

Doctor in Education (EdD) – International

*Bullying, bullying prevention and interdisciplinary practice in primary schools:
The insights of bullying prevention through the lens of Cypriot professionals*

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IOE/UCL

Declaration

I, Christodoulos Charitou, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis. The word count of the thesis is 58682.

Christodoulos Charitou (signature)

List of Abbreviations

AP	Action Plan
AR	Action Research
CITT	Collaborative Interdisciplinary Team Teaching
COSV	Cyprus Observation of School Violence
DIT	Direct Intervention Taskforce
EdD	Doctor in Education
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FOP	Foundation of Professionalism
GT	Grounded Theory
IFS	Institutional Focus Study
IOE	Institute of Education
MA	Masters
MOE	Methods of Inquiry
MOEC	Ministry of Education Cyprus
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RTP	Remove the Power
SW	Social Worker
T	Teacher
TA	Thematic Analysis
TiE	Theatre in Education
TP	Theatre Practitioner
UCL	University College London
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WABF	World Anti-bullying Forum
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSA	Whole School Approach

Abstract: The definition of bullying has been the subject of debate by researchers, who are exploring various traits of its manifestation. The ongoing research around bullying aims to better understand and define the act, while guidelines from policies and examples from research-based prevention practices contribute to the de-escalation of this behaviour. The aim of the current study is not to offer a new definition about what bullying entails, but rather to understand the way that the theory and research concerning bullying, existing bullying policies and actual practices, interconnect with and impact each other, through the lens of professionals actively engaged in the prevention of bullying. The study is connected to research conducted in Cyprus, with the aim of understanding and revealing the insights of five professionals around bullying and bullying prevention practices. The research questions focus on the professionals' understanding on bullying and bullying prevention practices, the way that their disciplinary identity, academic background and work experience, influence their understanding of bullying, their awareness of their own professional identity regarding the others' bullying prevention practices, and their understanding around the possibilities, the limitations and the challenges of interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention. Five professionals, working for bullying prevention in primary education in Cyprus, an educational psychologist (EP), a music therapist (MT), a teacher (T), a theatre practitioner (TP) and a social worker (SW), were selected through purposeful sampling. Following an Action Research methodological approach, the data collection involved professionals writing short vignettes illustrating some aspects of their work, participating in individual interviews based on the vignettes and finally, three focus groups, where they met in order to exchange perceptions, which respond to research questions. The findings reveal that the professionals hold a broad understanding of bullying which is linked with their actual practices. Additionally, the professionals entered a process of increased critical reflection, giving new information and shedding light on the efficacy of their and others' prevention practices, finding their role and responsibilities, and developing their professional identity around bullying prevention. Finally, they identified multiple challenges of interdisciplinary collaborative practice and assessed the opportunities that the process could bring both for their personal and professional growth, and for the education of the pupils. The study concludes with the insights of the research, identifying its limitations and challenges, which impacts the trustworthiness of the results. It reveals that further research is needed in order for interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention to reach its full potential, while illustrating the way that the findings can inform and problematise future anti-bullying policies and professional practice for bullying prevention in general.

Impact statement

This study has offered bullying prevention professionals a platform to present, through their own lens, what they believe about bullying, bullying prevention, effective professional practice and interdisciplinary collaboration. Their input may help individuals in charge of bullying prevention, be the policymakers or leaders in the Ministry of Education and Culture Cyprus (MOEC), understand the long-term impact of interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention in Cypriot primary education. A longer-term perspective on the usefulness of interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention may greatly improve bullying prevention practices and contribute to a de-escalation of bullying in the Cypriot primary educational context.

The research findings are related to the understanding of the complexity of bullying, the efficacy of current bullying prevention and the prospect of an interdisciplinary collaborative process to improve understanding and offer alternatives for bullying prevention. This study is useful in offering some explanation to professionals involved in bullying prevention, particularly teachers, seeking to make sense of the various options they can employ in the struggle to limit bullying in the Cypriot primary educational context. It offers the opportunity of opening up and exploring ways of working with other professionals, with the common aim of helping their pupils overcome the problems that the complex issue of bullying creates.

For researchers and practitioners, the findings of my thesis, which explore the links between policy design and implementation as well as the parameters of collaborative practice, help in providing a background context of the possibilities, the limitations and the challenges that professionals can encounter when proceeding with any kind of interdisciplinary work. By acknowledging these limitations and challenges, they understand the possibility of interdisciplinarity when applied in different contexts, with different objectives and diverse aims. For the latter, the publications with my supervisor and fellow doctorate students (i.e. Jones, P., Charitou, C. Mercieca, D. and Poplete Nurez, H. (2019) 'Reflective Practice and participant involvement in research', *Reflective Practice*, Vol 20, No. 4: 453-468 <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2019.1638244> and Jones, P., Charitou, C. Mercieca, D. and Poplete Nurez, H. (2019) 'Critical Practice in work with children and young people: perspectives from research'. In Robb, M., Montgomery, H. and Thomson, R. (2019) (eds) *Children practice with children and young people*, Bristol, The Open University) are particularly useful. Those publications introduced me to the field of academia and to the way that findings can be presented in articles and book chapters for use in future research.

Throughout my studies for the Doctor in Education (EdD), I participated in four major conferences, presenting different aspects of my findings each time. These conferences are the Drama Australia, Drama New Zealand International Conference (Sidney-July 2015), the 5th International Scientific Conference for Interdisciplinarity (Heraklion-April 2019), the 2nd World Anti-bullying Forum (WABF) (Dublin-June 2019) and the 3rd WABF (Stockholm-November 2021). Additionally, I gave presentations at numerous national conferences and seminars. My participation in these conferences and the discussions with fellow researchers and scholars has contributed to developing our shared understanding of our purpose in producing new findings around bullying and bullying prevention. The latter has been of paramount importance in the analysis and presentation of my findings.

The work of this Thesis has already provided the foundation for professional discussion amongst MOEC's policy makers, the Cyprus Observatory on School Violence (COSV) and the Direct Intervention Taskforce (DIT). For this reason, in 2016, MOEC appointed me to collaborate with the COSV. Through this collaboration, my preliminary results were presented to its members, which assisted in creating two training courses for the primary sector of education and one for the higher education sector, around a holistic approach to bullying prevention, including an explanation regarding the parameters of the Cypriot anti-bullying policy and the elements of collaboration with professionals. In accordance with these, two manuals were published for all Cypriot teachers, one including diverse activities for bullying prevention and the other proposing interdisciplinary practices in dealing with bullying amongst pupils. Additionally, COSV took into consideration the theoretical framework of my thesis and the analysis around the Cypriot policy in order to proceed with corrections in the bullying prevention policy regarding the areas of bullying definition and understanding, as well as the documents that schools use to report and assess bullying. As agreed, the final findings of the thesis will be disseminated to MOEC, the COSV and the DIT to examine what else can be done in order to improve both policy design and implementation. Finally, a new article will be created in collaboration with my supervisor to disseminate the final results of my thesis.

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Reflective Statement

From the beginning of my EdD studies in 2012, I have focused on examining bullying and bullying prevention from various perspectives. My interest in bullying and bullying prevention stemmed from my own experience as a primary school teacher faced with multiple challenges relating to defining and addressing bullying in my daily professional reality. During my MA in Applied Theatre, I decided to become more involved and to explore bullying and bullying prevention in primary education. Therefore, I designed and developed the Remove the Power (RTP) theatre bullying prevention programme in primary education. RTP was a 6-day theatre bullying prevention programme which aimed to raise awareness regarding bullying, amongst pupils, parents and teachers, contributing to the efforts for preventing bullying in Cypriot educational settings. Since the Cypriot bullying prevention policy was designed only recently (February 2012), every attempt to tackle the phenomenon was viewed in a positive light from the MOEC and thus, RTP was given the approval to be implemented in schools.

RTP was implemented under the umbrella of TheatrEtc, a non-profit organisation which I co-founded and which promotes the use of theatre and drama in Cypriot education and other settings, with a focus on social concerns and inequities. As RTP was an approved programme from the MOEC, we began collaborations with, along with the training of, other theatre practitioners, in order to be able to work on preventing bullying in Cypriot primary schools, seeing as the demand was so high. However, the MOEC still harboured some doubts, and teachers were continually questioning the theatre practitioners' credentials and expertise in pedagogy and teaching for applying the intervention in the primary sector, making the implementation of RTP challenging. Therefore, at this point decisions needed to be made on how to maintain the professional integrity of the intervention in the eyes of the MOEC by introducing the 'appropriate' professionals to the training, without discarding its methodology.

The Foundation of Professionalism (FOP) report, as a part of my EdD, was a good place to start questioning the reasons behind the MOEC and the teachers' uncertainty regarding whether theatre practitioners possess the professional skills to implement the RTP. Furthermore, it was important to identify the challenges theatre practitioners face in forming and establishing their professional identity as a newly emerged profession, in order for them to fit in at the primary educational institutes. Lastly, I was intrigued by the potential of the two professional communities collectively working together for the successful realisation of the programme's aims. My report was titled: *Cypriot primary teachers, theatre practitioners and the Remove the Power anti-bullying theatre intervention: collaborative communities of practice in a highly*

centralised educational system. Therefore, in the study a theoretical background was developed around professionalism, professional identity, specialisation and communities of practice. As was argued in the report, the RTP has created the apparent paradox of blurred boundaries between the roles and responsibilities of teachers and theatre practitioners in Cypriot primary institutions regarding bullying prevention. At the same time RTP offered the potential of becoming a platform for creative collaborations between Cypriot primary school teachers and theatre practitioners, by challenging professional social identity and boundaries and reforming professional desires and practices. Whether that creative collaboration could be applicable in Cypriot educational settings was something that needed further examination.

The theoretical background of – along with the arguments which emerged from – the FOP, led me to question whether there might not be additional approaches for limiting bullying which could be implemented in Cypriot educational settings. Since RTP was using the methodology of Theatre in Education (TiE), it only made sense to examine the efficacy of TiE as a tool for social transformation and, more specifically, for changing pupils' attitudes to bullying. The latter was addressed in my Methods of Inquiry 1 (MOE1) report, with the title: *Can theatre influence attitudes towards bullying in a classroom setting? A Participation Action Research in a Cypriot primary school*. Therefore, a preliminary research proposal began to take shape. The research proposal in the report assisted me in familiarising myself with research and in going deeper into the areas of literature reviews, ethical considerations in research, accurate structure of research questions, research design and methodology, sampling and methods of inquiry which could lead to the generating of data relevant to my research questions.

The MOE2 module took me a step further in implementing small-scale research, which gave me the opportunity to test and enhance my skills in the previous areas mentioned, regarding actual research. More specifically, I decided to proceed by investigating the extent to which teachers perceive TiE as a reflective tool in influencing attitudes towards bullying. My assignment had the title: *Theatre in Education in attitudes to bullying: A qualitative approach in exploring the views of Cypriot primary teachers*. Essentially, I developed a theoretical background about TiE and its efficacy around social issues and more specifically bullying, explaining the reality of the matter in Cypriot educational settings and pondering what teachers might believe about TiE's ability to transform pupils' attitudes in bullying. This specific endeavour assisted me in being thorough with the designing of my research methodology and the research instruments, since I had to implement the research and to be able to collect the amount of data that needed to be analysed. The MOE2 report greatly assisted me in delving deeper into the subject of collection of data and analysis, as well as initiating a discussion

around the findings and responding to the research question. Overall, my sample consisted of two teachers and a headteacher, who participated in an open-ended interview concerning bullying and the use of TiE in education. The results demonstrated that their view of TiE was a positive one, by virtue of their past experiences, though they did express concerns around the sustainability of the results. Furthermore, they avoided implementing themselves TiE methodology in the classroom and considered it something they cannot proceed with.

Thus far, the written reports were limited to 5000 words, with the FOP, the MOE1 and the MOE2 preparing me mainly in areas important for proceeding with research, including building on my theoretical framework, designing the research methodology, thinking of ethical considerations, implementing the research by choosing my sample, analysing the data and initiating a discussion around the findings, which lead to conclusions corresponding to my research questions. The Institutional Focus Study (IFS) with the title: *Forming Collaborations in Cypriot primary classroom settings: Action Research for exploring an anti-bullying intervention* came to deepen my understanding, offering the scope for greater depth in all the areas I previously mentioned in 20000 words. At that time, I was still interested in bullying and bullying prevention, as well as creative means, such as TiE, for raising awareness around this vast phenomenon amongst pupils, making them change their attitudes towards it. Hence, I evaluated four international interventions, in whose methodology theatre and experiential activities were incorporated. The interventions are the DRACON project-Australia 1996-2004 (Burton and O' Toole, 2002; 2005), the DFE Sheffield-England 1994 (Elsea and Smith, 1998), the UPEI project-Canada 2004 (Belliveau, 2005a; 2005b; 2006) and the DAPHNE II-Greece, Cyprus, Lithuania 2004-2008 (Stefanakou et al., 2013; Sismani Papakosta et al., 2014).

Taking into consideration all my previous findings regarding the efficacy of RTP and TiE, the uncertainty of teachers as regards the theatre practitioners' expertise in pedagogy and teaching, and the teachers' fear of using TiE in their teaching every-day reality, allowed me to design and test a new intervention with the name *Creative Collaboration* between a teacher and a theatre practitioner. In a Cypriot school context, the two partners were asked to co-design and co-facilitate five anti-bullying workshops. Using the Action Research (AR) methodological approach and by incorporating diverse research instruments such as interviews, observations, focus group discussions with pupils, and electronic diaries, my IFS report investigated the participants' knowledge of bullying, anti-bullying techniques of learning, and how they value and assess their collaboration. The findings of the study revealed that there was an increased awareness from both partners around the way pupils define bullying, along with a better understanding of new approaches to anti-bullying learning techniques. More specifically, they

both came into the process with preconceived notions about what bullying is and how it affects pupils' lives, and they were confident in the strategies they used to properly handle the issue individually. By the end, they had realised that their perspectives had altered, elevating bullying to the status of a more complex issue, which needed a comprehensive approach in order to be addressed. The teacher's recognition of the potential that the collaboration offered was crucial, as it provided a space for her and the pupils to address trust difficulties. Additionally, in order to achieve the collaboration's primary goal, the pupils put themselves in the shoes of the bullied, pondered, and made key judgments about what measures they should take to remedy the problem. The intervention gave both collaborators the chance to broaden their professional horizons and see that bullying can't be eliminated by relying on individual qualities alone; rather, its complex nature demands a more collaborative approach in order for it to be resolved.

During the IFS, it was interesting to look at the findings and realise that *Creative Collaborations* provides an opportunity for offering both teachers and art professionals a shared space to work on bullying prevention, to invest in their professional capacity building, as well as to work towards pupils' ability to react and address bullying in their daily life. The research process showed that the collaborators' interaction led them to think creatively and distinguish their individual practices, voicing their limits and boundaries of what they can practice and what they could not proceed with. For example, on many occasions they would divide specific activities, naming them "teaching oriented" or "theatre oriented" in their effort to allow room for each other in the process. At other times, they would merge activities and co-facilitate a session, proving that boundaries are blurred and not always distinguishable. Therefore, my interest around interdisciplinary collaborative practice started to grow, causing me to think that teachers and other artistic professionals, as well as pupils, could benefit in multiple ways from interdisciplinarity in educational establishments.

A preliminary study of the Cypriot bullying prevention policy was a prerequisite for seeing whether there is room for interdisciplinarity in the Cypriot educational setting, before I embarked on my journey for my thesis. The review of the policy revealed that not only is collaboration valued, but also that there is room to involve professionals from diverse backgrounds in bullying prevention. More specifically, the policy recommends individuals, organisations and services who can collaborate with schools during the designing and the implementation of their anti-bullying protocol. Considering the results from my IFS, my interest lay in further exploring the factors that create limitations, as well as possibilities, for experts from many disciplines who want to collaborate on bullying prevention. For example, the two partners in my IFS worked out their differences, focused on the common good and

achieved equal and actual participation in the new shared learning space they formed. Therefore, it was interesting to explore the perceptions of a number of professionals-collaborators in the context of introducing interdisciplinary collaboration for bullying prevention.

Essentially, all the previous areas that my EdD covered helped lend a greater depth to my research and allowed me to put the current study together. My thesis incorporates and engages with research, with the goal of exploring and revealing the perceptions of five professionals from various disciplines regarding their understanding of bullying and bullying prevention practices. By using multiple research instruments such as written vignettes, interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and electronic diaries, my research reveals the perceptions of the professionals around the efficacy of their practices and their awareness of other professionals' bullying prevention practices, as well as the lens through which they view interdisciplinary collaborative bullying prevention practices. The findings examine the link between policy guidelines, worldwide bullying theories, and bullying prevention measures in the Cypriot educational system, as well as the possibilities for an interdisciplinary and multi-agency collaboration, via their discourse.

Introduction

My review of literature shows that new and diverse anti-bullying interventions are being implemented, many of which are influenced by the work of Olweus (1983) (Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij and Van Oost, 2001). Nevertheless, the literature asserts that despite the work – insofar as it has progressed – regarding bullying and bullying prevention, bullying still thrives in schools (Dawn and Cowie, 2012; Hemphill et al., 2012; Hong and Espelage, 2012), causing the literature to call for new ideas and innovative approaches in order to limit it. In its recent Declaration, the Committee of UNESCO (2020), proposes a whole-education strategy to bullying prevention, based on empirical data and years of successful practical application throughout the world. Strong leadership and solid policy frameworks are the first steps to achieve the latter, which entails building a secure and positive school environment for all the members of a school community.

In 2015, the MOEC, in collaboration with the COSV and the Educational Psychology Service (EPS), circulated the first anti-bullying policy titled: *Preventing, combating and addressing school bullying* (February 10, 2015; February 23, 2016) (Appendix 1). The aim of the policy is to regulate a consensus among school members around bullying theory and anti-bullying approaches, and to introduce basic steps that each school should follow in preventing and addressing school bullying (MOEC, 2016: 1). Additionally, the Cypriot policy states: ‘The collaboration of the school with other institutions assists the efforts of the school for the academic and social success of their students’ (MOEC, 2016: 7). For the latter, the MOEC offers a list of organisations and institutions which work with professionals in bullying prevention, suggesting that a collaboration between them is possible.

The potential to introduce collaborative work – and especially more creative approaches to bullying prevention – to the Cypriot educational system appeared fascinating, coming from my role as a primary school teacher and a theatre practitioner in Cyprus. Therefore, during my IFS, I focused on exploring the efficacy of theatre and other creative approaches to bullying prevention, through the collaboration of a teacher and a theatre practitioner. Following an AR methodological approach, the IFS reports that the potential of limiting bullying through working with creative and collaborative approaches exists. An additional key finding was that opportunities and challenges can emerge for the professionals-collaborators, involving the way they negotiate their roles in the process and the way they understand each other’s needs, in order to achieve their aims. The contribution of the study to new knowledge, was an insight into those challenges and opportunities, as well as how highly both professionals-collaborators valued the

process of developing their professional skills, while raising awareness around bullying amongst pupils.

While the Cypriot anti-bullying policy offers the possibility of many different professionals being employed in Cypriot schools with bullying prevention as the focus, little work is done to understand their practices, as well as their opinions on each other and the relationships they develop with each other and with the members of the school community. Therefore, this study examines whether there is room for interdisciplinary collaborative practice for bullying prevention in Cypriot schools. For this purpose, the study incorporates and engages with research, exploring and revealing the perceptions of five professionals from different disciplines, regarding their understanding of bullying, bullying prevention practices and their efficacy, as well as the professionals' awareness of the bullying prevention practices of others, and their perception of interdisciplinary collaborative bullying prevention practices. Through their discourse, the findings explore the relationship between policy guidelines, international bullying theories and bullying prevention practices in the Cypriot educational system, and the potential of an interdisciplinary partnership.

The literature review in Chapter 1 critically bridges the gap found in the knowledge regarding the relationship between theories of bullying, policy design and implementation, bullying prevention practices, and interdisciplinary approaches. Particularly, the chapter examines the way that anti-bullying policies are constructed by combining bullying definition through theory and research. Then it addresses the interpretation and implementation of policies using the Cypriot anti-bullying policy as an example, exploring the impact that the policies have on relevant professionals and their effort to work on bullying prevention. Finally, the chapter reviews theories around interdisciplinarity, in order to explore what interdisciplinarity envisions and in what ways it could be put into practice for bullying prevention.

Chapter 2, presents the rationale, the aim and the research questions of the research. It reflects on the choices made for the flexible methodological research design, including the social constructivism paradigm and AR methodological approach (Bradbury, 2008; Levin and Greenwood, 2011; Coghlan, 2019). Multiple research instruments are used, such as vignettes, interviews, FGD and electronic diaries developing the three cycles of the AR. The methodological paradigm makes the research and the results relevant for the professionals involved in the process, while the multiple research instruments assist in collecting a large quantity of data to shed light on the research questions. The four research questions focus on the professionals' understanding of bullying and bullying prevention practices, their

descriptions of the efficacy of their practices, their awareness of others' bullying prevention practices, and their understanding and view around interdisciplinary collaborative practice for bullying prevention. Finally, the chapter justifies the choices of sampling and piloting, as well as deals with ethical considerations, to safeguard the trustworthiness of the research.

The study follows a Thematic Analysis (TA) approach both in its Inductive and Deductive form (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2012; 2019) for the analysis of the data emerging from multiple research methods. The data is coded, organised and presented in themes in Chapter 3. The qualitative paradigm can produce an excess of data, which can be challenging when having a word limit. Therefore, in order to convey the findings faithfully, delivering coherency to the reader, the data is grouped in a way that divides the chapter into two sections according to the methodology and the methods of data collection used. The first section pertains to the first two cycles of the research, presenting the data collected from the vignettes and the interviews combined, while the second section pertains to the third cycle, and the data collected from the FGD and the electronic diaries.

The goal of Chapter 4, is to extract examples from the data and discuss them, making comparisons with existing research and literature on the topics raised, highlighting new findings and describing how the latter could lead to a fruitful future discourse (Hewitt and Lago, 2010). Therefore, the objective is not to re-present the data as in Chapter 3, rather to link it back to the research questions and the theory, illustrating the meaning of the research findings. The four sections of the chapter correspond to the four research questions, discussing themes within the data, identifying gaps in the knowledge, and creating new understanding around each topic. Critically reflective practice, professional identity and interdisciplinary knowledge offer insights on possibilities and challenges of interdisciplinarity on bullying prevention, constructing the conceptual framework of the study, and tracing the future of anti-bullying practice in the Cypriot educational system.

The current study moves beyond examining the specifics of bullying behaviour per se, and does not attempt to offer a new definition for a rather complex and much researched issue. Following Crawford's (2020) triangulation of experience, literature, and theory to construct the conceptual framework of the study, bullying, as the main focus of the study, opens-up a space for sharing experience about its definition, bullying prevention practices and collaboration. The study is unique and original, since few people have conducted research on how professionals in the field of bullying prevention perceive bullying and bullying prevention practice. Most of the research in this field focuses on exploring and explaining bullying as a behaviour, moving closer to an – as much as possible – *accurate* definition, in order to deal with it more effectively. However,

here, the definition of bullying, as presented in theory and the findings, is appreciated and valued, while equal importance is placed on the interpretation of bullying, as seen through the lens of the professionals. The latter opens up the space for understanding the dynamics between theory and practice and between policy design and implementation, offering the possibility of working on what needs to be done in order to bridge the gap. Furthermore, this has been the first time that such a study has proven relevant for the Cypriot context, exploring not only the insights of the professionals in the field of bullying and bullying prevention, but also the potential for an interdisciplinary collaborative practice. Thus, the results are pertinent to all the stakeholders involved in bullying prevention in the Cypriot educational setting.

Chapter 1

Bullying prevention policy and interdisciplinary collaborative practice

1. Introduction

According to Crawford (2020), experience, literature and theory construct the conceptual framework of a study. As described by Ravitch and Riggan (2017) the conceptual framework is an argument of a study that serves two purposes: to show the importance of the study to the relevant audience and to present the relationship between research questions, data, and analysis. Personal interests, perceptions and experiences allow the development of a stimulus for research, and evidence in literature and the theoretical basis assist in supporting the conceptual framework of a study. For the purposes of the current study, bullying becomes the main topic of concern, which opens up the space for five professionals from various disciplinary backgrounds to share their experiences about its definition, prevention and interdisciplinary collaborative practice.

While the focus is on bullying, bullying prevention practices in Cyprus and interdisciplinarity, the study informs and activates a research process which enables the professionals to exchange their knowledge and expertise. Therefore, bullying is the focus, reflected in the research questions, with data examining how the professionals explore and offer information about their perceptions of its definition, prevention and to interdisciplinary collaborative practice concerning bullying prevention. The study aims to showcase the process and the insights of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives during the professionals' interaction, in which they critically reflect on bullying and bullying prevention understanding in terms of, the efficacy of their and others' bullying prevention practices and the potential of interdisciplinary collaborative approach in bullying prevention. In order to establish the study's conceptual framework, this literature review assesses the degree to which the aforementioned have been examined and indicates a potential gap in literature (Booth et al., 2016).

Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2012) argue that the role of the literature review is to offer the foundation and a sophisticated review and synthesis of different resources for the implementation of relevant research findings. They refer to the literature review as the groundwork for the undertaking of research. The current chapter critically approaches literature review, as described by Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2012), moving beyond mere description, to include a degree of synthesis of various resources linking the literature review with the research to follow. Therefore, the literature review asserts the dynamic relation

between the synthesis of theories and research related to bullying, bullying prevention policy and interdisciplinary practice for bullying prevention.

According to Boswell and Smith (2017), policy makers favour expertise and an evidence-based approach to produce more 'effective' policies. Therefore, the Literature Review utilises the Cypriot bullying prevention policy to critically reflect on its effectiveness through the synthesis of theories and research around bullying and bullying prevention (Appendix 1). In order to offer a better understanding of the Cypriot context and its anti-bullying policy, the Greek version of the policy is attached as an Appendix and relevant to the discussion parts are extracted in boxes in the main text translated in English for the readers comprehension.

The Literature Review begins with exploring the definition of bullying in policies, focusing on specific areas which continue to be a subject of debate amongst scholars: aggression, violence, predetermination, intention to harm, power imbalance and repetition. Then it examines the dynamics between policy design and policy implementation, and the potential of engaging in Whole School Approaches (WSA) to bullying prevention. Regarding bullying prevention, the literature reviews theory and research about disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity to explore the way that the latter could be put into practice to meet its full potential for specifically bullying prevention. The topics of discussion involve the awareness and appreciation of diverse disciplinary perspectives, which includes communication, integration of ideas, evaluation and a recognition of disciplinary limitations and appropriateness of interdisciplinarity. Moreover, the literature reviews critically reflective practice and professional capacity building in relation to interdisciplinarity. The aim of the development of this part of the literature review is not to argue that an interdisciplinary collaborative approach could be more effective in dealing with the issue of bullying, but to critically examine how interdisciplinary practice and integrative learning could work together towards a desirable outcome.

2. Bullying prevention policies

This section embraces a holistic and multi-faced approach to policy design and implementation. It begins by exploring the literature relevant to policy construction and the dynamics of the relationship between policy makers, specific interest groups and the public. In line with the literature, the terms 'bullying policies', 'anti-bullying policies' or 'policies for bullying prevention' (Hall, 2017) are similarly used to refer to policies related to bullying, which are developed by governing bodies or public officials to achieve specific outcomes. The discussion moves on to explore the possible impact of policy planning on policy implementation, focusing on the educational context and bullying prevention, by having as a reference the Cypriot anti-

bullying policy. More specifically, it approaches to coding the Cypriot anti-bullying policy by extracting information and comparing them with the way the definition of bullying and the bullying prevention practices appear in bullying policies according to literature. Then by critically analysing specific areas of the definition the nuances between the literature and policy design are presented. Finally, it argues that, in order for policies and practices to be successful, they should relate to all aspects of bullying definition, intervention and prevention and involve all stakeholders in every stage of design and implementation.

According to the literature, policies are systems of regulations designed by the current governing bodies to address specific matters that are of public interest (Hall, 2017; Meier and Bohte, 2007). As the definition suggests, there is a dialogic relationship between the policy designers, who are authorized by law to engage in constructing and implementing the policy (i.e., government officials) and the general public (i.e., specific interest groups, practitioners etc.). In this dialogic relationship, one party should inform the other of the matter which needs to be addressed, working collectively to construct and apply the relevant policy. However, according to Meier and Bohte (2007), the general public is usually neglected in the process of design and implementation, although their input is invaluable in making decisions for changes relevant to them. The latter causes problems to the insights and the dynamics of the relationship between policy makers, specific interest groups and the public, and the efficacy of the policy in practice.

According to Hall (2017), bullying policy shares the same ideology, design, course of action and outcome as any other policy. He describes bullying policies as ‘systems of principles created by governing bodies or public officials to achieve specific outcomes by guiding action and decision making’. Here lies the distinction between the state policies which are constructed by ‘governing bodies or public officials’ and school policies which are constructed by the schools in order to meet the objectives of the state policies. The value of the state policies is found in the fact that they act as ‘upstream’ interventions, which promote the design of ‘downstream’ interventions (p. 47). In terms of the Cypriot context, the ‘downstream interventions’ or school policies are included in the *Education of Health and Prevention of Delinquency Action Plan* (hereafter *Action Plan*) that the school develops and involves all the necessary actions that the school should take for awareness, prevention and addressing bullying according to the state policy guidelines.

“The Ministry of Education and Culture, as part of its policy for prevention and dealing with the phenomena of delinquency and violence at school, urges each school unit to develop its own action plan to prevent and deal with school bullying. This action plan can be included in the *Education of Health and Prevention of Delinquency Action Plan*, which is designed by the school in the beginning of each school year and is kept in its Archives.

During the preparation of the *Education of Health and Prevention of Delinquency Action Plan*, both the particularities of each school unit and the obligations of the state arising from the Convention of Children’s Rights must be considered”.

(Cyprus anti-bullying policy-introduction, 2016: 1)

Box 1: Developing an *Action Plan*

From this perspective, bullying policies impact and guide the behaviour and actions of the students, the teachers and the school administrators, calling the schools’ officials to develop an *Action Plan* which either prohibits or requires certain behaviours. For example, a bullying policy could lead to an *Action Plan*, which either discourages students from acting in specific ways or promotes the reporting of bullying so that it may be addressed in an explicit manner. Downes and Cefai (2016), in their survey of the anti-bullying policies of the EU Member States, argue that in countries with a national anti-bullying policy for schools, said policies are mostly directed towards evidence-informed processes and it is unclear to what extent bullying and violence prevention is embedded in the curriculum. In other words, a possible gap can be spotted between the way that the policy makers apply specific bullying and bullying prevention theories to their anti-bullying policies, and the way that these theories are interpreted and followed by the policy’s implementers in their *Action Plans*, such as the teachers and/or other professionals in the field.

Policies involve constitutions of values and ideologies created by the governing bodies or officials (Meier and Bohte, 2007; Chung, 2017; Hall, 2017) and therefore, the objective for the relevant stakeholders is to make decisions and promote action, to achieve changes in particular domains, in the form of explicit outcomes. On the one hand, the framework of all policies consists of formal procedures and on the other hand, according to Rayner and Lewis (2011), an effective policy for bullying prevention has a broader meaning and should include the bullying definition and specific instructions on how the organisation should prevent bullying and deal with it, should it occur. Important is the broader meaning of an effective policy as described by Rayner and Lewis (2011), which is to act both as a statement of intent and as a practice,

proposing specific steps for the relevant stakeholders to take, for every stage of bullying the organisation may find itself involved in. Nevertheless, the latter is rarely reflected in anti-bullying policies. For example, Downes and Cefai (2016), reveal that EU countries with policies lack a strategic focus on differentiated needs and/or various levels of prevention. They reveal that most countries are restricted to general prevention approaches. Therefore, the bullying policies seem to be losing their broader meaning of being able to address specific and differentiated needs among different students in different schools.

Anti-bullying policies should set the framework what bullying consists of and propose specific steps for designing and implementing more targeted programmes, projects and practices from individuals, organisations or services in schools (Ananiadou and Smith, 2002; Hall, 2017; Rayner and Lewis, 2011). For example, a bullying policy which requires that schools provide counselling services to students who behave in a negative way, should be distinguished from a policy which employs punishment for students who continuously engage in bullying behaviour. In the first case, the policy implementers (i.e., teachers, school counsellors etc.) will develop an *Action Plan*, which concentrates on different methods for preventing bullying (i.e., positive school environment). In the second case, the *Action Plan* will rely more on various confrontation methods of addressing bullying (i.e., reporting and punitive action). The latter proposes a different course of action in two different cases of implementing the anti-bullying policy, which challenges the interpretation of the different dimensions of bullying policies. In other words, the extent to which the policy's implementers interpret the directions of the policy as being relevant and inclusive to education is of great importance. Furthermore, the differences in interpretation of the policy challenges the credibility of the assessment methods that measure its effectiveness.

According to the literature, political parties consider anti-bullying policies as a legacy and inheritance of the government's agenda, demonstrated in a school environment in a rather complex way and serving as a mixture of ideological and epistemological discourses (Chung, 2017; Hall, 2017). Therefore, it is crucial to raise a discussion about the dynamics behind the decisions of various governing bodies to develop policies for bullying prevention, together with their expectations that derive from within this process. The policy's various regulatory measures, rules and actions are accountable to the legal authority of the individual or group, which establishes the policy, stemming from the need to either increase awareness and concern for student violence and school safety (Birkland and Lawrence, 2009) or to form behaviour management in schools (i.e., Clovelly House School Policy, 2017). Downes and Cefai (2016) identify the need for a stronger focus on student participation in the design process of an anti-

bullying policy. Therefore, it seems that there is a top-down approach to planning, designing and acting upon a bullying policy, lacking a bottom-up course of action, with the actual implementers of the policy being unable to assess and impact the effectiveness of the policy.

The differences in understanding of the bullying theory and bullying prevention approaches among various stakeholders, together with the impact that the latter has on the process of policy design and implementation, appears relevant to the current literature review process. According to Chung (2017), it is fundamental for bullying policies to become acquainted with the relevant theory, starting with a clear terminology and a definition of what is and what is not bullying. The latter will safeguard a common understanding between the policy's implementers of what is considered bullying in order to be able to prevent or deal with it more effectively. A clear definition of bullying assists teachers to identify children who need help, whether they are the one being bullied or doing the bullying. Furthermore, it provides a means for raising awareness among students and parents promoting bullying prevention. However, according to Brown et al. (2020), the stakeholders responsible for investigating the act of school bullying depend on its definition, yet at the same time are confused about the way that bullying is presented in policies or state statutes. In their research with school principals, the findings suggest a clearer definition of bullying, together with a step-by-step protocol to investigate reports, to follow up and to monitor the situation. The latter stimulates a discussion around the way that bullying definition and bullying prevention practices appear in bullying policies, emphasising specific conflicting areas or presenting nuances between the literature and policy design. Therefore, the following section focuses on the discussion around specific areas regarding the definition of bullying, which continue to be a subject for debate amongst scholars: the distinction between linking bullying with aggression or with violent behaviour, the relation between predetermination and intention to cause harm, the understanding of power imbalance in bullying, the idea of repetition and continuity, and the association between intent and repetition.

2.1. Bullying definition in policies

Policies should provide information on the theory of bullying and its prevention, together with a step-by-step protocol of addressing bullying if it occurs, in dialogue with international anti-bullying programmes and interventions (Chung, 2017; Rayner and Lewis, 2011). In the discussion that follows, a thorough examination of the literature on bullying and bullying prevention enables insights from scholars in specific complex areas regarding the definition of bullying: the correlation of bullying with aggressive behaviour, the connection between the aspect of predetermination in bullying and the intention to cause harm, the aspect of power imbalance in bullying, the repetitive nature of the act, and the association between intent and

repetition. Those areas appear to divide scholars when it comes to defining bullying, providing nuances when interpreting bullying in practice and the implementation of downstream interventions. For each area of discussion, the content of the Cypriot anti-bullying policy (MOEC, *Preventing, combating and addressing school bullying*, ypp3745, February 23, 2016) is brought in to explore the dynamics of the relationship between the theory of bullying and policy design, in correspondence with perceptions concerning bullying prevention found in the relevant literature.

In Cyprus the decisions for the development of policies regarding educational matters and interventions concerning children's emotional development and well-being, function within a centralised mechanism of the MOEC. However, a review of the Cypriot anti-bullying policy reveals a diversified approach to bullying prevention moving between the 'centralised direction' (Pashiardis 2004) of the educational system and the individuality of the schools. For example, the centralised aspect of the educational system is reflected in the existing requirement that schools to report their *Action Plan* to the MOEC by submitting an online report.

“The report form will help to better manage incidents and collection of statistical data, which will be sent to the Ministry of Education and, specifically, to the Observatory on School Violence in electronic form, during or at the end of the school year, through the Educational System Programming. The responsibility for registering the bullying incidents rests with each school's deputy, who is responsible of the Committee for Health Education and Prevention of Delinquency. More information on the electronic entry of the data can be found in the Appendix VII”

(Cyprus anti-bullying policy-introduction, 2016: 2)

Box 2: The schools report to the MOEC

The above is an attempt from the MOEC to regulate the way bullying is dealt with. However, as seen previously, the policy allows room for the schools to decide on the course of action that best suits their individuality. Additionally, an element of a holistic anti-bullying approach is evident throughout the policy, arguing that this could be achieved through equal collaboration between the teachers, the pupils, and the parents.

“The most effective school prevention and treatment programs of bullying include interventions at the individual and school level, as well as in other contexts in which children are active. Therefore, the prevention that is planned and applied at school should be done at three levels:

1. Teacher Level
2. Student Level (class and school)
3. Parent Level”

(Cyprus anti-bullying policy- Appendix II, 2016: 2)

Box 3: Collaboration between teachers, pupils and parents

Moreover, the collaboration with other external organisations and services is valued in the policy by introducing each of them on the Appendix VI with the title “Supportive Services and Organisations against bullying”

Therefore, the examples from the Cypriot anti-bullying policy are central to this literature review, in order to better illustrate the relationship between theory and practice, and a relevant context for the research that follows, which explores the insights of bullying and bullying prevention through the lens of Cypriot professionals.

2.1.1. Bullying, aggression and violence

The literature on bullying asserts a disagreement among scholars when it comes to the definition of bullying. One of the areas that they all seem to agree on is that bullying is linked directly with aggression, with the exact meaning of aggressive behaviour varying depending on their individual disciplinary perspectives. Researchers from a sociologist background (Murray-Close et al., 2006; Catanzaro, 2011; O’Brien, 2011; Hemphill et al., 2012) divide aggression according to the nature of the act, into direct/overt (physical and verbal bullying) and indirect/covert (i.e., spreading rumours, encouraging others not to play with someone), while others, exploring the psychological effects of bullying (Salmon et al., 2000; Dixon, 2011; Hong and Espelage, 2012; Sismani-Papacosta et al., 2014), divide aggression according to the form the act can take, into physical (hitting, kicking, shoving, taking or damaging belongings) and verbal (i.e., teasing, taunting, threatening, excluding).

According to Benbenishty and Astor (2019), although violence and bullying are interrelated concepts, though with conceptual differences, often they are used by practitioners, parents, and

children interchangeably. This is connected to the way bullying is linked with aggression and relates to the impact that policy formation has on bullying prevention practices. Lines (2008), for instance, asserts that bullying involves physical violence, and he admits that incidents of covert hurtful behaviour, such as teasing, name-calling or being excluded from a group of peers are frequently not perceived as violent and thus not as bullying. Cantazaro (2011) discusses ‘relational aggression’ (p. 84) expanding more on the socially motivated act of ignoring or excluding someone in a face-to-face conversation and including cyber-bullying as a phenomenon of our society’s major technological achievements. Therefore, it depends on where the emphasis is placed in policies: whether it links bullying to aggression, or whether it describes it as a violent act. The latter potentially influences the way professionals perceive bullying and construct their interventions, as well as the way parents and children interpret bullying in their real live experiences.

Taking the Cypriot anti-bullying policy as an example, we see the definition of bullying drawing information from national legislation and regulations of education, as well as from the Convention of Children’s Rights, highlighting the important role pedagogy plays in securing those rights. Additionally, the policy directs the theory of bullying towards Olweus’ (1986, 1991) definition which emphasises the negative feelings of the act.

“A student is being bullied or victimised when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students”

(Olweus in Cyprus anti-bullying policy-Appendix I, 2016: 1)

Box 4: Olweus definition of bullying

Of particular note here is the ‘negative action’, which seems to refer to aggression. However, the policy appears to make no other mentions of aggression; yet it characterises bullying as a ‘violent act’, borrowing the term from the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1997).

“**Violence:** Violence is the intentional use of physical force or authority, whether in the form of threats or real, against oneself, another person, or against a group or a community, which either causes or is likely to cause injury, death, psychological harm, dysfunctional development or deprivation (World Organisation of Health, 1997).”

(Cyprus anti-bullying policy-Appendix I, 2016: 1)

Box 5: Violence definition

Moreover, the Cyprus anti-bullying policy divides the violent behaviour into direct and indirect, as well as verbal, physical, relational and destruction of property.

“Ways that bullying can occur:

- 1. **Direct:** occurs in the presence of the targeted person (i.e., pushing, swearing, etc.)
- 2. **Indirect:** does not occur in the presence of the targeted person (i.e., spreading false and/or harmful rumors etc.)

Forms of Bullying Behavior:

- 1. **Physical:** use of physical violence by the bully towards the targeted person (i.e., hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, tripping, pushing, threatening/unwanted sexual gestures, coercion to commit sexual/offensive acts, etc.).
- 2. **Verbal:** verbal or written communication from the person who bullies to the targeted person, which causes harm. Verbal bullying behavior includes: taunting, using derogatory nicknames, swearing, threatening or offensive messages, inappropriate sexual comments and verbal threats, etc.
- 3. **Relational:** behavior by the bully, intended to harm the reputation of the targeted person's relationships with other people. It happens directly, when the person who bullies isolates the targeted person, ignores them, or prevents them from interacting with peers. It happens indirectly, when the person who bullies, spreads false and/or harmful rumors, writes derogatory comments in public places, or exposes photographs of the targeted person in a physical or electronic space, without their permission or knowledge.
- 4. **Destruction of property:** theft, alteration or destruction of the person's property-target by the person who is bullying, with the intention of causing them harm (i.e., theft, seizure or destruction of personal items, deletion and/or alteration of personal electronic information, etc.). (Gladden et al., 2014)”

(Cyprus anti-bullying policy-Appendix I, 2016: 1-2)

Box 6: Forms of bullying manifestation

Therefore, while the emphasis is on bullying as a violent behaviour, it seems that there is an effort from the policy makers to equally include indirect aggression in the terminology of violence explaining thoroughly the different forms that the specific act can take.

The diversity in opinion between the association of bullying with aggression and violence appears important to understand the complexity of the act. Furthermore, it offers insights into the natural disparity in perceptions among various stakeholders when it comes to translating the theory of bullying, as seen in the relevant literature and in policies, into their *Action Plan* and practice. For example, the different direction or nuances in the way bullying is defined in the literature and in policies, which places emphasis on physical violence (i.e., the Cypriot anti-bullying policy), at first appears challenging. However, it leaves room to explore the way various professionals perceive bullying, as well as whether their practice is directed towards including – and to what extent – relational aggression as bullying.

2.1.2. Predetermined act and intention to cause harm

Further definitions of bullying in literature perceive bullying as an ‘intentional act’ (Agatston et al., 2009: 17), or as a behaviour arising from the ‘deliberate intent to cause distress to others’ (Hickson, 2009: 134). While both definitions appear to introduce predetermination of bullying, the first implies that there are various reasons behind bullying manifestation, while the second becomes specific, emphasising the predetermined results (i.e., ‘cause distress’), which are considered before the action takes place (i.e., ‘deliberate intent’). Whether the harm that occurs is a result of premeditation on the part of the bullies or whether other reasons exist to trigger this behaviour is relevant for the following argument.

Reviewing the literature about the profile of children who present aggressive behaviour, Bjorkqvist (2001) offers another perspective. Offering a new twist on the bully’s profile, she argues that the age and development of the perpetrator’s intelligence must never be left out of the equation. Her research group in Finland found that very young children, whose social skills are underdeveloped, tend to employ physical aggression. With the development of verbal skills, the aggression becomes more verbal, while with the development of their social intelligence, they manage to manipulate social relationships to their advantage (Bjorkqvist, 2001). Elame (2013), who examines bullying from an intercultural perspective, agrees with Bjorkqvist. Of particular note here is that he goes one step further, linking emotional intelligence to the maturity of children with special needs, such as children with disorders or behavioural difficulties (i.e., dyslexia, clumsiness and stuttering). Those children, he states, interact differently in their various environments and respond to different stimuli, increasing their risk of becoming bullies. Therefore, children who are less emotionally mature and more prone to impulsive reactions than their fellow students are more likely to develop attitudes that favour bullying, without always being aware of their actions. While this statement appears valuable in re-defining bullying, of relevance for the current study is the further exploration of its input in

anti-bullying policies, both in the way the policy makers make decisions throughout the design process and the way that various stakeholders choose to interpret the ideology of the policy in their *Action Plans*.

Further examining the way predetermination and intention to cause harm is presented in policies, the example of the Cypriot anti-bullying policy appears particularly helpful. For instance, it seems that there is an effort to identify the protagonists of bullying, quoting possible characteristics they may possess. In relation to the above, three different roles are identified in bullying: the bully, the bullied and the bystander, while there is a reference to a fourth category called bully/bullied, children whose role depends on the circumstances.

“A third group is also identified through research, which consist of children who are, at the same time, bullies and bullied.

Characteristics of bully/bullied:

- low self-esteem and self-confidence
- deficiency of social skills
- difficulty in resolving their differences
- academic difficulties
- tendency to adopt negative standards
- isolation and rejection by peers”

(Cyprus anti-bullying policy-Appendix I, 2016: 3)

Box 7: Characteristic of bully/bullied

The literature corresponds with the profiling that the policy proposes and especially with the fourth category and the possibility that children who are bullied will become bullies in other contexts (Dixon, 2011; Leiner et al., 2014; Olweus, 2003; Stavrinides et al., 2010). What is interesting in the policy is that the intention to cause harm is overlooked, referring solely to predetermination, describing the bully as often being popular and sometimes possessing physical power, aggression, impulsivity, lack of empathy, low self-confidence and self-esteem, and underdeveloped communication skills.

“Characteristics of bullies

- physical power, aggression, use of violence
- impulsivity, anger, low frustration tolerance
- "popular" people who usually dominate and impose themselves
- insecurity, low self-esteem
- showing confidence and self-assurance to others
- undeveloped communication skills and reduced social skills
- academic difficulties
- difficulties in resolving differences with others
- coming from a family environment with conflicts and difficulties in demarcation
- negative disposition towards school
- tendency to adopt negative standards
- propensity to break rules and exhibit anti-social behaviour
- ability to escape from difficult situations
- absence of moral qualms or remorse for their actions
- lack of empathy”

(Cyprus anti-bullying policy-Appendix I, 2016: 2-3)

Box 8: Characteristics of bullies

The bully’s profile in the policy implies that we should look beyond the intention to cause harm and identify those reasons, multiple and varied as they are, which are responsible for the manifestation of bullying behaviour towards another individual.

Scholars identify a need to re-think whether bullying should be considered an act with the intent of causing harm (Bjorkqvist, 2001; Elame, 2013). This could possibly result in the exclusion of those incidents that are caused by disorders, personal distress or deficiency of communication and social skills. Therefore, the exploration of the dynamics between bullying policy design and implementation appears paramount, as well as the identification of the exact position in

which the professionals working in this field place their bullying prevention practices, in terms of their interpretation of the relevant bullying prevention policy.

2.1.3. Power imbalance

More theoretical definitions of bullying perceive the act as aggressive behaviour that involves an ‘imbalance of power or strength’ (Agatston et al., 2009: 17). Expanding on this, Agaston et al. (2009) state that in bullying cases, the imbalance of power between one or more individuals is always present. Scholars claim that power imbalance is a fundamental aspect of bullying, theorising about the existence and the impact of societal power relations on the manifestation of bullying. For example, Hickson (2009) states that bullying can be viewed as an abuse of power and adds that when children lack power, they are more likely to be bullied. Moreover, Aalsma and Brown (2008) argue that imbalance of power is used in schools when investigating a bullying incident. According to them, it is a significant element, which helps distinguish bullying from conflicts and instances of violence that are not considered bullying. Therefore, it is equally important to investigate how power imbalance is perceived in literature, the way it is incorporated into policies and its interpretation in practice by the relevant stakeholders.

Hemphil et al. (2012) identify two forms of power in bullying: the physical (i.e., stronger, bigger, taller etc.) and the sociological (i.e., the victim is an ethnic minority). Nevertheless, they conclude, the difficulty lies in measuring and responding in practice to the imbalance of power present in each bullying occurrence. According to a qualitative research conducted by Mishna (2004) with pupils, confusion was created when, although in their definition of bullying they recognised the aspect of power imbalance, they were unable to spot it when given examples of bullying between friends. This led to various occasions of bullying amongst friends or peers remaining unreported. In an effort to address the aforementioned confusion, Sawyer et al. (2008) tested a behaviour-based definition of bullying with pupils, not including power imbalance. What they discovered was that the latter impacted the rates of bullying being reported considerably, proving that although power imbalance is crucial for distinguishing bullying from other forms of violence, it remains hard to convey, especially amongst younger children.

These results appear fascinating in the context of the current study. As seen, Hall (2017) considers policies as the primary systems that guide practice and decision making. In this particular case, policy makers’ decision to either include or not include the aspect of power imbalance in the definition of bullying appears to be of paramount importance and seems to have an impact on the reporting of bullying cases. Additionally, Brown et al. (2020) highlight

the general confusion that professionals face when they are called upon to interpret bullying policies and especially the definition of bullying. Therefore, the differences in the understanding of power imbalance in literature could have an impact on the design and application of bullying interventions in schools, which in return will influence the efficacy of the bullying policy.

In the Cypriot anti-bullying policy, power imbalance is included as one of the fundamental aspects of defining bullying.

“The phenomenon of school bullying manifests itself as violent behavior between students, which has the following characteristics:

- an event of school bullying can be directed towards a person or group,
- deliberate, unprovoked and unwanted,
- repeated or likely to be repeated,
- **existence of power imbalance**
- the harm that can be caused is physical, psychological, social or affects learning”

(Cyprus anti-bullying policy-Appendix I, 2016: 1)

Box 9: Elements of bullying manifestation

What is noteworthy in this specific context, is that the policy makers briefly explain in a footnote the meaning of power imbalance.

“The power imbalance exists when an attempt is made on the part of the bully to exercise control over the targeted person's behavior or limit the person's ability to defend themselves.

The power imbalance can exist in a specific relationship for specific period of time”

(Cyprus anti-bullying policy-Appendix I, Footnote 1, 2016: 1)

Box 10: Power imbalance in bullying

The brief definition that the policy offers identifies power imbalance as the efforts bullies make to control the behaviour or to limit the ability of bullied children to defend themselves. The description of power imbalance in the policy is essential for investigating the particulars of the relationship between theory and practice in the specific context and potential challenges or opportunities that could surface within this relationship. Therefore, the Cypriot anti-bullying

policy acknowledges the difficulty in detecting and measuring power imbalance in a bullying incident, and thus, recognizing its significance, offers a description to make this identification easier in practice.

2.1.4. Continuity, repetition, and intention to harm

Another definition of bullying is Lines' (2008) approach, who identifies bullying as 'continual physical, psychological, social, verbal or emotional methods of intimidation by an individual or group' (p. 19). Of particular note here – apart from the definition taking into account more than just the physical and considering verbal abuse and isolation as contributors to the bullying phenomenon – is the continuity and repetition of the aggressive behaviour. Indeed, 'whether a behaviour is a one-time occurrence or whether it is part of a pattern of ongoing behaviour' (Agatston et al., 2009: 17) appears to be critical to understanding bullying.

Scholars agree that one of the major aspects of defining bullying is that it occurs repeatedly (Menesini and Salmivalli, 2017). However, even this is not so simple, seeing as, according to Elame (2013) some of the bully's motives are linked to specific events in particular time periods (i.e., various family issues, poor performance at school etc.). Elame explains that these motives tend to be temporary and when they cease to be an issue, the children find balance, which reduces their discomfort, complicating the aspect of repetition or continuity when defining bullying. However, the study by Skrzypiec et al. (2018) has shown that young people who experienced repeated victimization that did not meet the bullying criteria (i.e., not specifically targeted by someone or a group) reported that they had been harmed by it. The latter calls for reconsideration of the association between repetition and intention leading to the conclusion that, regardless the motives or the state that a perpetrator is found, the bullied still perceives the act as harmful. The latter raises many questions in terms of whether repetition of a harmful behaviour is perceived as bullying and/or whether the policy makers associate repetition with the intention to harm in the policies.

As seen, while the negative psychological effects of bullying on young people are widely recognised, the harm caused by incidents that do not fit the bullying criterion is little understood. Therefore, some researchers define bullying ignoring the aspects of repetition and power imbalance (Hamburger et al., 2011; Hemphil et al., 2012), while others, who are for the most part engaged in constructivist methodologies, (Duncan, 1999; Hickson, 2009; Catanzaro, 2011; Skrzypiec et al., 2018) emphasise the societal powers that are present in the act, which have a repetitive nature and will essentially harm individuals regardless the motives of the perpetrator. According to Smith, del Barrio and Tokunaga (2012), repetition and intent to harm

can interact to some extent, seeing repetition of a harmful action to be a strong indicator that the harm is what the perpetrator intends. However, as they continue, repetition, while a significant requirement in bullying, is not an essential one such as the power imbalance is; rather, it is more of a probabilistic indicator. In this framework, the literature contemplates the interpretation of a policy, which includes repetition and continuity in its definition of bullying. The framework also considers whether the policy discusses the frequency of the repetition in bullying cases or whether it suggests that it is important to first examine the motives of the implicated parties and then define the behaviour as bullying.

Taking the Cypriot anti-bullying policy as an example, we see that it includes repetition in its description of bullying: “repeated or likely to be repeated” (Cyprus anti-bullying policy-Appendix I, p.1). Moreover, it acknowledges the following:

“Noted that specific changes in children’s behaviour may indicate other issues and other difficulties that a child is facing (i.e., depression and other psychological disorders)”

(Cyprus anti-bullying policy-Appendix I, 2016: 5)

Box 11: Other issues that can be misleading in identifying bullying

This acknowledgment leaves room for further research into the way that Cypriot professionals working on bullying prevention perceive bullying, and whether the elements of repetition and continuity are included in their descriptions, or influence – and to what degree – their anti-bullying approaches.

2.2. Whole School Approaches to bullying

So far, the review has been focused on considering the nature of bullying and the way that it is defined in policies, by examining main aspects of the definition that either create confusion among stakeholders or are debatable and conflicting when applied in practice. Additionally, Rayner and Lewis (2011) argue that effective bullying policies should act both as a statement of intent and as a practice. A successful policy is one that takes all the aspects of bullying intervention and prevention into account, including specific instructions on how the organisation should, on the one hand, prevent bullying and, on the other hand, deal with it if it occurs. Therefore, it appears that if we wish to have a better understanding of the relationship between policy design and implementation and the impact that the latter has on bullying prevention practices, then a review of different bullying policies is required.

According to Hall (2017), a systematic review of the effectiveness of policy design and

implementation has not yet been completed. Instead, research mainly presents findings on the effectiveness of downstream interventions and/or whole school programmes. Some examples from international articles are, the DRACON project-Australia (Burton and O' Toole, 2002; 2005), the DFE Sheffield-England (Elsea and Smith, 1998), the UPEI project-Canada (Belliveau, 2005a; 2005b; 2006), the DAPHNE II-Greece, Cyprus, Lithuania 2004-2008 (Stefanakou et al., 2013; Sismani Papakosta et al., 2014), the KiVa programme Finland (Salmivalli et. al, 2011) and the Support Group to bullying (Young, 1998).

The findings of Denny et al. (2015) on the evaluation of anti-bullying programmes and interventions suggest that schools with approaches to violence that promote positive school climates and clarity in their support services rank lower in terms of levels of violent behaviour and bullying amongst pupils. Additionally, according to the meta-analysis contacted by Gaffney, Ttofi, and Farrington (2019), intervention programs in schools could reduce bullying perpetration by 19-20%, while they appear effective to bullying victimization by about 15-16%. Their meta-regression analyses showed no significant relationship between effectiveness and the number of intervention components included in a program (Gaffney, Ttofi, and Farrington, 2021). Of particular note here is that an effective bullying prevention practice is described as one which moves beyond knowledge on the issue and its elements, and which favours the positive transformation of the school climate with a clear and consistent action plan to support pupils.

According to the literature, any approach for the development of healthy relationship skills, will not meet its aims unless teachers and other adults who are in contact with the pupils display the expertise and skills to safeguard a secure and healthy environment which promotes learning (Kallestad and Olweus, 2003; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). Stefanakou et al. (2013) argue that many of the anti-bullying interventions have the development of a holistic approach in their design and implementation as a priority, while their main goal is to change the school climate to increase the sense of safety by bridging the relationship of all stakeholders (i.e., pupils, parents, teachers, local authorities etc.). Therefore, the framework and the content of the school's *Action Plan*, together with the people involved in its implementation, could make a difference to the well-being of the pupils in terms of feeling safe on school grounds, which in turn will limit bullying.

According to Boyd and Lawes (2018), holistic approaches are often encountered in literature under the term Whole School Approaches (WSAs) and appear more effective than isolated practices. They go on to say that one of the contributors to the success of WSAs is that they value collaborative processes, involving the whole school community, when framing the vision

of the school in terms of bullying, as well as planning a series of actions to realise said vision. Another contributor is the combination of several mechanisms that aim to transform the different layers of the system surrounding the pupils to benefit their well-being. However, Bradshaw (2015) argues that, although WSAs encourage change through an effective context and practice, the limited research in specific cultural settings calls for further investigation to pinpoint the most effective components of WSAs that limit bullying behaviour.

The studies of Ttofi and Farrington (2011) and Gaffney, Ttofi and Farrington (2019) more closely resemble review research on bullying policies and practice, which present findings from a systematic review and meta-analysis of the contribution made by different components of anti-bullying programmes in bullying prevention. Evaluation of these programs has shown generally positive results with notable reductions in bullying victimization levels (Gaffney, Ttofi and Farrington, 2021). However, not all interventions have managed to respond to victims with the worst prognosis or the longest duration (Kaufman et al, 2018). Boyd and Lawes (2018) conducted their research in schools in New Zealand, in an effort to describe the extent of aggressive behaviour and bullying and identify the most efficient practices or interventions that make a difference to pupils' experiences regarding their well-being, which influences the reporting of bullying incidents. Their findings reveal that, similarly to Ttofi and Farrington, a combination of practices or multifaced approaches that target different aspects of school life, and particularly bullying behaviour and aggression, appear more important than isolated actions.

It seems that schools which follow systemic, multifaceted and holistic approaches are in better condition and thus more effective when fostering a range of protective factors to prevent a complex issue such as bullying from taking place, and to address risk factors that trigger violent behaviours in general (Ttofi and Farrington, 2011; Smith, 2011; Langford et al., 2015; Beltran-Catalan et al., 2018; Boyd and Lawes, 2018, Gaffney, Ttofi and Farrington, 2019, 2021). Real world phenomena, like bullying, can hardly be confined within discipline boundaries. A consideration of the integrated nature of such behaviour, as well as a discussion that reflects on the integrated nature of societal issues, is essential for addressing specific challenges of this type of behaviour, in order to in turn address the challenges that society is facing (Klein, 1990; Carayol and Nguyen Thi, 2005; Repko, 2008). Therefore, collaborative, holistic and multifaceted approaches lead to more effective bullying prevention practices, as opposed to isolated interventions.

The literature moves even beyond collaboration within the school premises, introducing the idea that a balanced approach to school safety consists of interdisciplinary practices (Cowan

and Paine, 2015; Kinsella and Wood, 2019). According to Kinsella and Wood (2019), recent occurrences of school violence demand that our communities engage in dialogue with various stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, parents, policy makers, legislators and other members of the community. They introduce interdisciplinary collaborative approaches as a positive step towards creating a school-community partnership, which will assist in violence prevention, as well as addressing violence crises when they arise.

Holistic, multifaced and interdisciplinary approaches to bullying prevention in schools are at the epicentre of the discussion, providing opportunities for the pupils to not only learn, but also to develop and maintain healthy relationships, regulate their emotions and develop conflict resolution skills (Crooks et al., 2013). Therefore, by involving the community, interdisciplinarity opens the door for multiple stakeholders to participate in promoting a safe and caring school environment (Crooks et al., 2013; Cowan and Paine, 2015; Kinsella and Wood, 2019). However, this involvement could prove challenging, considering the numerous opportunities all the different professionals bring to the field, making further discussion and research on the context and content of such an approach necessary.

3. Disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity

A precise definition for interdisciplinarity appears integral to the understanding of how it could possibly be put into practice, in particularly bullying prevention. It could essentially equip and prepare professionals before they embark on any interdisciplinary or collaborative work. However, defining interdisciplinarity and setting down its concept and its objectives is complicated, while distinguishing it from collaboration is – in some cases – challenging (Klein, 1996; Haynes, 2002; Barry and Born, 2013; Olson, 2015). The following discussion attempts to arrive at a definition of interdisciplinarity by comparing it with disciplinarity. The objective is to then explore opportunities and challenges that interdisciplinary practice could entail both for the disciplines involved in the process and the receivers of its outcome, in this case, pupils. The discussion concludes on the implementation of interdisciplinarity in practice and on important elements of process assessment.

3.1. Towards a definition

Interdisciplinarity refers to a process of communication between various stakeholders and professionals involved in bullying prevention (i.e., policy makers, teachers, practitioners, social services etc.) enabling them to explore and in practice combine several ideas, knowledge and expertise (Repko et al., 2012). The exploration of disciplinarity appears fundamental, not in the sense of defining the concept, rather of critically examining the affiliation between the two

terms: interdisciplinarity and disciplinarity. For example, Boisot (1972) presents two historical tendencies for disciplinarity: man's need to distinguish, categorise and conceptualise his surroundings and the need for science in order to take full advantage of the accumulated knowledge (p. 89). The crux of the matter here is the notion of separation and, while cross-disciplinary studies concentrate on identifying differences across disciplines (Lim, 2010), interdisciplinarity consists of a process, in which each individual's approaches are appreciated. Along the same lines, Swales and Feak (2000) assert that interdisciplinarity is a process of 'borrowing information from other disciplines' and 'creating a new field of knowledge that is inextricably linked to its disciplinary roots' (p. 176). For them, discipline is something you learn in higher education and comes with a particular way of thinking about the world. This is different from a profession, which is any type of work that needs special training or knowledge to do. A good profession requires you to have knowledge in a specific discipline in order to apply it in practice. In the context of the current research, the value is given to the disciplines of the five professionals and their perspectives which derive from those disciplines in order to apply practice and potentially form an interdisciplinary collaboration. For example, the Educational Psychologist represents the discipline of psychology in the field of education, studying how people learn and retain knowledge. While professional experience, which derives from professional practice is acknowledged and existing, the value is given to the perspectives and the code of ethics of his discipline, which assist him to clarify and stand critical toward his and the other professionals' practices. Putting the latter under the framework of interdisciplinarity, the professionals' knowledge and training together with their expertise in bullying and bullying prevention is valuable in revealing, whether, during interaction, a new field of knowledge is created around bullying and bullying prevention.

Swales and Feak (2000) go on to argue that with an interdisciplinary approach the aim is to go beyond disciplinary boundaries for information on a topic, to formulate questions representing each disciplinary field, to choose from a range of methodologies and practices to resolve the issue, employing more than a single discipline. Therefore, while interdisciplinarity could be seen as a method of bringing disciplines together, disciplinarity appears to emphasise, restrain and control the boundaries of each discipline. However, Lim (2010) shows appreciation for the study of cross-disciplinary differences, which, he argues, offer valuable information on the restrictions of various disciplines. This process could possibly better equip and prepare professionals before they embark on any innovative interdisciplinary work, something that, as will be argued, was anticipated in the current study.

By debating the importance of disciplinarity and cross-disciplinarity in terms of appreciating

the boundaries of the various disciplines, a key element within my research leads to the concept of specialisation. Aram (2004) asserts that disciplinarity is the need for professionals to gain specialised knowledge in order to be economically active, a process that becomes a safeguard for their own professional identity. Additionally, as Perkin (2002) notes, 'specialisation leads directly to professionalism' (p. 23). In other words, to have specialisation in a specific practice means that, on an individual level, you protect your skills from competition and, on a collective level and with the members of your professional community, you maintain the high status of your discipline. However, according to Turner (2006), specialisation does not always imply that an organisation of knowledge could automatically become a discipline or a new profession; rather, as Freidson (1994) states, specialisation sometimes contributes to de-professionalisation. Expanding on his argument, he states that regardless of specialised knowledge, it is the government that has the authority to grant the specialised profession the exclusive right to practice and to evaluate a certain domain of knowledge and expertise. Therefore, specialised knowledge cannot by itself strengthen disciplinary boundaries, and disciplinarity appears stronger only if considered significant and effective for the government and for society.

Disciplinarity does not only have to struggle to maintain its boundaries through specialisation, but also has to deal with interdisciplinarity lurking in the wings, waiting to be established. Nevertheless, it would seem too simplistic and injudicious to argue that disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity are always at odds with each other and for this, one of Klein's (1996) initial definitions of interdisciplinarity could help us see the matter from a different perspective. He argues that 'interdisciplinarity requires active triangulation of depth, breadth, and synthesis' (p.12), explaining that the term 'synthesis' indicates the creation of an interdisciplinary outcome by dealing with a series of interactive actions. Of particular note here is the continuous process of triangulation of depth, breadth and synthesis placing value on each discipline and appreciating every individual contribution to knowledge.

Further definitions describe interdisciplinarity as a process of 'learning and then synthesising two or more disciplinary discourses' (Haynes, 2002: xii) or 'a course of study, which draws on more than one academic discipline to create a structured perspective on topics which are common to both (i.e., examine cultural deprivation drawing on the disciplines of education and sociology)' (Wallace, 2015: 152). With the emphasis on knowledge and learning, the triangulation of depth, breadth and synthesis is found both in the process of interdisciplinarity and the outcome of said process. As a result, interdisciplinarity could by no means be viewed as static, rather it is a continuous process, which highlights common topics between disciplines and combines them to produce new knowledge. As Klein (2000) states, disciplines are

becoming stronger due to an investment in connecting professions, while at the same time standing strong against the division of labour, building bridges over gaps and creating a new field of focus for knowledge inquiry.

At first, by attempting to understand interdisciplinarity, an immediate response was to not only distinguish it from disciplinarity, but also to position it across from it, presenting the two as contradictory terms. However, the literature asserts that interdisciplinarity and disciplinarity essentially complement and enable each other, making it – more often than not – difficult to explain one without the other. It is striking that arguments about interdisciplinarity emerge from debates around disciplinarity. In her work exploring theories on interdisciplinarity, Chettiparamb (2007) follows Klein's (2000) argument that interdisciplinarity exists within disciplines. She further claims that, historically, interdisciplinarity flourished within disciplines, dividing the arguments for interdisciplinarity into two main threads: interdisciplinarity as a means of filling the gaps that disciplinarity creates, and a way of achieving what disciplinarity could only hope to achieve.

3.2. Interdisciplinarity in practice

Literature has extensively explored different dimensions believed to contribute and establish the aim of bringing together the right kind of available knowledge and expertise, in order to resolve complex issues (Nowotny, 2017). Acknowledging the correlation between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity is the first step towards exploring how interdisciplinarity can prove equal to this task. However, according to Olson (2015) 'although we can have a glimpse of how it [interdisciplinarity] could possibly evolve, more study is required on the multiple variables that influence the success and failure of multi-party co-development' (p. 54). The literature goes one step further to examine the way interdisciplinarity could potentially be integrated into school life, focusing on bullying prevention, and the opportunities and challenges it could bring to the process.

The literature narrows it down to two directions that interdisciplinarity could take in teaching. According to Wentworth and Davis (2002), it is possible for one professional to be qualified in two or more disciplines and design an interdisciplinary session alone, but a more common format is that of 'team-teaching' (p. 16). Stewart (2018) describes this as a 'model which integrates instruction by teachers with different area specialisations in a fully collaborative form of team teaching' (p. 32). What's interesting is that Stewart (2018) highlights the element of 'collaboration between teachers' referring to the model as *Collaborative Interdisciplinary Team Teaching* (CITT) (Stewart, Sagliano and Sagliano, 2000; Gladman, 2015; Stewart, 2018) with

teachers from different disciplines planning, teaching and evaluating a session together. Here, the idea of exploring both models (individual and team-teaching) appears intriguing. However, as previously discussed, the focus is on approaching and understanding bullying and bullying prevention practices in a holistic, multifaced and collaborative way, rather than an individual approach to interdisciplinary practice.

A diverse terminology for interdisciplinary team-teaching can be found in literature, such as CITT, interdisciplinary collaboration, interdisciplinary team teaching or just interdisciplinarity (Stewart, Sagliano and Sagliano, 2000; Wentworth and Davis, 2002; Gladman, 2015; Stewart, 2018). Additionally, more definitions describe the process as ‘a method of coordinated classroom instruction, which involves a number of educators, professors only or professor and field experts, working together for a single course to bring a variety of different teaching styles and expertise to the course’ (Dong et al., 2011). Important here, other than the essence of collaboration, which is paraphrased as ‘working together’, is the professional background of those people who could work together in planning, applying and evaluating the session. The idea of bringing not only teachers to the process, but also practitioners and experts on a specific field, appears valuable and constitutes a key element within my research, which explores a social and a complex issue such as bullying from an interdisciplinary collaborative perspective.

The literature reviews, explores and identifies opportunities and challenges of interdisciplinarity, both for the representatives of the disciplines and the receivers of its outcome. Therefore, an interdisciplinary bullying prevention practice is examined from three main angles: the opportunities that interdisciplinarity brings to the pupils, the gap that exists between idea and practice, with all the challenges that accompany it, and the impact that interdisciplinarity has on a professional critical reflective practice and capacity building.

3.2.1. Opportunities for pupils

One of the benefits of interdisciplinarity is the fluidity of its outcome (Meyer, 2007) in relation to the active and continuous process of interaction between the disciplines and the professionals representing those disciplines (Bailis, 2002; Haynes, 2002; Meyer, 2007; Schmid, 2008). To clarify, the literature identifies a need to bring people, agencies or organisations together, to realise that their interests are compatible, to react positively, and to start forming intergroup relations that will produce maximum results (Sacramento et al., 2015). By bringing professionals working for bullying prevention together, they will essentially take the first step to form a mutual understanding of the issue of bullying. Furthermore, Longhitano and Testa (2015) add that coming together and developing trust is key for achieving openness, dialogue

and shared experimentations that will lead to successful innovations. Particularl here is the element of trust, which is of the utmost importance if the professionals are to engage in dialogue and experimentation.

The outcome of interdisciplinarity is fundamental, either for gaining new knowledge and understanding of a topic or for going even further and collaborating for the development of a new practice. Furthermore, the outcome acquires more value, especially amongst pupils, and it is applicable to the particular subject (Bailis, 2002), when interdisciplinarity is applied in education exploring an issue that negatively affects members of the school community, such as bullying. However, according to Meyer (2007), the outcome of interdisciplinarity is never concrete, expected and stationary, rather it is a system for linking framed points of interest, which are created by the inter-relationships between individuals and systems. Here, we should not view knowledge as evident and held by authority figures. On the contrary, pupils in schools who learn through interdisciplinarity can reconcile and synthesise the differing disciplinary worldviews and acquire knowledge through inquiry, relating it to a specific context (Haynes, 2002).

In terms of bullying prevention, the process of overcoming bullying involves the association of differing disciplinary viewpoints, which was a part of the initial interdisciplinary teaching approach. Therefore, the process and the outcome appear interrelated, with one informing the other and each being part of the other. The individual's sense of self, Haynes (2002) continues, is based on a fusion of the expectations of others, theories and ideas, with these forming the way one views oneself. The children learn to co-construct their sense of meaning with other people and components of their environment. Those who do not come in contact with interdisciplinary learning face difficulties when critically evaluating either other people's conflicting views or the hidden motives behind their actions. Thus, it would not be unrealistic to assert that in an interdisciplinary process for bullying prevention, pupils could critically reflect, gain a broader perspective and rationalise the behaviour they experience, building up their resilience.

From the above, we see that interdisciplinarity moves away from the 'absolutist conception of truth to a conception of truth that is situated, perspectival and discursive and that informs, and is informed, by the investigator's own sense of self-authorship' (Haynes, 2002: xv). Self et al. (2018), echoing the ideology of interdisciplinarity whilst moving away from the juxtaposition of two or more disciplines and focusing on the pupils' learning, support that their learning experiences should be infused with the integration of disciplines, which includes disciplinary skills, knowledge and expertise. Only through this could interdisciplinary learning perspectives

be accommodated. Wentworth and Davis (2002), identify seven opportunities of interdisciplinary team-teaching, amongst which that of pupils being offered a wider base of knowledge to draw on and a wider pool of personalities, from which they can find compatibility. Therefore, pupils become more involved and active in learning, since through interdisciplinarity, an atmosphere of risk and experimentation is formed, which tends to generate involvement and enhance learning.

Interdisciplinarity moves beyond the process of answering a question, solving a problem or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline. As Klein (1996) argues, with interdisciplinarity, the 'definition of intellectuality shifts from absolute answers and solutions to tentativeness and reflexivity' (p. 214). Moreover, Little's (2011) findings from the integration of interdisciplinary approaches in higher education demonstrate a significant switch of students' attitudes, as they gained broader and diverse worldviews. Thus, interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention could offer the pupils the opportunity to acquire the essential skills to critically think, reflect, change their attitudes and potentially overcome their problems; in this case, bullying. Yet, the apparent discrepancy between theory and practice acts as an obstacle in further predicting the scale on which interdisciplinarity could be realised.

3.2.2. A perceived gap between idea and practice

As seen at the beginning of the chapter, policy makers usually overlook the involvement and contribution of important stakeholders, such as practitioners, specific interest groups, the general public and political parties, to policy design and implementation (Meier and Bohte, 2007). While the policy makers see the stakeholders as an entity to be managed, rather than aiming for collaboration and mutuality in pursuit of a common objective (Adriof and Waddock, 2002), they appear to both value and depend on absolute knowledge equally. This is problematic and fundamentally contradicts the essence of interdisciplinary approaches and their outcomes, creating a schism between the idea of interdisciplinarity and what the regulations of a policy demand in practice. For example, the very process of forming and proceeding with an interdisciplinary collaborative approach for bullying prevention in schools is an obstacle, due to how sensitive the topic is, with the professionals wishing to enter this process having to struggle to overcome said obstacle.

From the above and with all the opportunities that interdisciplinarity could potentially bring for the pupils, the literature asserts the existence of an obvious gap between the idea of interdisciplinarity and its practical application, between what interdisciplinarity envisions and

what actually occurs in practice (Wentworth and Davis, 2002; Nowotny, 2017; Corcoran et al., 2019). Corcoran et al. (2019) agree that there is a discrepancy between what actually occurs in schools and the ‘ideal integrated prevention model’ (p. 288) which needs to be applied. They narrow the causes down to time and resource constraints, as well as the fact that the responsibility of implementing, coordinating and sustaining interdisciplinary programmes proves to be extremely challenging for schools.

More issues that the relevant literature brings to the surface include the fact that interdisciplinary team-teaching could lead to negative results in the pupils’ learning (Self and Baek, 2017). The findings of a study conducted by Self and Baek (2017) on the pupils’ experiences with interdisciplinarity have indicated that, while various activities towards interdisciplinary teaching and learning have fostered awareness on disciplinary perspectives, certain challenges could also be identified. One of the challenges was that pupils reported a more fragmented learning experience, which is possibly due to limitations in the integration of disciplinary knowledge. Furthermore, while most of the time the collaborators worked together at co-defining their aims, the pupils’ deliverables and their evaluation, at other times, instruction was provided separately by staff from different disciplines, resulting in a contradiction of disciplinary views and ideas.

Wentworth and Davis (2002) complete the list of challenges by adding various issues that influence the process of interdisciplinarity and which involve problems with overlapping roles, territorial conflicts and conflicts of status, and a tendency certain disciplines display for dominating the process. However, they stress the importance of communication and add that, in order for interdisciplinarity to be effective, the team members must keep returning to and reflecting on what it means to everybody and how it will affect their goals and practices. This perceived gap and the challenges that we encounter during the application of interdisciplinarity in the real world could prove fruitful and seems to be trying to tell us something (Nowotny, 2017). Thus, the professionals becoming involved in a process of interdisciplinarity identifying the challenges, could only be considered positive if they are prepared to face said challenges through communication and by repeatedly revisiting their aims and their broader vision of what they wish to accomplish.

3.2.3. Professional critically reflective practice and capacity building

The motivation for professionals to desire to work with an interdisciplinary collaborative approach on the issue of bullying could possibly derive from within the challenges of interdisciplinarity. Wentworth and Davis (2002) argue that when the sharing of knowledge

takes place within the context of interdisciplinarity, new expertise is developed. They explain that the professionals – experts in their discipline – learn more about their field through trying to convey their knowledge of their discipline and their expertise to other colleagues from other disciplines in as comprehensive a way as possible. This suggests that interdisciplinarity, other than the opportunities it creates for pupils, also contributes to professional development by offering a deeper understanding of the professionals’ own practice and by making them aware of other disciplines. In other words, the professionals become better equipped to communicate their boundaries and limitations, and at the same time acknowledge the opportunities other disciplines could offer. While Wentworth and Davis assert that evidence of disciplines overlapping could potentially be found throughout the process, they simultaneously accept that an open space is created where the participants can ask questions about professional boundaries and professional identity. When enough sharing of information has taken place, a certain familiarity of the newly created open space settles over the participants, and the expert no longer seems so unapproachable.

From the above, interdisciplinarity becomes a medium for developing professional critically reflective practice, which would lead to capacity building. The literature asserts that reflective practice encompasses several dimensions. According to Saric and Steh (2017), in addition to the cognitive dimension, reflective practice incorporates the affective dimension which refers to the emotions this experience elicits, the motivational dimension which deals with the aims and needs of the situation, the personal dimension regarding personal characteristics of individual professionals, and the physical dimension, which concerns reflection and the way it is applied in practice. They move on to describe ‘critical’ in ‘critical reflection,’ as the characteristics required for critical thinking, such as curiosity or doubt, and the process of being critical towards complex issues related to the process.

In critically reflective practice, the professionals have the opportunity to communicate and to enter a process of directing practice and professional development (Thompson and Pascalm, 2012; Bassot, 2015). Similarly, in order for interdisciplinarity to be successful, it must be considered an integration of perspectives and approaches through the sharing of knowledge, ideas and skills in the co-development of programmes, to best accommodate interdisciplinary perspective learning (Self et al., 2018); this integration should embrace holistic as well as reductionist thinking (Newell, 2010) and move, as previously argued, between depth, breadth and synthesis.

Literature identifies several opportunities of interdisciplinarity, both for the disciplines involved, as well as the receivers of the outcome. However, according to Garr, Loucks and

Bloschl (2018), we should pay attention to the context in which interdisciplinarity occurs and it should involve personal values, goals and expectations, the physical environment, the bureaucratic setting and institutional support. Institutional and funding arrangements actually act as facilitators and motivators that support interaction between collaborators. Equal importance must be placed on a history of successful collaboration between professionals, which acts positively towards additional motivation and an ability to collaborate further, which in turn see an increase in output. Fostering awareness of the challenges and limitations when working on interdisciplinarity could assist in achieving the maximum opportunities that could emerge from the process.

3.3. Communication, integration of ideas and evaluation of interdisciplinarity

Exploring the way that interdisciplinarity could be put into practice, the literature asserts that communication between the professionals representing different disciplines is vital. An example for the latter can be found in Haynes' (2002) argument, who cites Klein (1996) and presents the essentials of interdisciplinarity, which are the common language between the professionals and their audience, and deciding on the best approaches available for them, in order to demonstrate important perceptions deriving from each discipline, regardless of whether they concern worldviews or assumptions (Klein, 1996: 213, 214 in Haynes, 2002: xiv). Similarly, Bailis (2002) emphasises the continuous interrelation between disciplines, the influence the relevant domains have on them and the way they are translated into practice by the professionals in their everyday work.

According to Klein (1990), interdisciplinary work is 'neither a subject matter nor a body of content. It is a process for achieving an integrative synthesis, a process that usually begins with a problem, question, topic, or issue' (p. 175). Therefore, interdisciplinarity takes to a greater extent into consideration the nature of the integration of two or more disciplines, and the ability of the professionals to identify a common task and then to determine the tools that could assist them in dealing as effectively as possible with the task at hand (Haynes, 2002; Barry and Born, 2013). It would appear here that integration goes beyond simple communication and values the importance of bringing ideas from several disciplines to bear on each other, and narrows it down to topics that are related or similar, in this case bullying and bullying prevention.

Bailis (2002) perceives interdisciplinarity to be a process of attaining new knowledge and he highlights the importance of the disciplines defining commonalities of assumptions, approaches and subjects, as well as the importance of identifying connections between their field and other types of knowledge. He offers the example of social sciences, which appears relevant to the

discussion on interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention, and in which a variety of assumptions and approaches are identified. He argues that, in order for the disciplines to arrive at a common ground when dealing with complex issues, examples of similarities and differences between specific behaviours, which are treated in a different way, must be provided (Bailis, 2002). Only through this can we move from professional capacity building, which can be achieved through finding a common ground, to the impact on the receivers, who will be called upon to explore and negotiate the ideas and knowledge they gain from any particular approach.

When we consider communication, integration of ideas and identification of a common topic, the evaluation of interdisciplinary practices comes into discussion. Worthy of note are the criteria for assessment as described by Mansilla and Gardner (2003). According to them, for assessing competence in interdisciplinarity, three criteria come into play: focusing on the pupils' understanding by integrating more than one discipline, strong appreciation of the disciplines involved, and critical awareness in order to synthesise the disciplinary knowledge. Therefore, it is important to continually revisit the initial objective of the process, which in this case is the pupils' understanding of bullying. Along the same lines, Lattuca et al. (2012), in their work on developing a measure of interdisciplinary competence for engineers, agrees with the aforementioned criteria and goes on to place value on non-disciplinary perspectives (i.e., professionals drawing examples from experiences rather than the discipline itself), the limitations that exist within all the disciplines, and reflexivity, which is the ability to reflect upon one's own choices in defining a given problem. Therefore, the professionals involved are able to find common ground and evaluate interdisciplinary practices effectively.

As seen, when discussing the subject of interdisciplinary assessment in practice, some researchers aim to capture the nature of the interaction and the integration of two or more disciplines (Barry and Born, 2013), others are concerned with the results and the expected outcomes for the beneficiaries (professionals or researchers or pupils) (Meyer, 2007; Schmid, 2008; Wallace, 2015), while others still ascribe equal importance to both (Bailis, 2002; Haynes, 2002). Ultimately, for an interdisciplinary practice to achieve maximum value and result, the first step should be for the professionals to be prompted by a common question, or a topic or issue relevant to them, such as bullying and bullying prevention. Communication between the professionals is then vital for obtaining a common language, entering a process of self-reflection, defining commonalities and nuances between their practices, and modifying one's individual perspectives, worldview and expectations. Finally the professionals determine a common task and an objective and identify the tools they will use to achieve the desired outcome.

4. Conclusion

The importance of this literature review lies in anticipating critical thinking when it comes to bullying in theory and in practice, and in viewing bullying prevention from a new interdisciplinary perspective. Therefore, the literature review initially approaches the subject of bullying in schools as a multi-layered issue, which becomes more complex as the gap between theory, policy design, policy implementation and practice widens. The idea is not to embark on a systematic review of bullying policies, but rather to attempt to understand the way bullying theories impact the design of bullying policies, to locate specific points of differing viewpoints and to explore the possible impact that the latter can have on relevant professionals and their effort to put a bullying policy into practice. The Cypriot anti-bullying policy offers valuable findings and stimulates a discussion around the way the definition of bullying, along with bullying prevention practices, appears in anti-bullying policies, emphasising specific conflicting areas or areas that present nuances between literature and in policy design. It opens up the possibility of further inquiry about the way professionals engaged in bullying prevention translate controversial concepts regarding the definition of bullying – such as aggression, violence, predetermination, intention to harm, power imbalance and repetition – into practice, as well as creating a space for engaging in WSAs to bullying prevention.

The literature review examines and critically reflects on an interdisciplinary collaborative practice for bullying prevention. However, the aim of the development of this literature review is not to argue that an interdisciplinary collaborative approach could be more effective in dealing with the issue of bullying, but to critically examine how interdisciplinary practice and integrative learning could work together towards a desirable outcome. Therefore, the topics of discussion involve the awareness and appreciation of diverse disciplinary perspectives, which includes recognition of disciplinary limitations, appropriateness of interdisciplinarity, finding a common ground, and the ability to reflect upon one's choices for defining a given problem and integrative skills. The discussion surrounding the challenges of interdisciplinarity generates opportunities for pupils, which are fundamental for professional critical reflective practice and professional capacity building, while identifying a gap between the concept of interdisciplinarity and actual practice.

The current research illustrates the perceptions professionals have of the theory of bullying and bullying practices, and detects possible limitations and challenges of interdisciplinary practice for bullying prevention in relation to strengths and opportunities involved in the process. The research methodology targets professionals from different disciplines with the aim of recording their views surrounding bullying prevention and interdisciplinary collaborative work in primary

education in Cyprus. It generates the research questions around professionals' understanding of bullying and bullying prevention practices, their perceptions of the efficacy of their bullying prevention interventions and their awareness of other people's practices, as well as their understanding of an interdisciplinary collaborative practice for preventing and addressing bullying. Finally, the research explores the possibilities that interdisciplinarity brings in relation to bullying and the way interprofessional relationships function, interrelate and develop in a process of critically reflective practice.

Chapter 2

Action Research Methodological Framework

1. Introduction

The current chapter critically reflects on the methodological research design, which incorporates the social constructivism paradigm, following the AR methodological approach (Bradbury, 2008; Levin and Greenwood, 2011; Coghlan, 2019). The chapter begins with the rationale and the background of the research, which includes those aspects of the Cypriot anti-bullying policy that first suggested the idea of conducting the specific research. The chapter continues with the aim of the research and the four research questions, which led to the designing of the methodological framework. The chapter then explains the reasons behind the choices of the research methodology and debates the use of purposeful sampling for the selection of the participants (Patton, 2002; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011), and the procedure of the piloting of the multiple research instruments (i.e., vignettes, interviews, FGD and electronic diaries) in order for it to assist in the collection of a large bulk of data to respond to the research questions. Then the chapter argues the trustworthiness of the study by presenting its ethical considerations, together with acknowledging the researcher's personal involvement. Finally, TA, both in its Inductive and Deductive form (Barnett-Page and Thomas, 2009) is presented, which acts as a response to the great bulk and volume of the data, as well as their narrative format.

2. Rationale

As seen, a review of the Cypriot anti-bullying policy reveals a diversified approach to bullying prevention moving in-between the 'centralised direction' (Pashiardis 2004) of the educational system and the individuality of the schools. The policy, in line with various international interventions (i.e., Norwegian anti-bullying model-Olweus (1993), KiVA-Salmivalli (2006)), proposes that specific steps need to be followed for the schools to develop their own anti-bullying *Action Plan* (see Chapter 1, p. 24). The centralised aspect of the Cypriot educational system is reflected in the requirement for schools to communicate their protocol to the MOEC, by submitting an online report (see Chapter 1, p. 27). However, the MOEC neither gives feedback to the schools about the protocol, nor any assessment on the efficacy of the schools' effort to address bullying. Therefore, questions are raised around the effectiveness of the various protocols that schools develop and the form of their reports, which in turn has an impact on the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

The matter of interdisciplinary approach to bullying prevention becomes interesting, unique,

and rather complex in the case of the Cypriot educational system. What is fascinating and relevant to the current study, is that the Cypriot policy concludes by introducing several national organisations, services and individuals that could assist schools in realising their *Action Plan* (Cyprus anti-bullying policy-Appendix VI, 2016: 1-3). By supporting the work of the specific organisations, services, and individuals, the MOEC values their independent approaches, which implies the support of their theoretical perspectives on bullying. Therefore, a possibility is created for the MOEC, to co-ordinate an exchange of ideas and/or good practices between the proposed organisations, services, and individuals introducing potential interdisciplinary collaborative approaches. However, apart from a brief introduction, the policy lacks detailed information about the nature of the programmes and their activities. This challenges the efficacy of the policy, since the educational institutions have no examples and/or tangible outcomes to act as a point of reference in their struggle to tackle bullying amongst their pupils.

In the Cypriot policy, there is an appreciation of the involvement of all stakeholders, introducing guidance for parents and allowing each school to decide on how they can involve them. The element of a holistic anti-bullying approach is of paramount importance throughout the policy and argues that this could be achieved through equal collaboration between the teachers, the pupils and the parents. Nevertheless, the MOEC misses the chance to play a key role in bringing together and working alongside other experts on the issue of bullying in an interdisciplinary way, taking advantage of and combining the variety of their disciplinary approaches and methodologies. Therefore, the professionals work independently, unaware on many occasions of the work that the others are doing, introducing similar activities with identical objectives or different perspectives on topics related to bullying.

The MOEC, embraces the struggle to combat bullying in Cyprus schools, by introducing opportunities for a holistic and collaborative approach. Nevertheless, there is some inconsistency between its centralised philosophy and the open nature of the Cypriot anti-bullying policy. This inconsistency, together with the lack of assessment of anti-bullying protocols in Cypriot schools and the missed opportunity for the MOEC to play a co-ordinating role between schools and external organisations and services, challenges the implementation of the policy and impacts its effectiveness. Thus, further research is required to explore the understanding of Cypriot professionals of bullying and their awareness of the efficacy of their and other people's bullying prevention practices, as well as to discover the prospect of an interdisciplinary collaborative approach for bullying prevention.

3. Aim and research questions

The study explores the perspectives of professionals from various disciplines on bullying and bullying prevention practices in Cypriot schools. It examines the professionals' engagement in a discourse on bullying theory, policy and practice, focusing on their understanding of bullying and bullying prevention practice, the efficacy of their bullying prevention processes, as well as their awareness of others' bullying prevention processes, together with their response to an interdisciplinary collaborative approach for bullying prevention. The research questions are formed to provide a viable way of investigating each topic and to collectively set the groundwork of the research project. Bullying definition, disciplinary and professional identity, academic background, expertise and empirical work are considered relevant to the research.

3.1. Research questions

1. How do Cypriot professionals from different disciplines understand bullying and bullying prevention practices?
2. In what ways do their disciplinary identity, academic background and working experience influence their understandings of bullying and of the nature and impact of their bullying prevention practices?
3. What is their awareness of their professional identity in bullying prevention practice, in relation to other disciplinary processes and approaches for preventing and addressing bullying?
4. What does the research reveal about the interaction of professionals from different disciplines and their understanding of the possibilities, limitations and challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration for preventing and addressing bullying?

4. Social Constructivism and Action Research methodological approaches

Considering the areas and the parameters on which the research questions are focused, the current study moves away from the positivist paradigm and quantitative methods of inquiry, which are used when studying bullying prevalence, attitudes and behaviours (Cantazaro, 2011; Hamburger et al., 2011; Hemphil et al., 2012). Therefore, the research does not consider the researcher as an external expert and observer, who enters the frame recording and representing the facts, in order to access the one 'true' knowledge of the world (King and Horrocks, 2011; Kemmis et al., 2014). The way the research questions are formed calls for the researcher to consider his role as both a member of the community of practice, and as a researcher of that community during the different periods of time in which research takes place (Burs and McPherson, 2017).

The study is based on the social constructivism paradigm with the primary concern of making the researcher the medium of communication for introducing interdisciplinarity and a process of knowledge exchange between the participants (Levin and Greenwood, 2011). In other words, the interaction between the researcher and the participants is highly valued, with the participants considered to be the experts when it comes to sharing knowledge and giving information on bullying and bullying prevention practices. As Herbert (2005) argues, if the participants of the study own the discourse, they will seize power, and it is for all these reasons that the current study refers to them as ‘professionals’ rather than participants.

The initiative of the social constructivism paradigm is to have the professionals engage in the active commitment of social interaction and knowledge construction. The aim of constructivism is to approach empirical realities, favouring thorough knowledge over efficient completion of analysis (Charmaz, 2009). Therefore, its role in the current study is to locate the way professionals make meaning in larger social contexts, then look at the principles that the professionals’ meanings could be in reference to and the assumptions from which they formulate those meanings. In other words, and as Charmaz continues, its role is to identify the links between micro, meso and macro levels of analysis, connecting the issue with the social narrowing down of the definition of bullying and prevention practices in the specific setting and within the professionals’ reality.

Essentially, the concept of the social constructivism paradigm intends for the professionals to be able, through interaction, to produce knowledge and meaning. In other words, it is the recognition of the capacity of professionals working in specific settings to be part of a research process, which will produce knowledge particularly useful for enabling them to make improvements in their practices and/or their settings (Robson, 2011; Kemmis et al., 2014). For this reason, the study places value on social interaction between the professionals when discussing the theory of bullying and bullying prevention practices, while at the same time exploring their ideas and responses regarding the development of an interdisciplinary collaborative approach for preventing bullying.

As previously argued, by introducing the idea of social constructivism to the research methodology, knowledge and meaning will come into existence through the views and the understanding of the professionals. Equally, the study explores the dynamics that will develop between them through an interactive and an iterative process, in a research design, which investigates their responses to the possibility of formulating an interdisciplinary collaborative approach for bullying prevention. This creates a reasonable argument for combining an AR methodological paradigm, which is ideal for making this study and the results relevant to the

professionals involved in the process (Levin and Greenwood, 2011). As Bradbury (2008) states, AR is an open and participatory orientation to knowledge creation, ‘with’ people and not ‘about’ people. It bridges theory and practice, action and evaluation, in search of finding solutions to issues of pressing concern (Coghlan, 2019).

Deciding on AR as the relevant methodological approach for the current study is intentional, seeing as, when AR is combined with social constructivism, it moves beyond traditional research approaches and the creation of just knowledge or theory, aiming at taking action as the action unfolds (Coghlan, 2019; Coghlan and Coghlan, 2002; Svyantek and McChrystal, 2007). As Kinsler (2010) argues, AR is a medium for producing consciousness and practice, with all its potential and challenges, which essentially leads to a prospective change. Thomas (2017) agrees and goes one step further to place the emphasis of AR on problem solving in the most appropriate – per situation – way possible. In this case, through the social interaction and negotiation of roles and responsibilities, the professionals are called upon to exchange ideas and thoughts with the potential of developing an interdisciplinary collaborative approach for bullying prevention.

An additional advantage of AR is its flexible design, which in this case assists and supports the study to a great degree since the professionals enter the process with their own disciplinary and professional identity, whilst being called upon to negotiate their professional role and agenda. AR methodological approach is potentially the research mechanism to propose, monitor and reflect change in a community of people, as well as a medium for social and cultural transformation, including a constant negotiation, reflection and re-examination of principles, worldviews and practices (Armstrong and Moore, 2004; Swantz, 2008). The professionals have the opportunity to be equally exposed to a process of knowledge and practice exchange, leading them to revisit and critically think on their own work, with the ideas, assumptions, thoughts and aims that surround it, and then potentially modify it in order to be more effective and efficient in their practice (Thomas, 2017).

AR demands communication between the researcher and the participants in order for them to enter a process of mutual development of knowledge and learning and to understand people’s concerns (Swantz, 2008). Therefore, the data collection model is qualitative. As Bresler (2006) argues, the benefit of this approach is the support of a self-reflexive and self-critical stance that allows the participants-researchers ‘to “move closer”: to linger, connect, perceive, [and] re-see’ (Bresler, 2006: 56) the challenges, the nuances and the similarities of practice.

The study implements AR's 'spiral' methodology (Robson, 2011; Coghlan, 2019), which is iterative and cyclical, and the research data is collected over a period of time of three research phases (cycles). Each cycle includes a four-step process: (a) planning and constructing, (b) taking action (gathering data), (c) evaluating (identifying variables), (d) further planning (decisions taken ahead of time) leading to further cycles and so on, to address the pertinent issue and to generate actionable knowledge. Each of the three cycles includes a specific method of collecting the data, beginning with written vignettes, moving on to interviews and finally to FGD with electronic diaries (Diagram 1).

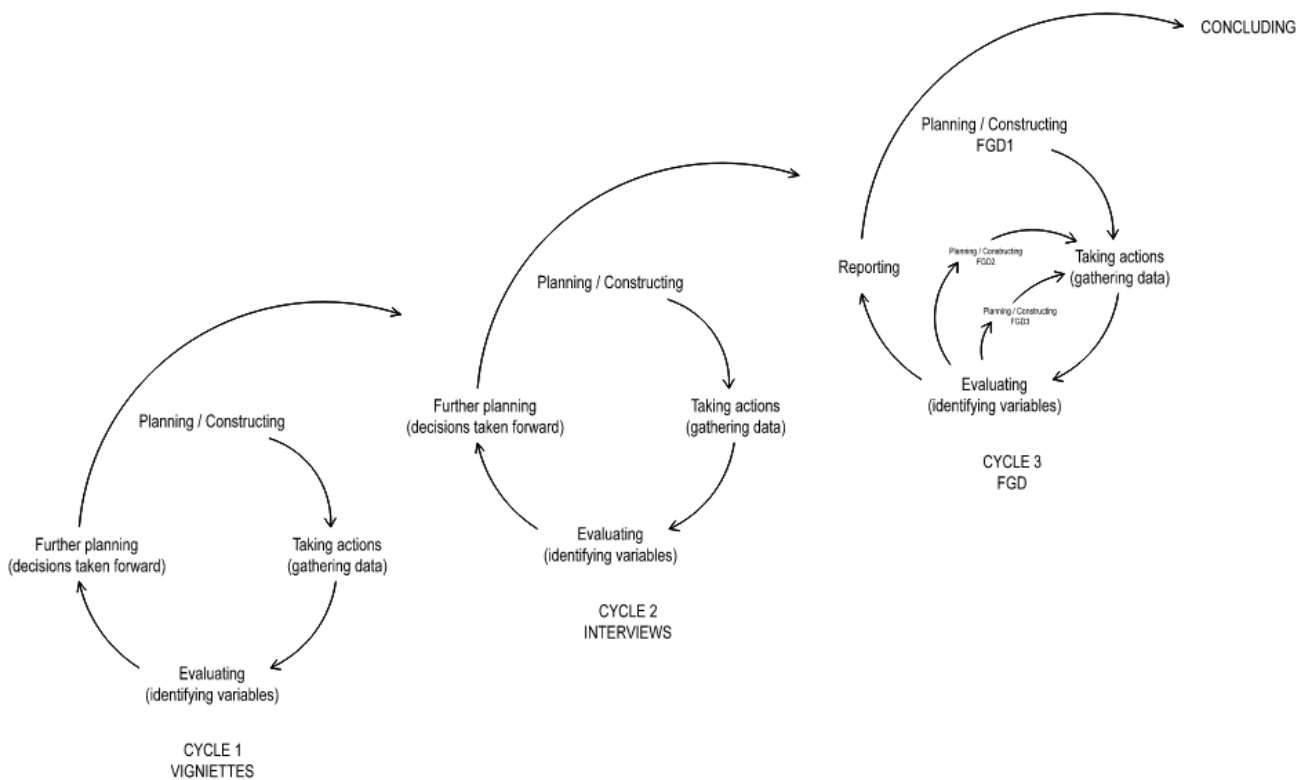


Diagram 1: The methodology of the current AR

The methodological paradigm in AR is repetitive, reflective and cyclical. According to Burns and McPherson (2017), a researcher who wishes to utilize AR must be creative and ready to adopt any changes that occur during the process due to a change in circumstances, as well as the nature of the issue under investigation and the participants' responses. Therefore, within the FGD cycle function three smaller repetitive cycles (Diagram 2), each of these corresponding to one FGD meeting. A cyclical process consciously and deliberately takes place with the professionals responding, reflecting, and then evaluating and repeating the cycle. Important is the need for the professionals to understand that the study benefits their own work, valuing differing points of view in order to move closer to answers regarding the research questions.

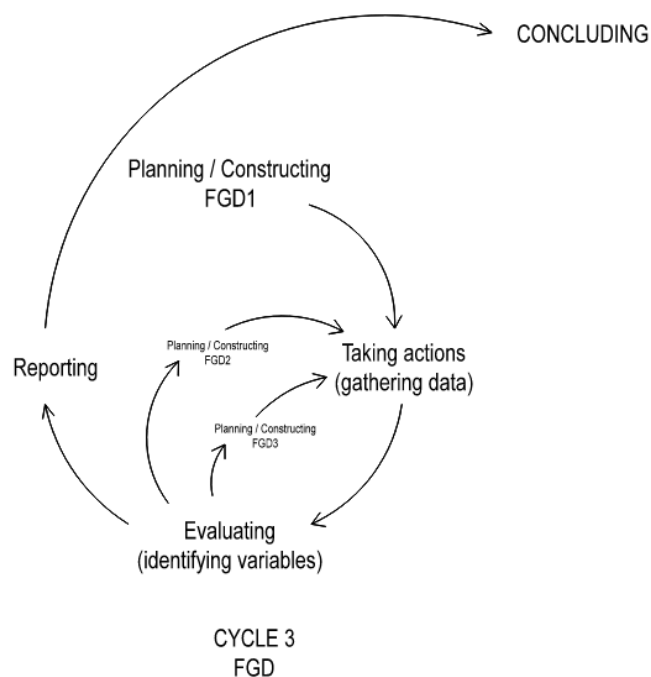


Diagram 2: The three repetitive cycles within the FGD cycle

The focus is on exploring the views and responses of the professionals on the matter of the efficacy of their own practices. Additionally, the emphasis is placed on issues that have to do with change and produce or encourage change in those involved. This leads to the idea of introducing collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches in order to assist the professionals in critically reflecting on their work and potentially seeking new practical ways to approach the issue of bullying in a classroom setting.

4.1. Sampling and research plan

The findings from a qualitative and flexible research design are non-numerical, making the conventional statistical analysis nonviable. However, the idea here is for the data to somehow be abundant and relevant in describing what might occur in other cases and/or settings and with other professionals (Robson, 2011). For this to be achieved, a sampling strategy which could assist in collecting rich and relevant-to-the-research data was developed.

Initially, an attempt was made to follow the guidelines of the Cypriot anti-bullying policy and to make targeted choices from amongst the suggested organisations, services and individuals that are active in bullying prevention, yet this proved somewhat problematic. Although the policy suggests a collaboration between the school and various experienced providers, it would appear to lack detailed information on their work, making the selection challenging. This offers the opportunity for the utilization of the purposeful sampling technique (Patton, 2002; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011), that is, the selection of participants amongst a plethora of cases, which

in this case are the different organisations, services and individuals the policy refers to. The professionals should come from diverse disciplines, without necessarily excluding professionals with overlapping disciplines and expertise. Thus, contacting each of the external providers was essential.

Selecting the professionals according to their rich knowledge and expertise was not enough since ethical issues need to be considered. According to Bernard (2002), it is important to take into account or ensure not only the participants' availability and willingness to participate, but also their ability to communicate in a clear, explicatory and reflective way. This guarantees that the process will run smoothly, with participants prepared to take part and comply with the research demands. However, it contradicts probabilistic or random sampling, two sampling methodologies ideal for an easier generalisation of the findings and the limitations of the possibility of bias in the selection of the participants (Palinkas et al., 2015). Therefore, it was critical to revisit the research aims and questions and to select professionals who meet four criteria: (a) they belong to organisations or services, or are individuals suggested by the anti-bullying policy, (b) they come from diverse disciplinary and professional backgrounds, (c) they are active in the practice of bullying prevention in primary schools and (d) they are willing to engage in a long research process.

Following the qualitative paradigm, which attempts a more in-depth understanding, in contrast to the quantitative methodology's aim of achieving a wider yet more surface-level range of understanding (Patton, 2002), the potential candidates were narrowed down to five professionals willing to engage in a long research process incorporating various methods of data collection. As it will be discussed, a balanced approach to ensure their anonymity was followed, which at the same time maintained the rigor of the research results. The participants of the study are a teacher (T), an educational psychologist (EP), a music therapist (MT), a theatre practitioner (TP) and a social worker (SW). After the research process was explained to them, by completing an informed consent form (Appendix 2) they all committed to taking part in the study, following the cycles of the AR as described below:

Cycle 1: Vignettes

The participants composed written narrative-based vignettes, offering consultation to a fictional 'newbie' professional called Rachel, while being encouraged to give examples of their own work to help Rachel 'find her feet' (Appendix 3). Examples of areas that the questions included, is to give advice and guidance to Rachel on how to prepare her sessions, on how to incorporate bullying in her sessions, on how to open up and maintain a discussion about the topic, on how

to create trust and foster empathy between her and the pupils, on how to handle and address specific bullying incidents and on how to evaluate her work.

Cycle 2: Interviews

The professionals' responses in the vignettes assisted in forming the semi-structured interview protocol in order to highlight specific areas in need of further clarification regarding their answers. All the professionals participated individually in an approximately 1-hour interview expressing more specific views on their background, on bullying theories and practice, and on current and future collaborations. Moreover, they shared their understanding of interdisciplinary collaboration practices for bullying prevention (Appendix 4). The interview was semi-structure and it included open-ended questions, such as "Tell me about bullying prevention in Cypriot education", with additional prompts, such as "Any strengths?" or "Can you give me an example?". Additionally, instead of asking the participants directly the definition of bullying from the beginning, specific statements were created, calling the professionals to complete them, such as "Children bully because (complete)". The latter statements were followed by various prompts in order for the professionals to expand their answer and give examples, such as "Factors that enable bullying?" or "You base your answer on...?".

Cycle 3: FGD

Three FGD were formed to assist the professionals in their interaction and communication (Appendix 5). At the end of each FGD, the professionals set down their thoughts in an Electronic Diary (Appendix 6) having the opportunity to disclose anything they were unable to during the process. The structure of the FGD took into consideration the professionals' interview responses, which were divided into themes and informed the three smaller cycles, each of them responding to an individual FGD meeting as described below:

Cycle 3.1: 'My practice': The professionals were called upon to identify their professional background and to reflect on the interview responses regarding the definition of bullying and anti-bullying practices in chosen situations and scenarios. The activities of the first FGD included, for the participants to choose cards with various bullying definitions and combine them in order to explain how they understand bullying, justifying it through their practice, to physically position themselves in an opinion line according to their response in different statements and justify their opinion and to re-enact scenarios in frozen images and then make changes or not according to their opinion on the matter. Additionally, they demonstrated an activity that they have prepared prior the meeting and which they implement with pupils in a

classroom setting, in order to exemplify the way they understand their work in relation to their own understanding of bullying.

Cycle 3.2: 'Me and the others': The professionals discussed each other's practices and identified similarities and differences. Additionally, they were asked to refer to the efficacy of potential past collaborations, and the factors that contributed to their effectiveness or any obstacles they faced during the process. Furthermore, they were called upon to identify and express their views on opportunities and challenges that an interdisciplinary collaboration process for bullying prevention could entail. In order to respond to the latter and achieve interaction between them, various activities were implemented, such as the use of vesica piscis diagram in order to discuss about past collaborations, or placing cards with disciplinary professions near or far of the word "collaboration" according to the challenges they encountered in the past or even taking a step forward, while in a line, if they agree regarding different opportunities that interdisciplinarity could bring.

Cycle 3.3: 'Together': The professionals reflected on collaborations and interdisciplinary practices and discussed future extensions of their work. They were asked to make decisions about and to design an interdisciplinary session either working with members of the group or individually. After presenting and explaining their session and their choices regarding their collaborators, aims and activities, they discussed the opportunities and challenges of this approach comparing it with the work they have been doing up to this point. In order to assist them deciding on who they were planning to involve in the specific session plan, a prior activity took place, in which the professionals were given cards with different professionals, as well as empty cards to add more professionals if they wished. Then they were called to create diagrams, grouping different professionals, who could work in an interdisciplinary collaborative process for bullying prevention. They had the choice not to include cards or add more cards in their diagrams.

4.2. Piloting

Before the actual study was carried out, piloting of the research instruments took place. Piloting is considered essential in research since it assists in the testing of whether the questions mean the same thing for both the researcher and the participants and whether the time frame designed for completing an interview or any other research instrument reflect the reality of the situation (Phelas et al., 2012). During the process of bridging comprehension of the questions between the researcher and the participants, items that will potentially not generate usable data or are confusing can be identified and eliminated. Nyatanga (2005) agrees that when piloting is

conducted as part of a research process, the trustworthiness of the collected data improves significantly. However, he argues that there are limitations, especially when the researcher makes assumptions based on pilot data, something that was considered during the pilot process of this study.

The current pilot research followed the Polit et al. (2001) argument, who state that piloting can be viewed as a 'small scale version or trial run' and it assists in preparing for an actual study (p. 467). Commenting on the major advantages of pilot research, Van Teijlingen et al. (2001) argue that a pilot study might give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols might not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated.

For the current study, the vignettes, the interview and the FGD were tested before reaching the professionals. Baker (1994) states that a pilot study should be used to try out a research instrument and suggests that a sample size of approximately 10%-20% is a reasonable number of participants, in order to increase the chances of the study's success (Baker, 1994). Nevertheless, this usually applies to cases with a large number of participants and mostly occurs through the use of questionnaires. Since the current study proposes the participation of five professionals in a qualitative methodological approach and focuses on the collection of rich data by the use of various research instruments, the specific percentage was seen as simply a suggestion. Additionally, the pilot study followed the argument of Phelas et al. (2012) according to which it is preferable to test the research instruments on the same type of people you will include in the study and if this is not feasible, to include a few other people, who will not in fact participate in the actual study.

Taking the above into account, the piloting of the vignettes, the interview schedule and the FGD included two professionals, one with an educational and one with an applied theatre background, with both having previous experience in working with primary school pupils on bullying prevention. Both professionals were excluded from the actual research.

During the pilot study, it was mostly wording issues that emerged, especially because all the research instruments were translated from English to Greek and special adjustments needed to be made for them to correspond to the original form, in order to promote better communication between the researcher and the professionals. Changes were made to the interview agenda, primarily in these three areas: wording, the order of the questions and elimination of repeated questions. Additionally, question 13 could not elicit the anticipated data since both pilot-participants asked for clarification and more information in order to answer (Appendix 7A).

The aim of the specific question was to stimulate an initial discussion around interdisciplinary approaches, since it requested that the professionals compare their approaches with those of other professionals working for bullying prevention. Therefore, a question was added preceding it, to warm the interviewees up by asking them to first list other professionals from different disciplines who work on the prevention of bullying and then to compare their approaches to theirs.

In the vignettes protocol, part 10 was eliminated since the pilot-professionals perceived it to be a repetition of part 9 and produced two different kinds of data from the two pilot-professionals (Appendix 7B). The point of the tenth topic was to collect from the professionals their views on specific research methodologies which they may use to examine the effectiveness of their practice. On the one hand, the first pilot-professional had already commented on their research methodology in part 9 and found part 10 confusing and repetitive. On the other hand, topic 10 prompted the second pilot-professional to refer to a research methodology and be more precise. Both cases raised the issue of whether the professionals could perceive topic 10 as a guiding question, since it could potentially put pressure on them to refer to more structured ways of evaluating their practice in order to satisfy the researcher. This however would be unrealistic, since some professionals possibly use only observation or other means of evaluation to test whether pupils change their attitudes or behaviour, and not any structured research methodology. Therefore, the decision was made to remove topic 10 from the vignettes and to give to the participants more time during the first interview to comment on their vignette's answers, clarify specific points, and to expand on their views on the area of evaluation.

5. Research methods

Prior to the study a preliminary meeting with the professionals was arranged. As Wilson-Agostinone (2012) argues, although preliminary meetings are sometimes overlooked and viewed as waste of the participants' time, they can facilitate a positive environment so that they may make an informed decision regarding whether to take part in the research study (p. 32). This preliminary meeting was necessary, especially because the specific study demanded they invest a great amount of time and employed research methods the professionals were potentially not familiar with.

After sending the informed consent form to all the professionals via email, a meeting was arranged in order for them to sign on and to provide them with a hard copy of the vignette document, clarifying any queries they might have had. Additionally, an electronic version of the vignette document was sent via email, giving them the option of completing it and sending

it back within a given reasonable amount of time that was discussed and decided upon individually. After the vignettes were handed in, a second meeting was arranged for individual interviews. After the interview process, a meeting was arranged for each of the three FGD, with a month elapsing each time before the next one, in order for the professionals to have enough time to properly reflect in their electronic diaries and for the researcher to adjust each FGD accordingly.

This section presents the decisions made to include the chosen research instruments, which are written vignettes, interviews, FGD and electronic diaries, and to start a discussion surrounding them, presenting their limitations and strengths, and comparing them with other research methods. Furthermore, ethical considerations for the implementation of the research are discussed, including the role of the researcher. Trustworthiness of the results is put forward to justify the choices made for the implementation of the current study.

5.1. Vignettes

Vignettes, as a research tool, are either linked to narrative theories, incorporating narratives as a means for analysis (Breuer, 2000; Monrouxe, 2009), or to research mainly connected with discursive narratives in the form of research evaluation (Elliott, 2005; Dausien et al., 2008) or a combination of both (Jones, 2009; 2014). According to Stecher et al. (2006), using vignettes to gain a contextualised description of classroom situations is not a new research technique, and they can be used for prompting detailed descriptions of institutional practices. Additionally, they make data collection processes more realistic by providing a context for professionals working in a classroom setting to situate their responses. This is relevant for the current research since it investigates bullying and bullying prevention practices specifically in a Cypriot primary school classroom setting.

According to the literature, researchers either use vignettes alone or in combination with other research techniques to study peoples' actions and practices, views and attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions (Hughes and Huby, 2002; Renold, 2002). The current study describes an exploratory use of vignettes as part of the spiral process of AR methodology, informing and complimenting the initial interviews. The research process begins with the vignettes, which illustrate the professionals' responses to classroom-based scenarios within an action research cycle, in order for them to reflect on and reimagine their actions and to then potentially suggest changes (Spalding, 2004). These changes were mostly decisions made ahead of time, before entering a classroom setting, or after a situation arises. The responses to the vignettes informed

the individual interviews, since all the professionals were asked to comment on their narratives, so the researcher could expand on their views and clarify any conflicting points.

The exploratory and complimentary use of the narratives, in combination with the positioning of the five professionals within the framework of a classroom setting, assisted in condensing their responses and allowed them to reflect on the issue under discussion, that is, bullying and bullying prevention. An example of this is Hunter's (2012) research on history curriculum and pedagogy, which employed the use of narrative vignettes amongst secondary education teachers. The process of designing her vignettes was a creative way of recording self-reflexivity within academic writing. It was also noted that in many cases, knowledge and practice intersected, and at the same time, disciplinary boundaries were negotiated. Although Hunter's results appear appealing and pertinent to the current research, designing vignettes that are relevant and suitable for each of the five professionals, enabling them to be self-reflexive, was challenging. The difference here is that the five professionals come from distinctive disciplines, with not all of them basing their practices on a classroom level, and treating bullying prevention differently, something that needed to be considered.

The current study employed narrative-based vignettes in the style of 'conversational interviews' (Breuer, 2000; Jones, 2014) to investigate the professionals' general understanding of the choices they make in their practices and at the same time to organise their thoughts and explain their reasoning. The vignettes included written descriptions of a fictional professional working for the prevention of bullying in a classroom setting, encouraging the professionals to support her, giving examples of decisions they themselves would have made ahead of time to address a situation. The narrative-based piece of writing had been expected to be a layered combination of academic socialisation, discussion with theory, practice and expertise (Hunter, 2012). Therefore, the choice of the fictional 'newbie' professional named Rachel, with an open description of her ideas and actions, gave the professionals the possibility of distancing themselves from their own practices, safeguarding their individuality. Additionally, it opened up ways of identifying with her by operating on the level of a mentor or counselor towards her, offering objectivity and truthfulness to their responses.

5.2. Interviews

Conducting interviews within AR is of paramount importance since, as previously argued, the aim of employing the AR as a qualitative methodological approach is to gain the maximum possible insight into the professionals' knowledge, as well as to explore the meaning the inquiry at hand holds for them (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002; Roberts-Holmes, 2005; Seidman, 2013).

Interviews in research can either be used by combining them with other research methods, or by themselves, since they have the ability to transport you into people's realities and let you witness the way they understand more complex issues. Researchers are of the opinion that it is impossible to attain this kind of rich information by only using other written research techniques such as questionnaires (Bell, 2005; Roberts-Holmes, 2005). The advantage of an interview is that it can be described as a live process which enables the researcher to probe into areas that emerge during the interview, maximizing the depth of the participants' responses.

Cohen et al. (2007) states that interviews are ideal for testing the hypothesis of a study, or for detecting variables particularly useful for the study and the way these correlate to each other. For Seidman (2013) the real reason behind using interviews in research is not to examine hypotheses or the way people explain theories; rather it is to profit from their real experiences, since they are considered experts in the topic under investigation. And he continues, 'social and educational issues are abstractions based on the concrete experience of people' (p. 7).

One of the requirements of this study is for the professionals to provide responses on how they understand bullying prevention practices, offering examples of their own work. This could prove problematic since, according to Remenyi (2011), many researchers question the subjectivity of one's memory and the accuracy of some of the responses given in the interview. Here the social constructivism paradigm comes into play, considering the responses of the professionals as a 'recollection of impressions of past events' (p. 10), probing and encouraging them to be as precise as possible when using examples of their practices.

As Remenyi continues, one additional limitation of the interviews is that bias can creep into the process, without, in many cases, either the interviewer or the interviewee realising it. Since both interpret the situations through their own biased lens, instructions and clarification from the researcher at any point in the process are fundamental in order to not guide or influence the answers in any way (Gray, 2009). In order to avoid this, and aside from the fact that the interviews were conducted in tandem with the written vignettes and FGD, instructions were clearly stated at the beginning of the interview, while prompts and probes were carefully added to the interview protocol during the piloting of the research instruments.

For this specific study, and in an effort to limit the challenges while maximising the opportunities created through the specific means of data collection, the choice to use semi-structured questions appeared ideal. A semi-structured interview, as opposed to an unstructured interview, is easier to analyse, while a structured interview differs only slightly from a questionnaire (Opie, 2004). The questions in AR are usually semi-structured by using an

'interview guide' (Robson, 2011: 280) as a checklist for what needs to be covered in the research questions, while the addition of probes offers the interviewees the opportunity to expand on their answers and divert the interview into other possibly unexpected directions (Gray, 2009).

As previously stated, for the current research the vignettes informed the structure and the content of the interview questions, although the primary aim was to allow personal choices in wording and for additional questions to be asked, based on the flow of the interview. As Wilson-Agostinone (2012) describes, the interview was designed to be a 'deliberate, informed conversation' (p. 21) with the focus on creating 'open-ended questions that will maximize the potential for participants' responses and rich data' (p.29), allowing them to further describe their practices and to define the issues they are dealing with themselves. An additional technique used was that of the professionals being asked in different stages of the interview to verbally complete specific statements. Robson (2011) talks about the technique using 'prompt cards' (p. 284), in which the professionals explained their views on how to best define bullying and their understanding of bullying prevention.

5.3. Focus Group Discussions

As discussed, the interviews were designed to primarily assist, in their direct way, the exploration of the professionals' perceptions of specific areas, which arose from the responses to the vignettes. However, being consistent with the research questions and the research methodological approach, one of the aspects to consider was ways to encourage interaction between the professionals. In contrast to the interviews, which could offer rich and in-depth data excluding, however, interaction, FGD appeared ideal in order for the professionals to exchange knowledge directly and communicate. Researchers believe that one of the advantages of the FGD is that participants feel less threatened by it, thus facilitating a positive environment for discussing perceptions, ideas, opinions and thoughts (Krueger and Casey, 2000; Liamputtong, 2011). Robson (2011) refers to this method as 'focused interviews' (p. 289) used particularly in flexible research designs, such as AR and evaluation, creating the potential of bringing change to the group and setting. For these professionals in particular, it was about reflecting on the efficacy of their and others' practices, and possibly considering a new direction for approaching bullying in the Cypriot primary education, that of interdisciplinarity.

Although FGD are frequently used in flexible designs due to their adaptable nature, it is no coincidence that researchers safeguard their three most important attributes when applying them. In Wilkinson's (2004) words, traditional FGD are 'informal' group discussions between

a 'small number of people' about a 'specific topic' (p.177). Their informal or open-ended nature is imperative, with an experienced researcher acting as the facilitator, in order to prevent certain participants from dominating the discussion (Robson, 2011). Equally beneficial, together with the facilitator's skills, is the maintaining of the number of participants as low as possible, with some of the researchers reaching the maximum of 10 participants. Moreover, the profile of the participants is of great importance to Krueger and Casey (2000), who are critical of researchers introducing FGD to pre-existing groups or to people who have previously worked together, fearing that the well-established dynamics or hierarchies could influence the data. Therefore, by opting for purposeful sampling, the current study has opened the door to those professionals associated with the field of bullying prevention for them to express their views on bullying and bullying prevention practices in primary education in Cyprus.

The involvement of the professionals in the interaction was highly significant, enabling them to discuss complex topics that are both relevant to them and which are rarely breached in a structured and instrumented way (Seymour et al., 2004). However, asking just anyone to react to their professional practices pertaining to challenges and limitations is a sensitive issue, making overcoming this difficulty a priority. Therefore, in different stages of the FGD the professionals were called upon to complete tasks through interactive activities, either individually or in groups, to set them at ease so they could express their opinions more freely. Infusing the FGD with interactive activities gives the professionals a safe space to spontaneously express their views since, as Liamputtong (2011) states, 'people feel more relaxed when talking about sensitive issues when they see that others have similar experiences or views' (p. 107). Therefore, the process was transformed, from me asking direct questions to me simply facilitating the discussion.

Interactions in FGD could bring many opportunities as well as challenges when compared to other research instruments. According to Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009), FGD encourage participation from people who are normally reluctant to be interviewed, with the participants discussing personal issues and suggesting solutions to these problems. Additionally, they are in favour of the inclusion and participation of groups of people in the study who feel they do not have anything to say (Gates and Waight, 2007; Kroll et al., 2007). Nevertheless, as Thomas (2017) argues, there is always the possibility that the answers to a question will be different when these questions are posed individually in an interview, since FGD have the ability to make the group bolder and more daring with their answers. As a researcher, you neither presuppose that the group will be more talkative than they are in interviews nor that their silence always indicates consent. In order to ensure this, the FGD were used together with other means of

research, including the professionals' entries in structured electronic diaries. Their reflection process assisted in primarily examining the challenges they faced during the interaction process (Swantz, 2008), and allowed them to disclose any views they were not able to express during the process in their own time.

6. Ethical considerations

The study investigates the professionals' perceptions around their understanding of the opportunities and the limitations of an interdisciplinary practice. Therefore, it encompasses certain ethical issues which need to be addressed prior the implementation. Here, two areas are discussed around the ethical consideration of the undertaken research and involve (a) anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, and (b) personal involvement and trustworthiness of the research

6.1. Anonymity and confidentiality of the participants

Apart from the ethics approval from the IOE/UCL (Appendix 8) a preliminary visit meeting with the professionals took place. During this first meeting, the five professionals were asked, among other things, to consent by signing the informed consent form to the interviews and the FGD being recorded, to ensure transparency and credibility in the data collection. Furthermore, an AR methodology deals with issues of 'confidentiality, privacy, protecting the rights of participants' (Glanz, 1998: 241), especially due to the limited number of participants in this study. As previously explained, the names of the participants were not used; rather, seeing as a great part of the study deals with professional practice and interdisciplinarity, it was important to refer to them by at least using the initials of the discipline they identify to represent in the research. However, according to Surmiak (2018), the use of pseudonyms or initials does not always guarantee anonymity, especially as far as small communities are concerned. She then separates anonymity into two categories, according to the research conducted with researchers from different research fields: protective and balanced. According to her, some of the researchers prioritise the anonymity of their participants and are very protective of them, while other researchers proceed with a thorough anonymisation of the study results, which at the same time does not affect the analysis.

The decision of what to anonymise for the current study was based on the desire to create a balance between protecting, on the one hand, the professionals' identity, and on the other, the credibility of the data. Therefore, anonymity was ensured for those concerned, taking care to balance between not revealing any personal information that exposes anyone's identity (Robson, 2011: 208) and by contemplating the six key areas of anonymity as described by

Surmiak (2018), which include: 1) people's names; 2) places; 3) religious or cultural background; 4) occupation; 5) family relationships; and 6) other potentially identifying information.

Bellow (Table 1) are the information that the participants gave at the beginning of the interview, -including the description of the discipline or the disciplines, that they identify to represent-carefully transcript in order to ensure anonymity, but at the same time to maintain the credibility of the findings:

A/A	Professional discipline- Knowledge-Expertise	Experience with children in primary education	Experience in bullying prevention in primary education
1.	Educational Psychologist (Study of how people learn and promote educational success- Psychology)	- 6 years' experience working with NGO (peer pressure, sex education, LGBT rights)	- 5 years' experience working with NGO (anti-bullying programme).
2.	Music Therapist (Therapeutic application of music-Psychology, Therapy)	- 10 years' experience as music private tutor. - 5 years' experience as a special education teacher.	- 4 years' experience in designing and applying workshops through music (aggression, expressing emotions).
3.	Social Worker (Meeting the basic needs of individuals-Sociology, Psychology)	- 4 years' experience in youth clubs and after school clubs.	- 3 years' experience in applying experiential anti-bullying workshops in collaboration with clinical psychologists.
4.	Teacher (Planning, implementing, and evaluating of learning process- Pedagogy, Didactics)	- 18 years' experience in teaching.	- 2 years' experience in working in a relevant to violence sector of the MOEC (workshops with pupils, parents, and teachers).
5.	Theatre Practitioner (Raising awareness and shape social change by using theatre as a tool- Theatre, Art, Sociology)	-10 years' experience in youth clubs and after school clubs.	- 7 years' experience of applying a bullying prevention theatre programme.

Table 1: Information about the professionals-participants

In dialogue with the information provided in the table, names and surnames are not mentioned; the place that they live and work is not specified; their religion or cultural background is not mentioned; names of organisations they worked or are still working are not named, rather a description is used (i.e., NGO or relevant to violence sector of the MOEC); names and content

of their previous programmes and practice is not extensively described; specifics of their current occupation is not mentioned.

6.2. Personal involvement and trustworthiness of the research

The great value of the current research lies in managing to minimise error and pursuing truth in every stage of the process, building in this way trust to the reader. Some researchers refer to this as reliability and validity of the research, which together strike a balance between the decisions you make as a researcher about the methodological aspect of the research – theory and practice – and the collaboration you achieve with the participants (Murphy and Dingwall, 2003; Roberts and Priest, 2006; Ladkin, 2007). Other researchers support that in qualitative research, even when a specific set of data is gathered and shared, several authors might provide several and distinctive interpretations (Stahl and King, 2020). As a result, qualitative researchers instead of aiming for validity they aim for trustworthiness, which implies that readers will feel confident in the researcher's findings when they interpret the written work. Therefore, the reader shouldn't anticipate being able to replicate the precise results in their own applications of the study.

In order to achieve trustworthiness, the researcher depends on credibility, which relates with internal validity and the assurance of precise findings (Korstiens and Moser, 2018), which respond to the research questions without bias. Credibility can be accomplished through triangulation, peer reviews, member checks and audit trail (Shenton, 2004). Other aspects of trustworthiness are transferability, which is a form of external validity and encompass the use of purposeful sampling, dependability, which is linked with reliability and requires triangulation and peer examination, and confirmability, which is about checking and rechecking the data, coding and presenting the themes (Gunawan, 2015; Shave and Nikengbeza, 2018; Zinyama et al., 2022).

The AR methodological approach often includes an evaluation process, which presupposes a process of collecting data from various data resources. Klein (2012) argues the critical nature of this, yet she goes on to state that collecting and analysing data from multiple resources often puts the credibility of the research in jeopardy, since the separate pieces of data you collect will unavoidably contain contradictions. Additionally, given the strong personal involvement of the researcher and the professionals-participants in the research process, issues of bias and subjectivity arise in findings, which negatively impacts the trustworthiness of the study.

Robson (2011) argues, 'a practitioner-researcher is someone involved in carrying out systematic enquiry that is of relevance to the job' (p. 535). Indeed, my professional practice as

a teacher and my extensive involvement in bullying prevention has influenced my decisions throughout the research process. As a primary school teacher, I am face to face with everyday challenges regarding the lack of awareness around bullying between the members of the school community, as well as the absence of, or limited knowledge regarding bullying prevention. Therefore, during my MA studies in Applied Theatre, I have decided to research bullying in depth, resulting to the designing of an intervention for bullying prevention in primary education. Using theatre as a tool, the intervention aimed to raise awareness of bullying, amongst pupils, teachers and parents, as well as to promote reporting. The specific initiative has received appreciation and approval from the MOEC and it was applied in the majority of primary schools in Cyprus, proving the increasing demand of the school communities to develop the necessary tools to deal with bullying effectively. The latter has led to the invitation from the MOEC, and specifically the COSV, to collaborate in the development of anti-bullying holistic programmes in schools following the guidelines of the Cyprus anti-bullying policy. Throughout my experience, I have collaborated with various academics, government officials and professionals, who research and work around bullying, from policy development to implementation of practice.

The multiple roles I have held throughout this journey, have led me to believe that taking advantage of the best from every disciplinary knowledge and expertise can be a means of transforming people's perceptions and attitudes towards bullying and bullying prevention practices. It therefore seems impossible to isolate my lived experiences and professional identity from the narrative, since they are essentially at the core of the study (Hunter, 2012), something that raises significant issues of trustworthiness in the research findings. The latter, reflects similar concerns around the personal connection to the research from the professionals-participants, which influences the degree and the dynamics of their participation.

Acknowledging the personal involvement in research, either on the part of me as the researcher, or on the part of the professionals participating in the study, was a first point added in favour of the trustworthiness of the study and its findings. The latter was considered from the beginning and was included in the decisions made ahead of time regarding the methodological approach that the research should follow, especially approaching the inquiry from a social constructivism paradigm (Swantz, 2008). Social constructivism paradigm in combination with the AR methodological approach offered trustworthiness to the findings. For instance, during the data collection process, as a researcher, I had the clear role of coordinating the exchange of knowledge within the AR cyclical process from single to collective, equally giving value to the dynamics of the interaction between the professionals during FGD (Gray, 2004). Additionally,

by activating the purposeful sampling technique, transferability regarding the objectives of the research and close collaboration with the professionals were assured.

Most importantly, a safe space was created during the FGD, making sure everybody understood that the study was a group effort, with the common aim of producing optimal results in our work. By thinking ahead and incorporating an on-going dialogue on the ethical implications of the research into each stage of the process, a deeper appreciation of the importance of each person's role was elicited amongst the participants (Brydon-Miller, 2008). Nevertheless, an open space for reflection was provided after each FGD in the electronic diaries, which allowed the professionals to freely express their views if for any reason they did not feel comfortable doing so during the workshop. Furthermore, 'the data reporting process included an opportunity for the researcher and the participants to review and reflect on findings through member checking (Klein, 2012: 14); this enhanced both credibility and dependability.

Additionally, various processes of data triangulation took place, by collecting and comparing data from multiple resources and by repeating the analysis throughout the spiral and cyclical process (Cobb et al., 2008; Hartas, 2010; Robson, 2011; Chisaka, 2013; Metler, 2014). The latter was important in order to enhance the credibility of the findings, a process that trustworthiness is depending on. Therefore, the findings on the one hand communicate the way that me as the researcher think regarding the social world in a research process (Thomson, 2017) and on the other, the way I examine and continually re-think research findings from theoretical and empirical perspectives (Burns and McPherson, 2017). The recordings of the interviews, the FGD and the electronic diaries assisted in the triangulation of the data, since during the analysis, it was watched back, making sure that nothing was missed. Data triangulation was additionally applied during not only the interpretation of the data but also while writing the *Discussion* chapter, in order to develop a clear argument around the findings, enhancing dependability and confirmability, which is equally important in trustworthiness.

The research design process included collecting data from vignettes, interviews, three FGD with interactive activities and electronic diaries. According to Metler (2009), the credibility of a qualitative research relies on whether the data collected measure what they intended to measure in the first place. In this case, the research questions were clear, and the research methods were not only chosen specifically but also used methodically to respond to those questions as presented bellow (Diagram 3).

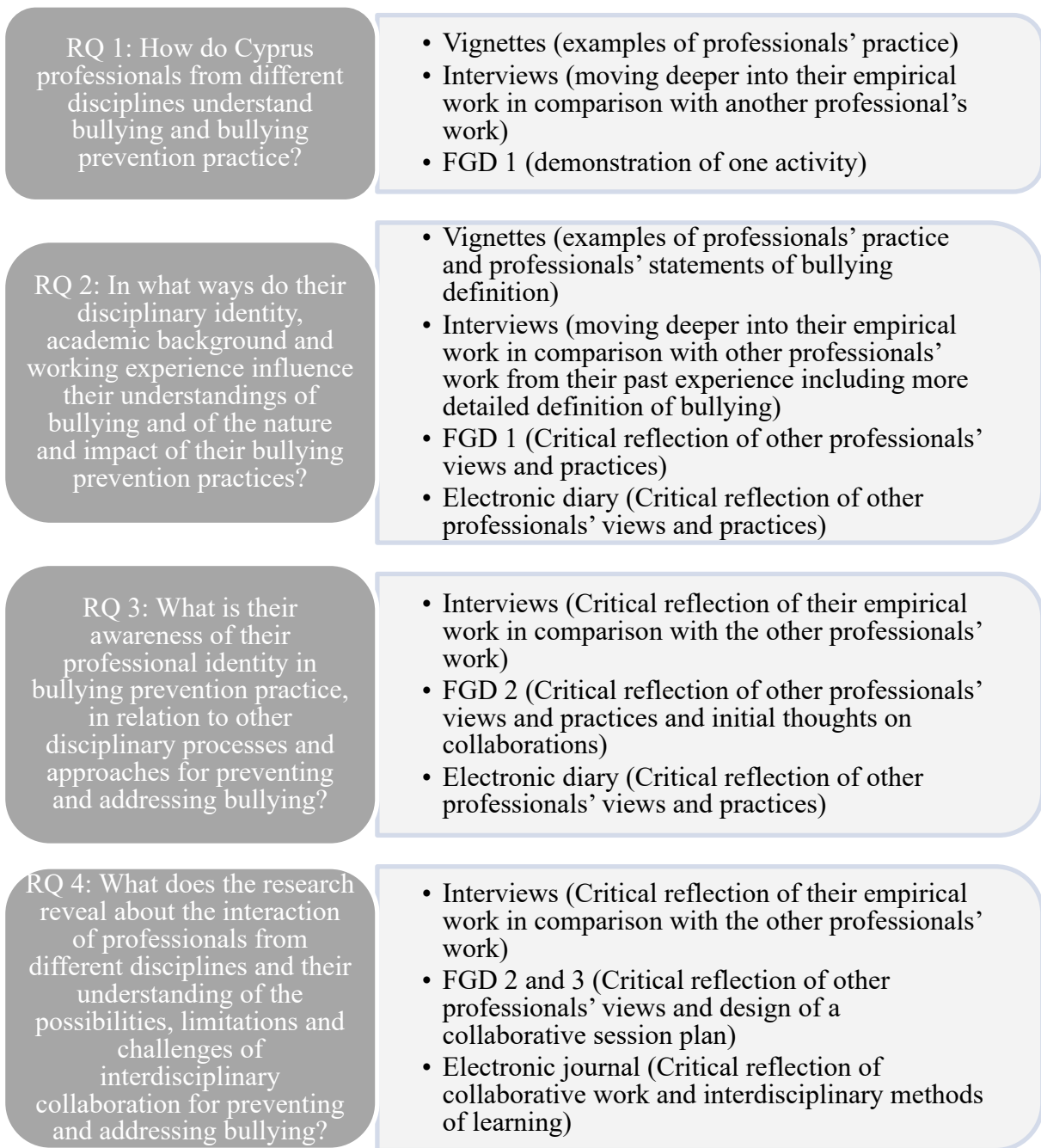


Diagram 3: The Methods of Inquiries' design to respond to each Research Question

In conclusion, to ensure trustworthiness, multiple actions took place from the beginning to the end of the research process, which include dedication and clarity in roles during the collection of data. Member-checking, multiple processes of triangulation, detailed transcription, methodical plan, and coding aimed to arrive, to as much as possible precise, consistent and exhaustive data, strengthening even more the trustworthiness of the findings.

7. Thematic Analysis

The current study employs various methods of data collection to form an argument intended to provide answers to the research questions by following a flexible qualitative methodological

design. The social constructivism paradigm was activated by incorporating the AR methodology in the form of an evaluation. Therefore, through vignettes, interviews, FGD, and electronic diaries, the professionals were called upon to communicate their beliefs about the theory of bullying and bullying prevention practices, while evaluating the efficacy of their own practice with a critical eye, by reflecting on the practice of other professionals. Additionally, the study challenged professional boundaries, revealing the professionals' understanding of interdisciplinarity in bullying prevention, promoting their collaboration in Cypriot primary education.

The purpose of the methodological approach is to progressively and repeatedly build on new knowledge and make new meaning from the new data emerging from each research instrument, by activating the AR cyclical and spiral process. Therefore, a decision needed to be made regarding the right strategy for the careful interpretation of data as soon as it arrives, in order for the study to continuously progress. Researchers describe data which derives from qualitative research designs as 'rich', 'full' and 'real' (Robson, 2011: 465-466) and far from abstract numbers found in quantitative paradigms. Barnett-Page and Thomas (2009) argue that TA is a method of analysis, which can sufficiently measure the effectiveness of an intervention using a constant comparison method between all the data collected from various research instruments. Since the current research design is flexible and exploratory (i.e., three iterative cycles of AR), it appeared fitting to implement TA as an approach, as it allows one to analyse the data as it arrives, before moving on to finetuning the data and applying the next research instrument.

The choice of TA reflects the reflexive and subjective view of the current study, since, according to Braun and Clarke (2019), the TA understands the researcher's subjectivity as a resource, rather than as a potential threat to knowledge production. 'Qualitative research', they continue, 'is about meaning and meaning-making, and the data analysis is about telling "stories", about interpreting, and creating, not discovering and finding the "truth" that is either "out there" and findable from, or buried deep within, the data' (Braun and Clarke, 2019: 591). Therefore, due to the great volume of data, as well as the narrative elements in the vignettes, the open-ended responses given during the interviews and the interactive discussions in FGD, the form of analysis decided upon was the TA.

Researchers argue that TA cannot be considered a specific method of analysis since, in contrast to other methods of discourse, analysis is not an extension of a pre-existing theoretical framework (Lawless, 2019). Furthermore, it is more frequently used in Grounded Theory (GT) studies (Chapman et al., 2015), rather than as a stand-alone methodology. However, it is the absence of any theoretical or epistemological stance and its flexible nature that makes TA so

popular in practice, with Braun and Clarke (2006) calling it a ‘foundational method for qualitative analyses’ (p. 4) and ‘reflexive TA’ (Braun and Clarke, 2019: 594). Although it is usually used as a simple method for discovering patterns and forming analytical themes to respond to the topics raised by the research questions (King and Horrocks, 2011), it can just as easily introduce basic skills that researchers can apply to any qualitative analysis. Wengraf (2004) disputes this statement and argues that GT is a methodology which could be seen as the foundation of any other method of analysis seeking to create theory from data, in contrast to TA, which could not stand alone as a method of analysis (Wengraf, 2004). Regardless, herein lies the difference between GT and TA, with the first seeking to develop theory through data and the second aiming to produce ‘conceptual-informed interpretations of the data’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 6), which is pertinent to the current research.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006; 2012) there are two forms of coding in TA. The inductive approach to data coding and analysis is a bottom-up approach and is governed by the data itself. In contrast, a deductive approach to data coding and analysis is a top-down approach, in which the researcher introduces a number of concepts, ideas, or topics into the data, which they use to encode and interpret said data. For the current study, the inductive approach appeared to better suit the methodological design since it permitted the emergence of themes from the data, rather than the data simply being adapted to adhere to the researchers’ presumptions or relying solely on the research questions and the literature review. However, according to Braun and Clarke (2012), as researchers, it is impossible to be purely inductive, as we always bring something to the data when we analyse it, and we rarely completely ignore the semantic content of the data when we code for a particular theoretical construct—at the very least, we have to know whether coding the data for that construct is worth it (p. 58, 59). Therefore, for the current study and due to the nature of the methodological design, a combination of both approaches was followed (Diagram 3).

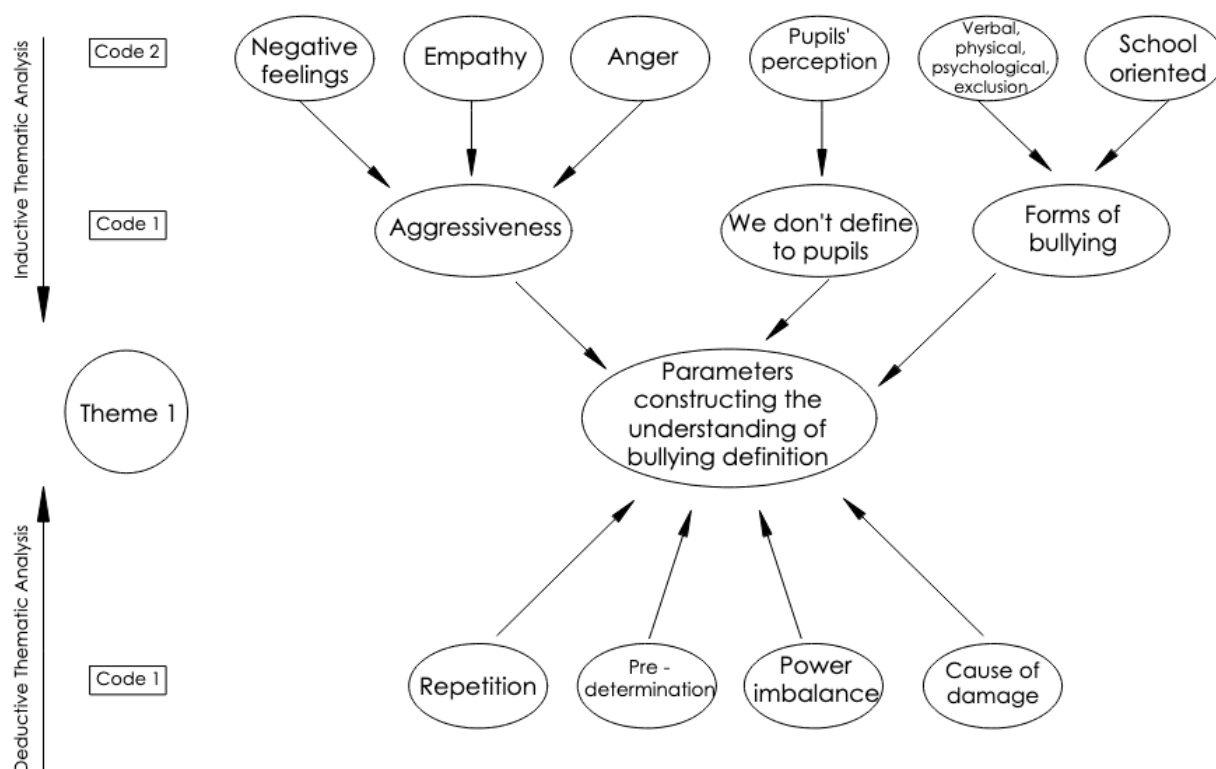


Diagram 4: Example of Inductive and Deductive TA (i.e., understanding of bullying)

Barnett-Page and Thomas (2009) refer to the process of coding the findings as ‘thematic synthesis’ (p. 3) since the findings are organised in codes, informing bigger analytical themes. The codes were formed to respond to either statements and narratives of the professionals or to address one or more of the research questions (Koh et al., 2014). In cases of views at odds with the majority, sub-codes were created (Appendix 9). The inductive TA was mainly used when coding from the data, in order to not miss the professionals’ experiences, which construct their stories. Additionally, the inductive TA was particularly useful for entering a social constructivism epistemology by examining the social interaction between the professionals, since you cannot isolate data from the social interactions and the context in which they take place (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Nonetheless, the use of deductive TA was imperative when drawing on hypothetical builds from bullying theories, professional identity theory, critically reflective practice and interdisciplinarity, to render obvious issues that participants did not explicitly express (Braun and Clarke, 2012: 60).

The foundation for interpreting the data was as Rossman and Rallis (2003) describe ‘learning as you go’ (p. 127), with notes taken during every research method used and transcripts from audio recordings created immediately after the completion of the interviews and each of the three FGD. To clarify, after the professionals handed in the completed vignettes, an initial coding commenced manually, through the thorough reading of the replies and the taking of

notes on the side. Then, although a first draft of the interview protocol had already been designed, it was revisited and restructured both as a whole and in its separate components, to correspond to and relate with each professional. This appeared vital because, on the one hand the professionals' answers generated more questions relevant to each topic and on the other hand, inconsistencies emerged between their answers that needed to be clarified individually. After the completion of the interview process, the recordings were transcribed verbatim with notes of the moment, suggesting code headings along the way. The notes were revisited before finalising the topics and the content of the three FGD. The transcript process was repeated after each of the FGD and every time the previous notes and their codes were revisited, more notes were created, and multiple readings of the data took place in an attempt to not miss anything. Finally, a careful transcript of the electronic diaries took place, with a constant revisiting of the previous codes and their finalisation where it appeared possible.

8. Conclusion

The current chapter describes the decisions for designing the research methodology and the assimilation of multiple research instruments, such as written vignettes, interviews, FGD and electronic diaries, in order to shed light on the research questions. Furthermore, the chapter describes the procedures that lend trustworthiness to the study, encompassing specific sampling and piloting techniques, while simultaneously raising the subject of ethics and the researcher's personal involvement in the study. For the analysis of the data, the TA is employed both in its deductive and inductive form in order to develop the following chapter, which presents the data coded in themes in order to respond to the research questions. More specifically, the data presented reveals the way in which the professionals engage in a discourse around bullying theory and practice. The data focuses on the professionals' understanding of the efficacy of their and the awareness of others' bullying prevention practices, and their understanding of interdisciplinary collaborative practice for bullying prevention.

Chapter 3

Presentation of the data

1. Introduction

The current chapter presents the interpretation of the data in two sections. The purpose of the two sections is to provide the reader with relevant and timely data. Specifically, the professionals were asked to comment and expand on their answers from the vignettes during their interview, while after each FGD, the professionals were asked to reflect in an electronic diary. Therefore, the first section presents findings from the vignettes combined with findings from the interviews and the second section presents findings from the FGD complemented with data from the electronic diaries. At the beginning of each section, a diagram signposts the themes. Moreover, cases of co-occurring codes, in which codes partially or entirely overlap, were anticipated and treated with care following by a bottom-up approach in TA (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Therefore, all the themes were revisited, the overlapping data was compared to the already existing codes, and then included in the presentation of each theme.

The five professionals-participants of the research are a teacher (T), an educational psychologist (EP), a theatre practitioner (TP), a music therapist (MT) and a social worker (SW). It is their initials that will be mentioned every time their input is presented, to offer coherency regarding their perceptions and the dynamics that developed throughout the research process and the different research cycles.

2. Vignettes and interviews

The first cycle of the AR consisted of the five professionals completing written vignettes in order to explore the way their professional background and code of conduct influences their decisions during their practice. After collecting the vignettes, the first codes were created, and the interview protocol was revisited and reformed to allow the professionals to go deeper and expand on their responses or clarify their opinions on specific matters. The latter especially was essential, seeing as some of the questions were open-ended, while others were direct responses to their vignettes. After the interviews, a coding process was conducted, and the new codes were compared and merged with the vignette ones, creating new analytical themes. The theme titles were chosen to accord with the language of the professionals, combined with a terminology that was used to detect the link between all their answers. The following diagram synopsis the themes that were created after the coding of the interviews:

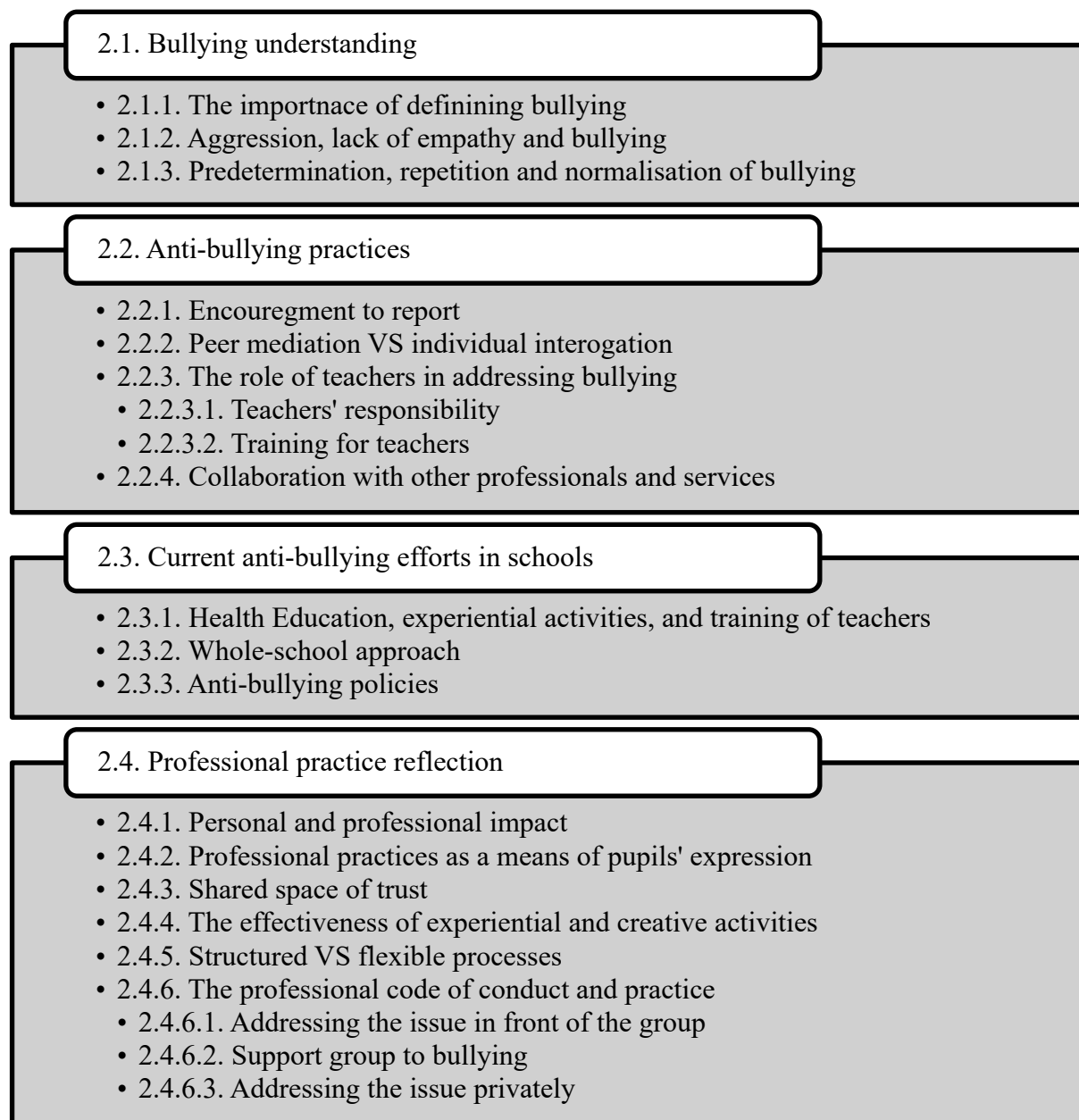


Diagram 5: Themes and sub-themes from the Vignettes and Interviews

2.1. Bullying understanding

The vignettes were structured to collect the professionals' input, through an effort to help a new colleague decide on how to act in every step of her work (Appendix 3). At this stage of the process, a direct question about how the professionals perceive or understand bullying was avoided. This process provided the professionals with a space to freely express their views and points, in many cases revealing the degree of significance defining bullying holds for them. Therefore, the focus at that point was not to discover what the professionals define as bullying, rather the importance they place on their opinions agreeing with the theory of bullying and the

theory of bullying prevention. It was during the interview stage that the professionals had the opportunity to solidify their views on the matter, defending their opinion on theory and practice. The following themes present the professionals' input from both the vignettes and the interviews and include: the importance of a bullying definition, the association between aggression, lack of empathy and bullying and bullying as a predetermined and repetitive act.

2.1.1. The importance of defining bullying

The professionals highlight the importance of knowing what bullying is and they place the emphasis on different parameters to distinguish it from other behaviours:

“It is similar with disorders in which you need to know what bullying is and find the correct way to act.” (MT)

“...bullying is not a conflict, which needs different treatment.” (T, TP, EP)

“...arguments can take place once, as opposed to bullying which causes damage to the child.” (TP, T)

“Bullying is not teasing, which is usual in a child's development.” (EP).

The MT identifies similarities between bullying and disorders, in which you must understand what you are dealing with in order to tackle it. The other professionals differentiate bullying from other similar behaviours which would require a different type of treatment. They refer to 'conflicts' (TP, T, EP), to 'arguments that take place once' (TP, T) and to 'teasing' (EP). Their responses suggest the importance they give in bullying definition in order to differentiate it from other behaviours and address it appropriately. Additionally, they present the vast spectrum that behaviours can take, which, in some cases, are mistaken as bullying, while they view bullying as complex and harmful.

The SW and the EP debate the appropriateness of communicating the definition or specific terminology of bullying to pupils:

“As a professional, I know the definition of bullying, but we should let the pupils tell us what bullying means for them.” (SW)

“From where I am coming from, terminology is important. If we don't use terms at all we are in danger of normalising behaviours... if we overuse them there is the danger of labelling children. I think it depends on the situation.” (EP)

The SW's comments that pupils should not have the definition of bullying imposed on them rather than as professionals to open up a space to the pupils to discuss what bothers them or what does not. The EP argues that by using the terms bully or bullied, the pupils will 'label' their peers and often refer to them as bullies or bullied and for him it always 'depends on the situation'. Both professionals negotiate the degree of communication of the definition of bullying to the pupils, yet in practice they seem to follow a different direction. The SW appears more exploratory, letting pupils discover bullying in a more experiential way, while the EP follows a more thorough approach by demonstrating that he understands the language and the culture of pupils, choosing to act differently in different situations without rejecting the use of bullying terminology.

2.1.2. Aggression, lack of empathy and bullying

The professionals showcase the connection between aggression and bullying:

“According to psychology, unresolved feelings of anger can lead to aggression and bullying. Kids experience stressful circumstances or are excluded in school in many ways or even the parents are absent during childhood offering no support to them.” (MT)

“If a child piles up anger due to stressful circumstances, then this can lead to aggression and bullying. Sometimes they learn from their parents to react aggressive.” (EP)

The MT and the EP consider an unresolved feeling of anger as prone to aggression, which essentially leads to bullying. For example, they refer to cases of pupils experiencing 'stressful circumstances' (MT, EP) or are 'excluded in school' (MT) or 'learn from their parents to react aggressive' (EP) or cases of 'parents being absent during childhood' (MT) as factors that predispose 'aggression in school' (EP). The EP adds to his comments:

“If you look at it from a psychoanalytical perspective it [bullying] is an expression of anger.” (EP)

Both professionals directly link the feeling of anger with aggression, which leads to bullying behaviour.

One of the factors that the professionals suggest, that contributes to pupils' aggression is lack of empathy:

“...the children have no empathy so as to understand that what they are doing is wrong and that is why you should build empathy during your practice with them.” (MT)

“...offering the space where children can express their feelings and speak about them [...] a great possibility to be able to empathise.” (TP)

The MT and the TP discuss fostering empathy, something they prioritise in their work, with the TP to ‘offer space for expression’ and the MT to ‘build on empathy’ for the children to understand their wrongdoing.

2.1.3. Predetermination, repetition and normalisation of bullying

Throughout the professionals’ answers, predetermination and repetitiveness are the two most common elements assigned to bullying, which distinguishes and separates this type of behaviour from other harmful behaviours:

“Bullying happens repeatedly, and the target is one specific person.” (MT)

“...bullying is something predetermined, a conscious repetitive violent act towards an individual or group from an individual or group. Children cannot understand the violent nature of bullying, so they keep quiet.” (T)

“Two very important things can define bullying, repetition and targeting of an individual. However, there are children that don’t experience distress, while you, as an adult, see it differently.” (TP)

Beyond the reference of the three professionals to predetermination and repetition, the T’s comment on the normalisation of bullying in schools is relevant to the specific theme, since it raises issues of children enduring the harmful effects of this behaviour, which often understand its harmful results. The TP also comments on normalisation, yet she approaches it from a different angle. While, both professionals discuss the normalisation of bullying, the first refers to lack of reporting due to normalisation, while the second emphasises the views of adults on the relationships of children, which contrast with how children experience bullying.

2.2. Anti-bullying practices

One of the topics expanded on both in interviews and vignettes was that of the various ways in which the professionals proceed for the prevention or addressing of bullying in practice. Although there was a broad spectrum of responses, they were grouped together according to their content, developing themes to showcase similarities and nuances in the professionals’ answers. The themes on anti-bullying practices that emerge concern: encouraging pupils to

report bullying, the approach of peer mediation versus individual interrogation, the role of the teachers on bullying prevention and the collaboration with other professionals-experts or services.

2.2.1. Encouragement to report

While the professionals support the idea of encouraging pupils to report bullying, the way they approach this differs:

“When a child reports bullying, it means that they feel strong and are governed by their need to deal with this behaviour. Of course, sometimes children don’t know how to report an incident in a discreet way to ensure their safety and they need to learn how to do this. For example, they need to be encouraged to not report in front of everyone, but rather tell a person they trust.” (MT)

“Children need guidance and support from the people in their environment in order to feel strong and to recognise that what is happening to them is wrong.” (T)

The MT and the T support the culture of ‘zero tolerance’ of bullying behaviour, which is essential if a pupil is to report an incident, should it occur. They both support empowerment of children (i.e., ‘they need to learn’, ‘encouraged’, ‘guidance and support’), yet taking different angles. The MT comments that the intervention must take place in order for the children to learn different and discreet ways to report, while the T argues that for pupils to arrive at a point of feeling strong and confident to report, they need prior ‘guidance’ and ‘support’ in order to ‘recognise’ that what they experience is not right.

2.2.2. Peer mediation VS individual interrogation

Collecting information during the investigation phase of a bullying incident can lead in two different directions, as evident from the responses of the professionals. One of the suggested directions is peer mediation, yet not approved by all the professionals:

“A good practice to collect information and potentially resolve the issue is mediation, in which you bring both parties together to express their feelings. I am trained to enter a process of mediation when two pupils can confront each other about an incident, and I can control this process of exchanging information and expressing feelings.” (MT)

“I will never bring the bully and the bullied together to confront each other since the bullied child will not feel strong enough to express how he/she feels in front of

the bully, while the bully can manipulate the situation [...] Mediation is effective in conflicts.” (TP)

The MT argues that the best way of collecting information and resolving the issue is to bring the bully and the bullied together in a mediation process, ‘to express their feelings’. She states that she has the training to enter this process and to recognise if two pupils can ‘confront each other’ about what happened. The TP in her response takes a different direction, arguing that in cases of bullying, putting the perpetrator and the victim in direct contact is a risk to the bullied child’s emotional safety. She presents mediation as an effective approach in cases of conflict between pupils, yet not so efficient in cases of victimisation, which is the case in bullying since ‘the bullied child will not feel strong enough’ to talk freely and ‘the bully can manipulate the situation’.

The other direction of collecting information is individual interrogation, something that it is supported by the T and the SW:

“The best way is to take individually both parties in order to discover the answers you are looking for.” (T)

“... ask them separately in order to be sure of what you are dealing with, identifying conflicting information and arriving at the truth.” (SW)

Here, the two professionals support individual questioning for gathering more information about the incident, without referring to mediation, and place emphasis on getting a clear picture of what is taking place. For example, the T refers to the process as a way of ‘discovering’ what took place and the SW as a way to ‘identify conflicting information’ and to discover what really happened. What both professionals have in common in their different responses, is the core of their practice, which is to gather as much information as possible before taking the next step to address the situation.

The opportunity of not excluding either direction is also considered:

“You need to question all the people involved individually to arrive at the truth. You don’t bring them together at an early stage. The bullied is very fragile at that moment. I am not opposed to bringing both parties together in a mediation process to resolve the issue, but not until both feel safe within this process. I believe that in order to go through mediation you need to consider you professional code of ethics, meaning knowing that you are qualified, trained and capable to do so.” (EP)

The EP supports individual questioning as the first step towards approaching the matter suggesting that you need to expand the questioning to as many people as possible in order to arrive to truth. He is not opposed to mediation, but he believes in taking safety measures beforehand in order for both parties to feel safe in the process. He reflects and asserts that professionals are free to proceed with mediation if this is a part of their ‘professional code of ethics’, if they are ‘qualified’, ‘trained’ and ‘capable’ of realising it.

2.2.3. The role of teachers in addressing bullying

Across the data, references to the role of teachers in addressing bullying are evident. The responses vary, from teachers being placed at the centre of raising bullying awareness, to mention being made of their responsibility of following the necessary protocols and taking action to prevent and tackle bullying. The different areas the professionals refer to suggest that the teacher’s role is multi-layered and their involvement in bullying prevention and de-escalation is vital. The themes emerging concern the teacher’s responsibilities and further training for teachers.

2.2.3.1. Teachers’ responsibility

Teachers are considered to be the adults, who are most directly involved in school life and therefore they have a great responsibility in addressing bullying:

“Teachers’ role is multi-layered since we are responsible to safeguard pupils’ emotional safety, and this comes down to have the skills to communicate with them. As a teacher, I feel great responsibility.” (T)

“Teachers have the central role in addressing bullying and need to be held responsible if they do not.” (SW)

“Teachers must constantly observe and be on the lookout for possible changes in a pupil’s behaviour, while at the same time finding time to talk with them.” (TP)

“Trust between teachers and pupils can only be built when teachers manage to open up channels of communication with their pupils.” (MT)

“Children must be able to open up and speak to their teachers.” (EP)

The T positions teachers at the centre of bullying prevention, explaining that their role is ‘multi-layered’, from their responsibility to ‘safeguard pupils’ emotional safety’, to the way they enter the learning process and teaching. Additionally, she explains the burden her profession has in bullying prevention and her concern in ensuring that pupils are safe and happy in school. The responses of the other professionals focus on the importance of teachers fostering trust between

themselves and their pupils, with the TP translating trust as a process of teachers constantly observing possible changes in a pupil's behaviour, while 'finding time' to talk with them. The MT states that trust can be fostered if the teachers manage 'to open up channels of communication', something that the EP, also supports and which is essential in bullying prevention.

2.2.3.2. Training for teachers

Training for teachers is another discussion which arises from the data and is directly linked with the theme of the teacher's role in bullying prevention:

"...teachers need to be trained on how to deal with the issue and how to change children's attitudes." (EP)

"A psychiatrist can explain the psychosynthesis of a human being and provide guidance to teachers for how to approach emotions and feelings of their students." (MT)

"It is teacher's responsibility to be constantly pursuing further training and to be up to date on current issues." (T)

"Some teachers do not ask for help and reject it when it is provided [...] teachers feel threatened by other experts involved in their work, but they need to realise that they cannot deal with bullying alone." (SW)

According to the EP, teachers are in the front lines of bullying prevention, and he thoroughly enjoys visiting schools where the teachers seek consultation on how to approach each case and 'change children's attitudes'. The T and the MT support teachers receiving guidance and training. More specifically, the MT refers to the role of a 'psychiatrist' in explaining the 'psychosynthesis of a human being' and provide consultation on how to deal with 'emotions and feelings', while the T claims it is up to teacher's whether they need to seek 'further training and to be up to date on current issues'. On this matter, the SW states her disappointment in some teachers' reaction when it comes down to helping them to addressing bullying incidents and the importance of realising that they need help to deal with bullying more effectively.

2.2.4. Collaboration with other professionals and services

Another theme emerging from the professionals' responses is the school investing in a potential collaboration with other professionals and services, which can lead in dealing with bullying:

"A holistic approach for preventing and dealing with bullying is the implication of more professionals in the struggle. Health services meet parents and can act as

an intermediary between school and home, while the police can help children realise that in the future, if they happen to be dealing with numerous issues, they need to know how to go about asking help.” (T)

“Unfortunately, as a visitor, in schools I cannot intervene in dealing with a bullying case but at least I can report to the teachers what is happening. The head-teachers are responsible for inviting experts to schools to talk, present or work with the kids in a more experiential way. Many experts are capable of doing this, such as psychologists, social workers or even special education teachers.” (SW)

“It is of highly importance to include psychologist to this [addressing bullying] since they are able to ensure pupils’ well-being.” (TP)

“It goes without saying that we need psychologists in schools. These psychologists need to have the freedom to refer the case to other professionals, who can help the situation.” (MT)

“Collaborations are great and offer a holistic way of dealing with the issue, yet I believe the first priority is to train people who are in the front line first and then see who else we can invite to help.” (EP)

According to the T and the EP, collaboration with other services is a ‘holistic’ way of approaching bullying issue. The T sets as an example the health services or the police, who can help in the struggle of dealing with bullying, since health services can act as intermediary between school and parents. She suggests that police can help pupils to understand that it is ok to seek out for help when they need it. While the T is positive in open up school to other services and collaborators referring to even psychologists, the SW expresses her discomfort of not allowing her when she is visiting a school to be part of addressing bullying in schools, highlighting that her only role is to report to the teachers in order for them to handle it.

Psychologists is one of the professions suggested as directly linked with bullying prevention by the MT and the T and their ability to foster the well-being of the pupils’ involved. Beyond the psychologists, the SW includes her profession and special education teachers as professionals who work in a more experiential way and can also offer their help. Similarly, the MT implies that psychologists alone is not enough, and more professionals need to be brought in. Interestingly, while the EP supports the involvement of psychologists, he takes a different direction by stating that beyond working with the pupils, it is more important to work with adults too (i.e., teachers, parents), since those adults are closer to pupils when anything occurs, and they can help directly.

2.3. Current anti-bullying efforts in schools

The five professionals refer to the current educational system and the existing anti-bullying approaches linking it to what they imagine or wish to change. The areas they mention are divided into three themes according to the micro, meso and macro areas of interventions, which are the individual and classroom approaches, the whole-school approaches, and the anti-bullying policies.

2.3.1. Health Education, experiential activities, and training of teachers

The role of Health Education (HE) as a subject within the national curriculum is one of the themes which emerges from the professionals' responses:

“The development of the Health Education curriculum is the most positive step forward that has taken place in recent years and an opportunity to develop communication skills or human values through experiential activities. However, it falls to the teacher to decide on how to approach it.” (EP)

“Teachers have limited time to talk about bullying and most of them focus only on knowledge and information transference. We need experiential activities for the children to form their own views on the issue.” (MT)

“There are seminars and training sessions offered by the MOEC regarding how to teach the topic. Regardless of whether the experiential activities prove more effective for teaching matters related to social issues, it is equally important to infuse your teaching with literature, texts and terminology. This is a more holistic approach.” (T)

“Health Education is a good initiative, but we cannot expect everything from teachers.” (TP)

“Apart from teachers, other professionals can also assist in preventing bullying, by working directly with children.” (SW)

As the EP states, it is an innovative subject that involves ‘experiential activities’, yet it is left to the teachers to decide the way they will ‘approach it’. In the same line, the MT links the subject of HE to the limited time the teachers have for discussing bullying and the lack of ability on the part of some teachers to teach the subject in general, ‘focusing only on knowledge and information transference’. Both professionals highlight the importance of experiential activities in contrast with the traditional teaching approach. The T comments on the positive aspects of HE combined with ‘seminars and training sessions’ offered by the MOEC regarding how to

teach the subject. She values the training of teachers thinking of it as catalytic in order for the teachers to change their approach to teaching. However, she further adds that teaching needs to follow a ‘more holistic approach’ and teach bullying cross curricular. The TP and the SW, although valuing HE subject and the role of teachers, place emphasis on the contribution of other professionals, trying in this way to find potentially their own role in bullying prevention.

2.3.2. Whole-school approach

Apart from the classroom approaches for bullying prevention, the professionals refer to the existing WSAs and the system of addressing bullying in schools:

“The last few years, MOEC requests from schools to develop their own Action Plan to address bullying. The Action Plan raises the responsibility of the teachers to facilitate discussions on topics around social issues, such as bullying.” (T)

“From my personal experience the Action Plan is only good on paper and the teachers are either inactive from some point on or they do not have any protocol to follow when a violent incident occurs, which is alarming.” (TP)

“I believe that the Action Plan is ineffective because teachers lack the proper skills for addressing bullying. They feel insecure when it comes to either preventing or addressing bullying, which can lead them to an approach of assigning blame rather than of one of taking action.” (EP)

Their responses include a need for change, yet the language and the descriptions they use vary. The T, the EP and the TP make references to the Action Plan (AP) for violence prevention which the MOEC dictates every school to develop at the beginning of each school year. The T supports the AP as a means of making teachers recognise that they have a ‘responsibility’ to start talking about social issues referring to bullying, conflicts and racism. The TP on the other hand is apprehensive and concerned, suggesting that from her own experience the AP is only good on paper characterising teachers as ‘inactive’ and not having any protocol to follow when a violent incident occurs. Much in the same vein, the EP expresses his concerns regarding teachers’ ‘insecurities’ when it comes to either preventing or addressing bullying, which can lead them to ‘blaming’ others rather than ‘taking action’. Therefore, while the T highlights the importance of the AP with the emphasis on violence prevention, the TP raises issues of sustainability due to the lack of anti-bullying policies, something that it is seconded by the EP, who adds that teachers lack the proper skills for addressing bullying, characterising the AP ineffective.

Through revisiting examples from their experience, the professionals describe the way they see teachers dealing with bullying, through revisiting examples from their experience. For example, the MT and the SW present a similar perspective, commenting on the teachers' lack of the necessary skills for addressing a situation. On the one hand the MT emphasises the fact that in most cases *“teachers follow a more punitive approach when addressing bullying, which leads to targeting the bullies instead of supporting them and understand their behaviour.”* On the other hand, the SW states that only a few teachers *“have the skills”* and calls for collaboration with other experts, who can offer their help. She reveals that teachers ‘reject’ any assistance because they feel ‘threatened’ by other experts and the latter comes from her experience.

2.3.3. Anti-bullying policies

Amongst the professionals, the T, the EP, and the TP appear more in favour of the anti-bullying policies developed by the MOEC, while the MT and the SW refer to the lack of planning and policies:

“Recently the MOEC appears sensitive in violence prevention and that is why two new services have been formed; the DIT and the COSV that offer their support to the schools. COSV is responsible of designing policies, training teachers, and offering consultation to the school staff on how to develop a whole-school protocol against violence.” (T)

“The MOEC started taking action since the Educational Psychology Service has designed the anti-bullying programme DAPHNE, which is applied in many primary schools.” (EP)

“The MOEC is open to accepting and supporting different approaches but sometimes is acting irrational, and you get the feeling that they approve as many programmes as possible just to show that they want to deal with some bullying cases. Remove the Power is for raising awareness around bullying, yet we are appointed to work with classrooms that they are dealing with serious incidents of violence or bullying. In those cases, we cannot do much and it is not our job to deal with such incidents.” (TP)

“There is no plan from the MOEC apart from the HE subjects.” (MT)

“Schools need renovation and don't offer a stimulating environment for the pupils. It's natural for the pupils to be de-motivated and violent.” (SW)

The T makes specific reference to the services of the MOEC responsible for preventing and limiting violence, the DIT and the COSV, characterising the MOEC in recent years as ‘more sensitive’ in developing a policy to prevent and deal with violence in schools. Regarding the COSV, she emphasises the importance of it ‘designing policies, training teachers and offering consultation to the school staff on how to develop a whole-school protocol against violence’, including bullying.

The other two professionals (EP, TP) refer to two anti-bullying programmes that are offered in primary schools, the *DAPHNE*, and the *Remove the Power*. Both programmes deal with raising awareness around bullying and they are included as examples of good practices in the MOEC’s anti-bullying policy. More specifically, the EP highlights the importance of the Educational Psychology Service (EPS), which designed the anti-bullying programme *DAPHNE* for primary school students. According to him, this is an example of how ‘the MOEC started taking action’. Much along the same lines, the TP refers to the bullying prevention programme *Remove the Power*, supporting the MOEC’s efforts, stating that they are ‘open to accepting and supporting’ different approaches. Although the TP’s opinion of the MOEC’s efforts to tackle violent phenomena appears positive, she states that, sometimes, inadequate decisions are made, while no clear strategy exists for what should be activated each time. She characterises the MOEC’s decisions as ‘sometimes irrational’, and as aiming ‘to show that they want to deal with some bullying cases’. Referring to the programme *Remove the Power*, she explains that, while it is a bullying awareness programme, the services from the MOEC frequently request it be applied in schools dealing with serious incidents of violence or bullying. The MT and the SW take a different direction, supporting that the MOEC is rather passive in the fight for violence prevention. While the MT states that ‘there is no plan’ from the MOEC apart from the HE subject, the SW links violence and bullying manifestation to the positive school environment or lack thereof.

2.4. Professional practice reflection

The data from the vignettes and the interviews reveal that the professionals enter a process of reflective practice. Their responses are combined and divided into themes according to their content, to tactfully include all the professionals’ diverse answers, while at the same time offering coherency, to help said answers make sense to the reader. The themes brought forth by the professionals are those related to their practice and their personal growth. They discuss the impact of their practice on their personal and professional development and the pupils’ emotional expression, the creation of a shared space of trust, the effectiveness of experiential

activities, the debate of structured versus flexible processes and the professional code of conduct.

2.4.1. Personal and professional impact

While identifying the factors of their involvement in anti-bullying work, the professionals explain the impact that their practice has on them firstly on a personal and secondly a professional level:

“My work around bullying is like a mechanism of self-reflection. I’m looking myself changing. It impacts the way I think about bullying and this changes me as a person.” (T)

“I feel more active. I was lucky enough to find people through my work who inspire me and show me the right way. Now, I am re-shaping the model of my facilitation during practice, something that is challenging, yet useful for me as a professional to adjust my practice.” (TP)

“When you go to a school, you come face to face with different situations, so you have to be flexible and adapt your practices [...] Music Therapy is usually either addressed towards a small group of children or to individuals. However, in schools I had to be more creative to my approach.” (MT)

“You become aware of the world around you. You learn how to identify which children are at a high risk of becoming bullies or being bullied.” (EP)

The professionals identify a personal growth through their engagement in anti-bullying work. The T characterises her growth as a process of entering ‘a mechanism of self-reflection’, something that helps her change as a person and the way of thinking. The TP expands on her thoughts on how her work causes her to be more ‘active’ and she feels ‘inspired’.

Additionally, the professionals identify the impact on their professional development and the challenges they face when working in schools. For example, the MT and the TP explain that their experience in schools causes them to be more aware of their work and shows them how to strive towards improving ‘flexibility’ and ‘adaptability’. The MT offers the example of the methodology of music therapy, which is usually either addressed towards a small group of children or to individuals. As she explains, due to the number of pupils she has to ‘become more creative’. The TP argues that she is re-shaping her ‘model of facilitation during practice’, which although challenging, is useful for her professional development. Both discuss adaptability and flexibility in a specific context in terms of experiential approaches, with the

MT referring to ‘specific activities’, and the TP to adjusting in practice. Furthermore, the EP and the TP comment on gaining awareness of their knowledge on bullying and the methodology they use. The EP values the experiences he gains through his work by becoming ‘more aware of the world’ around him. Through their reflection, the professionals appreciate the impact they have on pupils, which is linked to their personal and professional development.

2.4.2. Professional practices as a means of pupils’ expression

The professionals argue that their practices invest in pupils’ emotional expression, with nuances in how this is presented:

“Music makes pupils able to understand their feelings and the emotions they bring with them to the session each time. Music therapy is to create a space where the pupils can express themselves, without forcing them to disclose anything they do not feel comfortable disclosing.” (MT)

“Theatre’s open nature helps pupils to express their feelings and overcome their problems. Some children finding it therapeutic and others entertaining and fun... or some viewing it as an opportunity to take action.” (TP)

The professionals’ responses show a more open and flexible process without aiming in a specific outcome. According to the MT, the aim of her practice is for the pupils to ‘understand their feelings’ and ‘their emotions’ during the session. Music Therapy is an open process for exploration and a safe space in which pupils do not feel the pressure to disclose anything they do not want to disclose. Similarly, the TP refers to the ‘open nature’ of theatre, through which pupils ‘express their feelings and overcome their problems’. She further highlights that ‘theatre could be perceived differently’ by each participant with some of them finding it ‘therapeutic’, others ‘entertaining and fun’ and others as ‘an opportunity to take action’.

The EP and the SW take a different direction from the previous professionals. They highlight the importance of safeguarding emotional investment from pupils, by slowly building-up their trust and introducing new elements gradually:

“It is important to start with fun activities, as well as provide more information on the issue in general and not open up the space for emotional expression from the outset.” (SW)

“It takes time to earn pupils’ trust and for them to feel safe expressing themselves. That is why it is useful to start first with fostering social skill and empowerment. Activities for emotional expression should go last.” (EP)

For the SW the ideal is to begin with ‘fun activities’ and introducing knowledge on the topic of bullying, while the EP explains that he prefers first to introduce activities, which aim in building-up ‘social skills and empowerment’. Both appear reluctant in starting their practice by entering a process of emotional expression, with the SW first focusing on fun and knowledge and the EP on skills and empowerment.

2.4.3. Shared space of trust

According to some of the professionals, emotional expression is directly linked to the creation of a safe space and trust:

“...it is important to create a relationship of trust with pupils for them to feel safe discussing sensitive and emotional issues.” (T)

“Children need a space, in which they feel safe enough to express themselves. Profiling ahead of time is a way of creating this protective shield that I call a safe space.” (MT)

“Theatre can offer one a sense of security for sharing emotions and actions, as well as decisions, while pretending to be someone else: the person dictated by your role. For example, you ask children to take props and play the role of a bullied child [...] By doing this, and despite playing a role, they will show you what they would do in a real-life situation.” (TP)

The T argues that without trust the pupils will not be able to feel safe in order to discuss ‘sensitive and emotional issues’. The MT states the importance of ‘studying each child’s profile’ and to select activities that will create a ‘safe space’ among the participants. The TP in her response suggests that theatre is designed to build trust and offer a safe space, giving examples of activities of ‘using props’ and ‘role-playing’. She maintains that theatre can create distance between the pupils and the issue since they are playing a role, while at the same time they react and respond as themselves, showing their actions in real life.

2.4.4. The effectiveness of experiential and creative activities

The professionals commend on the effectiveness of experiential activities when working with children on social issues and bullying, giving examples each time of what they consider as experiential and of the impact of such activities:

“The uniqueness of experiential activities lies in that they contain the element of fun [...] anything visual can be used as a stimulus for discussion, such as pictures [...], pupils re-enact scenarios and then, through discussion, they put

things in order and change the storyline, making the right decisions, while still playing.” (TP)

“...exchanging ideas and thoughts through incorporating experiential activities.” (EP)

“...coordinate a process of initiating a discussion by providing stimuli through experiential activities.” (T)

The TP suggests the use of not only theatre, but also ‘pictures’ or ‘anything visual’ to initiate discussion amongst pupils. She supports that ‘the uniqueness’ of this approach lies in that they contain the element of ‘fun’, giving examples of pupils ‘re-enacting scenarios’, which leads to discussion and decision making about how they can shift things around, while still playing’.

Both the T and the EP maintain that the most effective approach when creating awareness for bullying is for them to stimulate a discussion with the use of an experiential activity. While they consider experiential activities important and effective, they shift the weight onto the discussion that will follow rather than the activity itself. More specifically, the EP describes the process as ‘exchanging ideas and thoughts’ and the T as a process of initiating a ‘discussion’. It appears that both professionals give more value to the coordination of such a discussion rather than the activities as such.

2.4.5. Structured VS flexible processes

A negotiation between a structured design and a flexible process when doing work regarding bullying was another theme that emerged:

“For teachers, it is highly important to have a structure when teaching any subject. Especially for this topic it is important to revisit the objectives of the lesson, and this will help you for timekeeping, especially when discussing things... And it prevents the pupils from bringing in other irrelevant topics.” (T)

“An idea is to divide your session into different topics. You must be careful, when working on bullying with children, to not leave things too open.” (EP)

“While having specific topics in every session is useful, the process is always changing considering the needs of the teachers, the pupils’ profiles and the needs of the parents.” (TP)

“It is important to leave the process accessible for the pupils to share personal stories and address whatever they are dealing with. Pupils need to express how

they feel and, as a group, handle any situation that comes up and me to take it anywhere the process will take me.” (MT)

The T describes a more structured process in her approach, elevating it to the status of ‘highly important’. She states that she keeps referring to the ‘objectives of the lesson’, useful for time management and directing the discussion. She adds that a structured process prevents the pupils from bringing in other ‘irrelevant topics’.

The EP and the TP insist on learning as much as possible about the issue of bullying and are constantly planning, dividing the sessions with the pupils into different topics. The EP states that dividing the sessions into different topics accommodates a smooth and a structured process. The TP describes some of the topics, yet she highlights the importance of a professional adjusting his practices to meet the needs of everybody involved in the process. As she asserts, the process is always shifting ‘considering the needs’ of everybody involved in the process.

The MT is the only professional who supports a completely flexible process with the initial sessions revolving around getting to know each other and the pupils feeling more comfortable with her in order to open up. She favours the idea of being ‘flexible’ in the form of leaving her process ‘accessible’ for the pupils to ‘share personal stories’ and ‘address whatever they are dealing with’. As she states, the only objective she has is for the pupils to express how they feel and, as a group, handle any situation that comes up, allowing her to be open to going anywhere the process takes her.

2.4.6. The professional code of conduct and practice

Across the data, the theme of the professional code of conduct and practice appears to be constantly at play. The biggest divergence in opinions is when the professionals express their views on professional responsibility and the limitations of their work. More specifically, they are called upon to respond to a possible scenario of a pupil reporting bullying during their practice. Their responses are divided into three themes: addressing the issue in front of the group, forming a support group for bullied pupil and handling the issue privately, after the end of the session.

2.4.6.1. Addressing the issue in front of the group

The MT and the SW are the only two professionals in favour of addressing the issue in front of the whole group, yet the way they position their reaction differs:

“You must deal with the issue now and then when it surfaces. You cannot keep an incident quiet when it occurs within the group and especially if a child is

upset and starts sharing. Sharing is something that I anticipate, and I believe it is cathartic for the person.” (MT)

“If it happens, I will invite everybody to share their views and critically think, instead of only asking questions to find exactly what happened. For me it is a necessary process because the group comes face to face with real situations, and they realise that this is happening.” (SW)

The MT justifies her opinion by explaining that, for her, the issue should be addressed immediately, since ethically she ‘cannot keep an incident quiet’ when it occurs within the group and especially ‘if a child is upset’. She further explains that this is an approach she follows, since sharing is an expected outcome when she runs her workshops with children, and she calls the moment ‘cathartic’ for the pupil who does the sharing. The SW has a similar opinion, although, as she says, sharing in front of everybody is not something that she usually anticipates through her practice. She explains that in case it does occur, she will ‘invite everybody to share their views and critically think, instead of only asking questions to find exactly what happened’. For her, it is sometimes a ‘necessary process’ because the group realises that what they are discussing is real and it is happening.

The other professionals are more in favour with addressing the issue privately, yet with nuances in the way they approach it:

“If a child starts sharing in front of the group it is a part of my practice. Then I normalise the situation, by stating how natural his/her reaction is. Then I will ask the pupil to discuss with me about this after we finish the session.” (EP)

“It is important not letting children expose themselves in front of the whole group. If it happens, the teachers should take the child and discuss it privately away from the group. The rest of the group must carry on, but I will let them know that the issue is being taken care of.” (TP)

“The dynamics of the group might start working negatively for the child and the teacher could lose control over the situation, which does not help. The best way is to reassure him/her that you will discuss privately after the session.” (T)

The EP believes that he is adequately equipped for addressing the issue of bullying, stating that this is a part of a psychologist’s ‘professional practice’. However, he refers to his intervention towards the group as entering ‘a normalisation strategy’, by stating how natural his/her reaction is, allowing the pupil who did the reporting to discuss the matter privately with him after the

session. Referring to their professional code of conduct and practice, both the TP and the T, are opposed to even leaving room for an outburst to happen in the group. The TP was adamant in not 'letting children' expose themselves in front of the whole group and this is something that she has insisted on from the beginning of the process. However, in the event this does happen, she is in communication with the teacher, so he/she can take over, requesting that he/she and the pupil discuss the matter privately outside the classroom. She further comments that she will conclude the session by informing the others that 'the issue is being taken care of'. The T highlights the fact that 'in a group of pupils, power dynamics exist' and if you enter a process of discussing the situation casually, then 'the dynamics' of the group might start working negatively for the child in question. Moreover, the teacher will 'lose control' over the group or feel unable to help the child expressing the specific feeling. Therefore, she supports that the best way forward is to interrupt the pupil and reassure him/her that you will speak with him/her in private after the session.

2.4.6.2. Support group to bullying

Another approach that the professionals mention is the *Support group to bullying*, a solution-focused approach. The way they put emphasis on how they believe that the approach could work differs and it is interesting to observe those differences:

"The whole group will assume the responsibility of addressing the issue and helping the individual to see things in a different way. When a child is crying, then the rest of the group reacts in a supporting way. As a therapist you have to believe and support the process and the group." (MT)

"My technique is called 'Self-revelation'. For this, I share my personal story for the children to feel that what is possibly happening to them could happen to anyone, and the group helps them to overcome their issue." (SW)

"I believe that I am well-equipped to proceed by involving the whole group in a supportive phase of the process. I do think though that academic background is sometimes not enough. It is important not to expose anyone." (EP)

As the MT states, the group will 'assume the responsibility' of helping the individual to see things a different way, to offer a broader understanding of the situation. She further claims that when a child is on the verge of tears, then a sense of support from the entire group arises and she supports her professional capacity to deal with it. Similarly, the SW approves the support group for bullied students offering examples of success from her experience, as well as presenting a technique she uses called 'Self-revelation'. In this technique, the facilitator shares

her personal story as a facilitator in order for the children to feel that what is possibly happening to them ‘could happen to anyone’, and they need to start talking about it’. Then the group will take over and support the pupil. The EP offers a different perspective on the topic. Although personally he feels well-equipped to proceed by involving the whole group in a supportive phase of the process, he states that ‘academic background is sometimes not enough’, suggesting that it is a combination of training, as well as expertise and experience, which allow the implementation of the approach in order to, as he says, ‘not expose anyone’. All three professionals seem to value and support their professional background and their disciplinary code of conduct. They are not just referring to the specific approach, rather they support it through their academic and disciplinary background.

2.4.6.3. Addressing the issue privately

One of the themes that emerges, which is associated with addressing bullying, is to approach the issue privately by arranging a one-to-one meeting with the bullied. However, there are differences on the reasons and the content of such a meeting:

“To expose a child by having him/her talk about what is happening to him/her in front of everybody else is wrong. Therefore, I would refer him/her for one-to-one sessions of music therapy for him/her to feel secure. [...] If someone wants to open up in front of the group, it means that he/she is ready to discuss things. I will never force anybody to talk, unless they want to.” (MT)

“It is important to have a ‘one-to-one discussion for gathering more information in order to address it more effectively and informing of course the teachers in order to go forward with handling it.” (SW)

“Informing the teacher is the only way forward. My job is to just bring the issue to the surface.” (TP)

“No matter if you are a teacher or psychologist or anyone else, you must put your professional skills aside, because a private discussion can help you understand the magnitude of the issue and encourage the pupils to express themselves freely. For sure the school’s protocol always helps to manage things.” (T)

Although the MT appears in favour of the *Support group to bullying* approach, she states that handling the issue privately is equally effective. Her response in the matter appears to contradict her previous response by saying that it is preferable not ‘to expose a child by having him/her

talk about what is happening to him/her in front of everybody else'. She prefers a 'one-to-one sessions of music therapy' to make him/her feel safe. When asked to elaborate more, she says that she is open to approaching the issue in many ways and it depends on each case. The SW's response to the private meetings with children is positive, regardless of whether they have previously reported bullying in front of the whole group. She emphasises the importance of 'one-to-one discussion for gathering more information' in order to address it more effectively. Then she highlights the importance of 'informing the teacher', who most probably will activate the appropriate protocols to address the issue. 'Informing the teacher' is also a suggestion made by the TP, who states that when she manages to 'bring the issue to the surface' and discuss without pupils exposing themselves, the matter ceases to be her responsibility. Finally, the T maintains that setting 'professional skills' aside, the one-to-one meetings are more efficient for understanding the reasons behind his/her behaviour and role, encouraging pupils who have low self-esteem and confidence to express how they feel. In any case, she states, a school requires a protocol for how to approach any behavioural matter, bullying included. While in the previous theme the professional code of conduct and disciplinary background was at play, here we see the professionals to prioritise the children's emotional safety and effectiveness in dealing with bullying. They highlight the role and responsibility of teachers in dealing with bullying, stating that they need to be inform about the case in order to address it more effectively.

3. Focus Group Discussions and electronic diaries

A key element in the current study is the way that bullying and bullying prevention relates to the development of professionals' understanding within their interaction. For the latter three FGD with experiential and discussion stimulating activities were designed, which aimed for the professionals to: (a) explore and respond to each other's disciplines and approaches in relation to bullying and bullying prevention practice, (b) expand on topics which emerged during their interviews and vignettes, elucidating ambivalent areas in their answers, (c) identify and consider similarities and (d) communicate and debate nuances among their practices and their professional codes of conduct concerning bullying and bullying prevention. The FGD were divided into three sessions to facilitate the huge spectrum of themes which emerged from the interviews and vignettes. At the end of each session the professionals were asked to reflect in a structured electronic diary, which offered a safe space for disclosing further information that for whatever reason they did not disclose during the session. The current section presents the context of, and the themes emerged from the FGD, as well as the themes from the professionals' reflection in the electronic diary (Diagram 6). On occasions, longer extracts from the dialogue are included in order to comment on the dynamics and the contend between the professionals.

3.1. Bullying definition

- 3.1.1. Definitning or not definining bullying
- 3.1.2. Bullying VS conflict or other violent behaviours
- 3.1.3. The four elements of bullying
- 3.1.4. What about the bullies?

3.2. Addressing bullying

- 3.2.1. Making reporting safe
- 3.2.2. Professional limitations and boundaries when addressing bullying
- 3.2.3. Addressing the issue in front of the group

3.3. Comparing disciplines and professional practice

- 3.3.1. Acknowledging commonalities and understanding the differences
- 3.3.2. Discussing professional boundaries in a classroom setting
- 3.3.3. Similarities in approaches, differences in tools
- 3.3.4. Lack of contact and collaboration in the educational system

3.4. Professional relations

- 3.4.1. The flower diagram (MT)
- 3.4.2. The circular diagram (T)
- 3.4.3. The staircase diagram (TP)
- 3.4.4. The pillars diagram (EP)
- 3.4.5. The shrine diagram (SW)

Diagram 6: Themes and sub-themes from the FGD and Electronic Diaries

3.1. Bullying definition

The FGD began with exploring the professionals' understanding of the definition of bullying. Thus, fourteen bullying definitions were identified and depicted from the data during the vignettes and the interviews, which were displayed during the FGD. It was made clear to the professionals that the specific definitions came from them during the interviews and the vignettes and the aim was not to arrive in a common definition or identify which definition was theirs. Therefore, the professionals were given time to read and choose the definition or definitions that best describe their understanding on bullying, regardless of their answers in the interviews and vignettes. The discussion produced rich data that was coded and the themes

emerged involve defining or not defining bullying, bullying versus conflict or other violent behaviours, the four elements of bullying and the factors behind bullying behaviour.

3.1.1. Defining or not defining bullying

The initial comment from the SW, during the first activity of choosing the definition or definitions that best describe her understanding on bullying, triggers diverse reactions amongst the professionals and tension:

“I think for all of us to arrive in a common definition of bullying is problematic. Everyone has a different idea about what bullying is, and what’s important is to focus on social skills with the pupils.” (SW)

The T and the MT form an opposing view, with their reaction reflecting their individual practices:

“It is very important to define bullying in order to address it more effectively. Bullying is not just a violent behaviour or a conflict and you have specific protocols to follow according to the policy of the school and the MOEC” (T)

“I agree. In order to be effective in addressing bullying you have to know what this behaviour entails. It helps you in making an assessment that it is linked to the diagnosis of the problem or the disorder.” (MT).

While the specific activity was not aiming for all of them to define bullying in the same way, the SW raises the issue of professionals arriving in a common understanding of bullying, describing it as ‘problematic’. Therefore, she directs the discussion towards the importance of focusing on developing pupils’ social skills rather than defining bullying as such. It seems that for the SW, bullying is linked to limited ‘social skills’, and, for the other two professionals, bullying appears to be separated from ‘conflict’ or other ‘violent’ incidents and it is identified as a ‘problem’ or a ‘disorder’. That distinction in the definition appears to also differentiate the way that professionals view an ‘effective’ bullying prevention practice.

The EP intervenes to the discussion generating two points of view, which continued shifting throughout.

“It is true that as professionals we must be clear whether an incident is bullying or requires a different form of intervention. Now whether we need to share this definition with the children is another matter.” (EP)

The first point of view here regards the usefulness for the professionals of having a clear definition of bullying and the second, the necessity of this definition being communicated to

the pupils during any type of intervention. The EP asserts that, as professionals, they must be 'clear on the definition' to address it with the intervention that is needed. He explains that whether they 'need to share this definition with the children is another matter'. The EP's position allows the SW to clarify her comment. As she states:

"I am not rejecting the definition of bullying. However, when you work with children, you don't need to explain to them exactly what bullying is." (SW)

The SW seems to shift her opinion stating that bullying definition is important directing the issue to the interventions that are more didactic and rely on bullying terminology. This statement creates a shift in the dynamics between the professionals. Here, the dialogue following on from each other is included to help enable the analysis of the dynamics and what it reveals about the act of definition:

"Definition of bullying is not for pupils. Personally, I invest more in a process in which pupils form their own opinion about the issue, proving to them that some of their actions are wrong and offering them the way in which they can change their behaviour." (MT)

"No, definition is important for pupils..." (T)

"Yes, pupils must know what bullying is. If you wish to inspire pupils to report bullying, then they need to know what it is." (TP)

"I agree. What if you are working with pupils who are experiencing bullying, but they cannot understand what is happening to them? How will you make them understand that what they are experiencing is bullying so they can report it?" (T)

"The issue is that a teacher might enter the classroom and say, ok, this is bullying, and this is the "bully" and the "bullied". However, there are thousands of other more creative ways to help the pupils overcome their issues and not just offer them stereotypical knowledge." (MT)

"Pupils should use the correct terminology and yes, it is important to be careful with when and how we [professionals] use words in our practices because they have a strong meaning." (T)

"I don't think there is right or wrong. Bringing this to a close, it is your role in the intervention, your professional background and the aims you set that determine how you will approach it in the classroom". (EP)

After the last comment of the EP the professionals agree that every approach is of value if it benefits the pupils. The discussion illustrates the way that the topic shifts to different directions constantly. It begins with a debate of whether pupils should be able to define bullying, then it continues to the importance of pupils being able to recognise bullying if it happens and use the right terminology to report it and finally, it moves on to professional practice. It is an example of how the professionals link pupils' knowledge around bullying definition with their 'role', their 'professional background' and their 'aims'.

Another aspect of the dynamics in relation to definition is the interpretation of the comments of the EP and the SW by the end, which reveal even more about the process that the professionals went through during their interaction:

"I guess there is a middle ground. Let's not enter the classroom and say, "Hi, kids, this is bullying". Let them express themselves first, explore their understanding and then give them the definition." (SW)

"What I got from the discussion is that, while the definition is important, professionals need to be careful when they intervene, always thinking of their specific aims." (EP)

Both statements reveal a sense of critically reflective practice, with the SW identifying a 'middle ground' and the EP taking it back to a professional code of practice with 'always thinking' of your practice aims.

3.1.2. Bullying VS Conflict or other violent behaviours

One of the themes that is linked to bullying definition is the need to distinguish bullying from other forms of violence, which is illustrated to the comments of the T and the TP:

"If it is not bullying but a conflict between pupils, teachers shouldn't turn to the anti-bullying policy that the MOEC dictates." (TP)

"Bullying is a social issue, of which pupils have limited knowledge or confused ideas about. Therefore, they report every violent act as bullying." (T)

While the TP emphasises on the distinction between bullying and conflict, the T elevates the issue to the level of a 'social' problem, explaining that pupils have 'limited' and 'confused' knowledge about. It appears that clear separation between bullying and conflict or other violent behaviours could lead to better communication between teachers, parents, and children, helping them identify, report and address each case accordingly.

At this point, the SW and the MT appeared not to be familiar with the anti-bullying policy circulated by the MOEC and the T provided a brief explanation, including information on three documents at a teacher's disposal. The TP added that, in cases where the act proves not to be bullying, there is no need to complete any documents, while the EP noted that from his personal experience, there is a misconception amongst teachers regarding the policy and the documents:

"...by completing the bullying incident report form provided, you create a clear understanding of whether the case is actually one of bullying." (EP)

Here, it is clear the distinction that it is being made between bullying and conflict from both policy makers (i.e., MOEC) and receivers of the policy (i.e., the professionals). It is interesting to note the different perspectives on the policy, as well as the comments, which reveal misunderstanding of the protocol.

3.1.3. The four elements of bullying

The conversation about the definition directs the TP to introduce four elements which, in her opinion, co-exist in bullying. More specifically, she argues:

"Bullying is a repetitive, predetermined act that contains a power imbalance and leads to causing harm to an individual." (TP)

According to her, bullying is 'repetitive' and 'predetermine', she identifies 'power imbalance' between the parties involved and 'harm to an individual'. The specific position allows the professionals to debate about the elements that themselves consider important to identify a behaviour as bullying. Their extracts that are following from each other are significant to understand the way that they state their opinion regarding what they consider important in bullying definition and whether there is any shift in their perception, which is influenced by the process of exchanging those insights:

"...the intensity of the distress caused to an individual is linked to whether an action took place once or is a recurring action. Teasing someone once might not hold the same intensity as when it is repeated every day." (SW)

"I believe that intention to cause harm is a given element of bullying since some children have a need to harm another child." (T)

"I disagree. Sometimes children do not understand that their actions will harm other children. They act impulsively." (MT)

“I don’t think we should link predetermination with intention to cause harm. It is more linked with targeting an individual, either the intention is to cause harm or it happens because of other reasons.” (TP)

As it seems from the discussion, the SW agrees on the repetitiveness and predetermination, as important factors to define bullying, while the T and the MT debate on the element of intention to cause harm. On the one hand, the T believes that intention to cause harm should not be examined since it is a ‘given element’ and always exists among children, and on the other hand, the MT claims that intention to cause harm can appear problematic in bullying and gives emphasis to the ‘impulsivity’ of children, which leads to bullying. The TP suggests a different approach to the matter explaining that predetermination should not be linked with intention to cause harm rather with targeting an individual for any reason, either maliciously or not. It is interesting to note the debate between the professionals and the distinction in their perceptions about what predetermination consists of and whether bullying is always an act that intends to harm an individual.

The EP adds to the discussion the element of ‘power imbalance’, in his effort to offer clarity in the debate:

“In bullying there is always power imbalance, repetitiveness, and predetermination, while the harm caused to an individual requires a different approach. If we identify even two of these elements then we should consider it bullying, which causes subjective distress to the individual. I am referring to subjective since in some cases the bullied child may not feel distressed, and you must always examine it from the perspective of the individual who experiences this behaviour.” (EP)

The T states that in some cases, you cannot assume that there is no harm caused just because the bullied does not speak:

“I agree. When a repetitive and predetermined act towards a weaker individual occurs, that is bullying. That is why I am saying that causing harm is a given factor since this type of behaviour causes distress to a child, whether it is expressed or not.” (T)

In both comments we witness an effort from the EP and the T to move away from a strict definition of bullying being aware that there is a vast spectrum of different cases, in which you get different reactions from a bullied child (i.e., ‘subjective distress’, ‘whether it is expressed or not’). Similarly, they favour a more open definition of bullying, since according to them

repetition and predetermination on the form of targeting an individual are enough elements to consider an act as bullying.

The comments from the two professionals shift the discussion towards professional practice and ways to explore and reveal the feelings of a bullied child. The latter is evident to the comment of the SW, who refers to “*the right questions to extract information*”, elevating interrogation as an important part of investigating an insistent and of determining whether it is bullying or not. Other examples are the comments of the EP, who states: “*If you see it through the lens of psychology...*” and the MT, who refers to “*children on the autism spectrum.*” On the one hand the EP visits back his professional discipline (i.e., psychology), which contains specific parameters of questioning and collecting information. On the other hand, the addition of the MT positions the discussion in a broader context bringing in examples of her practice, referring to children on the autism spectrum, who find it difficult to express feelings and emotions.

3.1.4. What about the bullies?

During the FGD, the professionals went through an *Opinion Line* activity, in which they had to position their opinion according to given statements. One of the statements they had to respond to was: ‘Bullying is a conscious behaviour’. The specific statement was important in order to link their responses with the previous discussion of whether bullying is an intentional act or not offering clarity to the data. However, something that was not anticipated was that it shifted the dynamics of the discussion, creating the following tension between especially two of the professionals:

“According to psychology, there are two types of bullies. One of them is children who don’t have empathy and therefore don’t understand that what they’re doing can harm others. The other kind, according to the theory of mind, understand the harmful effects of their actions, but they do it anyway.” (EP)

“Coming from a professional background of both psychology and sociology, I question whether they don’t recognise the harm caused by their actions. They feel powerful and they like it. However, some children are not mature enough to sense the harmful effects of their actions.” (SW)

“With no disrespect to anyone’s discipline, but I am referring to tested theories here.” (EP)

“My opinion comes from my own professional background and discipline. It is not a personal thinking on the matter.” (SW)

While the EP refers to his professional background and discipline, it causes the SW in her reflection to draw on her professional background and discipline. The latter creates a moment of tension between the two professionals, which was silenced during the FGD, since none of them wanted to expand more on the matter. Later, the EP comments on this in his electronic diary:

“I do respect social workers and the work they do, but they cannot question psychology and especially theories that have long been proven. Maybe it was a case where I didn't quite manage to get my meaning across. In my experience there are cases where bullies consciously cause harm to others. The majority though are impulsive and immature children, and all we need to do is teach them how to be more empathetic.” (EP)

Of paramount importance here is that the two positions do not appear to diverge from one another to a significant extent, except that the EP during the discussion refers to ‘lack of empathy’ and the SW to ‘lack of maturity’. Additionally, in the electronic diary reflection, we see the EP to link immaturity with lack of empathy. Therefore, it appears that it was the tone in which it was said and the reference to the professional background that created the moment of tension between them, and not their perception on the matter as such.

3.2. Addressing bullying

In addition to the definition of bullying, the *Opinion Line* activity led the professionals to explore the topic of bullying reporting. While the professionals discussed limitations and boundaries in their role and responsibility when a pupil reports bullying, the discussion was mainly directed towards acknowledging the teachers’ role, as the key professionals for handling and addressing bullying cases in schools. The T remained silent for most of the discussion, and she offered her perspective on what was said at the very end of each topic. Her comments are important to be included in the presentation in full length since they demonstrate a process of critically reflective practice, including data around limitations and boundaries in teachers’ roles and responsibilities. The themes that were identified through the discussion were: making reporting safe for the pupils, professional limitations and boundaries when addressing bullying and addressing a bullying incident in front of the whole classroom.

3.2.1. Making reporting safe

The TP and the EP raise the topic of tolerance of violence in schools, resulting to low rates of reporting from pupils. Both professionals refer to the pupils' culture of calling the person, who reports 'snitch', which causes fear amongst them and limited reporting. From their following comments they direct the discussion towards professional roles and responsibilities, which opens a space up of professional reflection:

"Part of my work is to make them [pupils] understand that there are safe ways of reporting. For example, in many cases pupils accuse other pupils in front of them, creating the possibility of being victimised even further." (TP)

"That is the reason for teachers to create a supportive system, in which pupils feel secure when reporting violent behaviours." (MT)

"Teachers must care about their pupils. Only in this way the children will feel safe." (SW)

"I believe that teachers take the matter of reporting lightly, sending the message that you are bothering them in some way." (TP)

"Teachers label children who report incidents as 'needy' or 'moaners', with bullies taking advantage of that, to bully them even more." (EP)

Here, we see the TP to enter a process of critically reflective practice, identifying a gap in bullying prevention, something that she is called to fill (i.e., 'Part of my work...'). Nevertheless, she contributes to the discussion about the role of teachers, who are responsible, according to the professionals, to create a 'supportive system' for reporting, to 'care' of their pupils in order to feel 'safe' and to show interest in the matter and the pupils who report.

After the last comment, there is tension between the T and the other professionals, with the T asking for permission to speak and share her insights on what was said regarding lack of support from the educational system:

"I agree that some things you said occur in schools, and it's true that there are teachers who may behave in this way. From my perspective, these things don't happen on purpose or even, I would say, consciously. We are dealing with human relationships and a centralised educational system that doesn't have the correct criteria for appointing teachers to schools. Also, it is a matter of further training teachers, something that is seriously lacking, except, of course, if you are talking about training in subjects of the curriculum. Most teachers seek

training on their own. Sometimes teachers might not have the skills to respond properly to a serious situation, so they try to make light of it in front of the pupils to make them feel better. The downside is that pupils see a teacher who does not empathise with them. Therefore, they never approach him/her again.” (T)

The tension directs the teacher to reflect on the matter and explain that lack of support and training leads to misunderstandings between the teachers and the pupils, resulting in pupils drawing the wrong conclusions. Moreover, she emphasises the importance of fostering trust between teachers and pupils, commenting that most teachers have the ability to do so, and this is demonstrated by their interest in seeking further training. The rest of the professionals did not comment on the T’s statements, apart from the TP, who argues that in her experience “*the majority of teachers are professionals, who try to do as much as they can, and who care about their pupils.*”

3.2.2. Professional limitations and boundaries when addressing bullying

The professionals were asked to comment on the protocol they follow when a pupil reports that he/she is being bullied in order to explore professional roles and responsibilities, beyond the role of teachers. Initially, the EP and the MT support that to reassure the pupil who reports is the first step:

“First of all, you should reassure the pupil that you will resolve the issue.” (EP)

“Yes, and you must be specific, explaining that it will not be resolved instantly. Just give him/her the assurance that you will protect him/her.” (MT)

The two perspectives on the matter lead the other professionals to form an opposition and argue strongly that promising to resolve something that you have not investigated yet is ‘rash’.

The discussion of what is appropriate or not to do when a pupil reports bullying was shifted to professional roles and responsibility. The TP and the SW express a parallel standpoint. The teacher’s role for both professionals is in the centre of the discussion once again as the professional who is ‘always there’ and not a ‘visitor’ and who is responsible to ‘monitor’. The difference between the two professionals is that the first prioritises the comfort of the pupil and then informing the school staff, while the second does not disclose her actions towards the pupil, who reports and rather diverts the responsibility to the school staff. For example, the TP refers to ‘fake expectations’ and that it is more appropriate to ‘reassure the pupils that you are there to listen’ before you inform the school staff. On the contrary, the SW emphasises the fact

that she is ‘a visitor to the school’ and she cannot promise something she is not able to ‘monitor’.

The discussion gives the opportunity to the EP and the MT to respond and clarify their opinion creating a space of reflection:

“I have to say that the discussion led me to question my role on how I am handling bullying reports, yet I am a bit sceptical on how I could communicate to the bullied pupil the fact that someone else will investigate the case.” (EP)

“Visitor or not, you have to do everything you can to help.” (MT)

“I do have a role in this yes. However, the school staff needs to take over the case and follow the protocol.” (SW)

“How can you follow an investigation protocol since you are there for just a few short visits? You have a role to play, but not the leading role.” (TP).

The above is a moment of critically reflective practice for the EP by questioning his role and by identifying possible gaps in his practice (i.e., ‘...how I could communicate...’). In contrast, the MT stands by her initial comment, while both the SW and the TP try to clarify that they are not denying they have a responsibility, instead offering clarity on their role in the school and the next steps they will take, in accordance with the anti-bullying protocol in schools.

The discussion led to a moment of tension between the T and the SW, which offers the opportunity to collect data around examples of professional practice:

“It would be troubling if my pupils disclosed this information to visiting professionals. Obviously, my pupils don’t trust me. Regardless, I disagree with visitors reassuring a pupil that they will resolve the issue.” (T)

“I don’t want to generalise and [turning to the T] please don’t take it personally, but a visitor to a school who comes to hold an intervention is a threat. In my experience, although you communicate to the teachers exactly what you need from them before you start working with their pupils, you still experience resistance from them.” (SW)

The T, reflects on the overall discussion, raising the issue of visiting professionals’ role in schools and that of the teachers having the last word in handling bullying in schools. Additionally, she is questioning the reasons behind pupils’ decision to report bullying to a visitor in the school. The latter gives the opportunity to the SW to express her disappointment from teachers offering examples from her personal experience.

The above comment of the SW led the T to open the space up for discussing possible challenges the visiting professionals may encounter during their work in schools. The EP and the MT refer to examples of pupils reporting cases of bullying to them, in which they reassured the pupils that they will try to resolve the issue. In both cases, the two professionals investigated the case through observation and afterwards had an informal discussion with the bully, communicating that they have information on their aggressive behaviour. Additionally, they communicated the school's zero tolerance to bullying policy, and informed the teacher and the school's counsellor about the issue, with them promising to take over the case. The MT expresses her disappointment at the teacher's reaction: "...she just replied that this specific pupil always complains about everything" and the EP is amazed by the counsellor's reaction: "...she promised to take care of it, but she didn't even know which pupil I was talking about."

Towards the end of the discussion, the T is asked to comment on what was said, with the emphasis on the role and responsibility of the teachers:

"You have to understand that there are regulations set by the MOEC that we need to follow. First of all, any intervention from a visiting facilitator or artist in a school needs to be approved by the MOEC. If the approval also dictates the teacher's presence, then we should be present. Communication prior to any intervention is vital in order to clarify roles and boundaries and, most of all, what is expected from the teacher. In my professional experience, visitors in schools offer a different perspective in class, and the pupils enjoy it a lot. Personally, I would like to be present so I can learn more and address any situation that might come up. I never saw my presence as an obstacle to the process." (T)

Here, the T puts boundaries and limitations in visiting practices in schools, which are dictated by the MOEC. She informs the professionals on two parameters when it comes down to other practices from visiting professionals: 'approval' by the MOEC and 'communication'. At the end, she states that talking from a professional point of view, she cannot understand why teachers should question anyone's approaches.

3.2.3. Addressing the issue in front of the group

Another theme to emerge during the *Opinion Line* activity was the debate of the professionals between one-to-one discussion with the bullied pupil versus addressing the issue in front of the group. The latter was a theme emerged from the interviews, something that needed clarification and therefore, was brought back to the FGD.

The initiator of the discussion is the MT, who on the one hand supports not putting ‘pressure’ to anyone to report bullying and on the other hand exploring the ‘support group’ to bullying approach. From their comments, all the other professionals, apart from the EP, oppose to the support group to bullying approach. For example, the SW speaks about “*not exposing the pupils in fronts of the whole group*”, the TP about the “*appropriateness of addressing the issue in front of others*” and the T about “*the benefits of ‘one-to-one private discussion.’*” The EP appears more inclusive in his perception directing the view towards professional code of ethics and competences:

“I think there is no right or wrong approach, as long as a professional you can handle it’ and if a professional is not confident in his/her ability to address it in front of the group, then deal with it in private.” (EP)

The discussion causes the MT to ask for alternative solutions, in case of a pupil discloses his/her situation in front of the group. The EP, the SW and the TP agree that the best thing to do is ‘wrap it up’. The latter led the MT to share a concern of hers with the rest of the professionals, requesting clarification on their approach to ‘wrapping things up’, something that as it seems from the following discussion, creates tension between them:

“So, I would reassure him/her, and after the workshop, we would talk about it.”
(TP)

“What about the rest of the group? Something is happening in front of them. They need to respond to it.” (MT)

“It is quite interesting, because it is like saying the same thing, but we understand it differently. I would personally calm him/her down and of course have a private discussion with him/her. I will later ask the rest of the group how they feel about it.” (EP)

“I would ask the same question. How does the group feel about one of their classmates expressing himself/herself in this way? It is a special moment of creating empathy.” (SW)

While the tension is escalating, the TP differentiates her position from the group’s creating new tension with the SW:

“Well, I may be wrong, but I would not let them discuss it. For me, the correct approach is asking the teacher to take over with the pupil, while I deal with the

rest of the group by carrying on with an activity, to change the mood of the group.” (TP)

“So, you think that the best solution is to isolate the pupil who had the courage to express how he/she feels?” (SW)

At this point in time, the T, who had remained quiet during the brief period of tension, takes the chance to intervene, placing the situation in the context of a classroom setting.

“I agree that it is quite risky to have the whole group discuss what happened. The pupil in question is in a fragile emotional state. I don’t know how the rest of the group will react and I don’t want to risk it. However, it always depends on what kind of group we are talking about, the number of kids, their ages etc. In a conventional classroom in primary school, I wouldn’t do it, because I feel that they probably don’t have the maturity to address it properly. They could laugh, they could start making fun of him/her, they could even all start crying, and you wouldn’t be able to handle it. A teacher may not have the expertise or the ability to proceed with addressing the issue in front of the group.” (T)

The T’s intervention led the professionals to discuss the variables that dictate the approach you should take each time. The following comments show exactly the latter:

“Whether you are called upon to offer just knowledge and inform them [pupils] about bullying, or you are called upon to address a situation, there are potentially pupils in your classroom that have experienced this type of behaviour and you have to be aware of this.” (EP)

“I guess everybody responds through his/her expertise. I am a therapist, and I can handle it. What I would do is from the outset choose a smaller group of pupils and not work with the entire class.” (MT)

As it seems, the intervention of the T led the EP and the MT to enter a process of reflection and realisation of individual professional practice. The EP refers to being aware of the profile of the group and the MT, while insisting on supporting her practice, she agrees that many variables are at constant play, and expertise is something that we should consider in each case.

3.3. Similarities and differences

The aim of the study is for the professionals to offer their understanding around bullying and bullying prevention practice through their interaction. Therefore, it was interesting to explore and reveal their understanding around commonalities and differences between various

professional disciplines, as well as the benefits or limitations of collaborative interdisciplinary approaches for bullying prevention.

During the FGD the professionals were called to design and perform an example of the activities they use in the classroom and then discuss the approach, the objectives, as well as any risk factors that could possibly arise. Each activity was described by each professional in written form and then applied during the FGD, stimulating the discussion amongst the professionals. The activities designed by the participants are presented in the following table as part of the data of FGD. The activities were performed by the professionals, while the discussion, which aimed to reflect to the activities took place after everybody introduced their work. The latter was deliberate in order to avoid any influence from the comments of the professionals that could lead to alternate or adjust the next activity to please anyone in the group.

No.	Facilitator	Objectives	Description
1.	Music Therapist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express emotions through improvisational music. • Encourage teamwork and team support through music jam. 	<p>Participants choose an instrument that they feel comfortable with, and they form a circle. The facilitator gives a pencil and a piece of paper and asks the participants to write down a sentence that best describes their current emotional state i.e., “Music makes me happy” or “I feel full of energy tonight”. Then they try to get to know their instrument and practice their emotional state that they expressed in the piece of paper. They can compose melody, which best compliments their sentence like composing music for lyrics. When taking turns to present their piece they can invite the other participants to jam in by improvising. The facilitator joins in and directs the orchestra for each piece.</p> <p>Discussion: How did you feel when sharing your music with the group? Did the instrument you chose represented your emotion or would you prefer something different and create a different melody? Did you ask for the group to participate or not? How did that feel?</p>
2.	Theatre Practitioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the emotions of a bullied person in comparison to a confident and happy person. 	<p>Participants are called to identify the feelings that a person experiences when he/she is being bullied. All the feelings are written down in a column on a cardboard. Then they are asked to say feelings that a confident and happy person feels, which are written on</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stepping into a bullied person’s shoes and fostering empathy. 	<p>a second column. The cardboard is on display and a story is presented: “Alex is in Year 5 and experiences bullying from students on Year 6 in the corridor of the school. How does Alex feel”? The participants stand in two parallel lines forming the school’s corridor. Each one takes turns and acts the role of Alex by caring his school bag and goes through the corridor. The rest of the participants are calling the unpleasant feelings written on the cardboard with aggressive tone. The second part of the activity is to do the same but this time calling the pleasant feelings and supporting Alex.</p> <p>Discussion: How did you feel while going through the corridor? Imagine how Alex feels who goes through this in real life.</p> <p>Did we manage to make Alex to feel better?</p>
3.	Social Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on building trust amongst the participants. • Creating shared responsibility for the other. • Working on teamwork. 	<p>Participants go in pairs. One takes an instrument with a specific sound and the other is blindfolded. The pairs are standing across each other and the person with the instrument tries to guide the blindfolded in a route.</p> <p>Discussion: Do you prefer to lead or to follow? Why? How did you feel having the responsibility to guide someone who is blindfolded? How did you feel to trust someone else to guide you through?</p> <p>What do we need it to do to manage to gain our partner’s trust?</p> <p>How important is to work together?</p>
4.	Educational Psychologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging perspectives on bullying. • Deconstructing stereotypes and fostering critical thinking. 	<p>The facilitator points out an imaginary line on the floor that starts from one part of the room and ends to another. He explains that he will read some statements and the participants should stand somewhere in the line according to their opinion where the one end is “Agree” and the other “Disagree” with the statement. They could even place themselves in the middle of the line if they have any other opinion if they can justify their choice. Statements: “Bullying could only have the form of repetitive physical violence, pushing and kicking”, “What form of bullying is more serious, verbal or physical?”. “Bullying is an unacceptable behaviour that occurs only amongst boys”. Use examples each time to challenge their opinion.</p>

			Discussion: The discussion is formed according to the participants' opinion. Areas of discussion are around how we define physical bullying, how we understand covert bullying and socially constructed norms etc.
5.	Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify commonalities and differences among us. • To understand that differences make us strong, while some people take advantage of them. • To understand the components of bullying and the protagonists' motives and emotions. 	<p>Participants are called to go into groups according to their eyes colour, then according to their hair colour etc. Then the facilitator reads a story of a boy who is being bullied by four classmates. More specifically the boy is excluded by his peers for various reasons and finds comfort hanging out with a girl, who is targeted too by the bullies.</p> <p>Discussion: The discussion takes place during the activities</p> <p>Are we all the same? Why is it important to have differences? Is it ok to belong into groups? What is it not ok though?</p> <p>Who are the bullies? Who are the bullied? Who are the bystanders?</p> <p>Who of all those people could intervene and offer solution to the problem and in what ways?</p>

Table 2: Information about the activities designed and implemented by the professionals

From the description of the activities, it looks like the professionals are looking to meet with their objectives by referring back to the tools/activities they use. It is interesting to note that in the planned activities the MT and the SW do not focus on bullying and their discussion is designed to explore the emotions and feelings of the group, while the EP and the T focus on exploring knowledge around bullying behaviour. The TP links bullying behaviour with the emotions of a bullied person, thus offering both knowledge around bullying and fostering empathy among the pupils in the group.

The themes emerged during the process of presenting the activities were about acknowledging commonalities and understanding the differences between disciplines, professional boundaries, similarities in practice and the lack of communication between professionals working on bullying prevention.

3.3.1. Acknowledging commonalities and understanding the differences

After the application of the activities, the space was open for discussion about what unites and what differentiates each professional from another. The following discussion illustrates the

parallels and the nuances between the professionals' perceptions, as well as the dynamics that cause a shift in perceptions of specific professionals:

"I have to say that my perception has changed during these activities about what each one of us is doing in his/her practice. I think we could all benefit from each other." (SW)

"Yes, there is room for all of us. What we need is to find where each of us could be of more help in de-escalating bullying, from its prevention to its resolution." (TP)

"I value more now our common understanding regarding bullying and the different anti-bullying approaches." (EP)

"As teachers, our aims could include teaching the four elements of bullying or three ways of reacting when being bullied, while the aim of a psychologist or therapist is for the pupils to express emotions and, if anything comes up, to handle it then and there." (T)

"All professionals could potentially have the same aims and objectives, while the difference lies in how we go about achieving them." (MT)

From the above discussion it seems that the SW and the TP suggest that knowing each other's similarities and differences could lead to a fruitful collaborative interdisciplinary practice. The fact that the SW states that her perception has changed is valuable to witness the way that the specific process impacts their thoughts about similarities and differences between them, which could benefit a possible collaborative process. The discussion guides the professionals to identify the areas that unite and differentiate them from each other. For example, the T suggests that the objectives of each profession are probably something that need to be taken into consideration when encounter in interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention, while the MT emphasises in common objectives but different approaches to achieve those objectives.

3.3.2. Discussing professional boundaries in a classroom setting

Another theme is on the matter of professional roles, responsibilities, boundaries and limitations when working at schools. The following discussion is valuable to demonstrate the professionals effort to find balance between their practice and the boundaries they are facing when they are working in public schools:

“While the teachers are into structure and have specific guidelines on what to teach, music therapists have the freedom to explore emotions and free expression.” (MT)

“When I am invited to schools, it is not to address a specific situation but to offer knowledge in a more experiential and creative way to the pupils, focusing on prevention. My role is to raise awareness on bullying and not to address the specific issue. Let the teachers act on that.” (TP)

“No matter my status in the school, I must address the issue. Different professionals have different approaches to this.” (SW)

“I feel that addressing bullying depends on how secure you feel with your expertise and discipline in order to do so. So, the way you approach it stems from your discipline and professional background, and then moves on to the flexibility you have when working in public schools.” (EP)

“Our discipline dictates that we address the issue then and there, this being a part of our code of practice. I’m not saying that I will push the teacher aside or not involve him/her in the process.” (MT)

The discussion establishes the role of teachers, while it sets the professional boundaries of the professionals, who enter a process of critically reflective practice. For example, the MT and the TP separate their approach from that of a teacher, stating that their approach is ‘to explore emotions and free expression’ and to ‘raise awareness’ with a more ‘creative’ process. The SW and the EP while acknowledging the limitations when working in the educational system, they try to find their role and responsibility in addressing bullying behaviour. The last statement from the EP triggers the reaction of the MT, who comments on professional compromise.

The discussion makes the EP to revisit the discussion on whether the teacher should be present during their intervention on bullying in a classroom setting, something that enhances the discussion about teacher’s role in each professional process:

“You [turning to the SW] don’t want a teacher present, because if anything comes up, you know how to handle it, while you [turning to the TP] want a teacher to take initiative in case something does come up. So, it is a matter of how far you can go as a professional.” (EP)

“Personally, I don’t want to exclude teachers from my practice, but rather I ask them not to intervene in the process.” (MT)

“In my case, one of my objectives is for them [teachers] to co-facilitate and explore theatre activities, as this could potentially help them in their future learning processes and approaches with their pupils.” (TP)

“My objectives are for pupils to express their emotions freely. I’m not forbidding the teacher’s presence, but when I work with the group, I want control over the situation because I know how to handle it.” (SW)

The EP tries to identify the reasons why each professional wishes or not to have the teacher present in their process. He elevates the issue in professional competences and objectives and not to the role of teacher as such trying to offer clarity between the professionals. The MT and the SW set their boundaries in terms of teachers’ presence stating that they do not need them to ‘intervene’ and having the ‘control’ of the situation, while the TP emphasises in co-facilitation with the teachers as part of developing their professional competences.

3.3.3. Similarities in approaches, differences in tools

Another theme that is emerged during the discussion after the activities held by the professionals is whether there are potentially similarities in the approaches they follow, yet the difference is around the tools they use coming from various disciplines. It is again a moment of tension between the SW and the EP:

“I find that social workers to resemble psychologists more closely. We have some differences, but these are few and far between. For example, we [social workers] have a broad knowledge about how to handle issues in every concept and context, while the psychologists choose to follow a professional direction after their studies and focus on one aspect only.” (SW)

“If you are talking about how we can both apply experiential activities when working with a group, then yes, we are similar. However, if, for example, a child is bullied, and he/she is dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) then it is down to me to deal with it, and not to the social worker.” (EP)

“I agree on that, but as a social worker, I have my own ways of dealing with this situation too. Your approach is not the only correct approach.” (SW)

The above tension between the SW and the EP, makes the SW to be more defensive towards her discipline and generates the need to clarify it emphasising on similarities rather than differences:

“I feel like I came here to justify my profession, just because people don’t know what we actually do as social workers. I can easily do what the MT does when there is a disclosure of bullying in the group. I could work with role-playing, as the TP does, and I can also work on gaining knowledge on bullying, like the T does. Of course, collaboration is important, and I support that. However, I can use music in my sessions, not in the same level as the MT, but the process and the aims could be similar. I’m not saying that they would be the same because, if they were, we wouldn’t have all these different disciplines. I would say that, yes, our objectives and our approaches could be similar but the tools we use are different or, let’s say, each person places the emphasis on the tool he/she feels more comfortable with.” (SW)

After listening to the SW’s statement, the EP tries once again to follow a more inclusive approach in his attempt to bring down the tension:

“Ok, I guess the MT, the SW and me are focused on the same thing when going into a group, and that is to explore the emotions of the pupils in order to make them speak up and address everything within the group.” (EP)

“Theatre as a tool is somewhat similar because, again, it is experiential, however, yes, there are differences between how a theatre practitioner works and how a drama therapist works. Well, my difference with teachers is the fact that they are more focused on the learning outcome, and I don’t blame them. The whole educational system is directed towards gaining knowledge.” (SW)

It seems that from the tension, the professionals refer to important aspects about similarities and differences between them. Beyond the difference in ‘exploring emotions’, the tension highlights nuances of each professional practice in terms of the different tools they use during their practice. Of high importance here is the difference highlighted between theatre practitioner and drama therapist, which draws the line between raising awareness around bullying and offering therapy to people involved in the incident.

3.3.4. Lack of contact and collaboration in the educational system

The theme of lacking contact and collaboration in the educational system is a point of view that the T expresses, something that generates a new topic of discussion between the professionals:

“This is the first time I am coming in contact with a social worker, to be able to understand his/her practice. We come in contact with other professionals

such as psychologists, not in the degree I would like, but I am at least able to understand their role in the issue of bullying. Evidently, there is lack of collaboration with any other profession in a school context. Even the psychologist will come and never ask our opinion on how to approach a situation. They will receive information from us and then suggest what needs to be done.” (T)

“In my experience, when I invite the school’s psychologist to attend the final presentation or to participate in my sessions, they never come unless it’s their regular scheduled visit to the school. Maybe they don’t have the time, since they are responsible for so many schools.” (TP)

The T directs the discussion towards collaboration and interdisciplinarity, stating that she has never had the opportunity of collaborating in the school. Responding to the latter, the TP brings the anti-bullying programme that she implements in primary schools into the discussion, emphasising to the absence of the psychologists despite her effort to invite them. Both views highlight the difficulty in entering a collaboration within the context of Cypriot educational system due to lack of communication and lack of time.

Another potential for interdisciplinary collaborative practice is, as the SW notes, the different perspectives they all have on the same issue:

“I’m not implying that every professional cannot work on the issue effectively from his/her position, rather that it is beneficial for the pupils and the professionals to see a different perspective.” (SW)

“A successful collaboration is one where each professional presents his/her perspectives to the group or the individual to the other professionals to reach a consensus on the matter they are working on” (MT)

“I don’t agree on that. What do you mean different perspectives? There is only one diagnosis. If there is PTSD, then we can both come to the same conclusion because of the signs. What is the purpose of looking at both perspectives?” (EP)

“I think the idea here is to look at the issue in a holistic way in order to find ways to limit it.” (T)

“Yes, each professional has his/her role in bullying prevention and his/her contribution is invaluable.” (TP)

As seen in the discussion, beyond lack of communication and lack of time, the professionals discuss around the benefits of collaborative practice highlighting the value of different perspectives that come into the process. Although the EP disagrees that different perspectives are one of the opportunities created through collaboration, the T's explanation offers clarity to the group stating that the objective of looking at things from a different perspective does not only apply to the diagnosis of a situation. The adding value to this discussion is that it demonstrates again the way that the interactive process between the professionals assists them to offer clarity and move on towards the same direction, something invaluable for an interdisciplinary collaborative process.

The professionals agree that each of them has a different role in preventing and addressing bullying favouring interdisciplinary collaborative practice. The tension that is created in the discussion assists them to explore different aspects of interdisciplinary collaborative process:

“When it comes down to making a diagnosis about a child’s psychological state that falls within the psychologist’s role.” (MT)

“I need to say that a social worker can also diagnose a situation. We are trained in this area as well. A successful collaboration is the one that respects each professional and value each other’s disciplines.” (SW)

“I disagree. Social workers cannot diagnose and treat bullied children” (EP)

“Ok. Let’s agree that we are all in favour of collaboration and we value it. However, we are all capable professionals who can enter a classroom, work on the issue, and direct it to wherever we feel we can comfortably deal with it. For me this is the potential in interdisciplinary collaborative practice. It asks the professionals to think of a greater plan of action and then for each of them to add a piece deriving from their expertise to the puzzle and create something together.” (T)

As seen, the statement of the MT directs the professionals to new tensions, this time coming from the SW who feels the need to clarify her discipline. At the same time the EP vocalises that he disagrees with this last comment and insists in not acknowledging the fact that social workers can diagnose and treat bullied children. Finally, it is the T's last remark, which assists in bringing the discussion to a close describing the essence of interdisciplinary collaborative practice. At the end, all the professionals agreed with the T's position, with the T highlighting the potential in them working together in an interdisciplinary collaboration, as opposed to individually, and the huge impact that this could have on the pupils.

3.4. Professional relations

Apart from the activity that each of the professionals introduced to the group, another activity aimed to explore and reveal the professionals understanding around their commonalities and differences, as well as the benefits or limitations of collaborative interdisciplinary approaches. Therefore, cards with the disciplines and professions mentioned during the interviews and previous FGD were given to the professionals, asking them to create diagrams, demonstrating their understanding on professional relations regarding the bullying issue and anti-bullying approaches. Empty cards were given for the professionals to add any other discipline or profession they found relevant, while they had the option to use as many cards as they wished. The diagrams are illustrated bellow, together with a summary of the description made by the creator and the short discussion that followed.

3.4.1. The flower diagram (MT)

The MT creates three groups, first identifying similarities between the professionals with a psychology and therapy background:

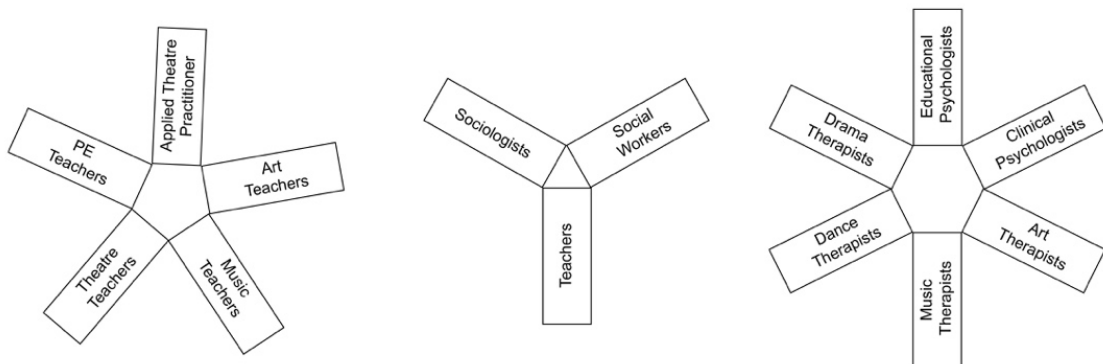


Diagram 7: The MT's flower diagram

Expanding on her decision, she states that the specific group of professionals have similar academic backgrounds, as well as a more therapeutic way of addressing bullying issues when they occur. During her studies, she came in contact with all these professions, which resulted in her understanding that they share similar professional codes of conduct and approaches. Moreover, she comments that the group with the applied theatre practitioners, music teachers, PE teachers, art teachers and theatre teachers have commonalities in the more experiential and artistic tools they use in their learning processes, yet they are more focused on prevention than on addressing any issues concerning bullying cases. The last group with sociologists, social

workers and teachers are involved, according to her, with learning processes, yet not in an experiential way, as their approach to bullying is not to offer therapy, but rather to investigate and address the issue in a procedural and structured way, following specific protocols and policies.

During the discussion, the SW disagreed with the smallest group of professionals, explaining that there is a distinction between her profession and the sociologists, who are more involved in research, rather than learning processes. Furthermore, as she commented, the social workers could potentially work with experiential activities, as well as address bullying through support group approaches in the same way that psychologists and therapists do. The MT clarified that, for her, these particular three professions are more in the field of following policies to address bullying issues, while she is not rejecting their involvement in prevention or any other creative approaches.

3.4.2. The circular diagram (T)

The T explains that she formed two groups, consisting of professions which, as she sees it, are connected:

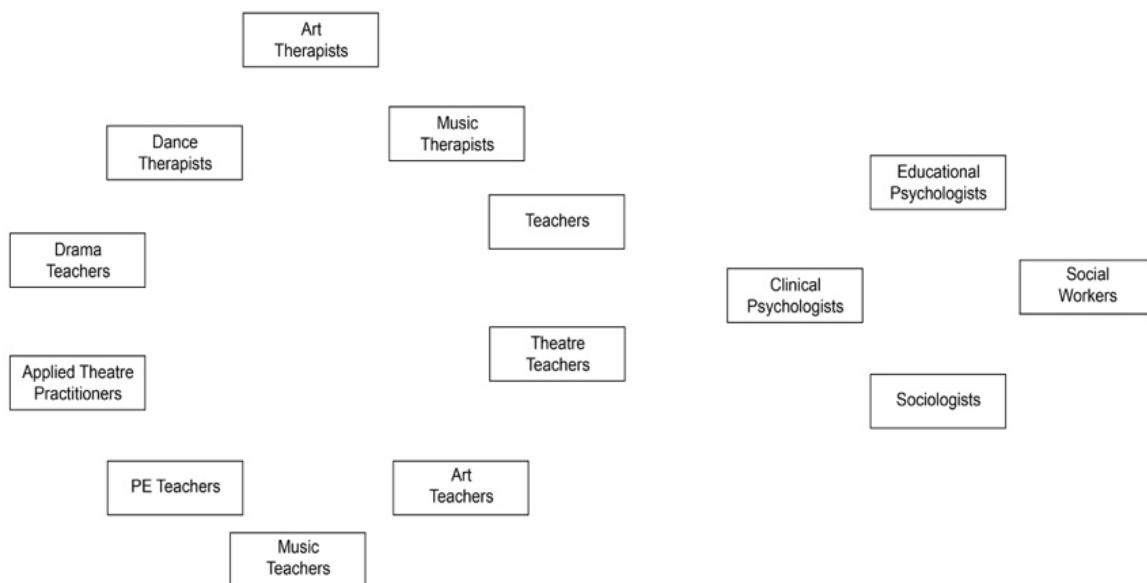


Diagram 8: The T’s circular diagram

She argues that the smaller group, which includes psychologists, sociologists and social workers, could offer information and statistical findings on bullying that are useful for the professionals in the larger circle, for building on activities and sessions so that they can address the issue more effectively. Additionally, the professionals in the smaller circle could offer

support to the professionals of the larger circle during their work, as well as addressing issues that might appear. The way that the large circle should work could be an interdisciplinary collaboration, since all these professionals could complement each other in building on a bigger anti-bullying programme. The anti-bullying programme could focus on learning, expressing emotions through experiential activities and addressing bullying when it occurs. Her thoughts about a bigger anti-bullying programme are influenced by the Health Promotion Model for Violence Prevention and Exposure, which covers primary prevention before the violence occurs, secondary prevention to tackle violence from the outset and tertiary prevention to ‘treat’ the issue after violence occurs.

The EP asked for clarification regarding the smaller group and their role in the anti-bullying programme she was suggesting. He mainly focused on the meaning of the psychologists giving information to the professionals of the larger circle and the form that this information could take. As the T clarified, the information provided by a psychologist to the larger group is highly significant, since the psychologists could give advice on specific approaches that the professionals could follow to help children overcome their problems. The SW agreed with the T’s diagram and she further commented that she sees those in the smaller circle as the experts on the issue of bullying, who could support and monitor the interdisciplinary programme that could potentially be created by the larger circle.

3.4.3. The staircase diagram (TP)

The TP forms two groups with the cards given, excluding, however, PE teachers from the groups:

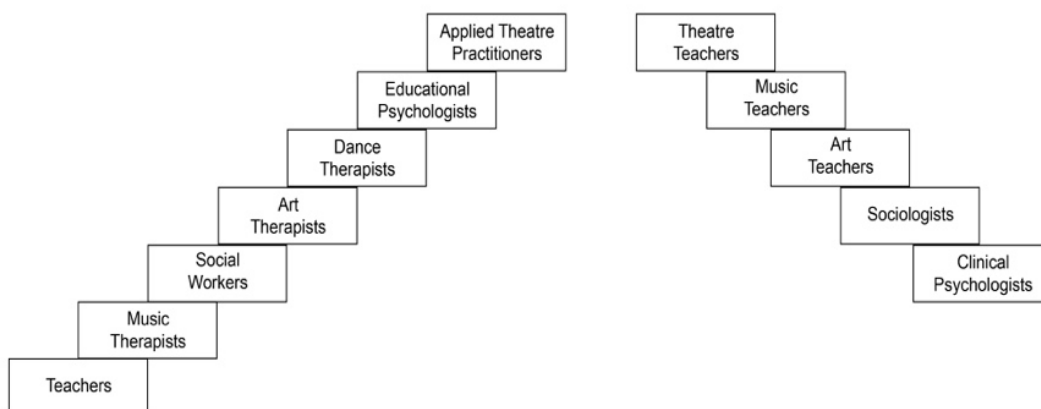


Diagram 9: The TP’s staircase diagram

The bigger staircase involves professionals who could enter a group or a classroom and, by using experiential activities, raise awareness on the issue of bullying. She argues that she sees

it as a staircase with many steps, and it is of no coincidence where each profession is placed, as they are all needed, so they can support each other. Furthermore, commenting on the smaller staircase she states that she agrees with the way the T placed the elements in her diagram, since it includes professionals who could potentially support the professionals belonging to the larger staircase. The support provided in discussions could take the form of information, monitoring, as well as alternative methods of working with the group (i.e., drawing, music activities etc.).

Commenting on the PE teachers, the SW argued that she believes that sports and athletics could offer much to the issue of bullying, yet she is apprehensive about the way it is currently being used in schools, and therefore decided to exclude the profession from the group. As she stated, although she believes PE has potential, she does not see it working in that direction, to which the T agreed, commenting that we should follow the example of programmes in other countries, which use sports in a positive way and for fostering life values, respect and teamwork, rather than competitiveness.

3.4.4. The pillars diagram (EP)

The EP identifies three categories of professionals, in which he did not include music teachers, PE teachers, theatre teachers, art teachers and sociologists.

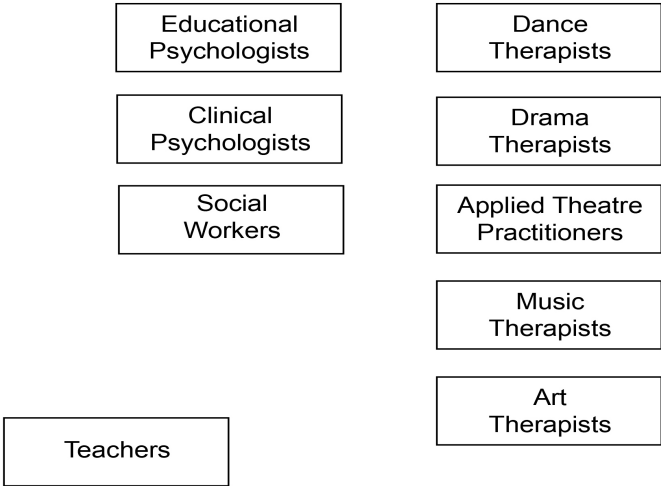


Diagram 10: The EP’s pillar diagram

As he states, these professionals have much to offer on the issue of bullying because they all have knowledge on theories on bullying, meaning they could design and apply anti-bullying interventions and address the issue when it occurs. On the matter of excluding the other professionals from the pillars, he states that he values their work, yet he believes that they do not have anything to offer to the previously mentioned areas. Additionally, he explains that he

distinguishes the groups according to whether they could work on a one-to-one basis or with a group. The pillar with the psychologists and the social workers can easily work on an individual level, the art professionals mostly in groups, though he questions whether the teachers have the expertise to work one-to-one with their students.

The TP intervened and asked whether the teachers could be slotted into both categories, while the EP clarified that they need their own category since they are more equipped to address the issue of bullying in schools. Moreover, the MT pointed out that she can work on a one-to-one basis, though not in the same way as a psychologist. According to her, it is in a child’s best interests to work individually with the music therapist since he/she could identify his/her needs and find a solution to his/her situation more easily. She asked that the rest of the group not dismiss the activity she does with them because it is specifically adjusted for each group. When it comes to group work, it is not as complex as the individual work she does with the children.

3.4.5. The shrine diagram (SW)

The SW begins the discussion on how she sees her profession amongst the other professionals.

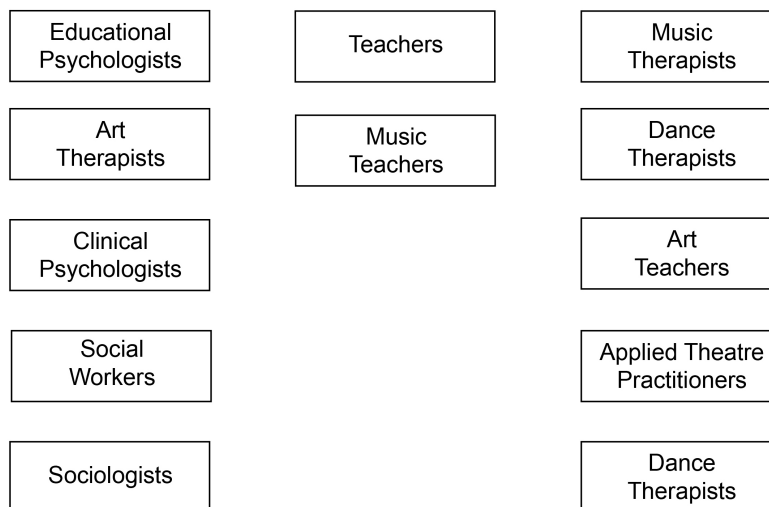


Diagram 11: The SW’s shrine diagram

She states that in terms of addressing the issue of bullying, she finds similarities mostly with the teachers and sometimes with the educational psychologists. She argues that, in her opinion, the profession of the sociologist is important since research on the issue of bullying is itself always important, and it is responsible for directing all the empirical work that could possibly take place. The PE teachers and theatre teachers were not included. Additionally, she comments that she decided against creating different groups of professionals, and instead decided to create

the shape of a 'shrine' in which the middle top card (teachers) is crucial to the fight against bullying. Teachers have to bring all the other professionals together, to collaborate and apply anti-bullying interventions and programmes in schools, focusing both on prevention and addressing the issue if it occurs. The PE teachers were not included in her shrine diagram since, according to her, they are more focused on the physical abilities of the students than on fostering any other skills and values.

4. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the presentation of the data collected and analysed. The data was derived from a multi-method approach which involved using narrative vignettes, semi-structured interviews, FGD and electronic diaries. Furthermore, the chapter provided additional material that the professionals brought to the FGD, such as the description of their activities used and the diagrams which they developed to justify commonalities and differences amongst other professionals working in bullying prevention. The themes to emerge from the data were presented in two sections, first the vignettes in combination with the interviews and then the FGD with the electronic diaries and were in response to the research questions. The *Discussion* chapter that follows focuses on summarising the research findings, providing a discussion on concepts and ideas identified in the study and which respond to the research questions. It draws comparisons with previous research and literature on the topics raised, highlighting new findings, and describing how the latter could lead to a future fruitful discourse.

Chapter 4

Discussion

1. Introduction

The objective of the current chapter is to present the research findings and to make the readers aware of and to engage with the way that the professionals reflect, critically think and share, concerning bullying definition, bullying prevention practice and interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention. Following Hewitt and Lago's (2010) argument, the *Discussion* chapter is directed towards analysing data to respond to the research questions, making comparisons with previous research and literature on the topics raised, highlighting new findings, and describing how the latter could lead to a future fruitful discourse. The data were collected over the three cycles of AR incorporating written vignettes, interviews, FGD and electronic diaries. Since part of the data is derived from the FGD, which is an interactive process, group dynamics were considered in the interpretation, and especially the risk of interpreting an absence of dissenting voices as indicating consensus, to strengthen the confirmability of the findings (Gunawan, 2015; Shave and Nikengbeza, 2018; Zinyama et al., 2022). The discussion, as formed, contextualises and interprets the nature and the meaning of the data, such as acknowledging the relation elements of the group and the reticent of individuals; this will be included where it is particularly relevant. Many of the findings refer to commonalities or observations about the group of professionals as a whole and where there is difference is significant and it is noted.

Consistent with the way that the thematic analysis 'identifies, analyses and reports themes within data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 79), the *Discussion* chapter is divided into four sections, each one responding to one of the four research questions. Each section is divided in smaller sections in order to guide the reader through the content and the context of the discussion that follows by extrapolating extracts of data, comparing them with the literature review and finally raising questions and concluding. Prior to each section there is summary of the findings in bullet points, as a way of orientating each area.

2. Research question 1: *How do Cypriot professionals from different disciplines understand bullying and bullying prevention practices?*

The analysis of the vignettes and the individual interviews identifies a wide range of bullying understanding, according to the professionals' descriptions. To explore this further, the responses of the professionals during the vignettes and the interviews, which were linked to bullying definition were brought back at the first FGD for them to select those that better represent their perspective, identifying parallels and nuances between them. The aim was not

for the professionals to detect which statement was theirs or to arrive in a common definition, rather to explore and expand on the factors they find important for defining bullying and to initiate a discussion around the multiple perspectives of the definition, linking it to bullying prevention practice.

The following discussion responds directly to the first research question about the way that professionals from different disciplines understand bullying and bullying prevention practice, identifying three important areas according to the analysis and the interpretation of the data collected: 1) There is an appropriate variety of the way that bullying is understood, influenced by several factors, 2) There is an association between cross-disciplinary theories and bullying understanding, and 3) Bullying understanding and bullying prevention practice become a dialogic process.

2.1. An appropriate variety of bullying understanding, influenced by several factors

The professionals:

- use parallel terminology, such as repetitiveness and predetermination to define bullying, but their examples illustrate that their understandings of these differ.
- appreciate the different understanding of bullying by other professionals and they create dialogue with them.
- in their examples of practice show that they are not attached to one definition and in different context they use different terminology, which sometimes is in line and other times challenges their previous description of bullying.

According to findings, the professionals narrow it down to repetitiveness and predetermination as the two most important elements for classifying an incident as bullying following literature, which asserts that repetitiveness and predetermination are prominent components in bullying behaviour (Olweus, 2003; Lines, 2008; Agatston et al., 2009; Stavrinides et. al., 2010; Dixon, 2011; Leiner et al., 2014). For example, the professionals refer to bullying as “...something predetermined [...] a conscious repetitive violent action...” (T), “...something that is happening repeatedly...” (MT), “...targeting an individual...” (TP). The importance of the current research process lies in the fact that it encourages the professionals to contextualise, to expand on their understanding of bullying and to give examples from their experience, revealing both parallels and nuances in the way they respond about repetition and predetermination in bullying in their everyday practice. As the FGD progress the professionals reveal with examples that the the way they understand repetition and predetermination differs. For example, some of them do not link predetermination with intention to cause harm (TP) and intention to cause harm is for them a given element in bullying (T). Additionally, some professionals through their

interaction, they reject initial ideas about bullying. For instance, they support that intention to cause harm needs a different approach (EP) and repetition can cause harm which is not expressed (T). The latter shows that the professionals are not attached to one definition since they understand and appreciate the different understanding of bullying by other professionals and they show a capacity to create dialogue with each other perspective on how bullying is defined.

Apart from repetition and predetermination, the findings reveal a plethora and variation between professionals' perceptions of bullying definition in general. Similarly, Gladden et al. (2014), identify a variety of bullying definitions in literature, while Shiakou et al. (2019) argue that the variety of definitions provided by scholars creates confusion amongst professionals, parents and pupils, and barriers to bullying practices. The importance of the current research is that it goes deeper into exploring the factors, which influence the way that the professionals understand and define bullying, such as the form of their practice, their role and their status in the educational institution and their target group. For instance, the professionals who are invited to collaborate with schools for a short period of time (i.e., TP, SW, MT) do not favour a 'strict' definition of bullying, in contrast to the permanent school staff (i.e., T) or professionals, who are collaborating with the schools in the long run (i.e., EP). The visiting professionals, who work with pupils in groups with experiential activities (i.e., TP, MT), favour a definition which does not include the intention to cause harm and repetition. The professionals who are involved in addressing bullying through a one-to-one process (i.e., EP, SW, T) consider repetition, power imbalance and intention to cause harm for their definition of bullying. If the latter category professionals are not permanent staff in schools (i.e., SW, EP), they challenge the element of predetermination and intention to cause harm for identifying bullying. The professionals in their examples of practice show that they are not attached to one definition and in different context they use different terminology, which sometimes is in line and other times challenges their previous description of bullying. Therefore, the findings of the research challenge literature that claims the existence of different definitions is confusing, which negatively impacts practice, and reveals that there is an appropriate diverse variety of definitions applicable to different contexts, which is linked with everyday practice.

2.2. The association between cross-disciplinary theories and bullying definition

The professionals:

- put forward their opinion about bullying definition using their disciplinary knowledge and tradition in order to promote the authenticity of their ideas and practices.

- can explain their understanding of what aggression is, but the way they link it with bullying varies.
- who identify themselves to belong to psychology (i.e., educational psychologist and music therapist) do not include the element of ‘deliberate act’ in their description of aggression as their discipline dictates.
- are able to explain through examples their understanding around the different forms that bullying can take and use terminology, which sometimes is in accordance with their disciplinary distinction as described by literature and sometimes not.

During the FGD, they were different moments of tension between the professionals, which reveal their appetite to link their understanding of bullying with their disciplinary theories. One of the examples was the tension between the EP and the SW and their debate around individual versus societal factors influencing bullying. Individual factors in relation to bullying have hitherto been dominant in research, including, amongst others, temperament (Olweus, 1980, 1997), anxiety (Jansen et al., 2011), school performance, race, ethnicity and gender (Mynard and Joseph, 1997; Juvonen et. al., 2000; Jeong et. al., 2013). Nonetheless, more researchers emphasise the need to examine the role societal power relations play in the manifestation of bullying (Hickson, 2009; Horton, 2011; Horton, 2012). The disciplinary distinction on the way that scholars approach the matter is crucial in understanding the data, since the findings reveal that both professionals put forward their opinion using their disciplinary knowledge and tradition to promote the authenticity of their ideas and practices. For example, they use phrases like: “according to psychology” (EP) and “stemming from a combination of both psychology and sociology” (SW). The attempt to draw on and to be supported by the authenticity of their disciplinary knowledge is an example that the two professionals understand, and they describe bullying according to their disciplinary distinction. However, the latter could also be viewed as an example of how the professionals attempt to establish and assert their professional identity during the FGD and reveals their dynamics. Therefore, the study allows one to explore the role of disciplinary distinction in bullying understanding and the degree that the latter impacts or applies in practice.

Beyond the beforementioned tension, evidence in the findings reveals that during the FGD there is a frequent reference from the professionals of aggression. The way they understand aggression varies according to their cross-disciplinary bullying theories. Similarly, in literature, all scholars agree that bullying is linked directly with aggression, with the exact meaning of aggressive behaviour varying depending on their individual disciplinary perspectives. Scholars exploring the psychological effects of bullying (Salmon et al., 2000; Dixon, 2011; Hong and

Espelage, 2012; Sismani-Papacosta et al., 2014) support that aggression is a deliberate act to make a person feels unwanted or threatened. According to the findings, the EP and the MT link aggression in bullying from – as they put it – a ‘psychoanalytical’ perspective, emphasising the ‘unresolved’ feeling of anger, which ‘is piled up’, and which ‘can lead to bullying’. It is worthy to mention that in the Cypriot anti-bullying policy, there is no reference to aggression proving that the two professionals are not influenced by the policy when they define aggression to bullying. Initially, this translation verifies the way that professionals associate their disciplinary theories (i.e., psychology) with the way they define bullying. However, it seems that the explanation of the term from both professionals presents nuances from the way that psychology defines it. For example, they do not include in their description ‘deliberate act’ something that it is dictated by the discipline they claim to identify with. The latter, allows to explore whether the professionals, by referring to their disciplines, prioritise to establish their professional identity amongst the group rather than to offer a definition of bullying, which is tailor-made according to their disciplinary distinction.

The professionals expand their thoughts around different forms of aggression that bullying can take. The latter is invaluable for analysing and moving closer to the nature and the dynamics of the association between their understanding of bullying and their disciplinary theories. Regarding the forms of aggression in bullying, literature follows either a sociological perceptive – dividing aggression to overt or covert, according to its nature (Murray-Close et al., 2006; Catanzaro, 2011; O’Brien, 2011; Hemphill et al., 2012) – or a psychological perspective and the harmful effects of bullying – dividing it into physical, verbal, psychological and relational bullying (Dixon, 2011; Hong and Espelage, 2012). Looking at the way that the Cypriot anti-bullying policy presents the forms that bullying can take, there is no distinction between disciplines, rather it makes a general distinction between direct and indirect violence and then becomes more specific in dividing bullying in physical, verbal, relational and destruction of property. According to the data, the professionals refer to “...covert [and] indirect bullying” (T), “...physical bullying” (EP), “...verbal bullying and psychological bullying” (TP), “...isolation” (SW). These findings reveal that the professionals refer to forms of aggression related to bullying without necessarily relying on their respective disciplinary categorisation from literature or the terminology used in the Cypriot anti-bullying policy. For example, the SW, who held on steadfastly to her disciplinary authenticity (i.e., identifies commonalities with psychology) when defining bullying, refers to bullying as ‘isolation’ and not as ‘relational bullying’, or the TP borrows terms such as ‘verbal’ and ‘psychological’ from the psychological perspective, without necessarily belonging to the specific discipline. The findings here suggest that understanding of bullying is more complex than the tendency to assert that individuals

locate their theories in disciplinary silos or according to the national anti-bullying policy. Therefore, the study problematizes the understanding of bullying, which is more complex than the disciplinary distinction in literature, because, in real life, the professionals work alongside others and their experiences are different from their cross-disciplinary unity or distinction. Nevertheless, there is the tendency from the professionals to frequently refer to disciplinary distinction, not necessarily to justify their beliefs on bullying definition, rather to establish their professional identity amongst the group.

2.3. Bullying definition and bullying prevention practice become a dialogic process

The professionals:

- are able to link their understanding of bullying with examples of good practices in order to prevent it, but their descriptions of same approaches to bullying prevention (i.e., Peer Mediation) differ.
- illustrate their understanding to the role of empathy and moral disengagement regarding bullying and make links with the nature of their everyday practice and their role in Cypriot schools, rather than their cross-disciplinary distinction.
- who work more in a creative and experiential way (i.e., theatre practitioners, music therapists) favour an open definition of bullying linking it with their open and exploratory approach to bullying prevention.

Insofar the findings reveal that the professionals define bullying in various ways, which is influenced by many factors linked with their practice, while their references in their disciplinary distinction offers them the opportunity to establish their professional identity amongst the group. It seems that practice plays an important role on how the professionals understand and describe bullying, something that allows further examination of the dynamics of this association. One of the examples is the reference to *Peer Mediation* by the EP and the SW. While both professionals refer to mediation as one of the good practices to address bullying, the way they describe the approach brings to light multiple nuances. The description of the two professionals' practices when bullying occurs reveals more about how they translate their constructed bullying definition into practice. Mediation is described as asking the pupils "to express their feelings" (MT) and for "both [pupils] to feel safe within this process" (EP). The EP continues by saying that it is a part of "professional code of practice", if the professionals are "qualified", "trained" and "capable" of realising it. Therefore, the difference in the description of the professionals' practice reveals that professionals link their practice with the different way they understand bullying. It seems that code of practice, professional

competencies, and work ethics are considerable factors in the way both professionals approach practice, making the association between bullying understanding and practice more dynamic.

Another example that can be considered revealing, and which exhibits the nature and the dynamics of the relationship between professionals' understanding of bullying and their practice, is the discussion around empathy and moral disengagement. Psychology studies around individual factors as predictors of bullying reveal that cognitive and affective empathy are negatively correlated, while moral disengagement is positively correlated with bullying (Kokkinos and Kiprissi, 2017; Antoniadou and Kokkinos, 2018; Bjarehed et al., 2019). The data from the MT can be understood in relation to literature, who states: "The children have no empathy so as to understand that what they are doing is wrong". However, the findings reveal a differing perspective on empathy between the EP, who links lack of empathy to the existence of a conduct disorder (i.e., Callus Unemotional Traits) and the other professionals, who link lack of empathy to social factors. Mentions include, among others: "dysfunctional family" (TP, SW, T), "school climate" (T, TP) and "the responsibility of the teacher" (MT). While the data is treated with care since the dynamics between the professionals constantly shift and change, the possible reason behind the professionals' distinction here could be linked to the nature of their practice in public schools. For example, the EP's expertise is mainly in one-to-one meetings or small group sessions with pupils, in order to provide a diagnosis and refer the case to other public or private services, if need be. The MT and the TP work on a classroom level and therefore refer to the responsibility of the teacher and school climate respectively. Additionally, the TP includes parents in her intervention and the SW deals with families in collaboration with the school, and they link lack of empathy to a dysfunctional family. Therefore, the findings reveal that the form of a practice, the role in the educational institution and the target group impact the way that professionals understand and define bullying, making the association between definition and practice a dialogic process.

Examining more parameters that impact the professionals' bullying understanding and bullying prevention practice within the data, attention is drawn to the perceptions of the professionals, who acknowledge that they work with creative and experiential approaches (i.e., TP, MT). The two professionals differentiate their perception from the others' and raise questions on whether bullying is an action with the intent to cause harm and whether bullied children experience bullying as a negative action towards them. Shetgiri (2013) maintains that the latter is the subject of ongoing debate in literature, with only a few scholars arguing that intent to cause harm is not always present in bullying, while in some cases, bullied children do not experience any distress during the act. For example, in their research, Basile et al. (2009) identifies a 40.6% of bullies who do not understand that what they do is bullying. Moreover, Elame (2013) asks

us to consider the cultural dimension in the definition of bullying, since in different cultures, different actions are perceived as normal, with children mimicking behaviours or remaining oblivious to the oppressive relationship they find themselves in with their peers. The two professionals state: “There are children who behave in a certain way without understanding the effect of the harm they cause” (MT) and “Some children don’t experience distress, while you, as an adult, can tell their relationships are not healthy” (TP). Regardless of whether we are talking about bullies or bullied children, the findings reveal that the way the two professionals understand and describe bullying is more sophisticated and has more layers than a linear action to cause harm would. This is linked to their effort to differentiate their practices from the other professionals, with an emphasis on art and creativity. For instance, the MT claims that: “While the teachers are more into structure and have specific guidelines on what to teach, music therapists have more freedom to explore emotions and work on free expression with the pupils”, and the TP: “In my case, when I am invited to schools, it is not to address a specific situation but to offer knowledge in a more experiential and creative way to the pupils, focusing on prevention”. The description of their practices appears fundamental, since it indicates that creative and experiential professionals (i.e., theatre practitioners, music therapists) favour an open definition of bullying and a more exploratory approach to bullying prevention, referring to it as ‘having more freedom to explore emotions’, ‘free expression’ and ‘experiential and creative’. Additionally, the way that they distance themselves from other professional roles and their explanation that they are not into ‘structure’ or ‘specific guidelines’ or ‘addressing a specific situation’, solidifies the previous finding that the nature of everyday practice and the role that the professionals are called upon or choose to perform within the educational institution impacts their understanding of bullying.

Summary of findings

In the current section, the discussion gives light to the first research questions and the way that the professionals understand and describe bullying and bullying prevention practice. The findings reveal a wide range of bullying understanding, with the professionals using parallel terminology to define bullying, yet with their examples to illustrate that their understanding of these differ. The latter proves that the professionals are not attached to one definition, rather they appreciate other perspectives about bullying brought by other professionals showing that they are willing to create dialogue with others. Moreover, while there is an initial sense that the professionals are creating links between their disciplinary theories and bullying definition, in reality the references in cross-disciplinary distinction could also be viewed as an example of how the professionals attempt to establish and assert their professional identity amongst the group. It seems that the examples that the professionals give from their disciplinary theories are

neither in accordance with their cross-disciplinary distinction, nor they are influenced by the Cypriot anti-bullying policy. Therefore, the professionals prioritise the establishment of their professional identity rather than offer a tailor-made definition, which derives from their disciplinary distinction. While disciplinary distinction is not in direct contact with professionals' understanding of bullying, the findings reveal that the professionals link their understanding of bullying with their practice. Therefore, the professionals understand bullying according to their professional competencies and work ethics, the form of their practice, their target group and their role in educational institutions. Those factors assist the professionals in communicating their understanding of bullying and at the same time in making decisions of whether they should proceed with a specific practice, defining their limitations in practice and the degree of their involvement.

3. Research Question 2: *In what ways do their disciplinary identity, academic background and working experience influence their understandings of bullying and of the nature and impact of their bullying prevention practices?*

As seen, the findings reveal that there is variation between professionals' perceptions around bullying understanding, which is influenced by several factors. Additionally, there is a complex association between cross-disciplinary theories of bullying and bullying understanding, while bullying definition and bullying prevention practices are found in a dialogic process. An innovative aspect of the current study is that of creating a space, in which the professionals were able to interact and exchange ideas and thoughts placing this interaction within the framework of interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention. The order, in which the research methods were implemented was significant in order for the professionals to be able to critically reflect, to think about their practices on a deeper level, to question assumptions and ideas and to gain greater self-awareness. Each research method was analysed and the findings informed the next research method, building moments of tension during the FGD, which assisted the professionals to enter a process of 'critically reflective practice' (Thompson and Pascal, 2012; Bassot, 2015; Jones et al., 2019), an approach of linking together their disciplinary identity, their academic background and their working experience. In other words, although moments of tension appeared to have potentially challenged the professionals' communication during the FGD, the findings demonstrate that those moments generated moments of critically reflective practice around the impact and the nature of their bullying prevention practice. Therefore, as it will be argued, opportunities were given for the professionals to enter a shared space of reflection that could potentially influence their future decisions and consequently the efficacy of their practice.

The discussion here corresponds to the second research question and the way that disciplinary identity, academic background and working experience influences the professionals bullying understanding and the nature and the impact of their bullying prevention practices. The analysis of the data examines the relationships between the potential the research process has of connecting with critically reflective practice and of illuminating and contributing to current debates about the nature, the value, and the form of critically reflective practice. Two areas are identified that are responding to the research question dividing this section into two parts: 1) The importance of bullying definition, and 2) The efficacy of professionals' practice through critically reflective practice.

3.1. The importance of bullying definition

The professionals:

- justify the importance of them having a clear understanding of the definition of bullying and link clarity of definition with efficacy of their practice and their role in bullying prevention.
- support that teachers, pupils and parents are confused concerning bullying definition.
- communicate the importance of following the Cypriot anti-bullying policy, however some of them appear uninformed of the policy's protocols, illustrating a gap between policy and practice.

The debate of the professionals around the importance of defining or not defining bullying to the pupils, which created tension between them, is significant to identify the dynamics and the impact of critically reflective practice during the professionals' interaction. As Barnett (2008) explains, critically reflective practice takes place when professionals observe how their own practice fits within a specific context and how it can potentially contribute to their own professional learning and professional development, with them individually constructing their own identity as part of a discursive process. While the initial aim of the discussion was to explore the professionals understanding around bullying definition and how this is translated into practice, by the end, the dynamics of the discussion have changed. In terms of understanding the nature and value of this aspect of critical reflection, it is interesting to examine those dynamics at work within the data. The following argument of the SW caused the professionals speak up on the importance or not to define or not to define bullying: "At the end of the day, defining bullying is not necessary. Everyone has his/her own opinion on this". While she brought the practical challenges stemming from the complex nature of defining bullying, she overlooks the issue by claiming that the solution to bullying is for the pupils to report any "bothersome" behaviour. In other words, she argues that defining bullying is complex and

therefore the best solution is to consider every bothersome behaviour as bullying. The latter caused reactions from the rest of the professionals, expressing their need to communicate the way they view the importance of having a clear definition of bullying. For the MT, definition is essential for addressing the issue more “effectively”, since it assists in making an assessment that it is linked to “the diagnosis of the problem or the disorder”. The TP adds that if you wish to inspire children to “report bullying” then they need to know what bullying is. Both professionals put at the front the importance of bullying definition linking it with the efficacy of their practice. They directly reflect that their approach differs from the others’, presenting issues of ‘how to address effectively’ bullying and the introduction of a process that is ‘based’ on pupils’ understanding and reporting. Their words can be understood as critically reflecting around their professional role and responsibility leading to the construction of professional identity in bullying prevention practice. It is an example of professional critically reflective practice, in which they think aloud about the importance of them having a clear understanding of the definition of bullying and link clarity of definition with efficacy of their practice.

The reflection of the teacher on the same topic, who remains silent for most of the discussion offers the possibility to examine the dynamics insight her process of reflective practice. Mann et al. (2009) and Robb and Thomson (2010) describe the specific reflection that the T went through as a meta-reflection process, in which she interrelates her professional distinctiveness and strengths at micro, meso and macro levels. The T highlights the importance of bullying definition in order to be able to address it more effectively. As she argues, parents and pupils cannot separate bullying from other forms of violence, creating issues when it comes to addressing a situation, since if it is bullying, you must follow specific protocols “according to the policy of the school and the MOEC”. She further supports that even teachers cannot separate bullying from other forms of violence because they are not fully trained to do so, which can lead to them not following the protocols for addressing the issue in an appropriate way. A close examination across data, illustrates that other professionals express similar concerns with examples such as their references around the importance of communicating bullying definition to pupils, in order to differentiate it from other violent behaviours and the lack of training of teachers with a result not knowing how to approach the situation. Considering the interaction between macro, meso and micro levels, the T’s meta-reflection can be interpreted as an analysis of her situation. For the T, the micro level represents her day-to-day work with pupils, the meso level her professional training and the macro level the national and international laws, policies, and guidelines. Here, the process of meta-reflection of the T detects a lack of awareness around the definition of bullying from teachers, parents and pupils, which intensifies the gap between policy makers the daily experience of professionals-practitioners and the public, with the policy

makers seen as failing to create links between theory and practices for dealing with bullying behaviour. The latter is further supported by the findings during the discussion around the Cyprus anti-bullying policy, in which there was confusion amongst the professionals on how to use the protocols of the policy, while some of them were unaware of the specific protocols. Therefore, teachers remain on the front line when it comes to bullying prevention in Cypriot educational settings, having the main role to address it effectively, without, in many cases, the necessary tools or abilities to tackle it. The latter calls for immediate action, for the policy makers to create links between theory and practice in order for a policy to be effective and respond to its cause, which is to identify, prevent and address bullying in Cypriot schools.

3.2. The efficacy of professionals' practice through critically reflective practice.

The professionals:

- show awareness around limitations and boundaries of their individual professional practice and they articulate this in terms of the definition of their role and the way they connect their roles with responsibilities.
- detect areas that they can work on and areas that they cannot in bullying prevention practice and they link this with their professional competences and professional code of practice.
- identify possible reasons behind specific limitations of their practice, creating links with solutions for professional capacity building.

An interesting and significant moment of tension between the professionals during the FGD was their debate around the efficacy of one-to-one versus group approach in dealing with bullying. According to Garandea et al. (2016), literature refers to both approaches for addressing bullying, a confrontational and a non-confrontational approach, with each having its proponents and its critics. The stimulus for the specific discussion was the MT's comment, who states that she "...would encourage him/her [pupil who is bullied] to speak more about it and address it with the rest of the group, which will act as a support group". The T and the TP immediately react to her comment and favour a more one-to-one approach for addressing bullying. Here, a like literature disparity on how to address bullying appears amongst the professionals, with the research process enabling them to enter a process of reflexivity, in which they critically reflect on the effectiveness of their practice and identify limitations and boundaries therein. This can be understood from: "I'm trying to picture this with my class, and I find it risky" (T) and "...addressing the issue with the rest of the classroom puts the pupil's emotional safety in jeopardy..." (TP). According to Thompson and Pascal (2012), reflexivity is a method of reflecting as a mirror does, to be certain that in a certain practice, the full amount of knowledge is used, actions are consistent with the professional value base and opportunity

for development emerges. The two comments can be used to showcase witness reflexivity, with the professionals finding themselves in direct dialogue with their working experience in a school setting, presenting the case as ‘risky’ and ‘putting the pupil’s emotional safety in jeopardy’. Therefore, they present another view or piece of knowledge on the topic and shape their understanding of their own work, by identifying similarities and differences, as well as specific points that they refuse to – or believe they cannot – follow in their practice. For example, the TP states that her role is not to “resolve bullying incidents”, rather to “offer a safe space”, in which children can explore, express their feelings, and promote reporting to the teachers, and the T maintains that the one-to-one meetings encourage pupils who have “low self-esteem to express how they feel”. Therefore, the findings reveal that they critically reflect on and show awareness around limitations and boundaries of their professional practices. They articulate the latter in terms of the definition of their role and the way they connect their roles with responsibilities, replying in the negative to the proposed group approach to bullying, as it is something they ‘cannot address’ professionally.

Equally important is the added value of the content and context of the specific study from other processes of critically reflective practice since it brought different professionals together to discuss interdisciplinary bullying prevention practices. Literature asserts that critically reflective practice enables the professionals to ‘think aloud’ for themselves and engage in discourse, aware of their emotional responses and being prepared to challenge their assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs in relation to other professions they take for granted in their everyday practices (Bassot, 2015; Jones et al., 2019). For example, the EP, commenting on the beforementioned group approach to bullying, states that “there is no right or wrong as long as you can handle it”. He moves further to state that as a psychologist he “would probably open up the discussion to the rest of the group” adding that the way that each of them would handle the situation is a part of their “professional code of practice”. The critically reflective practice that took place during the FGD was possibly influenced by the framework of the discussion, which bridged the professionals’ awareness of their and others’ professional practice with examples such as: “I don’t think there is right and wrong in this matter”, and “we are saying the same thing, but we understand it differently”. Apart from thinking aloud and voicing their thoughts, they detect areas that they can work on and areas that they cannot in bullying prevention practice and they link this with their professional competences and professional code of practice. The latter is an initial thinking around a future interdisciplinary collaboration since it illustrates the professionals’ appetite to reflect together, to identify what each one can individually offer in practice and find a common ground, proving in practice the impact and the value of interdisciplinary framework to critically reflective practice.

Signs of professional learning and growth are evident in the data, with the professionals constantly entering a process of reflective-in-action. Reflective-in-action is described in literature as a part of people's everyday lives, sometimes without them being aware they are doing it. Schön refers to it as 'thinking on your feet' (Schön, 1983: 54) and as Bassot (2015) states, the process is very important for people who work with other people, giving them solutions in their everyday problems. One example came up during another moment of tension and the professionals' debate of how bullying is being handled by teachers in schools. The T's reflection appears relevant and significant to examine the nature and the dynamics of reflective-in-action process. As she admits, teachers might not know how to respond properly when pupils report bullying or may not have the skills to do so. She further comments that teachers, in their effort to offer comfort and compassion to the pupil who reports bullying, accidentally underestimate the weight of the incident, with the pupils "receiving the message that their teacher is not empathetic". She shows awareness that this calls for "more training in classroom management and communication skills", and this is something that the teachers seek on an individual level, for their personal and professional growth. Here, Schön and Bassot point of view as being reflective-in-action assists in revealing the perceptions of the professionals around whether they enter a process of finding solutions to make their practice more effective. In this case, the T acknowledges the lack of efficient communication and understanding between her and her pupils. She enters a dialogue with herself, questioning these issues and laying down the reasons for teachers' incompetence in communication, which ultimately leads to lack of trust between the pupils and their teachers, discouraging the reporting of bullying. Nevertheless, she suggests that teachers are aware of this shortcoming in their competence and are looking to improve, identifying solutions for the situation. Therefore, the professionals' interaction allowed them to identify possible reasons behind specific limitations of their practice, creating links with solutions for professional capacity building.

Summary of the findings

The current section responds to the second research question, exploring the way that disciplinary identity, academic background and work experience influence the professionals' understanding of bullying and the nature and impact of their bullying prevention practice. It contributes to the knowledge and understanding of whether there is clarity in bullying definition, the importance thereof and the way that this impacts their practice. The importance is placed in moments within the data that professionals enter a process of critically reflection practice, in which professionals identified the importance of having a clear definition of bullying and the lack thereof from teachers, parents and pupils, which creates a gap between policy makers' guidelines and the daily experience of professionals. Therefore, the study

determines and showcases the agenda of policy makers and the difficulty professionals have responding to this agenda. Furthermore, the findings reveal that the professionals show awareness around limitations and boundaries of their individual professional practice and they articulate this in terms of the definition of their role and the way they connect their roles with responsibilities. They detect areas they can work on and areas that they cannot in bullying prevention practice, linking them with professional competencies and professional code of practice. In dialogue with the latter, they identify possible reasons behind specific limitations of their practice, thinking of practical steps to follow and find solutions for their professional capacity building. Therefore, critically reflective practice is appreciated in cases where the professionals observed the way their practices are understood and the way that this contributed to their own professional learning and professional development. The value of the critically reflective practice that took place in the current study lies in the fact that all five professionals' practices are distinct, and therefore the process enables them to draw elements from different disciplinary theories offering an abundance of evidence on professional roles and responsibilities, boundaries of professional identity and capabilities in their contact with other professionals. While all the professionals defend their professional boundaries, there is a sense of mutuality and respect for each other's professions by critically reflecting on their professional practice. Their common aim leads them to find bridges and their own place in a process of collaborating in bullying prevention practices, overcoming challenges and barriers that could essentially arise in a future collaboration. Yet, the findings show that there is much more to learn when the boundaries of professional work are crossed in a process of entering interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention.

4. Research Question 3: *What is their awareness of their professional identity in bullying prevention practice, in relation to other disciplinary processes and approaches for preventing and addressing bullying?*

As previously discussed, the professionals entered a research process, in which they reflected to their own understanding of bullying, creating moments where they critically questioned the efficacy of their own professional practices in addressing bullying. Beyond the data from the interviews and the vignettes, it was significant to look at the way that the professionals respond during the FGD and particularly their discussion after the creation of their professional relations diagrams. The specific activity assisted in viewing the way that professionals view each other's and other professionals' practices identifying parallels and differences between them and their own professional identity.

The following discussion responds to the third research question and that means looking at the awareness of the professionals of other disciplinary processes and approaches and the impact

that the latter has on their own professional identity. As it will be argued, the professionals constantly form and re-form their professional identity by thinking about roles and responsibilities, limitations and boundaries and they clarify the relation or lack thereof to each other's practices, in describing their views on the role of other professionals, and then positioning themselves in relation to them. Therefore, the current section is divided into two parts: 1) Professional identity negotiations, and 2) The individual and social process of constructing professional identity.

4.1. Professional identity negotiations

The professionals share their different perspectives on their approach and experience of negotiating their professional identity, with some of them to:

- emphasise particular qualities of their professional identity (i.e., music therapists value most children's free expression instead of a structure learning process) and hold strong to their distinct role that derives from this, without negotiating their professional identity.
- show a willingness to adapt and negotiate their practice in order to fit in and be able to function within the Cypriot educational institution (i.e., theatre practitioners), by prioritising these objectives and by being open and flexible.
- communicate the importance of negotiating their practice in school because of their role as visiting professionals (i.e., theatre practitioners, social workers, educational psychologists), which is influenced by the structural features and the objectives of the educational institution (i.e., short-term results, bigger number of pupils, structured activities, specific objectives).

The FGD and the interaction between the professionals showcase a process in which they share their different perspectives on their approach and experience of negotiating their professional identity in bullying prevention practice. According to literature, professional identity is a continuous process of interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences (Day 1999; Beijaard et al., 2004), in which the professionals have roles strongly determined by the communities and institutions of which they are members (Kogan, 2000). A vivid example from the data, which illustrates that the research process stimulated the professionals to start thinking of their own professional identity regarding bullying prevention practice is their debate of whether it is necessary to communicate bullying terminology to the pupils. For instance, the T approaches the matter from an educational perspective, aiming for pupils to gain knowledge about what bullying entails and separate it from conflict in order to report the incident or support the bullied. Conversely, the MT invests more in a process in which "pupils form their own opinion about the issue, proving to them that some of their actions are wrong and offering them the way in

which they can change their behaviour”. Here, the T links her professional identity with her community of practice (i.e., offer knowledge) and her role in the education institution (i.e., enhancing bullying report). Similarly, the MT finds links with her own community of practice (i.e., focuses on self-expression and creation) and she interprets her own experiences in bullying prevention by helping the “pupils to form their own opinion” about bullying (i.e., “proving to them” and “offering them”). In addition to the latter, the MT in the professional relation diagram she created during the FGD, finds similarities with professionals incorporating more therapeutic approaches, while she places the T in the category of professionals, whose role is to investigate and address bullying in a procedural and structured way, following specific protocols and policies. Both professionals emphasise particular qualities of their professional identity and hold strong to their distinct role that derives from this, without negotiating their professional identity. Therefore, this can be understood as revealing that the research process stimulated the professionals to start thinking about professional identity regarding bullying prevention practice, by exploring the way they expect to see themselves and the others in actual practice.

Another aspect, which is valuable to look at, is the impact that the structural features have to the development of professional identity looking at specifically the way that bullying prevention practice is described by the professionals. According to the literature, the influence of the structural features of the social world plays an important role in identity formation, with many professionals struggling within the boundaries of those structures to legitimately enter that social world (Deem, 2006). Participation in this struggle also impacts the development of both academic and professional identity (Wilson et al., 2013). A vivid example of the latter, which is revealing within the data is the comment of the TP, who states: “When I am invited to schools [...] is to provide knowledge in a more experiential and creative way to the pupils, focusing on prevention”. The TP, in contrast to the MT’s previous comment, attempts to find her role in bullying prevention practices within the structures of Cypriot schools, bridging the expectations of the stakeholders on ‘providing knowledge’ and her approach of being ‘experiential and creative’. Therefore, the findings develop a contextual insight into the literature, revealing the process of construction of one’s professional identity. In this case, the TP shows a willingness to adapt and negotiate her practice in order to fit in and be able to function within the Cypriot educational institution by prioritising these objectives and by being open and flexible. Her description of her practice demonstrates exactly this, by instrumentally choosing activities that have either been extended to fit both directions (i.e., knowledge and creativity) or combined activities to achieve the same goal. The value she places on creativity can be seen in her professional relations diagram, in which she includes her profession in those, who can incorporate experiential activities in a classroom setting for bullying prevention. Therefore, the

findings reveal that there is a strong influence from the structural features (i.e., instructions/policies of the school institution), which calls for the professionals to come to terms with their practice and the way that it will function within a specific institution, meaning negotiations are taking place within this process.

The findings demonstrate that the professionals are faced with the strong influence from the structural features, which calls for negotiations of their practices and the way they will function within the school institution. According to literature, increasingly, the institutions are directed towards implementing strong strategy, in order to aim for maximum effectiveness (Moos, 2005; Meyer, 2007). In the case of educational institutions, such as schools, the teachers and other professionals are being gradually more supervised, monitored and evaluated by external components or services with as a result to proceed with many restrictions and negotiations in practice (Vähäsantanen et al., 2008). The process that the professionals went through and their interaction through FGD generated data, which refer to multiple occasions of professional identity negotiations. Therefore, the findings of the research explore the framework and the insights of the literature, by presenting those negotiations that are taking place regarding bullying prevention practice in Cypriot educational reality. Examples of those negotiations include “I guess there is a middle ground...” (SW), “...the discussion led me to question my role...” (EP), “What I would do is from the outset choose a smaller group of pupils and not work with the entire class” (MT) and “You have a role to play, but not the leading role” (TP). It seems that the negotiations of the professionals include, minimizing time, achieving short-term results, working with bigger number of pupils and structured activities and setting up and meeting specific objectives. Those negotiations are link with and are influenced by their role as visiting professionals, the structural features and the objectives of the educational institution. Here, the centralised nature of the Cypriot educational system and the monitor of the anti-bullying policy by the DIT plays an important role to the professional identity negotiations, especially for the teachers. The frequent reflection of the T and her mention of the two parameters when it comes down to visiting professionals in schools: “approval by the MOEC” and “communication prior to any intervention”, shows initially her professional identity negotiation and secondly her agency as catalytic in professional identity negotiation of the visiting professionals in schools. Therefore, the professionals find themselves in a constant dialogue between their professional identity and the reality of their practice, thinking of what they can and what they cannot proceed with when they are called upon to work on bullying prevention in, specifically, the Cypriot educational system.

4.2. The individual and social process of constructing professional identity.

The professionals:

- who are invited to work in schools are found between their individual and the social process of constructing their professional identity since they communicate the reasons of not negotiating their practice, referring to the authenticity and value of their disciplinary theory, while the teaching staff employed by the school calls them to negotiate, referring to the institutional guidelines and instructions.
- present what they think is appropriate in real practice and then express the need to find a middle ground between respective disciplinary theories and the structural features of an educational institution.
- describe the way they see themselves in practice and their role and differentiate them from the role of a teacher, elevating teachers as the most important and valuable professionals in bullying prevention.
- show an understanding between the different perspectives and refer to common areas between teachers and other professionals regarding their roles and responsibilities in bullying prevention, communicating their willingness to find a middle ground.

The FGD and the interaction of the professionals enable potentially the creation of a social network between them, in which they create dialogue between theirs and the other professionals' practices, influencing the formation of their professional identity in bullying prevention. A study on the extent of the influence of social networks on the clarity of professional identity by Dobrow and Higgins (2005) showed that the more access you have to various, non-repetitive sources of information, the more clarity you gain of yours and others' professional identity (Dobrow and Higgins, 2005; Sweitzer, 2009). Exploring whether a social network is created during the professionals' interaction through FGD, the previous example of the T is particularly relevant. As seen, the T communicates the professional boundaries of the visiting professionals, calling them to negotiate their professional identity putting forward her role as a teacher in Cypriot educational system and the institutional guidelines and instructions. Opposing to the latter, the MT puts an effort to communicate the uniqueness of her practice, putting in across and comparing it with the teachers' practice. As she states: "A teacher might enter the classroom and say, ok, this is bullying, and this is the "bully" and the "bullied". However, there are thousands of other more creative ways to actually help the pupils...". The latter reveals the context of a process, in which a potential social network between the professionals is created during the FGD, offering them a new understanding and clarity of their roles and responsibilities regarding the issue of bullying prevention. For instance, the MT puts an effort to clarify her role by determining the role of other professionals (i.e., teachers offering "stereotypical knowledge"), by finding parallels (i.e., "help the pupils") and by distancing her

practice from them (i.e., “more creative ways”). In this case, the MT, as a visiting professional in schools, voices her professional identity by explaining that her different approach of incorporating ‘creative ways’ for deconstructing stereotypes about bullying is what makes her unique and valuable in the process. Therefore, while a social network between the professionals is formed, the process enables them to discuss and communicate the reasons of not negotiating their practice and refer to the authenticity and value of their disciplinary theory. They have the opportunity to clarify and voice their professional identity and to explain that being different is what makes them all fit in when it comes down to bullying prevention practice.

The creation of a social network during the FGD offers possibilities for the professionals to enter different processes of constructing their professional identity in bullying prevention practice. Literature asserts that there are more to learn about our abilities and skills, when a process of social comparison is taking place with others, in which we test the appropriateness of our knowledge, beliefs and opinions, constructing in this way our social self. (Lundell and Collins, 2001; Buunk and Gibbons, 2007; Van Lange, 2008). While previously the MT by comparing the practice of a teacher elevates her practice as unique and valuable, other examples from the data show a different approach. For example, in the discussion around the challenges around communicating terminology to the pupils the EP quotes: “From where I am coming from, terminology is important. [...] I think it depends on the situation”. The data demonstrate the process that the EP is found in constructing his social self within everyday reality presenting his opinion as a disciplinary authenticity (i.e., “where I’m coming from”) and at the same time seeing bullying in Cypriot schools from a broader perspective (i.e., “it depends”). Here, the findings depict the relationship between the professionals’ experience and practice, and their discourse and discipline, as linked by the data. The latter is reflected in the EP’s professional relation diagram, since he sees two groups of professionals, according to the work they provide, those who can support the pupils with a one-to-one approach (including him) and the others who work on a classroom level. The findings reveal that the professionals present what they think is appropriate in real practice and then communicate the need to find a middle ground between respective disciplinary theories and the structural features of an educational institution. Therefore, during the research process, the professionals find themselves in a constant dialogue between their disciplinary theory and the reality of their practice, thinking of what is right and what is wrong when they are called to work against bullying in a specific setting.

Different process of developing professional identity is formed during the FGD and the creation of a social network between the professionals. An example is the professionals’ discussion around the biases that the children bring to school, yet with the teachers’ role being central in their discussion. On the one hand, attention is drawn to the teachers’ role and agency, who act

as role models for emotional relationships connected to inspiration (Ortega-Baron et al. 2013), and on the other hand to the issues from a structural perspective and the teacher as a figure involving collaboration with parents, no tolerance towards bullying behaviour and surveillance (Cohen and Freiberg, 2013). According to the MT “teachers are role models, and they need to show empathy and inspire the children”, while the SW highlights that “if there are no structures, such as involving the whole school community for eliminating bullying, or if a teacher tolerates this behaviour, then this is very problematic, since the children will realise that they can get away with actions like that” (SW). The two viewpoints can be also traced back to the literature and are clear examples of how school structural features influences professional identity negotiations as discussed previously. Moreover, it shows a different process of identity formation with the two professionals to form an alliance and synchronise how they see themselves in practice and their role, and differentiate them from the role of a teacher, elevating teachers as the most important and valuable professionals in bullying prevention. Their professional relation diagrams demonstrate exactly this, positioning of the teacher in a prominent place when it comes to bullying in Cypriot schools. Therefore, the professionals reflect that no matter how much work they do during their practices, they need the support of the teacher, who is responsible for maintaining the quality and overseeing the outcomes of their work.

As the FGD were progressing, the data shows that the professionals’ views were constantly shifting, influenced by the dynamics of the social network that was created. According to Kogan’s (2000) the concept of professional identity is considered both individual and social, and professionals are stronger because of their own conceptual ideas and expertise in combination with other roles they are called upon to undertake in the communities and institutions in which they function. For example, the T remains silent for most of the discussion, saving her response for after everybody had expressed their opinion on the matter, making an effort to set things right and at the same time to bridge the differing views: “I get your points because, as a teacher, I believe that pupils should use the correct terminology. However, let’s be careful with when and how we use words in our practices because they have a strong meaning”. The EP agrees with the T’s comment: “Bringing this to a close, it is your role in the intervention, your professional background and the aims you set that determine how you will approach it in the classroom”. Here we see the example of how the professional identity is formed in combination with the ideas and roles of other professionals, when the T expresses her appreciation of other opinions (i.e., “I get your points”) and the EP offering a more unified opinion (i.e., “bringing this to a close”). Therefore, the professionals show an understanding between the different perspectives and refer to common areas between teachers and other

professionals regarding their roles and responsibilities in bullying prevention, communicating their willingness to find a middle ground. Whether a social network between the professional is formed or an initial interdisciplinary collaborative thinking for bullying prevention is being developed the findings demonstrate that, while the FGD progress, the professionals enter a process of identifying parallels on how they approach the topic, continually forming and reforming their professional identity regarding bullying prevention practices.

Summary of findings

The current section examines the awareness of the professionals of their professional identity in relation to other disciplinary processes and approaches for preventing and addressing bullying. The findings reveal the different process that the professionals go through in defining their professional identity regarding the matter and the potential negotiations they are called to make influenced by the structural features of the reality of the Cypriot educational system. While the professionals enter the research process with their assumptions and ideas about the way that other professionals work around bullying, the research process enables them to form a broader understanding about their own professional identity. Therefore, it seems that in some cases the professionals value their differences in the way they approach bullying prevention and hold strong to their distinct role that derives from this, without negotiating. In other cases, the professionals adapt and negotiate their practice in order to fit and be able to function within a Cypriot educational institution by being more flexible and choosing specific activities that meet theirs and the educational institution's objectives, or by being creative and merging activities to meet both parties' objectives. For the latter, they identify that having minimum time to achieve maximum results, working with bigger number of pupils, incorporating structured activities and setting specific objectives are among the negotiations they have to take, which are influenced by their role as visiting professionals, the structural features and the objectives of the educational institution. The professionals, who are invited to work in schools discuss and communicate the reasons of not negotiating their practice and refer to the authenticity and value of their disciplinary theory, while the teaching staff employed by the school calls them to negotiate, referring to the institutional guidelines and instructions. Therefore, the professionals present what they think is appropriate in real practice and then communicate the need to find a middle ground between respective disciplinary theories and the structural features of an educational institution. They describe the way they see themselves in practice and their role and differentiate them from the role of a teacher, elevating teachers as the most important and valuable professionals in bullying prevention. The latter does not take away the fact that the professionals try to show an understanding between the different perspectives and refer to common areas between teachers and other professionals regarding

their roles and responsibilities in bullying prevention and they communicate their willingness to find a middle ground. During the process, their professional identity regarding bullying and bullying prevention is constantly formed and re-formed, with the professionals highlighting their limitations and boundaries and voicing their sense of what is right and what is wrong with bullying prevention in Cypriot schools, finding parallels, as well as differences, and showing their motivation of working alongside others.

5. Research Question 4: *How do professionals from different disciplines understand and view the possibilities, the limitations and the challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration for preventing and addressing bullying?*

As seen, the research facilitated the creation of a social network between the professionals, to which they responded, clarified, negotiated and re-formed their professional identity in bullying prevention practice. During the FGD, the professionals were asked to perform examples of good practices and to create their professional relations diagrams in order to identify ways of working with each other around bullying, communicating their understanding on the nature of their potential collaboration. The latter, in combination with the interpretation of the dynamics of the relations between the professionals during the research process, from beginning to end, assisted in exploring the potential of the development of an interdisciplinary collaborative process between them.

The following discussion responds directly to the fourth research question and the way that the professionals understand and view the possibilities, the limitations and the challenges of an interdisciplinary collaborative process for preventing and addressing school bullying. Therefore, the discussion focuses on the nature and the dynamics of the process that the professionals were found, by correlating their practice with the practices of professionals from other disciplines, and the insights of an interdisciplinary thinking about bullying prevention practice that had been triggered. For the latter, three areas are identified to respond to the research question: 1) The professionals' interaction as a medium for interdisciplinary thinking, 2) Challenges and limitations of interdisciplinarity, and 3) Possibilities and opportunities of interdisciplinarity.

5.1. The professionals' interaction as a medium for interdisciplinary thinking

The professionals:

- use their interaction as an interdisciplinary opportunity to share knowledge and ideas around bullying, to discover connecting points with each other and to synchronize their thoughts.

- show awareness of the boundaries and the limitations that the broader educational institution imposes on their practice and the different directions that the bullying prevention practice can take, identifying in this way their place and role in interdisciplinary collaboration.
- communicate their willingness to work alongside others in interdisciplinary collaboration, by reviewing their practice and appreciating the way that other professionals approach practice.
- show an understanding of the different roles that different professionals have in the context of interdisciplinary collaborative practice, influenced by their responsibilities within the school institutional establishments.

One of the main aspects of interdisciplinarity is the creation of a process of sharing between the professionals, something that it is significant to trace within the data and explore whether it took place during the research process. Wentworth and Davis (2002), describe the process of ‘sharing’ in interdisciplinary collaborative practice as a process, in which expertise is still valued, yet democratised through the exchange of knowledge and ideas. During the process of sharing, Meyer’s (2007) idea of forming ‘connections’ is taking place, which is a dynamic system of framed points of interest, which sometimes create and intensify a framework of discussion and at other times stimulate interactions that are silenced or thought to be unimportant. One of the examples, within the data, which responds to the literature and illustrates that interdisciplinarity starts to be formed between the professionals, is the moment of tension created between the professionals, concerning their disciplinary distinction. The specific tension during the FGD involved their different approaches in addressing bullying, with some of them supporting the whole classroom approach, involving the whole classroom in dealing with an incident and the others an one-to-one approach, handling the matter with the main protagonists individually. In the specific case, multiple viewpoints emerge which prove the creation of a process of sharing between the professionals by exchanging knowledge and ideas about the matter in discussion. For example, the SW speaks about “not exposing the pupils in front of the whole group”, the TP about the “appropriateness of addressing the issue in front of others” and the T about “the benefits of one-to-one private discussion”. On the contrary, the EP maintains that both approaches are to be considered under specific circumstances: “...there is no right or wrong approach, as long as a professional you can handle it...”. His argument generates a new sharing process among the professionals, calling them to find new connecting points. For example, the professionals form alliances with each other, with some justifying their opinion that bullying must be seen as a shared concern among pupils and therefore it should be

addressed in front of the whole classroom (i.e., MT and SW) and others believing that such an approach puts the pupils' emotional safety in jeopardy and therefore one-to-one approaches are more suitable for resolving the issue (i.e., T and TP). The dynamic system of interaction shifted constantly and determined in each topic of discussion the relationship of the professionals with each other and the relationship between each professional and the way they understand and translate the systems around them. Therefore, the findings reveal moments of the professionals' sharing process, in which they find connections, form alliances and synchronize their understanding about the matter, illustrating a process of interdisciplinary collaborative process.

The interaction between the participants during the FGD assists the professionals to identify and clarify, both for themselves, as well as for the other professionals, differing professional roles and responsibilities in bullying prevention practice, something that could potentially bring them together to work collectively on the issue within specifically the Cypriot educational system. Here, there is the apprehension that the broader institutional context plays an important role in facilitating the realisation of, for example, professionals' personal and professional potential (Beijaard et al., 2004; Wilson et. al., 2013). The latter is highly important in order to explore interdisciplinarity within the data, since the professionals need to be able to examine their own feelings, reactions and motives and the way that those influence their thoughts and actions within the specific institutional context. In other words, to be able to be reflexive (Klein, 1996; Knaggard et. al., 2018) having into consideration the educational context they are called to work with. An example, which showcases a process of reflexivity from the professionals was during the tension of whether using bullying terminology in practice is needed. The EP states: "Whether you are called upon to offer just knowledge and inform them [pupils] about this phenomenon, or you are called upon to address a situation, there are potentially pupils in your classroom that have experienced this type of behaviour. You are not 100% sure what is happening there". Here, the EP directs the discussion towards the individuality of each practice, the context of their work and reflexivity. On the one hand, the EP draws attention to the distinction between preventive learning approaches (i.e., "offer just knowledge and inform them") versus interventions to address the issue (i.e., "address a situation"). On the other hand, he places professional intuition and reflexivity during a practice in a classroom setting at the forefront of the discussion, calling the professionals to be alert to what might be happening around them (i.e., "you are not 100% sure"). In other words, he introduces to the discussion the idea that each one of them has a different assignment to fulfil or a distinctive outcome to deliver, yet they need to share a common awareness that pupils are potentially experiencing bullying behaviour. He enters a process of reflexivity, in which he communicates the boundaries and the limitations that the broader educational institution imposes in practice, with resulting recourse

interdisciplinarity, by breaking down the different directions that bullying prevention practice can take and linking each direction with specific professionals. Therefore, the findings showcase the role of the broader institutional context in facilitating the realisation of professionals' personal and professional potential, leading them to redefine their roles, responsibilities, and boundaries and think of the parameters and their negotiations of working alongside each other within the Cypriot educational system.

Moving further, and as previously seen, one of the main debates among the professionals was around the diverse learning processes they follow, in their need to negotiate and find their role in practice and meet their aims. According to the literature, interdisciplinary collaborative approach is about essentially creating a new discourse or expertise, which combines elements from all other disciplines, yet at the same time maintains its sense of self, giving the opportunity to both newcomers and experts to benefit from each other (Haynes, 2002: xv; Wentworth and Davis, 2002; Knaggard et al., 2018). To achieve the latter, the professionals need to enter a 'concept of dialogue' or a 'shared reflective process', which is based on 'reciprocity and response, and which offers them the opportunity to reply on several occasions, in order to augment a line of reasoning (De Laval, 2006: 6) and justify ideas, concepts and decisions. The activities they designed and implemented, during the FGD, as good examples of practices, are particularly useful for the professionals to demonstrate their practice and to develop a dialogue with each other in which they justify their decisions and their priorities in bullying prevention practice. For example, according to the discussion that took place after the implementation of their activities, the MT and the EP find essential the treatment or therapy of the pupils involved in a bullying incident. For the T and the TP, their practices are based on learning and visual representation of the act respectively, and they prioritise awareness of bullying among pupils. The SW argues that focusing on the definition should not be a priority, but rather cultivating social skills and respect should. Gradually, we see their discussion to shift in different directions, with the professionals making an effort to form connections with each other. Examples include: "I guess there is a middle ground" (SW) or "There is no right or wrong. To bring this to a close, it has to do with your role in the intervention, your professional background and the aims you set" (T). In terms of creating a new discourse or expertise as dictated by interdisciplinarity, the data seem unclear probably due to the short period that the research took place since the beforementioned data trace two differing approaches; compromise (i.e., "middle ground") and respect of the disciplines (i.e., "there is no right or wrong"). Nevertheless, the interaction of the professionals through the FGD functioned as a 'shared reflective process', in which they were able to think aloud, to review their work and the way that their work influences

the pupils, never losing sight of their colleagues' practices, thinking in this way the potential of working alongside them.

Over time and through constant interaction, the professionals attempt to define their role, their boundaries and how each of them 'fit in' in the addressing of bullying in Cypriot schools. In this sharing process, on occasions, the professionals find connections with each other and on other cases, they are divided holding strong to their opinion. The latter division appears compelling since interdisciplinary epistemology does not claim that all types of knowledge are equal, rather it states that disciplines and professionals representing those disciplines, together with their aims, approaches and concepts, are already socially constructed (Haynes, 2002: xv). This is apparent in the tension between the TP and the MT during the FGD and in relation to the hypothetical case of a pupil reporting being bullied during their practice in a classroom setting. Interestingly, both integrate artistic tools in their processes, yet their view on how to approach the specific case differ, due to the way they understand their role in practice. The MT, having a more therapeutic approach, argues that she will take initiative to address the issue with the group to support the bullied child, showing a sense of ownership regarding addressing bullying. Important for the discussion is the fact that looking across the data, the professionals who identified themselves as associated with psychology and therapy (i.e., EP, SW, MT) show a similar sense of acting upon anything that might happen in the classroom, considering it is within their role to resolve the issue right then and there. However, the TP challenges this specific approach: "Pupils are too fragile in that moment. Your role is to raise awareness on bullying and not to address the specific issue. You are a visitor there [school]. Let the teachers act on that". Here, the TP identifies three main areas for them to consider, which are the pupils' emotional safety (i.e., "too fragile"), the context of the institution you are working in (i.e., "visitor") and professional boundaries (i.e., "your role is to raise awareness"). The data in relation to Hayes reveals the differing views, which are valuable since they do not only demonstrate the roles and responsibilities of the represented disciplines in this specific study; rather they demonstrate the socially constructed role of the school institution, which is the main institution, and the teachers, who are considered the professionals responsible for addressing bullying.

5.2. Challenges and limitations of interdisciplinarity

- The professionals problematise around interdisciplinarity by reflecting, communicating and revealing multiple challenges and limitations that the process brings, according to their experience.

Looking back and seeing how professionals change their views gives an insight into how the research process facilitated change of opinion and perception. By the end, the FGD was functioning as a process of sharing and forming connections, in which subsequent negotiations between the professionals took place, with them identifying challenges that interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention could potentially bring. The latter is traced back to the literature on interdisciplinarity, which is a practice that crosses boundaries between disciplines and institutions (Castán Broto et al., 2012) with knowledge, approaches, disciplines, and theories integrating with each other (Lam et al., 2014). Herein the professionals refer to lack of time, lack of contact with each other, lack of training and lack of funding. Some of their comments include: “The procedures of going forward with this [interdisciplinarity], which is linked to time” (SW), “Most other professionals don’t know what I do exactly” (MT), “...further training on how to give space to one another is useful and how to address tension if it occurs” (EP) and “I had to adjust somewhat in order to meet first my aims and then the needs of the school” (TP). Other challenges include professional roles, responsibilities and boundaries. For example: “...there are specific things that are allowed and some that are not allowed [...] They are dictated by the regulations of the educational system” (T), “...you have to acknowledge that the individual roles are sometimes not equal...” (SW) and “...the way you choose professionals to work with you, and sometimes tensions can be created through people not having the chemistry to work with each other” (TP). As seen, the findings demonstrate that the professionals are able to identify that interdisciplinarity is not an easy task and to reveal multiple challenges that they need to address if they are ever to consider proceeding with this process.

5.3. Possibilities and opportunities of interdisciplinarity

- The professionals show appreciation to interdisciplinarity, by communicating potential possibilities and opportunities that the process brings for their personal and professional growth and for the pupils’ learning.

For the professionals to identify the challenges and the limitations of interdisciplinarity can only be seen as positive if they are prepared to face them and remain motivated when working on the issue. This can be understood in relation to the argument of Repko et al. (2012) that when an issue is too broad or complex, a single discipline is not able to resolve it and therefore drawing on multiple disciplines offers a more comprehensive understanding or viewpoint than a single discipline could offer. Indeed, together with challenges in the interdisciplinary approach for bullying prevention, the professionals identify opportunities that the process brings. Therefore, the professionals form connections and reflect on the impact that their practices and the other professionals’ practices will have on each other, including personal

development and professional capacity building. For example: “It will help him/her [professional] build more concrete knowledge and structure his/her ideas when in contact with other practices” (EP) or “Enhance and enrich your knowledge and expertise” (T), “You discover new knowledge” (TP), “If you don’t work with someone, how can you know what he/she can do?” (MT) and “Working with interdisciplinarity, teachers have the opportunity to see their pupils with fresh eyes and find out how they respond to different stimuli and approaches” (TP). Additionally, the professionals expand on their thoughts on how the process could potentially have an impact on the pupils, with examples such as: “People learn in different ways” (MT), “The educational system focuses mostly on gaining knowledge” (SW) and “They [pupils] have the opportunity to be critical towards things” (T). The findings reveal the insights of the professionals’ realisation, according to Repko et al., that a collaborative approach to bullying prevention can be beneficial in many ways. Therefore, the professionals appreciate the opportunities interdisciplinarity brings and view the idea of entering a collaborative interdisciplinary practice to bullying prevention in a positive light, recognising its potential for their personal and professional growth, as well as for the pupils’ learning.

Summary of findings

This section responds to the fourth research question on the way that professionals from different disciplines understand and view the possibilities, the limitations and the challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration for preventing and addressing bullying. The findings reveal that the research facilitated a process, in which the professionals entered a process of sharing, by exchanging knowledge and ideas around bullying, they discovered connecting points with each other, by forming alliances with specific professionals and they synchronized their thoughts, by creating a common understanding with those professionals. That dynamic system of their interaction shifted constantly, demonstrating that a process of interdisciplinarity is starting to be formed. In line with the latter, the professionals enter a process of reflexivity, in which they communicate the boundaries and the limitations that the broader educational institution imposes in their practice, with the consequent to recourse to interdisciplinarity, by breaking down the different directions that bullying prevention practice can take and linking each direction with specific professionals. They think aloud, review their work and the way that their work influences the pupils, never losing sight of their colleagues’ practices, thinking in this way the potential of working alongside them in an interdisciplinary context. At the end, the professionals appreciate and make a clear distinction of the role of a teacher in an interdisciplinary collaborative practice, who is the professional responsible to address bullying, within the school institutional establishments, proving that different professionals have different levels of responsibilities according to the context of interdisciplinarity. The

professionals, through the process they went through, enter a concept of a dialogue, in order to express their reasoning behind their answers, to think aloud and review their practice in the context of interdisciplinarity. While it is not clear whether interdisciplinarity in the specific context took place due to the short time of the research process, the professionals have managed to problematise around interdisciplinarity by reflecting, communicating and revealing multiple challenges and limitations that the process brings, according to their experience. At the same time, the professionals show appreciation to interdisciplinarity, by communicating potential possibilities and opportunities that the process brings for their personal and professional growth and for the pupils' learning.

6. Conclusion

The current study was designed to explore the perceptions of professionals from various backgrounds and with different types of expertise, by bringing them together in an interactive process. The professionals revealed their insights, elucidating with their answers aspects regarding the research questions, which include their understanding around bullying and bullying prevention practices, the way that their disciplinary identity, academic background and work experience, influences their understanding of bullying and the nature and impact that the latter has in their bullying prevention practices, their awareness of their own professional identity regarding the others' bullying prevention practices, and their understanding around the possibilities, the limitations and the challenges of interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention.

The results show that the professionals hold a wide range of understandings of bullying, with them using similar terminology, while offering examples to show how these understandings differ. The latter demonstrates that the professionals are not wedded to a single definition, but rather they value the many viewpoints on bullying presented by other professionals, demonstrating their desire to engage in discourse with others. It appears that neither the professionals' cross-disciplinary differentiation nor the Cypriot anti-bullying policy has any impact on the way they understand bullying, rather they associate their understanding of bullying with practice. In line with the latter, work ethics and professional competencies, as well as target group and roles within educational institutions help the professionals convey their knowledge of bullying while also helping them decide whether to engage in a certain practice, specify their practice restrictions, and gauge the extent of their engagement.

Furthermore, the professionals enter a process of critically reflective practice, which assists them to recognise the value of having a precise definition of bullying, by identifying that there is absence of such a definition from teachers, parents, and students, which results in a gap between policymakers' guidelines and their day-to-day experiences. The findings also suggest

that the professionals are aware of the constraints and bounds of their professional practice, and they pinpoint potential causes for specific practice limits, consider doable next actions, and come up with solutions for their professional capacity growth. Although each professional defends their own limits, there is a mutual respect among them as they evaluate one another's professional practice, by making connections and by finding their own position in a process of collaboration in bullying prevention practices.

The research process allowed the professionals to get a wider awareness of their own professional identity even while they enter it with preconceived notions and preconceptions about how other professionals deal with bullying. Therefore, it appears that in certain instances, the professionals cherish their differences in how they approach the prevention of bullying and steadfastly adhere to the specific role that results from these differences, without haggling. In other instances, the professionals modify and compromise their practice to suit and be acceptable. Moreover, the professionals explain their practice and how it differs from that of a teacher, elevating teachers to the position of being the most significant and valuable experts in the field of bullying prevention. The latter does not change the fact that the professionals make an effort to demonstrate an understanding between the various points of view, make reference to areas where teachers and other professionals agree regarding their roles and responsibilities in the prevention of bullying, and express their willingness to find a middle ground in order to collaborate with others.

The research's findings show that the interaction between the professionals was a dynamic system that was continually shifting, showing the emergence of an interdisciplinarity process. According to the latter, the professionals engage in a reflective process in which they convey the restrictions and boundaries that the larger educational institution imposes on their practice, leading to the need for interdisciplinarity. Through the procedure they underwent, the professionals enter a notion of a conversation in order to explain the thinking behind their responses, to consider their practice aloud, and to do so in the framework of interdisciplinarity. Due to the short duration of the research process, it is unclear whether interdisciplinarity occurred in the specific context, but professionals have been able to problematize interdisciplinarity by reflecting, communicating, and revealing the numerous difficulties and constraints that the process poses. At the same time, the professionals express their enthusiasm for interdisciplinarity by highlighting the possible benefits and chances that the process offers for both their own personal and professional development and the education of the pupils.

Conclusion

Considering the complex nature of bullying and the various definitions that exist in the literature, the objective of my study has been to showcase professionals' perceptions around bullying theory, bullying prevention and interdisciplinary practice in Cypriot primary education. The research questions directed the focus of my research, which was for the professionals to exchange knowledge and expertise around their understanding of bullying, the way that their professional identity, academic background and work experience influence their practice, their awareness of others disciplinary identity and bullying prevention practices and the challenges, limitations and opportunities of interdisciplinarity in bullying prevention. This is a synopsis of my Thesis, giving the reader access to my personal reflections and limitations of the study and suggestions for future research work.

Chapter 1 and my theoretical analysis explored the literature relevant to policy definition, which includes the construction and the dynamics of the relationship between policy makers, specific interest groups and the public (Meier and Bohte, 2007; Hall, 2017). By critically analysing specific areas of the bullying definition within the Cypriot anti-bullying policy, nuances were identified between the literature and the policy design, which possibly impact policy implementation. The latter determined the importance of the involvement of all stakeholders in every stage of design and implementation of anti-bullying policies, in order for policies to be successful. Therefore, the chapter was directed towards reviewing theories around collaboration and interdisciplinarity, in order to explore the way that an interdisciplinary collaborative approach can bridge the gap between policy design and policy implementation.

The *Methodology* chapter (Chapter 2) began by identifying the rationale, the aim, and the research questions. The chapter presented the choices made for selecting a flexible methodological research design, incorporating the social constructivism paradigm throughout the three cycles of my AR methodological approach (Bradbury, 2008; Levin and Greenwood, 2011; Coghlan, 2019). It followed my thought process regarding the way that purposeful sampling technique (Patton, 2002; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011) was utilised to choose my participants, and the changes that took place during the piloting process. The chapter then justified the choice of written vignettes, interviews, FGD and electronic diaries as my research methods, in order to collect a large amount of diverse data to shed light on the four research questions. The aim of the chapter was to demonstrate my strategy in relation to the steps of my research and the way that my data will be generated and will function within the three cycles of the AR methodological approach in order to achieve trustworthiness in the research findings (Cobb et al., 2008; Hartas, 2010; Robson, 2011; Metler, 2014), incorporating TA as a method of coding my data and combining them to arrive in my findings.

Chapter 3, presented of my findings, following TA, both in its Deductive and Inductive form (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2012; 2019). The data was coded, organised and presented in themes in two sections, according to the methodology and the methods of data collection used. The first section related to the first two cycles of the study, presenting the data collected from the vignettes and the interviews combined, while the second section related to the third cycle, and the data collected from the FGD and the electronic diaries.

The study was completed with the *Discussion* chapter (Chapter 4), which discussed the data emerging from the study, to make comparisons with research and literature on specific points that were raised, and to respond to the research questions (Hewitt and Lago, 2010). The chapter made the reader aware of and react to the way the professionals enter a process where they think aloud, reflect, critically think, and share their views. The findings were presented in four sections, each one representing one of the research questions to demonstrate the way they are related with and respond to the research questions.

The current study focuses on bullying, which opens-up a space for five professionals to share experience about its definition, bullying prevention practices and interdisciplinary collaborative practices. During this encounter, I identified three limitations and/or challenges, which impact the trustworthiness of the study: (a) my personal and the participants' personal involvement in the study, (b) the credibility of the research results due to the great amount and the diversity of data and (c) the transferability of findings.

Firstly, as a professional in education who is involved in bullying prevention, as a theatre practitioner and as the main researcher of this study, I entered the process with my personal beliefs that interdisciplinarity could become a medium for transforming people's perceptions and attitudes towards bullying and bullying prevention practices. Additionally, the professionals' degree of participation or personal connection to the study was something that I needed to take into account. Personal involvement in research, either on the part of the researcher or of the participants, was included in the decisions made ahead of time, approaching the inquiry from the social constructivism paradigm (Swantz, 2008). Therefore, during the data collection process, my job was to coordinate the exchange of knowledge, placing at the centre my coordinating role, the relationship and the interaction between me and the professionals, and between the professionals with each other (Gray, 2004). Hence, the findings do not concentrate on one absolute knowledge, rather on communicating the way that I as the researcher contemplate the research process (Thomson, 2017) and the way I examined and continually re-thought research decisions from both theoretical and empirical perspectives (Burns and McPherson, 2017).

Secondly, the current study demanded a great amount of diverse data collected from multiple resources, making the process of regulating the rich data a challenging one, in order for it to be relevant to the research questions. Collecting and analysing data from multiple resources often puts the trustworthiness of the research in jeopardy, since the separate pieces of data you collect will unavoidably contain contradictions (Klein, 2012). In this case, the research questions were clear, and the research methods were not only chosen specifically but also used methodically to respond to those questions. For the latter, the AR methodological approach with the cyclical process assisted in designing my strategy around the steps of my research beforehand. The three main cycles of the AR represented each of my research instruments and illustrated the way that my data will be generated and function within those cycles. Furthermore, various methods of triangulation (Cobb et al., 2008) and repetition of analysis throughout the cyclical process (Hartas, 2010; Robson, 2011; Metler, 2014) were activated, enhancing the credibility of the results.

Finally, the study included the participation of five professionals contributing to the collection of rich and in-depth data, offering their perspectives on bullying definition, bullying prevention and interdisciplinary collaborative practice in the context of Cypriot primary education. The findings from a qualitative and flexible research design are non-numerical, making the conventional statistical analysis nonviable. Therefore, the latter creates a problem around the transferability of my findings, something that was anticipated. The idea here is for the findings to somehow be abundant and relevant for describing what might occur in other cases and/or settings and with other professionals (Robson, 2011). For this to be achieved, a purposeful sampling strategy was utilised (Patton, 2002; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011), that is, the selection of participants amongst a plethora of cases, which in this case are the different organisations, services and individuals the Cypriot policy refers to. The professionals came from diverse disciplines, without necessarily excluding professionals with overlapping disciplines and expertise. Furthermore, it was important to take into account or ensure the participants' availability and willingness to participate and their ability to communicate in a clear, explicatory and reflective way (Bernard, 2002). Finally, 'the data reporting process included an opportunity for the researcher and the participants to review and reflect on findings through member checking' (Klein, 2012: 14).

The current study offers new knowledge around the process that the professionals went through to critically reflect on bullying understanding, the efficacy of their and others' bullying prevention practices and the potential of interdisciplinary collaborative approach in bullying prevention. Yet further research could be suggested in three ways: (a) larger and diverse sample of professionals from all the educational sectors including cross-cultural research for comparing

the findings in different contexts, (b) different case studies exploring the implementation of an interdisciplinary collaborative approach for bullying prevention and the experience of the professionals and pupils, and (c) research around the influence of policies in practice including participation of policy makers. Regardless, the findings of the current study are valid, proposing a new direction for bullying prevention practice. The new direction brings opportunities to policy makers to bridge the gap between theory and daily experience, to professionals to critically reflect on their practices and to pupils to rethink their attitudes regarding bullying behaviour.

The research process did not aim at and never pursued the creation of an interdisciplinary collaborative approach for bullying prevention. Neither do the findings of the study suggest or imply that an interdisciplinary collaborative practice could become the solution for tackling bullying. Nevertheless, the findings show that as the research process moved forward, the professionals went through a deeper process of dialogue by sharing and creating connections, and learned more about their own field from having to explain it and link it to bullying and bullying prevention practices. From this, elements important for building up a process of interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention practices emerged. A notion of a new discourse was visible during the process, and especially during the FGD, with the professionals attempting to find their role, whilst acknowledging both the challenges and opportunities that an interdisciplinary collaborative approach could potentially bring. Gaining a greater perspective of their and others' professional identity pushed them to conceptualise the way they see themselves in bullying prevention practices, their role, responsibility and boundaries, and to find 'their way in' when practicing interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention in Cypriot schools.

Evidently more research is required to further explore the limitations and opportunities of interdisciplinarity when applied to bullying prevention. Yet the findings validate an extensive research process, in which interdisciplinary collaborative practice became the medium of critically reflective practice, in which five professionals identified similarities and nuances in their views, formed and reformed personal and professional beliefs and gave their perspective around bullying and bullying prevention practices in the Cypriot educational context. The COSV and MOEC's interest to be informed about the current findings proves their significance. Therefore, the findings can inform future policy designed by the MOEC, revealing that communication and collaboration between all the stakeholders who share the same aspirations could lead to positive results, preventing misunderstandings and confusions.

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Appendix 1: Cypriot anti-bullying policy (Greek)



ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ

Αρ. Φακ.: 7.19.04.16.1
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23 Φεβρουαρίου 2016

Διευθυντές/Διευθύντριες Σχολείων Δημοτικής, Μέσης
Γενικής και Μέσης Τεχνικής και
Επαγγελματικής Εκπαίδευσης

Θέμα: Πρόληψη, αντιμετώπιση και διαχείριση περιστατικών σχολικού εκφοβισμού

Το Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Πολιτισμού, στο πλαίσιο της πολιτικής του για πρόληψη και αντιμετώπιση των φαινομένων της παραβατικότητας και της βίας στο σχολείο, προτρέπει τη κάθε σχολική μονάδα να αναπτύξει τη δική της πολιτική στην πρόληψη και αντιμετώπιση του σχολικού εκφοβισμού. Η πολιτική αυτή μπορεί να ενταχθεί στο Σχέδιο Δράσης Αγωγής Υγείας και Πρόληψης της Παραβατικότητας, το οποίο καταρτίζεται από το σχολείο με την έναρξη κάθε σχολικής χρονιάς και διατηρείται στο Αρχείο του.

Κατά τον καταρτισμό του Σχεδίου Δράσης Αγωγής Υγείας και Πρόληψης της Παραβατικότητας λαμβάνονται υπόψη, τόσο οι ιδιαιτερότητες της κάθε σχολικής μονάδας όσο και οι υποχρεώσεις της πολιτείας που απορρέουν από τη Σύμβαση των Δικαιωμάτων του Παιδιού. Με την επικύρωση της Σύμβασης (Κύπρος 2006), η πολιτεία δεσμεύεται όπως το παιδί έχει δικαίωμα στην εκπαίδευση, η οποία θα πρέπει να στρέφεται προς την ανάπτυξη της προσωπικότητας, στην καλλιέργεια του σεβασμού για τα βασικά ανθρωπίνια δικαιώματα και στην προετοιμασία του παιδιού για μία υπεύθυνη ζωή σε μία ελεύθερη κοινωνία. Στην κοινωνία πρέπει να επικρατεί πνεύμα κατανόησης, ειρήνης, ανοχής, ισότητας των φύλων και φιλίας (άρθρα 28-29). Συνεπώς, το σχολικό περιβάλλον ανάγεται σε πολύ σημαντικό παράγοντα στη διασφάλιση των πιο πάνω δικαιωμάτων.

Η βία στο σχολείο αποτελεί ένα διαχρονικό, παγκόσμιο, κοινωνικό φαινόμενο με πολύπλοκες επιπτώσεις τόσο στη διαδικασία της μάθησης όσο και στην ψυχική υγεία των μαθητών. Είναι, πιθανόν, να εκδηλωθεί σε διάφορες μορφές. Μια μορφή βίας είναι ο σχολικός εκφοβισμός, ο οποίος ορίζεται ως εξής:

«Ένας μαθητής γίνεται αντικείμενο εκφοβισμού ή θυματοποιείται, όταν υποβάλλεται, κατ' επανάληψη και κατ' εξακολούθηση, σε αρνητικές ενέργειες από έναν ή περισσότερους άλλους μαθητές» (Olweus, 1986, 1991).

Η εγκύκλιος περιλαμβάνει τα ακόλουθα οκτώ Παραρτήματα:

Παράρτημα I: Ορισμοί και θεωρητικό υπόβαθρο
Παράρτημα II: Πρόληψη σχολικού εκφοβισμού

Παράρτημα III: Διαχείριση περιστατικών σχολικού εκφοβισμού

Παράρτημα IV: Έντυπα διερεύνησης, παρακολούθησης περιστατικών και αναστοχασμού
Παράρτημα V: Συμβουλές προς γονείς

Παράρτημα VI: Υποστηρικτικές υπηρεσίες και φορείς

Παράρτημα VII: Οδηγίες για ηλεκτρονική καταχώρηση περιστατικών σχολικού εκφοβισμού
Παράρτημα VIII: Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά

Συγκεκριμένα, στις περιπτώσεις όπου η μορφή του σχολικού εκφοβισμού αφορά σε πιθανή σεξουαλική κακοποίηση / εκμετάλλευση παιδιού, σε φυσικό ή ηλεκτρονικό χώρο, πρέπει να ακολουθούνται απαραίτητα και οι οδηγίες σύμφωνα με την εγκύκλιο (Αρ. Φακ.: 11.2.11.1, 11.2.11.5, 11.2.11.6, ημερ. 11/02/16, γρρ3736) με θέμα «Πολιτική σε σχέση με τη διαχείριση αναφοράς περιστατικών σεξουαλικής κακοποίησης στα σχολεία».

Το **έντυπο καταγραφής** θα βοηθήσει στην καλύτερη διαχείριση των περιστατικών και στη συγκέντρωση στατιστικών δεδομένων, τα οποία θα αποστέλλονται στο Υπουργείο Παιδείας και, συγκεκριμένα, στο Παρατηρητήριο για τη Βία στο Σχολείο σε **ηλεκτρονική μορφή**, κατά τη διάρκεια ή στο τέλος της σχολικής χρονιάς, μέσω του Συστήματος Εκπαιδευτικού Προγραμματισμού. Την ευθύνη της καταχώρησης των περιστατικών έχει ο ΒΔ υπεύθυνος της Επιτροπής Αγωγής Υγείας και Πρόληψης της Παραβατικότητας. Περισσότερες πληροφορίες για την ηλεκτρονική καταχώρηση των δεδομένων υπάρχουν στο **Παράρτημα VII**.

Παρακαλούνται οι διευθύνσεις όπως ενημερώσουν τους εκπαιδευτικούς της σχολικής μονάδας για το περιεχόμενο της εγκυκλίου κατά τη διάρκεια συνεδρίας του προσωπικού και όπως αξιοποιήσουν το περιεχόμενο της παρούσας εγκυκλίου στη διαμόρφωση πολιτικής ενάντια στον σχολικό εκφοβισμό.

Δρ Ηλίας Μαρκάτζης
Διευθυντής Τεχνικής και Επαγγελματικής
Εκπαίδευσης

Ελπιδοφόρος Νεοκλέους
Διευθυντής Δημοτικής Εκπαίδευσης

Δρ Αθηνά Μιχαλίδου –
Ευριπίδου
Διευθύντρια Π.Ι.

Δρ Κυπριανός Δ.
Λούης
Διευθυντής Μέσης
Εκπαίδευσης

Παράρτημα Ι

Ορισμοί και Θεωρητικό Υπόβαθρο

Βία

Η βία είναι η σκόπιμη χρήση φυσικής δύναμης ή εξουσίας, είτε με μορφή απειλής είτε πραγματική, κατά του εαυτού, ενός άλλου προσώπου, ή εναντίον μιας ομάδας ή μιας κοινότητας, η οποία είτε επιφέρει ή έχει μεγάλη πιθανότητα να επιφέρει τραυματισμό, θάνατο, ψυχολογική βλάβη, δυσλειτουργική ανάπτυξη ή στέρηση (Παγκόσμιος Οργανισμός Υγείας, 1997).

Σχολικός Εκφοβισμός

Ένας μαθητής γίνεται αντικείμενο εκφοβισμού ή θυματοποιείται, όταν υποβάλλεται, **κατ' επανάληψη και κατ' εξακολούθηση**, σε αρνητικές ενέργειες από έναν ή περισσότερους άλλους μαθητές (Olweus, 1986, 1991).

Το φαινόμενο του σχολικού εκφοβισμού εκδηλώνεται ως επιθετική συμπεριφορά μεταξύ των μαθητών, η οποία έχει τα εξής χαρακτηριστικά:

- εκδήλωση σχολικού εκφοβισμού μπορεί να γίνεται προς ένα άτομο ή ομάδα,
- εσκεμμένη, απρόκλητη και ανεπιθύμητη,
- επαναλαμβανόμενη ή με μεγάλη πιθανότητα να επαναληφθεί,
- ύπαρξη ανισορροπίας δυνάμεων¹,
- με σκοπό την πρόκληση σωματικού και ψυχολογικού πόνου,
- η βλάβη που μπορεί να προκληθεί είναι σωματική, ψυχολογική, κοινωνική ή μαθησιακή².

Τρόποι εκδήλωσης εκφοβισμού:

1. **Άμεση:** συμβαίνει στην παρουσία του ατόμου-στόχου (π.χ. σπρώξιμο, βρίσιμο, κτλ.)
2. **Έμμεση:** δεν συμβαίνει στην παρουσία του ατόμου-στόχου (πχ. διάδοση ψευδών ή/και επιβλαβών φημών κτλ.)

Μορφές Εκφοβιστικής Συμπεριφοράς:

1. **Σωματική:** χρήση σωματικής βίας από το άτομο που εκφοβίζει προς το άτομο-στόχο (π.χ. χτυπήματα, κλωτσιές, γροθιές, φτύσιμο, τριклоποδιές, σπρωξιματα, απειλητικές / ανεπιθύμητες χειρονομίες σεξουαλικού περιεχομένου, εξαναγκασμός για διάπραξη σεξουαλικών/ προσβλητικών πράξεων κτλ).

¹ Η **ανισορροπία δυνάμεων** υπάρχει, όταν γίνεται προσπάθεια από μέρος του δράστη να ασκήσει έλεγχο στη συμπεριφορά του ατόμου-στόχου ή να περιορίσει τη δυνατότητα του ατόμου να υπερασπίσει τον εαυτό του. Η διαφορά της δύναμης μπορεί να υπάρχει σε συγκεκριμένη σχέση για συγκεκριμένη περίοδο.

² Η **βλάβη** είναι ένα φάσμα από αρνητικές εμπειρίες που μπορούν να προκαλέσουν: (α) σωματικό τραύμα ή πόνο, (β) ψυχολογικές επιπτώσεις, όπως άγχος, κατάθλιψη, απελπισία, θλίψη κτλ. (γ) κοινωνικές επιπτώσεις, όπως βλάβη στη φήμη ή τις σχέσεις του ατόμου με άλλους, (δ) επιπτώσεις στη μάθηση λόγω αύξησης απουσιών, σχολική εγκατάλειψη, δυσκολίες συγκέντρωσης στο μάθημα, χαμηλή μαθησιακή επίδοση.

2. **Λεκτική:** προφορική ή γραπτή επικοινωνία από το άτομο που εκφοβίζει προς το άτομο-στόχο, η οποία προκαλεί βλάβη. Η λεκτική εκφοβιστική συμπεριφορά περιλαμβάνει: χλευασμούς, χρήση μειονεκτικών επιθέτων, βρισιές, απειλητικά ή προσβλητικά μηνύματα, ανάμυστα σεξουαλικά σχόλια και λεκτικές απειλές κ.ά.
3. **Σχεσιακή:** συμπεριφορά από το άτομο που εκφοβίζει, που αποσκοπεί να βλάψει τη φήμη και τις σχέσεις του άτομου-στόχου με άλλα άτομα. Συμβαίνει άμεσα, όταν το άτομο που εκφοβίζει απομονώνει το άτομο-στόχο, το αγνοεί ή το παρεμποδίζει να αλληλεπιδρά με συνομηλίκους του. Συμβαίνει έμμεσα, όταν το άτομο που εκφοβίζει, διαδίδει ψευδείς ή/και επιβλαβείς φήμες, γράφει σε δημόσια μέρη υποτιμητικά σχόλια, ή εκθέτει φωτογραφίες του παιδιού-στόχου σε φυσικό ή ηλεκτρονικό χώρο, χωρίς την άδεια ή τη γνώση του.
4. **Καταστροφή περιουσίας:** κλοπή, αλλοίωση ή καταστροφή περιουσίας του άτομου-στόχου από το άτομο που εκφοβίζει, με σκοπό να του προκαλέσει βλάβη (π.χ. κλοπή, κατάσχεση ή καταστροφή προσωπικών αντικειμένων, διαγραφή ή/και αλλοίωση προσωπικών ηλεκτρονικών πληροφοριών κτλ.). (Gladden et al., 2014)

Οι πράξεις βίας μπορούν να στοχοποιούν, μεταξύ άλλων, πρόσωπα στη βάση της εθνικής ή φυλετικής τους καταγωγής, της γλώσσας, της θρησκείας, των πεποιθήσεων, του φύλου, του σεξουαλικού προσανατολισμού, της αναπηρίας, της ηλικίας, της κοινότητας, του καθεστώτος παραμονής στη χώρα, της εμφάνισης, της κοινωνικοοικονομικής κατάστασης, των ταλέντων ή άλλων χαρακτηριστικών. Περιστατικά που έχουν ως σκοπό ή αποτέλεσμα την περιθωριοποίηση, τον αποκλεισμό ή τις διακρίσεις σε βάρος ατόμων ή ομάδων ατόμων, εξαιτίας της διαφορετικότητάς τους, ορίζονται ως ρατσιστικά περιστατικά και έχουν ως συνέπεια την καλλιέργεια περιβάλλοντος εχθρότητας όχι μόνο προς το θύμα ή τα θύματα του περιστατικού βίας, αλλά προς όλα τα πρόσωπα που μοιράζονται τα συγκεκριμένα χαρακτηριστικά (βλ. «Κώδικας Συμπεριφοράς κατά του Ρατσισμού και Οδηγός Διαχείρισης και Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικών Περιστατικών» σσ. 14-15).

Σε ποια μέρη του σχολείου λαμβάνει χώρα συχνότερα η εκφοβιστική συμπεριφορά:

- Στην αυλή του σχολείου
- Στο γήπεδο
- Στις τουαλέτες
- Στον δρόμο προς και από το σχολείο
- Στην αίθουσα διδασκαλίας

Σύμφωνα με τα αποτελέσματα επιστημονικών ερευνών η ενεργός παρουσία του ενήλικα μειώνει την εκδήλωση του φαινομένου του σχολικού εκφοβισμού.

Χαρακτηριστικά των θυτών και των θυμάτων

Συνήθως οι θύτες και τα θύματα είναι, πιθανόν, να παρουσιάζουν **κάποια** από τα πιο κάτω χαρακτηριστικά:

Χαρακτηριστικά των θυτών

- σωματική δύναμη, επιθετικότητα, χρήση βίας
- παρόρμηση, θυμός, χαμηλή ανοχή στη ματαίωση
- «δημοφιλή» άτομα που συνήθως κυριαρχούν και επιβάλλονται
- ανασφάλεια, χαμηλή αυτοεκτίμηση
- επίδειξη σιγουριάς και αυτοπεποίθησης προς τους άλλους
- μειωμένες κοινωνικές δεξιότητες

- ακαδημαϊκές δυσκολίες
- υιοθέτηση αρνητικής στάσης απέναντι στους άλλους
- δυσκολίες στην επίλυση διαφορών με άλλους
- προέλευση από οικογενειακό περιβάλλον με συγκρούσεις και δυσκολίες στηριοθέτηση
- αρνητική προδιάθεση για το σχολείο
- ροπή υιοθέτησης αρνητικών προτύπων
- ροπή προς παράβαση κανόνων και προς εκδήλωση αντικοινωνικών συμπεριφορών
- ικανότητα να ξεφεύγουν από δύσκολες καταστάσεις
- απουσία ηθικών ενδοιασμών ή τύψεων για τις πράξεις τους
- έλλειψη ενσυναίσθησης

Χαρακτηριστικά των θυμάτων

- εσωστρέφεια, ευαισθησία, ντροπαλότητα/συστολή
- αίσθηση φόβου, εκδήλωση παθητικής στάσης έναντι σε μορφές βίας
- αυξημένο άγχος και ανασφάλεια
- χαμηλή αυτοεικόνα και αυτοπεποίθηση
- δυσκολία στην υπεράσπιση του εαυτού τους
- ανεπάρκεια κοινωνικών δεξιοτήτων
- δυσκολία στην επίλυση των διαφορών τους
- ανάπτυξη σχέσεων καλύτερα με ενήλικες (κυρίως εκπαιδευτικούς, γονείς, μητέρα) παρά με συνομηλίκους
- σωματικά αδύναμα παιδιά (ιδίως αγόρια) ή με κάποια ιδιαιτερότητα στο παρουσιαστικό τους (υπέρβαρα, λιποβαρή, παιδιά με χαμηλό ύψος, κ.ά.)
- ιδιαίτερες ικανότητες/δυνατότητες ή και περιορισμένες

Ως αποτέλεσμα, τα θύματα εξελίσσονται, κάποτε, και οι ίδιοι σε θύτες.

Μέσα από τις έρευνες που αφορούν στον σχολικό εκφοβισμό εντοπίζεται και μια τρίτη ομάδα παιδιών που είναι, ταυτόχρονα, **θύτες και θύματα**.

Χαρακτηριστικά των θυτών/θυμάτων

- χαμηλή αυτοεικόνα και αυτοπεποίθηση
- ανεπάρκεια κοινωνικών δεξιοτήτων
- δυσκολία στην επίλυση των διαφορών τους
- ακαδημαϊκές δυσκολίες
- ροπή υιοθέτησης αρνητικών προτύπων
- απομόνωση και απόρριψη από συνομηλίκους

Οι θεατές ή παρευρισκόμενοι μιας εκφοβιστικής συμπεριφοράς χωρίζονται στις ακόλουθες ομάδες:

- Παιδιά που υποστηρίζουν και διευκολύνουν τον θύτη.
- Παιδιά που ακολουθούν τον θύτη και τον ενισχύουν με γέλια, χειροκροτήματα και άλλες μορφές επικριμασίας.
- Παιδιά που δεν λαμβάνουν μέρος, είτε τους αρέσει να παρακολουθούν, είτε απομακρύνονται από τη σκηνή, προσποιούμενα ότι δεν είδαν τίποτα.
- Παιδιά που θυματοποιούνται, τρομοκρατούνται: είναι πιθανό να θέλουν να υποστηρίξουν το θύμα, αλλά δεν ξέρουν τι να πράξουν.
- Παιδιά που υπερασπίζονται το θύμα, αποδοκιμάζουν τον θύτη ή/και τρέχουν να φέρουν βοήθεια.

Επιπτώσεις εκφοβιστικής συμπεριφοράς

Οι επιπτώσεις του σχολικού εκφοβισμού είναι σοβαρές και μακροχρόνιες και μπορεί να ποικίλουν, ανάλογα με την περίπτωση. Οι επιπτώσεις αυτές αφορούν στα θύματα, στους θύτες, αλλά και στους θεατές.

Πιθανές επιπτώσεις της εκφοβιστικής συμπεριφοράς στους θύτες

Τα παιδιά που ασκούν τον εκφοβισμό και τη βία, πιθανόν, να παρουσιάζουν:

- αδυναμία να αποδεχτούν τον εαυτό τους
- χαμηλή αυτοεκτίμηση
- δυσκολία διαπροσωπικών σχέσεων και διαχείρισης θυμού και συγκρούσεων
- άγχος, τάσεις κατάθλιψης, ψυχιατρικά προβλήματα
- αυξημένο κίνδυνο νεανικής και ενήλικης εγκληματικότητας, χρήση ουσιών και αλκοόλ
- αυξημένες πιθανότητες αντικοινωνικής και παραβατικής συμπεριφοράς, όπως κλοπές και βανδαλισμούς
- απομάκρυνση από το σχολείο και διακοπή σχολικής φοίτησης
- τάσεις φυγής από το σπίτι
- αυξημένη πιθανότητα βίαιης συμπεριφοράς στην οικογένειά τους, ως ενήλικες

Πιθανές επιπτώσεις της εκφοβιστικής συμπεριφοράς στα θύματα

Τα παιδιά που έχουν υποστεί τον εκφοβισμό, πιθανόν, να:

- νιώσουν φόβο, ντροπή, θυμό και το αίσθημα αβοήθητου
- εκδηλώσουν ψυχοσωματικά προβλήματα, όπως δυσκολίες ύπνου, πονοκεφάλους, στομαχόπορους,
- παρουσιάσουν μείωση της ακαδημαϊκής επίδοσης και σχολική άρνηση,
- βιώσουν άγχος και να παρουσιάσουν συμπτώματα της διαταραχής μετατραυματικού στρες,
- παρουσιάσουν χαμηλή αυτοεκτίμηση και στοιχεία κατάθλιψης,
- γίνουν οι ίδιοι θύτες σε μια άλλη κατάσταση,
- οδηγηθούν σε απόπειρα αυτοκτονίας - σε πιο ακραίες περιπτώσεις,
- συνεχίσουν να θυματοποιούνται και στο χώρο της εργασίας ως ενήλικες.

Ενδείξεις ότι το παιδί έχει πέσει θύμα εκφοβισμού και βίας στο σχολείο

- μειωμένη διάθεση ή άρνηση για το σχολείο
- αδικαιολόγητες απουσίες
- αλλαγή στη διαδρομή προς το σχολείο
- καθυστέρηση στην προσέλευση στο σχολείο και κατά την επιστροφή στο σπίτι
- άρνηση για συμμετοχή σε σχολικές εκδηλώσεις και δραστηριότητες
- απροσδόκητη μαθησιακή πτώση, χαμηλοί βαθμοί
- προσκόλληση σε εκπαιδευτικούς - ενήλικες κατά τα διαλείμματα
- αποφεύγει επεξηγήσεις για σημάδια και μελανιές στο σώμα
- ενδείξεις επίθεσης (ρούχα σκισμένα και προσωπικά αντικείμενα κατεστραμμένα)
- απώλεια προσωπικών αντικειμένων
- συχνά ζητά χρήματα από τους γονείς με τη δικαιολογία ότι τα έχασε
- ξαφνικές αλλαγές στη διάθεση, που διαρκούν για μεγάλο χρονικό διάστημα
- ψυχοσωματικά προβλήματα, όπως πονοκέφαλο, πόνο παθολογικά αίτια κ.ά.

στην κούλια,

χωρίς

Επιπτώσεις στους θεατές

Τα παιδιά που είναι θεατές περιστατικών σχολικού εκφοβισμού, πιθανόν, να αισθανθούν:

- φόβο και άγχος
- ενοχή
- απάθεια
- αβοήθητα.

Ακόμα είναι, πιθανόν, να αναπτύξουν και τα ίδια εκφοβιστικές συμπεριφορές.

Σημείωση ότι τα παραπάνω μπορεί να αποτελούν ενδείξεις και για άλλες δυσκολίες ή προβλήματα που μπορεί να αντιμετωπίζει ένα παιδί (πχ κατάθλιψη και άλλες ψυχολογικές διαταραχές).

Παράρτημα II

Πολιτική του σχολείου

A. ΠΡΟΛΗΨΗ ΣΧΟΛΙΚΟΥ ΕΚΦΟΒΙΣΜΟΥ

Το σχολείο, που τάσσεται στον αγώνα ενάντια στη βία, καθορίζει ξεκάθαρη πολιτική, η οποία εφαρμόζεται από όλη την εκπαιδευτική κοινότητα. Αυτή η πολιτική **κοινοποιείται σε όλους τους εμπλεκόμενους φορείς** εντός και εκτός σχολείου.

ΣΧΟΛΙΚΟ ΚΛΙΜΑ

Διεθνή ερευνητικά δεδομένα υποστηρίζουν ότι το σχολικό κλίμα συνδέεται με τη θυματοποίηση. Ένα θετικό σχολικό κλίμα συσχετίζεται με την ευεξία των μαθητών, τη μείωση της βίας και των προβλημάτων συμπεριφοράς και τη σημαντική αύξηση των μαθησιακών αποτελεσμάτων.

Άξονες που διέπουν την οικοδόμηση θετικού κλίματος:

- 1. Σχολική δικαιοσύνη:** Το σχολείο, που τάσσεται στον αγώνα ενάντια στη βία, καθορίζει ξεκάθαρους κανονισμούς, τους οποίους κοινοποιεί σε μαθητές και γονείς και εφαρμόζει με συνέπεια, σταθερότητα και με δίκαιο τρόπο. Έτσι, εξασφαλίζεται το αίσθημα της δικαιοσύνης, που είναι βασική προϋπόθεση για τη μείωση της βίας.
- 2. Συνεργασία των εκπαιδευτικών:** Η αλληλεγγύη, ο σεβασμός, η συναντίληψη μεταξύ των εκπαιδευτικών, η αντιμετώπιση των θεμάτων και των προκλήσεων, από κοινού, είναι απαραίτητα για την οικοδόμηση θετικού κλίματος. Οι εκπαιδευτικοί επιβάλλεται να έχουν, συχνά, κοινές συγκεντρώσεις, ώστε να συνεργάζονται. Ο μαθητής που έχει προβλήματα συμπεριφοράς, δεν πρέπει να θεωρείται μαθητής συγκεκριμένου δασκάλου, αλλά του σχολείου. Άρα, δεν αναμένεται μόνο από τον έναν εκπαιδευτικό να τον χειριστεί και να τον στηρίξει, αλλά από το σύνολο των εκπαιδευτικών.
- 3. Ενεργός εμπλοκή των μαθητών:** Το σχολείο που εμπλέκει τους μαθητές στη σχολική ζωή, τους χρόνο και ευκαιρίες, ώστε να εκφράσουν συναισθήματα, απόψεις και εισηγήσεις και να δώσουν τη δική τους ανατροφοδότηση για ό,τι συμβαίνει γύρω τους.
- 4. Πρόληψη:** Η εφαρμογή προληπτικών δράσεων είναι η καλύτερη επένδυση για την οικοδόμηση καλού κλίματος και τη μείωση της βίας.
- 5. Συνεργασία με τους γονείς:** Η ποιότητα του δεσμού με τις οικογένειες αποτελεί σημαντικό στοιχείο στην οικοδόμηση καλού κλίματος στο σχολείο. Ο δεσμός αυτός επιτυγχάνεται με την ενημέρωση και την εμπλοκή τους στις δράσεις του σχολείου. Επιτυγχάνεται, επίσης, με την εκπαίδευση και τη στήριξη τους σε διάφορα θέματα.
- 6. Συνεργασία με άλλους φορείς:** Η συνεργασία του σχολείου με άλλους φορείς διασφαλίζει βοήθεια στις προσπάθειες του σχολείου, για τη σχολική και κοινωνική επιτυχία των μαθητών τους.
- 7. Ποιότητα ζωής:** Η προσπάθεια του σχολείου, όπως εξασφαλίζει στους μαθητές ένα όμορφο, καθαρό και λειτουργικό περιβάλλον, σωστά εξοπλισμένο, αποτελεί μια σημαντική παράμετρο για τη διαμόρφωση θετικού κλίματος, όπου εκπαιδευτικοί και μαθητές εργάζονται ευτυχημένα και δημιουργικά.

Τα πιο αποτελεσματικά προγράμματα πρόληψης και αντιμετώπισης του σχολικού εκφοβισμού περιλαμβάνουν παρεμβάσεις σε ατομικό και σχολικό επίπεδο, καθώς και σε άλλα πλαίσια στα οποία τα παιδιά δραστηριοποιούνται. Η πρόληψη λοιπόν, που σχεδιάζεται και εφαρμόζεται στο σχολείο, ενδείκνυται να γίνεται σε τρία επίπεδα:

1. **Επίπεδο Εκπαιδευτικού**
2. **Επίπεδο Μαθητή (τάξης και σχολείου)**
3. **Επίπεδο Γονιού**

1. Εκπαιδευτικός

Αναγνώριση, εντοπισμός περιστατικών εκφοβισμού

Ενημερώνονται οι εκπαιδευτικοί και το βοηθητικό προσωπικό του σχολείου για το φαινόμενο, τα χαρακτηριστικά του και τις συνέπειες, που μπορεί να έχει στην ανάπτυξη ενός παιδιού (Παράρτημα Ι). **Η δημιουργία μιας κοινής αντίληψης γύρω από το θέμα αποτελεί την προϋπόθεση για την σωστή αντιμετώπισή του.** Τονίζεται ότι η πρόληψη αποτελεί τον καλύτερο τρόπο αντιμετώπισης του φαινομένου. Μέσα από συλλογική προσπάθεια, το φαινόμενο προλαμβάνεται ή, τουλάχιστον, μπορεί να αντιμετωπιστεί έγκαιρα.

Το σχολείο οφείλει να επενδύσει στην εκπαίδευση όλων των εκπαιδευτικών, ώστε αυτοί να είναι σε θέση να αναγνωρίζουν και να εντοπίζουν τα περιστατικά εκφοβισμού, σύμφωνα με τον ορισμό του σχολικού εκφοβισμού (Παράρτημα Ι).

Χαρακτηριστικά των παιδιών θυτών και θυμάτων

Ο/η εκπαιδευτικός, επίσης, πρέπει να είναι σε θέση να αναγνωρίζει κάποια στοιχεία στη συμπεριφορά του παιδιού που, πιθανόν, να παραπέμπουν σε περιπτώσεις θυματοποίησης, όπως αυτά περιγράφονται στο Παράρτημα Ι. Τα χαρακτηριστικά αυτά δεν παρουσιάζονται πάντα, εξαιτίας του εκφοβισμού που δέχεται στο σχολείο ένα παιδί. Μπορεί η εκδήλωση τέτοιας συμπεριφοράς να συσχετίζεται με άλλα προβλήματα που αντιμετωπίζει το παιδί, πράγμα το οποίο κάνει τον εντοπισμό ακόμα πιο δύσκολο.

Επιπτώσεις του σχολικού εκφοβισμού

Οι εκπαιδευτικοί ενδείκνυται να ευαισθητοποιούνται γύρω από το θέμα των επιπτώσεων, που έχει ο σχολικός εκφοβισμός στην ψυχοκοινωνική ανάπτυξη ενός παιδιού (Παράρτημα Ι).

Εντοπισμός χώρων υψηλού κινδύνου

Ο/η εκπαιδευτικός μπορεί να εντοπίσει στο σχολείο τους χώρους υψηλού κινδύνου όπου συμβαίνουν τα περιστατικά, αξιοποιώντας πληροφορίες που λαμβάνονται από τους μαθητές (Παράρτημα Ι).

Παρουσία του ενήλικα

Στα σημεία του σχολείου, που τα παιδιά δηλώνουν ότι δεν νιώθουν ασφάλεια, πρέπει να γίνεται στοχευμένη παιδονομία/εφημέρευση. Ερευνητικά έχει αποδειχθεί ότι η παρουσία του ενήλικα είναι καταλυτική στην αποτροπή του φαινομένου.

Δεξιότητες επικοινωνίας

Ο/η εκπαιδευτικός πρέπει να έχει ο ίδιος/η ίδια ανεπτυγμένες τις δεξιότητες επικοινωνίας, ούτως ώστε να δίνει ευκαιρίες στα παιδιά να εκφραστούν για θέματα που τους απασχολούν.

Διαχείριση τάξης

Ο/η εκπαιδευτικός αναμένεται να έχει ανεπτυγμένες τις δεξιότητες διαχείρισης τάξης, που στοχεύουν στη δημιουργία ενός υγιούς και ενθαρρυντικού σχολικού κλίματος για διευκόλυνση της μάθησης και πρόληψη καταστάσεων βίας.

2. Επίπεδο Μαθητή

2.1 Ατομικό επίπεδο:

Βασικός στόχος είναι η ανάπτυξη κοινωνικών δεξιοτήτων του παιδιού στα πλαίσια όλων των μαθημάτων και των δραστηριοτήτων της σχολικής μονάδας.

Οι πιο σημαντικές δεξιότητες είναι:

- Επίλυση προβλήματος και λήψη αποφάσεων
- Κριτική σκέψη
- Δεξιότητες επικοινωνίας
- Καλλιέργεια ενσυναίσθησης
- Διαχείριση συναισθημάτων

Μπορούν να αξιοποιηθούν για τον σκοπό αυτό δραστηριότητες που υπάρχουν μέσα στα Αναλυτικά Προγράμματα του μαθήματος της Αγωγής Υγείας/Οικιακής Οικονομίας.

2.2. Επίπεδο σχολείου:

Στους κανονισμούς λειτουργίας των σχολείων πρέπει να γίνεται αναφορά στις μορφές βίας, στις επιπτώσεις και στην υποχρέωση των εκπαιδευτικών να αναλαμβάνουν δράση ενάντια σ' αυτήν. Εκεί που το σχολείο έχει τη δυνατότητα να διαμορφώσει εσωτερικούς κανονισμούς (κώδικα συμπεριφοράς) αυτοί πρέπει να αναφέρονται ξεκάθαρα στο θέμα της βίας/του σχολικού εκφοβισμού, με λεκτικό που αντιστοιχεί στην ηλικία των μαθητών.

Η *Κοινωνία της Τάξης* είναι μια δραστηριότητα μεγάλης αξίας στον τομέα της πρόληψης. Σε τακτά χρονικά διαστήματα δίνεται η ευκαιρία στην ολομέλεια της τάξης να συνέρχεται και να συζητά θέματα που αφορούν τη ζωή των μαθητών στην ομάδα και στο σχολείο γενικότερα. Η δραστηριότητα αυτή δίνει την ευκαιρία στα παιδιά να ετοιμάσουν τα θέματα που θέλουν να συζητήσουν, να τα παρουσιάσουν και με την τεχνική επίλυσης προβλημάτων τα ίδια τα παιδιά να αναλάβουν να βρουν τις λύσεις και να τις υλοποιήσουν. Με αυτό τον τρόπο ενεργοποιούνται με σκοπό να βελτιώσουν την καθημερινότητά τους. Στη Μέση Εκπαίδευση, η πιο πάνω δραστηριότητα μπορεί να πραγματοποιηθεί μέσω του θεσμού του *Καθηγητή Υπεύθυνου Τμήματος*.

Το *Κουτί Επικοινωνίας* χρησιμοποιείται ως καλή πρακτική στα σχολεία της Κύπρου. Με τη δραστηριότητα αυτή ανοίγεται ένα κανάλι επικοινωνίας με τους εκπαιδευτικούς και δίνεται πάλι η ευκαιρία στους μαθητές να έχουν άποψη και να δίνουν ανατροφοδότηση.

Η *Οργάνωση Παιχνιδιών* κατά τη διάρκεια του διαλείμματος εφαρμόζεται ως πρακτική που βοηθά στη μείωση των συγκρούσεων. Στην πιο πάνω πρακτική ενδείκνυται η εμπλοκή των ίδιων των μαθητών.

Δραστηριότητες που ανταποκρίνονται στους δείκτες επιτυχίας του Προγράμματος Σπουδών Αγωγής Υγείας σε σχέση με τον εκφοβισμό βρίσκονται στο εγχειρίδιο

«Ανακαλύπτοντας τον Ελέφанта» (σελ. 72-83 και 92-106), το οποίο βρίσκεται αναρτημένο ηλεκτρονικά
ιστοσελίδα

στην

http://www.moec.gov.cy/agogi_ygeias/yliko_nap/thematiki_enotita_3/3_3_anakalyptontas_ton_ele_fanta.pdf

Περισσότερες πληροφορίες για καλές πρακτικές μπορείτε να βρείτε στον Οδηγό Καλών Πρακτικών Αγωγής Υγείας και Πρόληψης της Παραβατικότητας (Φάκελος 21.1.03, ημερ. 8/7/2011, dde2922, dme5486, dte 1297).

3. Σε επίπεδο γονέων:

Η ενημέρωση και η ευαισθητοποίηση των γονέων για το φαινόμενο, τα χαρακτηριστικά του και τις συνέπειες που μπορεί να έχουν στην ανάπτυξη ενός παιδιού είναι, εξίσου σημαντικά στοιχεία (Παράρτημα Ι). Οι γονείς μπορούν να ενημερώνονται μέσα από επιμορφώσεις, δελτία επικοινωνίας, την ιστοσελίδα του σχολείου και σχετικό έντυπο υλικό. Στην πληροφόρηση αυτή μπορούν να συμπεριληφθούν συμβουλές προς τους γονείς (Παράρτημα V).

Παράρτημα III

Πολιτική του σχολείου

ΔΙΑΧΕΙΡΙΣΗ ΠΕΡΙΣΤΑΤΙΚΩΝ ΕΚΦΟΒΙΣΜΟΥ

Είναι γενικά αποδεκτό ότι για να αντιμετωπισθεί ο εκφοβισμός είναι αναγκαία η εφαρμογή ενός σχεδίου διαχείρισης των περιστατικών στα πλαίσια μιας ολιστικής πολιτικής του σχολείου, η οποία θα ανακοινωθεί σε όλους τους μαθητές, εκπαιδευτικούς και γονείς.

Υπενθυμίζεται ότι συγκεκριμένα, στις περιπτώσεις όπου η μορφή του σχολικού εκφοβισμού αφορά σε πιθανή σεξουαλική κακοποίηση / εκμετάλλευση παιδιού, σε φυσικό ή ηλεκτρονικό χώρο, απαραίτητα πρέπει να ακολουθούνται, παράλληλα, οι οδηγίες σύμφωνα με την εγκύκλιο με θέμα: Σεξουαλική Κακοποίηση και Εκμετάλλευση Παιδιών και Παιδική Πορνογραφία (φак. 11.2.11.1, ημερ. 7/11/14, dde 4412, dme 7484, dte 2876).

Στα πλαίσια της αντιμετώπισης των περιστατικών εκφοβισμού έχουν αναπτυχθεί διάφορα πρωτόκολλα διαδικασιών για το χειρισμό των περιστατικών, τα οποία απορρέουν από προγράμματα κατά του σχολικού εκφοβισμού. Οι βασικές αρχές, που προτείνονται στην παρούσα εγκύκλιο, βασίζονται στην υιοθέτηση της Κοινωνικής-Οικολογικής προσέγγισης, μιας ολιστικής προσέγγισης, που στοχεύει στην αλλαγή του κλίματος του σχολείου και στο περιεχόμενο των ακόλουθων προγραμμάτων:

Προγράμματα:

- *Νορβηγικό μοντέλο Dan Olweus (1993)*
- *Μέθοδος “Shared Concern”, Pikas, Σουηδία (2002)*
- *Ελληνικό πρόγραμμα της Ε.Ψ.Υ.Π.Ε. «Stop στην ενδοσχολική βία» (2005)*
- *Φινλανδικό μοντέλο ΚΙΒΑΚΟΥΛΟΥ (2006)*
- *Αυστριακό πρόγραμμα ViSC (2008)*
- *Πρωτόκολλο διαχείρισης περιστατικών σχολικού εκφοβισμού του Υπουργείου Παιδείας και Πολιτισμού Γαλλίας (2013)*

Βασικές Αρχές Διαχείρισης του σχολικού εκφοβισμού

1. Διαμορφώνεται Ομάδα Διαχείρισης, η οποία αποτελείται από μέλη της διευθυντικής ομάδας και αριθμό εκπαιδευτικών και ανακοινώνεται σε όλους τους συνεργάτες. Το κάθε περιστατικό διαχειρίζονται ένα - δύο μέλη της Ομάδας Διαχείρισης περιστατικών σχολικού εκφοβισμού.
2. Η διαχείριση γίνεται σε χώρο όπου ο μαθητής νιώθει άνεση και ασφάλεια.
3. Η διαχείριση γίνεται, αμέσως, μετά τον εντοπισμό του περιστατικού, αφού προηγηθεί η σχετική διερεύνηση.
4. Η διερεύνηση περιλαμβάνει συλλογή και ανάλυση πληροφοριών, που αφορούν τον χώρο, τον χρόνο, τη διάρκεια και το είδος εκφοβιστικής συμπεριφοράς που υπέστη το παιδί.
5. Οι διάλογοι διεξάγονται με όλους τους εμπλεκόμενους σε ξεχωριστές, ατομικές συναντήσεις.
6. Γίνεται ενημέρωση των γονέων, όλων των μαθητών που εμπλέκονται.
7. Γίνεται καταγραφή σε σχετικό έντυπο από την ομάδα διαχείρισης των περιστατικών (Παράρτημα IV) και τηρείται αρχείο για τις λεπτομέρειες και τη διαχείριση των περιστατικών. Το Αρχείο φυλάσσεται στη σχολική μονάδα, με τρόπο που να προστατεύονται τα προσωπικά δεδομένα των εμπλεκόμενων παιδιών.

Στάδια Διαχείρισης Περιστατικών

- 1. Άτομο αναφοράς ή ομάδα αναφοράς:** Είναι απαραίτητος ο καθορισμός συγκεκριμένου ατόμου ή ομάδας που θα ασχολείται με τη διαχείριση του θέματος. Γίνεται αξιοποίηση μελών της Επιτροπής Αγωγής Υγείας και Πρόληψης της Παραβατικότητας.
- 2. Διερεύνηση του περιστατικού:** Είναι απαραίτητη πριν αποφανθεί κάποιος ότι πρόκειται για σχολικό εκφοβισμό. Για τον σκοπό αυτό ζητούνται πληροφορίες από άλλους εκπαιδευτικούς ή και μαθητές. Γίνονται ξεχωριστές συναντήσεις με τα παιδιά που εμπλέκονται στο περιστατικό που διαχειριζόμαστε. Εφόσον το σχολείο καταλήξει ότι πρόκειται για περιστατικό εκφοβισμού (επαναλαμβανόμενη συμπεριφορά, ανισότητα δύναμης και σκοπιμότητα) προχωρά στις πιο κάτω ενέργειες.
- 3. Διάλογος/Συναντήσεις με τους μαθητές:** Η διάθεση χρόνου στα παιδιά (θύτες και θύματα, θεατές) για στήριξη και συμβουλευτική είναι απαραίτητη. Τα περιστατικά εκφοβισμού δεν πρέπει να περνούν απαρατήρητα. Τα παιδιά έχουν ανάγκη να μιλήσουν, γι' αυτό οι εκπαιδευτικοί πρέπει να γνωρίζουν πώς να οργανώνουν τις συναντήσεις με τους μαθητές που εμπλέκονται στα περιστατικά. Η σειρά διεξαγωγής των συναντήσεων επαφίεται στην απόφαση της σχολικής μονάδας και στις ανάγκες του κάθε περιστατικού ξεχωριστά.

A. Συνάντηση με το παιδί που δέχεται εκφοβισμό Η ομάδα διαχείρισης:

- Κάνει το παιδί να νιώσει ασφάλεια και υπενθυμίζει τον ρόλο του σχολείου.
- Τονίζει στο παιδί ότι δε φταίει για ό,τι του συμβαίνει.
- Συλλέγει πληροφορίες όσον αφορά:
 - στα γεγονότα, στους θύτες, στο χώρο, στον χρόνο που ξεκίνησαν τα γεγονότα και στη συχνότητα επανάληψης
 - στην ύπαρξη θεατών
 - στην ερμηνεία του παιδιού αναφορικά με τα γεγονότα
 - στις ενέργειες του παιδιού για να προστατεύει τον εαυτό του (αντίσταση στον θύτη, ναι ή όχι και γιατί, ή αναφορά σε γονείς, εκπαιδευτικούς, φίλους)
 - στις επιπτώσεις/ συνέπειες.
- Ξεκαθαρίζει ότι το σχολείο θα επιληφθεί του θέματος, υπενθυμίζοντας την πολιτική του σχολείου.
- Ενημερώνει το παιδί για τους χειρισμούς που θα γίνουν προς αντιμετώπιση του περιστατικού και ότι θα μιλήσει με τους γονείς του, αλλά και με το θύτη.
- Καθορίζει νέα συνάντηση με το θύμα σε μια βδομάδα, ενώ το διαβεβαιώνει ότι είναι διαθέσιμος εν τω μεταξύ, αν τον χρειαστεί.
- Ενημερώνει τους γονείς του θύματος: α) για το περιστατικό σχολικού εκφοβισμού β) ότι το σχολείο έχει αναλάβει τη διαχείριση του και γ) ότι θα τους ενημερώσει εντός μιας βδομάδας για την εξέλιξη της κατάστασης. Επίσης, επισημαίνει στους γονείς ότι είναι απαραίτητη η παροχή στήριξης προς το παιδί τους από τους ίδιους, αλλά και η παρακολούθηση για τυχόν αλλαγές στη συμπεριφορά του παιδιού.

B. Συνάντηση με παιδί που ασκεί εκφοβισμό Η Ομάδα Διαχείρισης:

- Αναφέρει ότι το σχολείο είναι ενήμερο για το περιστατικό σχολικού
εκφοβισμού.
- Αντιμετωπίζει τον θύτη με αυστηρότητα, ώστε να αντληφθεί τη σοβαρότητα της κατάστασης.

- Δεν μπαίνει σε ιδιαίτερη συζήτηση και διαπραγμάτευση της κατάστασης. Είναι σημαντικό να μην κατηγορεί ή να κρίνει και ούτε να αναλώνεται χρόνος αναζητώντας τον λόγο που συνέβηκε το περιστατικό.
- Επιμένει στην πολιτική του σχολείου για μη ανοχή της βίας.
- Βοηθά τον θύτη να προβλημαστεί για τη συμπεριφορά του (ανάπτυξη ενσυναίσθησης).
- Βοηθά τον θύτη να σκεφτεί τρόπους με τους οποίους θα μπορούσε να βελτιωθεί η κατάσταση και να επανορθώσει, βοηθώντας έτσι το θύμα.
- Καθορίζει νέα συνάντηση με τον θύτη σε μια βδομάδα, για να συζητηθεί η υλοποίηση των υποσχέσεων και των πράξεων με στόχο να βελτιωθεί η κατάσταση, ενώ επισημαίνει ότι θα παρακολουθεί τις κινήσεις του.
- Αν ο θύτης δεν είναι ένας αλλά περισσότεροι, διεξάγονται ξεχωριστές- διαδοχικές συναντήσεις, χωρίς να δοθεί η δυνατότητα επικοινωνίας και προσυνηννόησης μεταξύ τους.

Γ. Συνάντηση με το/ους θεατή/θεατές Η ομάδα διαχείρισης:

- Αναφέρει ότι το σχολείο είναι ενήμερο για το περιστατικό σχολικού εκφοβισμού.
- Επιμένει στην πολιτική του σχολείου για μη ανοχή της βίας.
- Ακούει τη δική τους εκδοχή (περιγραφή γεγονότος, τρόπο αντίδρασής τους ή μη και τους λόγους, αναλογισμό πιθανής ευθύνης).
- Βοηθά τον θεατή να προβλημαστεί για τη συμπεριφορά του (ανάπτυξη ενσυναίσθησης).
- Βοηθά τον θεατή να σκεφτεί τρόπους με τους οποίους θα μπορούσε να βοηθήσει το θύμα.
- Αν ο θεατής δεν είναι ένας αλλά περισσότεροι, τότε γίνονται ξεχωριστές- διαδοχικές συναντήσεις χωρίς να δοθεί η δυνατότητα επικοινωνίας και προσυνηννόησης μεταξύ τους.

- 4. Επικοινωνία με τους γονείς:** Η ενημέρωση των γονέων των παιδιών που εμπλέκονται σε περιστατικά εκφοβισμού είναι απαραίτητη. Ο τρόπος επικοινωνίας διαδραματίζει σημαντικό ρόλο στη διαχείριση των περιστατικών. Χάρη στην επικοινωνία με τους γονείς επιτυγχάνεται η αποτροπή ανάληψης πρωτοβουλίας από αυτούς να αναλάβουν με το δικό τους τρόπο να επιλύσουν το πρόβλημα. Επισημαίνεται ότι στις περιπτώσεις γονέων που κακοποιούν τα παιδιά τους η ενημέρωση από το σχολείο γίνεται με τρόπο τέτοιο, ώστε να εξασφαλίζεται η ασφάλεια του παιδιού. Σε τέτοιες περιπτώσεις, το σχολείο ζητά τη συνεργασία άλλων αρμόδιων υπηρεσιών (Υπηρεσία Εκπαιδευτικής Ψυχολογίας, Υπηρεσίες Κοινωνικής Ευημερίας κ.ά.).

Α. Επικοινωνία με γονείς του παιδιού που έτυχε εκφοβισμού

Η ομάδα διαχείρισης:

- Επικοινωνεί αυθημερόν με τους γονείς του θύματος και τους ενημερώνει για το περιστατικό και την εφαρμογή της πολιτικής του σχολείου στη διαχείριση του περιστατικού.
- Ζητά τη συνεργασία τους και την παροχή στήριξης προς το παιδί.
- Σε περίπτωση που κριθεί χρήσιμο να υπάρξει κατ' ιδίαν συνάντηση μαζί τους, οι γονείς καλούνται να προσέλθουν στο σχολείο.
- Ενημερώνει τους γονείς για τις διαθέσιμες υπηρεσίες και γραμμές στήριξης στις οποίες μπορούν να αποταθούν (Παράρτημα V).

B. Επικοινωνία με γονείς του παιδιού που άσκησε πρακτική εκφοβισμού

Η ομάδα διαχείρισης:

- Επικοινωνεί αυθημερόν με τους γονείς του θύτη και τους ενημερώνει για το περιστατικό στο οποίο εμπλέκεται το παιδί τους.
- Γνωστοποιεί την εφαρμογή της πολιτικής του σχολείου στη διαχείριση του περιστατικού.
- Ζητά τη συνεργασία τους.
- Ενημερώνει τους γονείς για τις διαθέσιμες υπηρεσίες και Γραμμές Στήριξης οι οποίες μπορούν να αποταθούν (Παράρτημα VI).
- Σε περίπτωση που κριθεί χρήσιμο να υπάρξει κατ' ιδίαν συνάντηση, οι γονείς καλούνται να προσέλθουν στο σχολείο όπου ενημερώνονται για τις συνέπειες που μπορεί να έχει, αν συνεχιστεί, η εκφοβιστική συμπεριφορά του παιδιού τους. Στα πλαίσια μιας τέτοιας συνάντησης είναι δυνατόν να ζητηθεί η άποψη των γονιών για το πώς θα μπορούσαν να βοηθήσουν το παιδί τους να επανρθώσε.

Γ. Επικοινωνία με γονείς θεατών

Η ομάδα διαχείρισης:

- Επικοινωνεί αυθημερόν με τους γονείς των θεατών και τους ενημερώνει για το περιστατικό και την εφαρμογή της πολιτικής του σχολείου στη διαχείριση του περιστατικού.
- Συζητά μαζί τους τον ρόλο που είχε το παιδί τους στο συγκεκριμένο περιστατικό.
- Ενημερώνει τους γονείς για τις διαθέσιμες υπηρεσίες και γραμμές στήριξης οι οποίες μπορούν να αποταθούν (Παράρτημα VI).

- 5. Κοινή συνάντηση μαθητών:** Αφού προηγήθηκαν τα πιο πάνω στάδια της διαχείρισης και, εφόσον, και τα δύο παιδιά, τόσο αυτό που ασκεί όσο και αυτό που δέχεται βία, επιθυμούν να πραγματοποιηθεί μια κοινή συνάντησή τους, με σκοπό την συμφωνία για ειρηνική συνύπαρξή τους στο χώρο του σχολείου. Αυτή πραγματοποιείται στην παρουσία του υπεύθυνου εκπαιδευτικού, που διαχειρίστηκε το περιστατικό.
- 6.** Στις περιπτώσεις όπου η μορφή του σχολικού εκφοβισμού αφορά σε πιθανή σεξουαλική κακοποίηση / εκμετάλλευση παιδιού, σε φυσικό ή ηλεκτρονικό χώρο, απαραίτητα πρέπει να ακολουθούνται, παράλληλα, οι οδηγίες σύμφωνα με την εγκύκλιο με θέμα: Σεξουαλική Κακοποίηση και **Εκμετάλλευση Παιδιών και Παιδική Πορνογραφία** (φακ. 11.2.11.1, ημερ. 7/11/14, dde 4412,dme 7484, dte 2876).
- 7.** Τα σχολεία που εφαρμόζουν πιλοτικά κατά τη φετινή σχολική χρονιά τον «Κώδικα Συμπεριφοράς κατά του Ρατσισμού & Οδηγό Διαχείρισης και Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικών Περιστατικών» θα διαχειρίζονται εκφοβιστικά περιστατικά, τα οποία βασίζονται σε κάποια πτυχή της διαφορετικότητας του θύματος και ως ρατσιστικά.

Για περαιτέρω πληροφορίες βλ.
http://www.moec.gov.cy/agogi_ygeias/kodikas_kata_ratsismou.html

8. Επόμενα βήματα:

- 8.1** Λήψη των πειθαρχικών μέτρων, όπως προβλέπονται μέσα από τους κανονισμούς λειτουργίας των σχολείων.

8.2 Στην περίπτωση που κατά τη διαχείριση διαφανών δυσκολίες, που αφορούν τα εμπλεκόμενα μέρη, οι οποίες χρήζουν την παρέμβαση ειδικών, τότε, παραπέμπεται το περιστατικό στον οικείο Εκπαιδευτικό Ψυχολόγο.

ΠΑΡΑΡΤΗΜΑ IV- Έντυπα διερεύνησης, παρακολούθησης και αναστοχασμού περιστατικού

Αρ. 1. ΕΝΤΥΠΟ ΔΙΕΡΕΥΝΗΣΗΣ ΠΕΡΙΣΤΑΤΙΚΟΥ ΣΧΟΛΙΚΟΥ ΕΚΦΟΒΙΣΜΟΥ

Ημερομηνία περιστατικού: _____ Ώρα περιστατικού: _____
Επαναλαμβανόμενο: ΝΑΙ/ΟΧΙ

Χώρος

Βάλτε σε κύκλο ό,τι ταιριάζει

Διάδρομος, Τουαλέτες, Αποδυτήρια, Σκάλες, Αίθουσα Πολλαπλής Χρήσης, Αίθουσα διδασκαλίας,
Αυλή, Λεωφορείο από/προς το σχολείο, Ολοήμερο σχολείο, Απογευματινή σχολική δραστηριότητα, Διαδικτυακά (μέσω ηλεκτρονικού
ταχυδρομείου, κ.λπ.), Ηλεκτρονικά (μηνύματα στο κινητό), άλλο _____

Όνομα/τα θύματος/ων

Όνομα/τα θύτη/ών

Όνομα/τα θεατή/ών

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Μορφές εκφοβιστικής συμπεριφοράς

Βάλτε σε κύκλο ό,τι ταιριάζει

Σωματική

χτυπήματα, κλωτσιές, γροθιές, φτύσιμο, τρικλοποδιές, σπρωξίματα, απειλητικές / ανεπιθύμητες χειρονομίες σεξουαλικού περιεχομένου, εξαναγκασμός σε σεξουαλικές προσβλητικές πράξεις, άλλο _____

Λεκτική

χλευασμοί, χρήση μειονεκτικών επιθέτων, βρισιές, απειλητικά ή προσβλητικά μηνύματα, ανάρμοστα σεξουαλικά σχόλια, λεκτικές απειλές, άλλο _____

Σχεσιακή

διάδοση ψευδών ή/και επιβλαβών φημών, υποτιμητικά σχόλια αναγραφμένα σε δημόσια μέρη, απομόνωση, έκθεση φωτογραφιών σε φυσικό ή ηλεκτρονικό χώρο, χωρίς την άδεια ή τη γνώση του παιδιού-στόχου, άλλο _____

Καταστροφή περιουσίας

κλοπή, κατάσχεση ή καταστροφή προσωπικών αντικειμένων, διαγραφή ή/και αλλοίωση προσωπικών ηλεκτρονικών πληροφοριών, άλλο _____



**Λόγοι/Αίτια
Θυματοποίησης**

καταγωγή, σεξουαλικός προσανατολισμός, θρησκευτικές πεποιθήσεις, αναπηρία, ειδικές ικανότητες ή таланτά, σχολική επίδοση,
άλλο _____

Αναφορά περιστατικού από :

Βάλτε σε κύκλο ό,τι ταιριάζει

δάσκαλο/καθηγητή, μαθητή, θεατή, θύμα, θύτη, γονό, βοηθητικό προσωπικό σχολείου, ανώνυμη
αναφορά, άλλο _____

Περιγραφή περιστατικού:

Ενέργειες:

Συναντήσεις (θύμα, θύτης, θεατής/ές):

Έντυπο αναστοχασμού για τον θύτη (δίνεται στο τέλος της πρώτης συνάντησης):

Επικοινωνία με γονείς (θύματος, θύτη, θεατών):

Πειθαρχικά Μέτρα:

Παραπομπή σε άλλες υπηρεσίες:

Ημερομηνία: _____ **Όνομα εκπαιδευτικού :** _____ **Υπογραφή:** _____



Αρ. 2 ΕΝΤΥΠΟ ΠΑΡΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΗΣΗΣ ΠΕΡΙΣΤΑΤΙΚΟΥ ΣΧΟΛΙΚΟΥ ΕΚΦΟΒΙΣΜΟΥ

Αριθμός Συνάντησης: _____ Ημερομηνία: _____

Όνομα εκπαιδευτικού: _____

Παρόντες: _____

Κατάσταση μαθητή: βελτιωμένη χειρότερη καμία αλλαγή

Σχόλια:

Επικοινωνία με γονείς:

Ημερομηνία: _____ Όνομα εκπαιδευτικού : _____ Υπογραφή: _____



Αρ. 3 ΕΝΤΥΠΟ ΑΝΑΣΤΟΧΑΣΜΟΥ ΠΕΡΙΣΤΑΤΙΚΟΥ ΣΧΟΛΙΚΟΥ ΕΚΦΟΒΙΣΜΟΥ

Όνομα: _____ Ημερομηνία: _____

- Περίγραψε τη συμπεριφορά σου.

- Εξήγησε, γιατί συμπεριφέρθηκες έτσι.

- Ποιους και με ποιο τρόπο επηρέασε η συμπεριφορά σου αυτή;

- Τι συναισθήματα σου προκάλεσε αυτή η κατάσταση;

- Πώς αλλιώς θα μπορούσες να συμπεριφερθείς;

- Τι μπορείς να κάνεις από τώρα και στο εξής;

Υπογραφές:

Μαθητή/τριας: _____

Δασκάλου: _____

Γονιού: _____



ΠΑΡΑΡΤΗΜΑ V

Συμβουλές προς γονείς

Οι πιο κάτω συμβουλές απευθύνονται προς όλους τους γονείς και μπορούν να αξιοποιηθούν από το σχολείο για την ενημέρωση και ευαισθητοποίηση των γονέων. Μπορούν, επίσης, να αποτελέσουν ένα χρήσιμο εργαλείο για τους γονείς των οποίων τα παιδιά εμπλέκονται σε περιστατικά σχολικού εκφοβισμού. Η κάθε σχολική μονάδα επιλέγει τον τρόπο που θα διοχετεύσει τις πιο κάτω πληροφορίες (διάλεξη, έντυπο υλικό, ιστοσελίδα σχολείου κ.λπ.)

Συμβουλές προς γονείς των οποίων τα παιδιά δέχονται εκφοβισμό

1. Προσέξτε για αλλαγές στη συμπεριφορά και τη στάση του παιδιού σας:
 - Παιδιά, που υπόκεινται σε εκφοβισμό, δίνουν σημάδια πως κάτι δεν πάει καλά.
 - Μπορεί να παρουσιάζουν απροθυμία να πάνε στο σχολείο, φυσικά σωματικά συμπτώματα, όπως πονοκέφαλο, πόνο στο στομάχι και διαταραχές του ύπνου.
 - Σημάδια κακοποίησης στο σώμα (εκδορές, μώλωπες κ.ά.).
 - Κλέβουν χρήματα, για να τα δώσουν στον εκβιαστή.
 - Εξαφανίζονται τα πράγματά τους (χρήματα, κολασιό, αντικείμενα).
 - Παρουσιάζουν σοβαρές διακυμάνσεις στη διάθεσή τους.
 - Μειώνεται η σχολική τους επίδοση.
 - Δείχνουν να μην έχουν φίλους.
 - Μειώνονται οι δεξιότητες επικοινωνίας τους.
 - Φοβούνται να χρησιμοποιήσουν το κινητό τηλέφωνο ή να ανοίξουν το ηλεκτρονικό τους ταχυδρομείο.
 - Γίνονται επιθετικοί, παράλογοι, ανήσυχοι.
 - Μπορεί να παρουσιάσουν ανορεξία ή βουλιμία.
2. Ακούστε το προσεκτικά. Αποκτήστε μια ξεκάθαρη αντίληψη του περιστατικού (χώρος, χρόνος, διάρκεια, επανάληψη, παρόντες, περιγραφή του περιστατικού).
3. Απενχοχτούστε το παιδί και επιβραβεύστε το για την αποκάλυψη.
4. Εξηγήστε ότι κανείς δεν έχει το δικαίωμα να του φέρεται έτσι.
5. Πιστέψτε το, όταν σας εκμυστηρευτεί ότι υπέστη σχολικό εκφοβισμό (φοβάται μήπως δεν το κατανοήσουν, του επιρρίψουν την ευθύνη ή ότι θεωρηθεί ότι διαφέρει).
6. Ζητήστε να σας πει πώς αντιμετωπίζει το πρόβλημα. Διερευνήστε μαζί και άλλους τρόπους.
7. Μην του ζητήσετε να κάνει στο άλλο παιδί «τα ίδια».
8. Ενθαρρύνετε το να αναφέρει το περιστατικό στον δάσκαλο/καθηγητή του.
9. Εξηγήστε τη διαφορά του «προδίδω/καταγγέλω» από το «ζητάω» βοήθεια.
10. Επικοινωνήστε και εσείς με τον δάσκαλο/καθηγητή του παιδιού σας.
11. Ζητήστε βοήθεια/στήριξη από τον εκπαιδευτικό ψυχολόγο του σχολείου ή και τον καθηγητή/καθηγήτρια συμβουλευτικής (ΣΕΑ).
12. Ζητήστε βοήθεια/στήριξη από τις Γραμμές Στήριξης (Παράρτημα V)
13. Διδάξτε το παιδί να αντιμετωπίζει τον εκφοβισμό:
 - Να αντιδρά λεκτικά, λέγοντας: «δε μου αρέσει αυτό που είπες ή έκανες» ή «μπορείς να πεις ό,τι θες, αλλά δεν είναι αλήθεια» .
 - Να απομακρύνεται από τον δράστη.
 - Να χρησιμοποιεί χιούμορ.
14. Κάνετε εξάσκηση με το παιδί σας, να δίνει σύντομες αποστομωτικές απαντήσεις (αστείες, όχι εχθρικές), όπως:
 - Πείραγμα: Γιατί έχεις κόκκινα μαλλιά;
 - Απάντηση: Με κάνει να ξεχωρίζω μέσα στο πλήθος.
 - Πείραγμα: Φαίνεσαι χαρούμενος με τα γυαλάκια σου.

- Απάντηση: Ναι, έχω επιπρόσθετα μάτια, για να ελέγχω τα πάντα.
 - Πείραγμα: Έχεις μεγάλα αυτιά, σαν τον ελέφαντα.
 - Απάντηση: Ναι, αλλά εγώ ακούω πολύ καλύτερα από σένα.
15. Υπενθυμίστε στο παιδί σας να χρησιμοποιεί τη γλώσσα του σώματος, που θα του δώσει περισσότερη αυτοπεποίθηση (όρθιος, ανοικτοί ώμοι, διατήρηση οπτικής επαφής).
 16. Ενθαρρύνετε το να χρησιμοποιεί το πρώτο πρόσωπο στην έκφραση, ώστε να είναι διεκδικητικό: «εγώ πιστεύω ότι αυτό που κάνεις δεν είναι σωστό/δίκαιο...».
 17. Διδάξετε το παιδί σας να:
 - Σκέφτεται θετικές εικόνες για τον εαυτό του, ώστε να ενισχύει την αυτοεκτίμηση του.
 - Μένει σε χώρους που υπάρχουν ενήλικες ως επιτηρητές.
 - Μένει με ομάδα από φίλους.
 18. Βοηθήστε το παιδί σας να αναπτύξει τις κοινωνικές του δεξιότητες.
 19. Υιοθετήστε θετικές κοινωνικές σχέσεις και δραστηριότητες.
 - Βοηθήστε το παιδί σας να αποκτήσει φίλους, εντός και εκτός σχολείου, με τους οποίους να ταυριάζει.
 - Προτείνετε δραστηριότητες που μπορούν να κάνουν μαζί.
 - Βρείτε δραστηριότητες που το παιδί σας απολαμβάνει και κάνει με επιτυχία.
 20. Εξασφαλίστε για τα μικρά παιδιά εικονογραφημένα βιβλία με θέμα το σχολικό εκφοβισμό μέσω ιστοριών.

Συμβουλές προς γονείς των οποίων το παιδί παρουσιάζουν εκφοβιστική συμπεριφορά

1. Ακούστε το προσεκτικά.
2. Βοηθήστε το να αντιληφθεί ότι η συμπεριφορά του έχει επιπτώσεις, τόσο για το ίδιο όσο και για τους άλλους.
3. Μην κτυπάτε το παιδί ως τιμωρία για τις επιθετικές συμπεριφορές του. Προτιμήστε την αφαίρεση προνομίων ως τιμωρία.
4. Διδάξετέ το εναλλακτικές τεχνικές για επίλυση συγκρούσεων, που δεν περιλαμβάνουν βία (π.χ. διαχείριση θυμού, διεκδίκηση με ευγενικό τρόπο).
5. Επαινείτε και ενισχύετε το παιδί κάθε φορά που επιδεικνύει συνεργατικές και φιλικές σχέσεις προς άλλα παιδιά.
6. Υποβάλετε ερωτήσεις αναφορικά με τα βιώματά του στο σχολείο (φίλους, παιχνίδια, θυμό-ζήλεια-φόβο, εάν το εκφοβίζουν και αν το αναγκάζουν άλλοι να εκφοβίσει).
7. Συνεργαστείτε με το σχολείο για εξεύρεση κοινών τρόπων αντιμετώπισης της συμπεριφοράς του παιδιού.

Συμβουλές προς γονείς των οποίων το παιδί είναι θεατής περιστατικού εκφοβιστικής συμπεριφοράς

1. Ακούστε το παιδί σας προσεκτικά και επιβραβεύσετέ το για την αναφορά στο περιστατικό σχολικού εκφοβισμού.
2. Συζητήστε με το παιδί σας τον τρόπο με τον οποίο η στάση του επηρεάζει: α) το παιδί που θυματοποιείται και β) το παιδί που ασκεί εκφοβισμό.
3. Ενθαρρύνετε το:
 - να αναφέρει το περιστατικό σε ενήλικα.
 - να στηρίζει το παιδί που δέχεται τον εκφοβισμό, υπερασπιζοντάς το, χωρίς να δρα εκδικητικά και χωρίς τη χρήση βίας.
 - να αποδοκιμάσει τον θύτη, χωρίς να θέτει σε κίνδυνο τον εαυτό του.

Γενικότερα

Ενισχύστε την αυτοεκτίμηση του παιδιού σας:

- Αφιερώστε χρόνο στο παιδί.

- Εντοπίστε τα θετικά στοιχεία του κάθε παιδιού, εστιάζοντας την προσοχή σας στις δυνατότητες παρά στις αδυναμίες του.
- Δώστε ευκαιρίες επιτυχίας στο παιδί.
 - Ενθαρρύνετέ το να συμμετέχει στη λήψη αποφάσεων για θέματα που το αφορούν.
- Δώστε του ευκαιρίες να κάνει επιλογές και να αναλαμβάνει πρωτοβουλίες.
 - Σεβαστείτε την ελευθερία να ενεργεί, αρκεί να είναι σε συγκεκριμένα πλαίσια και όρια συμπεριφοράς.
- Προωθήστε το παιδί να εκφράζεται θετικά για τον εαυτό του.

ΠΑΡΑΡΤΗΜΑ VI

Υποστηρικτικές Υπηρεσίες και Φορείς ενάντια στο σχολικό εκφοβισμό

1. Υπηρεσία Εκπαιδευτικής Ψυχολογίας (ΥΕΨ)

Το Πρόγραμμα Δάφνη III στοχεύει στην πρόληψη της εκφοβιστικής συμπεριφοράς μεταξύ των μαθητών στο σχολείο μέσω της ανάπτυξης και εφαρμογής ενός εργαλείου πρόληψης, που αυξάνει την ενημέρωση για τους εκπαιδευτικούς της πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης. Η αίτηση για συμμετοχή στο Πρόγραμμα υποβάλλεται γραπτώς στην ΥΕΨ.

Η ΥΕΨ επίσης παρέχει διαλέξεις και βιωματικά εργαστήρια σε εκπαιδευτικούς και γονείς.

Τηλέφωνο: 22806863, Φαξ: 22800806, email: eps@moec.gov.cy

2. Υπηρεσία Συμβουλευτικής και Επαγγελματικής Αγωγής (ΥΣΕΑ)

Η ΥΣΕΑ, σε συνεργασία με την ΟΑΠ, προσφέρει το Πρόγραμμα Διαμεσολάβησης σε σχολεία Μέσης Εκπαίδευσης στα πλαίσια της προσπάθειας για μείωση της παραβατικότητας στα σχολεία. Η σχολική διαμεσολάβηση είναι ένας αποτελεσματικός τρόπος επίλυσης των συγκρούσεων και αποτελεί εναλλακτική λύση στην πειθαρχική πρακτική που ισχύει στα σχολεία, βοηθώντας στη μείωση των συγκρούσεων και την παραπομπή σε πειθαρχικά παραπτώματα.

Τηλέφωνο: 22800931, Φαξ: 22305117, email: yseamoec@gmail.com

3. Ομάδα Άμεσης Παρέμβασης

Η Ομάδα Άμεσης Παρέμβασης στα πλαίσια στήριξης της σχολικής μονάδας για την ανάπτυξη σχεδίου δράσης αντιμετώπισης σοβαρών περιστατικών ή φαινομένων παραβατικότητας προσφέρει επιμόρφωση στο θέμα του σχολικού εκφοβισμού και σε άλλα συναφή θέματα.

Τηλέφωνα: 22800824, 22806336, 25820880.

4. Παρατηρητήριο για τη Βία στο Σχολείο

Το Παρατηρητήριο για τη Βία στο Σχολείο συλλέγει, καταγράφει, κωδικοποιεί και αναλύει στοιχεία, που αφορούν στην έκταση και τις μορφές βίας στο σχολείο. Επίσης, στηρίζει δράσεις, την ανάπτυξη ή και την διάχυση δράσεων των σχολείων που έχουν σχέση με την αντιμετώπιση του σχολικού εκφοβισμού και, γενικότερα, της βίας στο σχολείο.

Τηλέφωνο: 22806309, email: paratiritirio-via@schools.ac.cy

5. Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο Κύπρου

Το ΠΙΚ προσφέρει Προαιρετικά Σεμινάρια και Σεμινάρια σε σχολική βάση, που απευθύνονται σε εκπαιδευτικούς όλων των βαθμίδων και σε γονείς για το θέμα του σχολικού εκφοβισμού και άλλα συναφή θέματα.

Τηλέφωνο: 22402387, ιστοσελίδα: www.pi.ac.cy.

Ο Τομέας Εκπαιδευτικής Τεχνολογίας του Π.Ι. είναι ένας από τους εταίρους του ευρωπαϊκού προγράμματος **Cyberethic**. Προσφέρει σεμινάρια, βιωματικά εργαστήρια και διαλέξεις για το θέμα του διαδικτυακού εκφοβισμού σε μαθητές, εκπαιδευτικούς, γονείς και στο ευρύτερο κοινό. Πληροφορίες και υποστηρικτικό εκπαιδευτικό υλικό φιλοξενείται στη διαδικτυακή πύλη.

ιστοσελίδα: www.pi.ac.cy/internetsafety.

6. Γραφείο Προγραμμάτων Αγωγή Υγείας

Στο ΥΠΠ λειτουργεί το Γραφείο Προγραμμάτων Αγωγής Υγείας για τη στήριξη των σχολείων σε όλες τις βαθμίδες της εκπαίδευσης. Το Γραφείο συντονίζει την πιλοτική εφαρμογή του Κώδικα Συμπεριφοράς κατά του Ρατσισμού & Οδηγού Διαχείρισης και Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικών Περιστατικών κατά τη σχολική χρονιά 2014-15. Το έντυπο και ηλεκτρονικό υλικό, που χρησιμοποιείται στα πλαίσια του μαθήματος της Αγωγής Υγείας, μπορεί να αξιοποιηθεί στην υλοποίηση του Σχεδίου Δράσης Πρόληψης του Σχολικού Εκφοβισμού. Ιδιαίτερα, προσφέρονται τα εγχειρίδια «Μικρή Πυξίδα – Compasito» και «Ανακαλύπτοντας τον Ελέφαντα».

Τηλέφωνο: 22800527, φαξ: 22800666, ιστοσελίδα: www.moec.gov.cy/agogi_ygeias

7. Μεσογειακό Ινστιτούτο Μελετών Κοινωνικού Φύλου

Η δράση του ΜΙΜΚΦ δίνει έμφαση στα προληπτικά προγράμματα που αφορούν, κυρίως, στους μαθητές της Μέσης Εκπαίδευσης και η επιμόρφωση σχετίζεται με θέματα Ισότητας των Φύλων. Τα προγράμματα αυτά έχουν ως στόχο την προώθηση του αλληλοσεβασμού μεταξύ των φύλων, καθώς επίσης, και την πρόληψη της έμφυλης βίας.

Τηλέφωνο: 22842036, φαξ: 22842050, ιστοσελίδα: www.medinstgenderstudies.org

8. Κυπριακό Κέντρο Ασφαλούς Διαδικτύου (CyberEthics)

Το CyberEthics προωθεί την ασφαλή χρήση των καινούργιων τεχνολογιών (διαδίκτυο, κινητό τηλέφωνο κ.λπ.) προσφέροντας προληπτικά εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα.

Τηλέφωνο: 22873820, ιστοσελίδα: www.cyberethics.info

9. Οργανισμός Νεολαίας

Η «Μικρή Άρκτος» αποτελεί πρόγραμμα του Τομέα Πρόληψης και Συμβουλευτικών Υπηρεσιών του Οργανισμού Νεολαίας Κύπρου. Απευθύνεται σε παιδιά, εφήβους, γονείς και εκπαιδευτικούς. Για κάθε θέμα/πρόγραμμα διεξάγονται πέντε συναντήσεις. Το σχολείο μπορεί να επιλέξει ως θέμα τον σχολικό εκφοβισμό.

Τηλέφωνα: 25443079/80, ιστοσελίδα: www.youthboard.org.cy

10. TheatrEtc ΜΚΟ

Ο Οργανισμός εφαρμόζει το εκπαιδευτικό πρόγραμμα **Remove the Power**, το οποίο απευθύνεται σε μαθητές πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης. Βασίζεται σε θεατρικά βιωματικά εργαστήρια σχεδιασμένα για παιδιά ηλικίας 10 – 12 ετών, που αποσκοπούν στη διαπαιδαγώγηση σχετικά με το φαινόμενο του Σχολικού Εκφοβισμού και τους τρόπους αντιμετώπισής του.

Τηλέφωνο: 99443104, ιστοσελίδα: www.theatretc.com

11. Hope for Children UNCRC Policy Center

Ο Οργανισμός προσφέρει βιωματικά εργαστήρια και διαλέξεις σε μαθητές, εκπαιδευτικούς και γονείς για το θέμα του σχολικού εκφοβισμού. Επίσης εφαρμόζει το εκπαιδευτικό πρόγραμμα «Ομάδες Υποστήριξης Συνομήλικων». Στα πλαίσια του προγράμματος η ψυχοεκπαίδευση-ενημέρωση των παιδιών σε θέματα σχολικού εκφοβισμού γίνεται από συνομήλικούς τους. Τα παιδιά, τα οποία επιλέγονται, εκπαιδεύονται από ειδικούς επαγγελματίες για να λειτουργούν ως πρεσβευτές εναντίον του σχολικού εκφοβισμού στα σχολεία.

Τηλέφωνο: 22103234, ιστοσελίδα: www.uncrcpc.org

12. Πρόγραμμα ViSC

Το Πανεπιστήμιο Νεάπολης, σε συνεργασία με το Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Πολιτισμού, εφαρμόζει το πιλοτικό πρόγραμμα **ViSC** για την πρόληψη και αντιμετώπιση του σχολικού εκφοβισμού. Ο κύριος στόχος του προγράμματος είναι η ενίσχυση των κοινωνικών και διαπολιτισμικών ικανοτήτων των παιδιών

εκφοβισμού στα σχολεία. Το πρόγραμμα αυτό περιλαμβάνει εφαρμογή μαθημάτων από τους καθηγητές στην τάξη των μαθητών, καθώς επίσης, και συγκεκριμένες διαδικασίες αντιμετώπισης περιστατικών σχολικού εκφοβισμού στο σχολείο.

Τηλέφωνο επικοινωνίας: Πανεπιστήμιο Neapolis: 26843602

13. Τηλεφωνικές γραμμές

Για την ατομική στήριξη παιδιών και εφήβων σε θέματα σχολικού εκφοβισμού υπάρχουν διαθέσιμες οι ακόλουθες Γραμμές Στήριξης:

- **116 111 Ευρωπαϊκή γραμμή στήριξης παιδιών και εφήβων.** Η συμβουλευτική γραμμή λειτουργεί από την Κοινοπραξία "Hope For Children" UNCRC Policy Center (HFC) - Σύνδεσμο για την Πρόληψη και Αντιμέτωπιση της Βίας στην Οικογένεια (ΣΠΑΒΟ). Παρέχεται στήριξη και καθοδήγηση για οποιοδήποτε θέμα.

Μέρες - ώρες λειτουργίας: Δευτέρα - Παρασκευή (12:00 - 20:00) και Σάββατο (09:30 - 14:00)

- **1440 για παιδιά, εφήβους και ενήλικες.** Γραμμή Βοήθειας για θέματα ενδοοικογενειακής βίας του Συνδέσμου για την Πρόληψη και Αντιμέτωπιση της Βίας στην Οικογένεια (ΣΠΑΒΟ).

Μέρες - ώρες λειτουργίας: Δευτέρα - Παρασκευή (08:00 - 22:00), Σαββατοκυριακά και αργίες (10:00 - 22:00)

- **1410 για παιδιά, εφήβους και ενήλικες.** Γραμμή Επικοινωνίας, Συμβουλευτικής και Στήριξης του Οργανισμού Νεολαίας Κύπρου.

Μέρες - ώρες λειτουργίας: Δευτέρα - Παρασκευή (10:00 - 23:00) και Σαββατοκυριακά (15:00 - 23:00)

- **70000 116 για παιδιά, εφήβους και ενήλικες.** Γραμμή Βοήθειας για θέματα αχρήσης του διαδικτύου του Κυπριακού Κέντρου Ασφαλούς Διαδικτύου «CyberEthics».

Μέρες - ώρες λειτουργίας: Δευτέρα - Παρασκευή (09:00 - 19:00)

- **1455 για παιδιά, εφήβους και ενήλικες.** Γραμμή στήριξης για θέματα σεξουαλικής υγείας και ευημερίας, Κυπριακός Σύνδεσμος Οικογενειακού Προγραμματισμού.

Μέρες - ώρες λειτουργίας: Δευτέρα - Παρασκευή (08:00 - 22:00)

- Cyprus Helplines mobile Application



ΠΑΡΑΡΤΗΜΑ VII

Οδηγίες Ηλεκτρονικής Καταχώρησης Περιστατικών Σχολικού Εκφοβισμού

Η ηλεκτρονική καταχώρηση των περιστατικών σχολικού εκφοβισμού είναι ευθύνη του κάθε σχολείου. Την καταχώρηση θα πραγματοποιεί ο ΒΔ υπεύθυνος της Επιτροπής Αγωγής Υγείας και Πρόληψης της Παραβατικότητας μέσω του Συστήματος Εκπαιδευτικού Προγραμματισμού.

1. Η πρόσβαση στο Σύστημα Εκπαιδευτικού Προγραμματισμού (ΣΕΠ) γίνεται είτε από την ιστοσελίδα του ΣΕΠ στη διεύθυνση <https://sep.dias.ac.cy> είτε από τις ιστοσελίδες των τριών διευθύνσεων του Υπουργείου Παιδείας και Πολιτισμού:
 - Διεύθυνση Δημοτικής Εκπαίδευσης: <http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/index.html>
 - Διεύθυνση Μέσης Γενικής Εκπαίδευσης: <http://www.moec.gov.cy/dme/index.html>
 - Διεύθυνση Τεχνικής και Επαγγελματικής Εκπαίδευσης:
<http://www.moec.gov.cy/mtee/index.html>Μέσα από τις πιο πάνω ιστοσελίδες, θα πρέπει να κάνετε κλικ στο εικονίδιο του ΣΕΠ που βρίσκεται στα δεξιά της σελίδας.
2. Ο καταχωρητής θα εισέρχεται στο σύστημα μέσω του προσωπικού του λογαριασμού ΣΕΠ - για λόγους διαφύλαξης των προσωπικών δεδομένων. Θα επιλέγει τη Κατηγορία «Θέματα Βίας» από το μενού επιλογών και ακολούθως την επιλογή «Περιστατικά Σχολικού Εκφοβισμού».
3. Για κάθε περιστατικό που διαχειρίστηκε το σχολείο θα συμπληρώνεται ξεχωριστή καταγραφή.
4. Με την ολοκλήρωση της καταγραφής του έντυπου υπάρχει η επιλογή της «Προσωρινής Καταχώρησης» (το έντυπο δεν αποστέλλεται στο ΣΕΠ αλλά παραμένει σε κατάσταση προσωρινής αποθήκευσης με τη δυνατότητα επεξεργασίας από τον ΒΔ ή τον Διευθυντή του σχολείου). Με την επιλογή της «Οριστικής Καταχώρησης» το έντυπο αποστέλλεται μέσω του ΣΕΠ στο Παρατηρητήριο για τη Βία στο Σχολείο.
5. Για οποιαδήποτε διευκρίνιση μπορείτε να αποστείνετε στο Παρατηρητήριο για τη Βία στο Σχολείο, στο τηλέφωνο 22806309.

Γενικές Πληροφορίες

Το Σύστημα Εκπαιδευτικού Προγραμματισμού λειτουργεί στους εξής περιηγητές ιστού (browsers): Internet Explorer 8+, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Safari.

Στοιχεία Επικοινωνίας για Τεχνική Υποστήριξη

Σε περίπτωση που αντιμετωπίζετε κάποιο πρόβλημα κατά τη διαδικασία εγγραφής στο σύστημα ή κατά τη χρήση του συστήματος, μπορείτε να επικοινωνείτε με τους πιο κάτω λειτουργούς.

Λειτουργός ΥΠΠ	Τηλέφωνο	Βαθμίδα	Ηλ. Ταχυδρομείο
Μαρία Χρίστου	22806308	Δημοτική, Μέση, Τεχνική	mchristou@schools.ac.cy

ΠΑΡΑΡΤΗΜΑ VIII

Επιμέλεια εγκυκλίου:

Δρ. Μαρία Τροφή, University Lecturer in Psychological Criminology Deputy Director of the PhD Programme
Institute of Criminology, Cambridge University

Δρ. Παναγιώτης Σταυρινίδης, Λέκτορας Ψυχολογίας, Τμήμα Ψυχολογίας, Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου

Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά

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Βιβλιογραφία:

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Ιστοσελίδες με χρήσιμο υλικό:

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Research Informed Consent Form

This Research Information Sheet is for Cypriot professionals working with children and who are invited to participate in the specific research:

Re-thinking bullying prevention: Exploring the perceptions of Cypriot professionals on Interdisciplinary methods of learning

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)
- Consent Form (for signatures if you choose to participate)

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

My name is Christodoulos Charitou and I am a research student at the Institute of Education/ University College of London (IOE/UCL). I am doing research for my Doctoral in Education (EdD – international) course on Interdisciplinary methods of learning for influencing primary school students' bullying attitudes.

More specifically my **research questions** are as follows:

1. How do Cypriot professionals from different disciplines describe the efficacy of current anti-bullying methods of learning, based on their experiences?
2. How does disciplinary identity and educational background influence the way Cypriot professionals define bullying?
3. What is their understanding on the efficacy of anti-bullying interventions and their awareness of other disciplines and approaches?
4. Which of the disciplinary practices they feel that they can appropriate and practice safely and which they feel they cannot?
5. How do professionals from different disciplines conceive and respond to a process of collaboration in order to co-design and co-facilitate anti-bullying learning sessions?

If you are a professional working on anti-bullying approaches with children then your opinion will assist greatly in my research.

I will provide you with information and invite you to be part of this research. You do not have to decide today whether you will participate in the research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research.

This Information Sheet may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information, and I will take time to explain.

Purpose of the research

Bullying has been broadly recognised as a vastly growing social problem, which often occurs in institutional settings and especially in schools. Regardless of all the negative consequences that the action can cause, it seems that bullying is still present at schools and that further study is required to assist educational institutions to evaluate their anti-bullying policies and in-classroom approaches. I believe you can help me by sharing your views on students' bullying behaviour and your learning approaches for bullying prevention. Furthermore, I would like to invite you in 3 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) together with other professionals from various disciplines working on anti-bullying methods of learning and exchange practices, sharing your experiences and sample of your work.

Context of participation

This research will involve your participation completing a three-page vignette sheet (details on Procedures B), a 40-minutes interview at the beginning and a 40-minutes interview at the end of the 3 FGD. The FGD are designed to discuss the participants' perspectives around anti-bullying methods of learning. I will briefly describe them to you. Apart from the activities designed by the researcher influenced by the answers of your vignettes and interviews, your role is to prepare a 30-minutes fragment of how you approach bullying in a classroom setting or with a group of children and as an outcome at the end of the 3 FGD to design a workshop plan and share your thoughts with the rest of the participants. The 3 FGD will last 3 hours each and interacting activities will be used. At the end of each FGD you will be called to give structured feedback following specific bullet points in an electronic journal. The FGD will be video recorded and during them I will be collecting all the material we will be working with, such as worksheets and workshop plans as part of the data I will analyse.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. The choice that you make will have no bearing on your job or on any work-related

evaluations or reports. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Procedures

A. Introduction to the format of the research study.

I would like to invite you in this research project to express your views on bullying in school and the ways that you deal with the phenomenon. If you consent, you will be asked to fill in a 3-paged sheet of vignettes and attend a 40-minutes interview prior and after the FGD, which will be audio recorded. Additionally, after each of the 3 FGD you will be asked to give feedback on an electronic journal. All 3 FGD will be video recorded in order to give a deeper insight on the participants' perceptions around their work and how they view others' work.

B. Type of the Vignettes.

The Vignettes are nothing more than your ideas and thoughts drawing from your examples of practice. You will be given the story of Rachel who is a professional, working on bullying prevention like you. At moments the story will be interrupted, and you will be called to write down the ways that Rachel should act and the story will go on. You will be invited to give examples that can help Rachel to understand what you are saying. You are free to ask me any questions during that process but bear in mind that you know Rachel's and your practice better than anyone else. A timeframe of completing the vignettes will be given to you.

C. Type of questions that the participants are likely to be asked during the research

You will participate in two interviews with me. During the interviews, I will sit down with you at a place you find comfortable. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and I will move on to the next question. No one else but the interviewer will be present. Some of the questions will be prepared prior the interview but generally I will be asking you to expand on different points or initiating a more discussion-based interview because this will give me a chance to understand your perspectives. You do not have to share any knowledge that you are not comfortable sharing. I will ask you questions about your expertise and professional background, about your work on bullying and what policies or practices you follow. I will also ask about your Vignettes to clarify some points if needed, your experience during the FGD and your decisions in each step of designing your final workshop plan because this will give me the chance to deepen my understanding on your process.

D. Electronic Journals

From the beginning of the FGD you will be given a recorder and a Journal Recording Protocol. Following the instructions of the protocol you will be called to comment on every FGD individually. The purpose of the recorder is for you to comment on various areas that you did not have the time or you did not wish to disclose to the group during the FGD. It is preferable to comment immediately after the FGD since you can recollect easier some details of the session. All recordings and transcriptions will be worked with to maintain anonymity and will be secured on my laptop with a password system. The recorder will remain to your possession until the end of all 3 FGD and will be handed back to me before the final interview.

Duration

The overall research takes place over 3 months in total with one FGD every week and will be structured as follows:

1. I will provide to and collect from all the participants the Informed Consent Forms.
2. I will provide the participants with the Vignette's sheet with a timeframe in which they will need to complete them
3. I will conduct the initial interviews with all the participants.
4. Handing out the recorder for the Electronic Journals and the 3 FGD will begin:
 - "My practice": Stimulating activities to discuss on each one's practice. All the participants present their work in a 30-minutes fragment. Discussion
 - "Me and others": Stimulating activities to discuss on other participants' practices. What can I use and what I cannot? Presentation on Creative Collaborations from the researcher
 - "Working together": Stimulating activities to discuss on how we can work with others. Presentation on Interdisciplinarity. The participants design and present their session plan.
5. Final round of interviews

Benefits

I value your expertise and your participation will help me to find out more about how we should approach bullying in Cypriot schools and explore more on anti-bullying policies and interventions, as well as future practices that professionals in the field can use. Furthermore, you will have the benefit, through your participation, to enter a critical reflective space about your practice and you will explore other professionals' anti-bullying methods of learning. By the end of the research, you will investigate bullying and develop a workshop plan that you can apply to your classroom, gaining invaluable knowledge deriving from other professionals. As a

part of IOE/UCL research, as well as TheatrEtc (NGO) initiative you will be given a certificate of attendance after the completion of the three workshops.

Confidentiality

The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except the researcher will have access to the information documented during your interview, the electronic journals and the FGD. The entire interview will be audio recorded and the 3 FGD will be video recorded, but no one will be identified by name. The FGD will be contacted with ethical agreement to respect confidentiality and any information on child protection issues emerge will be communicated with the responsible authority. The recordings will be kept and locked safely and then passed on to my computer for the transcription to take place. Hardware security will be used with files' security passwords.

Sharing the Results

Nothing will be attributed by name, and you will ensure that no identifying details will be included in any material emerging from the study such as location of their workplace, their identity or those of others in the group. The knowledge that I get from this research will be shared with you before it is made widely available to the public. The results will be used as a part of my assessment that will be given for evaluation to the examiners of Institute of Education. Ministry of Education and Culture and Cypriot Research Institute Board will have access to the findings, but anonymity will be kept as well as any personal details that may identify and expose the participants.

Securing the journal data

The journal recordings are your responsibility, and you must secure them every time you give your feedback, until I collect them at the end of the research. When I collect the electronic journals, I will protect the recordings with passwords, and I will delete everything when I do the transcripts.

Who to Contact?

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact the researcher. Contact details can be found on Part II: Consent Form

**This research proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Institute of
Education London/University College London**

Part II: Consent Form

Name of researcher: Christodoulos Charitou
Contact information: tel.: , email:

Re-thinking bullying prevention: Exploring the perceptions of Cypriot professionals on Interdisciplinary methods of learning

Please ✓ the box accordingly

- 1. I consent that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 23.06.2016 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactory.
- 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. Any materials collected from me will not be included in the research.
- 3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, articles or presentations by the researcher.
- 4. I consent that my interview will be audio recorded for the transparency and credibility of the research.
- 5. I understand that the 3 FGD will be video recorded for the transparency and credibility of the research
- 6. I understand that I will be asked to record on the electronic journal at the end of each FGD for cross-examining the data.
- 7. I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles, or presentations.
- 8. I agree to take part in the research.

Name of participant	Date	Signature

Researcher	Date	Signature

When completed, please return to researcher. One copy will be given to the participant and the original to be kept in the file of the researcher

Appendix 3: Vignettes' Protocol Example

Preface: This is the protocol of the vignettes that was developed to assist the professionals to provide examples from their practice. It is a narrative vignette approach that was broken down into small sections to assist the professionals to comment every time accordingly. The professionals could complete their answers, either in written form or electronically and send it back to me.

Introduction

Dear participant,

Thank you for participating in the research and your acceptance to write your thoughts on the following vignettes. Your answers are valuable for the development of my research as discussed on our preliminary meeting. The aim of these vignettes is to receive a wide range of information around the work that is done around bullying prevention, combining yours and the others' professionals' views. Therefore, I would like to assure you that there is not a right or wrong answer but rather differing opinions on how you approach the topic we are exploring.

After you complete the vignette and return it back to me, we will decide on a day to proceed with an interview. This is important in order to clarify some of your answers on the vignettes, as well as to expand in more areas around bullying definition and bullying prevention approaches.

Your answers from the vignettes will be used during the Focus Group Discussions in order to compare the differing points of each participant and discuss on the wide range of approaches coming from various professionals representing different disciplines.

The narrative of Rachel:

Bellow is the story of Rachel, a professional who work with pupils around social issues. This time, Rachel will start working with pupils on the topic of bullying. Read carefully and every time comment according to your opinion.

Vignette 1:

Rachel is a professional, who delivers sessions to pupils to educate them around social issues. This time she will start working with a group of children of Year 4 around the issue of bullying. This is the first time she works with the specific topic with this group of pupils and she has been prepared accordingly. Can you outline the areas she has been prepared on before she begins her sessions?

Vignette 2:

Rachel is struggling to decide how to begin her first session. She thinks that bullying is a huge topic and she wants to break it down to smaller themes. Can you advice Rachel what she needs to do in order to clear

her mind? You can advise her of how she needs to approach the topic of bullying using examples from your work.

Vignette 3:

After a lot of thinking Rachel has decided how she needs to proceed and she is certain about her approach. Nevertheless, she needs a starting activity in order to be on point with her goals. What is your opinion of how she needs to start? How do you begin to talk about bullying?

Vignette 4:

It has been days and Rachel is on point with her schedule. The pupils respond well but she is worried that they can't relate with what she is trying to do. This is due to the fact that the pupils are not telling their personal stories and she cannot address them properly. Any advises for Rachel? Use examples from your experience.

Vignette 5:

Through the sessions, Rachel realises that a boy is always quiet, isolated and does not participate much in the activities. He always takes a step back. Rachel immediately understands that possibly he is going through a difficult situation and perhaps bullying. How can she address this issue? Does this happen to your practice and how did you handle it?

Vignette 6:

One day, a girl's dad visited the school and reported to Rachel that another girl once again has destroyed his daughter's textbooks. Rachel assures him that she will resolve the issue and this will not happen again. Do you agree with how Rachel has responded? What do you think according to your experience the next step is?

Vignette 7:

At some point in one session, a girl seems very upset and she suddenly reports in front of everybody that she has been bullied. What do you think that Rachel should do? You can refer to any similar situation that took place during your practice and your steps forward.

Vignette 8:

One of the main topics of discussion for Rachel is teaching the pupils on how to protect themselves from bullying. What kind of advises do you think she needs to give them?

Vignette 9:

After all this work, the anti-bullying sessions come to an end. Rachel wants to measure the efficacy of her work. What do you think is the most appropriate way of proceeding to that? You can give her ideas that you are using in your practice.

Vignette 10: What theory Rachel has drawn on in understanding why change is occurring? What would you advise to deepen her understanding?

Appendix 4: Participants' Interview Protocol Example

This is the protocol of interview, which demonstrates the two forms that the questions were developed: open-ended questions and complete the statements. The interview protocol was developed in order to clarify the responses of the professionals on the vignettes. It is divided into the following topics: Background-Warming-up questions, Participants' information, Bullying attitudes, Bullying definition, Current anti-bullying work and Future anti-bullying work.

Introduction	
<p>Welcome and thank you for your participation today. My name is Christodoulos Charitou and I am a research student at Institute of Education/University College of London conducting my Thesis study for completing my Doctoral Degree in Doctor in Education (EdD-International). The purpose of my research is to increase our understanding of the work that is implemented around bullying in primary education through various disciplines.</p> <p>Thank you accepting to participating in this research and for completing this interview that will take about 40 minutes and will include questions around your professional background and your experience around anti-bullying work in primary education. I would like your permission to record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you convey. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please feel free to let me know. I would like to make clear that anonymity will be ensured, while your responses will be used to develop a better understanding of how you and the other participants view bullying and the necessary tools for preventing it.</p> <p>At this time I would like to remind you of your written consent to participate in this study. I am the responsible researcher, specifying your participation in the research project: Intredisciplinarity for bullying prevention. You and I have both signed and dated each copy, certifying that we agree to continue this interview, as well as the final interview after the five workshops you will attend. You will receive one copy and I will keep the other under security passwords.</p> <p>Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you need to stop or take a break please let me know. You may also withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission we will begin the interview.</p>	
<p>Participant's information</p> <p>Initials: _____ Age group: 20-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40 Date: _____ Gender: _____</p>	
Questions	Notes
Background-Warming up	
<p>1. Tell me about your education/academic background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (BA, MA, Doctoral Degree) • Degrees • Seminars/continuing professional development/short courses • Any relevant courses with bullying? 	
<p>2. How many years of experience do you have working with children and in what context? (specific programmes/organisations)</p>	

<p>3. How would you describe the relevance of your training and continuing professional development with your work around bullying?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses • Trainings • Seminars/conferences 	
<p>4. Can you tell me how you became interested in working with bullying and/or the specific organisation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal • Educational • Professional 	
Attitudes in bullying	
<p>5. What is your experience of bullying in Cypriot schools?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any negative behaviour? • What are the reasons for its existence or not? • How do you define bullying? 	
<p>6. Do you think there are different kinds of bullying and if you do, how would you describe them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categories and justification • How essential is to categorise? 	
Bullying definition	
I will now ask you to complete specific sentences. You can complete each sentence more than one time and in as many ways you like	
<p><u>7. Complete the sentence:</u> <i>Children bully because.....</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for bullying in school • Factors that enable bullying to occur in schools • Examples 	
<p><u>8. Complete the sentence:</u> <i>Bullied children are</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we recognise bullied children? • Factors influencing your answer? (empirical, professional) • Examples 	

<p><u>9. Complete the sentence:</u> <i>Children who report that they are bullied</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you recognise an insitent of bullying? • Any difference between conflict, fight and bullying? • Examples 	
<p><u>10. Complete the sentense</u> <i>The responsibility to prevent or stop bullying in school is held to....</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the key people to stop/prevent bullying in schools? • Which is the role of each one of them? (teachers, parents, bystanders etc.) • What is your role? • Examples 	
Current anti-bullying work	
<p>11. Let's talk about the anti-bullying work that it is taking place in schools. Any strenghts and/or weaknesses?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inititatives from the school • Ministry of Education and Culture • Policies • Other organisations 	
<p>12. Tell me about your work around bullying.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods of learning • Organisation involvement • Age groups • Aims • Tools • Theory behind it • Differences or similarities with other practices 	
<p>13. Tell me about any differences or similarities you have with other practises and approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychologists • Teachers • Artists 	
Future anti-bullying work	

<p>14. Have you ever collaborated with another professional in doing anti-bullying work with children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context (who? in what?) • Aims • Tools • Reflections on strengths and/or limitations within the experience 	
<p>15. Let's talk about about Collaborations for bullying prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definition • benefits • negatives • Personal and professional development • Impact to the children (knowledge, emotional development, behaviour and attitudes) 	
<p>16. What are your expectations from the current project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning outcomes • Personal • Professional • Future 	
<p>17. Do you expect any challenges and or limitations during the current project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Relationships with other participants • Personal restrictions • Other 	
<p>18. How do you define interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • Aim • Role in education and bullying prevention • Differences or similarities on how other professionals from other disciplines approach the issue? 	
<p>19. Do you think that you can gain something from working on interdisciplinarity? Areas for development or not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personally • Professionally 	
<p>20. Are there any limitations for introducing interdisciplinarity for bullying prevention?</p>	

Appendix 5: First Focus Group Discussion Protocol

Preface: This is the protocol of the first FGD to give an idea of the form that the interaction between the professionals took and the areas that the participants will be called to explore. All the questions were developed after the professionals completed their vignettes and responded to the interview questions. The latter, was useful in order to identify initial themes that were emerging and clarify areas that were still ambivalent or see how they could possibly be influenced by the interaction of the professionals. Having said that, the protocol of the FGD was formed in order to narrow down the main areas of the research and respond to the inquiry of the research questions.

Introduction:

Good evening and welcome to our session. Thanks for taking the time to join me to talk about your work around bullying prevention. My name is Christodoulos Charitou and I am a researcher undertaking my Doctoral degree at the Institute of Education in London. For completing my Thesis I would like to get some information about your perceptions of bullying prevention approaches in Cypriot education. More specifically what I am looking to explore is:

1. How do Cypriot professionals from different disciplines describe the efficacy of current anti-bullying methods of learning, based on their experiences?
2. How does their disciplinary identity and educational background influence the way they define bullying and in return their understanding and efficacy of anti-bullying interventions?
3. What is their awareness of other disciplines and approaches and which of them they can appropriate and practice safely and which cannot?
4. How do professionals from different disciplines conceive and respond to a process of collaboration in order to co-design and co-facilitate anti-bullying learning sessions?

You were invited because you have implemented in some extension anti-bullying programs or practises or you are working actively with the issue of bullying and its consequences to a child. All the activities and questions are influenced by the examples you have given to me prior the FGD through your vignettes and interviews.

There are no wrong answers but rather differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. Keep in mind that I am just as interested in negative comments as positive comments, and at times the negative comments are the most helpful.

I will be voice and video recording the workshops because I don't want to miss any of your comments. People often say very helpful things in these discussions and I can't write fast enough to get them all down. Also, we will be having some physical interaction and I would be very interested to look back on this in order to make sure that I will not miss anything.

I will be on a first name basis today and for the rest of the workshops, and I won't use any names in my report. You may be assured of complete confidentiality as agreed initially before the research starts.

FGD 1: "My practice"

Activity 1: Bullying definition

Description: The facilitator places the various definitions of bullying deriving from the participants' interviews and vignettes and places them on the wall without names. The participants choose the definition that best describes bullying in their opinion and they comment appropriately. They can choose various definitions that best describe their views and combine them together.

Questions: Why did you choose the specific definition? You can combine your answer with other definition if you feel that you need to say more.

Probe as necessary:

- a) Which things from the card affected your decision?
- b) Any examples from your experience that you would like to add?
- c) What could possibly change your mind?

Activity 2: Opinion line

The facilitator places two signs across the two ends of the room "Agree" and "Disagree". A mixture of scenarios are given taken from the vignettes and the interviews, as well as specific scenarios that the facilitator chooses in order to cover the wider spectrum of bullying definition. The participants have to position themselves anywhere in the fictional line between the two signs according to their opinion. The scenarios involve ways of dealing with a bullying incident and the way they are chosen illustrates the range of bullying definition.

Example of a scenario: "Paul's dad visited the school today reporting to the teacher that Mike for once again has destroyed Paul's textbooks. The teacher assured him that she will resolve the issue and this will not happen again".

Questions: Do you agree with the teacher's approach? Why did you position yourself closer to agree or disagree? You can reposition yourself at any point of the discussion if you have changed your mind.

Probe as necessary:

- a) Which things from the scenario affected your decision?
- b) Any examples from your experience that you would like to add?
- c) What could possibly change your mind?

Activity 3: Reenactments of scenarios in frozen images

Description: The facilitator divides the group in pairs and hands out scenarios influence again by the vignettes and interviews. The scenarios will involve bullying incidents, as well as an approach that was followed. After the participants reenact the scenario, all the participants will comment on how it was

handled. Multiple scenarios will be given in order to cover the range of the participants' examples given through their vignettes and interviews.

Questions: Can we recognize the role of each one involved in the performance? What is the story? What is your view on the way that the protagonists acted in each case?

Probe as necessary:

- a) Will you be doing anything different?
- b) Any examples from your experience that you would like to add?

Activity 4: Bullying prevention activities (methodology and aims are chosen by the participants)

Description: Each participant introduces their methodology, influenced by their discipline. They facilitate one activity with specific objectives around bullying prevention as a good example from practice. They can choose topics that involve vocabulary development on bullying (introductory activities), empathy for the bullied, the hidden motives of a bully, the active bystander and how to deal with a bullying incident. The facilitator will participate in the activity and when the professional concludes he will moderate the discussion, without commenting, avoiding to influence the views of the participants. Nevertheless, the researcher will reflect afterwards on his personal research journal.

Questions: Can we recognize the aims of this activity? How does this link with bullying? Where they any successful? How did you feel during the activity? Would you appropriate it safely in your practice?

Probe as necessary:

- a) What are the strengths or limitations of this activity?
- b) Can you see it working with a group of children?
- c) Any examples from your experience that you would like to add?

Appendix 6: Electronic Diary Protocol Example

Thank you for completing this Electronic Journal. The recorder will remain in your possession until all three Focus Group Discussions (FGD) are concluded and then it will be handed back to me as the researcher. The purpose of the recorder is for you to comment on various areas that you did not have the time or you did not wish to disclose to the group during the FGD. All recordings and transcriptions will be worked with to maintain anonymity and will be secured on my laptop with passwords in order for only me as the researcher to have access on. Please report on the areas specified below on the recorder that has been given to you.

ATTENTION:

- Make sure that the recorder has begun recording
- Never stop the recorder before you finish commenting in all areas. Do not stress if you need to think something before answering
- You do not need to refer to a specific name of a participant if you do not wish so. You can use terms such as one participant or generally the other participants
- Follow the structure below. Specify always when you change the question, for example **Question 1** or **Number 1**

How do you begin:

FGD number Date

How do you carry on:

QUESTION 1: Discuss the general process of the FGD. Any moments you felt comfortable? Any moments you felt challenged? Other general points you find important. Give examples

QUESTION 2: Any comment, action or work from other participants that you found thought provoking and why? Any comment, action or work of other participants that you found challenging or you have any disagreements and why? Give examples

QUESTION 3: Any reflection from your own participation in the FGD? How did the other participants respond to your work? Any possible learning outcomes or challenges?

QUESTION 4: Any comment on the topic of the activities of the FGD? Did you find them relevant to your work? Did you gain anything throughout the process or not? Give examples

QUESTION 5: Other comments you find important, and you wish to communicate

Appendix 7: Examples of changes from piloting

A) Interview protocol

Before piloting:

13. Tell me about any differences or similarities you have with other practices and approaches	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psychologists• Teachers• Artisti	

After piloting:

12. Can you name to me other professionals who work on bullying prevention?	
13. From the professionals you named, do you find any similarities or differences with them regarding your practice and approach?	

B) Vignettes' protocol after piloting

Vignette 9:

After all this work, the anti-bullying sessions come to an end. Rachel wants to measure the efficacy of her work. What do you think is the most appropriate way of proceeding to that? You can give her ideas that you are using in your practice.

~~Vignette 10: What theory Rachel has drawn on in understanding why change is occurring? What would you advise to deepen her understanding?~~

Ethics Application Form: Student Research

Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the Institute (staff, students or visitors) where the research involves human participants or the use of data collected from human participants, is required to gain ethical approval before starting. This includes preliminary and pilot studies. Please answer all relevant questions in terms that can be understood by a lay person and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.

For further support and guidance please see accompanying guidelines and the Ethics Review Procedures for Student Research <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/studentethics/> or contact your supervisor or researchethics@ioe.ac.uk.

Before completing this form you will need to discuss your proposal fully with your supervisor(s).

Please attach all supporting documents and letters.

For all Psychology students, this form should be completed with reference to the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics and Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Section 1 Project details																						
a.	Project title	Re-thinking bullying prevention: Exploring the perceptions of Cypriot professionals on Interdisciplinary methods of learning																				
b.	Student name	Christodoulos Charitou																				
c.	Supervisor/Personal Tutor	Professor Phil Jones																				
d.	Department	DLL																				
e.	Course category (Tick one)	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>PhD/MPhil</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>EdD</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>MRes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>DEdPsy</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>MTeach</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>MA/MSc</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ITE</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Diploma (state which)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	PhD/MPhil	<input type="checkbox"/>	EdD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MRes	<input type="checkbox"/>	DEdPsy	<input type="checkbox"/>	MTeach	<input type="checkbox"/>	MA/MSc	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITE	<input type="checkbox"/>			Diploma (state which)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
		PhD/MPhil	<input type="checkbox"/>	EdD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>																	
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		ITE	<input type="checkbox"/>																			
Diploma (state which)	<input type="checkbox"/>																					

	Other (state which) <input type="checkbox"/>	
f.	Course/module title	Thesis
g.	If applicable , state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed.	N/A
h.	Intended research start date	August 2016
i.	Intended research end date	August 2018
j.	Country fieldwork will be conducted in <i>If research to be conducted abroad please check www.fco.gov.uk and submit a completed travel insurance form to Serena Ezra (s.ezra@ucl.ac.uk) in UCL Finance (see guidelines). This form can be found here (you will need your UCL login details available): https://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/secure/fin_acc/insurance.htm</i>	Cyprus Since I am a Cypriot citizen, no risk assessment is required.
k.	Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?	
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	External Committee Name:
	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ⇒ go to Section 2	Date of Approval:
If yes:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submit a copy of the approval letter with this application. - Proceed to Section 10 Attachments. 		
Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the <u>National Research Ethics Service (NRES)</u> or <u>Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC)</u> . In addition, if your research is based in another institution then you may be required to apply to their research ethics committee.		

Section 2 Project summary

Research methods (tick all that apply)

Please attach questionnaires, visual methods and schedules for interviews (even in draft form).

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interviews
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus groups
<input type="checkbox"/> Questionnaires
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action research
<input type="checkbox"/> Observation
<input type="checkbox"/> Literature review | <input type="checkbox"/> Controlled trial/other intervention study
<input type="checkbox"/> Use of personal records
<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic review ⇒ if only method used go to Section 5.
<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary data analysis ⇒ if secondary analysis used go to Section 6.
<input type="checkbox"/> Advisory/consultation/collaborative groups
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other, give details: Journal recordings, Video recordings, Vignettes |
|--|--|

Please provide an overview of your research. This should include some or all of the following: purpose of the research, aims, main research questions, research design, participants, sampling, your method of data collection (e.g., observations, interviews, questionnaires, etc.)

and kind of questions that will be asked, reporting and dissemination (typically 300-500 words).

Purpose of the research

Over the years a diversity of international anti-bullying approaches were implemented, influenced by the Norwegian intervention that was developed and evaluated by Olweus (1983) in the region of Berden (Stevens et al. 2001: 155). Four examples of the approaches in which theatre and more experiential activities were involved in their methodology were the DRACON project-Australia 1996-2004 (Burton and O' Toole 2002; 2005), the DFE Sheffield-England 1994 (Elsea and Smith 1998), the UPEI project-Canada 2004 (Belliveau 2005a; 2005b; 2006) and the DAPHNE II-Greece, Cyprus, Lithuania 2004-2008 (Stefanakou et al. 2013; Sismani Papakosta et al. 2014). All four interventions were presented in my Institutional Focus Study (IFS), something that assisted to the designing and evaluation of a new anti-bullying intervention under the concept of Creative Collaborations between a teacher and theatre practitioner focusing on the use of theatre and other experiential activities.

Cyprus has a highly centralised educational system and therefore the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) has the authority of making decisions regarding educational matters, as well as interventions concerning children's emotional development and wellbeing. The first step towards taking action against bullying in Cypriot schools took the form of a research that was ordered by the MOEC and contracted by the Observation on Violence in School organisation (OVS) in collaboration with the Cypriot Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation (CCERE). Responding to the results of the research that show low but not negligible percentages of bullying (Papadopoulos et al, 2012: 37), the Direct Intervention Team (DIT) -a group under the auspices of the General Director of Education- put together and circulated at Cypriot schools an anti-bullying manual (February, 10, 2015; February, 25, 2016). The anti-bullying manual provides information on bullying definition and prevention together with references on international anti-bullying programmes and interventions. Additionally, the MOEC through the circulated manual invites every school to design and develop its own anti-bullying policy in relation to the national regulations of education. Initially, it appears paramount to examine the specific anti-bullying manual, in order to get a closer look to the definition of bullying constructed by the MOEC. However, of high importance is to move even further in order to get an understanding on how and in what ways the specific definition of bullying influences the decisions on particular prevention policies suggested, which are considered relevant and inclusive to Cypriot education.

Apart from the guidance around the development of an anti-bullying policy, the circulated manual introduces several external organisations and individuals, known for their anti-bullying work, of which schools could get in contact with, if they wish to address bullying incorporating other informal and non-formal practices. Indisputably, by recommending the work of the specific organisations and individuals (ie. Educational Psychology Committee, Cypriot Youth Board, Mediterranean Institute of Gender studies, TheatrEtc organization, Hope for Children organisation etc.), the MOEC seems to value their independent approaches, supporting at the same time their particular theoretical perspectives on bullying. Sadly, apart from a brief introduction, the manual is lacking of detailed information about the nature of the above multidisciplinary approaches and their results. Moreover, the MOEC did not attempt to coordinate exchange of ideas and/or good practices with those organisations and individuals, with a result to miss the potential to work alongside other experts on the

issue of bullying in a multidisciplinary way, taking advantage of and combining the variety of their disciplinary approaches and methodologies. Therefore, all these professionals work independently, unaware in many occasions of the work that the others are operating, introducing to the students similar activities with same objectives. Additionally, the lack of detailed information around the results of the specific national programmes and/or good practices puts in question the efficacy of the manual, since the educational institutes have no examples and/or tangible outcomes to inspired from in their struggle to tackle bullying amongst their students. Thus, further research is required to investigate the professionals connected to work on bullying prevention and to explore the potential of a collective approach that can potentially take the form of interdisciplinarity.

Aims

The aim of the research is to explore the practices that certain professionals from various disciplines follow, in order to raise awareness on bullying among children and young people. It will examine the participants' perceptions and responses on theirs and other professionals' anti-bullying processes and will investigate on how disciplinary identity and educational background are linked with the empirical work of the participants. The research will move further to reveal the views of the participants on how they conceive and respond on a process of working together on co-designing and co-facilitating anti-bullying learning sessions.

Research questions

1. How do Cypriot professionals from different disciplines describe the efficacy of current anti-bullying methods of learning, based on their experiences?
2. What is the participants' perception on how their disciplinary identity and their educational background influence the way they define bullying?
3. What is their understanding on the efficacy of anti-bullying interventions and their awareness of other disciplines and approaches?
4. Which of the disciplinary practices they feel that they can appropriate and practice safely and which they feel they cannot?
5. How do professionals from different disciplines conceive and respond to a process of collaboration in order to co-design and co-facilitate anti-bullying learning sessions?

Research design

The research proposes a Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology, which is ideal for making the research and the results relevant to the participants involved in the process. According to Kemmis et. al (2014) PAR rejects the conventional research approaches where an external expert enters to record and represent what is happening. In PAR there is the appreciation of the competence of people working in particular settings to participate actively in all aspects of the research process calling them to make changes in their practices and their settings (Kemmis et. al 2015: 4). The research data will be collected over the period time of three research phases and the PAR's 'spiral' (Robson 2011: 190) methodology will be implemented on the second phase and during the Focus Group Discussions (FGD), in which the participants will enter a process of acting, observing, reflecting, and then planning and repeating the circle. Of high importance is for the participants to understand that the research benefits firstly their own work and values differing points of view in order to move closer to answers regarding the research questions put.

Furthermore, as Robson (2011) states, often the focus of an action research takes the form of an evaluation (Robson 2011: 189); that is to explore the views of the participants on the efficacy of the so far practices that are applied in Cypriot schools, in order to raise awareness and deal with bullying among students. Patton (1982) agrees

and defines evaluation research methodology as a practice for evaluation that involves the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of programmes in order among others to improve effectiveness of specific practices and to make decisions with regard to what those practices are doing and affecting (Patton 1982: 15). Highly important is that focusing on evaluation, the current research will emphasise on issues that have to do with change and produce or encourage change in those involved (Robson 2011: 177). In this case the introduction of collaborations and interdisciplinary models of learning will be catalytic for the professionals to reconsider their practices and seek new ways to approach the issue of bullying in their learning processes.

Essentially, PAR commands communication between the researcher and the participants in order to enter a process for mutual development of knowledge and learning and to understand people concerns (Swantz 2008: 33). Therefore, the data collection model will be qualitative. As Bresler (2006) argues, the benefit on this approach is the support of a self-reflexive and self-critical stance that allows the participants/researchers 'to 'move closer': to linger, connect, perceive, [and] re-see' (Bresler 2006: 56) the challenges, the distinctions and the similarities of practice.

Multiple methods of inquiry will be selected for collecting the data and involve: a) written vignettes in which the participants will comment and include examples of their practice, b) interviews at the beginning and at the end of the process, c) Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with activities that stimulate discussion, d) journal recordings at the end of each FGD and e) video recordings of every FGD. Due to the amount of data that will be collected, data triangulation –a method of cross-examining data from multiple resources (Robson 2011: 158)- will take place. Bloor (1997) argues that collecting data for multiple resources can be proved problematic, especially when the data you collect differ to a degree from each other (Bloor 1997: 38). However, the use of a variety of data resources in PAR is critical when entering an evaluation (Klein 2012: 10) of the current and future anti-bullying practices, offering a wide range of views between the six Cypriot professionals that will participate in the research.

Participants

The participants of the research will be 6 professionals (teacher, psychologist, music practitioner, theatre practitioner, social worker, art practitioner) who are interested in taking part into the research, completing written vignettes at the beginning, being interviewed at the beginning and end of the research and participating in three 3-hours FGD with activities which will stimulate discussion. Although the participants come from different professional backgrounds, they all work on anti-bullying methods of learning with children and either belong to organisations suggested by the MOEC on the toolkit circulated in schools or they work as freelancers developing bullying prevention activities in education approved by the MOEC.

Data collection instruments

Prior to the research it is essential for a preliminary meeting with the participants to be arranged. The preliminary meetings with the six professionals are of high importance, especially when the research demands an investment of a great amount of time, as well as the use of vignettes, which is a tool that possibly they are not familiar with.

Vignettes

According to Stechers et. al. (2006) using vignettes to gain a contextualised description of classroom situations is not a new research technique and they can assist in prompting detailed descriptions of institutional practice. They make data collection process more realistic by providing a context for professionals who work in a classroom setting in which to situate their responses (Stecher et. al. 2006: 4). Hughes (1998) disagrees and states that due to the fact there is not much research on the use of

vignettes, there is lack of information on the relationship between them and real life responses (1998:384). Nevertheless, this study will use narrative-based vignettes, with written descriptions of a classroom situation together with questions on decisions that the professionals might take, including examples of their practice. The vignettes will be used as complimentary to form the initial interviews and all the participants will be called to comment on their answers in order for the researcher to clarify any conflicting points. Clear guidance on the completion of the vignettes will be given to the professionals, ensuring that anonymity will be kept, which will not expose any personal details of the participants or people they work with (Example of Vignettes' protocol attached).

Interviews

Conducting interviews within PAR is fundamental for gaining a deeper understanding on the professionals' practices and their decisions concerning their approaches (Kvale, 1996: 105). Therefore, I will interview the participants at the beginning and at the end of the process. The questions in PAR are usually semi-structured by using an 'interview guide' (Robson 2011: 280) to serve as a checklist of what needs to be covered following the research questions. The vignettes will influence the content of the questions although the primary aim is to leave room for wording and additional questions to be asked based on the flow of the interview. The focus is on creating 'open-ended questions that will maximise the potential for participants' responses and rich data' (Wilson-Agostinone 2012: 29), allowing them to describe further their practice and define themselves the issues that they are dealing with. Additionally, the participants will be called to complete statements, to explore their views on how they define bullying and how they understand bullying prevention (Example of Interviews' protocol attached).

Focus Group Discussions with activities

Interviews will assist in their direct way to understand participants' perceptions on specific matters. Nevertheless, FGD are less threatening to many participants and provide a helpful environment in order to discuss perceptions, ideas, opinions and thoughts (Krueger and Casey 2000: 13). Most importantly, FGD with activities that will stimulate discussion, offer a safe space to the participants to express their views since as Liamputtong (2011) states, people feel more relaxed when talking about sensitive issues when they see that others have similar experiences or views (Liamputtong 2011: 107). In this case and in combination with the vignettes and the interviews, the FGD will assist in the exchange of opinions around the learning methods used so far and the essentials to shift bullying prevention in the direction on interdisciplinarity (Example of FGD protocol attached).

Video recordings

The FGD will be video recorded making clear to the participants from the beginning that the video recordings will assist in getting a clear picture of their practices. The latter is due to the creative form of the activities during the FGD, which include physical re-enactment of scenarios or stories. By recording the FGD, I will enter the process of data triangulation, since I will watch back during my analysis making sure that nothing will be missed.

Electronic Journal

Additionally, after the implementation of the FGD, the participants will evaluate each workshop on an electronic journal following a specific structure relevant to the research questions. The evaluation process will help primarily to examine the participants' challenges (Swantz 2008: 42) and to leave space for disclosing any views they have and they could not express during the FGD, offering in this way a safe space to the participants (Example of Electronic Journal protocol attached).

Interpreting the data

Through vignettes, interviews, FGD with activities, video recordings and electronic journals, the participants will communicate their work and express their views on other participants' work. The research will move forward to challenge participants' professional boundaries and their understanding of interdisciplinarity in anti-bullying methods of learning, promoting the collaboration between them in creating anti-bullying sessions, which can be applied in specific group of children. Member checking will take place throughout the process and during mostly the initial and final interviews and the participants can choose whether they want to use something or not. More specifically, at the initial interview participants will be called to comment on their vignettes, while on the final interview they will be called to comment on the video and electronic journals recordings.

Due to the great length of data collection, Thematic Analysis will be used to answer the research questions. All the data collected will be analysed following the 'thematic synthesis' (Barnett-Page and Thomas 2009: 3) approach where the findings will be organised in codes informing analytical themes. According to Barnett-Page and Thomas (2009) thematic analysis can serve the need to measure the effectiveness of an intervention using a constant comparison method between all the data collected from various research instruments.

Section 3 Participants

Please answer the following questions giving full details where necessary. Text boxes will expand for your responses.

a. Will your research involve human participants? Yes No ⇒ go to Section 4

b. Who are the participants (i.e. what sorts of people will be involved)? Tick all that apply.
teacher, psychologist, sociologist, theatre practitioner, art practitioner, music therapist

Early years/pre-school

Ages 5-11

Ages 12-16

Young people aged 17-18

Unknown – specify below

Adults *please specify below*

Other – specify below

NB: Ensure that you check the **guidelines** (Section 1) carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES).

The participants are six individuals active in the field of anti-bullying work in Cypriot education

c. If participants are under the responsibility of others (such as parents, teachers or medical staff) how do you intend to obtain permission to approach the participants to take part in the study?

(Please attach approach letters or details of permission procedures – see Section 9 Attachments.)

d. How will participants be recruited (identified and approached)?

The participants are professionals working in the field of anti-bullying education in Cyprus and they have been approached through existing educational procedures. An official information form with a consent form will be provided to them

e.	Describe the process you will use to inform participants about what you are doing. Initial meetings will take place with all the participants individually in order to discuss on the information form. After the detailed description of the process they will be given a consent form, which they need to sign.
f.	How will you obtain the consent of participants? Will this be written? How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate at any time? <i>See the guidelines for information on opt-in and opt-out procedures. Please note that the method of consent should be appropriate to the research and fully explained.</i> The participants will be informed during the initial meeting that they are free to withdraw at any time and a written consent form will be given to them to sign
g.	Studies involving questionnaires: Will participants be given the option of omitting questions they do not wish to answer? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If NO please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
h.	Studies involving observation: Confirm whether participants will be asked for their informed consent to be observed. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If NO read the guidelines (Ethical Issues section) and explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
i.	Might participants experience anxiety, discomfort or embarrassment as a result of your study? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	If yes what steps will you take to explain and minimise this? If not , explain how you can be sure that no discomfort or embarrassment will arise? The participants will be informed that they do not need to disclose anything that they do not wish during the Focus Group Discussions. For this reason they will be given a recorder to evaluate each FGD. They will cross-check all the video recordings.
j.	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants (deception) in any way? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	If YES please provide further details below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
k.	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

	If NO please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
I.	Will participants be given information about the findings of your study? (This could be a brief summary of your findings in general; it is not the same as an individual debriefing.) Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If no , why not?

Section 4 Security-sensitive material

Only complete if applicable

Security sensitive research includes: commissioned by the military; commissioned under an EU security call; involves the acquisition of security clearances; concerns terrorist or extreme groups.

a.	Will your project consider or encounter security-sensitive material?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Will you be visiting websites associated with extreme or terrorist organisations?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input type="checkbox"/>
c.	Will you be storing or transmitting any materials that could be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input type="checkbox"/>

* Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**

Section 5 Systematic review of research

Only complete if applicable

a.	Will you be collecting any new data from participants?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	No <input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Will you be analysing any secondary data?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

* Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**

*If your methods do not involve engagement with participants (e.g. systematic review, literature review) and if you have answered **No** to both questions, please go to **Section 10 Attachments**.*

Section 6 Secondary data analysis Complete for all secondary analysis

a.	Name of dataset/s	
b.	Owner of dataset/s	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

c.	Are the data in the public domain?		If no, do you have the owner's permission/license? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/>
d.	Are the data anonymised?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
		Do you plan to anonymise the data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Do you plan to use individual level data? Yes* <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Will you be linking data to individuals? Yes* <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
e.	Are the data sensitive (<u>DPA 1998 definition</u>)?		Yes* <input type="checkbox"/>
f.	Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
g.	If no , was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
h.	If no , was data collected prior to ethics approval process?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

* Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**

If secondary analysis is only method used **and** no answers with asterisks are ticked, go to **Section 9 Attachments**.

Section 7 Data Storage and Security

Please ensure that you include all hard and electronic data when completing this section.

a.	Confirm that all personal data will be stored and processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 1998). (See the Guidelines and the Institute's Data Protection & Records Management Policy for more detail.)	
b.	Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *

*** If yes**, please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance with the DPA 1998 and state what these arrangements are below.

c. Who will have access to the data and personal information, including advisory/consultation groups and during transcription? Only me as the researcher and my supervisor

During the research

d. Where will the data be stored? Laptop and hard disk driver

Will mobile devices such as USB storage and laptops be used? Yes *
No

e. *** If yes**, state what mobile devices: Laptops, recorders and hard disk driver

*** If yes**, will they be encrypted?: Yes they will be encrypted

After the research

f. Where will the data be stored? Laptop and hard disk driver

g. How long will the data and records be kept for and in what format? Until the end of my Doctoral Degree and in audio, visual and word documents

h. Will data be archived for use by other researchers? Yes *
No

*** If yes**, please provide details.

Section 8 Ethical issues

Are there particular features of the proposed work which may raise ethical concerns or add to the complexity of ethical decision making? If so, please outline how you will deal with these.

It is important that you demonstrate your awareness of potential risks or harm that may arise as a result of your research. You should then demonstrate that you have considered ways to minimise the likelihood and impact of each potential harm that you have identified. Please be as specific as possible in describing the ethical issues you will have to address. Please consider / address ALL issues that may apply.

Ethical concerns may include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Methods - Sampling - Recruitment - Gatekeepers - Informed consent - Potentially vulnerable participants - Safeguarding/child protection - Sensitive topics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International research - Risks to participants and/or researchers - Confidentiality/Anonymity - Disclosures/limits to confidentiality - Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection) - Reporting - Dissemination and use of findings |
|---|--|

The research will investigate participants' perceptions and explore whether there are possibilities to work together on interdisciplinary models of learning, therefore it contains ethical issues in need of addressing prior the implementation. Firstly, a PAR methodology deals with issues of 'confidentiality, privacy, protecting the rights of participants' (Glanz, 1998: 241). Therefore, I will ensure anonymity for the implicated parties and I will also avoid revealing any personal information that exposes anyone's identity (Robson 2011: 208). Most importantly, I will create safe space during the FGD, ensuring everybody that the research is a group effort to maximise the results of our work, nevertheless they are free to only share things that they feel comfortable with. Moreover, at the end of the FGD a private space will be created, where the participants can come and communicate with me things they do not want to be included in the research. Lastly, an open space for reflection after each FGD will be provided through the electronic journals, in which the participants can freely express their views and disclose any information if they do not feel comfortable during the workshop.

Apart from the approval from the IOE/UCL, a preliminary visit meeting with the participants will take place. The participants will be six professionals working on anti-bullying methods of learning and come either from the organisations suggested by the MOEC on the manual circulated in schools or they are individuals applying activities with children in schools. The six professionals will be asked to consent that the interviews and the FGD will be recorded to ensure transparency and credibility of the data collected, which they will be protected through password protection system.

As Robson (2011), argues 'a practitioner-researcher is someone who is 'involved in carrying out systematic enquiry that is of relevance to the job' (Robson 2011: 535) raising questions of objectivism in the research findings. Indeed, as a teacher and applied theatre practitioner, I believe that interdisciplinary models of learning can play an important role in the transformation of people's perceptions and attitudes towards bullying and built-on the professional capacity of professionals. Nevertheless, 'PAR rejects science as the dominating knowledge and bases the problems on everyday knowledge' (Swantz 2008: 38). Therefore, it is essential that 'the data reporting process include an opportunity for all researchers, participants, and stakeholders to review and reflect on findings through member checking; this will enhance both credibility and conformability' (Klein 2012: 14). By incorporating an on-going dialogue on the ethical implications of the research with all the participants at each stage of the process, will allow a deeper appreciation on the importance of each one's role (Brydon-Miller 2008: 205).

As a research student of IOE/UCL any data collected will be securely stored and any dissemination of results will respect the rules and regulations of the University and the British Educational Research Association (BERA), as well as the privacy of those whom I research. Therefore, I will handle all the transcriptions, while copies and backup will be made of both the recordings and transcripts. Hardware based security will be ensured using files' passwords both on my computer and external hard disk driver so that only me will have access to these. Any issues emerge concerning protection of child abuse will be communicated towards the relevant child protection authority (<http://www.childcom.org.cy>).

Section 9 Further information

Outline any other information you feel relevant to this submission, using a separate sheet or attachments if necessary.

--

Section 10 Attachments Please attach the following items to this form, or explain if not attached

a.	Information sheets and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research, including approach letters	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Consent form	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>If applicable:</i>		
c.	The proposal for the project	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
d.	Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e.	Full risk assessment	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Section 11 Declaration

No	Yes
I have read, understood and will abide by the following set of guidelines. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BPS <input type="checkbox"/> BERA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BSA <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) <input type="checkbox"/>	
I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my supervisor. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I have attended the appropriate ethics training provided by my course. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I confirm that to the best of my knowledge:	
The above information is correct and that this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project.	
Name	Christodoulos Charitou
Date	23 June 2016

Notes and references

Professional code of ethics

You should read and understand relevant ethics guidelines, for example:

British Psychological Society (2009) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*, and (2014) *Code of Human Research Ethics*

or

British Educational Research Association (2011) *Ethical Guidelines*

or

British Sociological Association (2002) *Statement of Ethical Practice*

Please see the respective websites for these or later versions; direct links to the latest versions are available on the Institute of Education <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ethics/>.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

If you are planning to carry out research in regulated Education environments such as Schools, or if your research will bring you into contact with children and young people (under the age of 18), you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) CHECK, before you start. The DBS was previously known as the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)). If you do not already hold a current DBS check, and have not registered with the DBS update service, you will need to obtain one through at IOE. Further information can be found at

http://www.ioe.ac.uk/studentInformation/documents/DBS_Guidance_1415.pdf

Ensure that you apply for the DBS check in plenty of time as will take around 4 weeks, though can take longer depending on the circumstances.

Further references

The www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk website is very useful for assisting you to think through the ethical issues arising from your project.

Robson, Colin (2011). *Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner researchers* (3rd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.

This text has a helpful section on ethical considerations.

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011) *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical Handbook*. London: Sage.

This text has useful suggestions if you are conducting research with children and young people.

Wiles, R. (2013) *What are Qualitative Research Ethics?* Bloomsbury.

A useful and short text covering areas including informed consent, approaches to research ethics including examples of ethical dilemmas.

Departmental use

If a project raises particularly challenging ethics issues, or a more detailed review would be appropriate, you may refer the application to the Research Ethics and Governance Administrator (via researchethics@ioe.ac.uk) so that it can be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for consideration. A Research Ethics Committee Chair, ethics representatives in your department and the research ethics coordinator can advise you, either to support your review process, or help decide whether an application should be referred to the Research Ethics Committee.

Also see' when to pass a student ethics review up to the Research Ethics Committee':

<http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/policiesProcedures/42253.html>

Reviewer 1

Supervisor name

Supervisor comments	
Supervisor signature	
Reviewer 2	
Advisory committee/course team member name	
Advisory committee/course team member comments	<p>This is thorough and well thought-through, demonstrating a clear understanding of any ethical issues that may arise during the course of the research. There are three minor aspects to address and one slightly larger:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dept should be DLL? 2. Suggest amending end date to August 2018 in line with anticipated submission of thesis/viva? 3. Country fieldwork conducted in – Cyprus? And then indicate that you are a Cypriot so no risk assessment required? 4. RQ 2 – I’m assuming that the link between identity, educational background and how these influence how professionals define bullying will be the perceptions of your participants? If so, I suggest you amend this RQ to reflect that it will be self-reported.
Advisory committee/course team member signature	
Decision	
Date decision was made	
Decision	Approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Referred back to applicant and supervisor <input type="checkbox"/>
	Referred to REC for review <input type="checkbox"/>
Recording	Recorded in the student information system <input type="checkbox"/>

Once completed and approved, please send this form and associated documents to the relevant programme administrator to record on the student information system and to securely store.

Further guidance on ethical issues can be found on the IOE website at <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ethics/> and www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk

Appendix 9: Coding Example

Topic	Theme	Code 1	Code 2	Code 3
Involvement in anti-bullying work	Needs	Personal interest		
		Gaining more knowledge		
		Reaction to the educational system		
		Work on something new		
	Impact	Personal		
		Professional		
Bullying issue	Definition	Anger	Negative feelings and emotions	
			Empathy	
			Aggressiveness	
			Children define it	
		We cannot define		
		Repetition		
		Predetermine act		
		Power imbalance		
		Lack of empathy		
		Forms of bullying	Verbal, physical, psychological, exclusion	
		Damage		
		School oriented		
Bullying prevention	Dealing with bullying	Define it to work better on it	Like disease and disorder	
			Differences from conflict	
		Not labeling bully and bullied children		
		Empowerment to report		
		Support the bullied children		
		Investigate		
			Asking the right questions	

Understanding bullying prevention

		Never give promises of resolving something	
	Mediation		
	Parents	Education for parents Inform the parents Offer a healthy environment	
	Teachers	Education for teachers	The use of arts Focusing on building characters Form the way children think Education/help from experts Learning processes
		Teachers' professional code of ethics	Involvement of parent and better communication with them
		Channels of communication with children	
	Children to learn how to deal with negative emotions		
	Other professionals/help	Empowerment	
		Psychologists in schools	To intervene and handle the problem To refer the children to other professionals
	Other services of the state	Health services Police Social workers	
	Classroom approaches	Health Education	Focusing on knowledge transference
		Manual for bullying prevention	

		Infuse teaching on bullying in other subjects Action plan	
	School responsibility Non-existence of cohesive mind set between the teachers Lack of skills from teachers		
	MOEC's responsibility	Labeling Accept help Develop a plan	Services of the MOEC
		Increase the numbers of educational psychologists in schools Remove the Power	
	External organisations/ programmes	Sports teachers	
Professional identity	My practice		
	Expressing feelings/ emotions Teachers/ school involvement	Learn about profile Holistic approach	
	Safe space/ trust relationship Practice/ approach	Bottom-up method	Sharing personal stories
	The use of experiential activities Aims	Top-down method	
	Rules Addressing the issue to the group	Time keeping Disclosure/safe space Code of conduct	

Interdisciplinary form	Understanding of collaborations/ interdisciplinarity	Me and the others	Addressing the issue individually	Supporting group	
			Evaluation	Observation Questionnaires	Children Teachers Parents
			Similarities	Worksheets Final outcome	
			Differences	None is replaceable	
			Opportunities/ strong points	Alternative ways for children to express	
			Challenges/ limitations	Children come in contact with other methods of learning You see your discipline from a different perspective Understanding through practice other disciplines It completes my practice Professional development Learn how to work together Personal development No clear understanding of each other disciplines Territorial and status conflicts Lack of time	Code of conduct Short collaboration/ Lack of sustainability

**Future of
Interdisciplinary form of
learning**

Definition

The educational system is
not mature enough

Teachers and children will
stand critical
Interesting approaches to
learning
Different perspective for
bullying
Put effort
Teachers are important

Focus point and aims
Lack of training in co-
facilitation

In the form of a short
intervention

Lack of good preparation
and coordination
Devoting personal time
A lot to teach

