

Dissertation Volume 2

- 1. Literature Review**
- 2. Empirical Research Project**
- 3. Reflective Commentary**

University College London Submitted in partial requirement for the Doctorate in
Psychotherapy (Child and Adolescent)

DECLARATION

I declare that the material submitted for examination is my own work. The ideas and findings of others have been referenced in accordance with the guidelines provided and any work by others has been acknowledged. I understand that anti-plagiarism software may be used to check for appropriate use of referencing.



Date: 10/9/24

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Impact Statement	7
Part 1: Literature Review.....	9
Title: A Summary of Psychoanalytic Concepts that contribute to an Understanding of Why Parents Physically Harm their Children'	9
Abstract	10
Introduction.....	11
Rationale.....	12
Methodology.....	13
Historical context	14
Theme 1: The Id, Ego and Superego	15
Theme 2: Defences	29
Strengths and Limitations.....	35
Discussion	36
Conclusions	39
References	41
Part 2: Empirical Study	53
Title: An Exploration into the Childhood Experiences of Parents who are at Risk of Physically Harming their Children.....	53
Abstract	54
Introduction.....	55
Rationale.....	56
Method.....	58
Design.....	58
Context	58
Procedure	59
Sampling	59
Measures	60
Participants	60
Table 1: Sample Demographics	61
Ethics.....	62
Researcher Reflexivity	62
Data analysis	63
Results.....	65
Table 2: Summary of Themes	65
1. Familiar Territory: Maltreatment	66
Abusive Experiences: What happened to them?.....	67
Abusive Events: What happened around them?	68
2. Missing Pieces: absence, separation and loss	69
Parents	69
Other People/Factors.....	70
3. Holding it together: splitting, repeating and forgetting	71

Splitting and idealisation vs. Denigration	71
Compulsion to Repeat	72
Repression, Denial and Identification	74
Discussion	75
Familiar territory	76
Missing Pieces	78
Holding it together	81
Strengths and Limitations	85
References	87
Part 3: Reflective Commentary	97
Title: A Journey into the World of Research	97
Introduction: Setting the Scene	97
Beginning: Finding my Feet	99
Starting: A Leap of Faith	100
Stepping Up: Gains and Losses	102
Stepping out: Moving Forward	106
Conclusions: Destination Unknown	110
References	112
Appendix 1: data set	113
Appendix 2: Codes	137
Appendix 3: Themes	145

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Impact Statement

The messages in this project could inform direct work with parents who are struggling to safely parent their children. It supports a developmentally informed treatment approach and illuminates intergenerational patterns due to adversities in childhood leading to deficit in the adult attempting to parent. Children need to be protected from harm and authorities will need to continue to intervene. I hope that this project advocates for the importance of responding to parents with empathy and support as this could be the gateway to effectively engaging and helping both the parent and the children from becoming like their parent in the future. I also hope it provides a clear message that prevention and early intervention is key if transmission of developmental trauma is to be reduced.

This project illustrates how applying a psychoanalytic lens to the etiology of child physical abuse could assist with its perception as something to be addressed as opposed to managed. The outcomes of the literature review alongside the findings in the empirical project encapsulate the phrase '*hurt people hurt people*' and accentuates a need to re-evaluate how parents at risk of harming their children are understood and treated. It is understandable that any act of violence is deemed unacceptable and requires deterrents to promote order in society. However, promoting an individual's capacity to regulate emotional states could prevent it happening in the first place.

Recovery from as opposed to controlling against could take more time and thought now but could have knock on effects for generations to come.

As well as informing my own work with families, I have presented this research to my team, and I am in consultation with my supervisor about publication of a version. The team were struck by the themes in the empirical study and how every participant suffered significant adversities in childhood and were using psychic defenses that indicate that they live under a constant threat of their own psychological survival. We discussed how these were challenging conditions for parenting and how it was likely that these ill-equipped parents were unable as opposed to not wanting to keep their children safe.

It feels important to illuminate the lived experiences of parents at risk of harming their children and highlight how early life impingements and developmental trauma can permeate throughout the life cycle. I hope that this project and the growing body of on-going research on this topic will permit more open conversations and a realistic picture of what becoming and being a parent can mean. I hope that asking for and needing help can be accepted on a social and moral basis so that individuals develop the capacity to become more introspective as opposed to externally locating problems.

Part 1: Literature Review

**Title: A Summary of Psychoanalytic Concepts
that contribute to an Understanding of Why
Parents Physically Harm their Children'**



Word Count: 7813

Abstract

Introduction: This narrative review explores literature pertaining to psychoanalytic theory and the physical abuse of children by their parents. It seeks to investigate how a psychodynamic perspectives could contribute to an understanding of this phenomenon. Relevant databases and journals were searched, related content analysed and is presented under themes that were created. *Aims:* To find and discuss what is contained in relevant literature about unconscious psychic processes within parents that contribute to them physically harming their children, and to add to an understanding of the etiology of this enduring problem. *Findings:* The most prominent themes relate to how character is formed and how related internal psychic structures impact emotional regulation and behaviour. Whilst there are various and differing perspectives, it is deficits within the parents' own psychological development that have been most prominent in the literature. *Conclusions:* There are clear themes relating to the formative years of the parent and how this impact upon their psychological equilibrium and in turn the meaning attributed to and treatment of their child.

Keywords: child physical abuse/maltreatment, parents, violence, psychoanalytic theory/concepts

Introduction

The literature on the topic of child abuse highlights it as a problematic global issue (Holden, 2020), discusses its uniqueness as a phenomenon given the familial context within which it occurs (Galdston, 1981; Leeb et al, 2008) and informs that children are more likely to be harmed by someone known to them (Flatley, 2016). This review interrogates literature that applies psychoanalytic concepts to the etiology of physical abuse of children in a quest to contribute to an understanding of its persistence.

Throughout this review the words child abuse and maltreatment will be used interchangeably. Both refer to a child or young person being harmed. The word parent or caregiver is used to describe those in the role of caring for the dependent child. If the content of what is presented specifies to either the mother or father role, as opposed to parent in general, this will be stated.

The review will begin with information on the historical context and will then organise the findings from the literature under two main themes: 1. the Id, ego and superego and 2. defenses. Subheadings will be used to provide some order to the content. A discussion of the findings will follow, and conclusions drawn.

Rationale

Research shows that adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) such as maltreatment, can result in long term deficits in health and well-being across the lifespan (Felitti et al 1998). Gilbert et al (2008) discuss how child maltreatment is a major chronic public health and social welfare problem that needs to be addressed by therapeutic and preventative strategies. They highlight how it can cause serious harm to children, with life-long impact, or death.

Based on the above, it makes sense economically, and ethically, to tackle the causality of the problem alongside the impact. Psychoanalytic theories could offer perspectives on unconscious processes and the development of the internal world of the individual that carries into the parental role. George (1996) explores how psychoanalytic thinking can inform child protection interventions and cognitive approaches to parenting. Holden (2020) suggests that further work is needed in understanding unconscious determinants of why parents physically chastise their children, given these are invisible and can defy rationality.

Corby (1993) discusses the strengths of using psychodynamics and suggests that focusing on the intra-and inter-personal dynamics of child abuse may make thinking about it more tolerable. It has been cited that it is challenging to have empathy for those who abuse children due to it being difficult to think about it in the context of human nature (DeZuleta, 1993; Tuohy, 1987). Enabling professionals to tolerate and consider it as a human condition may promote their motivation and capacity to create and deliver services that could respond to the cause as well as reacting to the impact.

The aim of this literature review is to explore key literature containing psychoanalytic theory in the context of child maltreatment. The themes that emerged as relating to why parents may physically harm their children will be discussed in the service of illuminating the importance of understanding unconscious processes in the emotional life of a parent.

Methodology

This is a narrative literature review that synthesises the content of selected papers/books and organises the information under key themes. Two databases have been searched (Psychinfo via OVID, and PEBWEB), as well as two on-line journals (Child Abuse and Neglect and The Journal of Child Psychotherapy). The terms 'child abuse AND psychoanalytic theory' with truncations on the words abuse and theory, were used to conduct searches.

In terms of exclusion criteria, any material relating to the impact of maltreatment on children was excluded as it is the 'why' it may happen rather than the outcomes that is the focal point of this review. The review was focused on physical abuse, and studies that focused exclusively on sexual, emotional/psychological abuse and neglect were excluded as the etiology of these categories warrant separate exploration. That said, it is difficult to separate physical from emotional/psychological harm given the inevitable overlap.

Regarding inclusion criteria, papers and books that contained material on psychoanalytic theory that links to what internally driven factors could cause parents to

physically hurt their children was included. Also, material that relates to the intrapsychic processes attached to violence was incorporated due to physical abuse being the focus. Both maternal and paternal perspectives were explored. Literature relating to theory, empirical research, and clinical case studies were all included.

Historical context

Literature on the topic of child abuse reflects how child rearing practices have changed over time and can be culturally determined (De Mause, 2001; Kempe & Helfer 1987; Young-Bruehl 2012). De Mause explores how children were mistreated and exploited by their parents across centuries and suggests this was in the service of managing their own turmoil and survival anxiety. Hoffman (2003) refers to how the parents' destructive fantasies have found their way into fairy tales or myths and proposes that these are a vehicle for expression and mastery.

Young-Bruehl discusses how children being sacrificed was widespread practice in some ancient cultures. The Greek used the word 'pharmikon' which means to take something 'bad or unhealthy' away. Young Buehl suggest that symbolically parents felt the sacrifice of their own child undid their sinful past.

Whilst sacrificing children is an ancient practice, De Mause and Furman (1986) speak to the on-going conflicted feelings that parents grapple with towards their children. They refer to modern residues, from the harmless practice of swaddling babies to brutal acts, such as female genital mutilation.

Steele and Pollock (1987) conducted a landmark study in America during the 1960's. Many authors mention this pioneering work as central to developing an understanding of the aetiology of child abuse (Freedman, 1975; Prodgers et al, 1984; Green, 1976; Tuohy, 1987; Corby, 1993; George, 1996; Young-Bruehl, 2012). They used methods of psychiatric diagnosis and therapeutic interviews to assess the personalities of parents who had physically abused their children. They reported that what they saw was extreme versions of what were accepted parenting practice at the time and highlighted the intergenerational aspect of child abuse.

Theme 1: The Id, Ego and Superego

Through his lifetime Sigmund Freud (1915) engaged in pioneering work on the unconscious mind as a primary source of motivation in human behaviour. He developed theories relating to a structural model of the mind, which is inaccessible to conscious thought and cognitive processes (Freud, 1911; 1920; 1923).

Freud theorised that the infant is born with internal instinctual drives that are discharged in the service of survival and self-preservation. He theorised that a human being has opposing drives for both life, '*Eros*' and death, '*Thanatos*'. The latter was associated with the capacity for aggression, destruction and violence. Leer (2005) suggests that Freud was alluding to the fact that death is an evitable part of life, and that violence directed outwards is a way of controlling a self-destruct mechanism that is inherent in all humans. In other words, if the destruction of the self is threatened, an individual will be

driven to attack or destroy self or others, depending on the source of the perceived threat.

Freud called the part of the mind that oversaw these drives the '*Id*'. Freud believed that the interplay of the *Id* with the external world shaped the personality, which he called the '*Ego*'. Freud hypothesised that the *Id* pursues pleasurable and self-serving experiences whilst the *Ego* has to consider reality and survival in the context of relationships and social inclusion, which are fundamental to human existence. The third aspect, which Freud called the '*Superego*' develops as a moral conscience to guide the ego as it mediates between the internal drives and external reality. There are different schools of thought about when the superego forms, however there is a consensus that its foundation is built in early childhood and primary caregivers shape its structure (Klein, 1932; Winnicott, 1965).

Intergenerational cycles

In considering the internal world of a parent, the literature highlights how inadequate relational experiences within the formative years impact on ego formation and function (Anna Freud, 1965; Winnicott, 1965; Wolfe, 1981). Therefore, intergenerational cycles of abuse can develop as one fragile ego produces another within primary family relationships. Insufficient care in childhood could result in an unintegrated ego in the parent that will struggle to manage the drives through life. Prodgers (1984) identified a lack of ego development in parents as a key ingredient in the abusive act.

Anna Freud (1970) theorised that an infant utilises an auxiliary ego, in that during the first year of life they use the primary caregiver's ego as a '*protective shield*' (p37) in

navigating between the internal and external worlds. Should the available auxiliary ego be fragile and unintegrated, the child will form their own separate ego on this insecure foundation, setting the scene for what they can offer to their future child in the parent-infant dyad.

Rejection and punishing experiences in a parent's own childhood has been shown to contribute to cases of child abuse (Green, 1976; Jacobson & Straker, 1979). Miller (1990) talked about how a parent who physically assaults their child is attempting to gain back the power and control that they lost to their own parent.

Breiner (1979) suggested that those who have been the victims of violence in their formative years may physically punish their own child to regulate an unconscious fear of passive rage. The 'active' nature of the act is an attempt to prevent the building up of the 'passive', in that ongoing discharge of libidinal forces reduces annihilation anxiety. Rosen (1991) also talks about this concept and describes how aggression experienced passively in childhood is later enacted as the adult identifies with their own abusing parent and repeats the pattern.

In a case study, Mohler et al (2001) describe an infant-mother relationship. When the baby expressed a need it was met with aggression and resentment. The mother in the case example had never felt accepted or valued by her own mother and her child's needs triggered the pain and rage associated with her own unmet needs.

Psychoanalytic theorists such as Kohut (1977) and Montgomery (2019) discussed the cyclical nature of physical abuse in that a parent can be painfully reconnected their own longing and react with anger as opposed to empathy when their child makes a demand

or communicates a need that they themselves have not had met. Butz (1993) uses the archaic vampire as a metaphor for this phenomenon in that the immortality of this shadow figure symbolises how trauma passes down generations, with the victim transforming into the aggressor once injected with venom.

Aggression and Impulse Control

A discharge of aggression is involved when a parent physically abuses their child.

A survey of numerous studies concluded that a deficit in the ego resulting in poorly controlled impulses was a common factor for many abusing parents (Spinetta & Rigler, 1972).

The classical approach to psychoanalysis advocates that aggression is a libidinal drive on the side of life (S. Freud, 1915). Many other theorists agree and expand this idea about how such an innate survival mechanism can misfire and contort, resulting in violence and destruction in benign contexts (Bowlby, 1984; Campbell, 2011; DeZuleta, 1993; Morgan & Ruszczynski, 2007; Steele & Pollock 1987). Wiehe (1997) states that there is '*little empirical evidence*' (p1195) that there are biological roots to aggression as an instinct or drive, however, recognises internal processes, such as frustration and a need for control, as catalysts.

Parens (1987) refers to '*hostile destructiveness*' which he describes as '*extending from anger through hostility, hate and rage*' (p334). He highlights how, over time, the psychoanalytic tradition has come to see this as being beyond inborn traits. He discusses how it is linked to deep wounds in the development of the self and how violence is a defence against humiliation and the threat of annihilation. Parens uses a

case example to highlight how a parent who has feelings of low self-worth through multiple rejections, experiences her child's demands as a further indicator of failings hence destructiveness towards the source is mobilised in defence.

The superego is the part of the mind that oversees and manage the drives, weighing up and directing the discharge of aggression (Spitz 1958; Steele & Pollock 1987). Kernberg (1975) and Spitz (1958) described how the introjection of early relationships can play a vital role in the early formation of the superego. The superego enriches the integrated sense of self by overseeing the individual's navigation through life, providing flexible moral direction, when necessary. However, as parents who abuse often present as having fragmented egos and unintegrated superegos, they can instead experience rigid extremes, such as fantasies of power or harsh internal narratives (Prodgers, 1984).

Steele and Pollock (1987) discussed how an individual's capacity to use restraint in the discharge of aggression has its beginnings in infancy. They discuss how, if a parent uses force, control and physical punishment in carrying out parenting tasks, instead of providing attuned, developmentally informed care, the infant may identify with aggression as a bodily defence against felt helplessness. This unintegrated and unprocessed feeling can then be enacted when the infant grows into an adult and experiences helplessness in their experience as a parent.

Male and female psyche

Different psychoanalytic theories have developed to understand the perpetration of child abuse by fathers versus mothers. Josephs (2007) discussed the archaic primal father and suggests that this is an important aspect to think about within the male psyche. He

proposes that as part of their psychological development, a man needs to become unidentifiable with the destructive elements of this imago. This requires an ego that can reign in the drives and manage painful fears of impotency and emasculation that can come along with fatherhood. He talks about how these feelings can be particularly potent in the father-son dynamic. Josephs and Steele (1994) present case examples of men who severely beat their sons. They describe how these men presented with immature egos and in identification with own abusive aggressor-fathers, held ideals of respect and compliance.

In contrast, in exploring the female psyche in the context of child abuse, Welldon (1998) thought that whilst men tended to focus aggression externally, women were more likely to direct it inward, towards the self. She used the word 'perversion' to describe how a mother can perceive the child as their creation, hence could attack the child as a perceived part of the self. She suggests that a woman who has had a disturbing relationship with her own mother, will have had to relinquish any sense of autonomy to survive. This will result in a woman who will have emotional instability, issues with separation and in turn a skewed perception of motherhood. Welldon proposes that there may be an unconscious motivation to become the mother and obtain lost power and control. When the baby or child does not fulfil this need, the mother's intense hatred of her own mother is redirected at the child who is then at risk of attack. Welldon states that this is especially present in the mother-daughter relationship. Knowles (1997) and Minne (2011) present case studies where disturbed mothers have killed their infant daughters to manage early conflicts relating to their own mothers. Green (1976)

presents a case study wherein a mother who safely parented her two sons, violently attacked her daughter.

Ambivalence and Mistrust

Becoming a parent is a transformative experience that involves a lifelong commitment to another. Feelings of ambivalence are therefore expected and understandable, however need to be acknowledged, thought about and digested as opposed to being acted upon. Winnicott (1994) describes ambivalence as a necessary function within parent-child interactions and theorised that love and hate must be acknowledged and expressed, tolerated by both caregiver and, in time, the child. He talked about how the parent needs to sacrifice their own needs to attend to their child therefore it requires a mature ego and a vigilant superego that will integrate the negative feelings, avoiding any acting out. Parker (1995) acknowledges that ambivalence is a natural phenomenon, emphasising that the primary concern lies in how it is managed, particularly due to the guilt and anxiety it tends to generate. She argues that this is insufficiently recognised and spoken about. Green (1976) found that in cases of child abuse, mother had heightened levels of ambivalence towards their children. He thought that that they were unable to be cognisant of the more negative parts of their personality, meaning that there was a risk of them being split off and projected out as opposed as being integrated into the self. In the parent-child relationship this could lead to the child being scapegoated and misperceived.

The purpose of fantasy was discussed by Flynn (1970) in that it brings awareness of and management of normal negative feelings that parents have towards their children. A parent with low ego strength and punitive superego may struggle with such necessary

internal processes that enable them to think and process all aspects of the parenting experience.

Between 1968 and 1978 a study of 75 families, with abusing parents, were studied (Galdston, 1975). The author described the parents he worked with as not having mastered their ambivalence towards their child, hence concluding that negative feelings were not consciously thought about or verbalised, instead acted out.

Trust in the self and others has roots in early life. Having attuned care and needs effectively met results in feeling known and validated (Steele, 1994). A case study by Steele and Pollock (1987) describes an abusing parent who had not had such fundamental experiences in their own childhood and therefore depended upon external validation via their child's responses. The parent did not have an intrinsic belief in themselves and when their efforts to parent the child seemed ineffective, they perceived this as a failure on their part that could not be tolerated given their fragile ego.

Gladston (1981) described how parents who have unmet primitive needs can experience their child demands as persecutory and feel anxious about surviving the experience. He highlighted that the ambivalence in the caring role is most exasperated in parent-child interactions given it can bring to light aspects of the parent's self that are painful.

Motherhood can be idealised, leaving no room for the conflicted and ambivalent feelings that come naturally with the role (Hoffman 2003). Hoffman suggests that many believe that being a parent means eliminating aggression hence they cannot tolerate hostile feelings to or from their child. Hoffman studied mothers and toddler groups, concluding

that keeping aggressive thoughts and ambivalence out of conscious thought was detrimental to the parent-child relationship. Hoffman states that mothers can feel unable to acknowledge and verbalise fears of their aggression towards their children, preventing them from receiving the support they need and increasing the risk of maladaptive responses. The guilt and shame involved may impact upon their capacity to respond decisively and set appropriate boundaries when their child expresses normal aggression. The child may then not feel assured that their aggression is containable and fear their own capacity for destruction. This could lead to more acting out behaviour to be reassured and become a cycle within which both parent and child are anxious and in fear of their own aggression.

Trauma

Trauma can be described as occurring when the '*ego is overwhelmed by more stimuli than it can manage*' (Steele, 1994 p1015). Anna Freud (1970) refers to the developmental aspect of trauma in that ineffective responses from a parent will result in internal states not being validated, and this sets a foundation, across the life span, of low confidence and fragile sense of self. Steele describes how a lack of feeling protected and known overwhelms the psyche when the person who is supposed to keep you safe, is the person who is harmful. In becoming a parent, such deficits are exposed as the demands made by a child can bring related wounds to light.

The term 'soul murder' (Shengold, 1989) has been used to describe how a person's sense of self can be denigrated and destroyed within relational trauma, resulting in lifelong implications for their psychological development and maturation. Steele (1994) describes a case example where a mother who had fractured her daughter's leg and

skull, told of childhood experiences that disabled any sense of self and caused her to develop a distorted identity. Steele described the evolving layers of psychological complexity, noting how the mother simultaneously identified with her own abusive parent during the act of abuse, while also identifying with the child she attacked. In doing so, she embodied both the role of the aggressor and the experience of helplessness.

In his study of sixty cases of child abuse, Green (1976) talks about 'abuse prone' characteristics of the parents that included poor self-concept, low self-worth and a sense of being devalued because of developmental trauma.

Empathy

Having the capacity to connect with the experience of another person is a key component within meaningful relationships.

Freud frequently highlighted the importance of empathy in his writings (Freud 1900, 1905, 1926) and described it as the process whereby one person, either consciously or unconsciously, can think about the position of another. Pigman (1995) highlighted that Freud used the German word 'Einfühlung' meaning 'feeling into' when he talks about empathy.

Davis (1983) and Feshbach (1975) said that the process has not just cognitive but affective parts in that one needs to think about what something may feel like to another. They highlight that the capacity to empathise has its roots in the formative years as mis-attuned care from caregivers in early life will take its toll on the emotional development and internal working models. Hudson et al (1995) highlighted that unless a person has a

range of emotional states to draw upon, that they have themselves experienced, they will be unable to recognise these in others and be unable to perceive situations effectively and respond accordingly.

Research highlights that parents who physically abuse their children are less empathetic and tend to reject their children's feelings (Kaufman & Zigler, 1987).

Letourneau (1981) and Kohut (1977) also cite empathy as a key determinant in parental aggression. Such parents will attempt to manage their children's behaviour through using control and coercion. Frodi and Lamb (1980) examined the interactions between abusive mothers and their children and found that a lack of empathy could be related to the caregiver experiencing their child expressing their needs in a negative light. Given what has been described in terms of how empathy develops it could be suggested that a parent who has limitations in this regard might themselves have experienced a lack of empathy in their own childhood.

There is extensive literature that cites empathy as a key modulating variable in the expression of aggression (Wihe, 1997). Wihe discussed research about mothers who abuse their children and how they score lower on measures of empathy than non-abusive mothers, suggesting a clear association between the two. He lists empathy related behaviours that researchers have found are important for parenting, such as being understanding, providing comfort, being able to co-operate, valuing others, and flexibility. Call (1984) talks about the parent having an '*unconscious mythology*' (p185) based on their own experiences of being cared for, that informs their understanding of their child's behaviour. Through reciprocity the primary carer and infant co-create meaning. This intricate continuous process is dependent on internal and external stimuli

and what develops is heavily influenced by the parents' psyche. Call reviews literature on attachment and discusses how a parent's capacity for empathy can impact upon their reading of cues of distress and need. Call highlights how a child's behaviours, for example crying, biting, thumb-sucking and refusing food, could be misperceived and elicit parental hostility and aggression. Steele (1994) discussed how a lack of empathy for the child's needs was evident in the abusive parents he worked with. He cites a case example where a mother experienced her baby's cries as a sign that he did not love her, so she hit him.

In a sample of parents who abused their children, Jacobson and Straker (1979) found that there was a consistent pattern of a lack of empathetic awareness of their own affectional needs and those of their children. They also found a lack of self-efficacy in reaching out and attaining emotionally rewarding relationships. Morris and Gould (1963) and Green (1976) talked about their experience of mothers who felt they had no one to turn to and would seek comfort and care from their children and have expectations of them as a source of validation.

Narcissism and Self-esteem

Appreciation of the self is thought to be dependent on self-representations that form as structures within the mind, or internal objects (Rosen, 1991). It is these self-objects that regulate self-esteem and inform the individuals' sense of value. These objects are built in early life as the infant's drives and narcissism interact with parents' responses.

Primary narcissism was identified as a necessary infantile state A.Freud, 1936; S.Freud, 1923; Winnicott, 1945) from which investment and value in the self and others can develop. Under favourable conditions, the infant becomes exposed to the fact that they

do not always have control. They need to grapple with conflicts relating to dependency to move into a more integrated position in their mind where their own limitations are accepted and fused into the personality. If there are disturbances in the parent's capacity to attune to and nurture the child's narcissism in a balanced and empathetic manner, self-objects may not be enriching to the personality, causing low self-esteem and an immature ideal self.

Spontaneous violence has been thought about as a regression to an infantile omnipotent state fuelled by unresolved narcissism (Kohut, 1973). Not living up to an ideal can result in aggression as a survival response given this can be experienced as catastrophic (Kohut, 1977; Rosen 1991). Rosen discusses how self-esteem functions as an internal oversight of psychic equilibrium, both conscious and unconscious, and any sudden lowering of self-esteem is felt as a narcissistic wound evoking shame and rage erupts as a defensive measure.

Sources within the literature point to emotional immaturity and poor self-image as being evident in adults who abuse their children (Wolff, 1981). Sharkey (1980) also found low self-esteem was a key factor in the personalities of mothers who abused their children. They lacked feelings of value and worth that were amplified in the parenting context given the inevitable interpersonal challenges, manifesting in problems mastering aggressive drives. Wolff identified that a fragility in the ego lends to an identification with aggressive internal objects. This impacts upon their capacity to regulate feelings (namely anger) and form reciprocal relationships.

Mothers who abuse their children tend to lack affect and present with low mood (Evans 1980). Reiner and Kaufman (1959) thought this to be a defect in the structure of the ego as opposed to clinical depression.

Eldridge and Finnican (1985) use this idea in their thinking about abusive parents who have been deprived of fundamental primary processes, causing significant disturbances in the development of their sense of themselves. They suggest that the infant can emphasise these unmet needs and the parent can unconsciously turn to the child as a self-object. The child will of course be unable to consistently reflect the parents need for admiration and care, which can leave the parent feeling injured, rejected and worthless. In response, the regressed parent can display infantile rage and there is a risk of physical abuse.

Steele and Pollock (1987) describe the internal processes relating to the physical abuse of children in three stages. Firstly, the parent approaches a task with a desire to do well, secondly there is a desperate need for validation given their internal deficits and thirdly, the voice of low self-esteem demands efficacy. If all goes well, the parent receives the external validation that their fragmented ego craves and there are positive interactions. If not, the parent can feel under threat. The superego identifies with the parent's own abusive caregivers and the child is experienced as the parent's own '*bad childhood self*' (p117) and receives the aggression.

Studies involving abusive mothers had similar findings to those on abusive fathers in that they have shown issues with dependency, self-esteem, and feelings of powerlessness, linked to weak ego functions (Evans, 1980; O'Hearn, 1974). O'Hearn compared abusive fathers with non-abusive controls and found clear differences

between the groups in the cited functions. Green (1976) linked similar findings to parents feeling devalued due to rejection and hostility from their own caregivers in early years. They presented with an unintegrated sense of self and identify, dominated by negative internal self-objects. Green also talks about how children with additional needs may be at risk of abuse should a narcissistic parent experience them as representing their own faulty self-image.

Theme 2: Defences

Defences are a necessary function in the service of the ego and are mobilised by anxiety (A Freud 1936; S Freud, 1926). Prodgers (1984) discusses how the use of higher function defences enables progression to an integrated position in the mind wherein the highs and lows of life can be managed. In the case of abusive parents, he discusses how the pathological use of primitive defences could be linked to deficits in the parents own formative years.

Trowell (1986) highlights that a parent thinking about their own abusive experiences can produce overwhelming anxiety about loss of identity and self, hence it is defended against as opposed to processed.

Repression

Millar (1990) cited the release of repressed anger as a potential unconscious motive for a parent physically hurting their child. Millar thought physically abusing their child could

bring relief to the parent in the moment as they feel a release of pent-up rage that belongs to the past. Millar also suggested that a repressed traumatic event may be triggered by some behaviour or trait in the child, and this could evoke a violent reaction in the parent who is attempting to prevent a reoccurrence.

De Zulueta (1993) discusses violence in the context of human experience, with its foundations in our formative years. She uses a case study to illustrate her thinking about how painful, unprocessed feelings from traumatic events are repressed into the unconscious and enacted, via projection, within the parenting experience.

Rosen (1991) explores violence in the family and talks about how a parent's repressed rage can be projected into and identified with by the children who then act out the aggression and face retaliation by the parent.

Denial, Splitting, Projection

Galatariotou (2005) describes projection as a way of getting rid of anything about the self that cannot be acknowledged and integrated. Many sources suggest that abusive parents may disown their own destructive or malevolent parts by splitting them off and locating them in the child. This then allows them to justify the violence and retain some sense of goodness in themselves which avoids shame (Adshed et al 2010; Cramer & Kelly, 2010; Green, 1976; Kaufmann, 1962; Prodgers, 1984; Young Breuhl, 2012).

Moher et al (2001) described a case study wherein a mother expressed fears of her 'potential for violence' and managed her anxiety by projecting her own aggressive impulses into the child. Miller (1990) thought that parents could be displacing unprocessed feelings of humiliation onto their child via the physical act of punishment.

Gladston (1975) spoke of how children can be typecast as intrapsychic shadow figures and found that the word 'monster' was used by abusive parents to describe their child. Gladston thought that this word reflected the level of anxiety that the parent projects into their child who was then at risk of attack. Burchinal et al (2010) and Sturge-Apple et al (2014) found that mothers who rated their child's behaviour and/or interactions as intentional were more likely to engage in physical punishment.

Enactment and the Compulsion to Repeat

Freud (1914a, 1920) proposed that a fundamental human characteristic is a compulsion to repeat past experiences in an attempt to overcome what lies unresolved. He suggested that feelings that could not be acknowledged and talked about could manifest in actions. Burgess et al (1995) explore how the trauma of being the victim of violence can unconsciously provoke repetition, re-enactment, and displacement of the abusive experience. Bowins (2010) states '*in the case of child abuse, the abused often finds it easier to abuse than to resist this pattern*'. (p287)

A key text relating to how defences can contribute to intergenerational cycles is Fraiberg and colleagues (1980) paper 'Ghosts in the Nursery'. The authors illustrate how unprocessed trauma can be re-enacted and transferred from one generation to the next. Case studies are used to discuss pioneering parent-infant work. For example, one of the mothers could not hear her baby's cries because her own had not been heard. Via repression this mother had isolated and lost affective links with her own psychic pain

which compelled her to re-enact experiences and identify with her own abusive parent. Furman (1986) states '*the personality profiles of the abusive parent and abused child bear a striking resemblance*' (p53).

Identification

Abusive parents have been described as having fragmented senses of self, perceiving themselves in extremes and can become over identified with hostile internal objects (Green, 1976; Minne, 2011; Steele & Pollock, 1987). An unconscious identification with a physically chastising parent could be the defensive response to a perceived threat. (Adshed, 2019; Millar, 1990). Anna Freud (1936) coined the phrase '*identification with the aggressor*' (p109) and wrote about how becoming the source of threat, as opposed to the one threatened, can disarm annihilation anxiety. This ensures disconnection from the effects attached to the experience and avoids emotional pain; however, this means they are unable to empathise and recognise the potential negative impacts of their actions on others. Fraiberg and colleagues (1980) and Shabad (1997) mentioned this concept explicitly, with others noting identification with hostile or aggressive internal representations more generally (Green, 1976; Holden, 2020, Wolff, 1981).

Green (1974) describes how a parent can experience a child as rejecting should they not respond in accordance with the parent's ideals. This rejection triggers anxiety and the weak ego feels inadequate and guilty. To manage this anxiety, unwanted parts of the self (hostile, aggressive, needy) are projected onto the child, which prompts the parent to identify with their own aggressive caregiver. Green (1976) elaborated on this point and posited that this identification with the abusive parent facilitates the superego to authorise the abuse of their own child.

Steele (1994) talked about how exposure to violence in early life can result in the superego approving physical chastisement of children as valid. Steele describes how the parent's lack of empathy coupled with aggression are '*superego identifications*' with their own abusive parent (p1003). Rosen (1991) suggests that imitation and identification with parents are intrapsychic processes related to the development of ideals, therefore '*overt expression of violence may be transmitted this way*' (p20).

Projective Identification

Wolff (1981) talked about how the fragile ego can feel the threat of annihilation within relationships and via a harsh superego, it can defend itself by identifying with internal models or objects. Via '*projective identification*', an illusion of power is created in the face of helplessness (Rycroft 1968). Shabad (1997) describes how an individual can be put painfully in touch with their own deprivation when they become a parent which can provoke a reliance on such primitive defenses.

Ogden (1982) explored how projective identification can present in dysfunctional families in three stages. Firstly, one person unconsciously projects into another an unwanted part of themselves, this can be an internal object, impulse or feeling. Secondly the person who has projected the part influences the receiver to act in ways that is consistent with what has been projected. Thirdly the person projected into behaves in a manner that justifies that they own the split off part.

Lieberman (1999) refers to '*parental projective identification*' (p742) and describes this as a defence mechanism deployed by a caregiver who is unable to tolerate how their

child makes them feel. Instead of providing a containing function and metabolising projections from their child, the parent re-directs these back towards the child with added strength given this will include their own attributions based on repressed unconscious material. This can disturb the child's self-representations and behaviour. Lieberman presents a case example wherein a mother was slapping and hitting her toddler in fits of rage. Analysis uncovered that the mother suffered serious child abuse in her formative years and was locked in projective identification with her child as a way of managing affective states in the parent-child dyad.

Role reversal

When focused on what was happening in the interactions between caregiver and child, Steele and Pollock (1987) noted how the parents they studied had expectations of their child that far exceeded their actual capabilities. This resulted in '*role reversal*' (p.95) in that the parents were dependant on the child, which then led to the child being experienced as unfulfilling. Green (1976) linked this dynamic to unmet dependency needs and found that the child's inability to respond effectively resulted in the parents being painfully reminded of their own early deprivation. Combs-Orme and Cain (2008) found that mothers who believed that their infants were there to gratify them were more likely to use physical punishment.

Green (1974) proposed similar that a parent who has experienced abuse and deprivation in their own childhood, will identify with their child's dependence and vulnerability and seek for the child to meet their needs, as opposed to them being the

caregiver. When the child disappoints, the parents feel devalued and frustrated. These feelings are denied, split off and projected into the child who then becomes the target for the parent's rage. By being in this position of power, the parent is protected against their own painful psychic reality.

Strengths and Limitations

There are clear limitations to the findings in this review. The literature included comes from a range of sources, some can be described as empirical research however others are based on clinical material from the author's own work and practice. Whilst the latter are extremely valuable in bringing to life the psychoanalytic theory and concepts discussed there is a high likelihood of bias given what is presented was selected by the author as opposed to emerging as part of empirical research under appropriate conditions. Stelle and Pollock (1987) recognise that their study has limitations given the families involved came to them as part of their practice, hence could not be described as representative of the population.

It was also striking that a lot of the papers and books dated back to 1970's through to 1990's. It is possible that this surge of interest links to the study conducted by Steele and Pollock and the accompanying systemic developments in relation to child protection policies and procedures. Furthermore, upon reflection, the absence of more recent literature on the topic is likely to have been directly influenced by the classical language

used in the database searches. There are more recent psychodynamic theories that have expanded our understanding of child abuse. For example, mentalisation theory (Fonagy & Target, 1998; Asen and Fonagy, 2021) has provided a rich framework for understanding intergenerational patterns of trauma through its impact on the capacity to consider one's own and others' internal worlds. The inclusion of more contemporary psychoanalytic concepts, such as that of mentalisation, in the search terms may have led to more up-to-date sources of literature.

This is a narrative literature review, and although the search approach was rigorous, it was not a systemic review. As a result, there are likely to be some gaps in the scope of the literature that was included, and the review is unlikely to be a fully comprehensive summary of all psychodynamic understandings of physical abuse..

The strengths of the findings are the common themes that emerged throughout the literature and that they illustrate how unconscious processes can precipitate a parent being at risk of harming their child.

Discussion

Steele (1994) discusses four elements he thought present in the act of child abuse that could be described as corresponding to these themes. Firstly, that the parents experienced abuse in their own upbringing. This may feel disconcerting to expose and discuss given the risk of stigmatising those who have suffered adversity in that there is a suggestion that they are destined to be abusive. Perhaps approaching this issue from an informed psychoanalytic perspective, in that unresolved trauma impacts upon ego

development and defensive mechanisms could absolve such blame and shame and support open discussion.

It became apparent when writing this review that some concepts were similar although they were being given different names. For example, Kohut's self-objects concept could be aligned with Klein's primary object. Also, object relations concepts could be linked to attachment theory, with the latter being more readily discussed in social care. For such complex material to be relatable it needs to be clearly understood with the use of a common language.

Secondly Steele (1994) stated that there was a lack of empathy on the parent's behalf for the child and their needs. Wiehe (1997) states that developing empathy should be key in working with parents who abuse their children. He highlights how this is used in more social contexts, such as criminal offenders, however, it has value in the family context.

There are multiple references in the literature to how abusive parents were not provided with the primary fundamental experiences required to internalise models that would equip them to empathise with the emotional states of their children. A parent's capacity to reflect on internal representations in the context of their source and inconsistencies within the external and current experience has been identified as a key factor in reducing the risk of abuse (Main & Solomon 1990).

Erikson et al. (1989) proposed that work aimed at accessing and working with the parents internal models of relating would be effective in preventing child abuse. He felt it would be enabling to promote change at the level of mental representation given this

empowers families to develop their own strategies as opposed to relying on external controls. Although change is possible, Bowlby (1980) highlighted how challenging this is given, once formed in early childhood, deep internal structures resist change.

The third element Steele (1994) identified was an unrealistic expectation of the infant's emotional intelligence. George (1996) discusses how a parents' logical thought processes about their child can provide vital information about their own interpersonal development. She links this to the concept of mental representations and Bowlby's (1973) work on internal working models and how these are dependent on the meaning attributed to behaviour, individual differences in processing and organising behaviour and psychological structure. The latter having emphasis on defensive process, capacity to evaluate attributions and how mental representations are organised and structured.

Steele identified the fourth element as being a behaviour from the child that is experienced as a threat to the parent's fragile sense of self-worth. Tuohy (1987) identified improving self-esteem, strengthening ego functions, and modulation of maladaptive defenses as key points of focus for interventions for parents at risk of abusing their children. It was shown several times in the literature presented, that abusive parents had low self-esteem, over relied on primitive defensive mechanisms and external validation to manage unresolved internal conflicts. For example, a parent identifying with an internal aggressor avoids exposure of painful psychic wounds linked to vulnerability and helplessness yet can then be at risk of physically harming their child. It is interesting that Anna Freud's work on this type of defense was not as prevalent as could be expected, perhaps an indication that holding in mind the parent as someone who was abused and also a potential abuser is challenging.

Conclusions

Steele and Pollock's landmark study (1987) seemed to provoke an interest in the etiology of child abuse. They highlighted how parents who physically abuse their children were found to have fragile internal self-representations and maladaptive psychic defense mechanisms. Further sources of literature corroborated these findings and have added to a psychoanalytically informed understanding of why some parents are at risk of physically harming their children. The literature highlights how abusive parents tend to have ego's that struggle to integrate and mediate innate aggressive drives, hence the need to develop psychic defenses that can break down in the context of parenthood. Attacking their child could be understood in terms of an attempt to manage their own psychic homeostasis and survival. Via projective processes parents are painfully reconnected with unbearable feelings and can unconsciously react to protect themselves against a perceived threat of annihilation (Fraiberg et al., 1980).

A permeating theme across the literature was the impact of the parents' own experience of being parented and how this forms the foundation of the ego and its mechanisms of defense.

Whilst understanding child maltreatment is multifaceted and complex given the multiple factors and perspectives that can be consulted, the literature that has been discussed in the body of this review illustrates the benefit of incorporating psychoanalytic concepts.

They provide insight into unconscious processes that can result in a parent actively harming their child, despite them having a conscious desire not to.

The literature illuminates the impact of early deficit and how developmental trauma can seriously impact the internal world of a parent and in turn their capacity to parent intuitively and safely. Whilst an element of control may always be required in child protection work, the psychoanalytic concepts in this review could contribute to an understanding of child abuse being a maladaptive human response that warrants evidence-based responses and treatment. A therapeutic alliance is key to accessing the repressed material in parents that drive behaviour (Green, 1976; Wiehe 1997). The therapist can promote long lasting change by promoting ego development. If a therapeutic relationship can be internalised by the parent, this can alter internal representations and change characteristics in the parent, such as low self-esteem, that impact impulse control. This type of approach can promote the intrinsic changes that are required to break intergenerational cycles of abuse.

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Part 2: Empirical Study

Title: An Exploration into the Childhood Experiences of Parents who are at Risk of Physically Harming their Children

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'Children are absolutely dependent on their parents for sustenance...If a community values its children, it must cherish their parents'. (Bowlby, 1951)

Abstract

Introduction: This study explores the early life experiences of a sample of parents with children's social care involvement who showed high levels of child abuse potential on a self-report measure. A psychoanalytic lens is applied to analyse what is recalled and perceived by these parents about their childhood, how they were treated and if they feel this has influenced their behavior toward their own children. *Aims:* The study aims to provide insight into the relevance of understanding intergenerational caregiving experiences for parents whose children are deemed at risk of maltreatment. *Method:* Ten Participants were purposively sampled from a wider study. Data was extracted from semi-structured interviews wherein parents discuss their childhoods and impact on parenting practices. Using thematic analysis, qualitative data were coded, and themes developed. *Results:* Themes centered on participants having experienced significant abuse and loss in childhood alongside indicating fragilities in their psychological development that could impact upon their capacity to safely parent. In the discussion, psychoanalytic concepts help to make sense of the shared meaning that seems to bind the themes. *Conclusions:* The findings advocate for a treatment approach in working with parents at risk of harming their children. It suggests that there is a likelihood that these parents will have unmet developmental needs that must be understood and

addressed to reduce risk and prevent the continuation of intergenerational cycles of abuse.

Introduction

The protection of children continues to be a core remit of social care agencies. Parents are a child's primary source of care and protection, yet children are more likely to be harmed within their family than from external sources (Flatley, 2016). In 2022, 57, 777 children in the UK were subject to child protection plans (NSPCC, 2023) indicating the on-going prevalence of the phenomenon. The literature on the topic highlights how thinking about this issue as a human condition as opposed to a criminal act may make it more tolerable to think about and effectively respond (Tuohy 1987; Corby, 1993; DeZuleta, 2006). Punitive responses to parents at risk of harming their children are likely to intensify judgmental attitudes which in turn could further embed the negative internal self-representations that the literature shows can underpin an act of violence in a familial context (Sharkey, 1980; Wolff, 1981). Foster (2018) advocates caring for mothers as well as their children, building on Winnicott's famous statement '*there is no such thing as a baby*'. (1960, pp.587, n4). Foster discusses how society can be '*complicit in perpetrating cycles of deprivation*' (p 245) at great psychological and economic costs should psychoanalytically informed thinking and approaches be avoided in considering the responses to mothers who harm their children. Sources within the literature warn against colluding with an idealisation of motherhood (Mine, 2007; Welldon, 1988) and suggests that in extreme circumstances a mother's instinct can distort, resulting in a pathological mother-child dynamic.

It has become increasingly evident that adversity in early years can impact holistic health and development throughout the life cycle (Power et al., 2020). The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study (Felitti et al., 1998) included abuse and experience of significant loss during the formative years as indicators of a range of serious physical and psychological conditions.

A landmark study in the 1960's (Steele and Pollock, 1987) explored psychological factors in parents who physically harmed their children and found them to have fragile internal representations and psychic defenses that meant that their capacity to receive, digest and respond to their child's cues were impacted. The study highlighted intergenerational patterns as the parents they spoke to were once children who had been harmed by their parents. The researchers examined the parents' perceptions of their children and what led to the abuse. It seemed like the demands of parenting became tangled with their own unmet needs meaning the child's cues were experienced as attacking and persecutory. Subsequent sources of literature discussed how being a parent could involve unconscious projective processes that reignite painful mental content. This can result in the parent then reacting in ways to protect themselves against a perceived threat of psychic annihilation (Fraiberg et al., 1980; Lieberman, 1999 ;Miller, 1990; Parens, 1987; Rosen, 1991; Shabad, 1997).

Rationale

Since Steele and Pollocks's study, several subsequent papers have used psychoanalytically based theories and concepts to explore the causality, impact and

treatment of parents who are at risk of harming their children (Adshed, 2010; Green, 1976; George, 1996; Holden, 2020; Möhler at al., 2001;Prodgers, 1984, Trowell 1986, Tuohy, 1987; Schloesser & Schloesser1977; Spinetta & Rigler, 1972; Swerbenski, 2023). Holden traces the history of the application of psychoanalytic theory in understanding child maltreatment, from Freud's contribution to understanding human behaviour to Winnicott's theories on the role of hate in the parent-child dyad. He progressed onto discussing more contemporary thinkers, such as Fraiberg and Miller who discussed child maltreatment in the context of unconscious processes linked to their own unresolved trauma. It is suggested that whilst there is rich case material, what is lacking in these papers is evidence of experiential qualitative research that has methodological rigor to support findings.

This study will utilise a psychoanalytic lens to analyse data from a randomised controlled trial that provided a model of intervention to parents who had children subject to formal Child Protection or Child in Need plans. Having access to parents' own interpretations of what has happened to them could provide rich information about the unconscious determinants that might help in understanding the relational dynamics that underpin an act of child abuse. The outcomes could feed into interventions to lower the risk of abuse and the continuation of intergenerational cycles.

Method

Design

The study is a cross-sectional qualitative investigation of the lived childhood experience of parents who are at risk of harming their children. It is interested in parents direct recall of what happened to them during their formative years and how they feel this has shaped their parenting of their children. Qualitative paradigms offer the researcher the opportunity to develop an idiographic understanding of participants, and what it means to them, within their social reality, to be in a particular situation (Bryman, 1988). It thus facilitates an understanding of the complexity of bio- psycho-social phenomena and, as such, affords possibilities for informing clinical practice (Boyle, 1991).

Context

The data used for this study has been provided by The Supporting Parents Project (Sleed et al, 2024), which is a large scale Randomised Controlled Trial of the Lighthouse Parenting Programme (Byrne et al., 2019). It is an adaptation of a mentalisation based treatment for parents involved with child protection services due to risk of physical abuse and involves them engaging in psychoanalytically informed one-to-one sessions as well as group work. This study is interested in exploring the childhood experiences of these parents with the aim of adding to what is understood about why this phenomena persists and in turn promote efficacy within interventions.

Procedure

Parents involved with social care due to the risk of physically harming their child were referred to the Supporting Parents Project (SPP). Baseline measures were completed as part of the initial stages of the study. As part of this process, research assistants met parents via video call, and conducted semi-structured interviews asking participants to complete a set of questionnaires that were recorded and transcribed for the purposes of the SPP. For the purposes of the current study, only baseline data, that took place before any randomisation or interventions, were examined.

Sampling

To be included in the SPP a parent had to have a child aged 12 or younger and subject of a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan or be involved in Pre-Proceedings. A parent was excluded if the case was already in a Court process or expected to be within 6 months. Purposive sampling was used to select the sub-sample for the current study in that the ten cases with the highest score in the Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAPI) were included. Per this measure, they could be considered the parents most at risk of harming their child. To be included parents had to have completed the Parent Developmental Interview (PDI) as this measure's content provided the qualitative data for the current study. All categories of caregivers were eligible to be included, mother, fathers or others. There was no further exclusion criteria applied in terms of the age of participants or their children.

Measures

The Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAPI; Milner, 1994) was used to select the sample. It is considered a gold standard measure validated within child protection services for screening for physical child abuse potential. It is a self-report screening instrument that has been evaluated showing high internal consistent reliabilities regarding a parent's potential risk to their child (Walker & Davis, 2010) although some limitations in its use with fathers has been documented (Liel et al., 2019).

The source of data for this study was the Parent Development Interview (PDI; Slade et al., 2004)- a semi-structured interview that asks questions about a parent's internal representations of their child and themselves as parents. There were specific questions relating to the interviewee's own experience of being parented and how they feel they are like/unlike their own parents. Participants' responses to these specific questions were extracted as the main source of data. If participants spoke spontaneously about their childhood experiences in other parts of the interview, these narratives were also included in the data set.

Participants

The following table shows the sample of the 10 parents involved in the SPP who have the highest scores in the CAPI at baseline. A score of 166 and above is considered the threshold for risk of abuse. As indicated all participants scored significantly above this cut-off point. Each participant has been given a pseudonym for ease of reference and only relevant information to the study is included to protect confidentiality.

Table 1: Sample Demographics

Participant	CAPI score	Gender	role	Subject child age	Social care status of child
1: Anna	429	female	mother	10	Closed to social care (child living with maternal grandmother under Court Order)
2: Ben	396	male	Stepfather , living with mother	10	Child Protection Plan
3: Cora	391	female	mother	8	Child Protection Plan
4: Debbie	386	female	mother	3	Child in Need Plan
5: Eddie	376	male	father	10	Child Protection Plan
6: Fiona	375	female	mother	13	Child in Need Plan
7: Grace	374	female	mother	3	Child in Need Plan
8: Heather	373	female	mother	11	Child Protection Plan

9: Iris	372	female	mother	9	Child Protection Plan
10: John	371	male	father	5	Child Protection Plan

Ethics

The SPP trial protocol and the current study plan were reviewed and approved by the University College London research ethics committee (reference 9593/002). Full informed consent was sought from study participants. The interview transcripts for the current study were shared via a secure shared drive and the content was anonymised to protect the confidentiality of individuals involved. Any other personal information that could be used to identify participants was removed or changed with demographic information recorded on a need-to-know basis.

Researcher Reflexivity

Although subjective perspectives based on the researcher's professional expertise were an integral part of the data analysis, a nonjudgmental approach was applied throughout the study. I acknowledge that this is a sensitive and emotive topic. I held in mind that the participants are likely to be in difficult situations and could feel under scrutiny and/or systemically oppressed. I wondered if the extent of the information they felt able to self-

report had limitations. That said, this study is interested in the subjective experiences of the participants and the use of a psychoanalytic lens, the analysis is not reliant on true or credible accounts.

Data analysis

This study takes an inductive, experiential approach in that it is interested in the lived experience of participants. There is a focus on what the participants disclose about their own childhood experiences within the PDI and how they think this influences their parenting. It has become accepted by many health and social care disciplines that person-centered research promotes opportunities to explore phenomena that quantitative methods fail to reach (Renjith et al., 2021).

Braun and Clarke's (2008) approach in thematic analysis was chosen as an appropriate method of systemically processing and finding meaning in the extracted data. The flexibility of this method and acceptance of the researcher's subjectivity as a resource within a critically reflective frame were key factors in this decision. There are 6 distinct phases that were followed as detailed.

1: Data familiarisation

The transcripts of the sample's PDI were read and re-read to become familiar with the data set. Immersing in the content lent to a sense of connecting with the participants. Any words, sentences or statements that were linked to the parents' childhoods were highlighted and notes made in the margins. Thoughts or feelings evoked from reading the material were recorded in the left margin. In the right, potential interpretations via a psychoanalytic lens were noted. A table was then developed to capture this information (see appendix 1).

2: Data Coding

The extracted content within the table was systemically scanned to ensure this was meaningful in relation to the study. Colours were used initially to determine if there were specific threads or patterns of meaning, on a sematic level. A further table was created to re-organise the data under codes, using similarities that emerged between the comments made by participants (see appendix 2).

3: Initial Theme Generation

Thematic maps helped to organise and explore broader, potential links between the codes. Initial themes were built, driven by grouping and finding shared meaning. A more analytic approach was taken within this phase to draw out latent content. The codes gradually merged to create loose themes that are illustrated in appendix 3.

4: Developing and reviewing themes

The full data set was revisited (appendix 1) and further interrogated to test if there was a thread connecting codes and if each theme had a central organising concept (appendix 2). Three themes were then developed (appendix 3).

5: Refining, defining and naming themes

Names for themes and subthemes were defined and refined to further organise the data extracted. This prompted again revisiting codes to ensure that they were representative and coherent.

Results

Table 2: Summary of Themes

Themes	Sub themes	codes
Theme 1 Familiar Territory: Maltreatment	A: Abusive experiences (what happened to them)	Sexual abuse
		Emotional abuse
		Physical abuse
		neglect
	B: Abusive events (what happened around them)	Witness parent being abused
		Responsibility for self/others whilst still a child
		Parent with alcohol drug issues
Theme 2	C: Parents	Absence/loss of a parent
		Parent with alcohol/drug
		Parents separated

Missing pieces: absence, separation and loss	D: Other people/factors	Fantasy figure
		School issues
		Other significant carer
Theme 3 Holding it together: splitting, repeating and forgetting	E: Splitting and idealisation versus denigration	Heroes
		Fear of/wish not to become their parent
	F: Compulsion to repeat	Likeness to parent
		Don't want child to have their experiences
		Actions don't match words
	G: Repression, denial and Identification	No excuse
		Mental health issues
		Don't know/don't remember
		Didn't do me any harm

1. Familiar Territory: Maltreatment

The first theme became transparent early in the study as all 10 participants made references to being maltreated in some form during their childhood. Discussing how they were parented seemed to trigger a strong reaction for some. Eddie stated '*good luck!*' when the interviewer said they were going to discuss his upbringing and Ben declared that he '*didn't have a childhood*'. Many used strong words and statements,

perhaps reflective of impact. For example, Debbie described her childhood as *'traumatic'*, stating that her mother made her feel like she *'shouldn't have been even born'*. Anna described how she felt like her mother *'resented'* her.

There were direct ways that the parents recalled being abused and then other more indirect ways that related more to the behaviour of caregivers and/or the environment they grew up in.

Abusive Experiences: What happened to them?

Almost all ten parents in the sample (9/10) spoke of a primary carer being the person who maltreated them. For some it was their mother/mother figure, for others their father/father figure and in a few cases both caregivers were indicated as abusive. Many described both bodily and emotional injury, for example John stated *'you went to school with bruises, no one gave a shit'*.

In terms of categories, Anna and Ben referenced sexual abuse, with Anna being specific about this being her stepfather. It is interesting that these were the two highest scoring participants in the CAPI.

Most of the parents (6/9) reported physical abuse, with some participants describing cruelty and, like John, serious injury. Whilst some described on-going extreme physical chastisement, others reported shocking events. Ben talked about being with foster carers who subjected him to cruelty by injecting food with distasteful contents and leaving him outside all night in a bin bag.

A high majority of the parents who cited sexual or physical abuse also spoke of the emotional impact. Many described feeling unvalued, unheard and having a fear of their parents and/or abandonment Cora stated *'my stepdad only wanted my mum and sister. Me and My brother's weren't included in the family. They didn't really kind of want us. They said that we were naughty, we were going to be put in children's homes and things like that'*. John remembered how the friends they visited thought he was well behaved when the weight of his father's threat meant he could not speak.

There were also descriptions of childhood experiences from the parents that could also be described as neglectful. Iris talked about her older sibling being responsible for the morning school routine. Iris remembered that her parents would then go out in the evenings for *'their time'* and stated, *'I felt like I never seen them'*. Debbie spoke of not feeling prioritised by her mother who did not take her to medical appointments.

Abusive Events: What happened around them?

Most of the participants (8/10) referenced events in their immediate environment that could be described as abusive. The majority (6/8) of this cohort had also described direct abuse, meaning over half the sample experienced both.

Most (5/8) reported witnessing domestic violence between their caregivers and/or addiction issues. Grace linked incidents to her parent's use of alcohol, alluding to both parents being intoxicated. Negative language was used, perhaps indicating the effect of such experiences, for example Fiona described her father as a *'stinking drunk'*.

Half the sample (4/8) referred to having to take responsibilities for either themselves and/or siblings at a young age due to caregivers being unavailable and/or rejecting.

Eddie was homeless at 16 and Ben stated, *'I grew up too quick....I had to be an adult.'*

Potentially the most striking case in this theme was Anna, in that she reported all forms of direct/indirect abuse. It is interesting that she was the highest scoring participant in the CAPI and her child was the only one in the sample who was living outside of parental care. Anna felt that her mother knew that her stepfather was abusing her and chose not to act because she was jealous. Anna said that her mother would cast it up to her when intoxicated, and when sober acted like it was not happening. Anna felt her mother 'hated' her and commented on how she would *'use words to hurt me and her hands'*.

2. Missing Pieces: absence, separation and loss

The second theme also became apparent in the early phases when the data was being coded, as it became clear that all the participants referred to either not having had or having lost someone/something fundamental during their childhoods.

Parents

All the participants in the sample experienced significant loss through death, separation or absence of birth parent(s). A fifth of the sample (2/10) were separated from birth parents at an early age and lived in alternative care arrangements. Neither referred to any experiences with their birth parents and both described abusive foster/adoptive

parents. One participant (Iris) retained both parents but described them as chronically absent whilst for the rest of the sample they had experienced absence/loss relating to either their mother (1/10) or father (6/10).

Many described how the absence or loss of a parent was devastating and destabilising. Heather stated, she '*literally went off the rails*' and talked of running away from school or home just to be with her father. Cora spoke of her father's abandonment and how she feels unable to recover from him not being a part of her life.

Other People/Factors

John referred to being separated from his siblings due to his father removing him, indicating a loss of a maternal family unit. John described feeling powerless in this position as a child, unable to do anything about being severed from these connections.

Two of the parents spoke of their late grandfathers being significant in terms of absent people in their life. Ben mentioned his grandfather being someone he would want to be like, however it is interesting that he is not referred to as an adult who offered substitute care or safety. Cora was the other participant who mentioned her grandfather, which is interesting given her birth father was absent and her stepfather was physically abusive. Cora describes him in positive terms and sees his qualities in her son.

Ben talked about missing out on basic education during his childhood, stating that he was 'kicked out' of any school he attended. This statement conveys a feeling of being forcefully rejected that has a similar feel to his care-receiving experiences.

John and Ben stood out within this theme as there is a feeling of something being fundamentally lacking in terms of a foundational familial secure base. John vividly communicated the devastating impact of being separated from his mother at a young age. He described feeling '*took from*' from her and linked this to a feeling of having '*nothing*'. There is a sense from his interview that this is a pervasive feeling that reaches to other areas of his life.

3. Holding it together: splitting, repeating and forgetting

The third theme developed more gradually as codes were defined and refined alongside the thematic maps becoming more comprehensible. There were several revisits to the raw data and the codes to find a central organising concept. It involved more of the subjective experience and interpretative skills of the researcher as it relates to the participants' perspective on the impact of their childhood experiences on their own parenting and internal world. It transpired that the shared meaning within the content related to unconscious psychic defenses that the parents have potentially developed to manage the impact of childhood experiences.

Splitting and idealisation vs. Denigration

All the parents indicated that they held onto extreme positions when talking about their experience of being parented, either wanting to be like a caregiver in all ways or nothing at all. Splitting is a primitive psychic defense indicative that an early state of mind has been provoked by overwhelming painful material. Polarisation can avoid having to process and integrate thoughts, feelings and experiences.

Many parents in the sample used strong definitive words, such as '*nothing*' and '*completely*' to portray the extremity of the split in their internal representations of parental figures. There was also derogatory language used, for example, Eddie called his mother '*evil and vicious*' and Fiona described her father as '*useless*'. In contrast others used idealistic terms such as Anna describing her late father as a '*hero*' and Fiona speaking of being unable to find any fault in her mother, stating she did a '*great job*'.

Except for Iris, all the participants (9/10) seemed to want to disavow themselves as being identified with any aspect of one or both of their parents. Grace stating that her parents provided an example of '*what not to do*'. Again, definitive words were used along with symbolic language, such as John saying he was '*nothing*' like his parents and how this is a goal he sets himself within the parenting role.

Iris seemed to idealise both parents and their intentions. She was the only participant who did not physically lose a parent, albeit it could be argued that both were lost in essence due to their absence in her life. Iris reframes her parents' actions in positive terms, saying there is '*nothing to unlike*'. She describes them making her a '*strong woman*' and resulting in her valuing inflexibility as an effective parenting strategy.

Compulsion to Repeat

Most of the sample (7/10) spoke of a conscious desire not to be like the parent(s) they had during their childhoods. Superlative language was used, and language were used such as '*complete opposite*' and '*nothing like*'.

Debbie reflected *'this is why I'm so soft on the children and the boundaries are not there, because of how my mom and dad made me feel. I am so scared the children are going to end up feeling like that. And I never wanna put the children through any of those emotions and hurt because it was yeah, it was traumatic for me and I could never imagine what it would do to the children.'*

Over half (4/7) alluded to a feeling of helplessness, making references to how they feared that their children were having similar experiences to them regardless of their wishes. Eddie spoke of how he knew he acted like his mother at times, despite his awareness of her brutality and felt this was because of following a past pattern. Anna stated she was *'petrified'* that she would do unto her children as was done to her and became emotional when she said that her son was going to *'grow up without a dad like I did'*.

Fiona admitted to having her own issues with alcohol despite not wanting her children to experience an intoxicated parent, like she did. Fiona also recognised that she has a *'shit taste in men'*, like her mother, and is aware that her *'actions don't match'* and she describes herself as strong yet relies on *'validation'* that steers her towards unhealthy partners.

Some of the parents seemed less conscious of there being indications of patterns being repeated. Iris came across as contradictory in that she seemed accepting of being like her parents, saying that she was hoping to be *'a strong woman'* like her mother and felt she was like her father *'in every way'*. However, she then stated her desire for her children not to have an upbringing like her, describing neglectful, distracted parents,

saying how she wanted to be physically present for her children as this is something she didn't have.

Repression, Denial and Identification

Half of the sample (5/10) made links between their mental health and childhood experiences. Some participants spoke of chronic affective states that could indicate a reliance on regression, such as Cora who described excessive guilt.

Over a third of the sample (4/10) seemed to support the parenting practices they cited as harmful to them as children. They denied that they caused them any harm and reframed their actions as protective. Despite suffering anhedonia, linked to his *'history'*, Ben rejected the idea that his childhood has had any bearing on his behaviour as a parent and seemed averse to compassion and flexibility in approach. Heather alluded to wanting to be able to use physical chastisement, stating *'I just felt that she's got more power over me you know, where it should be the other way around. Its, you know what I mean, I'm the mum, she's the child, but yet there are things that you can't do now... if I did that (daughter's behaviour) years ago I would have had my dad's hands across the back of my legs, you know, and it would have left a really bad mark.'* Heather spoke of being physically chastised by her father and reported being *'very similar to my dad with regards his temper'* adding that she feels she can *'control it like he can'*.

Almost half (4/10) of the sample seemed in denial of their childhood experiences reverberating. John dismissed any links between how he was parented and his relationship with his child. He stated, *'I've made peace with all that shit a long time ago,*

I don't think about it anymore nor do I let it affect how I raise my son'. He denied having any feelings towards his birth family.

Almost a third (3/10) seemed unwilling or unable to reflect on how their childhood influenced them, perhaps due to what this would require them to think about. Eddie said he *'can't think of anything'* when asked about how his experiences have shaped his role as a parent and Fiona said *'I don't know cause some of it I can't remember cause I was little. I mean, I don't remember much. My memory is rubbish. But I mean there's' nothing that I would say I definitely don't want to do that. Parenting is parenting isn't it..I don't really know how to describe it, there isn't anything I could pinpoint to be honest. I don't really know how to answer that. She was just a good mum. Box standard parenting'*

Discussion

This study aims to illuminate the background stories of parents who are at risk of harming their children. As discussed in this paper's introduction, there is a consensus that our childhood has a significant bearing on who we become as individuals and parents. Whilst there has been an acknowledgement of the intergenerational transmission of trauma and theoretical discussion relating to unconscious processes, person-centered empirical research is limited. The rich data within this study is saturated with first-hand accounts of the participants' adverse childhood experiences. The results show that parents at risk of harming their children were once children at risk and what they endured is likely to have significantly impacted their psychological development and in turn their capacity to parent. All 10 participants in the sample

suffered maltreatment, painful loss and indicate that they heavily rely on primitive psychic defenses to cope and survive.

Familiar territory

The findings illustrate that all the parents in the sample suffered various forms of abuse via primary carers, with over half also experiencing environmental impingements. Many of the parents describe disturbing incidents, perhaps reflective of the catastrophic impact. The inhumane treatment that Ben described strongly suggests he felt poisoned (food injected) and discarded (put outside in a rubbish bag). . Being harmed by those on whom the child is dependent can be cumulative and relationally traumatic, impacting psychological development and capacity to develop a mature and integrated sense of self (Khan, 1963; Music 2011; Schore, 2001; Rassart et al, 2022). Ben's experience of having injuries and a lack of response from supposedly safe adults could highlight the devastating impact on internal representations of himself and others alongside the outer damage to his body. Being on the receiving end of rage and rejection from the adults to whom they must rely on is likely to have impacted many of the participants trust in others and in themselves (Rees, 2010). It is interesting to note that John felt the need to continuously reassure his son of his love as he did not hear this growing up. This could indicate how a lack of positive internal representations for the parent-child relationship has negatively impacted John's ego, meaning he does not trust in this being intrinsically known and communicated hence needs to offer external validation.

Alongside physical injuries, many of the participant's brandished emotional and psychological wounds, like Cora who communicated that she felt unwanted and under threat of abandonment. Chronic exposure to such demeaning messages could distort Cora's ego function in relation to self-worth and efficacy. Feeling valued and secure within primary relationships during the formative years is thought to develop internal representations that promote the capacity to empathise and mentalise (Asen & Fonagy, 2021). Cora described feeling like a '*child trapped in an adult's body*'. Anna Freud (1970) and Winnicott (1965) highlighted the importance of good enough care and nurture as key ingredients in the formation of a secure ego that is needed to mediate the drives and manage the demands of life in various contexts. When a parent's ego development has been derailed by adverse childhood experiences, this may lead to unintegrated emotions and a lack of agency which is being acted out within their relationship with their child (Harris et al, 2021).

The literature discusses how a parent with a fragile ego can easily feel persecuted and at risk of psychic annihilation if their attempts to meet the demands of their child is felt to have failed (Gladston, 1981; Parens, 1987; Mohler et al, 2001; Steele and Pollock 1987). Parens and Mohler used case examples to illustrate how the child can be experienced as the source of threat hence at risk of attack. Many parents in the sample spoke of feeling that their child was deliberate in their actions, and they had a skewed perception of the child's capabilities and intention. For example, Cora described being frightened of her child stating that she thought he might '*finish her off*' one day. Heather

said she felt her daughter had '*more power*' over her perhaps indicating a survival mindset.

Sources in the literature link the capacity to empathise and parental aggression (Kaufman & Zigler, 1987; Wihe, 1997) as well as an understanding that a parent must experience empathy in their formative years to develop the capacity to do so with their own children (Call, 1994; Hudson, 1995). Most of the parents in the sample communicated emotional deficit. Debbie described a lack of '*nurturing and love*' and how she feels her parent's treatment of her has left her with significant mental health problems that impact her emotional competence. Mohler and colleagues (2001) as well as Pereira and colleagues (2012) found that mothers who has a history of abuse in their childhoods were less sensitive and attuned to their child's feeling. It is interesting to note that within the interview transcripts, many of the parents were preoccupied with child's surface behavior as opposed to thinking about their child's emotions and what is being communicated

Missing Pieces

All parents in the sample referred to fundamental absences or loss during their childhoods. It is interesting that all three men in the study were removed from their biological mothers at a young age, perhaps highlighting that this has a profound impact on fatherhood.

All parents in the sample described traumatic experiences to include neglect, rejection and abandonment during fundamental stages of development, perhaps having a devastating impact on the establishment of ordinary narcissism which is necessary for the development of self-worth (S. Freud, 1916; Kernberg, 1985). There are numerous references in the literature to how the demands of parenting can provoke narcissistic wounds in a fragile ego, resulting in a risk of violence (Eldrige & Finnican, 1985; Sharkey, 1980; Wolff 1981). Steele (1994) stated 'the perception of the self being rejected or attacked is the most common trigger in abusive parents' (p1021). The literature relating to intergenerational cycles of child abuse speaks to a lack of ego development as a prominent feature (Prodgers, 1984; Spinetta & Rigler, 1972).

Half the sample referred specifically to the absence of fathers with many speaking of parents separating or lived apart. Freud (1917) theorised that deficit within invested relationships can interfere with the natural processes associated with loss and change, which are inevitable parts of life. He differentiated between normal mourning and mourning that involves unresolved conflicts due to fragmented relationships. Freud talked about how a shadow of the object can fall on the ego in the face of the loss of a primary object. Instead of psychologically accepting the loss and letting go, parts of the lost person that has not been thought about and processed are taken into the personality. This can result in anxiety and depression, or as Freud described it-melancholia. Many parents in the sample described low mood and other symptoms of depressive states. Sullivan (1956) discussed how pathological grief can result from, not only the absence of a physical person but losses associated with unmet needs, and this interferes with the formation of the self.

Many parents in the sample talked about not feeling cared for or understood in the wake of separations. John described suddenly moving to his father's care as a young child, with a narrative that this was due to him needing to gain housing as opposed to being led by his needs as a child. When he reached out to his mother John felt she was '*not interested*'. Kaufman (1962) theorised that parents who have not been supported in their formative years to navigate loss and individuate can have unmet dependency needs and this could trigger feelings of anger and resentment when they are the ones being depended upon. This results in them projecting their void into the child, experiencing them as needy and relentless. This avoids then having to confront painful deficits and their own vulnerability by locating and being at risk of attacking these in the child.

Parents in the sample communicated a feeling that they missed out on their parents who they experienced as absent or distracted from family life meaning they were either self-reliant or dependent on other children. Winnicott (1945) and other key writers (Balint 1968; Bion, 1962) drew attention to the importance of the primary care-givers states of mind and how, via unconscious processes of 'holding' and 'mirroring' the parent's responses form the foundation of the child's sense of themselves. Bion refers to the primary carers as needing to be containers for the infant's unprocessed raw emotional states. This vital function provides a model for managing anxiety that is internalised and drawn upon throughout life. It could be said that the participants did not have such fundamental experiences thus increasing the risk of them lacking internal mechanisms that are necessary in their role as parents.

Some of the sample talked about figures in their life who they aspired to be like although they had little lived experience of them. Espaca (2004) talked about the mourning of a fantasy object, or life that could have been. Cora talks of a grandfather in the wake of an absent father and partner and how her sons has his qualities. Espaca thought that should a parent have been unable to acknowledge and process their own loss associated with deprivation they can delegate a sense of importance to their child and expect that their own unmet needs and desires will be met via the parenting role.

Holding it together

There were several examples of the parent's use of primitive psychic defenses which have the potential to interfere with their capacity to reflect and mentalise which are key in avoiding repetition (Asen & Fonagy, 2021). Trowell (1986) discusses how the overwhelming anxiety associated with thinking about abusive experiences can be too threatening for a fragile ego, hence must be defended against.

In all the parents within the sample there was evidence of primitive states of mind and a reliance on splitting. This can indicate poorly functioning ego's resulting in a chronic fear of survival. The certainty splitting provides can avoid connecting with painful realities and by getting rid of what is not felt to be bearable by displacing it somewhere else. However, this impedes processing and ultimately recovery from what has been experienced. Shabad (1997) identifies a reliance on primitive defenses is due to a parent avoiding painful connections that can be provoked in the parent/child dyad.

For some participants the split was in the form of one or both parents versus themselves as a parent. Grace and John denigrated their parents, giving way to an idealisation of how they care for their children. However, they are intolerant of their child having negative feelings towards them, which could indicate that they will struggle to connect with and integrate normal aggression to or from their child. John is unable to think about him having any difficulties parenting his son, perhaps avoiding being connected with the affect linked to his own deprivation.

This was also applicable vice versa, in that what was ideal was often located in the participants' parent(s). Despite describing neglectful and distracted parents, Iris described positive feelings about them. Iris describes chronic guilt and blames herself for being unable to make use of the education she was offered. This could indicate that she denigrates herself to protect a positive view of her parents and how she was cared for. Adshed (2010) discusses how this can feel safer given the illusion of some control.

For other participants, splitting was in the form of one parent being seen as opposite to the other. Anna and Eddie have complete positive regard for their fathers. There were no signs that they recognised any passive role, painting their mothers as the sole source of their distress. Being able to retain absolute goodness in one parent, can be a way of avoiding painful feelings relating to deprivation in the context of dependence.

Another way of avoiding processing painful emotional content is to identify with an internal representation as opposed to forming a separate sense of being. Debbie and Grace's preoccupation with their children's reaction should they set rules and

boundaries could indicate that they feel paralysed by an over identification with their children, fed by a fear of rejection. Others like Eddie and Heather seem to identify with an aggressor, perhaps as a psychic defense against processing the unbearable helplessness they felt in their own childhoods (A Freud, 1936). It is interesting that many of the parents experienced their children as being a threat to them, rather than vice versa. There are sources of literature that suggests that a parent's repressed anger can either be projected into the child who then identifies with it and acts it out (Rosen 1991) or be evoked by some behaviour or trait in the child (Millar, 1990; De Zulueta, 1993). There was evidence of the use of denial as a defense against thinking. Some parents reflected on their childhood's central role in their current mental state whilst dismissing links to their parenting capacity. Several parents in the sample were either unable to recall their childhoods or denied any ill affect. Others described disturbing details however denied any impact. Freud (1894) proposed that the mind could separate affect from the feelings or ideas attached as a way of managing something that is of critical threat to the psyche. Valliant (1977) suggested that this defence mechanism of the ego is instrumental in managing trauma as the internal state is altered. Jacobson and Straker (1979) applied a test in their study of child abuse cases and highlighted how parents were able to talk about traumatic experiences in their own childhoods without the expected affect. It was as if the feelings were split off from the events. This is interesting given it was noted several times that the parents seemed to be relaying information in a matter-of-fact tone or laughing despite the sometimes graphic and upsetting content. There has been more recent literature linking the use of splitting to dissociation (Jiraskova, 2014).

A further way of defending against unmanageable pain and torment is to repress the thoughts and feelings associated with abusive experiences. Painful contents can be kept unconscious if they threaten the stability of the psyche. Despite some participants being acutely aware of being mistreated during their childhood, they dismissed any impact, perhaps to protect themselves against connecting with unbearable feelings, such as toxic shame and guilt. Many of the parents in the sample described chronic emotional states and distress that could indicate an overreliance on this way of managing. Inevitably, though inaccessible to conscious thought, the psychic content will make itself known through preoccupations, compulsions or distress. Grace spoke of her capacity to parent being impacted by a fear that her children will run away, perhaps indicating unconscious material relating to her sense of value and worth.

Many of the participants seemed to feel that they are helplessly drifting into the situation with their children that they were in. Freud (1920) felt that an individual will feel compelled to repeat experiences to master unresolved internal conflicts. Some seemed to feel disempowered in the face of patterns being repeated, whilst others spoke of being determined not to subject their children to adversity yet the presence of social services suggests the contrary. Steee (1994) alongside Fraiberg and colleagues (1980) suggested that deficits in ego functioning can pass from one generation to the next as the child who experiences impingements in early life can go on to unconsciously repeat the patterns with their children. Green (1976) conducted a study on 60 cases of child abuse and found that mothers' perceptions of their children were closely related to how they were regarded by their parents.

A few of the parents were cognisant of the fact they were behaving in a way that contrasted with what they wanted. Some were conscious of potential links to childhood experiences, whilst others seemed oblivious, passively accepting their perceived likeness to their parents despite their current situation.

Strengths and Limitations

The main strength in this study lies within the source. The data was extracted from interviews completed with participants and the semi-structured nature allowed for the gathering of information that could be analysed for manifest as well as more latent content, viewed through a psychoanalytic lens. This allows for an examination of the participants' perceptions of their formative years and what they think about the impact. The sample was taken from a large pool of participants (110) and had the highest CAPI scores. Therefore the study gives a voice to a group that are most likely to be high-risk, but also often marginalised, mistrustful, and perhaps not often asked about their own experiences.

A limitation to this study was the subjective nature of the data. The PDI is a self-report measure hence is reliant on the credibility of the participants. The sample are parents known to social care and may feel exposed and be experiencing stress and therefore may feel pressure to be selective about the information that they provide. This may exclude them from feeling able to be fully transparent about some of their thoughts and feelings regarding their childhood and their role as a parent. A further limitation is the inevitable presence of the researcher's bias. Although every effort was taken to adopt a

non-judgmental approach there will be unconscious material on the part of the researcher that could impact on what material is drawn upon and the meanings attributed.

Conclusions

All 10 parents in the sample were maltreated in some form, experienced absence or loss of a primary caregiver and indicated a reliance on psychic defenses that highlight unmet developmental needs and a lack of an integrated sense of self. The latter is likely to have been a direct result of the former. It is interesting that most of the parents in the sample were subjected to and/or witnessed violence during their childhoods and are now at risk of physically harming their own child despite conscious motivation not to repeat intergenerational patterns. Some participants signaled their awareness of the presence of unconscious determinants, with some feeling powerless to their influence. Many used emotive words and cited fears that they would become like their parents. This corroborates with sources of literature (Briener, 1979, Rosen, 1991) that highlight the compelling influence of unconscious processes behind child physical abuse. Furman (1986) highlighted how the developmental profiles of the parent who is at risk of abusing their child and the abused child are remarkably similar.

The participants in the sample described traumatic life events and deficits in how they are parented that are likely to have created a cumulative effect on their health and development. The presence of early states of mind illuminate that these parents have been unable to move from a position where they feel under constant threat of falling apart with fragile internal resources with which to face the challenges of parenthood. With a strong likelihood of an immature and unintegrated ego, the risk they pose to their

children could be understood in the context of their plight for their own psychic survival. From this perspective, Flatley's (2016) description of child abuse as lying '*midway between suicide and homicide*'. (p392) can be understood in the context of these parents being significantly compromised in their capacity to protect their child when internally their own vulnerability can over-rule.

The insight gained by this study supports a treatment approach in working with this cohort of parents. The findings suggest that the parents in the sample have gaps in their psychological development due to what has happened to them and therefore will have their own therapeutic needs that require tending too so that they have a foundation upon which to develop the capacity to mentalise and reflect on experiences that could impact their capacity to parent safely. It also highlights a need for the professional networks around these families to carefully consider what parents in this position will need to be able to make use of interventions. The fragility of their internal worlds could lead to an inability to engage which could present as resistance or not cooperating.

Overall, the study reinforces what has already been alluded to in previous sources of literature about child abuse being a human condition that requires interventions that treat the hurt parts of parents that can inadvertently hurt their children. The findings echo a clear message that they need to have a sense of containment and safety within the professional network and any interventions provided, before they can attempt to do the same for their children.

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Part 3: Reflective Commentary

Title: A Journey into the World of Research

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Introduction: Setting the Scene

Having grown up in a family that fostered children, I have often wondered if my interest in psychoanalysis began in response to being part of a sibling group submerged in

trauma. Perhaps being drawn to understand the complexities of emotion was an attempt to intellectualise what I had experienced and to cope with the painful reality of my own helplessness in the face of suffering. I became a young mother at 18 and at 22 I was a qualified social worker, determined to be in a helping position. Upon reflection I wonder if the adult part of me was attempting to address a childhood longing for mastery over the horrors I was exposed too.

For the next 20 years I worked with children and their families, with a large portion being in child protection. I worked with parents who had seriously injured their children, and I recall being struck by how ordinary these parents were, not the monstrous versions that I thought I would encounter. Several cases have stayed vivid in my mind, I think due to the level of affect involved, that involved serious harm to or the death of a baby due to non-accidental injuries. In one of these cases mother had another baby who became looked after post birth, and I was the social worker facilitating the contact. I spent a significant period with this young adult and grew fond of her, perplexed by how she could have come to harm her child.

I continued a course of professional development to include systemic family therapy training. I recall being introduced to the Co-ordinated Management of Meaning Model (Pearce, 1989) and felt gripped by the complexities of human interactions. I was managing a children's home at this point and intended to complete further training in this field, however there was no intake that year. I stumbled across an advert on the agency's internal web page, offering funded places for psychoanalytic observational skills training (M7). In my struggles to contain a staff team and understand the critical psychological state of the children, it sounded like a perfect fit. I intended on doing a

year of the course and then rejoin the family therapy pathway thereafter. However as soon as I was introduced to the world of psychoanalysis, I instinctively knew that this was what resonated with me on a deep level.

Beginning: Finding my Feet

When I secured a training post to undertake the child and adolescent psychoanalytic training, I felt elated. Living in an area where there were no commissioned posts, I took nothing for granted in terms of the opportunity that I was being given. When I told the children and staff that I was leaving my post in the home, I explained how whilst I knew that I went above and beyond for any child, young person or family that I had worked with over my social work career, I often felt I was responding to symptoms and not addressing the cause. I craved to understand more about how to help children recover from what had happened to them and embarked on the training full of hope to gain the knowledge and skills I would need.

My placement is in a Therapeutic Support Service for Looked After and Adopted Children (TSSLAAC). I started in the aftermath of the first Covid 19 lockdown and I know now that I was completely unprepared for the impact of leaving all that I knew to wander into unfamiliar territory. I became acutely aware of powerful projective processes operating in the setting, perhaps exasperated by the pandemic and the conditions forced upon the team. Despite being a much wanted and fought for trainee I often felt unwanted and even infantilised as I struggled to let go of the security I had felt in my previous profession. Analysis and supportive working relationships, both in

placement and in the training school, were my pillars of strength as I began the course and strived to find a place in the team.

Choosing IPCAPA seemed straightforward as I felt it was more of a middle ground in the field of psychoanalysis. At this point I felt I had only been introduced to core concepts and continued to grapple with these, having no idea if I was leaning towards a particular approach. I attended a conference wherein one of the IPCAPA course leads presented, and speaking with them afterwards I was drawn towards the smaller and friendlier feel of the school.

Starting: A Leap of Faith

I was excited and beyond grateful to begin the course, however I felt intimidated when it came to research having only completed a module of formalised training during the first year of my social work degree. Within various management roles in social care, I had learned through experience the need for an evidence base and although I was not familiar with research language back then, I now know that I often used quantitative approaches to argue for service development and resources. For example, I once produced a report for management that evidenced a drop in significant incidents in the children's home when there were 3 staff on at night, instead of 2. This resulted in a much-needed resource that improved the quality of care.

After completing the initial modules in the taught component, we were tasked with completing a proposal for the service-related project. I began my research journal at this stage, documenting my ideas, thoughts and feelings as I designed a project. Due to the

pandemic, I was delayed in beginning clinical cases and as a result I co-facilitated many Professional Network Meetings in the first few months. I was struck by the varying styles of delivery in these meetings depending on who I was partnered up with and how confusing the recordings were. Whilst there were templates, they were used inconsistently with some being bullet points and others containing a lot of detail. Based on my previous experience I imagined these consults to be invaluable for referring social workers and I wondered if the written records they received were fit for purpose. In looking at past annual reports I could see this was an aspect of the service that had not been evaluated, hence I decided to explore this subject area.

During this time, our class was put into groups to design and present an imaginary project. I found this valuable learning as there was the opportunity to learn from peers whilst being guided through the process by tutors. Alongside the taught component, supervision with a designated tutor provided a much-needed space to apply what I was learning and come up with a design. I was surprised to find that the task was not as overwhelming as I had imagined, and I was aware of feeling comfort in the structure offered from facts and figures. We were on-line during this time given the on-going restrictions which felt distanced, and I recall having to remind myself that I had indeed started the course. I felt the loss of not meeting my peers in person and with the delay in getting clinical cases, I wondered if doing this aspect of the research provided a much-needed sense of direction.

I was delighted yet apprehensive as I began seeing children and young people for sessions. The more this progressed and I became gripped by the unconscious processes in the room, I began to come to terms with how learning to be truly present is

not so much about acquiring more knowledge but knowing that I don't know and meeting the patient in the room without 'memory or desire'. (Bion 1967). I missed feeling competent and necessary. Perhaps the many forms, fixed processes and procedures within social work created an illusion that I was doing something about the human suffering I was in touch with daily. Developing psychoanalytically informed therapeutic skills required me to reconnect with my intuition and feelings in the room which was illuminating, yet risky and unsafe.

I now understand why analysis is often described as the cornerstone of psychotherapy training as it became pivotal in making sense of what I was experiencing in this transition as well as in the transference situation within sessions. It also provided me with a containing space where I could gradually revisit early life experiences and connect with internal representations and befriend the many defenses I have developed. It has been life changing. Through the work with the children and young people in the room, core psychoanalytic concepts that were being explored in the clinical component of the course were being brought to life and I was learning the importance of being able to sift through what was happening and think about what may belong to whom.

Stepping Up: Gains and Losses

My longing to meet my peers and engage in clinical seminars in person was tainted by the exhaustion I felt in travelling to London on Tuesdays. Living in a different country

meant I had long hours of travel, including a flight. I began my first intensive case around the same time our class was asked to submit preferences for research groups. I attended a conference where Gerry Byrne presented the Lighthouse Model (Byrne, 2019) and I recall thinking how this felt like the missing link for the vulnerable families I had met throughout my social work career. I felt fortunate to be selected for a group that would have access to data within a large scale randomised controlled trial (RCT) called the Supporting Parents Project (SPP), which was rolling out this model. The first task was the literature review, and I was keen to link what felt like a life-long interest with what I was learning about in psychoanalytic training.

The first brainstorming exercise helped me to think about what it was I was interested in researching and when we were given more information on what data we would have access to too I knew that I wanted to explore the 'why' in the phenomena of child abuse. Intuitively, through personal and professional experiences, I felt there was much to be understood about the human condition when it came to family dynamics. I was reading about concepts relating to maternal ambivalence such as Winnicott's seminal paper 'Hate in the Countertransference' (1949) and attended a conference by Daniella Sief entitled 'Maternal Hostility'. I was drawn to the forensic perspective and read texts by Brett Khar on filicide, attending one of his talks on the topic. I felt committed to exploring if psychoanalytic theory could add to an understanding of what causes a parent to attack what they have essentially created.

I began searching the available literature and in seminars, we were taught to search databases. In group supervision we listened to each other's areas of interest, and I found it helpful to hear how others were developing their study. It was at this point I

realised how vast the literature was on the topic (1, 388 hits over 4 platforms) and I knew I would have to think carefully about the scope of the review and to focus on a specific area. I knew that the data within the SPP related to physical abuse, it seemed logical to follow this route. I found this a difficult decision and even as I began to gather the papers, I found myself going down the elusive 'rabbit holes' as I would find something interesting and then question my decision. For example, I was particularly fascinated by the idea of 'Soul Murder' in that serious harm can be inflicted on the psyche to as fatal an extent as a physical attack (Shengold, 1979). I felt I had to wrestle with the reality that investing in reading texts that focused on physical abuse would best serve the empirical research. I have recorded in my journal that I felt annoyed and agitated at being confined in this way, perhaps an indication that my development as a psychotherapist had truly begun as the structure felt constricting as opposed to reassuring.

I found the process of reading the literature enjoyable and found 42 papers and various books/texts on the topic. I was stunned to read that as far back as the 1960's, there were various attempts to link psychoanalytic thinking and physical abuse, yet I had been ignorant as a frontline practitioner that it could be thought about as anything but a criminal and moral offence. I wondered if such a vacuum is indicative of the anxiety that accompanies thinking of child abuse as an aspect of human nature that can evolve under certain conditions as opposed to an aberration.

Becoming familiar with the extensive literature was a long and at times overwhelming process. I secured chunks of time to read and absorb the material however the exhaustion from travelling, constant study and the building up of my clinical cases

impacted my motivation and overall wellbeing, leaking into my family life. I swung between feeling hopeless in being able to retain and make sense of what I was reading and at other times exhilarated by how interesting it was. I tried various ways of filtering and capturing key points from the texts and found that I had to return to the old-fashioned way of printing them out. My study space became filled with papers that I grouped together, and I drafted a table to synthesis content and identify shared themes. In supervision as we continued to develop our ideas, I talked about what I was finding and felt reassured that I was making progress in gaining a narrative from what I was exploring.

When it came to writing up the review, I fell back into darkness as I attempted to condense in my head and on paper what I had found. I would write extensively about one paper to find I had used up a huge part of the allocated 8,000 words. I organised and re-organised the papers and texts and revisited the title several times before coming to accept that I was limited in what I could include. I learned to be harsh in my selection and found threads within the texts which created meaning and enabled me to summarise key messages. This took a serious amount of time and at times felt all consuming, however feedback in supervision helped me see that I was making progress and in time a structure appeared within my paper. I was struck by how many references there were to deficits in the internal world of parents at risk of harming their children and I wondered about unmet developmental needs. This resonated deeply with my past experiences and how the parents I worked with under child protection often seemed as vulnerable as the children they were deemed at risk of harming.

When I submitted my first draft, I felt elated when my supervisor gave me positive feedback and guidance on where it could be improved. I knew my capacity to engage in research and the knowledge I was gaining within my topic area was progressing and having this verified gave me the confidence to tackle the empirical study.

Stepping out: Moving Forward

I felt that doing the service-related project left me with a foundation of knowledge to build upon when it came to conducting empirical research. I had the opportunity to transcribe a Parent Developmental Interview at baseline and I was intrigued at how the semi-structured interview provided rich insight into the participant's subjective experience as a parent and of being parented. After much deliberation in supervision and considering the outcomes of my literature review, I decided on a qualitative study that would explore the childhood experiences of a sample of parents who were at risk of harming their children. Whilst the research I had conducted up to this point had highlighted the interpersonal nature and complexities of parenting, I hoped that this study would add something to understanding these parents and inform future interventions that could ultimately reduce risk, preventing family breakdown.

One of many decisions in the preparatory stage was the design, which required me to revisit early lectures in methods and explore potential options. I knew I wanted to delve deep into the lived experience of the participants yet also be able to see if there were patterns in the data. I leant towards a thematic analysis as opposed to theory testing or an interpretive phenomenal analysis approach as I thought this could uncover a shared

story. I choose Braun and Clarke's (2006) model as it felt like it allowed me the flexibility and reflexivity that I wanted as a researcher with a psychoanalytic lens. I bought their more recent publication (2021) and loved the straightforward language and humour that they incorporated into explaining each stage of the process. This became my bible for the next few months as I developed my interest into a study.

The ethics approval seemed straight forward given what I needed to access was from an existing study, and quite quickly I was able to begin the initial phase of familiarising myself with the data. I had decided to select 10 participants, who scored the highest on a baseline measure (Child Abuse Potential Inventory) as my sample. I struggled with the feeling that I was unfairly categorising these parents as although I had no reason to question the validity of this measure, I felt that it would be impossible to capture the complexities of risk in one single self-report questionnaire. That said, I accepted this as an evidence-based way of selecting participants for my study.

Having learned how I best work from doing the literature review, I printed the transcripts and organised them into a file, giving each participant a name and number for ease of reference. At this point a lengthy journey of becoming familiar with the parents in the sample began. I called this the 'hot bath' phase as it felt like I became immersed in these parents' stories, often feeling indebted to them for permitting me access to such sensitive parts of their lives. I found this a challenging task, fleeting between strong feelings of sadness and annoyance as I read how they understood their children and their own backgrounds. I had initially thought I would only code data from the section of the interview where they participants were asked directly about their experiences of being parented and how they thought this impacted on how they look after their children

in the here and now. However, I soon realised that there were many parents who mentioned childhood experiences in other sections hence I decided to code any relevant material. I highlighted relevant text and noted any link to psychoanalytic thinking in the left margins and any thought/reflections I had in the right. I found myself reading each transcript several times, some more than others, and found myself getting drawn into judging how the participants parented. I wondered if I felt a pull towards something familiar, given my social work roots. I felt like my mind was splitting into a 'us and them', perhaps as a way of defending myself against the anxiety of child abuse being something that, under certain conditions, all humans are capable of. Despite my compassion for the parents, I worked with in the past, I recall being grateful to be on the professional end of the table when in case conferences or in court processes, given how horrendous I imagined it to be on trial for what was considered the worst crime imaginable.

Getting out of the 'hot bath' was hard! I felt like I was somehow betraying the parents I felt that I had become so familiar with by trying to limit their experiences to words. I felt humbled to have had the opportunity to hear their stories and wanted passionately to do them justice in the research. When it came to creating the first of many tables that organised the data, I had a feel for each participant and could already clearly see shared experiences highlighting that the parents in the sample were once children at risk of harm. In clinical seminars we were exploring parent work, and I was interested in how becoming a parent could be considered a major life transition once an individual has navigated developmental stages. I thought of how the parents in the sample were

indicating regressions or fixations at earlier stages, perhaps making it impossible to forgo their own needs and prioritise their children.

Learning to code was not as daunting as I anticipated, and 2 main themes developed early on around maltreatment and loss. There were also strong messages in the data about how the parents managed their own unmet needs, however this proved more difficult to code and I relied heavily on my psychoanalytic lens to find meaning in what the parents were conveying. As I moved up and down the 5 stages of the Braun and Clarke model, I developed thematic maps and the third strand in the narrative slowly came into focus. This related to the primitive defenses that the parents were alluding to relying upon. I thought about how this indicated the level of threat the parents were experiencing in terms of their own psychic survival.

After many drafts, I developed a table containing the codes and the relevant text under the theme as my reference guide. I began writing the results and then discussion, I struggled not to include everything everyone said as I wanted equality in the voices of the parents being heard. After receiving back my first draft I worked on summarising and included the most illuminating quotes, reassured that their entire contributions could be read in an appendix. I felt mobilised by the passion that my past experiences had installed in me to contribute in some way to understanding parents at risk of harming their children as in need as opposed to being vilified.

Conclusions: Destination Unknown

I feel like my interest in psychoanalytically informed research has grown significantly as a direct result of conducting this research. I hope that what has been captured regarding the lived childhood experiences of the parents in the study will add to the body of literature that advocates for a treatment approach when responding to risk in families. It corroborates with what has been documented already about how parents with unmet developmental needs can present a risk to their child as unconscious processes can be activated, resulting in violence as a survival response. In the sample of parents, it felt devastating that despite their desires for something different for their children, intergenerational patterns prevailed, and there were similar adversities. It was hard not to feel hopeless as it seemed that without an intervention that would provide developmental help for parents, their children could be destined to continue the cycle. It is massively reassuring that initiatives like the Supporting Parents Project are attempting to develop services to target this need and the more research that is done the more we, as a society, can understand the internal world of parents and view the physical abuse of children as a treatable human condition. Whilst my research has inevitably raised more questions than answers, I hope it has given a voice to forgotten parts of these parents.

I would describe myself as having made friends with the world of research. I no longer feel like an imposter, and I am reassured when I engage in discussion with peers about what I did and why. I feel better equipped in my clinical work with parents and their children. I find myself thinking back to my research in my clinical practice, connecting with how unmet needs in a parent can perhaps clash with the child's demands. I believe

that the skills I have acquired in research and the insight I have gained in the subject area can continue to enhance my development in evidence-based practice as a psychotherapist.

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Appendix 1: data set

Ranking and ref number	Age/gender living situ of child	Who is Participant?	Material relating to childhood	analysis	Reflections/thoughts	feelings
1 (429) 200 9A AN NA	? Primary school Boy Lives with MGM Younger sis-lives with mum Absent father	Mother Partner OD'd Chronic illnesses Raped Suicidal-spoke of feeling like being tortured on the inside	'going to grow up without a dad like I did' Dad passed away when 4-he was my hero-wants to make him proud Step-dad-DV towards mum and inappropriate-feels mum hated her for it, jealous Feels mum projected what she didn't want to accept about herself onto her-used PI-calls her a crap parent-feels delusional-said how she is stronger now-does not let her feel that what she says is true-been through a course Terrified that she will do this to her children	Idealisation of dad DV-transgenerational dynamics Mother experienced as sadistic intellectualisation as defence? Compulsion to repeat/low ego strength Low self esteem/co	Splitting-dad great/mum abusive Sexual/emotional abuse Feels mum jealous as opposed to protective This knowledge helpful? Has no confidence that she won't repeat the past	Vulnerable mum-feels mother has taken her son-Like being tortured from the inside Flitted between being annoyed with her and feeling sorry for her. Looks external-CAMHS/Assessment/diagnosis Blames MGM for lack of bond/relationship with child. Feels MGM uses child to hurt her.

			<p>Can't accept when told doing well</p> <p>Wants to be the complete opposite of her mum</p>	<p>nfidence- Imposter syndrome- deep sense of being flawed- toxic shame/basic fault</p>		<p>Blames child-linking to dangerous dad</p> <p>Cried during interview</p> <p>Shocking events in life- kidnapped by child's father-found friend hung-raped by friend who then stalked her</p> <p>Feels persecuted by SS</p> <p>Males-You took my man so ill take yours? Son stole-rapunzel type tale-with villains and brutality</p>
2 (396) 501 5B BEN	10 Girl Younger sister-autism-not	Step dad-with mum 5 years	<p>Laughs when asked about childhood</p> <p>difficult because raised by local authority-went into care at age 5-first</p>	<p>Humour as defence</p> <p>Deep shame over being</p>	<p>Hard man? Joker type persona</p> <p>No reflection on impact on</p>	<p>Dangerous stepdad-unable to digest/integrate experience with child</p>

	diagnosed	<p>'I don't show my feelings unless it's anger..which I don't like showing'</p> <p>I don't ask for help</p> <p>Feels like a dangerous man-not feeling in charge/control could feel life/death</p>	<p>placement physical, mental, sexual abuse. Multiple placements. Some decent. 2 childrens homes.kicked out of schools</p> <p>I don't use that as an excuse</p> <p>Instilled that manners, clean up ect. Trust and respect. When asked to do something do it</p> <p>Grew up way too quickly, didn't have a childhood-look after sisters-had to be an adult</p> <p>Awful experiences-carers injecting chocolate bars and in black bin bag outside in the cold.</p> <p>Try not to be anything like majority of my carers-it was hell-wouldn't wish that for anyone-then</p>	<p>rejected/unwanted</p> <p>Rejects impact</p> <p>Compliance valued-superego?</p> <p>Strong defenses needed-does child's projections feel painful as they are reminders of the needs that he had that were not met?</p>	<p>self/vulnerability ect</p> <p>Speaking v matter of fact</p> <p>Excuse for what? Does he resent child being nurtured</p>	<p>Dynamic of stepdad being mums protector-negative about birth dad</p> <p>Very negative about the child from the start-made me angry-unattuned-authoritative - control/compliance-takes behaviour personally-cries at one point</p> <p>Blames child-seen as abuser-used criminal language-assault-has ADHD</p> <p>Splits children-one good/one bad</p> <p>Shocking childhood experiences</p>
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			<p>says like some of them-muddled.</p> <p>Talks about a grandad (now deceased) but no mention in own experiences of being parented.</p>			<p>-seems to want to shock</p> <p>Talks of it being 'bliss' when child not there-wish to get rid of</p> <p>Matter of fact tone</p>
3 (391) 302 0A CO RA	<p>Boy Aged 8</p> <p>Youngest of 4 brothers</p> <p>Older 2 different dad-not around</p> <p>Hard man persona but scared of spiders/dark</p> <p>Football</p>	<p>Mother 35/36</p> <p>Separated from his father but sees him a lot</p> <p>Depression-teary</p>	<p>As an adult, don't get along with 2 of my siblings-never got on with sis, but did with bro</p> <p>Mum and dad split when young-stepdad-part time dad-focused on mum and stepdad</p> <p>I think its where my guilt comes in-flt - stepdad only wanted mum and sister-me and brothers not included in the family</p> <p>They didn't kind of want us-said we were naughty-that we would be put in childrens homes and stuff</p> <p>Had holidays/days out but felt unwanted</p>	<p>Excluded/not important-narcissistic wound</p> <p>Lived with threat of abandonment-had to comply-sacrifice parts of the self</p> <p>Guilt-not wanted</p>	<p>Family split-difficult dynamics</p> <p>Guilt-heavy-impact on actions as a parent-feel flawed/undeserving/unable</p> <p>Not much info-has this been thought about beyond</p>	<p>Came across as having strengths but overwhelmed- feel like little girl trapped in this body-feels needs someone for her but does not deserve it-rejection by dad</p> <p>Don't want child speaking to her mum the way he speaks to her-hurt her mum</p> <p>Experiences child as demanding</p>

	Baby of family	<p>Step dad physically abused me and brothers</p> <p>I think that why I feel guilt now-want them all to feel included – that I treat them all the same-I don't want them to ever feel that I didn't want them</p> <p>Moved on-me and mum have slight relationship-sister doesn't allow</p> <p>MGM over compensates-will go behind my back – makes me cross-does more for them than ever did for me as a parent-find this hard-don't want to be anything like her-sounds horrible-don't want to be that person-I want my kids to know that I am there , never leave them, try my best-I don't want to have to overcompensate with GC-do with own now</p> <p>Stepdad-not like completely-id never wanted him anywhere near my children</p>	<p>because bad/unworthy?</p> <p>Her children getting what she didn't-how does this feel?</p> <p>Rejection of any likeness</p> <p>Repetition despite conscious wish</p>	<p>external narrative</p> <p>Pain of exclusion</p> <p>How does this show up in parent/child dynamic-child should be grateful-getting what she did not?</p> <p>Is this undermining parent as way of unconscious sabotage by MGM?-makes her feel better</p>	<p>Scared of child-could 'finish' her off-child asks are you going to cry</p> <p>Sibling fights triggering-can shut self away</p> <p>Guilt every day</p> <p>Values caring qualities</p> <p>Gets teary when discussing how child can be aggressive but then loving-also when 11 yr old depressed-feels guilty/failed</p> <p>Past DV</p> <p>Shares bed-brushes mums hair-intrusive</p>
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			<p>Nothing like them</p> <p>C stayed with dad during lockdown- don't want feel sent away as this was threatened to me as a child-felt guilt-does not want im to feel blamed, not wanted- that's how I felt as a child</p> <p>Wishes child knew her dad-walked away when older children born—find hard-walked out on me-cant get over that-walked out on grandchildren</p> <p>Grandpa died when 10—great/bright person-wish boys met him</p>	Hero in mind? He could have been saviour	Abandonment-deep wounds	<p>Feels children have control</p> <p>Catastrophises about family breakdown-someone going to have to go</p> <p>Wants to change how consistently he has been parented-not lost him yet</p>
4 (386) 500 2A DEB BIE	<p>Girl 3</p> <p>Younger brother</p> <p>Deceased baby girl</p> <p>Estranged dad-</p>	<p>Mother</p> <p>BPD</p>	<p><i>BPD like I have because of the way I was brought up.</i></p> <p>Want her to have the education I wish I had</p> <p>Needs the right nurturing and love that I never received</p> <p>Said this will be easier from the rest?</p>	<p>Worried about past repeating</p> <p>Parent living through child</p> <p>Fantasy that unmet child needs would be met by child</p>	<p>Wants them to have better</p>	<p>Vulnerable mum-falls apart easily-fear of children rejecting her-</p> <p>Age not stated and was so surprised when heard she was 3-thought much older.</p>

	lets her down		<p><u>Lived with mum and dad-then mum from 13. + view of MGM</u></p> <p>Scared of children feeling how she felt-thinks this is why hard to have boundaries- it was 'traumatic-don't want to put children through those emotions, hurt-can't imagine what it would do</p> <p>Very clear-not like mum at all-describes as heavy handed-would scream and shout-use words to hurt me and her hands-never want to raise hand to child, or scream-tells them off but not like my mum-made me feel like I shouldn't have been born</p> <p>Dad alcoholic-don't want to drink like him-never around-I will be there for my children-know they are loved, don't have to worry, not going to be punished</p> <p>Gran-wants to be like-no pushover-has boundaries-placid</p>	<p>Someone elses fault?</p> <p>But if you went through it would you not know?</p> <p>Bad object-villan/sadistic</p> <p>Rejecting/absent</p> <p>Angel figure-ego ideal</p>	<p>But she said she does shout/raise voice</p> <p>Uses as measure that she doesn't live up too</p>	<p>Talked about child headbutting and throwing tablet at SW head-laughed-felt annoyed.</p> <p>Thinks autism</p> <p>Split view of child-swings in view-also of self-described in extremes</p> <p>Lot to do with deceased sibling-what is being managed through child</p> <p>Parent values child looking after them- thinks she caring bc if she sees someone upset she thinks she is to blame-child view of self as</p>
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			<p>person-available-hate how I am with my MH-makes me not like-diff emotions going around-never shows feelings-don't want my emotions affecting the children</p>			<p>damaging? Mum says 'this will help her later on in life??????</p> <p>High expectations of child-expects same mind as adult-values compliance</p> <p>Talks about child still being there-just needs guidance-see prob with the child</p> <p>Feel persecuted by the child-parents breaks down in face of behaviour-feels child saying 'ha ha Ive won'</p> <p>Feels persecuted vy SS</p> <p>Mentions MH-BPD-</p>
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						<p>don't want child having this</p> <p>Feels having child 'saved' her</p> <p>Parent falls apart easy 'cant do this'. Locks self in bathroom</p>
<p>5 (376) 502 5B</p> <p>ED DIE</p>	<p>10 Girl</p> <p>Younger sister</p> <p>Older brother 14</p> <p>Deceased baby last year</p>	<p>Dad</p> <p>Lost a baby last year</p> <p>Smokes cannabis - used to be an alcoholic - sees partner as saviour.</p> <p>Avoidant?</p> <p>Lots of don't</p>	<p>Homeless and independent since 16</p> <p>When asked about childhood-said 'good luck'</p> <p>Raised by adoptive parents from age 3 - first called then step parents, then corrected</p> <p>I don't know - cant think of anything - asks partner for help</p> <p>When I done wrong I got a smack - didn't do me any harm - taught me not to do it again - cant do that now</p> <p>They've got more right than us</p>	<p>Rejection/harsh separation</p> <p>Sarcasm - avoidance of pain?</p> <p>Avoidant - not wanting to think</p> <p>Identification with an aggressive/volatile parental object</p> <p>Split - us and them - between parents/children</p>	<p>Did he leave or put out?</p> <p>As in anything good hard to find?</p> <p>Too painful/difficult</p> <p>Better to be the scary one than be scared.</p> <p>Parents right - children wrong</p>	<p>Angry dad - shouting at professional - feels blamed by them - narcissistic - felt sorry for - adopted then abused - matter of fact tone</p> <p>Negative view of child - cant think of 3rd word partner interjects with more positive words</p> <p>Cant think of time they clicked</p>

		<p>know , cant think.</p> <p>Want to be like mum- I don't! 'evil and vicious'. Would get punished/beaten- would avoid going in until dad came home</p> <p>Want to be like dad- calm/collected-would tell mum to clam down-you are taking it too far.</p> <p>Wants to be like dad and not mum-<i>come across like my mum- because of my past</i> but yet rather dad then mum</p> <p>Half and half- sometimes go like mum, sometimes like dad-partner tells him</p>	<p>Opposing view of parents- one bad- one good- split</p> <p>Some reflective capacity- can be like mum- linked to past</p> <p>Split- one or the other- not both together</p>	<p>Way of managing primitive anxiety- believe in a good object that can have power over the bad- fairytales.</p> <p>Acknowledgment of concerns?</p> <p>Lack of integration</p>	<p>Values compliance</p> <p>Feels persecuted- feels child is lazy (toileting) and school blaming- shouts at staff (sees this as ok as didn't raise hand)-states can't help self</p> <p>Feels frightened as a parent- feels not true- cant think of example</p> <p>Responses to child depend on adults perception</p> <p>Feels his responses link to how children treat him</p> <p>Talks of children being taken into care- blames SS-</p>
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						<p>tried to kill self-effect on kids was his absence</p> <p>Would not change anything-all ever wanted was kids</p>
6 (375) 301 1A FIO NA	<p>Girl 13 3 siblings (all diff fathers)-2 girls, 1 boy</p> <p>Living with MGM sig amount? Phy health probs</p> <p>Mum talks about her hearing voices /mood issues /self harming</p>	<p>Mother Single</p> <p>EUP D/BPD-mentions a lot</p> <p>Describes self as unpredictable-feel MH is issue in parenting</p> <p>Talks about disasocialising/self</p>	<p>Mum and dad-dad not present-drunk. Spoke of mum and dad friends, then something happened and then I came 'hi' (laughs).</p> <p>Dad-around but not around in a dad way. He was just useless. Mum was great-cant fault mum</p> <p>Mum raised me, don't need a man but 'my actions say differently'. Been needy, need males. Needed that validation of being wanted-daddy issue?</p> <p>When asked how mum parented-cant remember-nothing don't want to do. 'shes a good mum, that's about it'. Talked about parenting being parenting-box standard.</p>	<p>Parental couple? Conception by accident.</p> <p>Split-one useless, one great</p> <p>Reaction formation</p> <p>Avoidance</p> <p>Cant seem to tolerate anything negative about mum-is this</p>	<p>Chuckles at lots of points where it should be sad/disturbing-found this annoying</p> <p>Unmet need-relating to males</p> <p>Too painful</p>	<p>Teenage mum-relied on GM</p> <p>First word used to describe was protective of parent-ref what she has witnessed. Likes that she helps adults.</p> <p>States-will try and parent for me-then will tell profs-looks bad on her?</p> <p>Engaging in programme to help relationship</p> <p>Feels entitled-will threaten to</p>

		<p>harming/alcohol issues</p> <p>Apologises to him for having to look at her-hates neck-fat</p> <p>Kids with her mum - poorly in her head</p>	<p>Didn't agree with a move but understands why</p> <p>Calls dad 'a stinking drunk'- talks about him still living with his dad-derogatory attitude towards him.</p> <p>Feels similar to her mum that she has bad taste in men-bad judgement of people.</p> <p>Does not want to be like dad-questions if MH comes from his side?</p>	<p>because she has to hold onto an ideal to defend against primitive anxiety?</p> <p>Villan-childlike character in her mind</p> <p>Locates the blame in the other-'attract the horrible ones'</p>	<p>Bad stuff from dad</p>	<p>ring SS-paternal function</p> <p>States 'I haven't completely messed them up'- low self esteem</p> <p>Feels sorry they don't have the same dad</p> <p>Guilt over being distracted by relationships and what children have witnessed.</p> <p>Worries she will turn out like her-choice in men</p> <p>Views having child at 16 as robbing her of her childhood</p> <p>Talks about abandonment issues</p>
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						<p>starting when she was in hosp-woke up baby not there. Talked about not waking at night-mum seen to child-diffs bonding</p> <p>Blames child for loss of son-younger sibling-to father-breaks down when talking about this-unrealistic expectations of child's understanding</p> <p>Child self-harming-'flashing it off' to teachers-struggle to respond as self struggling-prof know-I don't</p>
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						<p>Lonely-son/grandad-males?</p> <p>To be cared for-want/dont want it-ambivalent.</p> <p>Feels hated by child-does not want to be affectionate</p> <p>Wanted her to know brother</p> <p>Cared for grandad</p> <p>Blamed others for reasons kids on CP</p>
7 (374) 302 7A GR ACE	<p>Girl 3</p> <p>Older half sister (15)-lives with her dad</p> <p>Older half brother</p>	<p>Mother</p> <p>EUP D-knows she can snap-can't control</p>	<p>Mum and dad-did the opposite-they were abusive. Dad alcoholic-mum drank a bit-was beaten in front of her by dad. We were all really abused-emotionally and physically. Its affected me by I don't hit my children-I don't want my child to run away from me-which is what I did as a teenager. Try not</p>	<p>V negative of both parents. Reflective in that she calls it abuse-does not want it repeated</p>	<p>Does not want to repeat being abusive but she has been deemed risk to child-child does hide when she is angry</p>	<p>Chas fear of losing children-because she was lost to her parents? Stop her putting in boundaries?</p> <p>Find child demanding/hyper</p>

	<p>(aged 13)-lives with Gran-autism?</p> <p>Lives with mum and dad</p> <p>Born with a club foot</p>		<p>to be like my mum and dad-showed me what not to do.</p> <p>Unlike mum/dad. They never listen/care. We have to lie. Taught us all the things not to do in life</p> <p><u>Moved away from dad when 9/10</u></p> <p>Don't want t to be like-will repeat little sayings. Also strict but different tactics.</p>	<p>Unable to be objective-too painful? All awful</p>	<p>Fixed narrative-parents negative-not like</p>	<p>Likes her innocence-not tainted</p> <p>Like best friends-parent likes dependency -feels lonely/no purpose when not with her.</p> <p>Sees child as saviour-also wants to be child's saviour-feels rejected if child asks for someone else.</p> <p>Child hides/stays quiet when mum angry-scared</p> <p>Has insight into learned behaviour-need to contain emotions.</p> <p>Will withdraw if child has negative emotions</p>
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						Older daughter and her drifted-called her toxic
8 (373) 501 6A HEA THE R	Girl Age 11 Younger sister 2 older adult sibling s-diff father Attending school an issue Dad involved-not regular/predictable	Mother Divorced Depression Mood swings/temper tantrums Uses smoking to cope	<p>Talks about getting her dad's hands across the back of her leg-would have left a really bad mark. Can't do that now.</p> <p><u>With mum and dad until 14-parents split-</u> she then 'went off the rails'. Spoke of running away to dad's</p> <p>How affected? I have no idea. Dad strict-when they split it was harder, a lot harder to deal with than..I don't know how it affected, I don't know</p> <p>Im not like my mum- always in the pub-I had to look after younger siblings-my children don't do that</p> <p>Im like my dad with regards temper-I can control it-takes a lot to push buttons/snap</p>	<p>Alluding to feeling that she needs to use violence to exert control-identification with aggressor as defence against helplessness</p> <p>Avoidance of thinking/reflecting-went back to I don't know when mentioned split</p> <p>Thinks not like mum if not externally doing the same</p>	<p>Feels that she has no power if she can't use violence - that's what she was shown</p> <p>Hurt/abandonment-flight response</p> <p>Parents separation major life event</p> <p>Disown likeness to mum</p> <p>Experienced</p>	<p>Values child meeting needs of other tries to fill holes in adults</p> <p>Links depression to parenting</p> <p>Ambivalence-split exp, one day great/next not-one day better off without/next day Im the best thing</p> <p>Feels children have helped her control her temper more-then shouts at child off screen-sends to naughty chair</p> <p>Feels angry and cross-</p>

			<p>Want to be different than dad-used to be close-not doesn't talk/make time</p>	<p>Dad as aggressor -hitting-sees self like?</p> <p>Not wanted/valued/important</p>	<p>abandonment</p>	<p>child more power over her-should be other way around</p> <p>Feels persecuted by the school-blames her</p> <p>Guilt if gets self anything</p> <p>Experiences child as dismissive of her emotions-like she can't affect her. Feels does not show feelings so children not aware</p> <p>Feels she has no support-has to do everything</p> <p>Would change not having last child-felt harsh-very matter of fact</p>
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9 (372) 201 4A IRIS	Boy Aged 9 Anxiet ies firewo rks/lo ud/dar k- autisti c 3 older sister s (one full) Stays at dads and sister s	Moth er MGM died of canc er- child didn't meet but talks about her Lost dad 3 yrs ago	<p>I don't want them to be brought up like I was. I'd say we were dragged up..in a good way (x2)</p> <p>We were more streetwise..had freedom-build houses, go to park, played in the wood-wouldn't dare allow</p> <p>Describes self as 'daddy's girl'-one of 4 sisters-felt missed out on parents-worked long shifts-why at home. Big sister got us dressed and to school</p> <p>When home from work went to bingo/pub/pool-didn't see them-why stay home</p> <p>Like mum? Don't..couldnt be-she rasied a strong woman-hope follow footsteps-don't resent or regret anything-taught right from wrong-wise to the world. Unlike mum-nothing to unlike</p> <p>Like dad?in everyway-attitude and things,</p>	<p>Negative language yet felt to be good? Denial</p> <p>Left alone a lot-where were the adults?</p> <p>Absent/dis tracted parents</p> <p>Idealised-has to keep good, deny anything negative</p> <p>Confusing -is strict good/not good. What does strict mean</p>	<p>Needs to defend against being uncared for</p> <p>Reframing to fit narrative</p> <p>Not good feelings-try to do opposite</p> <p>Preserve good object</p> <p>Positive reframing-to avoid painful affect-lack</p>	<p>Idealises child-loves everything about him</p> <p>Cries about son and losing dad</p> <p>Talks about clicking with child when they express love/compliments</p> <p>Idealises parenting-cant think of time not clicked-angels in training-states her feelings don't matter-come last-altruism?</p> <p>Feeling of mother being quite needy/intrusive- he doesn't like going out/staying somewhere</p> <p>Values ed-she did not</p>
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			<p>strictness. Jealous streak-don't like. Not as strict as dad-disliked growing up-he was strict with us, very very strict</p> <p>Understand strict but should allow grow up quicker-should allow gro up and be ourselves but thought doing right-look back now he was doing right thing-trying to keep safe, learn, protect us-go down right path but in way held against it-</p> <p>feels will rebel if told to do something-linked to dad telling her what to do</p>	<p>Conflicting statements</p> <p>Push against control</p>	<p>of available parent</p>	<p>make use of it</p> <p>Cant shield them/shield them too much-so may paed on the street-too many-don't think happen to you</p> <p>Worries about autism-adapting-hes easily led-fear about not being able to protect-to be in with the crowd</p> <p>Feels guilty every day-if they want and I cant get</p> <p>Fears dying and leaving children alone-maybe like she was/is?</p> <p>Panicked when asked</p>
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						rejection question Tried to control birthday at distance (at dads)-struggles with separation-school/friends-has some insight
10 (371) 501 0B JOHN	Boy Age 5- lives with mum 2 older half siblings that live with their dad	Dad age 42, has 3 sisters and 1 brother Has child 2 days every 2 weeks + holiday periods Heart probs/dia	Nothing like my dad- which was always my goal. He used to hit me and stuff. Growing up in 80's- different time-you didn't have all this shit (SS). You went to school with bruises and no one gave a shit. My dad was a bit harsh, so my main goal when H was born was not live or be brought up like that. I can see all my dad's mistakes and where he went wrong and I do everything for that to not be the case for him-feels worked out 'absolutely perfect'. Before having child- not doing too good-	Physical abuse	Talks about child being a good boy- does he think he wasn't and that's why he got abused Omnipotent- I have control, can make right- denial of vulnerability Being parent gives life meaning-if	Whos needs are being met Values selfless qualities Idealises child and parenthood- loves everything- perfect Child as saviour- when he felt hopeless child came and gave him a purpose- something to do, someone

		<p>betes /thyroid</p> <p>Spoke of feeling ill and wanting to stay alive-got sick because of problems</p> <p>struggle-nothing to look forward too</p> <p>On antidepressants and anti-psychotics</p>	<p>with my upbringing and stuff-id had enough to be honest.</p> <p>Dad dead-not really got on or talked with my mum since, I don't know, forever.</p> <p>Dad out of prison when-took me from my mother and we never had a relationship, so I kind of had nothing</p> <p>Because of how shit my growing up and things with my parents</p> <p>I remember the stuff my old man used to say about my mum, and that and how it used to make me feel</p> <p>When asked when scared as parent-talked of being late for an appointment and rushing then thought heart attack-thought of son-his dad died of heart attack-was with him at the time-knows how quick it can happen-smokes a lot-stressful-trying to cut down</p>	<p>Feels failure as relationship broke down-wanted diff for his son-determined to have own little family</p> <p>Dev trauma-shock</p> <p>Wants to fix wrongs by being dad and doing right</p>	<p>fail-fail at life?</p> <p>Felt 'taken'-object used by adult</p> <p>Links MH and CH</p> <p>Fear of repeat cycle?</p> <p>Rejected by mum-not claimed by dad-no mans land? Nobodys child?</p>	<p>who needed me-only joy and pleasure I have-no one cares/bothers-but I got him-only one who gives a shit and loves me for me</p> <p>Suspicious of interviewer-I've got nothing negative to say if that what your getting at</p> <p>Teary when talking about child running to him-don't want to think about that</p> <p>V negative/hung up on ex-blaming of her-talks of trying to make it work for 7 years-didn't want child seeing</p>
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		<p>Came home from infant school-man sitting there-hadnt met him before-that's how it went. Heard my dad saying to people he had to go and get me from my mum because he needed to get somewhere to live' because he had just come out of prison.</p> <p>Determined to have 'my own little family' and it not to be like that for child..dont want none of that for my son.</p> <p>I try to be different from both of them, completely.</p> <p>There wasn't any positives that spring to mind-dad came and took me, mum not interested. When dad took didn't see for 5/6 years (lived further away)</p> <p>Don't have relationship with mum-or brothers, 3 sis-they have different dad-I simple wasn't there-nothing I could do</p>	<p>Absence mum/siblings</p> <p>Phy assault</p> <p>unseen/unheard</p> <p>Denial of impact</p>	<p>Conscious desire-painful when what has been repressed gets repeated</p> <p>Sense of belonging-is relating painful?</p> <p>Narcissistic wound-too deep to link affect</p> <p>Soul murder</p>	<p>arguments-she lost her older kids, will lose this one. Curses when telling stories (anger) and alleges drug misuse. Rants about an incident when child got burnt</p> <p>Asks researcher-how would you feel sending son back to drug addict-said he wishes to terminate her</p> <p>Shows letter listing MH diagnosis</p> <p>Got annoyed when child expressing painful emotions-missing mum-felt taking the brunt</p> <p>Annoyed at SS-feels</p>
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		<p>The little bit of time I did have with mum vanished quickly with the amount of time with dad</p> <p>Dad hit me a bit took much, cant remember who, dad's sister or something at the time. I was long ago. She phoned me and I begged her to let me come back and she wasn't interested- that was that-don't want that for him-he doesn't deserve that, be brought up that way, different time back then</p> <p>Not similar to them at all-dont hit-make feel like shit. Talked about being at dad's friends-they said about him being well behaved. Had slap on back of head in car and tol to go in, sit down, shut up and don't speak until spoken too-anyone offers, say no. That's why quiet/well behaved. From a man who is supposed to be your father. Ive made peace with all that</p>		<p>Too painful-have to face reality</p>	<p>mum abusive and they are not acting-feels helpless in protecting child-maleness-rants: feels there is no empathy</p> <p>Was arrested by police in front of child as alleg that he beat mum and took child from her.</p> <p>Wakes child up at night for cuddle-sleeps in dads bed</p> <p>Talked about mum negatively in front of child-when addressed with him understood-able to relate to being angry-feels SS keeps on about this</p>
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			<p>shit-don't think about it-let it affect how I raise my son-taught me how not to be like them and because I know how it feels, I don't want my son feeling that</p> <p>Would like child to know his mum-she didn't bother with me but she has a grandson-arguments for years-bothers own grandkids-sister reached out-he now goes down-even though I don't he does. Im happy with that</p> <p>Lost all of them years ago-25/30-don't have feelings towards them, not upsetness, love, happiness or nothing-think when separated for so long, you lose all how you feel about people and stuff-they fade just like the feelings do.</p> <p>Glad son has relationship he should have had</p> <p>Tells child he loves him bc he was never told as a kid.</p>			<p>Isolated-feels doesn't need anyone-</p> <p>Very matter of act when talking about terrible historical events</p>
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Appendix 2: Codes

Code	Statement (from who)
1. Absent/ loss of parent	<p>Dad passed away when I was 4 (1 Anna)</p> <p>I was raised by the local authority. I went into care at age 5. I went through 2 children homes, multiple foster placements (2 Ben)</p> <p>My dad walked away from me for good when (third child) was a baby so he has never met (subject child). I find it really hard because I couldn't just walk out on my children , so I find it hard that my dad walked on out me, I can't kind of get over that, but then you've also walked away from your grandchildren (3 Cora)</p> <p>He (dad) was never around (4 Debbie)</p> <p>My stepmum and my stepdad, adoptive sorry, 3 years old. (when asked who raised) (5 Eddie)</p> <p>Dad was present, but not present, present. He was around as in person but not around as in, a dad way, he was just useless (6 Fiona)</p> <p>I never really had a bond with my dad because I moved away from my dad when I was 9/10 (7 Grace)</p> <p>I felt like I never seen them (parents) (9 Iris)</p> <p>My dad's dead. Ive not really got on or talked with my mum since, I don't know, forever. A lot of that was because when my dad came out of prison when I was younger he basically took me from my mother and we never really had a relationship, so I kind of had nothing (10 John)</p> <p>So I never really had a relationship with her (mother), nor my brother, nor my 3 sisters actually for that matter because they've got a different dad</p>

	<p>and I simply wasn't there and there was nothing I could do about that really.</p> <p>So the little bit of time I did have with my mum sort of vanished very pretty quick with the amount of time I was in (town's name) with my dad (10 John)</p>
2. Hero's	<p>He (dad) was my hero (1 Anna)</p> <p>I would love to be like my Gran, she's a, she isn't a pushover like she has her boundaries and stuff and shes like no other person I ever met. Like she will be there, like pick you up when you need it and she knows the right things to say and do. She's a very placid person..she would never show she was upset. I want to be like her because I don't want my emotions affecting the children. So in every way I want to be like her. (4 Debbie)</p> <p>I want to be like my dad all the time, he was calm, collected. I want to be like that, not the other way, like my ma. (5 Eddie)</p> <p>Mum was great though, I cant fault my mum at all. She did a great job, so (6 Fiona)</p> <p>She (mother) raised a strong woman. And I just hope that I follow in her footsteps and raise strong woman in my daughters. So I don't resent or regret anything, you know what I mean. She taught us right from wrong. She taught us to be wise. There is nothing to unlike. (9 Iris)</p>
3. Witness parent being abused	<p>I had a step dad who beat her (mum) to a pulp (1 Anna)</p> <p>My mum was beaten..in front of me..by my dad (6 Fiona)</p>
4. Sexual abuse	<p>He (step dad) was very inappropriate with me (1 Anna)</p> <p>The first placement I went into I suffered physical, mental and sexual abuse (2 Ben)</p>
5. Emotion alabuse	<p>My mum hated me for it, she was jealous. So she's hated me ever since, that's why we don't have a relationship really. And when she drunk she admit that she knew what was going on, and when shes sober she acts like it never happened. She has resented me, my whole life, she loves her other kids (1 Anna)</p> <p>She (mum) projected onto me all the bad things she didn't want to accept about herself (1 Anna)</p> <p>The first placement I went into I suffered physical, mental and sexual abuse (2 Ben)</p>

	<p>My stepdad only wanted my mom and my sister. Me and my brothers weren't included in the family. They didn't really kind of want us. They said that we were naughty, we were going to be put in children's homes and things like that. (3 Cora)</p> <p>My mum was very heavy handed, she would scream and shout, and it would always be, she would use words to hurt me and her hands. Like I tell my children off but I never want to raise my voice like my mom raised her voice to me and spoke to me and made me feel like that, like I shouldn't have been even born (4 Debbie)</p> <p>Nurturing and love like I onever received (4 Debbie)</p> <p>We were all really abused. Abuse really emotionally and physically. (6 Grace)</p> <p>Basically I come back from infant school and there was just a man sat on the sofa, now obviously I hadnt met him, and that's basically how it went. I dunno, it was kind of hard really because even though I was young at the time, I used to hear my dad having conversations with people where he was saying "I had to go and get him from his mother so we could get somewhere to live', because he's just come out of Prison and all that sort of stuff. (10 John)</p> <p>I tell him I love him about 30 or 40 times a day and he goes 'you already told me that' and I go 'I know' and a lot of that is because that's something that I never heard when I was a kid (10 John)</p>
6. Physical abuse	<p>The first placement I went into I suffered physical, mental and sexual abuse. Around Easter time a set of my foster carers injected mustard, marmite into chocolate bars. As soon as we bit into them we were then sick. There was another point where I was tied up in a black bin bag and thrown outside for the night. (2 Ben)</p> <p>My stepdad physically abuse me and my brothers (3 Cora)</p> <p>My mum was very heavy handed, she would scream and shout, and it would always be, she would use words to hurt me and her hands. (4 Debbie)</p> <p>I knew I was going to get punished.I made sure I didn't go in until my dad was home. Cause if I went in when it was just my ma I get beaten. (5 Eddie)</p> <p>We were all really abused. Abuse really emotionally and physically. (7 Grace)</p> <p>I would have had my dad's hand's across the back of my legs, you know, it would have left a really bad mark. (9 Iris)</p> <p>He (dad) used to hit me and stuff. I mean growing up in the 80's was a different time. You didn't have all this shit that you have nowadays with people wanting to come and talk to you and make sure your alright. You went to school with bruises and no one gave a shit (10 John)</p> <p>There was this one time he (dad) hit me a bit too much (10 John)</p>

	<p>I remember my dad dad taking me round to his mate's house, back then and I sit down and his mate goes 'oh he's so quiet isn't he, he's well behaved'. But what they didn't know was I'd just had a slap round the head in the car and told to get in there, sit down, shut up and don't speak until you are spoken too. If anyone offers you anything you say no. That's why I was so quiet. That's why I looked to be so well behaved. And that's from man who is supposed to be apparently your father. (10 John)</p>
7. Neglect	<p>my mom was too busy working and too busy with other things to even take me to hospital appointments or doctors and stuff (4 Debbie)</p> <p>Mam and dad worked a lot with shifts. Where I felt I missed out on my parents when I was younger which is why I'd rather be at home with my kids. Because my parents worked a lot. We would get ourselves, like my big sister would get us dressed for school and make sure we got to school cause mam and dad had to be at work like. My mam was out at 5 in the morning and my dad 7am. When we got home from school we would see them for about an hour before my man would go back to work or the bingo and my dad would go out like you know after work for a drink or a pool match or whatever. And I suppose that was their time. I felt like I never seen them. (9 Iris)</p> <p>There was this one time he (dad) hit me a bit too much and I can't remember who it was, I think it was one of my dad's sisters or something at the time, it was long ago, she phoned me and I begged her to let me come back and she (mum) wasn't interested. So that was that (10 John)</p>
8. don't want child to have their experience	<p>Going to grow up without a dad like I did. (1 Anna)</p> <p>I'm petrified that I do that to my own kids (1 Anna)</p> <p>I think that's why I feel guilt now with my children that I want them all to feel included. I want them to feel that I treat them all the same. I don't want them to ever feel like I don't want them. (3 Cora)</p> <p>I think he felt like he was being blamed for it all, that he wasn't wanted. That's how I felt as a child so I don't want him to feel like that. (3 Cora)</p> <p>I don't want her ending up with BPD like I have because of the way I was brought up (4)</p> <p>I want her to have the education I wish I'd had (4 Debbie)</p> <p>This is why I'm so soft on the children and the boundaries are not there, because of how my mom and dad made me feel. I am so scared the children are going to end up feeling like that. And I never wanna put the children through any of those emotions and hurt because it was yeah, it was traumatic for me and I could never imagine what it would do to the children. (4 Debbie)</p> <p>I want to make sure that the kids know that they are loved, and that they don't have to worry about whatever they say or do, they are not going to get punished and they can speak to me and stuff. (4 Debbie)</p>

	<p>I've kind of did the opposite, my mum and dad were abusive. It affected me by I don't hit my children..Ive always said I don't want my children to, you know, run away from me, which is what I did when I was a teenager (7 Debbie)</p> <p>Try to keep that close relationship. So that's where I want to be different to my dad is, I want him is, I want to make sure I talk to my children every day, even if its just for 2 minutes, at least Ive spoken to them, I know they are ok, and they know Im alright. (9 Iris)</p> <p>That they are not following in my footsteps, I don't want them to be brought up like I was (9 Iris)</p> <p>Where I felt I missed out on my parents when I was younger which us why I'd rather be at home with my kids. I felt like I never seen them (9 Iris)</p> <p>I wouldn't say strict like my dad was strict and that's what I disliked about my dad as we were growing up, he was strict with us. He was very very strict with us. So I'm less strict with my kids that way. I can understand him being strict bu he should have let us grow up a bit quicker He should have let us grow and be ourselves but obviously he thought he was doing it the right way (9 Iris)</p> <p>My dad was a bit harsh, so my main goal when (child) was born was not live or be brought up like that at all. I can see all my dad's mistake and where he went wrong and I do everything for that not to be the case for him. (10 John)</p> <p>Its made me determined for it not to be like that for (child's name) again because I knew how it felt and what it was like being like that and like I obviously don't want none of that for my son. (10 John)</p> <p>He (child) doesn't deserve that nor should he be brought up that way. (10 John)</p> <p>Because I know how that feels, obviously I don't want my so feeling that (10 John)</p>
9. Fear of/wish not to become their parent	<p>I'm petrified that I turned out to be my mam. Complete opposite of her (1 Anna)</p> <p>Foster placements not the best, try not to be like them (2 Ben)</p> <p>I don't want to be anything like her. (3 Cora)</p> <p>No, definitely not, 100% (when asked if she wanted to be like her mother). I never want to raise a hand to my child, or scream at my children. Like I tell my children off but I never want to raise my voice like my mom raised her voice to me and spoke to me and made me feel like that, like I shouldn't have been even born (4 Debbie)</p> <p>I would never want to drink to the point that it affected him and he was never around, so obviously I will always be there for my children. (4 Debbie)</p> <p>I don't (want to be like mother) she was evil and vicious. (5 Eddie)</p>

	<p>I don't want to be a stinking drunk like he was (dad). I don't know if mental health comes from his side of the family or not (6 Fiona)</p> <p>I've always had that fear over me that my children would..would run from me when they get to a certain age. Yeah just trying to not be like my mum and dad. They kind of show me what not to do. (7 Grace)</p> <p>Definitely unlike my mum and dad. They never listen, they never cared. We have to you know, lie just they taught all the things not to do in life. (7 Grace)</p> <p>Im not like my mum (8 Heather)</p> <p>And jealous streak, that's the only thing I don't like (about dad). (9 Iris)</p> <p>Nothing like my dad. Which was always my goal (10 John)</p> <p>I try to be different from both of them, completely. There wasn't. Well any positives that spring to mind right now, because my dad come and took me and my mum just wasn't interested. (10 John)</p> <p>I am not similar to them at all. I don't hit my son. I don't, well in general, I don't make him feel like shit (10 John)</p> <p>The only thing that taught me from all that time back then is how not to be like them (10 John)</p>
10. Mental health issues	<p>That could be going back to my history (when talking about not being able to feel happiness) (2 Ben)</p> <p>I think its where the guilt comes in (3 Cora)</p> <p>I don't want her ending up with BPD like I have because of the way I was brought up (4 Debbie)</p> <p>I've always needed that validation of being wanted. I think maybe cause dad didn't..possibly? Maybe it's a daddy issue of mine? (6 Fiona)</p> <p>I wasn't doing too good, because basically with my upbringing and stuff I was doing at the time, id enough to be honest (10 John)</p>
11. School issues	<p>I got kicked out of the majority of of my schools, in fact every single one of my schools I got kicked out of. (2 Ben)</p>
12. Responsibility for self/others whilst still a child	<p>I didn't have a childhood. I grew up too quick. I had to look after my sisters. I had to be an adult before I was (2 Ben)</p> <p>I was homeless at 16 and all that and I've been independent (5 Eddie)</p> <p>I grew up having to look after my younger sisters and my brothers (8 Heather)</p> <p>We would get ourselves, like my big sister would get us dressed for school and make sure we got to school cause mam and dad had to be at work like. My mam was out at 5 in the morning and my dad 7am. When we got home from school we would see them for about an hour before my man would go back to work or the bingo and my dad would go out like you know after work for a drink or a pool match or whatever. And I suppose that was their time. (9 Iris)</p>

13. didn't do me any harm	<p>When I done wrong, I got a smack, at the end of the day, Im not being nasty, it didn't do me any harm. If anything taught me not to do it again. You know what I mean? So with compared to these days where you cant do nothing, where they've got more rights than us, theres not much you can do (5 Eddie)</p> <p>I just felt that shes got more power over me you know, where it should be the other way around. Its, you know what I mean, Im the mum, shes the child, but yet there are things that you can't do now that if I did that years ago I would have had my dad's hands across the back of my legs, you know, and it would have left a really bad mark. (8 Heather)</p> <p>I'd say we were dragged up, in a good way...in a good way. We were more streetwise than the kids these days. We were allowed more freedom. We used to go home and then back out until it was like a certain time (9 Iris)</p> <p>When you look back now, he was doing the right thing. He was just trying to keep us safe and learn and protect us, and want us to go down the right path but in a way we were held against it. (9 Iris)</p>
14 Fantasy figure	<p>I would probably say my grandad. Obviously no longer here and he hasn't been with us for years (2 Ben) no mention of him through childhood exp and being in care</p> <p>My grandpa died when I was 10. My (first son) looks just I, and he was such a great person. Such a bright person, so I wish my boys met him, definitely. (3 Cora)</p>
15 Parents separated	<p>My mom and dad separated when I was quite young. So my dad was a part time dad really,so it was my mom and stepdad, really, that I had growing up. (3 Cora)</p> <p>My dad was around but mainly my mom. I lived with my mom and dad up until I was, I think, 13 (4 Debbie)</p> <p>My mum and dad until I was 14, then my parents split. I then literally went off the rails. I would run away from school, run away from home. I wouldn't go far, I would only ever go to my dad's (8 Heather)</p>
16 Other significant carer	<p>My Gran kinda took over the role because my mom was too busy working and too busy with other things to even take me to hospital appointments or doctors and stuff. So it was mainly my Gran that did all that, but my mum, you know was there, and she was the one who took the main role. (4 Debbie)</p>
17 Parent with alcohol/ drug issues	<p>My dad drank very heavily, I would class him as an alcoholic. (4 Debbie)</p> <p>Stinking drunk (dad) (6 Fiona)</p> <p>My dad was an alcoholic, my mum drank a little bit (7 Grace)</p> <p>My mum was always in the pub (8 Heather)</p>
18	<p>I don't know, can't think of anything (about impact of how parented) (5 Eddie)</p>

Don't know/don't remember	<p>I don't know cause some of it I cant remember 'cause I was little. I mean, I don't remember much. My memory is rubbish. But I mean theres' nothing that I would say I definitely don't want to do that. Parenting is parenting isnt it..I don't really know how to describe it, there isnt anything I could pinpoint to be honest. I don't really know how to answer that. She was just a good mum. Box standard parenting (when asked about mum's parenting) (6 Fiona)</p> <p>I have no idea (about impact of parenting. My dad was strict, my mum not so strict and then obviously when they split it was harder, a lot harder than...I don't know how it affected, I don't know. (8 Heather)</p>
19 Actions don't match words	<p>Sometimes, I can come across like my ma. Obviously because that's what I've seen in my past. But yeah, I'd rather be like my da than my ma (5 Eddie)</p> <p>My actions don't match what I am about to say, but the way my mum raised me made-you know, was the realisation that you don't need a man in your life to, you know. And that you can be a good parent without that. But then my actions say differently because ive always been needy and had to have a male in my life. Ive always needed the validation of being wanted (6 Fiona)</p> <p>I don't want to be a stinking drunk like he was (dad) but then I have my own alcohol issues. (6 Fiona)</p>
20 Likenesses to parent	<p>The only similarities there is, is that , is me and my mother have a very very shit taste in men. (6 Fiona)</p> <p>Like little sayings (about mum) (7 Grace)</p> <p>Mum was strict as well, my dad was very strict so I guess Im a little bit like them with the strictness but Ill try and different tactics (7 Grace)</p> <p>Im very similar to my dad with regards to my temper. I can control it like he can. It can a lot now to push my buttons, to make me snap (8 Heather)</p> <p>She (mother) raised a strong woman. And I just hope that I follow in her footsteps and raise strong woman in my daughters. So I don't resent or regret anything, you know what I mean. She taught us right from wrong. She taught us to be wise. (9 Iris)</p> <p>Im like my dad in every way, more so like attitude and things and strictness, I think. (9 Iris)</p> <p>So Ive got that from my dad, if my dad wanted me to do something I wouldn't do, ...well don't tell me what to do cause I just do the opposite. (9 Iris)</p>
21 Not an excuse	<p>I don't use that as an excuse. Manners don't cost anything. When you asked to do something do it (2 Ben)</p> <p>I've made peace with all that shit long ago, I don't think about it no more, nor do I let it affect how I raise my son (10 John)</p> <p>I don't have feelings towards them (family) (10 John)</p>

Appendix 3: Themes

Theme 1: abuse:What happened to them/around them

Witness parent being abused	I had a step dad who beat her (mum) to a pulp (1 Anna) My mum was beaten..in front of me..by my dad (7 Fiona)
Sexual abuse	He (step dad) was very inappropriate with me (1 Anna) The first placement I went into I suffered physical, mental and sexual abuse (2 Ben)
Emotional abuse	My mum hated me for it, she was jealous. So she's hated me ever since, that's why we don't have a relationship really. And when she drunk she admit that she knew what was going on, and when shes sober she acts like it never happened. She has resented me, my whole life, she loves her other kids (1 Anna) She (mum) projected onto me all the bad things she didn't want to accept about herself (1 Anna) The first placement I went into I suffered physical, mental and sexual abuse (2 Ben)

	<p>My stepdad only wanted my mom and my sister. Me and my brothers weren't included in the family. They didn't really kind of want us. They said that we were naughty, we were going to be put in children's homes and things like that. (3 Cora)</p> <p>My mum was very heavy handed, she would scream and shout, and it would always be, she would use words to hurt me and her hands. Like I tell my children off but I never want to raise my voice like my mom raised her voice to me and spoke to me and made me feel like that, like I shouldn't have been even born (4 Debbie)</p> <p>We were all really abused. Abuse really emotionally and physically. (7 Grace)</p> <p>Basically I come back from infant school and there was just a man sat on the sofa, now obviously I hadn't met him, and that's basically how it went. I dunno, it was kind of hard really because even though I was young at the time, I used to hear my dad having conversations with people where he was saying "I had to go and get him from his mother so we could get somewhere to live", because he's just come out of Prison and all that sort of stuff. (10 John)</p> <p>I tell him I love him about 30 or 40 times a day and he goes 'you already told me that' and I go 'I know' and a lot of that is because that's something that I never heard when I was a kid (10 John)</p>
Physical abuse	<p>The first placement I went into I suffered physical, mental and sexual abuse. Around Easter time a set of my foster carers injected mustard, marmite into chocolate bars. As soon as we bit into them we were then sick. There was another point where I was tied up in a black bin bag and thrown outside for the night. (2 Ben)</p> <p>My stepdad physically abuse me and my brothers (3 Cora)</p> <p>My mum was very heavy handed, she would scream and shout, and it would always be, she would use words to hurt me and her hands. (4 Debbie)</p> <p>I knew I was going to get punished. I made sure I didn't go in until my dad was home. Cause if I went in when it was just my ma I get beaten. (5 Eddie)</p> <p>We were all really abused. Abuse really emotionally and physically. (7 Grace)</p> <p>He (dad) used to hit me and stuff. I mean growing up in the 80's was a different time. You didn't have all this shit that you have nowadays with people wanting to come and talk to you and make sure you're alright. You went to school with bruises and no one gave a shit (10 John)</p> <p>There was this one time he (dad) hit me a bit too much (10 John)</p> <p>I remember my dad taking me round to his mate's house, back then and I sit down and his mate goes 'oh he's so quiet isn't he, he's well behaved'. But what they didn't know was I'd just had a slap round the head</p>

	in the car and told to get in there, sit down, shut up and don't speak until you are spoken too. If anyone offers you anything you say no. That's why I was so quiet. That's why I looked to be so well behaved. And that's from man who is supposed to be apparently your father. (10 John)
Neglect	<p>my mom was too busy working and too busy with other things to even take me to hospital appointments or doctors and stuff (4 Debbie)</p> <p>Mam and dad worked a lot with shifts. Where I felt I missed out on my parents when I was younger which is why I'd rather be at home with my kids. Because my parents worked a lot. We would get ourselves, like my big sister would get us dressed for school and make sure we got to school cause mam and dad had to be at work like. My mam was out at 5 in the morning and my dad 7am. When we got home from school we would see them for about an hour before my man would go back to work or the bingo and my dad would go out like you know after work for a drink or a pool match or whatever. And I suppose that was their time. I felt like I never seen them. (9 Iris)</p> <p>There was this one time he (dad) hit me a bit too much and I can't remember who it was, I think it was one of my dad's sisters or something at the time, it was long ago, she phoned me and I begged her to let me come back and she (mum) wasn't interested. So that was that (10 John)</p>
Parent with alcohol/drug issues	<p>My dad drank very heavily, I would class him as an alcoholic. (4 Debbie)</p> <p>Stinking drunk (dad) (6 Fiona)</p> <p>My dad was an alcoholic, my mum drank a little bit (7 Grace)</p> <p>My mum was always in the pub (8 Heather)</p>
Responsibility for self/others whilst still a child	<p>I didn't have a childhood. I grew up too quick. I had to look after my sisters. I had to be an adult before I was (2 Ben)</p> <p>I was homeless at 16 and all that and I've been independent (5 Eddie)</p> <p>I grew up having to look after my younger sisters and my brothers (8 Heather)</p> <p>We would get ourselves, like my big sister would get us dressed for school and make sure we got to school cause mam and dad had to be at work like. My mam was out at 5 in the morning and my dad 7am. When we got home from school we would see them for about an hour before my man would go back to work or the bingo and my dad would go out like you know after work for a drink or a pool match or whatever. And I suppose that was their time. (9 Iris)</p>
Parents separated	My mom and dad separated when I was quite young. So my dad was a part time dad really, so it was my mom and stepdad, really, that I had growing up. (3 Cora)

	<p>My dad was around but mainly my mom. I lived with my mom and dad up until I was, I think, 13 (4 Debbie)</p> <p>My mum and dad until I was 14, then my parents split. I then literally went off the rails. I would run away from school, run away from home. I wouldn't go far, I would only ever go to my dad's (8 Heather)</p>
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Theme 2 : Loss and separations: who/what wasn't there

Absent/loss of parent	<p>Dad passed away when I was 4 (1 Anna)</p> <p>I was raised by the local authority. I went into care at age 5. I went through 2 children homes, multiple foster placements (2 Ben)</p> <p>My dad walked away from me for good when (third child) was a baby so he has never met (subject child). I find it really hard because I couldn't just walk out on my children, so I find it hard that my dad walked on out me, I can't kind of get over that, but then you've also walked away from your grandchildren (3 Cora)</p> <p>He (dad) was never around (4 Debbie)</p> <p>My stepmum and my stepdad, adoptive sorry, 3 years old. (when asked who raised) (5 Eddie)</p> <p>Dad was present, but not present, present. He was around as in person but not around as in, a dad way, he was just useless (6 Fiona)</p> <p>I never really had a bond with my dad because I moved away from my dad when I was 9/10 (7 Grace)</p> <p>I felt like I never seen them (parents) (9 Iris)</p> <p>My dad's dead. I've not really got on or talked with my mum since, I don't know, forever. A lot of that was because when my dad came out of prison when I was younger he basically took me from my mother and we never really had a relationship, so I kind of had nothing (10 John)</p> <p>So I never really had a relationship with her (mother), nor my brother, nor my 3 sisters actually for that matter because they've got a different dad and I simply wasn't there and there was nothing I could do about that really. So the little bit of time I did have with my mum sort of vanished very pretty quick with the amount of time I was in (town's name) with my dad (10 John)</p>
Fantasy figure	<p>I would probably say my grandad. Obviously no longer here and he hasn't been with us for years (2 Ben) no mention of him through childhood exp and being in care</p> <p>My grandpa died when I was 10. My (first son) looks just I, and he was such a great person. Such a bright person, so I wish my boys met him, definitely. (3 Cora)</p>
	<p>My dad drank very heavily, I would class him as an alcoholic. (4 Debbie)</p> <p>Stinking drunk (dad) (6 Fiona)</p>

Parent with alcohol/drug issues	My dad was an alcoholic, my mum drank a little bit (Grace) My mum was always in the pub (Heather)
Other significant carer	My Gran kinda took over the role because my mom was too busy working and too busy with other things to even take me to hospital appointments or doctors and stuff. So it was mainly my Gran that did all that, but my mum, you know was there, and she was the one who took the main role. (4 Debbie)
School issues	I got kicked out of the majority of of my schools, in fact every single one of my schools I got kicked out of. (2 Ben)
Parents separated	My mom and dad separated when I was quite young. So my dad was a part time dad really,so it was my mom and stepdad, really, that I had growing up. (3 Cora) My dad was around but mainly my mom. I lived with my mom and dad up until I was, I think, 13 (4 Debbie) My mum and dad until I was 14, then my parents split. I then literally went off the rails. I would run away from school, run away from home. I wouldn't go far, I would only ever go to my dad's (8 Heather)

Theme 3: wishes/fears/defenses

Hero's	He (dad) was my hero. Want to make him proud (1 Anna) I would love to be like my Gran, she's a, she isn't a pushover like she has her boundaries and stuff and shes like no other person I ever met. Like she will be there, like pick you up when you need it and she knows the right things to say and do. She's a very placid person..she would never show she was upset. I want to be like her because I don't want my emotions affecting the children. So in every way I want to be like her. (4 Debbie) I want to be like my dad all the time, he was calm, collected. I want to be like that, not the other way, like my ma. (5 Eddie) Mum was great though, I cant fault my mum at all. She did a great job, so (6 Fiona) She (mother) raised a strong woman. And I just hope that I follow in her footsteps and raise strong woman in my daughters. So I don't resent or regret anything, you know what I mean. She taught us right from wrong. She taught us to be wise. There is nothing to unlike. (9 Iris) I was a daddy's girl growing up (9 Iris)
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<p>don't want child to have their experience</p>	<p>Going to grow up without a dad like I did. (1 Anna)</p> <p>I'm petrified that I do that to my own kids (1 Anna)</p> <p>I think that's why I feel guilt now with my children that I want them all to feel included . I want them to feel that I treat them all the same. I don't want them to ever feel like I don't want them. (3 Cora)</p> <p>I think he felt like he was being blamed for it all, that he wasn't wanted. That's how I felt as a child so I don't want him to feel like that. (3 Cora)</p> <p>I don't want her ending up with BPD like I have because of the way I was brought up (4)</p> <p>I want her to have the education I wish I'd had (4 Debbie)</p> <p>This is why I'm so soft on the children and the boundaries are not there, because of how my mom and dad made me feel. I am so scared the children are going to end up feeling like that. And I never wanna put the children through any of those emotions and hurt because it was yeah, it was traumatic for me and I could never imagine what it would do to the children. (Debbie)</p> <p>I want to make sure that the kids know that they are loved, and that they don't have to worry about whatever they say or do, they are not going to get punished and they can speak to me and stuff. (4 Debbie)</p> <p>I've kind of did the opposite, my mum and dad were abusive. It affected me by I don't hit my children..Ive always said I don't want my children to, you know, run away from me, which is what I did when I was a teenager (7 Grace)</p> <p>Try to keep that close relationship. So that's where I want to be different to my dad is, I want him is, I want to make sure I talk to my children every day, even if its just for 2 minutes, at least Ive spoken to them, I know they are ok, and they know Im alright. (8)</p> <p>That they are not following in my footsteps, I don't want them to be brought up like I was (9 Iris)</p> <p>Where I felt I missed out on my parents when I was younger which us why I'd rather be at home with my kids. I felt like I never seen them (9 Iris)</p> <p>I wouldn't say strict like my dad was strict and that's what I disliked about my dad as we were growing up, he was strict with us. He was very very strict with us. So I'm less strict with my kids that way. I can understand him being strict but he should have let us grow up a bit quicker He should have let us grow and be ourselves but obviously he thought he was doing it the right way (9 Iris)</p> <p>My dad was a bit harsh, so my main goal when (child) was born was not live or be brought up like that at all. I can see all my dad's mistake and where he went wrong and I do everything for that not to be the case for him. (10 John)</p>
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	<p>Its made me determined for it not to be like that for (child's name) again because I knew how it felt and what it was like being like that and like I obviously don't want none of that for my son. (10 John)</p> <p>He (child) doesn't deserve that nor should he be brought up that way. (10 John)</p> <p>Because I know how that feels, obviously I don't want my so feeling that (10 John)</p>
<p>Fear of/wish not to become their parent</p>	<p>I'm petrified that I turned out to be my mam. Complete opposite of her (1 Anna)</p> <p>Foster placements not the best, try not to be like them (2 Ben)</p> <p>I don't want to be anything like her. (3 Cora)</p> <p>No, definitely not, 100% (when asked if she wanted to be like her mother). I never want to raise a hand to my child, or scream at my children. Like I tell my children off but I never want to raise my voice like my mom raised her voice to me and spoke to me and made me feel like that, like I shouldn't have been even born (4 Debbie)</p> <p>I would never want to drink to the point that it affected him and he was never around, so obviously I will always be there for my children. (4 Debbie)</p> <p>I don't (want to be like mother) she was evil and vicious. (5 Eddie)</p> <p>I don't want to be a stinking drunk like he was (dad). I don't know if mental health comes from his side of the family or not (6 Fiona)</p> <p>Ive always had that fear over me that my children would..would run from me when they get to a certain age. Yeah just trying to not be like my mum and dad. They kind of show me what not to do. (7 Grace)</p> <p>Definitely unlike my mum and dad. They never listen, they never cared. We have to you know, lie just they taught all the things not to do in life. (7 Grace)</p> <p>Im not like my mum (8 Heather)</p> <p>And jealous streak, that's the only thing I don't like (about dad). (Iris)</p> <p>Nothing like my dad. Which was always my goal (10 John)</p> <p>I try to be different from both of them, completely. There wasn't. Well any positives that spring to mind right now, because my dad come and took me and my mum just wasn't interested. (10 John)</p> <p>I am not similar to them at all. I don't hit my son. I don't, well in general, I don't make him feel like shit (10 John)</p> <p>The only thing that taught me from all that time back then is how not to be like them (10 John)</p>
<p>Mental health issues</p>	<p>That could be going back to my history (when talking about not being able to feel happiness) (2 Ben)</p> <p>I think its where the guilt comes in (3 Cora)</p>

	<p>I don't want her ending up with BPD like I have because of the way I was brought up (4)</p> <p>I've always needed that validation of being wanted. I think maybe cause dad didn't..possibly? Maybe it's a daddy issue of mine? (6 Fiona)</p> <p>I wasn't doing too good, because basically with my upbringing and stuff I was doing at the time, id enough to be honest (10 John)</p>
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<p>didn't do me any harm</p>	<p>When I done wrong, I got a smack, at the end of the day, Im not being nasty, it didn't do me any harm. If anything taught me not to do it again. You know what I mean? So with compared to these days where you cant do nothing, where they've got more rights than us, theres not much you can do (5 Eddie)</p> <p>I just felt that shes got more power over me you know, where it should be the other way around. Its, you know what I mean, Im the mum, shes the child, but yet there are things that you can't do now that if I did that years ago I would have had my dad's hands across the back of my legs, you know, and it would have left a really bad mark. (8 Heather)</p> <p>I'd say we were dragged up, in a good way...in a good way. We were more streetwise than the kids these days. We were allowed more freedom. We used to go home and then back out until it was like a certain time (9 Iris)</p> <p>When you look back now, he was doing the right thing. He was just trying to keep us safe and learn and protect us, and want us to go down the right path but in a way we were held against it. (9 Iris)</p>
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<p>Don't know/dont remember</p>	<p>I don't know, can't think of anything (about impact of how parented) (5 Eddie)</p> <p>I don't know cause some of it I cant remember 'cause I was little. I mean, I don't remember much. My memory is rubbish. But I mean theres' nothing that I would say I definitely don't want to do that. Parenting is parenting isnt it..I don't really know how to describe it, there isnt anything I could pinpoint to be honest. I don't really know how to answer that. She was just a good mum. Box standard parenting (when asked about mum's parenting) (6 Fiona)</p> <p>I have no idea (about impact of parenting. My dad was strict, my mum not so strict and then obviously when they split it was harder, a lot harder than...I don't know how it affected, I don't know. (8 Heather)</p>
<p>Actions don't</p>	<p>Sometimes, I can come across like my ma. Obviously because that's what I've seen in my past. But yeah, I'd rather be like my da than my ma (5 Eddie)</p>

match words	<p>My actions don't match what I am about to say, but the way my mum raised me made-you know, was the realisation that you don't need a man in your life to, you know. And that you can be a good parent without that. But then my actions say differently because ive always been needy and had to have a male in my life. Ive always needed the validation of being wanted (6 Fiona)</p> <p>I don't want to be a stinking drunk like he was (dad) but then I have my own alcohol issues. (6 Fiona)</p>
likeness to parent	<p>The only similarities there is, is that , is me and my mother have a very very shit taste in men. (6 Fiona)</p> <p>Like little sayings (about mum) (7 Grace)</p> <p>Mum was strict as well, my dad was very strict so I guess Im a little bit like them with the strictness but Ill try and different tactics (7 Grace)</p> <p>Im very similar to my dad with regards to my temper. I can control it like he can. It can a lot now to push my buttons, to make me snap (8 Heather)</p> <p>She (mother) raised a strong woman. And I just hope that I follow in her footsteps and raise strong woman in my daughters. So I don't resent or regret anything, you know what I mean. She taught us right from wrong. She taught us to be wise. (9 Iris)</p> <p>Im like my dad in every way, more so like attitude and things and strictness, I think. (9 Iris)</p> <p>So Ive got that from my dad, if my dad wanted me to do something I wouldn't do, ...well don't tell me what to do cause I just do the opposite. (9 Iris)</p>
No excuse	<p>I don't use that as an excuse. Manners don't cost anything. When you asked to do something do it (2 Ben)</p> <p>I've made peace with all that shit long ago, I don't think about it no more, nor do I let it affect how I raise my son (10 John)</p> <p>I don't have feelings towards them (family) (10 John)</p>