassink – de Stigter (2022) review did not apply specific theoretical lenses in their analysis. In contrast, the remainder of this discussion will employ specific theoretical lenses to interpret the findings of this study, aiming to provide new insights and possibly reinterpret existing ones within the field.

Theming reflexivity *February 2024*	*In theming my data, I have found it incredibly difficult to think about them as distinct themes. I have wondered several times whether I have done this "right" as Braun and Clarke say that each theme should be unique and tell its own story. I think that this is "true" of my themes but I also believe that the richness of the themes only makes sense when combined altogether and the interdependence on each other is shown. It was very difficult not to stray in to another theme or sub theme when selecting the quotes for the findings section and I think this symbolises just how interconnected the themes are with one another. I have been drafting numerous figures to try and illustrate how these themes intersect to help my understanding of this.* *At first I drew one diagram that I was going to put in my findings section but then realised that actually the diagram I drew was more an illustration of my understanding of the themes and so thought that such a figure would be best suited in the discussion chapter. The figure I finally put in my findings section was a simple diagram which highlighted the themes and then gave the sub themes below. The figure I drew of the interconnections, when I showed it to my supervisor, was said to look like planets. I quite liked this idea and I doodled next to it "connective constellation". I think I will keep this as a name for the figure as I think it summarises it well whilst also looking like a constellation of sorts.* *What I am unsure about however is whether or not providing an image might look more quantitative and positivist in nature or like I am developing a theory – makes me think about my decision not to use GT. I want to remain cohesive with the psycho-social ontology but I believe that images are powerful in helping to illustrate complex concepts. For me, when I drew this out it helped me see the connections and how it all hung together. I was also reminded of how helpful a number of my participants found using the OiM in their interview. It seemed to help them freely associate and gave them an anchor on which to come back to if they needed stability or a reference point within their interview. I am curious whether I find the figure of the connective constellation equally stablising in a topic and process that is far from it. I will share this figure with my supervisor and discuss its inclusion. I would like to include it if I can.*

Figure 16: screenshot of my reflexive diary, highlighting my deliberations with regard the connective constellation to illustrate the connectedness of the themes generated in this study

5.2: Response to research questions: research findings in context

Theoretical lenses, namely psychodynamic, systemic, and systems-psychodynamic, will now be employed to discuss the pertinent findings in the context of existing literature. These three lenses are used to complement, rather than supersede or dismiss, existing interpretations within the literature of what may influence the use of trauma-informed approaches. Additionally, it is acknowledged that the application of these lenses may yield alternative

interpretations, which include unconscious processes, compared to many other possible interpretative conclusions. The use of these lenses maps on to the three research questions that guide the structure of the subsequent sections (5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3).

5.2.1 Research question 1

How might unconscious processes affect educators' experience and use of trauma-informed approaches in mainstream schools?

Findings in this study relating to emotional labour are particularly associated with unconscious influences (Ellis, 2018; Stammers & Williams, 2019), as are the relational dynamics experienced (Ellis &Wolfe, 2019; Ramvi, 2017) and educators' personal and professional identities (Ramvi, 2017; Sherry et al., 2021). It is important to recognise that while the concepts of emotional labour, relational practice, and identity may align more overtly with unconscious processes, knowledge acquisition and systemic influences also have unconscious processes within them. However, these themes will be discussed in the subsequent research questions.

A tenet of psychodynamics is that emotions influence behaviour and that emotions are not consciously manifested (Gilmore & Anderson, 2016; Lane, 2016; Murray, 2016). Participants in the current research expressed the emotional intensity of their work in being trauma-informed. This is not uncommon: when educators are responsible for supporting the mental health needs of children, in comparison to educators less engaged in such practices, additional emotional burden is experienced (Bowes et al., 2023; Brown et al., 2022; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Jopling & Zimmermann, 2023; Ormiston et al., 2022). The emotions frequently mentioned by participants were predominantly perceived as negative, ranging from sadness to heartbreak and frustration to rage (Brown et al., 2022; Ormiston et

al., 2022). However, positive emotions like contentment and pride were also evident, indicating the emotional variability in educators' experiences (Garrett, 2020; Jopling & Zimmermann, 2023). This was often described as challenging and was compounded by prolonged exposure: the longer participants experienced these emotions, the more difficult they became to tolerate (Bowes et al., 2023; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Gilmore & Anderson, 2016; Murray, 2016).

Defence mechanisms

When strong and prolonged emotions became intolerable, participants may have instinctively sought to avoid these at an unconscious level (Britzman, 2014; Näring et al., 2006). To avoid emotional discomfort individuals often employ unconscious defence mechanisms (Dale & James, 2015; Garrett, 2020; Jopling & Zimmermann, 2023). These defence mechanisms serve to shield against distressing emotions, allowing individuals to maintain a sense of psychological equilibrium (Brown et al., 2022; Ormiston et al., 2022). Within the context of this study, participants demonstrated numerous defence mechanisms with splitting being common. Participants often categorised experiences, individuals, or situations into rigid and polarised extremes (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Lawson et al., 2019; Ramvi, 2017). For example, participants considered school policies as either fully trauma-informed or entirely lacking trauma sensitivity, viewed colleagues as either wholly trauma aware or entirely oblivious, and assigned educators' as solely focused on academic instruction or emotional support. This propensity for splitting had significant implications on the experience and implementation of trauma-informed practices. It led participants to perceive themselves as inherently trauma-informed in comparison to others, who were often viewed more negatively for not being so (Lane, 2016; Lawson et al., 2019; Ramvi, 2017). This not only affected working relationships with other colleagues but also, paradoxically, created more

frustration and sadness for participants. This then likely caused further splitting and employment of other defence mechanisms. The presence of paradoxes is explored further in section 5.3 in this chapter.

Often occurring simultaneously with splitting is the unconscious defensive process of projection: once an intolerable aspect of oneself is split off, it is then projected on to others (Pellegrini, 2010). In this study there are numerous examples of participants likely becoming overwhelmed with their own unacceptable thoughts, splitting these off and projecting the negative aspects on to colleagues. Examples where participants were frustrated at colleagues for not responding to the needs of trauma-experienced children may have been participants projecting their own frustrations that, despite their efforts, children continued to be physically and emotionally hurtful. Adding further complexity is that educators are likely to both unconsciously send and receive projections (Lane, 2016; Murray, 2016;). If participants are doing this, it follows that this is also occurring for colleagues and children (Frances & Potter, 2010; Lane, 2016; Lawson et al., 2019; Pellegrini, 2010). Therefore, splitting and projections are likely rife within schools, with all members of a school community splitting and projecting their intolerable thoughts and feelings. This sustains the emotional volatility participants reported and provides justification for how unconscious processes might affect the experience and use of trauma-informed approaches in mainstream schools.

Splitting and projections give rise to another unconscious process: projective identification. Here, individuals begin to behave in accordance to the projections they receive (Garrett, 2020; Murray, 2016). In this study, participants spoke about colleagues not being trauma-informed and insinuated that this might have been because colleagues were not confident in how to be so. This, however, could be a possible projection of participants' own concerns

about being adequately knowledgeable in their own practice (Frances & Potter, 2010; Stammers & Williams, 2019). After splitting their own uncertainty off, participants would be left feeling more assured and any uncertainty, consequently, being projectively identified with by colleagues. This could lead to colleagues having reduced confidence in utilising trauma-informed practices, likely leading to less implementation/practice change (Ellis, 2018; Jopling & Zimmermann, 2023). The interplay of splitting, projection, and identification creates a cycle which reinforces the emotions, the perceived lack of trauma-informed practice amongst colleagues and the necessity for participants to assume the role of trauma-informed practitioner within school (Lawson et al., 2019; Näring et al., 2012). As a result, educators within participants' schools were split between those that can and those that can't be trauma-informed. This perpetuates the cycle of projection and identification (French, 1997; Sherry et al., 2021) and illustrates how unconscious processes further affect educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices. Repeated cycles of behaviour are often associated with systemic theory and a more in-depth exploration of this follows in the next research question.

Another defence mechanism present in this study includes reaction formation. In this defence, individuals behave in a manner contradictory to their true feelings to protect from possible embarrassment or damage to self-image (Perry & Henry, 2004). This also has connotations of denial, a further defence mechanism which serves to protect the ego from anxiety (Freud, 1915 as cited in Ellis, 2018). In the current study, participants demonstrated reaction formation and potential denial. This was evident when they laughed while recounting uncomfortable situations and when they explicitly mentioned laughter as a means to avoid crying or shutting it off to deny the emotional overwhelm. Similar reaction formations and denials are seen within the literature, suggesting that this defence mechanism if often experienced when teaching (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Lane, 2016; Lawson et al.,

2019). Therefore, supporting the presence of such defence mechanisms in this study. This again demonstrates how unconscious processes, namely defence mechanisms, affect the experience and use of trauma-informed practices in mainstream schools by shielding educators from the emotional labour and relational complexity inherent in such practices.

Relational dynamics

In this study, some participants found certain children's behaviour more challenging than others: some educators were moved to tears by children while others were not, and some found it easier to connect with certain children more than others. These are some examples of the relational dynamics that participants shared during interviews and when using a psychodynamic lens, a number of unconscious processes might be occurring that gives rise to these varied relational experiences.

For instance, an individual who has experienced trauma is more likely to respond to situations in a fight, flight or freeze manner more quickly compared to others who have not (Maclochlainn et al., 2022; McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). These responses are initiated unconsciously, with both children and adults possessing ingrained responses to threats that are likely linked to their childhood experiences (Perry, 2003; Pine et al., 2005; Tobin, 2016). Therefore, if a child behaves in fight, flight or freeze manner (examples in this study: physical aggression, swearing or running away) this may be threatening to an educator (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). This then may trigger a fight, flight or freeze response from the educator (examples in this study: shouting, issuing punishment or ignoring). If both the child and educator respond with a fight reaction, for example, conflict becomes inevitable which can lead to ‘severe disruption in educator-student relationships’ (Chafouleas et al., 2021, p. 219). This exchange of unconscious threat response

may have been occurring when participants witnessed colleagues being punitive which resulted in poor relationships between children and some colleagues.

Relationships are key when teaching (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021) and this is arguably even more true when a child has experienced trauma (Bowes et al., 2023; Ellis, 2018). If an educator responds in a fight manner, a child's sense of safety is reduced and future attempts to relate with that child will likely fail (Chafouleas et al., 2021). Furthermore, if an educator responds in a flight or ambivalent manner, this too will create relational rupture as a child may perceive this as being abandoned and trust will be broken (Riley, 2009). When educators respond to young people in a way that seeks to protect from their threat this will likely damage relationships. This was experienced by participants when they had observed other colleagues with trauma-experienced children responding in these ways. Consequently, it appears that educators (as reported by participants) may not be identifying and noticing their own triggers when working with children (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Sherry et al., 2021; Stammers & Williams, 2019). This in turn may affect the relationships with trauma-experienced children, specifically. Again, it appears there may be a cycle present that acts to sustain the relational difficulties experienced by some educators. Furthermore, children who have not experienced trauma are less likely to trigger educators' survival responses: their behaviour is less likely to become threatening by virtue of feeling relationally and emotionally safer (Sinclaire-Harding & Grinham-Smith, 2023). Trauma-experienced children, feeling more threatened, may, however, exhibit more threatening behaviour, triggering the survival mechanisms of adults. Consequently, the child may perceive the adult's response as equally threatening, perpetuating a cycle that damages relationships. Participants in this study were advocates for relationship first and their passion for this approach was evident. However, there were occasions when these relationships were difficult

to maintain for participants. When a professional finds relating to a child difficult, this often causes them pain as their professional identity has been questioned (Ramvi, 2017). This however also threatens their personal identity as professional and personal identities are intricately linked (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Stammers & Williams, 2019). This link is highlighted during the unconscious processes of transference and countertransference (Sherry et al., 2021). In this study, educators likely experienced these processes while employing trauma-informed practices: participants frequently connected their personal relationships to their interactions within the school setting.

Transference/countertransference was most likely apparent when participants were reminded of their own children in their interactions with pupils (transference). The transference and resultant behaviour of the educator, may have lead pupils to unconsciously behave in ways which reinforced the participant's association with their own children (countertransference). Examples of this was when participants seamlessly began to speak about their own child's behaviour when initially giving examples of pupils' behaviour they had witnessed at school. However, the opposite dynamic is also likely. For example, participants shared that despite having no children they still felt parental. The pupils may have been needing a parent figure who was safe and protective (transference) and participants identified with this and acted as such (countertransference). Furthermore, participants also spoke of past students and how they had remained with them during their career and they were curious to what extent the interaction with those pupils had impacted their relationships with the current ones. It could be that past pupils were thought of when interacting with present pupils (transference) which resulted in pupils unconsciously behaving in ways that served to confirm the connection (countertransference). These examples suggest how unconscious processes could affect educators' relational experience and use of trauma-informed practices in mainstream schools.

The need for containment

Participants' experiences were also affected by the lack of emotional support within their schools. Psychodynamically, this can be interpreted as participants felt uncontained. Emotional containment pertains to the ability to regulate and navigate affective experiences without succumbing to overwhelming emotional distress, thereby fostering a sense of psychological stability and resilience (Bowes et al., 2023; Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Gripsrud et al., 2018; Hulusi & Maggs, 2015). It could be that the participants felt overcome with sadness and frustration by not being contained within their schools: support was not in place to help them process, reflect or navigate the emotional demand within their work (Ellis 2018; Ramvi, 2010; 2017). It has been shown that without containment, educators experience heightened stress, burnout and reduced job satisfaction/engagement (Ellis, 2018; Eloquin, 2016; Sherry et al., 2021). Moreover, when left feeling uncontained, educators have also been reported to find relating to colleagues and pupils increasingly more difficult (Britzman, 2014; Murray, 2016). All of these aspects were reported by participants within this research and further highlights how uncontained they felt within their roles, illustrating how unconscious processes can affect educators' experiences and use of trauma-informed practices. This claim is strengthened by numerous participants sharing how much better they felt after being part of the interviews (Ruch, 2014) and demonstrates how impactful providing a space for educators to speak about their experience, reflect on their relational dynamics and explore their identity in relation to their work can be (Ellis, 2018): the unconscious process of containment can positively influence experience and use of trauma-informed practices if only it is available (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Hulusi & Maggs, 2015).

Response summary

Unconscious processes influenced the participants' experience and use of trauma-informed practices in their mainstream schools in numerous ways. The emotional demands inherent in these approaches often trigger unconscious defence mechanisms aimed at protecting individuals from vicarious trauma. Consequently, educators may unconsciously split off and project intolerable aspects onto others to alleviate the burden, leading to projective identification. Additionally, unconscious processes such as transference and countertransference influence the quality of relationships between children and educators, with both positive and negative associations from the past affecting this. Despite their impact, systemic support for managing the emotional and relational challenges in schools was noticeably lacking for all participants. The systemic influences on educators' experiences and adoption of trauma-informed practices will be discussed next.

5.2.2 Research question 2

How might systemic influences affect educators' experience and use of trauma-informed approaches in mainstream schools?

Participants highlighted the impact of external agencies, parents, school leaders, local governments, and national legislation, on their engagement with trauma-informed practices. These multiple systems provide the broader context in which educators operate and influence resource allocation, policy directives and institutional priorities (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). Systemic thinking can provide a lens through which to explore the meaning and impact of these on educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practice. At its core, the systemic approach emphasises the significance of relationships and interactions among individuals within a system (Guthrie, 2020). The experiences highlighted by participants demonstrate the wider impact of the connections of both inside and outside of the school

system, for example how legislation and national policy affects educators' pedagogies. This aligns with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Eco-systemic theory. This theory posits that the different systems surrounding an individual all contribute to the experiences they have (Penn, 2005). Participants spoke of the influence school policy, leaders, parents, local area, and government all had on them and their use of trauma-informed practices making eco-systemic theory applicable. Figure 17 plots the influences shared by participants within the relevant eco-system.

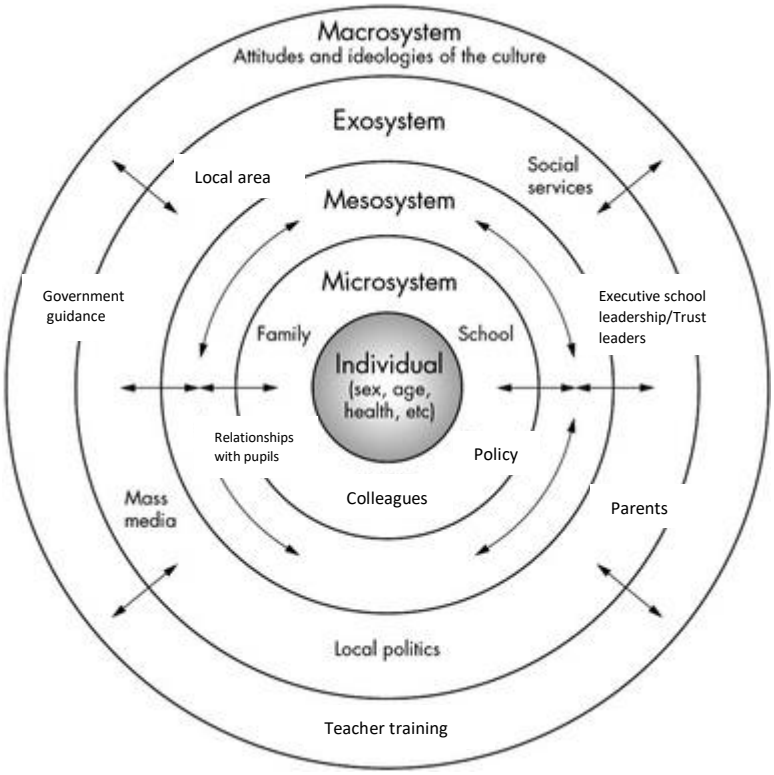

Figure 17: adaption of Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystems (1979) to illustrate possible systemic influences on educators use of trauma-informed practices

As seen in the Figure 17, there are a number of systemic influences that could affect educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices, however not all will be discussed. An influence within the Macro-system that will be discussed, as it was raised by

participants, is teacher training. Participants felt that teacher training programmes currently lacked insufficient content on trauma, its effects, and how to adapt practices accordingly. Participants believed that a systemic shift enabling increased content on this in teacher training could lead to a more system-wide trauma-informed approach. The perceived notion that teachers and educators are entering the system lacking awareness of trauma may contribute to the sense of stuckness expressed by participants. According to systems theory, those within a system will attempt to preserve homeostasis, to maintain the status quo (Guthrie, 2020). Therefore, any changes that threaten this are resisted (Lai & Huili, 2017). This resonates with Bateson's (1972) ideas of feedback loops or circular causalities. Circular causality refers to a concept in which multiple aspects in a system interact in a complex, reciprocal manner, influencing each other in a continuous feedback loop (Geyer & Rihani, 2010). In this study circular causality may be present in terms of which educators are more trauma-informed compared to others (Figure 18).

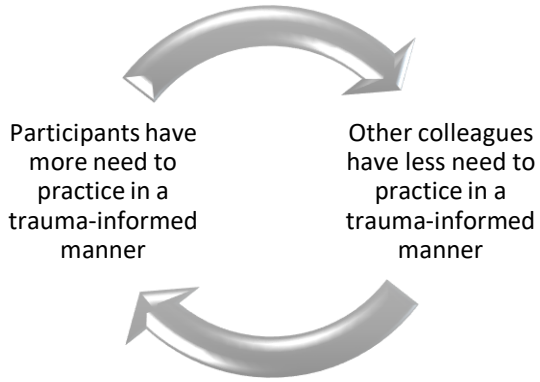

Figure 18: representation of feedback loop/circular causality present in system leading to being positioned as those that do trauma-informed practice and those that don't, as described by participants

Feedback loops give rise to another systemic concept: positioning. Positioning within the system involves individuals adopting roles to maintain equilibrium, which are not consciously assigned but rather dictated by patterns of behaviour (Matthews & Singh, 2015).

In this study, participants were frequently positioned as the ones to support dysregulated children due to their trauma-informed approach. This allowed other educators to concentrate on teaching and learning. The positions people take within a system provide the perspective through which situations are perceived, with each member of the system invariably constructing different narratives of meaning (Anderson et al., 2022). This process is called punctuation (Watzlawick et al., 2011). In this study instances of probable punctuation included where participants perceived situations differently, often interpreting colleagues' lack of trauma-informed engagement as dismissive or resistant. Consequently, participants felt compelled to react according to their perceived roles, leading to frustration and perpetuating feedback loops and positions within the system. In considering concepts of circular causalities, positioning, and punctuation, the systemic influences that impact educators' engagement with trauma-informed practices are highlighted.

Moreover, the influence certain punctuations have is dependent on the power dynamics and dominant narratives within the system (Birdsey & Kustner, 2021). Power and dominant narratives are key facets of systemic thinking: those with more power often have the more dominant narratives (Ellis, 2018; Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). In this study, all participants portrayed themselves as having a less dominant narrative compared to others. Those in non-teaching roles viewed teachers as more powerful, teachers saw leaders as holding greater authority, and leaders identified the local authority as dominant. This may suggest why participants felt stuck in their experience of using trauma-informed practices: there was an assumption that progression and development of trauma-informed practices was determined by those with more perceived power elsewhere in the system.

Participants also believed aspects such as class, geography, education and culture contributed to the power present in the system. Participants spoke about how middle class families were more likely to pursue litigious processes (complaints and tribunals) compared to working class parents. Moreover, geographical location of schools was perceived as contributing to the needs within a school and the necessity for increased use of trauma-informed approaches: references to council estates and rural areas as contexts where children might require additional support were frequently made. This aligns with the social GGRRAAACCEEESSS framework, which encompasses aspects of identity: gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, education, ethnicity, employment, sexuality, sexual orientation, and spirituality (Burnham, 2012; Roper-Hall 1998). It is acknowledged that these aspects of identity influence the unconscious bias people have and thus gives rise to certain narratives being more dominant, and for certain identities to hold positions of power over others (Birdsey & Kustner, 2021). For instance, those in leadership positions and writing school policy (both locally and nationally) often have many shared characteristics (race, class, education) that bring with them increased privilege (Theoharis, 2018; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011). Although not all educators engage directly in policy formulation within their schools, they are still required to adhere to established frameworks within them, even if they disagree or perceive these guidelines as not benefiting the children they serve. For example, participants felt that behaviour policies did not account for the emotional aspects of behaviour and were therefore not trauma-informed. This further suggests how systemic influences might affect educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices

In addition, the role of leadership was also perceived as significantly influential for participants when implementing trauma-informed practices. Participants highlighted the importance of having supportive leadership in promoting trauma-informed approaches (Ellis

& Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Ramvi, 2017) and gave examples of when this occurred and what a difference it had made. However, participants also noted instances of inadequate leadership that hindered their efforts to adopt such practices (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016; Ramvi, 2017). This added to participants' emotional labour as they felt bound by both policy and leadership to practice in a way that countered their pedagogical philosophies (Eloquin, 2016). This also increased the relational complexity as their frustrations made it more difficult to work with and for those leaders (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016). These examples highlight participants' systemic need for aligned policy and effective leadership which facilitate trauma-informed practice. Policy and leadership will be considered in more depth subsequently using a systems-psychodynamics lens.

Response summary

The systemic influences on educators' engagement with trauma-informed approaches in mainstream schools are diverse. External agencies, parents, school leaders, local governments, and national legislation significantly influence resource allocation, policy directives, and institutional priorities. Concepts such as feedback loops, positioning, and punctuation elucidate the dynamics that influence educators' experiences, with power differentials and privileges determining perceptions and responses. For participants, supportive leadership and aligned policy are beneficial for facilitating trauma-informed practices, highlighting the systemic influence in the experience for educators when implementing these approaches.

5.2.3 Research question 3:

How might the intersection of unconscious processes and systemic influences affect educators' experience and use of trauma-informed approaches in mainstream schools?

Participants spoke about the dysfunction in their systems on numerous occasions. Systems-psychodynamics, amalgamating open-system, group relation and psychodynamic ideas (Eloquin, 2016), is a relevant theory to apply here as its core application is when organisations/teams behave dysfunctionally (Rustin, 2015). This section now discusses which aspects of participants' experience may be understood using this theoretical lens and associated concepts.

Social defences

The notions of having a lack of time, money and resources were often cited as major causes of dysfunction for participants. A systems-psychodynamics perspective would proffer that these concepts are being used as social defences to guard against the anxiety participants feel by virtue of doing emotionally painful work (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014; May, 2017). The anxiety felt was likely due to the unconscious knowledge that by practising in a trauma-informed manner, participants would become close to the young people and be exposed to more emotionally difficult information. Compounding this, participants consciously knew that they worked in systems that were unable to support their emotional needs. Therefore, by reporting that they had too little time, or not enough budget to be as trauma-informed as they would have liked might be illustrative of participants of using social defences to protect themselves from further emotional burden (Eloquin, 2016).

A social defence may also be needed to guard against participants' growing resentment toward the young people with whom they work. This uncomfortable possibility was also seen by Menzies (1960) whose seminal work suggested that nurses began to hate the patients for what they were doing to them emotionally. To defend against such intolerable unconscious thoughts, nurses split these off and projected them on to systems within the hospital, directing their hatred on to processes such a rotas and administrative tasks. In this study, participants

could be splitting off their resentment of the young people and projecting these unbearable aspects on to concepts of time, money and resources as a means to socially defend against their intolerable feelings toward the young people with whom they work (Eloquin, 2016).

Additionally, participants shared that some colleagues had a perception that school had become too trauma informed and that they were there to teach and not be a psychologist or social worker. The open system aspect of system-psychodynamics posits that external influences come in or out of the system via a semi-permeable boundary (Eloquin, 2016). It may be that educators feel a sense of emotional invasion due to the increasing numbers of trauma-experienced children in school. A social defence in response to this might be to adopt policies and practices that prioritise quantitative rather than qualitative measures of success. This, arguably, is reinforced by national and governmental legislation as demonstrated within the OFSTED framework against which schools are judged. In this study, participants noted that their schools often focused on exam results rather than emotional well-being. It might be that focussing on curricula and exams re-fortifies boundaries, regains control and socially defends against the emotional overwhelm (Stammers & Williams, 2019). The presence of this social defence likely affects educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices: focussing on academic priorities hinders meaningful connections, which are essential for both meeting students' emotional needs (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Stammer & Williams, 2019) and being relationally trauma-informed (Chafouleas et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2019).

Basic assumptions

A nuanced social defence occurs when basic assumption behaviours are employed (Rustin, 2015). Bion (1961) makes a distinction between the conscious primary task and unconscious basic assumptions inherent in all group work. There are five basic assumptions, all of which aim to disengage groups from the daunting nature of the primary task (Eloquin, 2016).

Examples of all five basic assumptions were present within the data, with some more prevalent than others.

Dependency

Participants frequently exhibited what could be interpreted as a dependency on leadership within their school: relying on them for guidance, support and endorsement in implementing trauma-informed practices (Eloquin, 2016). Additionally, participants often looked to policy, rules, and procedures as a framework for their actions, possibly depending on them to identify what was permissible and within their remit (Ellis, 2018). It is plausible that policy dependency also served to assuage feelings of failure among participants who may have struggled to enact change with a child: it was the policy that limited the change and not the educator (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019). The dependency on leadership and policy might allow participants to split off feelings of inadequacy and the emotional weight of their role onto external factors rather than confronting these emotions directly within the primary task of educating and supporting children (Eloquin, 2016). This may be particularly pertinent when teaching and supporting children who have experienced trauma.

Fight/flight

Participants expressed frustration with external agencies like Ofsted and local government, citing the stress of judgment and the restrictions imposed on implementing trauma-informed practices as reasons for their feelings. They also described colleagues, due to their lack of engagement with trauma-informed approaches, as equally frustrating. These behaviours can be seen as manifestations of the fight/flight basic assumption. In the context of Ofsted and local government, participants found unity in opposing these external entities, diverting attention from their primary task of supporting children (Eloquin, 2016; Miller, 2018). However, unity dissipated when participants experienced a battle with colleagues which also

seemed to serve as a distraction from the emotionally demanding work of supporting trauma-experienced children. Some participants also described instances of flight and avoidance, likening it to burying their heads in the sand when faced with challenging aspects of their role, such as leading on strategic improvement. Participants also described fight/flight more generally in terms of colleagues' seeming avoidance of using trauma-informed practices (flight) which led to increased participants' frustration and resentment (fight). This is reminiscent of 'social taint' (Bowes et al., 2023, p.10; McMurray & Ward, 2014, p.7) which describes how colleagues avoid getting involved with 'emotionally dirty work' (McMurray & Ward, 2014, p.11), leaving those that do alone, angry and exhausted (Bowes et al., 2023).

Pairing

The basic assumption of pairing was evident as participants formed close relationships with specific individuals, relying on them for emotional support and collaborative problem-solving (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2020). These pairings provided a sense of emotional safety and assurance, with participants referring to their paired colleagues as safe people. This mutual support allowed participants to share and manage their emotions, relieving some of the emotional labour associated with their work. This pairing also meant that colleagues could disengage with the emotional work associated with being trauma-informed as they were unconsciously assured that the emotional work was being done by others/those who had become a pair (Lawrence et al., 1996). However, when these pairings were absent, participants experienced an increase in emotional labour and decrease in a sense of containment. This was also likely felt in the wider system as the emotional work was no longer contained in the pairing. Participants may have split off and projected their intolerable thoughts and feelings into the system once again. This further illustrates how unconscious processes might affect educators' experience and use of trauma informed practices.

Meness/Oneness

The basic assumptions of meness and oneness could also frame some of the study's findings. Participants frequently distinguished themselves from their colleagues in terms of their attitudes toward trauma-informed practices, often feeling isolated as the sole advocates of such approaches. This sense of distinctiveness could be seen as the basic assumption meness, serving to protect against the perceived threat of group dissolution due to the disjointed approaches adopted (Lawerence et al., 1996). However, instances of oneness were also apparent. Participants believed that togetherness would enhance the trauma-informed ethos of their schools, speaking of the closeness of some teams, such as their SEND team. These examples illustrate oneness, as group cohesion is assumed and differences within the group overlooked: members are 'lost in the oceanic feeling of unity' (Turquet, 1974, p.360). Consequently, the adoption of basic assumptions of meness and/or oneness likely influences perceptions of uniqueness or similarity to others in the school which, in turn, will affect educators' experiences and utilisation of trauma-informed practices.

Protective reframing

Participants also shared numerous examples of their proactive efforts to address and manage their anxiety rather than attempting to avoid it as highlighted in the above section. The emotional and relational challenges inherent in their work was acknowledged and yet, despite these challenges, participants remained committed to fostering meaningful connections with students. Participants advocated for relational approaches and shared numerous examples of how this approach had been effective in supporting trauma-experienced children. This suggests participants had recognised that while anxiety and overwhelm were unavoidable in their work, it could be managed and harnessed for positive outcomes. This resembles the concept of protective reframing which focuses on how anxiety can and should be supported rather than avoided (Hirschon & Horowitz, 2014). This perspective challenges the notion

within systems-psychodynamics that all anxieties are inherently negative and should be avoided for the system to function optimally (Hirschon & Horowitz, 2014). Instead, protective framing suggests that acknowledging anxiety and using it productively is more practical and effective and reduces the risk of 'organisations undermining their own potential' (Eloquin, 2016, p.172). In this study, participants sought ways to manage any unconscious anxieties by generating ideas for using time creatively to collaborate in solution-focused discussions (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Eloquin, 2016), wanting increased supervision within schools to reflect on difficulty (Ellis, 2018; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Ramvi, 2017) and contemplating what system redesigns might help accommodate these challenges (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023; Sherry et al., 2021; Stammer & Williams, 2019).

Response summary

The intersection of unconscious processes and systemic influences appear to impact educators' engagement with trauma-informed approaches in mainstream schools. Social defences, basic assumptions, and protective reframing, offer insight into how educators experience the emotional and relational complexities of their roles within the organisational context. These processes may manifest as: resistance, reliance on leadership and policies for guidance, frustration with colleagues, and the formation of close relationships for emotional support. Furthermore, participants' efforts to manage anxiety whilst fostering meaningful connections with students demonstrate a nuanced approach to coping with the challenges of trauma-informed practice. These findings suggest that acknowledging unconscious anxieties proactively may lead to increased use of trauma-informed approaches, ultimately enhancing support for trauma-experienced children in mainstream schools.

5.3 Presence of paradox

Participants encountered several paradoxes in their utilisation of trauma-informed practices. One paradox involved the system's reluctance to engage with emotional content, which ironically exacerbated emotions (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023). Despite the necessity for emotional engagement in trauma-informed practice, participants observed a systemic aversion to addressing emotional issues, perhaps stemming from institutional discomfort or anxiety surrounding emotional topics. This avoidance, however, led to an accumulation of unaddressed emotions, intensifying the emotional burden on both educators and students (Ellis, 2018; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021). As educators suppressed emotions in response to systemic pressure, they found themselves increasingly overwhelmed by emotional strain, highlighting the paradoxical dynamic between the need for emotional engagement and systemic resistance to it.

Another paradox arose when participants discovered that knowing more about a child's trauma increased their own emotional burden rather than enhancing understanding (Bowes et al., 2023; Ellis, 2018). Initially, participants believed that acquiring knowledge about a student's trauma would facilitate empathy and inform support. However, as they learnt more about the complexities and pain, participants experienced heightened emotional distress and increased vicarious trauma. This paradox illustrates the balance between gaining insight into students' experiences and protecting educators' emotional well-being (Ellis, 2018). Despite the intention to deepen understanding and connection, the reality of knowing more about the traumatic events can overwhelm educators, potentially compromising their use of trauma-informed support.

Participants also experienced the paradox of prioritising academic achievement. Previously, it was highlighted how academic prominence could be a social defence which saw educators compelled to prioritise academic outcomes (Stammers & Williams, 2019). However, according to participants, this emphasis on academic performance often heightened emotional responses for trauma-experienced students, which paradoxically exacerbated the emotional burden for educators. Moreover, while educators pursue students' academic progress, they may increasingly neglect the emotional needs of children (Stammers & Williams, 2019). This was reported in this study and might have led trauma-experienced students to feel less emotionally and relationally safe. These are known caveats of effective learning (Beauregard et al., 2022; Shean & Mander, 2022) and so without them, students are likely to disengage with learning more (Stammers & Williams, 2019). Therefore, a focus on academic outcomes may paradoxically hinders academic progress itself. This then becomes more difficult for educators to manage and adds to their sense of emotional and relational difficulty which may then create a feedback loop and lead to more focus on academics as a defence (Eloquin, 2016). This paradox illustrates the interplay between academic achievement and emotional support within trauma-informed practices and further demonstrates how paradoxes can affect educators' experience and use of such approaches in mainstream schools.

The paradoxes present in this study occur both unconsciously and systemically and further highlight the complexity of using trauma-informed practices for educators. The paradoxes also help appreciate why defence mechanisms, basic assumptions and feedback loops are present within educators' experiences of using trauma-informed approaches. The paradoxes add to the anxiety and overwhelm that participants and educators may be defending against and create circular causalities that see educators stuck in paradoxical loops. The unconscious

and systemic influences on the experience and use of trauma-informed approaches give rise to numerous implications for practice which could help mitigate the paradoxes outlined.

5.4 Implications of research

The implications of this research for EP practice could be wide ranging, from individual educator support to wider systemic changes. Due to the exploratory and qualitative nature of the study, there is an appreciation that some implications may have to be more tentative than others (Morse, 2015). Yet, making them still feels appropriate and does justice to the experiences of the participants within this study. The implications are discussed in three sections, broadly highlighting the individual, group and organisational levels of EP work.

5.4.1 Enhancing emotional support and reflective spaces

An important implication from this thesis is the role Educational Psychologists (EPs) can play in promoting and facilitating reflective spaces for educators within schools. By offering this support, EPs would enable educators to reflect on their connections and reactions to students and situations, foster a safe environment for processing challenging experiences and emotions, and promote professional growth (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021). This support would not only help contain emotions within schools but also alleviate the paradox of heightened emotional distress while supporting students using trauma-informed practices. Enhancing emotional support and reflective spaces could also help mitigate compassion fatigue and burnout among educators (Bowes et al., 2023), which ultimately would lead to increased support for all students (Garret, 2020; Ramvi, 2017; Stammers & Williams, 2019). Given the possibility to develop their expertise in relational supervision (Kennedy et al., 2018) and apply theories such as psychodynamics to help explore and contain emotional content for educators (Bibby, 2010; Ellis, 2018; Hulusi & Maggs, 2015),

EPs have the potential to be well-suited to provide such support in schools. This exploratory research indicates that this implication would be valuable and beneficial for the participants in this study, and thus potentially for educators more broadly.

5.4.2 Integrating unconscious and systemic influences in to training

A further implication is that EPs begin to amend the content of their trauma-training so that it includes the psychological impact of possible unconscious and systemic influences on implementation (Ramvi, 2017). By discussing and addressing potential instances of splitting, projection, or transference in training, EPs can support educators in developing awareness of their own responses to students and colleagues (Eloquin, 2016). This increased awareness would allow educators to appreciate what might be occurring for them psychologically, enabling reflection on their contribution to the dynamic they are in (Stammers & Williams, 2019). In knowing this, educators would be more able to reflect and decipher what emotionally is theirs and what is not (Ellis, 2021). Moreover, integrating discussions on systemic processes such as circular causalities and positioning within training can help educators consider the repeated patterns of behaviour within their schools and aid reflections in how to disrupt these to bring about pedagogical change (Ellis, 2018; Fitzsimmons et al., 2021; Sherry et al., 2021). Having an EP lead such training is therefore important as they are trained and supervised to enable them hold and contain emotional content (Ellis & Wolfe, 2019) and think systemically about difficulties (Jopling & Zimmerman, 2023).

5.4.3 Re-emphasising the relational aspect of trauma-informed approaches

Unconscious and systemic influences could also form part of wider systemic training within the next implication: EPs could contribute to teacher training programmes and help develop trauma-informed pedagogy content for aspiring educators. This content would integrate

theoretical foundations of trauma and its impact along with practical strategies for supporting children rather than punishing them. Trainee educators trained in trauma-informed pedagogy would be explicitly taught about the importance of emotions and relationships within this approach and the need for containing spaces would be specified. By equipping newly qualified educators with this knowledge, they would more likely enter the profession with increased confidence and efficacy with regard to being trauma-informed. EPs, in collaboration with training providers or system legislators, could aid early career educators in creating safe, supportive and relational learning environments for all students (Brown et al., 2022).

Another systemic implication is that trauma-informed practice could be re-emphasised as a relational approach. Re-emphasising the relational aspect over the trauma-informed aspect of the approach could reduce the stigma and anxiety associated with the word ‘trauma’ and instead promote the positive relationships, communication, and empathy that the approach was founded upon (Bowes et al., 2023; Fallot & Harris, 2008; Harris & Fallot, 2001). By re-emphasising the positive impact of relational approaches on student well-being and academic success, EPs can support educators to prioritise connection and empathy in their practice. Advocating for a refocus from trauma-informed to relational practice could also help mitigate a paradox associated with trauma-focused approaches in this study: using trauma-informed approaches often increases (vicarious) trauma due to its association with complexity, pain and emotional content (Bowes, et al, 2023). By advocating for focussing on relational practice, the aim is to alleviate negative associations and create a more inclusive approach to supporting all children and young people (Dolezal & Gibson, 2022; Wright, 2023). EPs can be active in this systemic re-framing, supporting policy makers, school leaders and educators

to focus on relational practice: creating and promoting sustainable relationships (Gibson, 2015).

5.5 Dissemination

To disseminate to a wide audience including educators, educational psychologists and other researchers, I intend to use a number of dissemination strategies. The first will be to share the thesis with participants who expressed interest in reading it and offer opportunities for further discussion. Additionally, I aim to present the findings within my EP service and consider with colleagues how the implications from this study could be incorporated into existing professional development programmes on trauma-informed practice. Moreover, I intend to present this research at professional conferences both nationally, such as those hosted by the Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) or the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP), and internationally such as at the International School Psychology Association (ISPA) annual conference. I also aim to pursue publication in a relevant journal, considering the readership and content interests when considering which journals to submit to. Finally, within my placement county, there is also a growing movement led by a senior EP who has shared the need for national systemic change within the SEND system to a working group of Members of Parliament (MPs) in Westminster. Being able to join this movement and incorporate this research in to the evidence base for this ongoing pursuit for systemic change would disseminate this research more widely. This would also allow the findings and implications to be shared on a blog that accompanies the movement with a growing number of subscribers: currently over 200 EPs subscribed nationwide. It would be my intention that dissemination outlined would be completed between 12-24 months.

5.6 Self-reflection

Using psycho-social supervision and my research diary to aid self-reflection has been invaluable during this research: using myself as a tool to not only know more about myself but also others in professional contexts (Dennison et al., 2006). I will now share some key reflections I have had throughout this process.

5.6.1 Reflecting on becoming a psycho-social researcher

At times I found maintaining the psycho-social researcher position difficult. During this process, I became acutely aware of my personal connection to trauma-informed practices and my want to help and provide solutions. Initially, I found myself supressing the desire to ask supplementary questions or propose solutions so much that I recognised I had, at times, stopped listening. This then caused feels of guilt and I wondered, to assuage this, if I over aligned with participants to whom I had at times stopped listening to. However, as the interviews progressed, my urge to ask questions and provide solutions subsided. I wondered during supervision (and in my reflective diary, see Figure 19) whether this subsiding coincided with how freely the participants associated as interviews progressed too. I was curious whether projective identification was occurring with participants identifying with my withholding of questions and when I eased in to the researcher position, they too eased in to the interview and shared more personal information.

Researcher reflexivity *March 2024*	*There was noticeable improvement in both my active listening and participants' increased openness, especially evident in Part 2 of the interviews. This has led me to contemplate the relational dynamics between us. I wonder if participants felt more understood and heard because I had showed a renewed investment by returning to conduct Part 2 interview? Had I had demonstrated an interest in their story by seeking permission to explore aspects of Part 1 in the second interview? Additionally, I also noticed how much more comfortable and familiar I felt with the participants in my second time with them. I wonder if this is because I feel I have a better understanding of both the research process and their experiences. This makes me think about Hollway and Jefferson's (2012) position about the importance of the researcher's relationship with participants in both producing and analysing data. This understanding, facilitated by psycho-social supervision and self-reflection, has been instrumental in my development as a psycho-social researcher.*

Figure 19: screen shot of reflexive diary where I reflect on the relational dynamics between myself and participants

5.6.2 Reflecting on challenges as a researcher

A challenge of this research was the unbeknownst emotional effect it would have on me. Firstly, the balance between holding a researcher position and forming genuine connections with participants was more complex than I had originally assumed. I found that I aligned with specific individuals more than others in person but when familiarising myself with the data and progressing through the analysis process, I felt a bond with each participant. The data analysis evoked memories of our interactions, eliciting a variety of emotions, including frustration, sadness, and feelings of being overwhelmed, as emphasised in the reflexivity reflections in the findings chapter. Having these emotional responses illustrated to me the personal and immersive nature of research. While supervision and self-reflection supported me in exploring these feelings, I realised that the dynamic nature of psycho-social research does not lend itself to simplicity. I found this difficult as simplicity is what I sought. Instead,

it creates complexity and although this was challenging at times, I have come to see that it offers valuable insights and highlights the importance of embracing ambiguity in the research process.

5.6.3 Reflecting on process and me

Reflective practices such as psycho-social supervision and journaling have provided me space to explore my experiences throughout this process. Metaphors, in particular, have served as helpful tools during supervision, allowing me to conceptualise complex ideas and feelings, some of which may have been projected on to me by participants and vice versa (Figure 20).

Process reflexivity *February 2024*	*I have just finished supervision and I have been struck by how helpful speaking in metaphor was. I wanted to note these down so that I did not forget them. I was asked what movie would the research process and the first image that came to mind was likening my experiences to an action car chase scene – fraught with tension and obstacles. I was in the car trying to get to safe destination (end of thesis) whilst dodging roadblocks (challenges) with the looming thesis deadline relentlessly chasing me down and driving me forward.* *I was also asked to think about an image for how it might feel for participants in their schools. The image of a tire stuck in mud resonated with me, symbolising the feeling of being unable to move forward despite the persistent effort. These reflective exercises helped elucidate my understanding of my experience conducting this research but also prompted me to consider the broader implications of feeling stuck, both personally and within the educational system. I reflected on whether these feelings of stagnation were not only shared by participants, who expressed frustration at the slow pace of change but also projected in to me as researcher to some extent, compounding my feelings of frustration of being stuck whilst being chased by the deadline.*

Figure 20: screen shot of reflexive diary where I reflect on the research process

Another prominent reflection I had during this process was about the influence of my identity, particularly as a white, gay male. Reflecting on my discussions with Carl, for example, helped me realise that maybe I was over aligning with him due to our shared identities as white, gay men passionate about trauma-informed practice. However, upon further reflection, both during supervision and in subsequent interactions with Carl, I came to appreciate the multitude of differences between us. This realisation highlighted the importance of acknowledging not only the overt aspects of identity, such as race, but also the unspoken dimensions that interact to shape our perceptions and interactions (Butler, 2017). This realisation was beneficial as it enabled me to acknowledge when and where my alignment with participants may have resulted in assumptions being made due to my blind spots. This would then affect data interpretation: psycho-social supervision enabled me to reflect on this.

5.7 Limitations of research

It was hoped that this study would address a limitation raised in the literature review which was the limited diversity of participants in terms of race and gender: most participants were white and female. Within this study this demographic skew is also present. With the recruitment process being dependent on self-selection, it was difficult to stipulate the researcher's want to have diversity within the participant population. However, it is noted that having limited diversification between those interviewed in terms of gender and race will have narrowed the experiences shared compared to what may have been shared if more racial and gender diversity was present within interviews.

The notion of diversity amongst participants also extends to the opinions of trauma-informed practices. The study's participants all advocated for trauma-informed practices and thus their

experience of using such practices will not represent the experiences of all educators. While the findings of this study are not intended for generalisation, this limitation poses challenges in extrapolating the results to educators more widely especially those less inclined to practice in a trauma-informed manner. Therefore, it remains uncertain whether educators who are less enthusiastic about trauma-informed practices share similar experiences or are influenced by comparable unconscious and systemic process as the ones experienced by this study's participants.

Another limitation of this research concerns the potentially narrow focus on mainstream primary and secondary schools. By exploring experiences of educators from only these settings, the research may not fully capture the nuances and variations of what it is like to use trauma-informed practices in other educational environments (e.g special schools, higher education institutions or schools within the independent sector). However, with the vast majority of children in England attending a mainstream school (DfE, 2023b), conducting this research in those settings seemed appropriate to commence the exploration of unconscious and systemic influences on educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices.

One further limitation to highlight is regarding the inclusion/exclusion criteria for papers within the literature review to help contextualise this research. The current literature review excluded "attachment" as a search term and omitted studies from Australia and New Zealand. Including "attachment" could have provided a broader understanding of the factors influencing trauma-informed approaches, given its relevance in psychological and educational contexts. Additionally, incorporating research from Australia and New Zealand may have offered valuable insights from regions with diverse educational practices and policies. When pursuing publication, a re-run of the literature search to include these aspects

will occur to help ensure a more comprehensive, rigorous and systematic review of the existing literature.

5.8 Future research

The volunteer nature of participant recruitment of this approach attracted educators who were more aligned with a trauma-informed approach than not. Therefore, it would be helpful to conduct research which aims to gather the experiences of educators who have varying levels of affiliation with trauma-informed approaches. Data gathered in a study such as this would provide insight on what it is that may or may not be influencing the use of trauma-informed practices for these educators and help contribute to the discussions on what would enable further implementation of trauma-informed pedagogies. However, designing research with such a focus on participant type requires ethical consideration: participants may feel judged for not employing trauma-informed strategies and so the research would need to be navigated sensitively.

A further possible extension of this study would be to conduct similar research within diverse educational settings. This thesis focused on educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices in mainstream primary and secondary schools, however, conducting interviews across various educational settings (nurseries, higher education establishments, special schools, independent schools, residential) would illuminate educators' nuanced experiences more comprehensively. This would help establish a growing evidence base regarding the impact of unconscious and systemic influences on the adoption and utilisation of trauma-informed practices across the wider education system.

The small sample size and the use of RTA in data analysis, though not deemed limitations in this exploratory study, do limit the potential for theory development and broader generalisations. While many experiences are shared among participants, I have exercised caution in making general claims or generating what could be seen as theories based on the findings. Future research may benefit from using Grounded Theory, as was considered for this research, for data analysis to facilitate such theoretical development.

In conducting any further research, it is also advisable that researchers consider how to increase the diversity of the participants recruited. Both gender and racial homogeneity particularly were apparent within the literature during review and present in this current study. Therefore, future research should actively seek to remedy this so that the experiences of the diverse educators within the education system can be represented.

5.9 Conclusions

This thesis has explored the multifaceted dynamics surrounding educators' experiences when using trauma-informed practices in mainstream schools, highlighting the intersection between unconscious processes and systemic influences within this. Utilising the OiM drawing as a stimulus and FANI for data collection, the study went beneath the surface of semantic meaning, providing a deeper understanding of educators' perspectives. Through a reflexive thematic analysis, five key themes were proposed in affecting educators' engagement with trauma-informed approaches: emotional labour, relational practices, personal and professional identity, knowledge, and systemic influences. Researcher subjectivity, due to personal connection and interest in the topic, was also acknowledged to have contributed to the entire research process.

In applying theoretical lenses (psychodynamic, systemic and systems-psychodynamics), findings were interpreted to illustrate the unconscious and systemic complexity inherent in being a trauma-informed educator. Participants' experiences reflected unconscious processes that defended against intolerable anxiety, influenced relational dynamics, and facilitated the containment of unprocessed emotions. Moreover, the impact of various eco-systems on educators' experiences when using trauma-informed practices highlighted how homeostatic patterns of behaviour are sustained, often leading to a sense of stagnation and resistance to change within the system. Systems-psychodynamic frameworks further illuminated the presence of unconscious social defences and basic assumptions that aim to guard against institutional anxiety. There were also numerous paradoxes highlighted that punctuated educators' experience of using trauma-informed approaches. However, despite experiencing challenges, be those emotional, relational, paradoxical or systemic, participants demonstrated a proactive stance in reframing these and were keen to explore alternative approaches to effect change.

EPs are well placed to support in such change by aiding in the development of reflective spaces for educators to help contain the emotional labour experienced and also to support in re-emphasising the relational aspects of trauma-informed practice. EPs can also adapt content of training so that educators become more aware of the influence that both unconscious and systemic processes can have on them individually, as a group and organisationally. Moreover, EPs are able to challenge the Macro-system ideologies of what education should be and influence wider systemic change, potentially influencing content on teacher training programmes. Overall, this study has illustrated how psychodynamics, systemic thinking and systems-psychodynamics can help explore the unconscious and systemic influences on educators' experience and use of trauma-informed practices in mainstream schools,

unearthing a number of paradoxes that exist in being so. EPs have a key role to play in addressing and mitigating these paradoxes, enabling wider implementation of relational, trauma-informed practice and bringing about positive change for children and educators alike within schools.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Reference list for the selected papers in Literature Review

Ellis, G. (2018). Containment and denial: raising awareness of unconscious processes present when teachers are working with children and families where there is domestic abuse. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 34(4), 412-429.

Ellis, G., & Wolfe, V. (2019). Facilitating work discussion groups with staff in complex educational provisions. *Open Journal of Educational Psychology*, 4, 1-24.

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Sherry, J., Warner, L., & Kitchenham, A. (2021). What's Bred in the Bone: Transference and Countertransference in Teachers. *Brock Education: A Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 30(1), 136-154.

Stammers, L., & Williams, A. (2019). Recognising the role of emotion in the classroom; an examination of how the psychoanalytic theory of containment influences learning capacity. *Psychodynamic Practice*, 25(1), 33-43.

Appendix B: Completed CASP documentation

CASP Tool

Paper for appraisal: Ellis, G. (2018). Containment and denial: raising awareness of unconscious processes present when teachers are working with children and families where there is domestic abuse. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *34*(4), 412-429.

Section A: Are the results valid?	**Yes/No/can't tell**	**Comments**	**HINT: Consider**
Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes	The paper clearly states the aims of the research, which include exploring the perceptions and experiences of teachers who have taught and supported children exposed to domestic abuse, understanding the interplay between following procedures and emotional responses, and investigating the impact of domestic abuse on teachers' confidence and well-being.	• What was the goal of the research? • What it was thought important • Its relevance
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes	The use of a qualitative methodology is appropriate for exploring the complex and nuanced experiences, perceptions, and emotions of teachers working with children exposed to domestic abuse. Qualitative methods allow for in-depth exploration and understanding of the subjective experiences of participants.	• If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants • Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal?
Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	The two-phase sequential mixed-methods design used in the research appears appropriate for addressing the aims of the study. The initial quantitative phase provides a broader understanding of teachers' training and confidence levels, while the qualitative phase delves deeper into their perceptions and experiences.	• If the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided to which method to use

Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes	The opt-in option for interviews and conducting them in the participants' school settings seem appropriate for engaging teachers and gathering rich data on their experiences related to domestic abuse.	• If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected • If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study • If there are any discussions around recruitment (why some people chose not to take part)
Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes	The data collection methods, including interviews and questionnaires, appear to be well-suited for addressing the research issue of understanding teachers' experiences and perceptions in relation to domestic abuse.	• If the setting for the data collection was justified • If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi structured interview etc) • If the researcher has justified the methods chosen • If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interview are conducted, or did they use a topic guide) • If methods were modified during the study. If so has the researcher explained how and why • If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc) • If the researcher has discussed saturation of data.
Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes- to some extent	The excerpts do not provide explicit details on the relationship between the researcher and participants. However, the mention of ethical considerations and informed consent suggests that the researcher likely considered the dynamics of this relationship.	• If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of research question (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location • How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implication of any changes in the research design

Section B: What are the results?			
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes	The paper mentions that ethical factors were clearly considered, participants were informed of the study's aims, and their data handling was explained. This indicates that ethical issues were taken into consideration.	• If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained • If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study) • If approval has been sought from the ethics committee
Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes	The paper mentions using both quantitative (inferential statistics) and qualitative data analysis methods. Thematic analysis is mentioned, which is a rigorous approach to analysing qualitative data.	• If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process • If thematic analysis is used. If so, it is clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data • Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process • If sufficient data are presented to support the findings • To what extent contradictory data are taken into account • Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of the data for presentation
Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes	The paper provides a clear statement of findings, discussing the relationships between teachers' training, confidence levels, procedures for recording incidents, and their experiences working with children exposed to domestic abuse.	• If the findings are explicit • If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for an against the researcher's arguments

			• If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e,g triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst) • If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question
Section C: Will the results help locally?			
How valuable is the research?	Yes	The research appears valuable as it sheds light on the emotional challenges faced by teachers working with children exposed to domestic abuse, highlights the importance of emotional containment and support for teachers, and suggests implications for training and support programs in educational settings.	• If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research based literature • If they identify new areas where research is necessary • If the researchers have discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used

CASP Tool

Paper for appraisal: Ellis, G., & Wolfe, V. (2019). Facilitating work discussion groups with staff in complex educational provisions. *Open Journal of Educational Psychology*, *4*.

Section A: Are the results valid?	**Yes/No/can't tell**	**Comments**	**HINT: Consider**
Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes	The paper provides a clear statement of the research aims, which focus on exploring the use of work discussion groups to support staff in complex educational provisions. The aim is to enhance staff well-being, understanding of emotional responses, and professional development through the facilitation of these groups.	• What was the goal of the research? • What it was thought important • Its relevance
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes	The qualitative methodology employed in the study is appropriate for the research aims. Qualitative methods allow for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and interactions within the work discussion groups, aligning with the study's focus on understanding the emotional aspects of staff work in educational settings.	• If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants • Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal?
Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	The research design, based on action research principles, is appropriate for addressing the aims of the research. Action research emphasizes collaboration, reflection, and practical knowledge generation, aligning with the goal of supporting staff well-being and professional growth through the implementation of work discussion groups.	• If the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided to which method to use

Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes	The recruitment strategy appears appropriate for the aims of the research, as it involved contracting with headteachers and engaging participants from complex educational provisions where the work discussion groups were facilitated. Involving staff members from these settings aligns with the study's focus on supporting those working with vulnerable children and young people.	• If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected • If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study • If there are any discussions around recruitment (why some people chose not to take part)
Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes	The data collection methods used in the study, such as group sessions, reflections, and feedback, effectively address the research issue by capturing the experiences, challenges, and insights of staff members participating in the work discussion groups. These data collection approaches contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the intervention.	• If the setting for the data collection was justified • If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi structured interview etc) • If the researcher has justified the methods chosen • If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interview are conducted, or did they use a topic guide) • If methods were modified during the study. If so has the researcher explained how and why • If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc) • If the researcher has discussed saturation of data.
Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes	The paper adequately considers the relationship between researchers and participants, particularly in the context of the facilitators also being the authors of the study. The dual role of facilitators and researchers is acknowledged, highlighting awareness of potential biases and influences on participant responses.	• If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of research question (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location • How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implication of any changes in the research design

Section B: What are the results?			
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes	Ethical issues are taken into consideration in the study, as evidenced by the confidentiality agreements, feedback mechanisms, and respect for participant autonomy and well-being. The paper mentions the importance of ethical conduct in the facilitation and analysis of the work discussion groups.	• If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained • If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study) • If approval has been sought from the ethics committee
Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes	The data analysis in the study appears to be sufficiently rigorous, drawing on principles of action research and qualitative interpretation. The authors engage in collaborative analysis, reflection, and supervision to derive meaningful insights from the data collected during the work discussion group sessions.	• If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process • If thematic analysis is used. If so, it is clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data • Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process • If sufficient data are presented to support the findings • To what extent contradictory data are taken into account • Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of the data for presentation
Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes	The paper provides a clear statement of findings, highlighting themes such as group readiness, being heard, physical space, and staff well-being that emerged from the data analysis. The findings underscore the value of work discussion groups in	• If the findings are explicit • If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for an against the researchers arguments

		supporting staff within complex educational settings.	• If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e,g triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst) • If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question
Section C: Will the results help locally?			
How valuable is the research?	Yes	The research is valuable in shedding light on the importance of addressing emotional well-being, reflective practice, and professional support for staff in educational settings. By exploring the impact of work discussion groups on staff experiences and well-being, the study contributes to enhancing understanding and practices related to staff support and development in complex educational provisions.	• If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research based literature • If they identify new areas where research is necessary • If the researchers have discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used

CASP Tool

Paper for appraisal: Eloquin, X. (2016). Systems-psychodynamics in schools: a framework for EPs undertaking organisational consultancy. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *32*(2), 163-179.

Section A: Are the results valid?	**Yes/No/can't tell**	**Comments**	**HINT: Consider**
Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes – to some extent	The excerpts do not explicitly state the specific aims of the research. However, the paper appears to aim at outlining systems-psychodynamics as an approach for educational psychologists (EPs) to work with organisational dynamics in schools.	• What was the goal of the research? • What it was thought important • Its relevance
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes	The use of qualitative methodology seems appropriate for exploring the complex dynamics, emotional processes, and organisational functioning within educational settings, as qualitative methods can provide in-depth insights into these phenomena.	• If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants • Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal?
Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Unsure	Without detailed information on the research design, it is challenging to assess its appropriateness. However, if the research design aligns with exploring psychodynamic processes and organisational dynamics in schools, it could be suitable.	• If the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided to which method to use
Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Unsure	The excerpts do not provide information on the recruitment strategy employed in the research. A suitable recruitment strategy would align with the aims of the research and ensure the inclusion of relevant participants.	• If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected • If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study • If there are any discussions around recruitment (why some people chose not to take part)

Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes	The data collection methods should align with the research issue of exploring systems-psychodynamics in educational settings. It is essential that the data collected provide insights into the emotional, relational, and organisational aspects under investigation.	• If the setting for the data collection was justified • If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi structured interview etc) • If the researcher has justified the methods chosen • If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interview are conducted, or did they use a topic guide) • If methods were modified during the study. If so has the researcher explained how and why • If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc) • If the researcher has discussed saturation of data.
Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes	The excerpts suggest a focus on understanding emotional dynamics and unconscious processes, indicating a consideration of the relationship between the researcher and participants in exploring sensitive topics within the school context.	• If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of research question (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location • How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implication of any changes in the research design
Section B: What are the results?			
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Unsure	While the excerpts do not explicitly discuss ethical considerations, research involving psychodynamic processes and emotional dynamics should consider ethical issues related to confidentiality, consent, and potential impact on participants.	• If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained • If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have

			handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study) • If approval has been sought from the ethics committee
Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Unsure	The rigor of data analysis is not detailed in the excerpts. However, rigorous data analysis methods are essential to ensure the validity and reliability of findings in qualitative research.	• If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process • If thematic analysis is used. If so, it is clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data • Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process • If sufficient data are presented to support the findings • To what extent contradictory data are taken into account • Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of the data for presentation
Is there a clear statement of findings?	No	The excerpts do not provide a clear statement of findings. A comprehensive research paper should present clear and coherent findings that address the research aims and contribute to the existing knowledge base.	• If the findings are explicit • If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for an against the researcher's arguments • If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e,g triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst) • If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question
Section C: Will the results help locally?			
How valuable is the research?	Yes – to some extent	The value of the research would depend on its contribution to the field of educational psychology, organizational consultancy, and systems-psychodynamics. If the research provides	• If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the

		novel insights, practical implications, and theoretical advancements, it could be considered valuable.	findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research based literature • If they identify new areas where research is necessary • If the researchers have discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used

CASP Tool

Paper for appraisal: Fitzsimmons, W., Trigg, R., & Premkumar, P. (2021). Developing and maintaining the teacher-student relationship in one to one alternative provision: the tutor's experience. *Educational Review*, *73*(4), 399-416.

Section A: Are the results valid?	**Yes/No/can't tell**	**Comments**	**HINT: Consider**
Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes	The paper provides a clear statement of the research aims, focusing on exploring tutors' experiences of teacher-student relationships in one-to-one alternative provision settings and understanding the role of attachment theory and psychodynamic concepts in these interactions.	• What was the goal of the research? • What it was thought important • Its relevance
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes	The use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is appropriate for the research aims as it allows for an in-depth exploration of individual experiences and perspectives related to teacher-student relationships in alternative provision.	• If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants • Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal?
Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	The research design, utilising IPA to explore tutors' lived experiences, is appropriate for addressing the aims of understanding the development and maintenance of teacher-student relationships in alternative provision.	• If the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided to which method to use
Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes	The recruitment strategy appears appropriate as it involved selecting participants with relevant experience in teaching students in alternative provision settings, aligning with the research aims.	• If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected • If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study • If there are any discussions around recruitment (why some people chose not to take part)

Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes	The data collection method, through in-depth semi-structured interviews, effectively addressed the research issue by capturing tutors' perspectives on their teacher-student relationships.	• If the setting for the data collection was justified • If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi structured interview etc) • If the researcher has justified the methods chosen • If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interview are conducted, or did they use a topic guide) • If methods were modified during the study. If so has the researcher explained how and why • If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc) • If the researcher has discussed saturation of data.
Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes	The paper acknowledges the potential influence of the researcher's role as a tutor on the study and describes efforts to mitigate bias through bracketing techniques, indicating a consideration of the relationship between researcher and participants.	• If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of research question (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location • How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implication of any changes in the research design
Section B: What are the results?			
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes	The study had ethical approval, obtained informed consent from participants, and followed ethical guidelines, demonstrating a consideration of ethical issues in the research.	• If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained • If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have

			handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study) • If approval has been sought from the ethics committee
Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes	The data analysis process, following a four-stage IPA approach, appears to be sufficiently rigorous in exploring and understanding the essence of tutors' relational experiences with their students.	• If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process • If thematic analysis is used. If so, it is clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data • Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process • If sufficient data are presented to support the findings • To what extent contradictory data are taken into account • Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of the data for presentation
Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes	The paper provides a clear statement of findings, highlighting themes related to the emotional labour, challenges, and rewards of teacher-student relationships in alternative provision settings.	• If the findings are explicit • If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for an against the researchers arguments • If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e,g triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst) • If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question
Section C: Will the results help locally?			
How valuable is the research?	Yes	The research adds value by shedding light on the importance of emotional connections and supportive relationships in teaching, particularly in alternative provision contexts, and by	• If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the

		suggesting implications for training, support, and the re-framing of the teacher's role to enhance student engagement and well-being.	findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research based literature • If they identify new areas where research is necessary • If the researchers have discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used

CASP Tool

Paper for appraisal: Garrett, H. J. (2020). Containing classroom discussions of current social and political issues. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *52*(3), 337-355.

Section A: Are the results valid?	**Yes/No/can't tell**	**Comments**	**HINT: Consider**
Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes	The paper clearly articulates its aim to explore the emotional and affective dynamics that manifest during discussions of political issues in secondary classrooms. The focus is on understanding how emotions are intertwined with political knowledge and how teachers navigate emotional content in classroom interactions.	• What was the goal of the research? • What it was thought important • Its relevance
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes	The use of interpretive readings, psychoanalytic theory, and narrative interpretation suggests that a qualitative methodology is appropriate for exploring the emotional and psychosocial dimensions of classroom discussions.	• If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants • Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal?
Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	The research design appears suitable for addressing the aim of exploring emotional and affective dynamics in classroom discussions. The focus on observations, interpretive readings, and narrative interpretations aligns with the qualitative nature of the study.	• If the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided to which method to use
Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes	The recruitment strategy, which involved obtaining consent from students and teachers to film classroom sessions, seems appropriate for the aims of the research. However, the restriction on interviewing students due to school policies may have limited the depth of data collected.	• If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected • If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study • If there are any discussions around recruitment (why some people chose not to take part)

Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes	The use of filming classroom sessions and focusing on observations of discussions appears to address the research issue of exploring emotional and affective dynamics during political discussions in classrooms.	• If the setting for the data collection was justified • If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi structured interview etc) • If the researcher has justified the methods chosen • If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interview are conducted, or did they use a topic guide) • If methods were modified during the study. If so has the researcher explained how and why • If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc) • If the researcher has discussed saturation of data.
Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Unsure	The excerpts do not explicitly discuss the relationship between the researcher and participants. However, the focus on interpreting classroom interactions and emotional responses suggests a consideration of the dynamics between researchers and participants.	• If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of research question (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location • How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implication of any changes in the research design
Section B: What are the results?			
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes	The paper mentions that interviews with students were not permitted due to school policies, indicating a consideration of ethical guidelines. However, the specifics of ethical considerations are not extensively discussed in the excerpts provided.	• If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained • If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have

			handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study) • If approval has been sought from the ethics committee
Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes – assumed so	The use of psycho-social research methods and narrative interpretation suggests a rigorous approach to analysing the data collected. However, the level of rigor in data analysis is not explicitly detailed in the excerpts.	• If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process • If thematic analysis is used. If so, it is clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data • Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process • If sufficient data are presented to support the findings • To what extent contradictory data are taken into account • Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of the data for presentation
Is there a clear statement of findings?	No	The excerpts do not provide a clear statement of findings. However, the paper likely presents findings related to the emotional and affective dynamics observed during classroom discussions of political issues.	• If the findings are explicit • If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for an against the researchers arguments • If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e,g triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst) • If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question
Section C: Will the results help locally?			
How valuable is the research?	Yes	The research appears valuable in shedding light on the emotional complexities that arise during discussions of political issues in classrooms. By emphasising the emotional and affective	• If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the

		dimensions of classroom interactions, the research contributes to understanding how educators can navigate and address emotional content in pedagogical encounters.	findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research based literature • If they identify new areas where research is necessary • If the researchers have discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used

CASP Tool

Paper for appraisal: Jopling, M., & Zimmermann, D. (2023). Exploring vulnerability from teachers' and young people's perspectives in school contexts in England and Germany. *Research Papers in Education*, 1-18.

Section A: Are the results valid?	**Yes/No/can't tell**	**Comments**	**HINT: Consider**
Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes	The paper clearly articulates its aim to explore vulnerability in educators and students, focusing on the emotional aspects often overlooked in educational settings. The aim is to address the neglect of vulnerability and emotional dynamics in teaching practices and professional development.	• What was the goal of the research? • What it was thought important • Its relevance
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes	The paper utilises qualitative methods, including case studies and interviews, to delve into the emotional experiences and vulnerabilities of educators and students. This methodology is appropriate for exploring complex phenomena and understanding the nuanced emotional aspects of educational relationships.	• If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants • Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal?
Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	The research design, incorporating case studies and qualitative interviews, aligns well with the aim of exploring vulnerability and emotional dynamics in educational contexts. The design allows for an in-depth examination of individual experiences and relational aspects.	• If the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided to which method to use
Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes	The recruitment strategy, involving participants with diverse experiences and vulnerabilities, is appropriate for addressing the research aim of exploring emotional dynamics in educational relationships. By including a range of perspectives, the study	• If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected • If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study

		can capture the complexity of vulnerability in educational settings.	• If there are any discussions around recruitment (why some people chose not to take part)
Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes	The data collection methods, such as interviews and case studies, are tailored to capture the emotional experiences and vulnerabilities of educators and students. The data collection approach aligns with the research focus on understanding the emotional dimensions of educational relationships.	• If the setting for the data collection was justified • If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi structured interview etc) • If the researcher has justified the methods chosen • If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interview are conducted, or did they use a topic guide) • If methods were modified during the study. If so has the researcher explained how and why • If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc) • If the researcher has discussed saturation of data.
Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes	The paper acknowledges the emotional engagement of researchers with the participants and the school system, indicating a consideration of the relationship dynamics. The emotional responses of researchers are reflected upon, suggesting a thoughtful approach to the researcher-participant relationship.	• If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of research question (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location • How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implication of any changes in the research design
Section B: What are the results?			
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes	Ethical considerations, such as seeking informed consent, ensuring participant confidentiality, and reflecting on emotional responses, are evident in the research process. The paper demonstrates a	• If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained

		conscientious approach to ethical issues in conducting the study.	• If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study) • If approval has been sought from the ethics committee
Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes	The paper mentions the use of qualitative analysis methods, such as depth hermeneutic approaches, to analyse the data and identify themes and emotional dynamics. This suggests a rigorous approach to data analysis that considers the complexity of emotional experiences.	• If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process • If thematic analysis is used. If so, it is clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data • Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process • If sufficient data are presented to support the findings • To what extent contradictory data are taken into account • Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of the data for presentation
Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes	The paper provides insights into the neglect of vulnerability, the impact of limited resources, and the imbalance in focus on cognition over emotion in educational settings. The findings are presented in a coherent manner, highlighting the emotional dimensions of educational relationships.	• If the findings are explicit • If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for an against the researchers arguments • If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e,g triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst) • If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question
Section C: Will the results help locally?			

How valuable is the research?	Yes	The research adds value by shedding light on the emotional aspects of vulnerability in educators and students, emphasizing the need for a more balanced approach in educational practices. By exploring emotional dynamics and relational vulnerabilities, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities within educational relationships.	• If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research based literature • If they identify new areas where research is necessary • If the researchers have discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used

CASP Tool

Paper for appraisal: Sherry, J., Warner, L., & Kitchenham, A. (2021). What's Bred in the Bone: Transference and Countertransference in Teachers. *Brock Education: A Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, *30*(1), 136-154.

Section A: Are the results valid?	**Yes/No/can't tell**	**Comments**	**HINT: Consider**
Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes	The paper clearly states the aims of the research, which include exploring transference and countertransference in the school setting, outlining research methods, presenting interview data, discussing findings, and providing recommendations and implications.	• What was the goal of the research? • What it was thought important • Its relevance
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes	The use of a qualitative methodology, specifically hermeneutic phenomenology, appears appropriate for exploring the lived experiences and perceptions of teachers regarding transference and countertransference in the classroom.	• If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants • Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal?
Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	The adoption of a qualitatively driven mixed-method design, focusing on in-depth interviews and qualitative analysis, seems appropriate for addressing the aims of exploring teachers' experiences with transference and countertransference.	• If the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided to which method to use
Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes	The recruitment strategy, which involved inviting participants to take part in face-to-face interviews following a survey, appears appropriate for engaging teachers in discussing their understanding and management of transference and countertransference.	• If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected • If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study • If there are any discussions around recruitment (why some people chose not to take part)

Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes	The data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews and survey questions, seem to effectively address the research issue of exploring teachers' experiences with transference and countertransference in the classroom.	• If the setting for the data collection was justified • If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi structured interview etc) • If the researcher has justified the methods chosen • If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interview are conducted, or did they use a topic guide) • If methods were modified during the study. If so has the researcher explinaed how and why • If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc) • If the researcher has discussed saturation of data.
Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Unsure	The paper does not explicitly discuss the relationship between researchers and participants. However, the use of semi-structured interviews and a qualitative approach suggests that efforts may have been made to establish rapport and trust with participants.	• If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of research question (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location • How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implication of any changes in the research design
Section B: What are the results?			
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Unsure	The paper does not provide specific details on ethical considerations.	• If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained • If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have

			handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study) • If approval has been sought from the ethics committee
Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes	The paper describes a rigorous data analysis process using consensual qualitative analysis (CQA), involving coding, thematic analysis, and consensus-building among researchers. This suggests a systematic and thorough approach to analysing the interview data.	• If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process • If thematic analysis is used. If so, it is clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data • Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process • If sufficient data are presented to support the findings • To what extent contradictory data are taken into account • Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of the data for presentation
Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes	The paper outlines the results of the study, presenting themes related to transference and countertransference in the school setting. The findings are organised and discussed in relation to the research aims.	• If the findings are explicit • If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for an against the researchers arguments • If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their fundings (e,g triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst) • If the fundings are discussed in relation to the original research question
Section C: Will the results help locally?			
How valuable is the research?	Yes	The research on transference and countertransference in the school setting appears valuable in shedding light on the emotional dynamics of teacher-student relationships and the	• If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the

		implications for teacher training and practice. By exploring teachers' experiences and perceptions, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the emotional aspects of teaching.	fundings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research based literature • If they identify new areas where research is necessary • If the researchers have discussed whether or how the fundings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used

CASP Tool

Paper for appraisal: Stammers, L., & Williams, A. (2019). Recognising the role of emotion in the classroom; an examination of how the psychoanalytic theory of containment influences learning capacity. *Psychodynamic Practice*, *25*(1), 33-43.

Section A: Are the results valid?	**Yes/No/can't tell**	**Comments**	**HINT: Consider**
Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes	The paper clearly states the aim of alerting educationalists to the complexities of the classroom context, particularly emphasising the conscious and unconscious elements at work in teaching and learning.	• What was the goal of the research? • What it was thought important • Its relevance
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes	The use of a psychoanalytic, developmental framework and case studies suggests that a qualitative methodology is appropriate for exploring the role of emotion in the classroom and understanding relational influences.	• If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants • Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal?
Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	The focus on case studies and the psychoanalytic framework align with the aim of examining the role of emotion in learning, indicating that the research design is suitable for addressing the research aims.	• If the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided to which method to use
Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Unsure	The paper does not provide specific details on the recruitment strategy, so it is unclear how participants were selected for the study and whether the strategy aligns with the research aims.	• If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected • If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study • If there are any discussions around recruitment (why some people chose not to take part)

Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes	The use of case studies and observations suggests that the data collection methods are tailored to address the research issue of understanding the role of emotion in the classroom.	• If the setting for the data collection was justified • If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi structured interview etc) • If the researcher has justified the methods chosen • If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interview are conducted, or did they use a topic guide) • If methods were modified during the study. If so has the researcher explained how and why • If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc) • If the researcher has discussed saturation of data.
Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes- to some extent	The paper touches upon the importance of attunement and relational aspects in teaching, indicating some consideration of the relationship between researchers and participants.	• If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of research question (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location • How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implication of any changes in the research design
Section B: What are the results?			
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Unsure	While the paper does not explicitly discuss ethical issues, the focus on the well-being of children and teachers implies an underlying consideration of ethical implications in the research.	• If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained • If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have

			handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study) • If approval has been sought from the ethics committee
Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Unsure	The level of rigor in data analysis is not explicitly mentioned in the excerpts provided, so it is unclear how thoroughly the data was analysed.	• If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process • If thematic analysis is used. If so, it is clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data • Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process • If sufficient data are presented to support the findings • To what extent contradictory data are taken into account • Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of the data for presentation
Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes	The paper provides insights into the emotional experiences of children and teachers, highlighting the importance of emotional engagement in the learning process.	• If the findings are explicit • If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for an against the researchers arguments • If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e,g triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst) • If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question
Section C: Will the results help locally?			
How valuable is the research?	Yes	The research appears valuable in emphasising the significance of emotion in the classroom, challenging the traditional focus on cognition and	• If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the

		academic outcomes, and advocating for a more holistic approach to teaching and learning.	findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research based literature • If they identify new areas where research is necessary • If the researchers have discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used

CASP Tool

Paper for appraisal: Ramvi, E. (2017). Passing the buck, or thinking about experience? Conditions for professional development among teachers in a Norwegian middle school. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 5, 139–156.

Section A: Are the results valid?	**Yes/No/can't tell**	**Comments**	**HINT: Consider**
Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes	The study aimed to understand the conditions for learning from frustrating situations among teachers and explore the impact of identity violations on teachers' professional development.	• What was the goal of the research? • What it was thought important • Its relevance
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes	The use of an ethnographic approach is appropriate for gaining in-depth insights into teachers' experiences and perspectives in the school setting.	• If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants • Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal?
Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	The ethnographic design aligns with the aim of understanding teachers' emotional experiences and professional development in real-life contexts.	• If the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided to which method to use
Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Yes	The selection of participants based on their connection to the case, including formal interviews with key informants and colleagues, was appropriate for addressing the research aims.	• If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected • If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study • If there are any discussions around recruitment (why some people chose not to take part)
Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes	The data collection methods, including interviews, observations, and field notes, were suitable for capturing teachers' understanding and experiences related to frustrating situations.	• If the setting for the data collection was justified • If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi structured interview etc)

			• If the researcher has justified the methods chosen • If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interview are conducted, or did they use a topic guide) • If methods were modified during the study. If so has the researcher explained how and why • If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc) • If the researcher has discussed saturation of data.
Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Yes	The study appears to have considered the relationship between the researcher and participants by conducting interviews, maintaining field notes, and engaging in informal conversations to understand teachers' perspectives.	• If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of research question (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location • How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implication of any changes in the research design
Section B: What are the results?			
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes	The study received approval from the Norwegian Social Science Data Service, indicating that ethical considerations were taken into account.	• If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained • If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study) • If approval has been sought from the ethics committee

Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes	The study employed a narrative analysis approach to understand how teachers learned from frustrating situations, suggesting a rigorous analysis of the data.	• If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process • If thematic analysis is used. If so, it is clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data • Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process • If sufficient data are presented to support the findings • To what extent contradictory data are taken into account • Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of the data for presentation
Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes	The study provides insights into the impact of identity violations, emotional experiences, and relationships on teachers' professional development, indicating a clear statement of findings.	• If the findings are explicit • If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for an against the researchers arguments • If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e,g triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst) • If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question
Section C: Will the results help locally?			
How valuable is the research?	Yes	The research contributes to understanding the complexities of teachers' experiences and the importance of addressing emotional aspects in professional development, suggesting valuable insights for educational practice.	• If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research based literature • If they identify new areas where research is necessary

			• If the researchers have discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used

Appendix C: Summaries of individual papers selected for Literature Review

Ellis (2018) **Containment & Denial: raising awareness of unconscious processes present when teachers are working with children and families where there is domestic abuse**

Methods	Ellis (2018) explicitly state their use of psychodynamic concepts when exploring the perceptions and experiences of primary school teachers regarding domestic abuse. The mixed methods approach distributed questionnaires to 165 teachers across 26 primary schools within one local authority to collect self-reported knowledge of domestic abuse. Following descriptive and inferential analysis of teacher confidence in domestic abuse disclosure management, impact of domestic abuse training and awareness of school procedures, 8 participants were invited to take part in a semi-structured interview. The qualitative data generated was analysed using thematic analysis.
Findings	Four main themes: emotional factors of working with children who have witnessed domestic abuse, navigating the school system, relationships with the child and family, and uncertainty about teachers' knowledge and needs. These themes were discussed in relation to psychodynamic concepts of containment and denial. The conclusion by Ellis (2018) emphasised the importance of incorporating containment and denial into future safeguarding training for teachers to promote their well-being and resilience in the profession.

Ellis & Wolfe (2019) **Facilitating Work Discussion Groups with staff in complex educational provisions**

Methods	Ellis & Wolfe (2019) conducted action research across three educational settings, including one special school and two alternative provisions. The study involved Work Discussion Groups (WDGs), applying psychodynamic principles to group reflection rather than seeking immediate solutions. Participants, primarily female (90%), included teaching assistants, teachers, and middle leaders. The research followed the basic tenets of action research: plan, act, observe, reflect. Throughout the nine consecutive weeks of the study, the group structure, content, and facilitation methods of the WDGs were continuously adapted based on observations and reflections from preceding meetings.
Findings	Findings from the nine-week period emphasised the importance of staff well-being, physical space, being heard, and group readiness to engage in reflective group spaces. Behaviours indicative of basic assumptions were common, serving to avoid the primary task of the WDG due to its overwhelming nature. Psychodynamic concepts like splitting were observed, particularly in the context of split sites, where individuals psychologically divide intolerable feelings into good and bad to make them manageable. It was concluded that school systems should provide both physical and emotional space (containment/supervision) for educators to feel related safety and group belonging, which could enhance staff well-being and reduce feelings of burnout and emotional exhaustion.

Eloquin (2016) **Systems-psychodynamics in schools: a framework for EPs undertaking organisational consultancy**

Methods	Eloquin (2016) conducted case studies applying systems-psychodynamics to understand the emotional life of schools. Two separate schools were studied, each serving as a distinct case study, demonstrating the applicability of systems-psychodynamics to schools and their pedagogical practices. The first school was a residential setting for children aged 10-16, organized into education, care, and therapy departments. The second school was a secondary school at risk of having inadequate behaviour management judged by Ofsted, prompting the local authority to seek support from the researcher (Eloquin, 2016) to develop behaviour policy and practice.
Findings	Using a systems-psychodynamics approach, commonalities in educators' behaviour were identified in the studied schools. Similar to Ellis & Wolfe (2019), Eloquin (2016) suggested that much of this behaviour stemmed from activating basic assumptions to avoid the primary task. Confusion and lack of clarity about the primary task were seen as daunting as the task itself. Other psychodynamic concepts like splitting, projections, transferences, and countertransference contributed to the emotional landscape in both case studies. The application of systems-psychodynamics revealed hidden emotional responses to policy and practices among staff, leading to social defences inhibiting the school environment. Eloquin (2016) advocated for Educational Psychologists (EPs) to engage in this work, as they are skilled in containing organizational emotions and facilitating reflections on unconscious dynamics for individuals and the organization as a whole.

Fitzsimmons et al. (2021) **Developing and maintaining the teacher-student relationship in one to one alternative provision: the tutors experience**

Methods	Fitzsimmons et al. (2021) conducted an exploratory study on teachers' experiences working 1:1 with young people at risk of exclusion in alternative provision settings. Six teachers from secondary schools, with four from the same setting, were purposively sampled and invited to semi-structured interviews. Interviews took place either in the researcher's office or the participants' homes for convenience, reflecting the non-traditional educational settings where teachers worked. Applying both attachment and psychodynamic lenses, the study emphasized the importance of humanistic relationships for learning. Teachers expressed concerns about feeling inadequately trained or equipped to establish, maintain, or understand the relationships necessary for academic success.
Findings	Four main themes: connecting and tuning in, the look and feel of the relationship, bringing the whole person, and struggling with disconnection. These themes underscored the relational nature of teachers' work in alternative provisions and highlighted the emotional demands it entails. Conclusions emphasized the centrality of relationships in educating children, particularly those in alternative provisions or at risk of exclusion. The need for supervision to contain emotions emerged as a key requirement for this work. Application of attachment theory and psychodynamic theory suggested the importance of teachers being more aware of these psychological theories and concepts, indicating a need for more psycho-education and training.

Garret (2020) **Containing classroom discussion of current social and political issues**

Methods	Garret (2020) conducted research on the emotional dynamics of classrooms during political discussions. Two case studies were conducted in different American high schools. The psychoanalytic concept of containment was used to understand the generation of emotional affects in classrooms. The first case study focused on Confederate Memorialization, facilitated by a white male teacher in a predominantly African-American school in the southern United States. The second case study discussed American gun laws following a mass shooting in Florida. Both teachers observed were former graduates from the program taught by Garret (2020).
Findings	The study didn't report specific themes, but suggested that teachers manage emotions in classrooms by validating questions, asking questions, and paraphrasing to show understanding. This pedagogical practice was seen as teachers' ability to contain students' emotions, but it comes at an emotional cost to the teachers as no systems are in place to manage their own emotions. Physical space also influences students' emotional engagement, with the layout of the room hindering emotional discussion in one case study. Limited engagement in the second observation was interpreted as a social defence mechanism by students to protect themselves against the anxiety of the topic (gun control).

Jopling & Zimmerman (2023) **Exploring vulnerability from teachers' and young people's perspective in school contexts in England and Germany**

Methods	Jopling & Zimmerman (2023) conducted a comparative study examining how vulnerability is understood and supported in schools. The study compared policies and practices of teachers in England and Germany. Methodology involved a "mini meta-analysis," reviewing select papers from each country that investigated vulnerability among teachers and students. Only findings relevant to educators were discussed in the literature review. A depth hermeneutic approach was used to interpret data, generating latent themes and reflecting on the researcher's emotional responses.
Findings	In both England and Germany, relationships between teachers and students, as well as among colleagues, were crucial for sharing vulnerability. However, admitting professional vulnerability was perceived as weak in both countries, potentially damaging educators' professional identities. Jopling & Zimmerman (2023) suggested that admitting vulnerability was unconsciously avoided by teachers. Despite this, educators in both countries recognized the importance of sharing vulnerabilities, especially when supporting vulnerable children. The study concluded that sharing vulnerabilities is beneficial and should not be viewed negatively. This would require system changes to create safe spaces for sharing vulnerabilities without judgment.

Sherry et al. (2021): **What's bred in the bone: transference and countertransference in teachers**

Methods	Sherry et al. (2021) conducted mixed methods research to explore the use of psychodynamics within public school settings. The study focused on investigating teachers' understanding and management of unconscious processes like transference and countertransference in the classroom. Four teachers from secondary or primary schools in Canada participated in semi-structured interviews after completing questionnaires.
Findings	Seven themes were identified, four related to transference and three to countertransference. Themes included schema, relationship, context, unconscious; background/personal experience, self-awareness, and self-reflection. Each theme had subthemes (27 for transference, 17 for countertransference), analysed through consensual qualitative analysis. Conclusions highlighted the simultaneous noticing and unnoticed aspects of transference and countertransference by teachers, accepted as part of emotional dynamics in teaching. Transference and countertransference were sometimes positive, aiding rapport between teachers and students. Due to the emotions involved, Sherry et al. (2021) advocated for more supervisory spaces in schools and increased psycho-education for educators on the influence of the unconscious on pedagogy.

Stammers & Williams (2019) **Recognising the role of emotion in the classroom; an examination of hoe the psychoanalytic theory of containment influences learning capacity**

Methods	Stammers & Williams (2019) focused on the emotional aspects of teaching and learning, particularly in nursery classrooms, using psychodynamics to understand relational dynamics. The lead researcher, also a teacher and therapeutic practitioner, conducted two child case studies within the nursery where the research occurred. Observations were made of both children and adults interacting in the nursery. The children were British with Asian heritage, while the adults were White British. The dynamics between children and adults were analysed through a psychodynamic lens, applying the concept of containment to observed behaviours.
Findings	Findings were reflections gathered from observing children and educators, revealing the complexity of emotions in teaching and learning. The study argued that the current educational system is ill-equipped to handle such emotional complexity and advocated for system change. Stammers & Williams (2019) emphasized that emotions are not exclusive to children; educators also experience emotions that impact children's education through projections. The study critiqued the predominant focus on cognitive development and achievement outcomes, neglecting the emotional dimensions of education. Advocating for an educational paradigm that embraces emotional nuances, the authors proposed systems fostering empathetic connections between students and educators to optimize educational experiences and outcomes.

Ramvi (2017) **Passing the buck, or thinking about experience? Conditions for professional development among teachers in a Norwegian middle school**

Methods	Ramvi (2017) used an ethnographic approach to explore challenges teachers face in managing frustrating situations and emotions in schools. The research spanned one school year across two middle schools in Norway, involving 326 hours of fieldwork and data collection. Multiple data sources, including formal interviews and observations, were used to understand teachers' perspectives and experiences. Employing a psychodynamic lens, the study employed narrative analysis to explore themes related to problem background, understanding, and support mechanisms. The study aimed to enhance understanding of teachers' professional development by examining how educators and school communities navigate difficult emotional experiences and relationships.
Findings	Ramvi (2017) conducted extensive fieldwork, revealing the consequences of relationship failures in schools, particularly focusing on a specific incident involving a group of boys in a classroom. Using narrative analysis, three main themes were identified: background (issue origins), understanding of the problem, and support and problem-solving. These themes were analysed to track changes over time, highlighting shifts in experiences of support or the problem. The findings underscore the importance of acknowledging and processing emotional experiences for teacher learning and professional development. Ramvi (2017) advocated for a shift towards a nuanced understanding of how teachers learn from practices and emotional encounters within teacher professional development in education.

Appendix D: Limitations of individual papers selected for Literature Review

Author and Date	Specific limitations
Ellis (2018)	1) Study's concentration on primary school teachers in the United Kingdom may constrain the transferability of the findings to diverse educational contexts e.g nursery, secondary, post-16 or alternative provision. 2) Research relies heavily on the psychoanalytic concepts of containment and denial, potentially restricting the examination of broader psychological, psychodynamic processes influencing teachers' reactions to domestic abuse scenarios. By overlooking alternative processes and perspectives, the study may not fully capture the complexity and multifaceted nature of teachers' responses to situations involving domestic abuse.
Ellis & Wolfe (2019)	1) Study commissioned and funded by a charity who supports families/carers of vulnerable young children. Research commissioned by organisations faces several limitations. Firstly, independence may be compromised due to the vested interest, with pressure to align findings with the charity's goals being asserted either explicitly or implicitly. 2) The authors were sometimes part of the group and sometimes not. This is a limitation of design as researcher participation could have affected internal validity and the difference observed within the WDGs may not have been to do with the functionality or utility of WDG at all, but more a response of the changing group dynamics with or without a researcher being active in the group on any given cycle.
Eloquin (2016)	1) Findings can only be ascribed to the schools within the case study. Unconscious responses (individual or group) to similar situations cannot be assumed to be equally similar for other educators in other schools. Research using such a lens should seek to increase the number of settings within the sample pool to increase generalisability of the findings. 2) No explicit mention of the ethical considerations taken. Study explored sensitive, inter-relational dynamics between colleagues; protection from harm, confidentiality and power dynamics should have been addressed.

Fitzsimmons et al., 2021 (2021)	1) Researcher worked with four participants. Mitigation processes were put in place to address this, however, the significance cannot be overlooked. The connection the researcher has with the setting could increase blind spots. 2) Prior dissemination of interview questions. The intention was so participants could prepare answers. However, familiarity with the researcher and the questions could have led to behaviours in line with the Hawthorne Effect.: if participants are aware of what the researcher is "looking for", they respond in accordance with the perceived expectation. 3) Study does not allow for generalisations to whole class teacher-student relationships. The context pertained to a 1:1 relationship with pupils and therefore likely pertinent only to settings that are similar and not schools more generally.
Garret (2020)	1) Cconnection and power dynamic of the researcher and participants as past tutor. This may have increased social desirable practices whilst being observed and thus an accurate representation of pedagogy may not have been observed. 2) The researcher, having taught the participants, may have been subject to confirmation bias and observed what they wanted to see of his former students. Limitation 1 and 2 query the trustworthiness of this study. 3) Case study 1 took place in a southern state with a deep history of race inequality and case study 2 a week after a mass shooting. As the author states, the findings in this study are 'uniquely American' (Garret, 2020, p. 353) and so generalising to classroom practice per se should be done cautiously.
Jopling & Zimmerman (2023)	1) Study is a self-acclaimed "mini meta-analysis". No primary data was collected and conclusions were drawn based on interpretations of interpretations of data. 2) Researches could have been selective in their outcome reporting, selecting evidence from within the literature to affirm their hypotheses. 3) Quality of studies included in the min met-analysis is unknown. If studies included were not robustly quality assured, this by default would reduce the quality of any conclusion drawn by Jolping & Zimmerman (2023). These are common limitations of meta-analyses.

Sherry et al. (2021)	1) Questionnaire and interview were asking participants to consciously reflect on unconscious processes. This led to researchers using an interpretive lens to ascertain further examples of transference and countertransference. 2) Application of a certain lens will always bring a certain level of subjective interpretation. This research aimed to mitigate the subjectivity by conducting consensual qualitative analysis in search of what is assumed to be an objective truth. However, it is more in keeping with a psychodynamic lens to engage with the subjective and reflect on how this subjective has influenced the interpretation rather than attempting to explain it away. 3) Sherry et al. (2021) were exploring only transference and countertransference. There may be other processes present that may equally give rise to the behaviour of interest. Narrowing the scope may limit the credibility of this study.
Stammers & Williams (2019)	1) States a case study methodology was used and that observations formed the data collection component, no further methodological details were provided. Lack of transparency regarding research process raises questions about the rigor, trustworthiness and credibility of study's findings. 2) Study primarily focuses on the author's personal experiences as a teacher, as well as case studies from their workplace (nursery school). Findings and conclusions drawn from these experiences may not be generalisable.
Ramvi (2017)	1) The specific context of Norwegian middle schools may introduce cultural and institutional factors that could affect the transferability of the study's findings to educational settings in other countries or regions. 2) Study focused on a single case involving a specific incident with a group of boys in a classroom. This narrow focus may limit the breadth of insights gained and the applicability of the findings to a broader range of professional development scenarios.

Appendix E: Recruitment information pack: participant information and poster

The Tavistock and Portman
NHS Foundation Trust

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research Title: The role of the implementee in the implementation process: a psycho-social exploration of the experiences of educators when implementing trauma informed practices after having had trauma training (draft title and subject to change)

Who is doing the research?

My name is Ashley Smith and I am a trainee Educational Psychologist currently in my second year of study of the three-year course. I am undertaking this research as part of my doctoral thesis. Dr Maria Wedlock, a practising Educational Psychologist, will be supervising the research.

What are the aims of the research?

This research aims to explore the psychological and social factors that influence implementation, specifically the implementation of trauma informed practices. I am interested in exploring how the unconscious, or psychological influences that individuals are not aware of, affect the implementation of trauma informed practices after educators have been trained in them.

Who can take part in this research?

Any educator who works in school and has experience of having had trauma training within the past 2 academic years and has experience of implementing this training into their practice**.**

What will I be required to do?

You will be asked to complete two interview sessions. The first interview will ask about your experiences of using trauma informed practices.

The second interview will have two components. The first will ask you represent your place of work in a visual way and this will be discussed. The second component will be a follow up from the first interview. I will invite you to say more on certain topics or areas from the first interview or ask you to clarify meaning or details.

All sessions will be audio recorded, and later transcribed. Once this has been typed up, I will then delete the audio recording. The first interview will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour. The second interview session may be longer and last for approximately 60 - 90 minutes.

Do I have to take part?

It is at your discretion whether you want to participate in the research. If you consent to participate but then later wish to withdraw this consent, this is also possible. It will however not be possible to withdraw once the data analysis process has begun. However, by this time, your identity will be coded and anonymised.

If, during the interview sessions, you wish to leave, you can. At the end of the interview, I will check and confirm that you are happy for your interview data to be included or whether you wish to withdraw. It is also important to know that you can change your mind about withdrawing at any time up until I start the data analysis. At this point, withdrawal will no longer be possible.

Will anyone know what I have said?

When the study is written up, some of what you have said in the interview may be used in quotes in the study. The study will be seen by my supervisor and those that mark it. It may also be published in a journal, where other professionals might read it.

Your name and the school will **not** be written in the study, so people reading it will not know it was you who said a quote. However, someone in your school may know how you use certain phrases or that you have certain colloquialisms that may possibly be recognisable to others. The only time I would tell anyone about something you have said, is if I feel that you, or someone else, is at risk of harm.

Please also note that the data gathered within this research will be retained in accordance with the Trusts 's Data Protection and handling Policies.

Who has approved this research?

This research has been approved by Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust and Kent Educational Psychology Service.

What do I do if I am worried about something after the interview conversation?

You can speak to me using the contact details below or the designated member of staff in school. If you would rather speak to somebody outside of school, the following organisations can support you.

- Education Support Helpline: **08000 562 561**
- Education Support website : Education Support, supporting teachers and education staff

If you have any questions

If you have questions, there will be time before the interview starts, and after the interview finishes, for you to ask them. If you have any questions outside of those times, you can email me at [redacted]

If you have any concerns or complaints

If you have any concerns or complaints about the researcher or your involvement in this study, you can contact Paru Jeram, the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust Quality Assurance Officer using this email address - [redacted].

Thank you,

Ashley Smith

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

I AM A TRAINEE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST AT THE TAVISTOCK & PORTMAN NHS FOUNDATION TRUST. I AM INTERESTED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACHES.

INTERVIEWEES NEEDED

THESIS RESEARCH

EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATORS WHEN IMPLEMENTING TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACHES IN TO THEIR PRACTICE

CAN YOU HELP?

- Teacher, Teaching Assistant or Leader
- Have had trauma training in the past 2 academic years
- Attempts to implement trauma informed approaches in to your practice
- Willing to be interviewed & share your experiences
- Enjoy eating biscuits/cake

If interested and would like to participate, please inform [redacted]

I will then be in touch.

For more information, please feel free to contact me directly:

[redacted]

Appendix F: Example of signed consent form

NHS
The Tavistock and Portman
NHS Foundation Trust

Participant Consent Form

Title of research: The role of the implementee in the implementation process: a psycho-social exploration of the experiences of educators when implementing trauma informed practices (draft title).

This project is to be completed as part of the Doctorate in Child, Community in Educational Psychology. The findings of this study will be reported as a thesis as part of this course and may later be published in a peer reviewed journal.

Please put your initials in the boxes if you agree with the below statements

1	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	[redacted]
2	I understand that I have the choice of whether to take part in the study.	[redacted]
3	I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researcher will not be shared with others, unless they are concerned that I, or someone else, is at risk of harm, as per safeguarding rules.	[redacted]
4	I understand that an audio recording of the interviews will be taken and agree to this information being held by the researcher and the research supervisor up until it is transcribed. At which point it will be deleted.	[redacted]
5	I understand that quotes I say during the interview session will be used in publications of the study, but my name will not.	[redacted]
6.	I understand that my contributions will be kept for analysis and may be included as an appendix in the final write up of the thesis.	[redacted]
6	I understand that despite my name being removed, other people in school may recognise some of my phrases or colloquialisms	[redacted]
7	I agree to take part in the above study	[redacted]

Participant name: [redacted]	Date: 17/7/23	Signature: [redacted]	
Researcher name: [redacted]	Date: 17/7/23	Signature: [redacted]	

Appendix G: Interview schedule/outline

Interview Schedules/Outlines

Instruction for Organisation in the Mind drawing:

I'm going to ask you to draw this school and your role within it. You can draw it in any way you like but I'd like you to think of how you would represent this school and those within in. Does this make sense?

I'll give you approximately 10 minutes to draw this and I will not interrupt you whilst you are doing this. If you finish before then please let me know and we can begin to discuss your drawing.

Invitation to Discuss Organisation in the Mind Drawing

Thank you for doing that. Can you tell me what this picture is about and how it represents you, your role and your school?

Prompt Questions:

- Can you say / tell me more about that?
- (repeat a given word) – can you tell me more?
- How does it/that make you feel?

Part 1- Interview Session Schedule/Outline

The below provides an overview of the areas I will explore in the first interview. It is not my intention to ask all of these. The schedule will be refined as the research develops. The intention of a FANI schedule is that the participant feels they can speak uninterrupted and the researcher can prompt but should no interfere with free associations being made.

First Interview Questions:

- Can you tell me what it is like for you to use trauma informed practices in school?
- Can you tell me what it is like for you when you feel the trauma informed practice works well?
- Can you tell me what it is like for you when you feel the trauma informed practices does not work well?
- Is there anything I haven't covered or that you would want to say about your experience?

Prompt Questions:

- Can you say / tell me more about that?
- (repeat a given word) – can you tell me more?
- How does it/that make you feel?

Part 2- Interview Session Schedule/Outline

This session will be organised in to two parts. The first will ask the participant to draw an organisation in the in drawing. This will then be discussed. The below are the intended questions to use for the second interview. The schedule will be refined as the research develops.

Interview Schedule for Second Interview

The last time we met we talked about your experience of using trauma informed practices.

1. What thoughts or comments would you like to make about the previous interview? Or was there anything that you left the interview thinking about?

2. What thoughts or feelings have you had about returning to take part in the second interview?

Possible further questions

- Would it be helpful for me to mention some of the things that we discussed last time?
- I listened back to our conversation together, and there are a number of things that you mentioned last time, that I would explore more:
  - Last time we spoke, you mentioned feeling (for example) “actually wanting to cry” or feeling “guilty” when you didn’t use the trauma practices you’d been taught about. (Can you tell me more about that?)
  - You shared with me XXXXX and I wondered what this meant for you, in relation your use of trauma informed practices?
  - You talked about feeling (for example) “quite deflated” or “like you are using them well” when you Can you tell me a little more about that?
  - I am curious to understand more about when you said: “XXXXXX”.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking part in both interview sessions and sharing your experiences with me:

- Is there anything you would like to mention, that I did not ask and you may have expected to be asked?
- What thoughts do you have about the interview process? What has it been like?
- Is there anything that has come up for you in the interviews that has upset you or you would like to discuss with someone?

Appendix H: Examples of field notes taken

P1T1PRT1 *White* *Female* *AP leader* *Not SLT* *Secondary*	*When I first got to the school and waited for the participant, I remember thinking how quiet the school was. I then remembered it was strike day. The participant met me and we exchange pleasantries and she walked me over to where we would be conducting the interview. We then walked over to the alternative provision centre and she wanted to introduce me to the team and that's where we would make a cup of tea. I remember thinking how proud she was of the space she was leading and thought why it was she wanted to share and show it to me. The team seemed friendly and then we left to head back to the room where the interview was to be carried out.* *I got all the paper and consent forms out and the recorder. I remember feeling quite nervous about whether I would do it right, whether the recorder would work, whether the participant would speak enough – I felt very much out of my comfort of being a researcher and already felt like I had to be different to how I normally would be compared to how I would be in and am in a consultation.* *I explained the task and the organisation in the mind and after any questions participant signed the consent. I pressed record and the audio began counting down which meant it was recording. Phew. I felt an instant alignment with the participant and as she was drawing, I felt that I could feel her frustration in how she was scribbling with the pen and how she was drawing. She had a definite imagine in her head that she wanted to get down on paper. When I asked her to explain the drawing once she was done, I again felt frustrated and I caught this as a projection as I was not frustrated in myself and nor was I frustrated at her - I was certain that I was picking up on her frustration. And then she said she was frustrated and then my feeling dissipated. As the conversion went on, I felt the ebbs and flow of frustration as she was talking. At one point, she sat forward and straightened her back when she was talking about having to "fight" for the approach. Again, I felt her frustration but also felt ignited with her passion. At this point, I think I was experiencing a transference and countertransference as she was talking about members of staff who didn't understand the approach and she was trying al she could to lead it in school. This felt the same as me when I was in school, trying to lead on TIPs.* *Once the interview was over, I felt relieved and also a sense that I could have stayed for longer talking to her. I felt keeping in role as interviewer quite difficult as I wanted to jump in and expand on what she was saying and also to fill in her paused with my input and reflections. I didn't though. I kept repeating in my head that "this is not a consultation – you're collecting data". I also remember thinking "you don't need to give her strategies to help with change resistant staff members – that's not our purpose here". Although this internal dialogue was useful in keeping me in role, it did mean that there were times that my active listening lessened. However, the participant did do most of the talking and I was able to use word repetition to encourage more if needed.*

P4T2PRT1 *White Male Pastoral team Secondary*	*I got to the school and went to sign in. After I had done so, I asked if there was a bathroom that I could use. The receptionist said that I would have to wait as she was the only one on the desk and the toilets were inside the school. I said that was fine and then sat and waited. The receptionist phoned through to the participant and whilst on the phone said "are you ok to show him where the toilet is because he needs to go to the bathroom". I felt quite uncomfortable at hearing this. Firstly, the receptionist did not use my name which she knew after having signed in and secondly there was something in the phrasing of "he needs to use the bathroom" that made me feel somewhat infantilised. I did not address this with the receptionist.* *The participant came to collect me and walked to the room which was within the collection of rooms which I took to be the SEND hub as the SENDCO office was there, what looked like nurture rooms/chill out rooms were there. He showed me where the bathroom was on the walk to the room (I felt on the edge of embarrassed again). We both dropped our coats in the room and then I went to the loo and he went to make a tea. When I returned to the room, I set out the forms and the paper and waited for him to return. When he did, he began to read the information sheet. He saw the Dictaphone and said "oh we are going to be recorded". I said yes and explained that I would then listen back and transcribe to analyse. The participant seemed guarded and asked more about audio recording. I wondered why it might be that he appeared not to feel safe to share. I explained the coding and pseudonym processes and how all names of people, places and other identifiable features would be either redacted, removed or replacement names used. I thought already that there was defence and felt a little apprehensive that he might hold back and not share all that he might want to. I then had two thoughts. The first was that I would work to try and make him feel as relationally safe as possible in both my reassurances but also how I was in the interview and secondly, thought that I could discuss this with him in part 2. He read the consent information and then signed the form but with a "joking" comment about the statement on point 6 and the mistakenly typed second point 6. Drawings being used in the write up and although names would be anonymised some people may recognise certain turns of phrase in what was said. I assured him that if he didn't feel comfortable he could decline to sign and take part and that would be ok. He said no and that he wanted to take part, that it was important for him to do so and also that he was always "honest and says it how it is".* *The interview began and I was somewhat surprised at how talkative he was and how freely he seemed to be associating. I found that when I held silence, he would begin to talk again. At one point he spoke about being an adoptive parent and how he had also applied what he had learnt on the training for his adoption and how he has changed his parenting with his own children in his work with students in school. He said that he worked with children all the time in his role as DSL and a student wellbeing mentor who works closely with the SENDCO. He also used a phrase similar to "my partner always says that I bring too much work home". I instantly wondered if he was gay and thought that if he was an adoptive parent and used the phrase partner then he might be. I wondered if*

	this was something I was hoping for as I was a gay man and I wondered if I was searching for a connection or sense of attunement. Alternatively, he could have been thinking the same thing, or he isn't gay and actually does it matter anyway? I think the only reason it might be important to note is my connection and identification as a gay man. *Within the interview, the participant was speaking about his being an adoptive parent and how he had fostered. He gave an example of his son and how difficult it was at first but how it never even crossed his mind to terminate the placement. Within this story, there was a moment when I felt emotional at hearing his story and wondered if this was a projection of his. I shared this with him at the end of the interview and he seemed surprised that I felt that. Also at the end of the interview, he spoke about his current situation and how he had been communicating with school leaders after they had excluded a student for something that seemed, to him, not worthy of exclusion. He gave me his personal email address "in case" he wasn't here in September. I then asked him if he would mind sharing his experience of this and if I could start the audio again, he said yes but when the audio was on his narrative changed and he started to talk about how difficult it might be for the school based on the location and geography. This was very interesting to me as I assumed that there might be more "emotional charged" content in what he was talking about when the audio started again. Again, I thought as he was talking about geography and catchment areas that this could be something that might be discussed in part 2 after my listening in more detail. When the interview was over, he walked me over to the reception area to sign out and asked about the training I was doing. He also said that it was a shame that not more people from the school had not responded to the invite to be interviewed and he said that he would "see what he could do" and that I was to "leave it with him". I took this to mean he would try and recruit more people for me. I thanked him for his interest and said that I would be in touch to organise part 2 either late august or early September. I left.*

Appendix I: Transcription codes & notation system

Feature	**Notation**
The identity of the speaker	Use the speaker's name followed by a colon (for example, Anna:[colon]) to signal the identity of a speaker or Moderator:[colon]/Mod[colon]: or Interviewer:[colon]/Int:[colon] for when the moderator/interviewer is speaking; it may also be appropriate to use the moderator/interviewer's first name.
Turn-taking	Start a new line every time a new speaker enters the conversation.
Laughing, coughing etcetera	((laughs)) and ((coughs)) signals a speaker laughing or coughing during a turn of talk; ((General laughter)) signals multiple speakers laughing at once and should be appear on a separate line (to signal that no one speaker 'owns' the laughter).
Pausing	((pause)) signals a significant pause (in other words, a few seconds or more; precise timings of pauses are not necessary); can also use (.) to signal a short pause (a second or less) or ((long pause)) to signal a much longer pause.
Spoken abbreviations (for example, TV for television; WHO for World Health Organisation)	If someone speaks an abbreviation then use that abbreviation (for example, TV), but do not abbreviate unless a speaker does so.
Overlapping speech	Type ((in overlap)) before the start of the overlapping speech.
Inaudible speech	((inaudible)) for speech and sounds that are completely inaudible; when you can hear something but you're not sure if it's correct use brackets around the text (ways of life) to signal transcriber doubt or (ways of life/married wife) to signal multiple potential hearings.
Uncertainty about who is speaking	?[question mark] to signal uncertainty about the speaker, or name followed by a question mark (for example, Judy?[question mark]) to signal this is your best guess. Or, if you can only identify the sex/gender of the speaker, F?[question mark] or M?[question mark] to signal that the speaker is a woman or a man, but be mindful that gender isn't always easily readable from a person's voice.
Non-verbal utterances	Render phonetically and consistently. For example, common non-verbal sounds uttered by English as a first language speakers include 'erm', 'er', 'mm', 'mmhm'.
Spoken numbers	Spell out all numbers and be mindful of the difference between 'a hundred' and 'one hundred'.
Do I use punctuation?	It is common to use punctuation to signal some features of spoken language, such as using a question mark to signal the rising intonation of a question and a comma to signal the slight pause/emphasis of continuing intonation in speech. However, adding punctuation to a transcript is not straightforward and it is important to be mindful of the ways

	in which adding punctuation can change the meaning of an extract of data. Equally, punctuation enhances the readability of spoken data, especially extracts quoted in written reports.
Cut off speech and sounds	This level of detail is not necessary for most experiential forms of analysis, although it can be useful to signal moments when participants are struggling to articulate their thoughts, feelings etcetera and cut off speech can be a part of this. To signal cut off speech, type out the sounds you can hear then add a dash (for example, wor-[dash]).
Emphasis on particular words	Again, this level of detail is not necessary for most experiential forms of analysis, although it can be useful to signal words or sounds that are particularly emphasised by underlining (for example, word[underlined]).
Reported speech	When a speaker reports the speech (or thoughts) of another person (or reports their own speech in the past) signal this with the use of inverted commas around the reported speech. For example, "and she said [inverted comma open] 'I think your bum does look big in that dress' [close inverted comma] and I said [inverted comma open] 'thanks a bunch' [close inverted comma] …".
Accents and abbreviations/vernacular usage	It's important not to transform participants' speech into 'standard' English; however, fully representing a strong regional accent can be a complex and time consuming process! A good compromise is to signal only the very obvious or common (and easy to translate into written text) abbreviations and vernacular usage such as 'cos' instead of 'because' or a Welsh speaker saying 'me Mam' (instead of the English 'my Mum'), unless it is absolutely critical for your analysis to fully represent exactly how a speaker pronounces words and sounds.
Names of media (for example, television programmes, books, magazines etcetera)	These should be presented in italics (for example, *The Walking Dead, Men's Health* [italicised]).
Identifying information	You can either change identifying information such as people's names and occupations, places, events etcetera (for example, 'Bristol' to 'Manchester') or insert generic descriptions of the information in square brackets (for example, [square bracket open] [brother's name] [square bracket close]).

Appendix J: Initial notes after first listen, pre-transcription

P3T1PRT1 first listen

- Linked drawing OiM to sitting it the kids on a test
- Looking all smiley – whispered when drawing
- Asking questions about writing words – worried about getting it wrong?
- Hard to think about what you actually do every day – you just do it – what makes it difficult? Is it hard to think about what you do? What might it mean to do thinks out of habit or just because you do it – get in to automatic functioning – why? What might this suggest?
- Commented on mistakes in spelling
- But I can explain it –
- Level 2 teaching assistant was the first thing you said – means a lot or to justify
- Trained in Sept and have the dog at school – well-being dog
- Change in role and having this change how you feel about yourself and what others think about you
- New- unsure – feels like always explaining to people what it's for
- Fresh start for sept – [dog name] is the dog
- Lots of the children go see casually
- We're quite good here at linking together – house structure explained
- School has school counsellor
- Send has key workers
- Try and work together – what does this look like
- Here, there and everywhere – don't really have a place – don't have a base – does this effect identify and sense of worth in role – what does it mean to you not to have a place? Is this similar to the children who don't have a place or feel like they don't have a place? Difficult to find a zone to be in.
- How is she portrayed across the school – sounds like it doesn't take priority
- Everything, everywhere
- Have sessions planned and then people come to you and need you – dependency?
- Try to be structured but that's difficult
- The more you know, the better it is – is this the same for educators? Do you need to know the background to be trauma informed?
- Distinction of can't fix and change but what can be done to support? Tyr and help
- Some are more complicated – what is this like for you?
- Lifetime of constant trauma and some have had something recent
- Varies massively depending on the child
- We – as a team – Lara, SENDCO and house officer and maybe counselling
- Gatekeeper (my word) of SENDCO and house officer – want you to look at this but them Lara can say I think this is what we should look at. Lara is approached and told who needs it. Unless Lara spots something and then finds out more about it – on a mission to find out and see if she can help
- Sense of team work and this being helpful
- Finding a room and s pace is stressful and annoys you – mentioned it a couple of times. Sense of understanding about lack of space but wanting to stay true to training – what makes a good safe space. Find it difficult to maintain the consistency. Children don't mind

and Lara gives valid reason for change in location – would be good to have a hub, have the resources and kids just know that's where they go. It's a school and its difficult – has a door but not a proper door – can hear English lesson – not quiet. Being interrupted and then stopped and can't get back on track. Struggling with this the most. Getting used to it – should you have to? Could do with a consistent space – this is your current battle

- Battle and mission – you ask and you get a possible and we'll look at it – nothing will happen. Be patient then give another option. Poke to site guy – room not being used – need to speak to people above who give the yes and no. Didn't get back but then when asked was told couldn't have the room. Went to deputy SEDNCO. Understands school is going for changes. Tried to ask for spaces but will just have to wait for the ELSA space – felt like not taken seriously enough. All the things will happen first and then if you get a space.
- Then just give up – link to child and how they feel
- Link to hierarchy and people in charge – teachers and then gets to my bit – last – thought – this is frustrating.
- Someone will get sick of you at just give you the room eventually
- Used hands to demonstrate the hierarchy
- Don't really know the details of the hierarchy
- Governors – head – deputy – teachers – support staff – additional staff
- Get it with the kids – only a TA is said by the students. Adults pick children up on this but if someone at LT need it they will get it more than you will "down here". People do care but…
- Lara knows she doesn't know that full picture – e.g library moving but she didn't know
- Naturally there has to be people in charge – get sit but still frustrating
- Sept do a presentation of what she need – solution focused thinking
- Just a TA, only a TA, down here – left uni didn't know what to do – never knew what she wanted to do. Saw job and didn't need degree – would be quiet nice – couldn't deal with primary as too needy. Started in classroom. Did year and then had covid. Then level 2 came up All math intervention. Old dog left. Then got a dog – not easy – link to me
- What should we do with the dog – moved on to well-being and then did ELSA - recognized her own progression
- Stigma attached to being TA – just stand in a classroom – but actually really hard work
- Teacher is next step as you have your degree – aren't you going to be a teacher?
- But I like the well-being-pastoral side of things – are the two mutually exclusive?
- If people are asking if you're not going to move on does that mean this isn't what I should be doing? – there is link here to psychodynamics – needs more thought
- Just a TA – kids say "can't do anything" – teachers are appreciative. Stigma not from people around in school but more national
- Teachers get pay rise but TAs don't – gets put in to groups – reinforces that TA is in a different category
- Job has changed and maybe unfair – she does more training and has a bit more "respect" and "seen as more important" – not all TAs have this
- Seen as more important by student mainly – exposure and communicate in with the kids a lot
- If not in lesson children don't know TA– relationship is therefore important
- Looking busy helps makes people look more important – all guilty of thinking this way
- Child born addicted to drugs and alcohol – given back to mum – was in foster home – adopted by 2 dads. It's lovely!

- Support that 100% - but as a teenage boy he doesn't has a mum – he never brings it up – mother's day – his life if different – link to gay dads for me as a gay man
- He was almost kicked out
- Called it zones with him – zone 1 getting mad someone might help me, zone 2 – "gone"
- Unsure if the school would be able to support him and this would have made clear at the beginning
- In the beginning, incidents happened – not as bad as the school thought
- Was a self-harmer in time of escalation – pens and rulers scratching at the hand
- At first – little bit…. didn't finish sentence
- Described boy as having split personality
- There were bits and bobs and things were happening
- How about giving ELSA a go with him – all unsure if he would respond to it
- Anxiety of making it worse and triggering him
- 8 sessions – looked at anger
- Now child is open and can talk about it – anger, friendships, safe spaces, safe people, got attachment issues and so building trust up has taken all year. Not seeing him meant that relationship was slow to develop. Felt good when he said Lara was a safe person. He loves the dog – what does this feel like
- When talk about him, Lara wants to cry – what is this about – boy started and now he's very different – pride – where does the relationship with pride come from?
- Walking away and finding an adult and I feel they have said this – don't want to be angry OMG he's done all the stuff – that was huge and would not have happened a few months ago. Being able to talk about feelings – this is new – how does this feel for you? What does it feel about how you feel about this progress he has made and what your contribution of that was? Well done me
- Other examples of when it works but then something happens and then they don't
- Summer holidays and separation from school might affect how they are after summer
- How is he getting on so far – only in year 7 (now year 8)
- Wanting to cry – quite an emotional person – I am and I'm not – half the time I'm fine.
- When school got pipework – "what we going to do with this one"? paperwork suggested no way they could support that – how is this going to go – prepare yourself to…..?
- People already though it was going to fail
- Element that he has proved everyone wrong
- Like to see the ones that people don't expect to do well – rooting for that child – prove them wrong – knowing that she is helping
- Hate lists of names but will say no to putting on list unless they are getting seen
- If they are on Lara list, there are getting seen so she knows they are getting seen otherwise you're not actually helping them
- As a school we will do it – when its positive you used we and not I as much.
- Just cry when people do well – don't have kids but it's like having kids – proud mum moment – psychodynamic link to flesh out
- Have sad tears too – when and where and why?
- Relief tears – holding things in and then release – parasympathetic system
- More difficult when the trauma is present and current
- How do you overcome that? Try and go through it but it's happening – too raw and too soon
- Emergency foster situation, court case, don't want to go back to mum

- Raw emotions and happening right now – too real to sit and go through it. They don't want to talk about it. Psych link again.
- Child won't talk, wont acknowledge it – how do you deal with it? Can't change its happening but still want to help. Only thing she can do is acknowledge feelings – you're allowed to feel this. Validate feelings – is this true in all the school?
- Heartbreaking – strong emotional connection
- Not qualified enough to deal with – Recognising to say "that's not for me to do" – need more professional than her.
- Well-being with [dog name] comes in – can just come in and sit with dog and have time away from it
- Hard to deal with – deputy head is DSL and said struggled to shut out – defense mechanism?
- Another girl who is suicidal and ASC diagnosis – talking and this is difficult
- Want to help but only so much you can do. Want to be here for them but they are not here. Thinking about what can be different in sept – things going on right now and only so much you can do and will always try and help where she can.
- Can have successes and then ones that don't
- Just feel for them because they are kids
- Had normal upbringing and easy life really – hard to imagine what they are going through – they're difficult – you try and do what you can do for them
- How is she getting on now in sept?
- Example of talking to her whilst in escalation and unable to talk about it in the moment but can talk about it after
- Looked to see where [dog name] was as she didn't want to hurt him – paused, where's the dog – spoke about throwing the chair in the pause
- The repeating and not changing feels difficult and tricky
- Don't really think about it when you're growing up
- Mum dad, sisters, never didn't have food, new clothe, school uniform ready
- Youngest was a little bit spoilt – I am the favourite quite obviously, sisters moved out so was just her in house. Sounded trusting relationships. Never shouted at. East childhood – how it should be. But you look at all the kids and they don't have those basic needs met. Don't have washed shirts, or meals provided.
- Split families if they are handles right doesn't need to be harmful
- Shocking how many children don't have basic needs met – don't know this until you work in school – could this be why being trauma informed is tricky as it forces you to see things that you haven't experienced?
- Make their situation appreciate what she has
- Social media doesn't help- bullying link and cyber link bullying – constantly on the phones
- Recognising how lucky she is in her childhood
- School on a council estate and so cohort might be more prevalent because of this? School do give food packages.
- Don't realised it goes on until you see it in school. Fortunate enough to have a normal upbringing.
- Knowing how far she can go – psychology degree, had ELSA – at what point is it past her pay grade?

My take-aways from the interview:

- Identity of TA
- Hierarchy
- Frustration of not having a place or space
- Competency and limit of what she can do – boundaries
- [dog name] and his impact
- Relationships – as a team member – with the children
- Feeling pride like a mother
- Comparing own lucky childhood with realising other children don't have what she had
- Certain children sticking with you – what is it about these children that might had made them stick?
- Wanting to do a good job

Appendix K: Extract of transcript

P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
It's then quite uncomfortable because I don't want to undermine the member of staff, but equally… I know that's not going to work and erm so it just feels like a constant shielding without looking like I'm making excuses, pandering, undermining and I'm not a senior member of staff in the school either
Researcher
Right.
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
so erm I'm I would like be middle management. But in terms of when I'm brought in to like, some quite big cases in the school, it feels like I'm more SLT.
Researcher
OK
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
so it's it's quite a…a grey area of a role erm when you have an exams factory that that is what a school is at the end of the day…erm..but equally the the behaviour that we're seeing in education at the minute is everything but that. You can't access *that* when they can't regulate and the emotions kind of take over… and that kind of just feels battering when you're hearing the secondary trauma, you're dealing with the secondary trauma…you are… shielding the secondary trauma behaviours. And then managing and mediating staff, students, relationships, families and student relationships and I think personally, for me that is how it feels a lot, which is causing *this (pointing at the OiM)* in terms of the processing and and having a knock on effect. You know you don't get supervision or anything like that…erm so I think that's just a really good representation of my role, and I think a lot of staff would feel quite similar.
Researcher
Uhuh
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
It's just that there role perhaps isn't…errmm… needed with the shielding as much because in their head they're like, well, I'm the teacher so this is what *you* do and this is what *I* do.
Researcher
Mmmm
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
Where is for me, I'm like it has to be a team.
Researcher
Mmmm
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
And we need to get rid of the blame culture. We need to work together, and then there's a shift in culture.
Researcher
Mmmm
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
So, and I think that's where I'm at at the moment. Is trying. I'm trying to shift a whole culture in a school that and it feels really foreign …erm…so…
Researcher
Foreign?
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
For them.
Researcher
OK, who's them?
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)

Staff. Not all. I'm sweeping statementing here, but this whole year when we've been delivering Thrive to staff…erm… You can see I do overanalyse anyway, that is what I do from my drama degree is… Is observe behaviour

Researcher

Mmmm

P1T1PRT1 (Jane)

and, but that goes in my job role. I can see when someone is already disengaged the, you know the rolling of the eyes, the body language. I can see all of that before they've even said, "Oh, goodness. Oh God, do this again. It's a waste of time. Got so. Much to do", or like. You know, we have had comments, it is a waste of time. We haven't learned anything, erm we don't need counselling. Those sorts of comments when we do training.

Researcher

And just for clarity, that's comments from staff.

P1T1PRT1 (Jane)

Yep

Researcher

So thank you. So more broadly then and you can sort of feel free to relate back to this (pointing at OiM).

P1T1PRT1 (Jane)

Yeah

Researcher

So would you mind telling me about what it's like for you? And implementing trauma informed practices in your teaching or in your role in school.

P1T1PRT1 (Jane)

Frustrating…erm is the biggest is the biggest one because it feels like and it sounds really dramatic. It does feel like you versus the world… trying to get people to understand the explanation. But it's not an excuse. It's an explanation of why they are behaving like that. Erm and the frustration comes from explaining ACES. You know, we've had training and in err ACES in September and it was quite powerful, I would say, where it was like a light bulb moment for some staff.

Researcher

Ok

P1T1PRT1 (Jane)

But … then when you're in a classroom. That's so, you know, there's there's no triggers for anyone in there. Then I come in and do staff training and talk about what might trigger us to act a certain way that could trigger them because of what's happened to them and working with staff on that erm and the frustration comes from them not hearing… And saying it in the moment, but applying it and it's the application where I think there's quite a barrier.

Researcher

Mmm

P1T1PRT1 (Jane)

In the school erm with some teachers I've been doing Thrive with so and in a lot of it is like behaviour management basically in the classroom and it's because of the volume in which they are talking to the students. It's the way that they look at the students, the moment they come in, it's all of the erm body language. That they are kind of like at loggerheads. So when I'm saying have you tried standing at the front of the door and welcoming the students, which for me is just a no brainer? And if that means you perform, you perform and you'll get more out of them. And you said that they don't have equipment. So for me, I would just get a pen pot and be like, "oh, I've got a pen if you haven't got one.", erm "How's your day going?" That sort of thing to diffuse that barrier.

Researcher

Mmm

P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
It made a huge difference when they came in because they were prepared, but then then doing it without me there then just doesn't carry on.
Researcher
OK.
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
And and it's like they've literally forgotten what we've just discussed. Or I then started erm in a science lesson the 1st 15 minutes to model… how to … erm be boundaried for students, bearing in mind a lot of students in the class I'm referring to have experienced ACES…
Researcher
Mmm
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
Erm they have… erm a lot of trauma currently in their lives, so I've talked about the volume, where you stand, how you speak to the student as well. Erm… it can still be boundaried, and there's still consequence with with, with trauma informed approaches.
Researcher
Mmm
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
It's not about saying that's OK, don't worry that you're swearing at me. We'll forget about and that's what people think it is. Even with the education and staff training, even with those conversations. I'm like there is still consequences. It's still boundaried, it's being able to have the skill set to diffuse something without it escalating.
Researcher
Mmm
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
And having the child's voice heard
Researcher
Mmm
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
Talking to them…what can I do? But because some some staff are erm… I don't know if I'll use…old school. Well, I'm the teacher. They should respect me anyway.

Researcher
Mmm
P1T1PRT1 (Jane)
That doesn't work because that didactic teaching…erm you can still be at the front saying I'm going to speak for this amount of time and then I'll come over to you…And and then speak to you, you you can still have all of that in place… ah and meet their needs without having to shout and scream to demand control and power.
Researcher
When you say old school?

Appendix L: Examples of theme development during data analysis

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Particip	Transcript	Transcript	Notes	Initial	Refine 1	Refine	Refir	Sub Theme	Theme
39	Bree	B38	but…erm…there's been…erm…I think…5 heads in as many years or it has been quite a bit of turbulence,		change in leadership causes instability in system				Leadership sets the tone	Internal systems and surrounding contexts
43	Bree	B42	rural…environment and we're sort of on the edge of the [identifies area] so…kind of feels erm quite appropriate in a village location erm sort of water and fields around.		outside factors such as parents/local area				External agencies, other stakeholders and geographical consideratio ns	Internal systems and surrounding contexts
52	Bree	B51	I think there are maybe some recruitment challenges in the area and obviously there's the retention, recruitment challenges and teaching in general.		Broken system				Broken system: limited resources, funding and time	Internal systems and surrounding contexts
63	Bree	B61	I don't always feel that comfortable with the hierarchy of schools.		the hjierarchy makes Bree feel uncomfortable				Leadership sets the tone	Internal systems and surrounding contexts
64	Bree	B61	I don't always feel that comfortable with the hierarchy of schools.		feel uncomfortable with the sructures within school				Leadership sets the tone	Internal systems and surrounding contexts
70	Bree	B65	because I think coming erm from a support staff background I feel quite so sensitive about that, maybe.		background as TA has made her feel senstive about the structures					Personal and professional identity
75	Bree	B69	I actually feel socially I feel quite connected to…erm members of staff who aren't specifically teaching and learning,		Connection					Personal and professional identity
	Bree	B72	I think teaching can be a little bit lonely		teaching is lonely	emotion felt by an educator			Longevity takes a toll	Emotional labour in being trauma

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Particip	Transcript	Transcript	Notes	Initial	Refine 1	Refine	Refir	Sub Theme	Theme
464	Kate	K145	we've moved on so much from the kind of 1950s, sixties kind of ethos of…really strict education system. I think it's a different world		Times have changed					Having sufficient knowledge
469	Kate	K150	and we're creating different people for a different world.		Times have changed					Having sufficient knowledge
482	Kate	K163	Ermm, conflict I suppose is more…yeah, professional difference.		Conflict/disagreement				Navigating interpersonal emotions	Emotional labour in being trauma
485	Kate	K165	But that's more…that's more linked to my own personal kind of experiences and need to…have harmony, P5T1PRT1(Kate) laughs which is what I try and create most of the time,		need to help provide harmony in the interactions she is					Personal and professional identity
499	Kate	K179	So they think they know best, but we know that families know their situation best and we need to be working with rather than being a big stick.		working with colleagues/parents/other professionals				External agencies, other stakeholders and geographical consideratio	Internal systems and surrounding contexts
500	Kate	K179	So they think they know best, but we know that families know their situation best and we need to be working with rather than being a big		Giving punishments didn't work					Integral role of relationships
501	Kate	K180	So I think sometimes that erm… over the years my role…within, the trust has has been quite conflicting for me because my…my core beliefs are are are quite different to…erm what is expected from…some head teachers and…and the the government, I		Conflict/disagreement					Personal and professional identity

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Particip	Transcript	Transcript	Notes	Initial	Refine 1	Refine	Refir	Sub Theme	Theme
3099	Carl	C1583	But actually when you're getting maybe and it's and again it's not about money as such, but if you are getting paid about 1/3 of what others are and you're doing all of that?		School as business/ money related				Broken system: limited resources, funding and	Internal systems and surroundin g contexts
3100	Carl	C1584	And you're doing a good job making progress. It's kind of not right. And and then it's impacting on home.		Time away from family				Broken system: limited	Internal systems and
3102	Carl	C1586	But I mean yeah, you know we...that's probably my own difficulty, though of not being able not separating very well and not having a work life balance.		Time to TIPs outside of school hours				Broken system: limited resources, funding and	Internal systems and surroundin g contexts
3110	Carl	C1591	Yeah, my partner was a bit. Yeah, he'll get a bit pissed with it sometimes and say, you know well where where's so and so, what are		Time away from family				Broken system: limited resources,	Internal systems and surroundin
3115	Carl	C1595	Because the amount of work was quite intensive and and actually it needed to be done like that.		Being TIPs is a commitm ent				Emotional impact of vicarious trauma	Emotional labour in being trauma informed
3118	Carl	C1598	I literally started and went in and I was there by half seven and I'd get home at maybe 5 or half five when I should be doing 8 till four.		Time away from family				Broken system: limited resources,	Internal systems and surroundin
3119	Carl	C1599	I wouldn't stop all day if you had time for the toilet you were lucky, you know. But I don't complain. I don't complain about that.		Educators are time poor				Longevity takes a toll	Emotional labour in being trauma
3121	Carl	C1601	And then I'd come home. And then if I needed to catch up, I'd be doing that as well. Or at the weekend or		Time away from family				Broken system: limited	Internal systems and
3123	Carl	C1603	Yeah, kind of maybe something that I have to work work on for anything I do in the future maybe, but I think it's the nature of being within education, unfortunately.		Broken system				System does not account for nor designed for the	Internal systems and surroundin g contexts
3128	Carl	C1608	You know. And so how's it been today? Oh, yeah. Well, yeah, a bit of a nightmare.		Emotional ly taxing				Emotional impact of vicarious trauma	Emotional labour in being trauma informed
	Carl	C1609	And. And then like would just get frustrated for me, you know and like, be protective I think of like it's actually not OK and you know why?		Frustrated at other educators				Emotional impact of vicarious trauma	Emotional labour in being trauma

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Particip	Transcript	Transcript	Notes	Initial	Refine 1	Refine	Refir	Sub Theme	Theme
6062	Lara	L1070	makes you a little bit more human and a little bit more... And I do, I don't share loads of them, but I do. I		Self in role and self					Personal and profession
6063	Lara	L1070	makes you a little bit more human and a little bit more... And I do, I don't share loads of them, but I do. I		Connectio n					Integral role of relationshi
6067	Lara	L1073	you're doing your training and stuff, it's. Kids that don't have their basic needs, met, it's this, it's this and		Comment on adversity					Having sufficient knowledge
6107	Lara	L1113	get it and like and I feel like I get them and I kind of...sometimes, I suppose adults can be quite...		Descriptio n of other educators					Emotional labour in being
6109	Lara	L1115	they do, they really want someone to be there for them. I'm not saying that adults don't, but adults can be a little bit more shut off to things.		Defence mechanis m	OR psychosocial			Lack of emotional support	Emotional labour in being trauma informed
6115	Lara	L1121	I can come in and I can talk to them and I I don't find that a challenge. I find it natural so. Yeah, I		being TI is who I am					Personal and profession
6117	Lara	L1123	always chatting to them and talking to them and wanting to help them. And then that's just sort of led me to		Communic ation/com municatin					Integral role of relationshi
6119	Lara	L1123	always chatting to them and talking to them and wanting to help them. And then that's just sort of led me to		Saving/sa viour					Personal and profession
6127	Lara	L1131	It seems like the right thing for me to be doing so.		being TI is who I					Personal and
6143	Lara	L1147	you see one of the kids you've been working with doing really well or having a really good relationship		TIPs is affective/i t works				Positive emotions make the labour worthwhile	Emotional labour in being trauma informed

Appendix M: Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC) approval

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

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Ashley Smith

By Email

28 March 2023

Dear Ashley,

Re: Trust Research Ethics Application

Title: 'The role of the implementee in the implementation process: a psycho-social exploration of the experiences of educators when implementing trauma informed practices after having had trauma training.'

Thank you for submitting your updated Research Ethics documentation. I am pleased to inform you that subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee your application has been approved. This means you can proceed with your research.

Please be advised that any changes to the project design including changes to methodology/data collection etc, must be referred to TREC as failure to do so, may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct.

If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Academic Governance and Quality Officer
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cc. Course Lead, Supervisor, Research Lead

Appendix: N: Example of OiM drawing (Jane)

Appendix O: Example of OiM (Kate)