The importance of relationship: perceptions of the child - coach

relationship within TLG's Early Intervention programme.

What can we learn from them?

Hannah Brooks

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Abstract

This thesis presents the exploration of a child – coach relationship based within the 'Transforming Lives for Good, Early Intervention' programme. The programme offers support to children with or vulnerable to, social, emotional and mental health difficulties using the principles of coaching and emotional literacy. Coaching children in primary schools has gained little attention in the research community. Research in the US has begun to address this, although there has been a minimal focus on relationship. The wider coaching literature suggests the importance and impact of relationship. It also postulates the value of understanding and interacting with the process of relationship to enable better outcomes for coachees. In the broader research field, relationships have been found to play a key role in reducing the debilitating outcomes for children with or vulnerable to social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Such findings indicate the value of understanding and improving relational experiences for this group.

This research explored the perceptions of children and coaches, with regards to their experience of relationship, on three occasions. This enabled the process of relationship to be better understood and offered an insight into how relational development can be supported. Acknowledging the co-constructed, subjective nature of relationship, this research adopted a qualitative longitudinal design using flexible methodological tools. Participant views were collected by semi-structured interview and analysed using thematic analysis. Findings included themes in line with a journey of relationship, capturing the importance of beginnings and endings, taking an interest, reciprocity and responsivity. Three further themes were found to interact with the relational journey. These were: the importance of play, coaching challenges and relational positioning. A Child – Coach Model of relationship was proposed. Specific recommendations for coaches, EPs and TLG's use of this model, with regards to supporting the development of the child – coach relationship, were made.

Declarations

Declaration of word count

The word count (exclusive of appendices and list of references) is 37,102

Declaration of own work

I, Hannah Brooks, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been delivered from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed

Hannah Brooks

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Rational

With ever tightening budgets and increasing demands placed on mental health services, many children and young people (CYP) experiencing or vulnerable to, social emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMHD) fail to receive any intervention to meet their needs (Farmer, Burns, Philip, Angold & Costello, 2003). CYP with SEMHD also face increased risk of school exclusion, known to have a wide reaching and long lasting impact on their academic, social, emotional and health outcomes (Cole, 2015; Gazeley, Marrable, Brown, and Boddy, 2015). Schools are therefore striving to find increasingly more proactive ways to meet these needs within their own context. McLaughlin & Clarke (2010), argue that schools should indeed be taking the lead in the development and maintenance of emotional well-being and use the work of Resnick (2005) to highlight that this should involve 'the intentional, deliberate process of providing support, relationships, experience and opportunities that promote positive outcomes for young people' (p. 92).

Positive relationships with adults have been found to benefit all CYP's social and emotional well-being (Atkinson and Hornby, 2002). It has been suggested, however, that warm relationships for CYP experiencing SEMHD are critical in the development of social and emotional skills and the construction of adaptive beliefs (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Weare & Gray, 2003; Pianta, 1999). Aligned with this research, guidance and legislation under the Labour government heavily promoted the importance of relationship, elevating the 'social and emotional aspects of learning' (SEAL) (DFES 2007) and promoting positive behaviour management (DFES, 2003).

McLaughlin and Clarke (2010) argued, however, that although guidance and research evidence suggested that positive relationships with adults in school were important to emotional wellbeing, this was not frequently reflected in school policy or staff development. Under current legislation and guidance this issue is likely to be exacerbated, as the emphasis on relationship, particularly in regards to how relationship should be developed, is largely reduced. The most recent guidance, referring to relationships, was found in public health guidance for schools concerning mental health and wellbeing, although there is no mention of how such relationships should be achieved (PHE, 2015, p. 9).

> '(Schools should) provide young people with opportunities to build relationships, particularly those who may find it difficult to seek support when they need it'

This demonstrates a returning divide between CYP's well-being and their education. Indeed, the department of education, in their guidance referring to 'Mental health and behaviour in schools - Departmental advice for school staff' (2014a), make only one reference to pastoral systems in schools, noting the need for pupils to feel 'a sense of belonging and feel able to trust and talk openly with adults about their problems' (p.7). Once more, there is no embellishment as to how this should be embedded into school practice.

Overarching messages such as 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2004), common to the previous government, are also distinctly absent from current policy. Instead, the current legislation places emphasis on more punitive measures and a far higher emphasis on academic outcomes and evidence base (DFE, 2014b). In this culture, with regards to supporting CYP with SEMHD, there is a danger of reducing

emphasis on the importance and improvement of supportive relationships with adults. This is, in part, due to findings suggesting that interventions based around adult relationships with CYP with SEMHD, have a lower academic impact than other interventions (Education Endowment Foundation, n.d.). Research concerning academic outcomes, however, often fails to consider students' school success as a result of a complex interplay involving numerous factors, reflecting multiple levels of young people's ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It also fails to make sense of a wide body of research referring to the importance of relationship for CYP with SEMHD. Insights into how relationships with CYP are established, developed and supported are indeed frequently neglected in research, school and governmental policy (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010). This research hopes to challenge this negation, and argues that there is a need to articulate the intangible dimensions of supportive relationships, reported by The Search Institute (n.d.) to be illusive; 'but while the importance of developmental relationships is widely acknowledged, they are not widely understood' ('Why do they matter', para. 2).

A recent project, built around the formation of a child - coach relationship and targeting children, categorised by their mainstream primary school as being vulnerable to, or suffering from SEMHD, is TLG's (Transforming Lives for Good) Early Intervention (EI) programme. This intervention is based around a child - coach relationship, using the principles of coaching and emotional literacy. Research regarding coaching relationships with children in schools is limited, and has focused mainly upon quantitative outcomes measures, finding few academic benefits although acknowledging social gains (Tsai and Cheney, 2012). In the wider coaching field, however, the importance of the coaching relationship has received far greater attention, being thought of by some researchers as the most influential component of

coaching outcomes (de Haan, Culpin and Curd, 2011; Palmer and McDowall, 2010). Strong quantitative evidence has been put forward (de Haan, Duckworth, Birch and Jones, 2013; Baron and Morin, 2009) and a number of qualitative studies have found relationship to be central to their findings (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007; Knoche, Kuhn, and Eum, 2013; Anderson, Feldman, and Minstrell, 2014).

Acknowledging previous research and policy concerning children vulnerable to SEMHD and the role of relationship in the wider coaching literature, this study aimed to break with the outcomes tradition within current educational research. This small scale exploratory research, instead hoped, to gain a fuller understanding of a coaching relationship, in order to support its future development and improve outcomes for the children involved. TLG's EI programme is a long term intervention, when compared to many within a school context, and therefore provides a unique setting in which to gain an understanding of the process of relationship over time. Qualitative longitudinal designs are rare within previous research, regarding the views of children with SEMHD, and so offer a different insight into the relationship process within this group.

1.2 Context

TLG was initially set up through a church community in Bradford who sought to meet the educational needs of secondary school students choosing to no longer attend school. After the success of this programme, they chose to encourage and support other church communities to set up similar programmes. With slower growth than anticipated, due to the time consuming, complex and costly nature of setting up independent schools, a second branch of the charity was formed in 2012 under the title, TLG Early Intervention. This programme sought to equip church communities to

work within pre-existing primary schools and meet the needs of children, earlier on in their development.

The TLG Early Intervention programme uses the relationship between a coach and child to address the needs of primary aged children, within mainstream settings, who are facing educational and social disadvantage and risk of truancy and exclusion. These children commonly display social, emotional and mental health difficulties supported by the programmes use of coaching and emotional literacy. In only one year TLG has grown from 5 to 17 centres (working with between 6 – 9 children each) across the UK. With plans underway to develop a further 20 centres next year and a total of 200 centres in the next 5 years, an estimated 2,000 children could be involved in a TLG EI programme each year.

The programme enables trained volunteers, called "Behaviour Coaches", to work on a one to one basis with children, spending at least 1 hour a week with one child (for at least a year), with the overall aim to improve a child's social and emotional development and raise their attainment. As a result of this model, TLG's current centres have reported that 80% of children feel more positive about school, 75% have significantly improved in their behaviour and 100% of children are now achieving their school educational targets in numeracy and literacy, something quite contrary to much of the literature. These findings are self-reported using unstandardized measures and TLG's EI programme is therefore currently being more rigorously evaluated.

1.3 Origins

1.3.1 Personal perspective

Within my previous role as a centre manager/head teacher of a TLG secondary alternative provision, I was struck by the level of unmet social, emotional and mental health needs in young people aged predominately between 14 – 16 years old. In this role, I began to grasp the reality of Farmer, Burns, Philip, Angold and Costello's (2003) research, highlighting that so few CYP, previously termed as having 'social, emotional and behavioural difficulties', received any intervention for such difficulties. My experiences confirmed to me the need for earlier intervention, as I continually met young people in year 10 and 11 whose views of their schooling, their ability and their behaviour were so entrenched and difficult to shift, that the question of why this had not been addressed earlier continually arose.

The lack of external therapeutic support for these young people was made ever starker for me as I embarked on the journey to become an Educational Psychologist, 3 years ago. Experiencing the quality of provision that some CYP with SEMHD access, made me more aware of the need to share best practice and skills to ensure that a larger number of CYP's needs are met through the access to effective intervention.

Understanding the magnitude of the problem and the difficulty of meeting such demands with professionals alone, I am interested in finding other ways to meet this extraordinary need. I want to understand how the child - coach relationship within the TLG Early Intervention programme developed for seven children, in order to understand how best to support this relationship and ensure that quality support can be provided for children vulnerable to SEMHD earlier in their developmental journey.

1.3.2 Professional perspective

Children with SEMHD are of particular interest to Educational Psychologists (EPs). With this group of children often causing most challenge to staff, they are commonly the children brought to EP's attention. Working within the school context, EPs are able to work systemically to bring about change in perceptions and working practices of staff. EPs have a role in supporting leadership, and the wider staff team, to be more aware of the potential impact of adult – child relationships for CYP with SEMHD as well as the need to make systemic changes to create environments where good relationships are possible. As the educational system, in some local authorities, becomes more fragmented, EPs can play an important part in engaging and training the independent and charity sectors working with children with SEMHD. This would ensure children do not become alienated from external professionals, with their unique insight and skill set, a realistic danger in the current traded market.

The conclusions from this study may help to develop EPs' ideas around interventions for children with SEMHD and their own approach to building relationships with these children within a one to one capacity. Such findings could lead to the development, and increased delivery, of therapeutic work in services.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature concerning the impact of SEMHD on CYP, including the increased risk of exclusion and its negative influence. It deals with the need for early intervention and explores some of the current approaches to this work, highlighting the need for social and emotional support and the importance of relationship for CYP with SEMHD. Notable gaps in the literature regarding coaching CYP with SEMHD in schools are highlighted. The impact, value and process of relationship is then explored within the wider coaching context. Research questions concerning the process and development of TLG EI's coaching relationship, are outlined.

A comprehensive literature search was carried out in August 2014 and re-visited in August 2015 using the following electronic databases: British Education Index, eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), E-Journals, ERIC, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycEXTRA and PsycINFO. The following search terms were used to identify studies that were relevant to the research questions: coach* AND child* AND relationship (title), coach* AND relationship AND social emotional (title), and coach* AND relationship AND behave* (title). There were a relatively high number of results for these terms. On closer inspection however, only two papers, outside of sports coaching, were concerned with the relationship between CYP and a coach. Additionally, these papers were concerned with the quantitative impact of relationship rather than qualitative perceptions or experiences. To gain a broader understanding of relationship, I then used the terms: coach* AND relationship AND school (title) and finally coach* AND relationship AND executive (title). The role of

relationship outside of the coaching literature, within areas identified as relevant to my study through supervision, including social, emotional and mental health difficulties, exclusion and early intervention, were also explored through the use of the following terms: child* AND relationship AND social emotional, child* AND relationship AND exclusion and child* AND relationship AND early intervention. Further reading was carried out when following up on references within papers of particular relevance to this research.

2.2 Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

2.2.1 Terminology

The use of the term SEMHD is derived from the most recent Children and Families Act (2014) and is best defined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice:

> 'Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder'. (DFE, 2014c, p.87)

Having previously been termed 'social, emotional and behavioural difficulties' (SEBD), the term SEMHD endeavours to acknowledge that behaviour serves a function rather than being a diagnosable difficulty, and that the underlying causes of

behaviour, often found to be challenging to others, '…may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression…' (DfE, 2014c, p.87). This new terminology will be used throughout this study.

2.2.2 The impact of social, emotional and mental health difficulties

Throughout global legislation and research, there is a consistent recognition that CYP's social, emotional and mental health needs are high and largely unmet (Farmer, Burns, Philip, Angold & Costello, 2003; MacKay, 2007; Rait, Monsen and Squires, 2010).Estimates of service delivery in 2007, indicated that only 1% of CYP with previously termed 'social, emotional and behavioural difficulties' received any service for these difficulties (Rait, Monsen and Squires 2010). The World Health Organisation (2010) report that around 20% of CYP in the UK seek help for anxiety and depression each year. The most recent British survey found that one in ten CYP aged between five and fifteen (approximately three CYP in every classroom) will experience a clinically defined mental health problem (Murphy and Fonagy, 2012). The most common mental health problems were described as conduct disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), emotional disorders (anxiety and depression) and autism spectrum disorders.

Mental health problems have been found to be long lasting, with half of those with life time mental health problems first experiencing them before the age of fifteen (Murphy and Fonagy, 2012). Evidence suggests that these problems have a serious impact on life chances (Colman, et al., 2009) including unemployment, low earnings, poor educational performance, teenage parenthood, marital problems and criminal activity (Richards and Abbott, 2009) as well as life expectancy (Jokela, Ferrie, and Kivimaki, 2009). Such long lasting difficulties place huge financial pressure on educational, social and health services as well as families, and are associated with

excess costs estimated between £11,030 and £59,130 annually per CYP (Suhrcke, Puillas and Selai, 2008). Such statistics help to demonstrate the need for earlier intervention, when problems for CYP and families are first detected or foreseen (C4EO, 2010).

2.2.3 SEMHD and the risk of exclusion

A further and compounding issue for those vulnerable to SEMHD, is the increased risk of exclusion (Cole, 2015) and the resulting lack of educational achievements, considered a 'basic component of the healthy development of children and youth and of the success of young adults across their lives' (Maynard, Kjellstrand, and Thompson, 2013, p. 296). SEND has been found to be a stronger predictor of exclusion than any other factor, including gender, free school meals eligibility or ethnicity (DfE 2016). Of those children with SEND, boys with SEMHD have been found to have the highest rate of fixed term exclusions, the most frequent reason for which is persistent disruptive behaviour. There is, therefore, a clear relationship between SEMHD and school exclusion, shown to be relatively consistent over time (Parsons, 2005).

The link between SEMHD and exclusion is so evident, that Parker and Ford (2013) went as far as to say that exclusion is a 'mental health issue'. Caution should be used when emphasising this link however, as both the act of exclusion and the development of SEMHD take place within a social, educational and political context. Specifically, SEMHD and exclusion rates are impacted socially, by family break down and disadvantage; educationally, by teaching practices, school ethos, leadership values and staffing skills; and politically, by national policies on the identification and treatment of mental health problems, teaching 'standards' and the

teaching of social, emotional and behavioural skills (Cole et al., 2003; McGinnity, Meltzer, Ford, and Goodman, 2005; Cole, 2015; Murphy and Fonagy, 2012).

Factors that increase CYP's risk of developing SEMHD, therefore, also increase their risk of exclusion. The long term outcomes for excluded CYP are similar for those with SEMHD, hence exclusion serves only to compound the problems experienced by CYP with SEMHD. Specifically, the long term impact of exclusion from school has been found to increase the likelihood of future involvement with the criminal justice system and incarceration, as well as to weaken a CYP's right to education, limit educational opportunities and lead to long-term social exclusion (Losen, and Gillespie, 2012; Brownstein, 2010; Gazeley, Marrable, Brown, and Boddy, 2015). Despite so many similarities between the environmental factors contributing both to SEMHD and exclusion, as well as the respective outcomes for each, the revised exclusions guidance (DFE, 2012) barely mentions the unmet needs that exclusion is likely to signify. This demonstrates that the current political context is failing to acknowledge the underlying causes of challenging behaviour and exclusion, a conflicting message to that given in the redefined SEMHD label, producing a confusing paradox in which Head teachers must operate.

Finally, studies investigating CYP's difficulties prior to exclusion, have found that poor relationships are central to their schooling experience (Cole et al., 2003). These findings were supported by the views of parents, who frequently referenced break downs in relationship between CYP and certain teachers as being a critical (Hayden and Dunne, 2001). These findings help to support the need for better adult – child relationships within schools, advocating the need to better understand how these can be developed and supported.

2.2.4 Summary

This part of the literature review captured the risk of negative outcomes for CYP with SEMHD, including higher risk of exclusion, known to exacerbate SEMHD and cause wider societal exclusion. Findings in this field highlight the potential benefit of early intervention and the importance of relationships for CYP with SEMHD, emphasising the potential benefits of research within this area.

2.3 Early intervention and the use of relationship

Early intervention has been found to yield significant savings, by identifying and responding to children's emerging difficulties quickly (DfES, 2007). Early responses to signs of developing SEMHD, at any age, have been found to prevent problems from becoming entrenched, and thus reducing the long lasting and negative outcomes of SEMHD (DCSF, 2010). The enhancement of 'protective factors', implicit in early intervention work, have been found to raise CYP's resilience and increase positive life outcomes. Three particularly important, and mutually reinforcing, protective factors are high attainment, good social and emotional skills, and positive parenting (DCSF, 2010). Such findings help to recognise the ecosystemic nature of SEMHD and the importance of having early interventions that recognise the links between attainment, parental engagement and skills, and social and emotional well-being.

2.3.1 Whole school approach

The earliest form of intervention for children vulnerable to SEMHD, and thought to be the most effective (Weare and Gray, 2003), is the development of a whole school ethos that values CYP's emotional and social competence and well – being. Developing children's emotional self-regulation and social competence, has been found to shape the way CYP think, learn, react to challenges, and develop

relationships throughout their lives (Raver & Knitzer, 2002). Placed centrally to the previous government's ideas (see SEAL. DCFS, 2007), good practice, in relation to CYP with SEMHD, is thought to develop as a result of policies and practices that address emotional and social well - being at a whole school level. This has been found to shape school ethos, classroom practice and relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves (Cole, 2015; Tew and Park, 2013).

2.3.2 Staff – student relationships

Thought to emanate from a whole school approach, 'warm' relationships between staff and CYP with SEMHD, support the early identification and response to SEMHD. Staff - student relationships have been found to be crucial to CYP's emotional and social development, motivation, attainment, attendance, enjoyment in school and reduction in externalizing behaviours (Weare and Gray, 2003; Martin and Dowson, 2009; Baker, Grant and Morlock, 2008; Meehan, Hughes, and Cavell, 2003). Staff-student relationships are also thought to play a fundamental role in the successful implantation of school systems (Sellman, 2009). There may, therefore, be an interaction between the embedding of whole school polices that support CYP with SEMHD, and pre-existing relationships with staff, demonstrating the central role of relationship in supporting those with SEMHD.

Ways to promote effective relationships include the use of positive communication (such as active and empathetic listening), disengaging from conflict, building trust through fairness and honesty and engaging in mentoring around specific incidents (Klein, 2000; Weare and Gray, 2003). Perceived support, fairness, trust, competence and positivity as well as the experience of being heard, were regarded as important to CYP in the development of their relationship with staff (McLaughlin and Clarke, 2010). The impact and perceived importance of staff – student relationships,

particularly for those with SEMHD, indicates the need for school management to be more aware of how effective relationships are between their students and staff, and ensure further development of these relationships is implemented, if required (Weare and Gray, 2003). Such consideration is often absent in school policies and over-looked within continuing professional development opportunities (McLaughlin and Clarke, 2010).

2.3.3 Targeted adult relationships

Targeted early intervention can come in the form of a specific adult relationship, facilitating appropriate and meaningful interactions with CYP and leading to positive outcomes, such as increased social skills and self-esteem (Dappen & Isernhagen, 2005; Dubois, Neville, Parra, & Pugh- Lilly, 2002). The importance of at least one close and nurturing relationship has been found, in resilience research, to indicate that CYP, faced with adversity and vulnerable to SEMHD, are often able to manage, and even thrive, when they have at least one warm relationship outside of the family (Liabo and Lucas, 2006). With fewer positive interactions (Murray & Greenberg, 2006), CYP with SEMHD have had less opportunity to be taught skills such as empathy (Weare & Gray, 2003) or to have constructed adaptive beliefs about themselves and others, thus impacting upon their development of social and emotional skills (Pianta, 1999).

A common relationship, found to be valued by CYP and their families, as well as having an impact upon CYP's social and emotional needs (Shiner et al., 2004), is developed within the context of mentoring. With regards to relationship, research concerning mentoring has tended to ignore the process by which relationship forms and is developed. Research, instead, focuses on recollected perceptions of relationship, or a focus on what Skinner and Fleming described, in 1999, as the

'doing' of mentoring rather than critically reflecting on the concept and process (Philip, Shucksmith, and King, 2004; Shiner, Young, and Grobewn, 2004). This is often reflected in the choice of methodology, for example, using surveys in repeated measure designs, rather than interviews which are able to capture the change of deeper perceptions over time. This prevents a more profound understanding of the value of this relationship for CYP and, as mentoring has been found to have little impact on academic outcomes (St James-Roberts, et. al., 2005), may reduce its perceived value in the current political climate.

The use of coaching with children with SEMHD in UK schools is an area with little research. Since the decrease in funding for local authorities and the resulting decline of behaviour support services, targeted relationships for CYP with SEMHD tend to be commissioned by schools from private enterprises, such as TLG, or outreach services provided by PRUs or SEMHD schools (Taylor, 2012; The Research Base, 2013). This has created a range of early interventions using adult relationships to support CYP vulnerable to or impacted by SEMHD, but also a dearth of research exploring their individual effectiveness and designs, including how relationship is enabled and developed (Cole, 2015). This may help to explain the lack of research regarding child coaching in schools although its use, through TLG's EI programme, is known to be increasing.

One example of the use of coaching in the UK can be found within 'The Incredible Years' programme, aimed at children aged 3 – 8. In this intervention, adults are supported to make comments during a time of child - directed play, coaching children in social and affective regulation. Such an approach has been found to significantly enhance children's outcomes, improving their social competence, peer relationships and school readiness, as well as reducing aggressive behaviours in the classroom

(Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Hammond, 2004; Webster-Stratton, 2016). Although no specific research has been conducted, regarding the formation of relationship within this programme, the use of coaching during child – directed play has been hypothesised to 'influence the affective and relational aspects of adult-child interactions' and 'promote parenting and adult-child bonding or attachment' (Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2009, p. 250). This indicates that relationship is both a component and outcome of this intervention and stresses the importance of relationship for those with SEMHD.

Early intervention, in the form of a nurture group, recommended for meeting the needs of CYP with SEMHD as well as those at risk of exclusion (DCSF, 2009; OFSTED, 2009; Scottish Government, 2011), focuses primarily on the formation of an adult – child bond. This intervention provides CYP, with insecure and damaged attachments (Bennathan and Boxall, 2000), an extended and compensatory nurturing experience, found to be effective in improving their emotional well-being (Hughes, and Schlösser, 2014). In this intervention, the emphasis on relationship is made explicit, as 'the focus is on developing a secure and trusting relationship with the teacher as a substitute attachment figure' (O'Connor and Colwell, 2002, p. 96). In line with attachment theory, this relationship is formed so that CYP are 'able to develop the personal and social and emotional skills necessary for successful learning' (p.96).

2.3.4 The use of Educational Psychologists

EPs hold a valuable 'strategic vantage point' within school systems, helping them to support the implementation of early intervention for CYP with SEMHD. EPs use of consultation with staff is a particularly valuable tool; in itself recognised as a form of early intervention, as it helps teachers to identify needs and create supportive

actions, enabling swift implementation and change (Nolan and Moreland 2014; Fallon, Woods and Rooney, 2010). Such work is not restricted to individual cases but, through the use of action research, EPs can support departmental and whole school systems for CYP with SEMHD (Zambo, 2007).

Perhaps the most important aspect of EP's use of consultation for CYP with SEMHD, is the space it provides staff to explore the meaning of behaviour and the emotions that impact upon teaching and learning. This is extended in EP's use of work discussion groups, found to increase teachers' capacity to manage their relationships with pupils, resulting in wider systemic gains, including classroom and school ethos (Jackson, 2008). A further extension to EP's consultative role, is in the use of coaching itself. Although EP's use of coaching has received little research, the growth of coaching psychology means that it is an available tool for EPs, and was noted to be used informally by Munro (1999).

Munro also discussed EP's use of coaching with CYP, illustrating the EP's role in delivering individual interventions for those with SEMHD. Individual work, addressing the needs of CYP with SEMHD, has been seen to increase since the beginning of the 21st century. This is likely to be due, not only to the rise in mental health needs (MacKay, 2007) but also to the recognition of EPs' role within schools systems; well placed to deliver effective targeted therapeutic interventions (Rait, Monsen and Squires, 2010; Atkinson, Corban and Templeton, 2011). Although not necessarily the earliest form of intervention, the use of EPs in this way is likely to see the needs of CYP with SEMHD identified and met quicker, without being referred outside the school system. EP's ability to work in this way has been further supported by the new SEND code of practice, which helps to re-examine some of the roles and boundaries when applying psychology, requiring education, health and social

services to work together (DFE, 2014c). EPs are well placed to work alongside other professionals within the school context and play an important role in supporting creative and flexible multi-agency working to develop new practices (Gaskell and Leadbetter, 2009).

2.3.5 Psychological theories

The connection between the importance of early intervention, the use of relationship with CYP with SEMHD, and the role of EPs is highlighted in the later work of Bronfenbrenner (1999) with regards to his bioecological theory of human development. Bronfenbrenner's later work stressed the importance of 'proximal processes', defined as the regular interactions over time with either a person, object or symbol, (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). Bronfenbrenner proposed that proximal processes are an engine for human development and that the formation and stability of relationships and activities are essential for psychological growth. The main premise of Bronfenbrenner's theory is that this process does not happen in isolation, but that there are interactions between different proximal processes, forming what he termed as the mesosystem, and that these interact with wider social, educational and political institutions and agendas. In this way, relationships in children's immediate environment or microsystem, can play a vital role in enabling them to navigate and interact with their wider environment. For children living in more chaotic contexts, causing their relationships to be disrupted or undermined, Bronfenbrenner's work indicates the value of enabling stable experiences of relationship over time and suggests the wider ecological impact of this. This helps to highlight the value of early intervention, as the earlier positive and stable proximal processes are established, the more time there is for wider and sustained facilitative interactions to occur within the child's context. Additional to the emphasis on context,

time and proximal processes, Bronfenbrenner's work highlights the agency of the child in human development and notes that they play an active role in shaping environments, evoking responses from them, and reacting to them. Bronfenbrenner calls these bi-directional influences and emphasises their essential role in development, highlighting, in this research, the potential impact of relationship on both child and coach.

Using Bronfenbrenner's work as a theoretical framework to inform the research design of this study, both coach and child perceptions were explored, acknowledging the bi-directional impact of a potential proximal process. A qualitative longitudinal approach was also adopted, valuing the importance of time and of context. Finally, Bronfenbrenner proposed that the reality of a person's interaction with their environment was understood from their own perspective and as such, his theory took a phenomenological stance, adopted by this study.

Alongside Bronfenbrenner's theory, the work of attachment theorists provide an equally important insight into the importance of relationship and its wide reaching impact on development. The theory of attachment was first developed by John Bowlby, whilst seeking to understand intense distress by infants when separated from their parents. Bowlby (1969) noted the lengths children went to maintain proximity with their primary care giver and observed how this was common to a number of mammals, postulating that this was an evolutionary function to reduce separation from protection, support and care. When the availability of the primary care giver was high, children were found to be able to confidently explore and engage with their environment. When there was low availability however, Bowlby noted a number of attachment behaviours to re-establish contact, such as visually scanning the environment and crying. Through her systematic research of infant –

parent separation, Mary Ainsworth (1978) found that if these behaviours were regularly unsuccessful, due to insensitive, inconsistent or rejecting parenting, children developed new attachment behaviours during separation indicative of what Bowlby termed as an insecure attachment. Specifically, she found that two fifths of children exposed to separation were either ill-at-ease and difficult to sooth (anxious-resistant attachment) or avoidant of contact (anxious-avoidant attachment). Later research identified a fourth classification of infant attachment behaviours during separation that were heterogeneous and often incomprehensible in nature. This attachment style was given the term 'disorganised' (Main and Solomon, 1990).

Attachment theory relates to the work of Bronfenbrenner in that the proximal process of an infant – parent relationship impacts upon the infant's ability to explore and engage with their environment and others. In contrast to Bronfenbrenner's work, however, attachment theory elevates the specific importance of relationship and postulates that it is early relational experiences that have the largest effect on human development over time, as they influence the way people engage and shape relationships with others as well as how they evoke responses and react to them (Hazan and Shaver, 1987; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Bowlby suggested that this was due to the formation of an internal working model (IWM), a mental representation of oneself in relation to one's attachment figures, in early infant - parent relationships and that these remain relatively consistent over time. Importantly, however, later work in this field has highlighted the way that secondary attachment relationships have the capacity to 'revise insecure models of self and others' (Cohen, 2005, p.2), formed previously through poor primary attachment bonds, and positively affect later psychological and behavioural functioning (Crowell, Treboux and Waters, 2002; van IJzendoorn, Sagi and Lambermon, 1992). Slowly

over time (Collins & Read, 1994), secondary attachments are thought to support individuals to develop positive self- and interpersonal-views, adopt others' perspectives, develop nurturing caregiving behaviours, and learn to cope with emotions more effectively (Belsky & Pensky, 1988).

Researchers have postulated that secondary attachments have varying degrees of impact on development. Some have theorised that attachments exist in a hierarchical structure whilst others claim they are context dependent, where attachment figures are only influential in those areas of a child's development in which they "specialize." van IJzendoorn, Sagi and Lambermon (1992) found interesting evidence of the summative effect of secondary attachments, proposing an integration model. Similar to findings relating to increased resiliency (Liabo and Lucas, 2006), this model postulates that higher numbers of secure bonds with attachment figures will lead to increased positive functioning, and substantially minimise the adverse effects of insecure attachments. Researchers suggest that a diverse range of people can act as secondary attachments to CYP, including other older relatives, older siblings, sports' coaches, teachers, religious leaders, mentors, and romantic partners (Ainsworth, 1989; Pearson et al., 1994). Ainsworth (1989) emphasised the importance of further research in this area, illustrating the perceived importance of secondary attachments and their potential role within the early prevention of SEMHD.

2.3.6 Summary

The value of early intervention and the importance of relationship for CYP with SEMHD have been summarised, and supported by psychological theory. There is a need for schools to be more aware of how relationships are developed and used within their staff team, as well as within the interventions they commission. Previous

research has tended to focus on the 'doing' or outcomes of interventions and, as such, little emphasis has been placed on the understanding of process, particularly with regards to how relationship is developed. There is a lack of research into those providing one-to-one interventions from outside the school context, specifically around coaching. There is, therefore, a lack of understanding about how best to support coaching relationships in schools. In light of EP's role in early intervention, such an insight would prove informative and could enhance their work and practice in this area.

2.4 The Coaching Relationship

Research into the impact, value and process of relationship has been conducted in the wider coaching field, frequently within the organisational context, and will therefore be explored within this part of the literature review.

2.4.1 Terminology

In this research the term coaching is understood as;

> 'A form of development that occurs within a one-to-one relationship in which a coach facilitates a coachee in identifying and working towards personally beneficial developmental goals'

> (Sonesh et. al., 2015; De Haan, 2008).

The 'coaching relationship is viewed as a vehicle for change' (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007, p. 168) and a coach, not as someone who 'contribute(s) knowledge or experience or give(s) instruction' (De Haan, 2008, p. 22), but one who facilitates goal attainment. Coaching can be thought of as being positioned between the two paradigms of mentoring and coaching. In the former, advice is frequently given, while in the latter, the coachee's internal world is explored.

2.4.2 The coaching relationship in the organisational context

Introduction

Numerous authors have suggested that the relationship between coach and coachee constitutes an essential condition to the success of coaching, (Baron and Morin, 2009; De Haan, 2011). Others, however, propose that there is a lack of research on the coaching relationship, commenting that assumptions have been extrapolated from findings concerning psychotherapist - client or sports coach - athlete relationships (O'Broin & Palmer, 2006; Palmer and McDowall, 2010). It is indeed the case that many authors and researchers have drawn from the therapeutic literature, regarding relationships within therapy and counselling practice, recognising the value and importance that such relationships have long been acknowledged to have (McKenna and Davis, 2009). Psychotherapy research has found that the therapeutic alliance (otherwise known as the working alliance or bond), between therapist and client, alongside the therapist's attributes and facilitative conditions, are central to the outcomes of therapy (O'Broin & Palmer, 2006). A number of authors and researchers have argued that the same centrality of relationship is key to coaching outcomes, and in some cases, go so far as to say that the relationship, or working alliance, between a coach and coachee, has more impact than the form of coaching or the interventions made or not made (de Haan, Culpin and Curd, 2011; Palmer and McDowall, 2010).

Empirical evidence for the importance of the executive coaching relationship

Using a quantitative design, Baron and Morin (2009) provided empirical evidence that the quality of the coach – coachee relationship 'constitutes a prerequisite for coaching effectiveness' (p.99). These findings were later supported by de Haan, Duckworth, Birch and Jones (2013) who conducted the largest study in this field and

support the centrality of relationship in coaching practice. Studying 156 coaching relationships, using online surveys over the course of a twelve month period, de Haan, Duckworth, Birch and Jones (2013) found that perceptions of coaching outcomes were significantly related to perceptions of the relationship. The perceptions of relationship, with regards to quality, have been found to be pivotal to coach opinions regarding the impact of coaching techniques as well as their self-efficacy (Baron and Morin, 2009). The appreciation of relationship has been found to impact upon coachee learning, and the motivation of coachees to transfer this learning and make best use of supervision (Baron and Morin, 2009; de Haan, Duckworth, Birch and Jones, 2013). Such findings help to illustrate the shared nature of relationship within the coaching process, as it impacts upon both coachee and coach behaviour and beliefs.

Not all research has been so certain of the centrality of relationship quality with regards to coaching outcomes. Grant (2014) found that a goal-focused coach–coachee relationship was a significantly more powerful predictor of coaching success. The 'within subjects' design used in this study, however, cause the validity of these results to be questioned. Additionally, coaches and coachees participated in only four coaching sessions. Baron and Morin (2009) found that the number of coaching sessions received was a significant determinate of the coach – coachee relationship, and drawing from the psychotherapeutic literature, concluded that the relationship strengthened over time. Four sessions over 10 – 12 weeks is a relatively short time frame, and hence the generalizability of Grant's (2014) results should be carefully considered.

In relation to the perceived value of goal setting and focus, however, Grant's results were not an isolated finding. Most studies, especially those that recognise the

importance of the quality of relationship, also acknowledge the importance of working towards clear goals and improving performance (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007; Schmidt, 2003; Smith and Brummel, 2013). This suggests that coaching may be most beneficial if it incorporates a number of components but is underpinned by a quality relationship.

Wilkins (2000) provided support for such a view by utilizing coaches' perspectives to gain an understanding of the process of coaching. Using grounded theory, Wilkins (2000), formed a model of coaching, according to which, relationship plays an inseparable role together with the purpose and process of coaching, to bring about the most meaningful change for the coachee. In this sense, it is not only the process of coaching that is worth exploring, but also the process of the relationship itself, as these findings suggest they are intrinsically linked.

Quality relationship – views of the coachee

The impact of coachees' perceptions, regarding coach attributes and qualities, on their view of coaching outcomes, have been a consistent finding across a number of studies (De Haan, 2008, 2011; de Haan, Culpin, Curd 2011; Palmer and McDowall, 2010). Specifically, De Haan (2008) highlighted that coachees who identified attributes in their coach such as friendly, approachable, available, attentive, and responsive and coach qualities such as listening, understanding and encouragement, generally experienced a significantly better outcome. Later, de Haan, Culpin, Curd (2011) emphasized that clients' views of the helpfulness of coaching, centred around their value of the relationship and the qualities of the coach, whilst making little distinction between specific interventions made by that same coach.

Baron and Morin (2009), although supporting the importance of the perceived quality of the coach – coachee relationship, found that, in regards to the determinants of a quality relationship, coachees identified only their coach's 'ability to facilitate learning and results' as important. Baron and Morin (2009) go on to explain their perception of this result, highlighting the importance of considering the organizational culture in which the coaching took place. In this study, the managers were from an engineering background, working within an industrial setting, and were focused on following procedure and obtaining results. This, they hypothesised, may explain why pragmatic skills were more valued by coachees than personal attributes, and helped to illustrate the importance of context and the interplay between the coachee's needs and the kind of relationship they value. Variation could, therefore, be expected across different contexts and even within different coach – coachee parings. This highlights the importance of research across different settings, as well as the role of qualitative analytical tools in conducting more sensitive exploration of individual experience, helping to explain the correlational findings of quantitative results.

One study, using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to gain an insight into coachee's experiences of workplace coaching, identified 'the coaching relationship' as a main theme, and in turn, the subthemes of 'valuable coaching relationship', 'trust', and 'transparency' (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007). They deemed that 'the relationship between the coach and the coachee appeared to be one of the most essential aspects of coaching' (p. 173) and that, as a result, coaches should be aware of, and work to optimize, the coaching relationship. They concluded that this was particularly true for the start of the relationship, where the coachee was uncertain as to what to expect and even sceptical at times. This suggests that it is the relationship between coach and coachee that provides a starting block from

which to build upon, impressing the importance of relationship for effective coaching to take place.

Highlighting the importance of relationship throughout the coaching experience, Wales (2002), using IPA, found that coachees experienced their coaching relationship as a supportive and safe environment, where they were able to discuss their fears and anxieties. Gyllensten and Palmer (2007) found their participants valued similar experiences, noting that coachees had the opportunity to be listened to, which for some, was a rare experience. Building on the idea of co-operation, Schmidt (2003), using coachee questionnaires, found that a sense of sharing emerged between coach and coachee and that it was key to successful coaching. Trust and the quality of relationship were also found to be factors of success, and related to 'feeling supported by coaches' and 'the development of an open and accepting relationship'. Leedham (2005), using 180- degree feedback questionnaires, found that after individual gain, coachees appreciated feeling supported and valued by their coach. Finally, Passmore (2010), using grounded theory, found that coachees valued not only particular coach behaviours, such as 'holding emotion' and 'being non-directive', but also coach attributes, such as being 'affirming and supportive' and 'non-judgemental'.

Quality relationship - Views of the Coach

Much of the research concerning the coach - coachee relationship involved the views of the coachee. This is perhaps understandable as they are the client and, therefore, stand to gain the most from the relationship. It seems unlikely, however, that when engaging in a relationship of this kind, a coach would remain unchanged or disengaged from the process of relationship, indeed the very idea of a relationship, even in the form of a 'working alliance', would suggest otherwise. Baron

and Morin's (2009) study noted that coaches' self- efficacy, in regards to facilitating learning, was mediated by their perceived quality of relationship, thus demonstrating relational impact. It could be hypothesised that this is not a linear causality, but that as the coaches' self-efficacy rises, they perhaps enjoy meeting with the coachees more, giving them an additionally positive view of the relationship. Without looking at the relationship in more detail, however, this claim is not possible, and Baron and Morin's use of a quantitative approach concerning self-efficacy, leaves the impact of relationship, as perceived by coaches, relatively unknown.

One study that enabled a more in-depth view of coaches' experiences was conducted by Jowett, Kanakoglou, and Passmore's (2012). In their qualitative study, they analysed the coach – coachee relationship as one entity using the 3+1Cs (closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation) relationship model. They found that the important relational components of the dyadic coaching relationship from coaches' and coachees' combined points of view, included trust, respect, liking, support, responsiveness, cooperation, and openness and were also essential for the success of the coaching process. This study once again supports the centrality of the coaching relationship and is unique in its capturing of the coach – coachee relationship as one entity, rather than separating participants' views. A limiting factor of this design can be found in its deductive nature. By using the 3+1Cs relationship model, the findings, regarding the nature and quality of relationship, were effectively discerned by the model's parameters. It would be interesting to look at the coach - coachee relationship as one entity, without placing such restrictions upon the data, something that this study hopes to achieve.

2.4.3 The coaching relationship in the educational context

The majority of research concerning the relationship between the coach and coachee, has taken place within the private organisational setting. Coaching itself, however, is increasingly used within the educational context (Brunder, 2013), such as in schools and early childhood settings, to support positive outcomes for children and families (Knoche, Kuhn, and Eum, 2013; Anderson, Feldman, and Minstrell, 2014). Research in this context, tends to focus on practice and outcomes (Knoche, Kuhn, and Eum, 2013). This aligns to the current outcomes focus within the educational field, but also follows a similar research trend to that seen in executive coaching research (Grant 2014). There is, therefore, little research into the value of relationship within the educational field (Brunder, 2013), although this has begun to change.

Using a longitudinal mixed methods design, incorporating multiple sources (surveys, interviews, classroom observations and coaching logs), Anderson, Feldman, and Minstrell, (2014), sought to understand the underlying components of effective science instructional coaching. They found a strong correlation between improvements in teacher practice and the quality of the professional relationship with the coach. They also found that teacher performance was related to time together (at least 10 hours for elementary teachers and 20 for secondary) and the focus of their work (narrow as opposed to broad). These findings suggest the same centrality of relationship, found within the executive coaching field, but also a role for careful goal setting. The element of time links to Baron and Morin's (2009) findings, which suggest that the number of coaching sessions received was a significant determinate of the quality of the coach – coachee relationship.

Anderson, Feldman, and Minstrell were able to follow-up their original analysis in order to better explain the impact of relationship on teacher performance. Specifically, they found that the original codes, involving coaching dilemmas and resolution for these dilemmas, could be recaptured in codes relating to relationship, implying their necessity in the process of relationship. They noted that such ups and downs in the relationship 'did not seem to be a reflection of the personal disposition or skills of the coach or teacher' (p.7). Furthermore, the process of relationship was not seen as part of a linear process, whereby it was established and then coaching could begin, but 'rather seemed to result from the situated interaction between coach and teacher' (p.7), thus demonstrating the reality of an ongoing process of relationship.

Two other themes in Anderson, Feldman, and Minstrell's (2014) in-depth analysis were that of relational trust and role synchrony. Trust is a heavily supported theme in both executive coaching research (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007; Schmidt, 2003) and within the educational setting (Kelsen, 2011). Interestingly, although initially having the theme 'trust', on further analysis Anderson, Feldman, and Minstrell changed this theme to that of 'relational trust'. This captured the interpersonal nature of the trust felt by participants, in that it was generated between people, rather than being a personal attribute. This is important, as it helps to explain why the coaching relationship is so central to the process of coaching, namely because a relationship in itself is a process, and therefore is best seen as the backbone of coaching, rather than its starting block.

Knoche, Kuhn, and Eum (2013) attempted to capture experiences and perspectives of coachees participating in an early childhood coaching relationship. Similar to results found within the organisational sector, coachees were found to value the

qualities of the coach, resources provided by the coach and the qualities of

the coach–coachee relationship, including reciprocity, effective communication

practices, giving and receiving feedback, empowerment, and relationship

satisfaction. Additionally, coachees discussed their experience of transformation, in

regards to their behaviour and affective state and the challenges of

the coaching process, including 'time', 'difficulty applying strategies' and

interestingly, 'discomfort'. This final theme involved coachees noticing a tension in

themselves regarding fear of criticism, being watched and feeling unable to share.

Coachee's perceptions of their relationship with their coach, within the educational

context, tended to capture a sense of discomfort or 'ups and downs' (Anderson,

Feldman, and Minstrell, 2014; Knoche, Kuhn, and Eum, 2013). Such reflections

could be related to the work of De Haan (2008a), regarding critical moments; times

where coaches were faced with their own or their coachee's discomfort or tension.

De Haan found that such moments were all related in some way to a coach's doubt,

concluding that doubt seemed to be the overriding form of tension for the

inexperienced coach. He also concluded that, if coaches could manage feelings of

tension and anxiety, remaining calm, open and authentic when surrounded by

questions, tensions and doubt, they could provide a starting point for significant

learning to take place. This parallel between De Haan's work and Knoche, Kuhn, and

Eum's (2013) findings, helps to acknowledge the benefits of looking at both the

coachees' and coaches' experiences of relationship and even the relationship as one

entity, something this study hopes to achieve.

Finally, in the educational field, collaboration has been found to be an important

feature within the coach - teacher relationship (McGatha, 2008; Bercovici, 2014) and

has been found to develop new teaching behaviours (Walpole, McKenna, Uribe-

Zarain and Lamitina, 2010). Specifically, Bercovici, (2014) noted the importance of collaborative, as well as supportive and non-evaluative relationships between coaches and coachees. The non-evaluative aspect of Bercovici's findings were not a key finding within organisationally based executive coaching studies. Themes regarding fears of judgement and criticism were higher within educationally set coaching studies (Knoche, Kuhn, and Eum, 2013; Anderson, Feldman, and Minstrell, 2014) and possibly demonstrates the pressure teachers are currently facing and the need they have for a collaborative approach to support. There is a sense that coaching relationships are shifting to the needs of the clients they are working with. Walpole, McKenna, Uribe-Zarain and Lamitina's (2010) findings support this idea, noting that positive collaboration was particularly important for third grade teachers and that this may be due to the large student achievement differences they were faced with.

2.4.4 The coaching relationship between coach and student

Outside of sports coaching, there is currently a small but growing body of research, mainly based is the US, concerning coaching CYP with SEMHD within the school context. Outcome studies have shown a reduction of externalizing (Cheney, Flower, & Templeton, 2008; Stage, Cheney, Lynass, Mielenz and Flower, 2012) and internalizing problem behaviours (Cheney et al., 2009). There is surprisingly little research, however, when considering the breadth of evidence indicating the positive impact of staff relationships for CYP with SEMHD, about the impact of the coaching relationship. Furthermore, there is no known research that investigates the process by which this is developed and experienced, explored within the executive coaching field.

One study, that did investigate the impact of relationship, found that the child - coach relationship had an impact on students' social skills outcomes but did not have the impact on behavioural, academic and school engagement outcomes that the teacher – student relationship explained (Tsai and Cheney, 2012). This study, however, relied upon the same teachers that completed the student - teacher relationship scale to rate pupils' social, behavioural, academic and school engagement. It is, therefore, not surprising that teacher's perceptions of their relationship correlated with their own perceptions on pupil impact. Furthermore, the use of the student – teacher relationship scale was used for the measure of the child - coach relationship, with little regard to the possible differences within this relationship, indicating the limited focus this relationship has received.

Another study drew tentative conclusions regarding the wider impact of the coaching relationship, noting that as coaches perceived their relationship with students to improve, students' success within the programme increased (Cheney et al. (2009). Cheney et al, hypothesised that as students experienced success within the programme, they established a more trusting and co-operative relationship with their coach, enabling relational growth to occur. This is an alternative hypothesis to the findings in the wider coaching field, where relationship has frequently been identified as an integrated aspect in the success of coaching, rather than the result of coaching. This implies a lack of depth into the research concerning the child - coach relationship in the school context. Woodcock and Hakeem help to support such a claim when writing about literacy coaching. Here they note that 'at its heart, literacy coaching is about relationships and growth' (2015, p.14) and yet very few authors, if any, go into any depth as to how to create and foster genuine relationships, 'the foundation of responsive and successful literacy coaching' (p.14).

2.5 Summary

In conclusion, there is a strong argument from the literature reviewed, that the relationship between coach and coachee constitutes an essential condition to the success of coaching, in both organisational and educational settings. Many researches go as far as to say that it is the most essential aspect of coaching, and postulate the need for coaches to be aware of the relational process they are in. There is a sense too that the quality of this relationship is important to the outcomes of coaching, and to the self-efficacy of both the coach and coachee.

There is a strong case for the need for relational trust, as well as a safe and supportive space in which to be heard and accepted, and from which to learn. Overall, there is an impression that relationship is an ongoing and interactive process, inter-related to the tools and processes of coaching itself. There are very few studies, however, that capture the process of relationship, within the coaching context, particularly in a way that incorporates both coach and coachee perceptions over time, and no known studies that capture the relational process involving children. Coaching, in a pure form, is indeed a relatively new early intervention tool when working with CYP with SEMHD at school, and it would seem that the literature lags behind in this advancing field.

This study aims to break with the outcomes tradition within current educational research, postulating that there is enough evidence to suggest that relationship is important to the coaching process, and as such, needs to be better understood within the field of child coaching. In addition to this, there is extensive research indicating the value of relationship for children vulnerable to SEMHD and exclusion, supporting the need to understand how the relationship within this coaching programme is formed, and what supports its formation.

In summary, this research hopes to gain an inductive insight into the perceptions of both coaches and children regarding their relationship, in order to understand the process of relationship over time, and how best to support its development in the future.

Research Questions:

RQ1: How does the relationship between coach and child develop over time?

RQ2: What factors, relating to the process of relationship, are important to children?

RQ3: What factors, relating to the process of relationship, are important to coaches?

Aims and potential benefits of the study:

An additional aim of this study is to advocate evidence-based practice as a platform on which the experiences of children with SEMHD can be enhanced.

Potential benefits include the development of TLG's EI programme and the subsequent improvement of future outcomes for the children it supports. Broadly speaking, findings may be used to encourage further research, support the development of school policy and practice, as well as refine the use of school based coaching. Within the professional context of Educational Psychology, the findings of this study may help to develop ideas around coaching interventions for children with SEMHD and therefore support systemic thinking and change in this area. Reflection on approaches to building relationships with children with SEMHD, within a one to one situation, may also be instigated. It is also hoped that children were provided with a positive experience when taking an active role in this research project.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter includes a rationale for the research design selected, including the epistemological and ontological assumptions underpinning the chosen approach. It addresses the research design and method, including the procedure of refining research tools. The setting and the participants, including their recruitment, are then discussed before the procedure of data collection is surmised. Lastly, ethical issues and the analytical procedure are examined.

3.2 Philosophical Stance

It is vital when completing research, that the beliefs about the world, underpinning the researcher's position, are communicated clearly. Beliefs concerning the nature of reality (ontology) and what can be known about reality (epistemology) determine how the researcher attempts to discover what she believes can be known (methodology) (Maxwell, 2011).

The ontological position adopted within this research was that of constructivism, which argues that "social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors" (Bryman, 2008, p.19). This means that one phenomenon can be perceived or understood in a number of different ways (Willig, 2008), and indeed postulates that there is more than one reality (Bryman, 2008). Social constructivism emphasises the notion that the way in which an individual views and interprets the world, coupled with the language they use to describe it, is reality as far that individual is concerned (Burr, 2003).

The epistemological approach, adopted within this research, was a phenomenological approach, located within the interpretative paradigm. Interpretivism proposes that knowledge is a matter of subjective interpretation and phenomenology looks to "gain a better understanding of the nature and quality of phenomena as they present themselves' (Willig, 2008, p.56). This position advocates the exploration of how humans experience and perceive certain phenomena (Bryman, 2008), in this study, the coaching relationship.

3.3 Rationale for the research design

To gain the perceptions of children and their coaches with regards to their experience of relationship, as well as to form an interpretation of how their perceptions developed over time, a qualitative longitudinal research design was adopted. Longitudinal designs have been conceptualised in various ways but were defined in this study, as an approach that involves more than two episodes of data collection (Singer and Willett. 2003; Ployhart and Vandenberg, 2010). Researchers have warned against the use of two time frames, stating that such designs make it difficult to determine the form of change over time and that they confound true change (Ployhart and Vandenberg, 2010). For this reason, the longitudinal design of this study incorporated three time frames, conducted over the course of a child – coach relationship.

Longitudinal research is commonly defined by its focus on change and, as such, researchers have proposed the need to 'collect repeated measures over time from the same units of observation…and in such a manner that units may be linked over time' (Ployhart and Vandenberg, 2010, p.97). As this research aims to explore the development of relationship (expecting to capture change), methodological tools (in

this instance semi structured interviews) were designed to stay relatively consistent over time. The spacing of longitudinal measures, acknowledged to be frequently impacted by practical considerations, have been suggested to mirror the requirements of the study (Ployhart and Vandenberg, 2010). Equally spaced interviews were felt to suit the exploratory nature of this study; thus enabling a wide spread of data from near the beginning, middle and end of the relationship.

The qualitative nature of the design, allowed for the presentation of multiple realities and provided a way to account for the subjective nature in which children and coaches made sense of their experience of relationship (Willig, 2008). The design was concerned with the inductive relationship between theory and research (Bryman, 2008), and therefore enabled a dynamic and flexible analysis of the under-researched child - coach relationship. A qualitative design also enabled the complexity of perceptions to be captured, allowing for the analysis of more subtle viewpoints to be carried out (Yardley 2000). Finally, a qualitative design enabled me to become an instrument of data collection, providing a framework in which participants could respond with ease.

3.4 The context

The results of qualitative research should be 'understood within the context of the particular characteristics of the organisation…and, perhaps, geographical area in which the fieldwork was carried out' (Shenton, 2004 p.70). Such clarity has been said to offer the possibility of transferability of results (Denscombe, 1998). A description of the context in terms of the church, geographical area and school, is therefore provided. My understanding of the context was raised through the act of familiarisation, thought to increase the credibility of research (Shenton, 2004).

The coaches included in this study all attended a local church, where they had received training and volunteered to become TLG EI coaches in the local primary school. The church was situated on the estate from which all children in this study lived and the school was located. The church had around 40 members and worked with over 150 CYP, some of whom were included in this study.

The school was much larger than average and the majority of the pupil population was from a White British background and spoke English as their first language. The school had an above average number of pupils eligible for pupil premium (about four in ten) and a high proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs, although the number of students with an Education Health Care Plan was below average.

The estate itself was located in an urban area outside a large city. The area has been described as a deprived suburb and was identified as having a higher than average proportion of children living in poverty in 2012, despite many families being in paid employment (anonymised source).

3.5 Participants

3.5.1 The sampling framework

In order to interview child – coach pairings who accessed the EI programme over a similar time scale, and to allow for 'prolonged engagement' with participants and the context, one EI centre, operating in one primary school was selected for involvement in this study. The EI centre was selected due to its large size (in comparison to other EI centres) and established co-ordinator, who had built up close relationships with families, teaching staff and coaches.

There were seven child – coach pairings in operation at the beginning of data collection in February 2015. These pairings had been in place for approximately half

a term and had met between 3 – 6 times, giving time for relationship to form without outside involvement. This was seen as ethically sound practice, as it allowed a relationship to begin to establish without interference, as the children on the programme had noted difficulties in this area.

The seven children (six boys and one girl) and seven coaches, involved in the coaching relationship, formed an opportunistic sample and were each considered for interview. Participants, identified as likely to experience their participation in the study as stressful, therefore increasing the risk of psychological harm or distress, were not approached for interview. As long as their relationship continued all other participants were approached for interview. Table 1, shows the actual number of interviews that took place across the year long relationship.

Table 1: The sampling framework, number of participants interviewed

Sampling Framework	Participant groups			Data collected
	Time 1 (February)	Time 2 (July)	Time 3 (November)	
Children	6 children	5 children	4 children	15 interviews
Coaches	6 coaches	6 coaches	4 coaches	16 interviews
Total number of participant interviews = 31 interviews				

3.5.2 Recruitment

Children

After parental consent was received (Appendix 6), children were approached to take part in the study using an information sheet (Appendix 7), delivered by their coaches. This provided an overview of the aims of the research and the role of the researcher. A consent form (Appendix 8) and timetable (Appendix 9) were also supplied through

the coaches, allowing children to be exposed to the expectations of the study and give their initial consent in a relaxed setting. Consent was sought again at the beginning of the interview to ensure clarity. Six children were approached to take part in the study and all of them agreed to be involved.

Coaches

Coaches were informed of the research, by an information sheet given out by the TLG co-ordinator (Appendix 10) and invited to take part by completing a consent form, which was duly checked and reiterated at the time of the interview (Appendix 11). All seven coaches, approached to take part in the study, agreed.

3.5.3 Participant details

The details of the children involved in the study, including their anonymised reference, age range and year group during the course of the research, can be found in Table 2. The table also lists the children and coaches that were interviewed over the three data collecting time frames.

Table 2: Details of the focus children and participants interviewed

Focus child (Pseudonym)	Age range	Year group	Participants interviewed		
			Time 1	*Time 2*	*Time 3*
Harley	11 – 12 years	Year 6 – Year 7	Harley Harley's coach	Harley Harley's coach	Harley Harley's coach
Mark	10 – 11 years	Year 6 – Year 7	Mark Mark's coach	Mark Mark's coach	Mark Mark's coach
Jamie	10 – 11 years	Year 6 – Year 7	Jamie Jamie's coach	Jamie Jamie's coach	Jamie Jamie's coach

Charlie	9 – 10 years	Year 5 – Year 6	Charlie Charlie's coach	Charlie Charlie's coach	Charlie Charlie's coach
George	9 years	Year 5	George George's coach	George George's coach	*Finished coaching*
Reece	9 years	Year 4	Reece *Coach was unavailable*	*Started with new coach*	
Tim	9 years	Year 5	*Tim was not interviewed due to ethical reasons* Tim's coach	Tim's coach *Sudden end*	

The Children

The children included in this study presented with a number of factors, reported in the literature to increase both vulnerability to SEMHD and exclusion. They are recorded here in brief to protect the anonymity of the children. Children in this sample tended to have experienced a number of these vulnerability factors and in a number of cases, did so within the course of this longitudinal study.

- Leaving the family home to be placed in the care of the local authority or other family members (kinship care).

- Low attendance rates caused by family context, fixed term exclusions, reduced timetables or sickness.

- Lower than expected attainment and specific learning difficulties.

- Experiences of bullying, in both the victim and perpetrator roles.

- Difficulties managing behavioural responses either in the classroom or playground and related problems making and maintaining friendships.

- Home instability including experiences of separation, bereavement, domestic abuse, suicide, and substance abuse.

As depicted in table 2 and 3, not all of the children were interviewed at every time frame. George finished coaching at the end of the summer term, as previously agreed with the coach. Reece's first coach had to leave the programme for personal reasons and it was not deemed ethical for Reece to be involved during the second time frame, as a replacement coach had only just been found. Tim was never interviewed due to ethical and safeguarding concerns expressed by the TLG co-ordinator who noted Tim's elevated level of stress due to a breakdown in foster placement.

The Coaches

Coaches were of a variety of ages ranging from around 30 to 70 years of age and had diverse private and professional backgrounds. Coaches' current employment status included; family worker, youth worker, cleaner, retiree and teacher. Coaches' previous roles included; health care professional, teacher, social worker and vicar. Privately, most coaches had experiences of children whether they were their own, grandchildren or foster children. For six of the coaches, the experience of coaching on the TLG EI programme was new to them. One coach had previous experience of participating in a TLG EI programme in another school.

As depicted in Table 2, not all of the seven coaches were interviewed at every time frame. Reece's coach was not able to be interviewed at time one, due to availability issues, and then left the programme due to personal reasons before time two. Tim's coaching relationship ended abruptly prior to time two, as Tim moved away from the school and area.

3.6 Rationale for the method

Methods are the specific research techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data (Brechin & Sidell, 2000). This research appertained to an individual's interpretation or subjective view of a complex social phenomenon. Semi - structured interviews were therefore selected as an appropriate method. Semi - structured interviews enable the researcher to gain rich data, as they use open-ended and non-directive questions to allow participants to share their experiences (Wilig, 2008). To enable each participant's experience to be valued, the 1:1 interview approach was selected in preference to other methods, such as focus groups. Previous research investigating coaching relationships has tended to use surveys to collect longitudinal data and consequently, has reduced experience to abstract categories (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Semi – structured interviews enable a deeper understanding of the nature and quality of phenomena, as perceived by participants, and are therefore a methodological tool in line with the philosophical stance of this research. Specifically, semi – structured interviews enable the interviewer to seek further elaboration, understanding and clarification, by using more focused and specific questions (Willig, 2008). They enable a flexible and interactive approach to data collection allowing for conversational flow (Kvale, 1996) and participant ease, as question order can be modified and rephrased (Robson, 2002).

Within this research, children were viewed as equal to adults in regards to being social actors, 'experts' on their own lives, and thus semi-structured interviews were used for both children and coaches. To enable children's participation, however, this method was adapted to include a mixture of materials and techniques, enabling children to have time to 'think about what they would like to communicate, as well as

giving them choice and control on how to express themselves, and assist them in talking about more complicated, sensitive, and abstract issues' (Fargas-Malet, McSherry, Larkin, and Robinson, 2010, p.180). Such tools have also been found to reduce children's anxiety, placing them at greater ease and reducing their desire to please (Hurworth, 2012).

Adaptation of this kind is viewed as a 'participatory' research technique, involving the adaptation of the more traditional methods (Punch, 2002), (in this case semi-structured interviews), but enabling the core concepts of the methodology to remain central. Participatory research techniques are frequently used in interviews with children and allow them to create 'inclusive accounts using their own words and frameworks of understanding, via a range of exercises, such as mapping, timelines, cartoons, matrices and pie charts' (Pain and Francis, 2003, p. 46).

3.7 Developing the interview protocol

This section includes a focus on the formation of the initial interview schedules, the adjustments made after piloting and additional changes made during the longitudinal process.

3.7.1 Constructing the interview schedules

The questions used within the initial interview schedules (Appendix 1) were formed as a result of engaging with relevant literature and accessing academic and peer supervision. They were also shared with the TLG co-ordinator in order to check their suitability, ensure transparency and build trust. In order to capture the change expected in the development of relationship, semi – structured interview schedules were constructed to be relatively consistent over the three different time frames, changing mainly to fit with the interview context.

Coaches

General information regarding the coaches' roles and their perceptions of coaching were included at the beginning of the interview schedule to support coaches' engagement and build rapport. Initial questions were designed to reduce anxiety and allow for more open reflections throughout the interview, helping to maximise the credibility of the research (Lagunowitsch, 2012). Questions were formed to be open and informal, for example *'How's it been going so far?'*, to enable conversational flow and genuine insights to be made (Kvale, 1996).

A number of questions regarding coaches' perceptions of their relationship were adapted from Lagunowitsch's (2012) work, regarding the role of a Sports Coach Mentor (a specific role created in a PRU to support young people's emotional well-being). For example, *'What do you think the young people get out of the relationship with you?'* was adapted to '*What do you think the child gains from this coaching relationship?'.* Sub – questions, designed to further explore views or clarify participants' comments, were formed as a result of formal and peer supervision, as questions were shared with others and possible avenues of exploration were discussed.

Kvale (1996) suggests that an interview schedule should create a space in which participants can re-address something, or add information that they recognise as important. A question, enabling this space, was therefore included at the end of the interview.

Children

When designing the interview schedule for children, the same principles of rapport, informality, flexibility and empowerment were applied. For example, the same sort of

unthreatening questions were used at the beginning of the interview hoping to build children's confidence and ease, prior to speaking about their more personal experiences (Wagner and Gillies, 2001).

In a relatively under researched area, few examples of previous questions, relating to concurring relational experiences, were found. A number of exploratory questions, regarding children's experience of a coaching relationship, were therefore designed around a range of participatory tools. This encouraged children to find new ways of thinking about the same question, raising their ability to meaningfully participate in research and be more accurately understood (Clark, 2005). Some questions regarding their relationship were phrased using scaling (Appendix 2). Scaling has been illustrated as an effective way of gaining children's perspectives within solution brief therapy, providing a helpful way of eliciting what works well and what could be better, without placing undue pressure on a child or focusing on the negatives (Ajmal, 2001).

Cartoon 'blobs' (Appendix 3), representing a variety of different feelings, were used as a non-threatening way to open up discussions about how they viewed their coach (Wilson, 2007), opening an alternative way to express and understand their relationship. The relationship's role within different contexts was also explored using the 'blobs' to help provide other opportunities for children to share their views. Finally, a cartoon vignette (Appendix 4) was used to provide children with an opportunity to discuss their coach in relation to another child. This provided them with a way of discussing the sensitive issue of why they went to coaching (Barter and Renold, 2000) and, therefore, encouraged a different reflection on the relationship itself.

3.7.2 Pilot interviews

As questions were relatively similar in each of the interview time frames, only time frame one questions (see Appendix 1) were piloted, the results of which are captured in the modified research questions (Appendix 5). Minor amendments, captured later in this section, were made to round two and three interview schedules, as required.

Coaches

During the pilot phase, one coach was interviewed using the time one interview schedule. The coach provided extensive and detailed responses to the questions and on occasion, covered more than one question within the schedule. When reviewing the coach's answers, it was noted that further questioning allowed for deeper and more elaborated responses to be obtained. It was therefore decided that the schedule would be kept the same, even if this meant asking questions the coach had seemingly already answered.

For example, in the following extract, when asked about her role as a coach, the coach made a number of comments regarding interactions with the child.

> '…I ask the teacher how he's (child's) been but I tend not to, I tend to ask him erm and a lot of the time he will embellish that it's better than it has been, but erm, so we do a lot so at the moment we are going through aeroplanes, he loved the aeroplanes, making them he liked doing all the recording, working out which one's his favourite'

But later, when asked how coaching had been going, she elaborated upon these comments providing a deeper understanding and suggesting the benefit of repeating questions.

> *Interviewer* – 'So how's it been going so far?'

> *Coach –* 'He really really enjoys the attention…he just loves I think being away from class and yeh he really enjoys that interaction I think on a one to one even when I know he's kind of fibbing to me about how well he was, I think he still feels like he needs to tell me what I want to hear rather than just being honest'

Reflecting upon the delivery of the questions, I felt that referring to the child's name was more natural and appropriate to the focus of the interview, and as such, adjusted the interview questions to reflect this. The term '*work with'* in the question, '*How do you feel you are seen by the child you work with?',* also felt out of place and was replaced with the term *'meet with'.*

Finally, to make sure coaches felt listened to, a comment in reference to the possibility of repeated questioning, and the importance of this in understanding the complexities of relationships, was made at the beginning of the interview. As little was changed, it was decided to use this pilot data within the overall data analysis.

Children

For ethical reasons, it was not suitable to interview a child at the very beginning of their coaching relationship. The interview schedule and materials were therefore piloted with a sample of three children, with or vulnerable to SEMHD, from my Trainee Educational Psychologist case load (see table x). These children were known to me through brief solution focused or cognitive behavioural therapeutic work. The children were interviewed separately and asked to pick a person that they spent one-to-one time with in school. They were given the option of teacher, teaching assistant or best friend. They also had the opportunity to pick someone of their own choosing. The pilot schedule was used flexibly, interchanging differing relational roles, and using appropriate questions for the child's situation identified in

table x. The importance of this pilot phase was to ascertain what sorts of questions and techniques elicited information regarding the perception of relationship, and whether those questions produced rich or limited data.

Table 3: Piloting children's questions, the relationship discussed and questions asked

Case number	Relationship discussed	Questions asked (1 – 7*)
1	Teaching assistant	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
2	Teacher	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
3	Best friend	3, 4, 5, 6

*see Appendix 1 for details

In all instances, children were co-operative and enjoyed talking about what they liked doing with the person being discussed. When answering the scaling question, one child gave 10 / 10 for his enjoyment of being with his TA and so the secondary question was adapted to 'if it was possible to get even higher than a 10, what would make it even higher'. This seemed to work well and was noted as a possible response to maximum scaling scores in future interviews.

The use of the cartoon vignette provided information regarding how the children saw themselves before having a certain relationship, without having to engage in a negative line of questioning. For instance, this question worked well for a child discussing her positive relationship with her teacher. She was able to discuss how the relationship had helped her, whilst not having to talk about previous negative behaviours. At the end of a number of the relationship discussions, it felt natural to ask a more direct question, for example 'Has having your best friend made any difference to you?' This seemed to draw the child's attention directly to the

relationship being explored, and initiated a range of further reflections; a similar question was therefore added to the end of the interview schedule.

The pilots enabled me to ascertain that the use of different materials and techniques enabled all children to participate and engage with the research, regardless of how much they chose to share or not share. In this sense, no child knowingly experienced feelings of failure and no child's interview was deemed unhelpful as they were given a multitude of ways to communicate. This pilot generated some very insightful comments from children, supporting the use of these questions in this study.

3.7.3 Reflections during the interviews

Reflections regarding the interviews were made throughout the year and slight adjustments to second and third round schedules and procedures were made, especially when these enhanced participant engagement, understanding and comfort.

On the second round of child interviews, it became apparent that referring back to previous scales, blob trees and cartoons was quite distracting for children's current perceptions about the relationship. Although initially thought to provide a sense of connection between the interviews, it was later felt that, on occasion, the previously used visuals lead children back to previous thoughts, or caused them to choose a different picture. In time frame three, therefore, the interview schedule was adjusted and references to specific previous drawings were no longer made.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Through discussion with the Head of TLG EI, one EI centre was chosen to take part in this study. Initial contact was made with the TLG co-ordinator and a letter was sent

to the Head teacher of the primary school in which the coaches volunteered (Appendix 12). Permission to conduct the research in the school was gained. Information sheets and consent forms were developed and shared with the TLG co-ordinator to check their suitability, ensure clarity of the researcher role and build trust. Recruitment procedures were then followed.

In time frame one, where possible, children's interviews were conducted after an EI session. When this was not possible, children spent some time with the TLG co-ordinator who introduced them to me. The logistics of joining children at the end of their coaching sessions was challenging and therefore, after time frame one, it was decided that the TLG co-ordinator would bring all children to the interview. The first introductory question was, therefore, dropped from the schedule. The TLG co-ordinator remained available throughout the interviews.

After a period of off-topic conversation, participants were informed of their rights and consent was gained. Children were given support to begin and end the recording themselves, to build trust and ensure clarity. In time frames 1 and 2, participants were asked if they would be willing to be interviewed again. In time frame 3, participants were thanked for their involvement and informed of their ongoing rights. Children were given a star certificate for their involvement in the study.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study was approved by the Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee and carried out in accordance with the British Psychological Society's Code of Conduct and Ethical Principles for conducting research with human participants. Specific considerations were made regarding the inclusion of children and are explicitly referenced.

3.9.1 Informed consent

Participants were deemed competent and provided with adequate information to understand that their participation was voluntary (Beauchamp and Childress, 2001). All participants were visually and verbally reminded that their participation was voluntary, they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and that they were not required to respond to every question if they did not wish to do so. This was reiterated prior to any secondary or tertiary interviews.

Children

Effort was made to make sure that children could be included in the study and access information. The gaining of parental consent was supported if necessary, by the TLG co-ordinator. Children were presented information in an accessible way and given more specific material about the type and content of questions, prior to interview. Children's consent form was differentiated to suit their level of understanding and they were given a visual prompt sheet to remind them of their rights throughout the interview (Appendix 13).

3.9.2 Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality, children were assigned a unique pseudonym. Children and coaches were referred to by the use of pseudonyms, for instance, 'Charlie' and 'Charlie's coach'. Although appropriate precautions were taken to ensure confidentially was maintained, the small nature of this study meant it was not possible to ensure participants were not identifiable to those within the school community, who knew them well. To be transparent about this ethical dilemma, all participants were made aware of this possibility in their written consent. Although identification was possible, potential harm to the child - coach relationship remained

low. The study was framed as an opportunity to learn and develop, so any negative comments are discussed as areas of development.

Children

To protect the one female child in the study from being identified easily within the data, a number of the pseudonym's were made to be gender neutral, for instance George and Jamie. The pseudonyms were also used to replace masculine or feminine references, indicated by their bracketed use in quotes.

3.9.3 Harm to the participants

Careful consideration was given to the issues of safeguarding and psychological harm. Efforts were made to help participants feel at ease and comfortable within the interviews by building rapport, using empathy and active listening. All participants were given prior warning of the interview in terms of content and expectations. For all interviews, a suitable space was established, allowing for private conversation but ideally within view of others. Where possible, participants were met on the school site. Home visits were carefully considered and conducted alongside the TLG co-ordinator.

Children

Children, identified by their parent / carer, teacher, coach, TLG co-ordinator or other known service (e.g. social worker) as likely to experience their participation in the study as stressful, increasing the risk of psychological harm or distress, were not approached for interview.

3.10 Rationale for the approach to data analysis

3.10.1 The researcher's approach

Integral practice involves placing a high value on participants' data and being careful not to undermine, manipulate or distort it. It is acknowledged that all research, and particularly that seeking to obtain meaning and experience, is not value-free or objective. In the current study, my interpretative framework has been influenced by: training and practice in Educational Psychology, previous experience working as a centre manage within a TLG secondary school and an interest in counselling and coaching psychology. By partaking in research, outside of my current and previous places of work, however, I was able to step away from my role as Trainee Educational Psychologist and previous links with TLG, to make more objective observations (Morse and Field, 1995). Indeed, effort was made to minimise unjustified idiosyncratic interpretations or unwarranted selective attention throughout the process of analysis.

3.10.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis, defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a tool for 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data' (p.79), was chosen to analyse the data collected from semi structured interviews. This method allows key features of large amounts of qualitative data to be summarized. It is particularly suited to participants, who are collaborators in the research and whose views are relatively unknown (Braun and Clark, 2006). Thematic analysis consists of the formation of 'codes' to fit data and brings together the different elements of the data to form 'themes'. Themes help to organise the data and enable it to be compared and contrasted; highlighting patterns of similarity across the data set and allowing data to be presented in relation to specific research questions. This all aids in the

interpretation of the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998). Other analytical methods are also suitable for such work. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), for instance, enables a detailed exploration of people's understanding of everyday experiences of reality (McLeod, 2001). IPA, however, relies on a homogenous group and therefore, would prevent the flexible analysis of data that thematic analysis allows. In this research, the process of relationship was elicited from a combination of child and coach data sets, enabling a unique insight into the relationship, not possible to achieve with IPA. The decision to analyse the data in this way acknowledges the intertwined nature of relationship, and is a relatively rare approach in coaching research.

3.10.3 An inductive approach

This research adopted an inductive approach to analysis, creating themes that are strongly linked to the data, but bear little resemblance to the specific questions asked of the participants (Braun and Clark, 2006). In this sense, themes relating to participants' experience of relationship were formed, by reading and re-reading the data, without considering themes that previous research on the topic identified. Efforts were made to avoid preconceived ideas of the data, leaving an in-depth engagement with previous literature to the end of the analysis. Grounded theory advocates a similar approach to the exploration of data, but is primarily focused on formulating theory (McLeod, 2001). Thematic analysis, however, enables a more flexible approach to data analysis, enabling data collected over the three time frames to be analysed as a whole. The process of relationship can therefore be induced from the data, rather than being created by its collection. This helped to overcome difficulties associated with varying relationship time frames and retrospective references.

The use of NVivo supported my analysis, as I was able to ask certain questions of the data, in regards to time. I chose to do this after I had developed my understanding of the data, as I felt that as a qualitative researcher, I wanted to be the primary tool in the analysis. Notably, when exploring the frequency of codes relating to the process of relationship in time frames one, two and three, the same rough pattern emerged. This was not always an exact fit, supporting the original rationale, not to time bound the analysis, but allowed a further rigour to be applied to the analysis.

3.10.4 The process of analysis

In accordance with the suggestions of Braun and Clarke (2006), six phases of analysis were followed.

Phase 1: Familiarisation with the data

I transcribed each of the interviews into a written format (see Appendix 14 for example), thought by some to be ''a key phase of data analysis within interpretative qualitative methodology' (Bird, 2005, p. 227). I then read each of the interviews, making initial notes regarding the transcript, using the annotating function of Nvivo, a computer based tool that aids the analysis of qualitative data (Table 3).

Table 4: Transcript extract with initial notes

Interview transcript (Harley's Coach)	Initial notes
Interviewer- How have things been going so far with Harley? Coach - I love (Harley's) imagination with the games and that. That's when (Harley) really comes alive it's just poof	**Appreciating the child.**

I think wow (laugh) I think I like that. It really surprises me but in a really positive sense and erm and er yeh we like to talk and get to know (Harley) and sort of what's bothering (Harley) what's sort of, you know, making (Harley) tick things (Harley) doesn't want to do.	**Getting to know him, being interested in him.**
Interviewer - What works well?	**Importance of play.**
Coach - I think the playing works really well for (Harley). (Harley) likes making out the rules. I always let (Harley) to do that, (Harley's) very good at that and (Harley's) very confident in that so (Harley) likes making up the rules and that's fine and (Harley) likes changing them as well so they don't work (laugh) so I think yeh I really enjoy that.	**Child is able to have control within play.** **Coach's personal enjoyment of time.**
Interviewer - Have there been any challenges with the relationship?	**Testing the boundaries.** **Developing an understanding**
C- Hmm challenges erm no no er I think (Harley) likes saying sometimes (Harley) says aww I want to take this home I want to take this home, I said no that's really my stuff and I wouldn't say that's, (Harley) knows to know where the boarders is sort of thing what (Harley) can and what (Harley) can't do sort of thing which is great so, but I think we've got that understanding now.	

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

This phase involved the production of initial codes, units of meaning, and included both descriptive and interpretative codes. All the data was coded in this phase, regardless of its perceived relevance, and some data was coded a number of times if relevant (see Appendix 15). A process of merging and splitting initial codes occurred during this phase, to enable the clearest understanding of the data to emerge.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

In this phase, codes were grouped to capture something important about the child – coach relationship, known as a theme. Careful thought was given to the relationship between codes, in the tentative search for themes. The model function of NVivo helped to visualise connections between codes, and create themes and sub-themes (Figure 1). In this figure, the codes are represented in circles and created the theme 'coaching challenges'. To help better understand this theme, sub - themes were created to detail the different aspects of coach challenges.

Generally, themes arose from frequently occurring interpretations of an aspect of relationship. However, as Braun and Clark note, 'the 'keyness' of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures - but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question' (2006, p. 82). All themes relevant to the research questions, regardless of frequency, were therefore reported and understood as crucial to the understanding of the process of relationship.
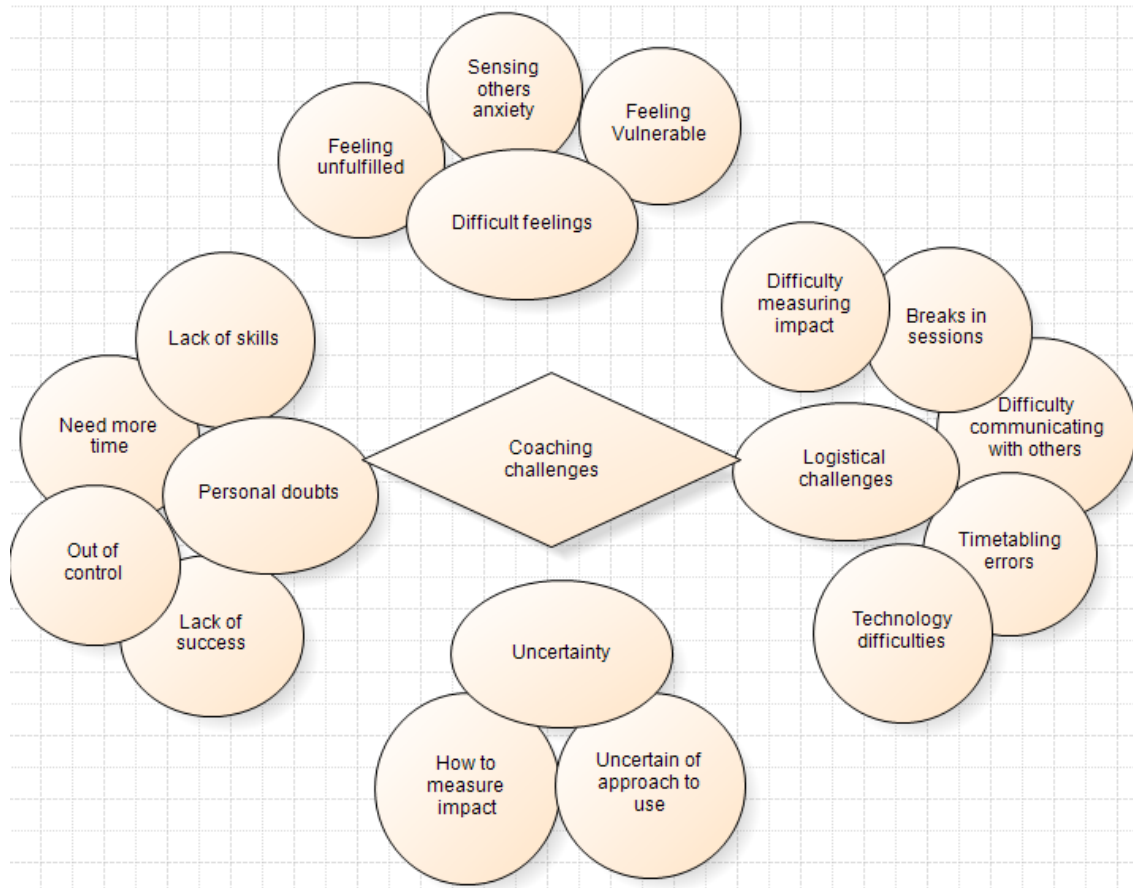
Figure 1: The grouping of codes to produce a theme and sub - themes

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

This phase involved the refinement of individual themes, by checking that the meaning of coded extracts of data linked to the theme itself. In order to check the relevance of coded extracts, tables, incorporating sub – themes, codes and example extracts of the data, were made for each of the themes (Appendix 16). This made extracts from the data easier to compare, and provided a holistic picture of similar and differing perspectives generated around a theme.

Reviewing themes and sub - themes enabled further splitting and merging to take place. For instance, within the theme 'responding to relationship' (see Appendix 16), the sub - theme 'feeling valued' was not felt to capture the data concerning the code 'feeling supported'. In this phase of analysis, it was felt that the code 'feeling

supported' was actually a separate sub - theme. Additionally, extracts captured by the sub – theme 'able to trust' were not felt to represent the theme 'responding to relationship' but were instead felt to inform the theme 'deepening connection'.

Finally, the process of analysis was discussed and reviewed in supervision. A collaborative coding session was also held with a group of colleagues, whereby a sample of data was jointly coded and the themes discussed (Appendix 17). Although not seeking to establish inter-rater reliability, deeming that differences in interpretations are inevitable, this process helped to generate new interpretations and provided a platform to discuss my analytical rationale and explain my findings.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

In this phase, themes and sub - themes were further refined and defined, particularly in terms of their relevance to the research questions. This phase helped to prepare for the final phase, 'producing the report', and drew further attention to the naming of themes. For example, the theme entitled 'able to talk' was changed to 'opening up' which was considered to be more in line with the data it captured.

Phase 6:

This phase incorporated the formation of the results section, using a selection of compelling extracts relating to the research question. Continued engagement with the data at this phase, on occasion, led to further analysis and adjustments to the presentation of themes and sub – themes.

3.11 Summary

This chapter outlined the constructivist, interpretative stance and qualitative longitudinal design adopted in this research. The choice of semi-structured interviews was discussed and the participatory considerations and adjustments, made for children's interviews, were detailed. Details of participants and information relating to the initial pilot and final data collection procedure were summarised. The context was highlighted and ethical issues considered. Thematic analysis was used inductively, to find patterns in the data relating to the relational process.

Chapter 4: The Journey of Relationship

4.1 Introduction

The results of this study are detailed in two chapters. The first chapter presents children's and coaches' perceptions of their relationship over time and addresses the question;

RQ1: How does the relationship between coach and child develop over time?

The second chapter presents factors identified by children and coaches as important to the process of relationship, and specifically addresses the research questions;

RQ2: What factors, relating to the process of relationship, are important to children?

RQ3: What factors, relating to the process of relationship, are important to coaches?

The results of this study included eight main themes. Five themes, presented in this chapter, help to explain how the relationship between coach and child developed over time and are best understood as a journey. Three themes, outlined in Chapter 5, helped to identify features that impacted upon the process of relationship, best understood as interacting factors.

4.2 The Journey of Relationship

The themes and sub-themes discussed in this chapter were derived from the child – coach pairings over three time frames. The themes depict the development of the child – coach relationship as a journey.

The strong sense of a journey, and the centrality of relationship to the coaching role, is perhaps most meaningfully expressed by one coach, when asked about how their role changed over time.

Now with hindsight, now I'm looking back I can see how you can actually have a relationship building up even if you see a child only once a week, how that actually builds up to something. I didn't think that would happen, I didn't, I never thought there's actually, there's something going to come out of it. I didn't think that there'd be any difference at all, but now I can see with (Harley) there's something actually, there's something actually started, how it started and where we are now and in that respect we've come a long way and I never thought that would be possible just for seeing a child once a week for an hour. *(Harley's coach, Time 3)*

The five themes and fifteen sub – themes depicting the journey of this coaching relationship are captured in Table 4. The table provides an overview of the findings covered within this chapter.

Table 5: Themes and sub - themes in relation to research question one

Themes capturing the journey	Sub-Themes
1. Anticipation	Hopes Apprehension
2. Taking an interest	
3. Reciprocal connection	Collaboration Acceptance Trusting other Understanding other Positive regard
4. Responding to relationship	Feeling valued Opening up

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	Feeling supported
	Seeking to meet the needs of the other
	Learning from other
5. Dealing with endings	Difficult feelings
	Preparing for the end
	Thinking about the future

4.3 Anticipation

The beginning of the relationship tended to be filled with a sense of anticipation as coaches and children reflected upon their new partnership, contemplating both their fears and hopes. The majority of references to both fears and hopes for the relationship were made within time frame one, although a number of coaches made later reflections concerning their initial fears when looking back on their journey.

4.3.1 Hopes

Children tended to reflect on their hopes in regards to the impact they hoped the relationship would have on their life. The use of vignettes helped to support children to reflect on their hopes regarding impact. A number of children referred to what the cartoon characters might gain from the relationship, in particular making reference to having 'new friends', being less 'silly' in class and 'focusing on learning'.

'She (coach) might find some like new friends for him'. *(George, Time 1)*

Jamie – 'That one because he's being silly'.

Interviewer – 'That one'.

Jamie – 'Coz he's being like the class clown and he's not listening to the teacher'

… 'I mean (coach) would help him to focus on his learning'. *(Jamie, Time 1)*

Coaches discussed their hopes regarding the impact the relationship might have on a child, but also engaged with their wider relational hopes and their aims for the relationship itself.

'I think I'd like to be seen by (George) as somebody who is here to help and somebody that (George) can talk to about what's going on erm and I guess kind of a bit of a safe space as it were'. *(George's coach, Time 1)*

'The aim is to be somebody different that the child can actually make a relationship with... The aim is not to teach them but the aim is much more to relate to them as a little person and to build up a good rapport with them so that if the reasons for their selection is that there are troubles in their life, erm you can help identify them and support the child and you can be a safe person they can relate to and share with'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 1)*

4.3.2 Apprehension

This sub-theme was derived from the views of coaches alone and reflects fears of entering a new relationship. The lack of children's perceptions regarding this sub-theme possibly reflects that, at the time of the initial interviews, children had met their coaches a number of times and therefore feelings of apprehension or uncertainty were less salient to them. Coaches did, however, reflect on instances that captured children's initial uncertainties and fears. Harley, for instance, initially refused to meet with the coach, who chose to do a home visit to alleviate Harley's fears, whilst Tim ran away from the coach on an initial visit. Other instances seemed to capture

children's apprehension regarding what was expected from them within the relationship.

> 'When I first met (Mark), the first thing (Mark) said to me was do I need to tell you about the bad things that (others) do to me'. *(Mark's coach, Time 1)*

For many coaches it is interesting to note how strong their initial fears, illustrated by their revisited reflections within the three interview time frames, had been. This seemed to be linked to an uncertainty about what to expect from a child labelled with behaviour problems, and was particularly evident in those coaches who had less experiences with children in a professional sense.

> 'I think you don't quite know what you're going to meet'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 1)*

> 'I had no sort of vision of that in that sense, I didn't know what to expect I was jumping into the deep end'. *(Harley's coach, Time 2)*

> 'I did not know what to expect and with him being such a well fantasist err even less than a normal child (laugh) so you know I'm quite pleased by how it ended up'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 3)*

4.4 Taking an interest

The next phase of the journey incorporated comments referring to getting to know one another and in particular, captured coaches' and children's interest in one another. References of this kind tended to be made during time frame one, seemingly helping to alleviate apprehensions by building rapport and familiarity, but were not explicit to this time frame.

A number of children showed an interest in the coaches' experiences and feelings and on occasion used the interview itself to air their interest in their coach. George, for example, pondered if the coach ever felt sad.

'Well I don't know (coach) everyday but (coach) might be a bit sad on some days'. *(George, Time 1)*

In other instances, children eluded to taking interest in each other in the use of their language. Mark, for instance, referred to talking about 'our' day implying there was an exchange of interest in one another.

Interviewer - What do you talk about?

Mark - How our days been. *(Mark, Time 1)*

Children also made a number of comments concerning their coach's interest in them, indicating the importance of this stage of development from their perspective.

'We been talking about what I'm guna do at the weekend and erm tell what I did in the week so like maths English erm science'. *(Jamie, Time 1)*

'She just like asks how my days been, it's like nice to talk to someone every once in a while'. *(George, Time 1)*

Similarly, some coaches indicated their enjoyment of children's interest in them, demonstrating the reciprocal nature of the relational journey.

'(George's) like so what are you doing at the weekend and I'm like oh you're interested in me (laugh) so well yeh so it's just quite funny so I think (George) enjoys doing that'. *(George's coach, Time 1)*

Others, however, although enjoying children's interest, sometimes found their behaviour to be quite possessive.

'I think is (Harley) getting possessive of me (Harley) wants me exclusively, erm in a sense it's a nice thing on the other hand it may be not so good'. *(Harley's coach, Time 1)*

Coaches demonstrated an interest in children's experiences, context, feelings and well-being, within this phase of the relationship journey, and often made general comments about 'getting to know' their child.

'I've been getting to know (Harley) first because I haven't met (Harley) before, I didn't know (Harley) as such, (Harley's) not a person I know from outside of the school so just getting to know (Harley)'. *(Harley's coach, Time 1)*

'Just to be aware as well of certain things you know (Mark's) got a bruise or (Mark's) not really clean I'm just aware of that not that I'd mention it to (Mark)'. *(Mark's coach, Time 1)*

At this stage, coaches referred to others perceptions of the child. This implied that they sought out information about the child, a feature of the relational journey that tended to decline as the child – coach relationship developed.

'(Charlie's) home background was said to be unhappy…' *(Charlie's coach, Time 1)*

Although most relevant to the beginning phase of the journey, coaches demonstrated particular interest in their child at times of change, or when their behaviour had proved challenging to them or others.

'It will be interesting this term to see how (Charlie's) been getting on with a new teacher and all the rest you know and how (Charlie) feels'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 3)*

'So I just sat and chatted to (George) and I was like right what's happened why has this happened and things'. *(George's coach, Time 1)*

'I do ask (Mark) about (Mark's) mum and (Mark's) brothers'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

Taking an interest continued to be important to some children as the relationship developed. For instance, as the relationship deepened, George began to understand the coach's interest as a supportive mechanism, helping to demonstrate the dynamic and cyclical process of relationship.

George - She helps you…

Interviewer - How does she do it?

George - Talks to you.

Interviewer - Does she, what do you talk about?

George - I dunno, how your day has been, how the week has been… *(George, Time 2)*

4.5 Reciprocal connection

This theme incorporates five sub-themes. The codes used in this theme tended to be derived from time two and three interview waves and as such, fit well in the sequence of the journey. The reciprocal nature of this theme captures the mutuality of responses between coaches and children, specifically in their collaboration, acceptance, trust, understanding and positive regard for one another.

4.5.1 Collaboration

The sub-theme of 'collaboration' was an important aspect of this phase of the relationship journey. Children, in particular, frequently used the pronoun 'we' and begun to make more explicit references to their relationship with their coach.

> 'We've done, we develop, like we've done well at coaching at like see what kind of things we can make and what kind of weird things we can discover'. *(Jamie, Time 2)*

Coaches and children discussed feeling a sense of connection to each other, valuing the time they had together.

> 'It's me and (coach) and (we) have like a really close bond now'. *(Mark, Time 3)*

> 'On Friday I like going to school coz I get to meet (coach)'. *(George, Time 2)*

> 'I've got a relationship with this little person now'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 2)*

> 'Well I've had some lovely times with (Charlie) really'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

This connection was often illustrated as coaches and children began to refer to previous times they had spent together, as well as ways in which they worked with each other. For coaches, references to a shared past were often explicit, whereas children's comments tended to imply the importance of the past rather than explicitly name it. For both, however, there was a sense that a shared past helped to support the experience of 'togetherness'.

> 'We always play with that'. *(Mark, Time 2)*

> 'Yeh that one the one that's holding that one up because we're helping each other'. *(Jamie, Time 2)*

'…it's growing and has become a bit deeper yes that's right than the first day where you meet this unknown quantity'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 2)*

'I think it's quite important that we do chat and have that sort of you know that relationship over all this time'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

4.5.2 Acceptance

Coaches and children discussed a sense of being accepted by the other.

'She asks me what my days been and I say well good bad wobbly and then she like says ok and then we just play'. *(Mark, Time 2)*

'I suppose (Jamie) seemed to accept me erm and enjoyed what we did together you know'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 3)*

At times, there was a sense that coaches felt accepted as a result of their child's behaviour towards them, particularly in regards to perceptions of respect and children's enjoyment.

'Yeh generally (George's) always really up for coming out chatting'…

'When I see (George) outside of TLG I think there's just a respect there that actually, you know, (George) and (George's) mates were all climbing along that thing that other day and I was just like you need to get down and erm (George) did erm…I do think there is an element of like erm mutual respect for each other'. *(George's coach, Time 2)*

For coaches, the idea of acceptance linked with an avoidance of judgement and a number of statements were made concerning this.

'I'm not going to come down and judge (Charlie) hard'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

'(Mark) knows that erm really I just don't judge, do you know what I mean, I've tried to make sure (Mark) doesn't feel judged by me because I know that (Mark's) felt that from others or that's been put on (Mark)'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

One coach particularly avoided the judgement of others about her child's behaviour seeking to;

'…take (Harley) on that day as (Harley) is without any sort of erm background knowledge… otherwise there is a risk for me to be judgemental or prejudice'. *(Harley's coach, Time 2)*

This quote helps to illustrate how coaches began to rely on their own understanding of the child, rather than seeking the view of others and is an interesting shift from the early phases of the relationship.

4.5.3 Trusting other

In this stage of the relationship journey a number of the coaches' recognised feeling relaxed in the child's company and noted similar responses in the child.

'I think (Charlie's) relaxed a bit more I mean we're both more relaxed with each other'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

'(Harley's) not so nervous anymore…the nervousness is gone (Harley's) completely relaxed now…has calmed down, now I can have, now with (Harley) a good conversation even without having to do anything'. *(Harley's coach, Time 3)*

This seemed to be linked to feelings of trust between the coach and child, and there seemed to be a reduced sense of pretence and desire to please, particularly on the

part of the child.

'I think that the relationship has deepened slightly because there's no, (Mark) doesn't have to pretend that everything is ok'. *(Mark's coach, Time 2)*

'I think there is quite a trust between us'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 3)*

4.5.4 Understanding other

Children and coaches frequently described aspects of one another's character, context, struggles, experiences, feelings, likes and strengths. This led to a strong sense of understanding the other and seemed to be an important experience for both children and coaches.

'She likes erm she likes being sarcastic and funny'. *(Jamie, Time 3)*

'I think there was, (Mark) saw quite a lot of violence'. *(Mark's coach, Time 2)*

'I think it's partly the work, struggling to do the work and I think (Charlie) does struggle I don't know how much extra help (Charlie) is able to have but (Charlie) struggles with maths'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 3)*

'Every time on her anniversary it snows'. *(Reese, Time 1)*

'(Harley) does learn things very very quickly, learns new skills just like that it's just amazing (Harley's) got a very creative mind'. *(Harley's coach, Time 2)*

Some children commented not only on their coach's character, but on their wider life. Children, for instance, made reference to their coach's forgetfulness, their experiences of holidays, their friendships and their feelings and as such, eluded to a deeper sense of understanding.

'Well because she has a lot of friends she went on holiday with most of them I think she'll be that one'. (picked blob with a friend) *(George, Time 1)*

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Feelings of empathy from a number of children and coaches were often incorporated and implied by their statements, regarding their understanding of the other. Here, there is a sense that understanding one another produces a deeper experience of empathy, causing children and coaches to predict, or even take on, the feelings of the other.

> 'I'm seeing it through a child's eyes I'm seeing it through (Mark's) eyes and I find that, I find that distressing for (Mark) do you know what I mean'. *(Mark's coach, Time 2)*

> 'I thought that it was going to upset her because that's twelve and that's about thirteen quid gone out of her own money'. *(Harley, discussing losing a book given by the coach, Time 3)*

Coaches tended to further their understanding by asking deeper questions concerning children's thoughts, feeling and behaviours. There was a sense that, for coaches, their understanding of other, involved a process of reflection or hypothesising as they wondered about their child and tried to make sense of their experiences.

> '(George) just didn't mention it at all which was quite interesting, I don't know whether it was just because (George) had completely forgotten about it or he was just like, oh it's been dealt with I don't need to talk about it I'm over it whatever'. *(George's coach, after George's teacher informed her about George having a difficult week, Time 2)*

This seemed to lead coaches to interpret the underlying causes of behaviour and in many instances recognise children's needs in a deeper sense.

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'I think (Charlie needs) encouragement because (Charlie) does (Charlie) down a bit sometimes'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

'(Mark's) got all this stuff going on in (Mark's) head and really needs, erm ideally needs some therapeutic intervention at some point (Mark) really does'. *(Mark's coach, Time 2)*

In terms of behaviour, coaches would often refer to what they felt their child was attempting to communicate to them and others, as well as how the behaviour was serving to meet their child's needs.

'(Tim) would grab another cushion and pull it down over (Tim's) head, so clearly (Tim) could hear and was trying to say I don't want to converse with you'. *(Tim's coach, Time 1)*

'(Mark) lives slightly in a fantasy world and I think that's (the) coping mechanism for what's happening or what has happened at home'. *(Mark's coach, Time 2)*

'Well I suppose its bolstering self-esteem so it must be that very deep inside (Jamie) is feeling very fragile'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 2)*

In regards to children's feelings, coaches tended to reflect upon children's difficulties dealing with challenging experiences and the impact that these had on the child's internal world.

'(Mark's) back story is quite a severe one really you know (Mark's) whole life, I feel for (Mark), has been like just a facade of keeping everything together and now it's not, it's kind of unravelled and (Mark's) not in control anymore and you know all those feelings'**.** *(Mark's coach, Time 2)*

'Emotional exclusion hurts and it's not it doesn't conclude and so I think (Tim) was probably feeling (Tim) was going further and further on the margins all the time'. *(Tim's coach, Time 2)*

4.5.5 Positive regard

The sub-theme, 'positive regard', was derived from codes relating to liking the other person and enjoying their company. It seems that after knowing the characteristics of the other, coaches and children developed an affectionate consideration for each other.

'She's really fun to be with and like she's not like some, sometimes you get strict teachers in school, she's not like that she's like the opposite'. *(Jamie, Time 3)*

'She brings like really good creation skills and erm she brings loads of fun like loads of good things, not the same things'. *(Harley, Time 2)*

'I think it's err I mean (Harley) is an amazing kid an absolute smasher, (Harley's) brilliant and (Harley's) creativity is just fantastic, has a very very creative mind'. *(Harley's coach, Time 3)*

'I mean I like (Mark), you know what I mean'. *(Mark's coach, Time 2)*

The data supporting this sub-theme once more demonstrates the similar reflections made by both children and coaches, with reference to their relationship with one another, helping to exemplify the shared and intertwined nature of the development of this relationship.

4.6 Responding to relationship

This theme was developed from five sub-themes. The codes used in this theme tended to be derived from time two and three interview waves, appearing more frequently in the time three interviews. As three of the relationships finished after wave two, it seems likely that this accounts for the spread of data and it is my understanding of the findings, that this theme, 'responding to relationship', appears after that of 'going deeper'.

In this phase of the relationship journey, there were a number of differences between coaches' and children's experiences. Specifically, the sub-themes of 'opening up', 'feeling supported' and, 'learning from other', applied only to the children's response to the relationship. The coach, however, was not immune to the influence of relationship and as such, also responded to its development over time, most notably 'feeling valued' and 'seeking to meet the needs of the other'.

4.6.1 Feeling valued

The sub-theme, 'feeling valued', captured a response to relationship similar to both children's and coaches' experience. Children tended to refer to experiences where their coach had kept them in mind and attempted to meet their needs.

> 'She brought me a feeling book for twelve quid and some pens I didn't even just like out of nowhere she just said here, I was like cool'. *(Harley, Time 3)*

Comments referring to the classroom vignette also indicated children's experience of being valued. For example, when Mark was discussing why a certain cartoon character would need to meet with his coach he referred to his own experience of having a cup of tea and a biscuit.

'I think she needs coaching coz like, well she don't need coaching she needs a cup of tea or a biscuit'. *(Mark, Time 3)*

Harley, also demonstrated feelings of value when referring to the cartoon vignette, referring to what Harley's coach would do to help a cartoon identified as in need of a coach.

'Tell him to express his feelings however he wants…and it don't matter if he's popular or unpopular, you're all the same your all flesh and blood'. *(Harley, Time 3)*

Children also experienced a sense of value through feeling understood by their coach. For instance, one child was able to share the jokes he had attempted with his science teacher with his coach, as he knew she would find them funny. There was a sense that he felt understood and subsequently valued by his coach. This was closely linked to his own understanding of her character, helping to illustrate the importance of the journey of relationship.

'When I was doing my shield erm we kept on talking about what science was like and I was like ahhh it's so dramatic we did an experiment about eggs and I said to my science teacher let's get cracking then'. *(Jamie, Time 3)*

Every coach interviewed made reference to feelings in line with an experience of being valued by their child. Coaches, both experienced and unfamiliar with working with children, expressed a sense of delight and often relief, in their child's responses towards them.

'(Harley) says now I don't mind Fridays now at school because I know you're coming. So comments like that…sort of makes my day, that's what I feed on

but erm so it's a positive feedback for me because I know (Harley's) not dreading it'. *(Harley's coach, Time 2)*

'I'm always just excited that (George) wants to come and talk to me (laugh).' *(George's coach, Time 2)*

'I feel quite cheered that (Charlie's) actually missed me you know'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 3)*

4.6.2 Opening up

All children commented on being able to talk to their coach. A number of children spoke in particular about being able to express their feelings and 'let go' of them.

'I can get everything off my chest if I feel upset or something'. *(Harley, Time 2)*

'Like I can get it all out'. *(Mark, Time 2)*

Children and coaches noted how children began to share their personal experiences and feelings with their coaches. Many were difficult experiences and there was an impression that this relationship enabled them to express some of the more unmanageable feelings that they encountered.

'I wasn't there for a week, coz I got upset about something and I told her'. *(Harley, Time 2)*

'(Mark had) managed to keep it together all day until (Mark) saw me at two and then (Mark) just cried'. *(Mark's coach, Time 2)*

Similarly, children were also able to discuss more positive aspects of their life and, in a number of cases, shared their feelings about the outcomes of their relationship with their coach and their view of the coach themselves.

'(Mark talks about) things that are important to (Mark), (Mark) says there's a girl that really likes (Mark) but she's Polish and she can't speak much English'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

'(Jamie) came out with this stuff like people don't bully me any more I feel more confident you know'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 3)*

'In secondary school (Harley) told me I'll be one, I am one of six people, or something, one of six people who listen'. *(Harley's coach, Time 3)*

4.6.3 Feeling supported

All children referred to feeling supported by their coach. Most references of this kind occurred at time frame three indicating the need for a deeper relationship to be present for such feelings to occur.

'This is me and she's helping me see…She's supporting me on the tree'. *(Harley, Time 3. Using blob tree)*

'She like, helps me get along with my feelings and erm helps me forget about all the bad things that happened'. *(Jamie, Time 3)*

'Like she helps me like get through what's happened'. *(Mark, Time 2)*

4.6.4 Seeking to meet the needs of the other

When responding to their relationship with their child, coaches seemed to be reacting to the difficulties or deficits they noticed the child was experiencing earlier in the relationship journey. A number of the coaches, for instance, mentioned their child's lack of control over their life, low self-esteem, and lack of positive attention from the adults around them. Coaches then seemed to respond to these needs, attempting to meet them through their relationship.

'I had to really sort of focus on being child led by (Mark) coz you know you go with an agenda I've got this and this and this I could do and erm you know but sometimes (Mark) just didn't want to do that'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

'I was just like you need to ask (George) if (George) doesn't wanna tell you then that's fine it's not my place to tell you it's up to (George)'. *(George's coach, when peers asked about coaching, Time 2)*

'I ask (Harley) what mood (Harley) is in what can we do, if (Harley's) in a good mood we do this if not then we do something else'. *(Harley's coach,   Time 1)*

This sub-theme does not highlight coaches' attempts to meet children's needs through coaching itself, but through relationship, and specifically, a deeper desire to 'be there' and provide a safe space for their child. This was particularly apparent in the code 'reassurance of safety and stability'. Coaches discussed a number of instances in which they attempted to communicate a sense of safety, permanence and availability, in which the child was able to express their sometimes difficult or private emotions and experiences.

'(George) was like really angry and crying and things so I just like took (George) and I was like, I just want you to like get your angry out so (George) just like basically scribbled on this bit of paper and made a beautiful rainbow pattern in (the) book, erm and then (George) eventually yeh did like calm down and then talked about what had been going on and things'. *(George's coach, Time 2)*

'(Mark) wanted to paint (Mark's) nails so because there was nail vanish remover there we did that and (Mark) really enjoyed that, and so doing that all (Mark) talked about was how (Mark's) nan painted her nails and (Mark) was doing all the actions. (Mark) was showing me you know got the file out so

(Mark) really enjoyed that, putting your little bit of sparkly nail vanish on and took it off but there were still little bits round the edges so I just said well you can remember were that's from I don't think anyone will notice it'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

In this last quote, the coach attempts to extend the child's feeling of security and permanence, by suggesting that the little bits of sparkle round the edge could remind the child of their time and experience together. This was not the only incidence of such messages. A number of coaches commented on wanting to let the child know that they were thinking of them, and in one instance, even went to sit in the room they met in when the child could not make the session.

'I said to (Harley) (the) last time I saw (Harley), I said I know I haven't seen you for a few weeks, we had some problems and what have you, erm I said but I didn't forget about you. I said it doesn't mean that I forgot about you the last few weeks or didn't think about you. I said because I did which is the truth and so I did say that to (Harely) so I said erm you know I didn't wanna (Harley) feel like being forgotten or you know that sort of thing I think that was important that (Harley) knew that I had to say that'. *(Harley's coach, Time 2)*

Although this sub-theme was primarily experienced by coaches, children did, on occasion, 'seek to meet the needs of other'. Specifically, children tended to seek to support their coach in being successful in the tasks they did together.

'I help her, like sometimes she forgets things and I remind her'. *(Jamie, Time 2)*

Finally, coaches sought to meet children's needs through their involvement of others. Different children had different needs in regards to their home and school lives and as such, coaches varied in their desire and attempts to involve others. For instance,

Harley's coach sought a more separate relationship responding to Harley's needs for a sense of security and non-judgemental attention. Charlie's coach, however, felt differently;

> 'I really would like to meet her (mother) because I think (Charlie's) very fond of her and… I know there are some problems, erm so for (Carlie), there is a little (child) err you know I don't think she could do much wrong you know which is nice yeh erm so I would like to meet her really'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

Coaches also met children's needs by supporting them to build bridges with others, using the strategies they had learnt in coaching, encouraging them to take things home to their family or share something with their class or teacher.

> '(Mark) liked taking them home, I let (Mark) take them home at the end erm and erm yeh sort of speak to its not (Mark's) Dad it's his Mum's partner but (Mark) calls him Dad and sort of share that with him'. *(Mark's coach, Time 1)*

> 'Like I make them because I can get (to) share them with my class'. *(Charlie, Time 2)*

4.6.5 Learning from other

This sub-theme was derived from children's and coaches' perceptions of children's responses to the relationship. It incorporates children's ability to learn from their coach, most commonly perceived by coaches during game play, whereby they felt that children tended to study their response to winning or losing whilst they played together.

> 'When we were playing (Harley) studied my face you know when I lost or (Harley) lost or (Harley) won you know, and then (Harley) would really sort of (look at face) and I noticed that I thought …when I play with my daughter she

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doesn't study my face at all…but (Harley) really studied my expression how I would react when I lost or when I won'. *(Harley's coach, Time 3)*

Children too had perceptions regarding learning from their coach, and in a few cases gave explicit examples of how they had generalised their experience of relationship to change their own behaviour and approach to others.

Mark - 'She helps me out when I need her and then like I do that when someone else needs help and like I take what (coach) doing to me and I bring it in the school and help other people'

Interviewer - 'How do you do that?'

Mark - 'Well if people are like crying because like their Dad or someone hurt em, I'll be like I'll like pick em up like walk em to the student centre and like say it's gunna be ok and like he won't hurt you anymore'. *(Mark, Time 3)*

This sub-theme is not addressing the learning that took place from the coaching itself, but as the last quote helpfully illustrates, how the child learnt from participating in and experiencing, a secure relationship with an adult.

Although such explicit reflections were rare in the data set, children commonly referred to their perceptions regarding coaching's impact on their relationship with others. Children's reflections included their increased ability to talk to others, deal with conflict, accept other's viewpoints, show empathy and demonstrate support.

'She like helps me get along with other people'. *(Jamie, Time 2)*

Harley - 'Since I've been seeing (coach) I've got used to her (Mum's) boyfriend

Interviewer – 'What helped that?'

Child – 'I've been more interested in actually spending time with him'. *(Harley, Time 3)*

'Being happier with friends, it's got me to help other people because I saw someone today in the playground who was really sad…we saw this little kid so me and my friend played tag with him and he comes up to us every day to play with us so we always play tag with him'. *(George, Time 2)*

'Yeh like say like if one of my friends is like feeling down I like cheer them up by telling them jokes'. *(Jamie, Time 3)*

When looking at the data produced from children's perceptions regarding the social impact of coaching, there is a sense of a mirror being held up to the experiences of children in their relationship with their coach. This observation suggests that children were generalising what they had experienced in their relationship with their coach to other relationships, and in this regard, were learning from the relationship itself.

Other instances, did not refer specifically to learning or impact, but demonstrated that learning may have taken place. For instance, Harley, who was identified by teachers as having a possessive manner in relationships, spoke about opening a space for others during the coaching session.

'Maybe it would be nice if like maybe just like at the end and at the beginning if I could just like bring a friend so like if they have problems they can talk as well'. *(Harley, Time 2)*

Harley's desire to share this space seemed to be supported by Harley's coach's efforts to enable Harley to feel secure in their relationship. Once secure, it seems that Harley was able to respond to this experience, demonstrating a willingness to

share the relationship with others and offer support and help, in the same way that the coach had done for Harley.

4.7 Dealing with endings

Evidence for the existence of a journey of relationship is supported by the theme 'dealing with endings' whereby coaches and children made reference to the difficult feelings they experienced at the end of their relationship as well as their responses to such feelings. Coaches' also referred to their preparation with regards to endings and their thoughts regarding the future, including their concerns and hopes. The codes used in this theme tended to be derived from the third wave of interviews. Some pre-emptive thoughts of endings, however, were also captured in time two and included those of child – coach relationships that came to a planned or premature end.

Similar to reflections regarding the beginning of the relationship, coaches tended to reflect more on endings than children. This may be explained by children's preference for more immediate experiences as most children's final interview was just before the ending of their relationship and, as such, their feelings regarding this time may not have been salient or even fully understood by them. It became clear in the results of this study that not all coaches explicitly discussed endings with children and, as such, some children were possibly unaware of its imminence when interviewed.

4.7.1 Difficult feelings

A number of children, and most coaches, experienced difficult feelings towards the end of their relationship. Difficult feelings were often coupled with a desire to continue or elongate their time together.

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'Well my mum said if I ring (coach), the weeks that I haven't been here she said that erm you could actually put them back on so like I could have two more weeks after and then that would be it'. *(Harley, Time 3)*

The manifestation of difficult feelings tended to differ across the child – coach pairings as they prepared for, and managed endings, differently. Coaches and children experienced a range of difficult emotions, ranging from feeling deflated and sad to feeling inadequate and out of control. Some children seemed to hold back information from their coach towards the end of the relationship as they perhaps began to prepare for the loss of the relationship.

(Harley mentioned experiencing bullying in secondary school)

Interviewer – 'Have you chatted to (coach) about it?

Harley – 'No'. *(Harley, Time 3)*

To help illustrate the diversity of experience, I will discuss a few pairings starting with Tim and Tim's coach. In this instance, there was a sense of loss and unmanageable feelings experienced by both Tim and Tim's coach. External factors caused Tim to be removed from the school and the family home and as a result, Tim's coaching relationship also came to an end. The outcomes of this ending are captured well by the TLG co-ordinator who mentioned it in her own interview;

'In those last couple of days (Tim) had trashed someone's office, smashed you know, (Tim) just couldn't end, couldn't end leaving school not only with (coach) but even school. (Tim) just left in a huge devastation trail, couldn't…just disappear, didn't know what to do with (Tim) you know, so yeh (Tim) left, (Tim) left in a real bad ending actually'. *(Co-ordinator, Time 2)*

Tim's coach also reflected on this experience, commenting finally;

'There's no proper closure for (Tim) and I'. *(Tim's coach 7, Time 2)*

Reece also experienced a difficult ending with his coach, whereby for personal reasons, the coach decided to end her involvement in the programme. In this instance, Reece's coach wrote him a letter and Reece was supported by the TLG, co-ordinator. Reece experienced a number of difficult feelings due to the loss of this relationship.

'(Reece) was, (Reece) cried, she wrote (Reece) a lovely letter you know, she said there's nothing, she showed me it, and I took it into school and it said you know (Reece) I've really liked working with you but for (personal reasons) I'm going to say goodbye now sort of thing, so you know very much wasn't (Reece)'. *(Co-ordinator, Time 2)*

Reece received a new coach, and was later mentioned by the TLG co-ordinator, as having developed a 'strong relationship' with his new coach and was said to be 'doing well'. In the majority of cases, coaches and children had more manageable experiences, although they still dealt with difficult feelings and the management of loss.

'It is because I had her all last year it started in year 5 into year 6 and now it's well really I've only got two more weeks left until she doesn't see me anymore because my dad can't be bothered to get out of bed'. *(Harley, Time 3)*

'It's hard to stop it at some point but I know it's going'. *(Harley's coach, Time 3)*

Jamie's coach - 'I'd explained it at the beginning of the session that it would be the last one and went into the whys and wherefores and (Jamie) didn't say anything, at all really…then (Jamie) just went'.

Interviewer – 'How did you feel?'

Jamie's coach - 'Erm, I feel a bit let down that (Jamie) didn't even say thank you…' *(Jamie's Coach, Time 3)*

4.7.2 Preparing for the end

A number of coaches specifically addressed their preparation for the ending of their coaching, noticing particularly what the child might need to learn or remember from their sessions.

'(Harley) didn't know how to ask for help this is really what I would like to see happening in (Harely) erm so I've got five more sessions where I wanted start talking to (Harley) (about that)'. *(Harley's coach, Time 3)*

'I think focusing on again it is behaviour but it's also looking to the future thinking about you know having this kind of independence skills er being able to deal with disappointment things like that you know'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

'I thought that there were three things I wanted to tell (Jamie)…and I even thought of little actions from (Jamie) to do because (Jamie) couldn't just remember the words'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 3)*

Coaches tended not to focus on preparing to end the relationship itself and a number seemed unsure of how to approach this.

'The only thing, what I'm sort of thinking of, now we're coming to the end of the term is how would it sort of just end? When is it time to say goodbye? Where is that cut off point, is it just with the term time?' *(Harley's coach, Time 2)*

Mark's coach noted the need for support in this area.

'I think it would be good for TLG to always have that kind of erm, not guidance, but maybe that kind of goodbyes, even if it's kind of like a project you know that

someone could maybe develop you know an ending project a look to the future

project maybe I think that would be lovely to have something like that'. *(Mark's*

coach, Time 3)

The three coaches entering secondary school spoke about the importance of making

this transition with their child, helping both the coach and child prepare for the end of

their relationship.

'I think if you have a child in year six, I think it's important to do a few weeks in

secondary school just to see how things (go)'. *(Harley's coach, Time 3)*

'I'm pleased that (Mark's), I'm glad I've seen (Mark) because if I hadn't seen

(Mark), if we'd just stopped in July erm I would have been very, I would have

just had that picture of (Mark) whereas (Mark) has moved on a little bit…seeing

(Mark) at school and having that connection I think is a good thing definitely'.

(Mark's coach, Time 3)

Finally, coaches tended to reflect more broadly on the journey of relationship they

had experienced, (best captured by the coach quote at the beginning of this

chapter), perhaps indicating their preparation for its ending.

4.7.3 Thinking about the future

When thinking about endings, coaches tended to express a broader range of

thoughts than children, often referring to their concerns and hopes for children's

futures. Coaches concerns incorporated references to future support and difficulties

the child may face.

'Because it's such big things happening to (Mark) it could be undone by other

people… where (Mark) has built himself up. I hope not, (Mark's) doing so well

now at seniors I do have my little worries'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

'For me now because there will come a time in five weeks' time when I say well that's it for me there might be a hand over there might not be'. *(Harley's coach, Time 3)*

Coaches tended to hope that change would continue to occur in children's experiences, feelings and behaviours.

'For me personally I would like to see (Harley) to be able to speak to a teacher and say this is what happened'. *(Harely's coach, Time 3)*

'To know that (Jamie's) got through secondary school without being horrible to people because you know (Jamie) was being really verbally absolutely vicious to people so yeh it would be a good thing that's that changed'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 3)*

'I hope they give (Charlie) lots of, I hope (Charlie) gets hugs and things like that'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 3)*

All coaches expressed the hope of a legacy from their relationship and some reiterated their hope that the relationship would continue in a different form if needed.

'I hope that you know if (George) was, I don't know, if (George) has issues in secondary school and things like that, (George) knows that I'm someone (George) can come to talk to about them'…

'I would hope that something would, that (George) learnt a bit about coping with anger you know, I think maybe that would be good, and perhaps if (George) learns that there are people out there that do care about (George) you know'. *(George's coach, Time 2)*

Some children referred to times where they reflected on their future with their coaches, also capturing a sense of hopefulness.

   Jamie - 'We've made erm we've made like a list of what I'm going to do when I'm in year 11'

   Interviewer – 'What does it say?'

   Jamie - 'Erm like it's like all the different things you want to do when you're in year 11, be in a band erm yeh pass your GCSEs'. *(Jamie, Time 3)*

4.8 Summary

Overall, by using a longitudinal design, semi structured interviews and inductive analysis, I was able to gain an understanding of the relational journey children and coaches embarked upon when entering this specific relationship. Each theme captured an aspect of the journey, beginning with anticipation, which included the sub-themes of hopes and apprehension. The theme taking an interest represented the next stage of the journey, followed by a reciprocal connection, which included sub themes referring to collaboration, acceptance, trusting other, understanding other and positive regard. The next theme, captured coaches and children's response to their relationship and included the sub themes of feeling valued, opening up, feeling supported, seeking to meet the needs of the other and learning from other. The theme dealing with endings, helped to solidify the picture of a journey, and incorporated the sub themes difficult feelings, preparing for the end and thinking about the future.

The results suggest that the relationship between these coaches and children developed and changed over time and through different phases. The results should not however be viewed as an exact or linear process, as there was evidence of repetition of phases over the different time frames, indicating a cyclical aspect to the

journey of relationship. These results suggest that relationship is central throughout

the coaching process, and that some of the outcomes of coaching seem to be a

response to the relationship itself.

Chapter 5: Interacting Factors

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents factors identified by children and coaches as important to the process of relationship and helps to address the research questions;

RQ2: What factors, relating to the process of relationship, are important to children?

RQ3: What factors, relating to the process of relationship, are important to coaches?

Three themes identified in the data represent features that impacted upon the process of relationship, best understood as interacting factors (see Table 5).

Table 6: Themes capturing factors that interact with the relational journey

Themes	Sub-Themes
1. Importance of play	Building togetherness
	Enabling child to lead
	Enabling enjoyment
	Enabling expression
	Supporting children's ability to cope
2. Coaching challenges	Coach doubts
	Difficult moments
	Logistical challenges
3. Role positioning	Shifting position within the relationship
	Changing approach to coaching
	Shifting relational dynamic

5.2 Importance of play

The theme 'importance of play' was developed from five sub-themes, and was supported by the perceptions of both children and coaches, answering, in part, research questions two and three. Children's reflections highlighted the importance of play in their relational experience, as they frequently incorporated references to play when speaking about their coach. Coaches too, recognised the importance of play, often highlighting children's responses to play and the use of play as a facilitative relational tool.

Interestingly, all the sub-themes that comprise the 'importance of play' mirror aspects of the relational journey such as 'togetherness', 'seeking to meet the needs of the other' and 'opening up'. In this way, the facilitative power of play, in regards to the relationship, is powerfully demonstrated.

5.2.1 Building togetherness

Play seems to support a sense of togetherness as, through play, the coach and child are able to create, discover and achieve things together.

'We've discovered that one of my characters isn't like, it's got a vehicle in the comic strip and we're adding a vehicle to it'. *(Jamie, Time 2)*

'(Coach) has a tennis ball and we play catch and we try do little tricks and we get a piece of paper and we record the scores'. (Harley, Time 1)

This sense of building togetherness through play is referred to throughout the relational journey by children as well as coaches, who acknowledge its facilitative role in relationship building.

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Interviewer - 'What's worked well in developing relationship?

Coach – 'Well er sort of having races with the paper aeroplanes and playing ball, throwing to each other and trying to see who's going to catch it'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 1)*

Togetherness in play seemed to hold slightly more importance to children at the beginning of the relationship, perhaps indicating that play can be used to explore a relationship and overcome hurdles together, whilst avoiding feeling vulnerable.

'We put tape on it because the paint was really weird and we couldn't look through every time we looked at it…so then we built some little things that go on the side of it'. *(Charlie, Time 1)*

5.2.2 Enabling child to lead

Play also seems to enable children to lead and therefore gain a sense of control. Using play in this way may provide a relatively unique experience for children. Enabling the child to lead was found to be facilitative of the relationship, perhaps enabling children to have a greater sense of control within the relationship itself.

Interviewer – 'Why does it (meeting with coach) make you feel more happier?'

Jamie – 'Because it's like because you get to design your own characters get to do your (own) thing…you get to add any characters you want and then you can make up your background and how the characters act to situations'. *(Jamie, Time 1)*

'Then (George) came up with this own little project that (George) wanted to do which was based around football so (George) wanted to like make this game where you have to like guess the football player…(George) called (it) guess the

player (laugh) so yeh that's cool, it's good that (George) yeh chose to do that'. *(George's coach, Time 2)*

'I was making this game with football players it's a guess who game'. *(George, Time 2)*

5.2.3 Enabling enjoyment

Play was important for children in enabling them to have new experiences and have fun.

'Because I can make loads of stuff and I never really make stuff at school'. *(Charlie, Time 3)*

'You can do really fun stuff and you're not guna get bored'. *(Jamie, Time 1)*

This is likely to have a facilitative impact upon children's relationships with their coach as their coach becomes associated with enabling fun experiences and positive feelings. For example, when explaining the benefits of coaching to a cartoon character, Harley commented;

'It's good, you do fun things. It depends what you like doing so just like if you like drawing like me or art like me then she brings…coz I've got a woman so (smile) erm she will bring in toys and stuff and paint and books'. *(Harley, Time 3)*

5.2.4 Enabling expression

Play allowed children to express themselves. Such expression could be enabled through play itself or, by the paying of joint attention to a play stimulus, the pressure of focused attention on the child could be reduced.

'Well she got me to draw pictures and she said what are you feeling and I said good good, good, good and then I drew a picture'. *(Charlie, Time 3)*

'When I'm too busy in my art it just comes out. So I'm like, I've had a really bad day today, she goes why and I'm like coz somebodies bullying me and we just keep on talking about it because where I'm so busy in just like colouring or something I just like I just like letting all it all out'. *(Harley, Time 1)*

This is clearly facilitative to the child and coach relationship as children are more able to express themselves and embark upon the initial stages of relationship, at times even disclosing more personal aspects of themselves, whilst maintaining their distance.

5.2.5 Supporting children's ability to cope

Although play seems to become less important in regards to the child – coach relationship as the relationship itself strengthens, the continued importance of play throughout the relationship process and its interaction with the relationship itself, is illustrated by the sub-theme, 'supporting children's ability to cope'. It is clear that although many children attribute their met needs to their coach, they also affirm the use of play in raising their self-belief, taking their mind off difficult situations and providing a way of feeling close to their coach.

Mark - 'Like she helps me like get through what's happened'.

Interviewer – 'How does she do that?'

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Mark – 'Like just takes my mind off it whilst playing'. *(Mark, Time 2)*

'(The comic was) actually quite good I printed it off of my computer coz it didn't have any colour coz I wanted to colour it in myself…I've put it up I've put it up next to my poster'. *(Jamie, Time 3)*

Interviewer - 'What is important about making those paper aeroplanes?'

Child – 'Makes me remember the good times me and (coach) have'. *(Mark, Time 1)*

5.3 Coaching challenges

The theme 'coaching challenges' was developed from three sub-themes derived mainly from the perceptions of coaches, and therefore answering, in part, research question three. The sub-theme 'difficult moments' was found to have the most obvious interaction with the process of relationship but was heavily impacted by coaches' doubts and the logistical challenges they faced.

5.3.1 Coach doubts

All coaches expressed doubts concerning their approach to coaching, their personal skills as a coach and their ability to bring about change for a child. There was a sense, throughout coaches' descriptions of their doubts, that they often experienced feelings of inadequacy in the role and faced a number of uncertainties.

Coaches expressed doubts about their approach to coaching itself, wondering if they were too suggestive or directive or not using the resources enough, and expressed a desire to receive advice or be more closely monitored in case they were 'doing something wrong'.

'Whether I'm too suggestive in that because obviously I'm not a teacher, whether I should just let (Charlie) stay on the side or whether you've got to make (Charlie) think about it more. I'm happy to be corrected about that.' *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

'I think if I were to do something, let's put it in a negative sense, if I were to do something very wrong you know without even realising, I do something wrong. Maybe if I'm thinking I'm perfectly right doing (it) this way…erm obviously we always try not to do it or say anything wrong you know but obviously you have to have that in the back of your head'. *(Harley's coach, Time 3)*

'In terms of like the resources that TLG give you to use almost like what do you do when they don't really want to do any of it? Like it's kind of hard because you kind of feel like this is what you do with your young person, like you know this is how your session is structured erm and I think sometimes I'm like oh no I'm not doing it right erm but as I say if (George) doesn't want to sit and do it then what can you do'. *(George's coach, Time 2)*

References concerning doubt about their personal skills as both a coach and person, were the most frequent within this sub-theme and often incorporated the strongest feelings of inadequacy.

'That's something (Harley) must learn and I'm not sure how you go about that'. *(Harley's coach, Time 1)*

'I think because I'm not a teacher I feel a bit nervous about it and I think what am I going to do. I feel I must have something so I can fill the whole hour'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

Interviewer – 'What skills do you think you need to be a coach?'

Coach – '…*a bit more wisdom than I had'. (Tim's coach, Time 2)*

Such doubts not only impacted upon the process of relationship, but for some coaches, had wider reaching effects on their involvement with others close to the child;

'I (am a) bit sort of wary about home because you never know you know how you are going to relate to them'…

'She's (teacher) probably thinking oh gosh what are you doing?' *(Jamie's coach, Time 3)*

A few coaches expressed their uncertainties regarding working within the school context, specifically in regards to societal changes and expectations.

'I guess the thing about putting your arm around him or something, you know these days life is so different isn't it. Erm I don't on the whole do that although walking down the corridor erm I think I may have done that once, then I thought hang on you know be careful you know because er things are more difficult like that'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 1)*

Finally, coaches doubted the impact their coaching had made, referring to a general uncertainty as well as a number of influencing factors such as a lack of time, the child's mood and a difficulty measuring impact.

'I hope…that (Charlie) gains a bit of help in dealing with (Charlie's) anger but I'm not sure about that'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

'I think because I know my child quite well, erm I think (George's) like 'aw yeh (I'm) just gunna go and hang out with (coach) for a bit' rather than really seeing that it's achieving something'. *(George's coach, Time 1)*

'It's very difficult to evaluate my own work I don't think I've done much I don't think so because I just turn up and I listen'. *(Harley's coach 1, Time 3)*

Interestingly, one of the coaches mentioned lessening her concerns by sharing them with the TLG co-ordinator;

'I did mention it to (co-ordinator) the other day and I said, 'you know (George) doesn't actually like really do any of it' and she was like 'aw no its fine like (Mark) doesn't really do that either like (Mark) always just wants to play battle ships or something' so that made me feel a little bit better about it'. *(George's coach, Time 2)*

Reflections concerning the sharing of doubts tended to be quite rare within the coach data set, and perhaps indicates the need for more official lines of supervision, verified by one coach's reflection;

'I think we need ongoing monitoring and we need an ongoing meeting perhaps say monthly where we will be able to reflect on the four visits and say help for goodness sake help or err I think this is working. We don't do that yet'. *(Tim's coach, Time 1)*

5.3.2 Difficult moments

When referring to challenges they experienced in coaching, coaches referred to a number of difficult situations and feelings. Specifically, coaches referred to moments where they experienced a loss of control, a sense of distance, a sense of loss or a lack of fulfilment, as well as moments experienced as particularly effortful. Both

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children and coaches discussed such feelings with regard to the end of the relationship, a sub-theme included in the journey of relationship, explored in Chapter 4. Coaches, however, acknowledged a greater number of these moments than children throughout their experience of coaching, indicating their importance to coaches during the process of relationship.

All coaches experienced situations where children were defiant, ambivalent or avoidant of them, on a number of occasions even running away from them.

'I think with (Mark) particularly when (Mark) was at erm the primary, some of the sessions could be quite difficult because (Mark) just wouldn't want to focus, or you know was a bit flitty'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

'So I met (Tim) in the library and talked through the book case and I got a nod and then he ran off'. *(Tim's coach, Time 1)*

'Just the last session (Jamie) completely disobeyed me, I asked (Jamie) not to run out of the room after the teacher but (Jamie) wanted to check that (Jamie) would be able to join PE with the rest of the class and completely ignored me, but no point getting irate about it, I just accept my position'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 1)*

'(Harley) gets up and starts playing with other toys and we're just in the middle of doing something'. *(Harley's coach, Time 2)*

During these times coaches often felt de-skilled or deflated, having to rely on others to support them or feeling that such moments reflected upon their personal skills and qualities. This often led to feelings of distance from the child.

'I felt a bit hurt by that (Mark ran away) personally because I thought we had a good enough relationship where (Mark) wouldn't do that to me because (Mark)

kept trying to do it in the classroom but I thought well no our sessions were good'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

There were a number of responses to such difficult moments. Often these moments presented an opportunity for coaches to reflect upon their child's behaviour and deepen their understanding of the child's needs. In this way, these moments seemed to strengthen the relationship, and help to illustrate the cyclical process of relationship outlined in Chapter 4, whereby the coach seeks once more to gain insight, understand, empathise, accept and then respond to the child's needs.

'I soon got over it…and really I knew why (Mark) was doing it because (Mark) knew his social worker was going to come and pick him up from school and didn't want that…so it was more a kind of cry for help'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

'I try to draw (Harley) back…erm I try to sort of entice (Harley) back in to actually what we're doing'. *(Harley's coach, Time 2)*

Not all difficult moments could be handled in this way and some appeared to obstruct the development of the relationship for a time, in one instance leaving the coach feeling a loss of control, perhaps similar to the child's own experience.

'(Tim's) handled it which I think is what (Tim) does, you see (Tim) knows (Tim) can handle the whole lot of us really'. *(Tim's coach, after Tim verbally insulted the coach in a session, Time 2)*

The development of the relationship seemed to be slowed down when coaches related the difficult moment to their doubts about their personal skills;

'He just comes out with all this stuff and erm a fair amount of which is blatantly not real…If I were a very wise person no doubt I would know how to help better how to help this child face up to reality'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 1)*

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Here, instead of re-engaging with the relational process and seeking to understand this child's reliance on fantasy, Jamie's coach attributes this difficult moment to their own lack of skill, maintaining some feelings of distance.

Difficult moments also occurred for the coaches outside of the direct relationship with the child, as they often felt lacking in control of external factors that impacted upon their child and their relationship.

> 'I don't know what's going on, I don't know what's being discussed in core meetings and you know I don't share, I'm not shared privy to that information'. *(Mark's coach, Time 2)*

> 'I have gone through (co-ordinator) because I thought that was the way and that in a sense (co-ordinator) is a gatekeeper…erm so I haven't really felt free to (approach the teacher) erm because well I'm sure there are sort of etiquette rules in a sense'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 3)*

These moments were often exacerbated or directly linked to the logistical challenges of coaching and, for some coaches, caused a sense of loss and a lack of fulfilment, requiring the considered effort of the coach to keep personally committed to the relationship.

> 'I had expected to see (Charlie) and we had said you know (Charlie) wanted to sort of meet up next term, so I do feel a bit sad about it really…I feel sorry about the six week break because I think that's you know well it just makes it feel all more disseminated really somehow'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

As with the relational journey, coaches were not alone in their experiences of these moments and some children also referred to them.

Interviewer – 'What is it (score for coach) now?'

Harley – (Harley circled 9 on the scale. In the two previous interviews Harley had circled 10 and considered this change of score carefully)

Interviewer – 'OK, what makes it a 9?'

Harley – 'Err obviously because I haven't been in so much I can't actually speak to her because like she can't come around my house apparently… (so) erm because I haven't seen her it's gone down a little bit'. *(Harley, Time 3)*

Children, however, made no references to moments experienced alongside their coach but only to feelings of loss during periods of separation from them. Difficult moments were more relevant to coaches and were something that they primarily had to work through and support the child with. They are therefore understood here to be an interacting factor in the process of relationship, most important to coaches.

5.3.3 Logistical challenges

When referring to challenges, coaches referred to a number of logistical complications, including problems with timetabling, technology, communication and measuring impact.

'It is quite difficult because the school timetable does seem to change a bit it doesn't seem to be like every time you go in it's the same'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

'I haven't engaged, well I haven't started, I still haven't started using the website or anything I'm just writing notes by hand'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 1)*

'Because my child has two different teachers I've spoken to (George's) teacher that (George) has at the beginning of the week but because I'm never in school at the beginning of the week I never get to see her, and I don't know (George's), coz (George has) just got a new teacher for the other half other week, so I don't really know her yet'. *(George's coach, Time 1)*

'(Jamie's) form teacher was off sick so I couldn't get it (child feedback) corroborated'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 3)*

The main outcome of these challenges was that time with children was cut short or missed altogether, leading to breaks between sessions. Missed time inevitably affected the process of relationship causing an increased number of difficult moments and feelings of loss for both the child and coach.

'Well I haven't really seen her that much because like I've been like out of class and that because I'm finding it difficult'. *(Mark, Time 2)*

'It kind of took a dip because it got to a point where (Mark) was hardly managing to stay in and they kept calling Grandpa in, and when (Mark) was in I felt that it wasn't appropriate that I saw (Mark) because you know Grandad was there to really sit with (Mark) and make (Mark) do the work but (Mark) was struggling, really struggling so I thought I was losing (Mark)'. *(Mark's coach, reflecting on earlier relational experiences, Time 3)*

These moments could be used to deepen the relationship through the process of seeking to understand the impact of missed sessions, empathising and responding by attempting to meet children's needs.

'Coz as soon as (Mark) moved I went out and visited them I've seen them a couple of times now'. *(Mark's coach, Time 2)*

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5.4 Role positioning

The third interacting factor, relating to the process of relationship, was role positioning, whereby coaches referred to how they positioned themselves within both their relational and coaching roles. This theme was derived, mainly, from coaches' views and therefore helps to address research question three. Overall, coaches' understanding of their role positioning within the relationship and coaching processes, seemed to shift over the course of the relationship, seemingly interacting with the journey of relationship itself and at times, indicating the shifting needs and experiences of the children.

5.4.1 Shifting position within the relationship

Coaches reported experiencing a range of relational positions throughout their coaching journey. Coaches referred to roles as 'advisory', 'equal', 'neutral', 'overarching', 'supportive' and 'trusted. Every coach's description of their relationship varied over time showing both its development and the changing needs and experiences of the child.

Many coaches referred to holding a neutral relational position, comparing themselves to others important to the child, or as simply a listener.

> 'I mean that I'm the in-between person the neutral one so because I'm not a teacher and I'm not (Harley's) mum'. *(Harley's coach, Time 1)*

> 'I feel like I'm a pair of ears'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 1)*

This position was always referred to during time frame one interviews, and perhaps reflects the role coaches needed to assume when getting to know a child.

A number of coaches referred to a sense of equality within the relationship making references to a friendship, characterised by a sense of openness and respect.

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'You are there as a friend because there are other people who can be there in a strict way, I mean it's a privileged role in a sense'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

References to a positon of 'equality' as well as 'trusted' and 'supportive' positions tended to be made within time frame two. These seemed to correlate with the journey of relationship as it deepened and produced the responses of feeling valued and supported, able to trust and opening up.

'I feel like (Mark) sees me more as a confident you know maybe an adult that (Mark) can say certain things to and its ok do you know what I mean'. *(Mark's coach, Time 2)*

In the advisory role, coaches made references to a mentoring aspect of their positioning.

'More kind of like I don't know well it is like a mentoring relationship'. *(George's coach, Time 2)*

Comments made about holding an 'advisory' position as well as an 'overarching' position, were made towards the end of the relational journey, possibly indicating that this was a time where children sought more guidance and reassurance and where coaches were required to think more broadly about children's needs.

'Yeh I think it has shifted I don't really know how I suppose how would I say that, I feel like I'm still coaching (Mark) but coaching (Mark) in other things rather than just behaviour management does that make sense…so it's like a life coach really I suppose you would call it wouldn't you'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

Coaches referred to uncertainties regarding their relational position throughout the process of relationship. A number of these reflections related to coaches'

experiences of self-doubt and may correlate to difficult moments, experienced over the course of the relationship.

> '(Charlie) probably thought I was a bit of an old fogie at first, I don't know, well (Charlie) may still think that I don't know I've no idea really I don't know'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

Other reflections that capture coaches' uncertainty help to highlight the uniqueness of this relationship from the coach perspective.

> 'It's difficult because when you want to describe something you're always going to compare it with something, another relationship don't you. Erm (you) can't really compare it, erm it's not friends, erm it's not I'm not (Harley's) mother I'm not a teacher erm, a friend you it's difficult how you define friend.' *(Harley's coach, Time 2)*

5.4.2 Changing approach to coaching

When coding data from children and coaches regarding the coaching process, a relationship between coaches' perceived relational position and the coaching approach adopted by coaches at different time frames, was observed.

Earlier coaching approaches were found to involve the exploration of thoughts, feelings and behaviours, linking to the relationally neutral position.

> 'So we kind of talk about who is a good friend we talk about (Mark's) hopes and (Mark's) aspirations as well so yeh'. *(Mark's coach, Time 1)*

In the middle phase of the relationship, coaching approaches involved more instances where coaches challenged views and developed ways forward, requiring a trusted or supportive stance.

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'I tried to help (Jamie) suggest ways to be angry in a positive way'. *(Jamie's coach, Time 2)*

Interviewer – 'So it changes how you feel about your sister?'

George – 'Yes because normally (coach) says why do you treat your sister like this? Erm Dunno'. *(George, Time 1)*

'I dig and say I don't think you are very happy actually you've said happy but and erm, and actually we did the swimming pool thing this time and I said well what are you like when you're angry, so he pointed first of all to the one standing on the side and I said I don't think your like that'. *(Charlie's coach, Time 2)*

The final coaching approach involved being directive and links to the advisory position.

'There was this incident that this boy said 'oh that's well rubbish' and I said 'just like you' and then erm I react in a bad way and she said 'don't react just whisper under your breath, "I don't really care" and you can just walk on'. *(Jamie, Time 2)*

Within these findings there is a suggestion that the coach approach is related to the process of relationship, in that as the relationship develops, the coaches' relational position shifts and allows for different coaching methods to be used. These are tentative findings but may indicate a further link between relational and coaching processes.

5.4.3 Shifting relational dynamic

During the coaching process, a few coaches noticed changes either occurring within a child or within a situation a child was experiencing, that caused a shift in the experience of the relationship itself.

> '(Harley's) not fidgety anymore you know I can have a, (Harley's) quite attentive'. *(Harley's coach, Time 3)*

> 'I would say our relationship is not about school at all now, it's about (Mark's) life and (Mark). (Mark) doesn't wanna talk about school at all (Mark's) not interested, (Mark) wants to talk about cousins, the dog now you know Grandpa'…

> '(Mark) held that back so it all kind of got blown up then (Mark) was able to tell, talk about things…and now it's I suppose the relationship is that it's all out in the open but you're still really important to me so let's go together'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

Some coaches also noticed a shift from communicating through play to being able to talk without that focus, subtly changing the dynamic within their relationship. This did not mean that play ceased to be valued but seemed to become less vital to the relationship as the relationship itself strengthened.

> 'Play time is not, (Harley's) not so nervous anymore (Harley) doesn't have to act out through play…so (Harley) doesn't have to have a tennis ball anymore, doesn't have that. So (Harley's) relaxed now, has calmed down now I can have, now with (Harley) a good conversation even without having to do anything which is a really good improvement'. *(Harley's coach, Time 3)*

'So it's more stuff relating to (Mark) erm less fantasy I got when I first saw (Mark)'. *(Mark's coach, Time 3)*

5.5 Summary

Overall, when discussing their relationship, not all of the children's and coaches' reflections seemed to refer to the process of relationship, but rather captured features that interacted with its development. In this chapter, the interactive nature of play on the process of relationship is demonstrated. Play was found to be particularly important to children, highlighting its importance in facilitating the process of relationship with this group. Coaches recognised the importance of play, but also spoke in detail regarding the challenges they faced throughout the relationship and their positioning within their relational and coaching roles. Coaching challenges had an interesting interaction with the process of relationship, often facilitating the deepening of the relationship or, at times, appearing to slow the development of relationship down. Finally, coaches' view of their relational role seemed to shift in line with the process of relationship as well as interacting with their coaching approach. Outside influences on the child influenced coaches' perceptions of the relational dynamic, affecting role positioning and interacting with the process of relationship. This aspect of role positioning helps to acknowledge that each of the child - coach relationships explored in this study exists in a different context and as such, is uniquely impacted by external factors.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter introduces a model relating to the journey of the child - coach relationship, explored in this study. The phases of the model, relating first to the process of relationship and then to the factors impacting upon its development, are examined. Relevant research is discussed and additional contributions to the understanding of the process of the child - coach relationship are highlighted. Limitations of the research are put forward and future recommendations around the support and development of the child - coach relationship are made, before the section is concluded.

6.1 The Child – Coach Model of relationship

The findings of this research enabled the formation of the Child – Coach Model. This model captures the process of the child – coach relationship, based within one TLG EI centre, and the factors found to interact with its development (Figure 2).
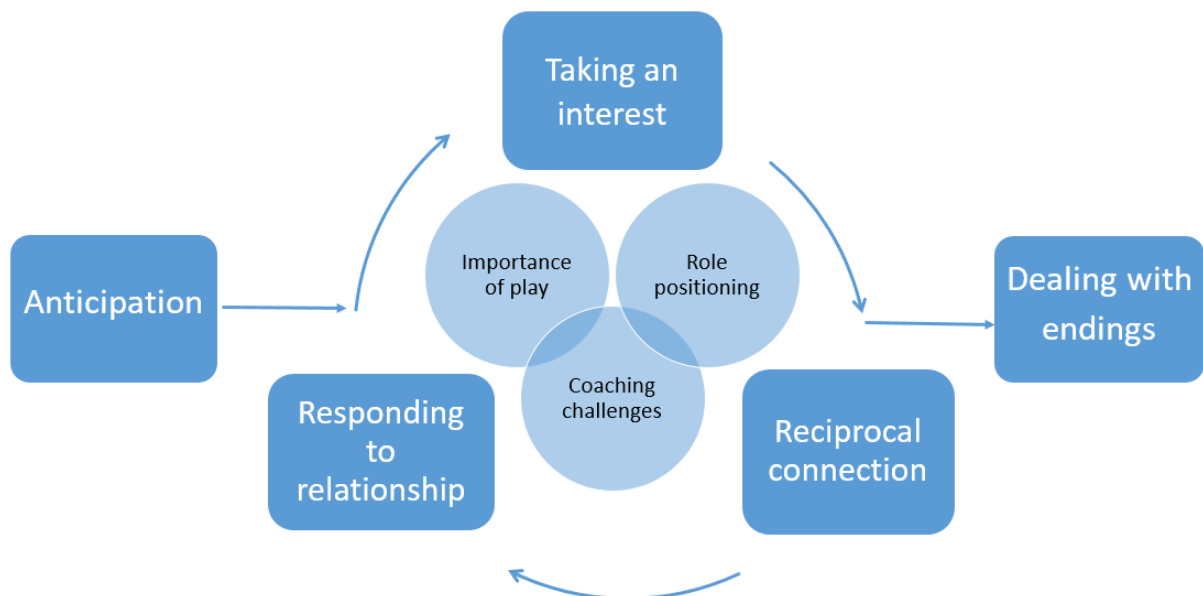
Figure 2: The Child - Coach Model of Relationship

A model is 'an attempt to recreate, in physical or symbolic form, the relationships alleged to exist among the objects or forces being investigated' (Barnlund, 1970,

p.44). In order to capture the existence of a relationship between the phases of this model, the concept of journey is replaced with that of process. The process of this relationship was found to consist of five interlinked phases that interacted with three distinct factors, each element of which is explored later in this chapter.

Broadly, the Child – Coach Model can be seen to relate to other models of relationship. An overarching feature of all models, describing the process of relationship, is that the 'relational actions, feelings, and communication behaviour of the participants change over time' (Avtgis, West and Anderson, 1998, p.281). Knapp's (1978) ten stage model of relationship captures five stages of 'coming together' from which, parallels to the Child – Coach Model can be drawn. There is a particular focus in Knapp's model on the beginning stages where information is exchanged, similar to the phase of 'taking an interest'. Knapp's model then focuses on the exchange of commonalities, before people feel able to inquire about and reveal more personal feelings and experiences, developing a mutual affection and then a bond. The Child – Coach Model captures similar aspects of relational experience, however, suggests that a reciprocal connection is established before children reveal more personal feelings.

Reciprocal interactions relate to the process of attunement, captured within Bowlby's attachment theory (1988), where the importance of being aware and developing harmony are highlighted. This phase of the relational process relates to the next, where children and coaches are found to respond to their relationship. The responsivity of coaches to children's needs, indicative of attunement, was captured, whilst children were found to experience feelings of value and support, and were able to open up. Children were also found to learn from their relationship, tending to report changes in their relationships with others. This finding is in line with research

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referring to the formation of a secondary attachment where internal working models of reference are shifted and more caring behaviours towards others develop. The Child – Coach Model helps to situate experiences akin to attunement and secondary attachment within a wider model that captures children's and coaches' initial experiences of relationship, its formation and subsequent deepening, as well as its ending. Additionally, the model can be seen to relate to Bronfenbrenner's work as it highlights the importance of proximal processes, such as a child – coach relationship, in driving change in other areas of the child's context.

In line with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) work, which states that children are active agents within their relationships and context, the model helps to capture the bi-directional nature of the child - coach relationship, as both children and coaches were found to respond to the relationship. The role of context, strongly emphasised in Bronfenbrenner's work, is also highlighted, as the model's circularity captures the relationship's response to difficult moments related to external influences. Through this aspect of the model the importance of taking an interest, developing a new shared understanding and providing opportunities to demonstrate acceptance, trust and positive regard, is highlighted as vital in helping to strengthen the relationship. Cairn's (2002) phrase 'learn the child' helps to explain the circularity of this model, as coaches, in particular, return to the relational phase, 'taking an interest', and build upon their understanding of the child. The model's portrayal of interactive factors draws from a wide range of psychological theory and research, including the use of play (Landreth, 2013), the role of critical moments (De Haan, 2008) and the impact of context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It helps to draw these findings together and relates them to the process of the child – coach relationship, examined within this

research, producing a number of recommendations to strengthen other child - coach relationships and enable better outcomes for children on TLG's EI programme.

6.2 The process of the coach – child relationship

The model portrays five phases of the child - coach relationship thought to be experienced by the coaches and children that took part in this research. Each phase is discussed in light of the coaching literature, in order to gain an understanding of its role in the process of relationship and inform the practice of coaches, EPs and TLG.

6.2.1 Anticipation

This aspect of the model recognises coaches' and children's experiences at the beginning of the relationship, capturing their anticipation of what is to come and specifically, their feelings of apprehension and hope. Previous research identified feelings of apprehension from the coachee perspective at the beginning of the relationship, and indicated that such feelings tended to be short lived (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007). Coach apprehension related to De Haan's (2008) work regarding coach doubt, which specifically addressed coaches' discomfort and tension at the beginning of the relationship. This research supports previous findings concerning initial apprehension and indicates its universal nature within coaching relationships.

No specific references were found within the coaching literature with regards to hope, a notable contrast to findings within counselling research. Counselling research indicates that hope is linked to identity and that counsellors' hopes tend to play an even greater part in coachee's outcomes than their own hopes (Larsen & Stege, 2012; Larsen, Stege, Edey, and Ewasiw, 2014; Coppock, Owen, Zagarskas, and Schmidt, 2010). The findings of this research provide an additional insight into the coaching field with regards to hope, indicating the importance of hope when

working with children vulnerable to SEMHD. In this study, children's hopes tended to be limited to changes they would like to see in their behaviour. Based on counselling literature, this may imply that their identity was based on their perceived difficulties or deficits, indicating the need for coaches to establish alternative hopes, to reduce children's feelings of personal failing. Coaches tended to express a wider range of hopes, indicating that coach hope, like that of counsellors, is important in the successful development of relationship. Due to the new nature of these findings, there is a need to further research the impact of hope on coaching relationships and outcomes for children with SEMHD.

6.2.2 Taking an interest

This aspect of the model correlates with research suggesting that relationship provides a starting block for the coaching process, as it enables coachees to feel comfortable quickly in the coaching situation (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007). Coaches' wide ranging interests in children at the beginning of the relationship, enabled them to build rapport and explained the swift reduction in children's initial unease. There are similarities here to the focus on problem free talk, promoted by solution – focused practices (Smith, 2005). Talk, focusing on a child's likes and affirming experiences, creates a positive start to a solution focused process and communicates to a child that 'there is more to them than just the problem' (NSPCC, 2014, p. 17). Coaches' attempts to know children and not their problem was found to be particularly important for the children, vulnerable to SEMHD, included in this research.

Contrary to the idea of relationship providing a starting point to the coaching process this study found that 'taking an interest' helped to build rapport and familiarity from which the relationship progressed alongside, or perhaps with, the coaching process.

Additional to the literature, this research found that children took an interest in their coach early on in the relational process. This possibly stemmed from children's anxieties regarding who their coach was as well as general curiosity. Children's interest and curiosity was experienced positively by coaches and seemed to reduce coaches' initial anxiety as they moved from a focus on the unknown to the child themselves, developing feelings of acceptance and empathy towards them, explored within the next phase of this process.

Another addition to the coaching literature, is the cyclical nature of the relational model for this child – coach relationship. Taking an interest was found to play an additional role in the process of relationship during difficult moments, where anxiety or tension was experienced. It also played an important role when children opened up to their coach. At these times, taking an interest was not only, once again, linked to reducing anxiety and tension, but also to coaches' desire to meet children's needs, seeking to further their understanding and make sure children felt heard; a factor found to strengthen the relationship. These findings help to demonstrate the interwoven nature of relational experiences, and the importance of this phase when working with children with SEMHD.

6.2.3 Reciprocal connection

In this phase of the model, acceptance, trust, understanding and an affectionate regard for one another were generated between the coach and child through their interactions with one another. This relates to Anderson, Feldman, and Minstrell's (2014), understanding of 'relational trust' generated between people, rather than being related to personal attributes. Previous findings have suggested the importance of mutuality, where coaches and coachees reciprocate to each other's relational advances, developing a sense of trust, respect and liking for the other, as

well as a growing co-operative, collaborative and a non-evaluative stance towards the other (Knoche, Kuhn, and Eum's, 2013; Jowett, Kanakoglou, and Passmore, 2012; Bercovici, 2014; Schmidt, 2003; McGatha, 2008;).

Although the value of reciprocity has been suggested by the findings of previous coaching research, this research helps to understand its overarching importance in the development of relationship. The exploration of concurrent relational experiences over time, enabled a richer understanding of the role of reciprocity, perceived to relate to the psychodynamic idea of attunement described as 'being in harmony; being aware of and responsive to another' (Catlett, n.d., 'Understanding anxious attachment, para. 2). The role of understanding was of particular importance to this phase. Contrary to previous research, where there is a focus upon *feeling* understood, this research captured children and coaches perceived understanding of the other. This suggests that this phase incorporates the beginnings of attunement, whereby there is an awareness of the other, reciprocity of approach towards one another but not yet a response to the relationship. This is captured in Jowett, Kanakoglou, and Passmore's (2012) discussion regarding the reciprocated feelings of 'liking', similar to 'affectionate regard' in this research;

> 'The existence of these feelings seemed to be key in establishing the kind of emotional bond that is necessary for creating a safe and more personal environment within which the coachee can develop and flourish' (p. 190).

This research helps to broaden Jowett, Kanakoglou, and Passmore's (2012) discussion. The findings highlight the role of reciprocity, demonstrated in child – coach interactions involving acceptance, trust, understanding and affectionate regard, in enabling responsivity, captured in the next relational phase.

The final element to this phase of relationship was the importance of collaboration in enabling reciprocal interactions. This highlighted the importance of opportunities for children and coaches to work together to overcome obstacles and strongly related to the facilitative use of play in strengthening relationship. Time, seen as vital in Bronfenbrenner's work on human development, also seemed to be an important feature in children's and coaches' collaborative experiences, suggesting that a shared past helped to support the development of attunement between a coach and a child vulnerable to SEMHD.

6.2.4 Responding to relationship

This phase of the model captured the outcomes of a deepening connection; the responses coaches and children made to their bond with another. The responsivity captured in this phase helps to affirm the establishment of attunement between a coach and child, seen as developing in the previous relational phase. Attunement has been found to be related to secondary attachment, in that an adult, 'who is available, attuned and responsive to a child's needs…establishes a secure attachment for that child' (Catlett, n.d.) providing them with a strong foundation from which the child can explore the world and learn.

Previous research has captured, in part, the response to a relationship that is perceived to be of a good 'quality', noting that coachees experienced feelings of support and the development of an open relationship (Schmidt, 2003). This involved 'letting their guard down', 'sharing sensitive information' (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007, p.171) and discussing their fears and anxieties (Wales, 2002). Such findings were very similar to children's responses to relationship captured in this research as 'opening up', and 'feeling supported' and 'valued'. Previous findings have not, however, captured coaches' response to relationship, although coachees have been

found to value coach behaviours that supported them in managing their emotions and enabled them to experience their relationship as a safe environment (Wales, 2002; Passmore, 2010).

In this research, the exploration of both coach and child views over time enabled a far greater understanding of responsivity within this relationship. The responsivity of coaches to children's needs, through their relational interactions, was a key finding in this research and helps to support the existence of attunement between coach and child. In previous research, coachees have valued coach behaviours that 'held' their emotions but researchers have failed to explore why such behaviours arise, seemingly making the assumption, that these behaviours occur as separate from the relational interaction. This research suggests that, although conscious attempts are made by coaches to put children at ease, coach behaviours that help to meet children's needs for a safe space, attention, control and self-worth, are brought about by the experience of the relationship itself. It is as though, through interactions over time, coaches attune to children's needs, enabling coaches to respond.

Additional to previous findings, regarding coachees' responsivity to relationship, children in this study were found to learn from their interactions with their coach and generalise this learning to their approach to other relationships. The individuality of this finding suggests its particular relevance to this group of children, suggesting that they were in particular need of a good relationship model from which to develop their pre-existing relationships, aligned to social learning theory (Bandura 1977). Arguably, for some children, this learning could also indicate the formation of a secure secondary attachment with their coach. Attachment theory postulates that children are more likely to be able to learn from others, explore their surroundings

and try new things, when in a containing and secure relationship with an adult (Bomber, 2008).

Although unlikely to be the case for every child included in this study, it seems that for some children, this relationship offered an experience of a secure secondary attachment and a base from which to explore. This is interesting as this coaching role was far less intensive than 'key adults', used in schools for children with specific attachment difficulties (Bomber, 2008). Tentatively, therefore, these findings suggest that for those vulnerable to SEMHD, the early identification and provision of an adult in the coaching context may enable a secure secondary attachment to form, alongside the coaching process. The developmental impact of a secure secondary attachment includes a number of positive social, emotional and cognitive outcomes (Greenhalgh, 2002; Bomber, 2008).

6.2.5 Dealing with endings

Endings, like beginnings, are common place in psychotherapeutic thinking (Youell, 2006) but have often been a neglected topic within the coaching relationship (Cox, 2010). In this model, the phase 'Dealing with endings' helps to contribute to this field, highlighting the importance of considering endings when participating in this child – coach relationship. Youell (2006), when discussing the learning relationship between teachers and their students, remarks upon the striking similarity between the anxieties experienced by both teachers and their students at the end of a learning interaction. Similarly, in the current findings, child – coach pairings could be seen to experience comparable difficult emotions, differing between the pairs from feeling deflated and sad, to feeling inadequate and out of control. The shared nature of these feelings helps to acknowledge the shared connection and attunement existing between coach and child.

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This study highlighted the differing experiences of child – coach parings at the end of their relationship. For some, this was influenced by the child's or coach's context but for most, the experience of ending was affected by the preparation and management of this time frame. Cox (2010), claimed that novice coaches have a tendency to place greater emphasis on the initial sessions and how to start 'right' rather than how to end well. The findings of this study indicated that many coaches felt unsure of how to 'end well', feeling uncertain as to when and how to approach the subject of endings and tending to focus on the ending of the coaching process alone. The wide range of experiences between child - coach parings helps to illustrate the uncertainty of approach at this time and supports one coach's recommendation that further guidance is needed in the management of this time.

6.3 Interacting factors

Interacting factors are captured within the centre of the relational model depicting their separateness from the relational process but their interactive role in relational development. Each interacting factor is discussed in light of the coaching literature in order to gain an understanding of their impact on the process of relationship and inform the practice of coaches, EPs and TLG.

6.3.1 Importance of play

There is a large body of research concerning the importance of play in the development of relationships with parents, teachers and counsellors. In support of this current research, previous findings advocate play's importance in enabling expression, control, enjoyment and improving children's ability to cope (Landreth, 2013; Raver & Knitzer, 2002; Youell, 2006; Winnicott, 1953). Apart from an intervention which uses coaching specifically through the use of play (The Incredible Years), there has been very little emphasis on play in the coaching field. Additionally,

research regarding The Incredible Years has focused predominantly on outcomes, only hypothesising about the importance of play in relational development (Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2009; Webster-Stratton, 2016). The current research, therefore, provides an important insight into the importance of play in the development of a coaching relationship with children vulnerable to, or with, SEMHD.

In this research, play was found to facilitate the development of relationship by providing opportunities for collaboration, acceptance, self-expression and success, seeming to have a role in raising children's self-esteem and worth and enabling them to feel valued and able to open up to their coach. The relationship was also found to inform the use of play as, in the later stages of the relational process, when children were more open to learn from their coach, play provided an environment whereby children could observe their coach manage feelings of loss and failure. Additionally, play was used in the provision of containing experiences and continuity, by the use of transitional objects.

Most of the perceptions, informing the interactive connection between play and relationship, were elicited from children. This research, therefore, helps to elevate the views of children vulnerable to SEMHD, and establishes what they deem as supportive to the process of their relationship with a coach. Three of the children within this study entered secondary school, over the yearlong intervention, indicating plays continuing importance at later developmental stages for children with or vulnerable to SEMHD.

6.3.2 Coaching challenges

Coach challenges included personal doubts, difficult moments and logistical difficulties. Difficult moments (where coaches encountered their own or their

coachee's discomfort) and their interaction with the process of relationship, have been widely acknowledged within the coaching literature (De Haan 2008; Knoche, Kuhn, and Eum, 2013; Anderson, Feldman, and Minstrell, 2014). De Haan (2008) specifically identified such moments as 'breakthrough moments' whereby coaches were able to explore 'deeper layers and ways of viewing and assessing things'. De Haan (2008) also suggested that such moments were accompanied by coach doubt, as he noted that coaches seemed to ask themselves; "Who am I to think I can do this work?", "Do I understand, how do I respond, and is it good enough?" and "Am I doing it right?".

This research supports previous findings concerning the impact of difficult moments on the developing coach relationship. In this research, difficult moments were found to present coaches with an opportunity to reflect, sometimes alongside the child, enabling new insights to be gained and the relationship to be strengthened. This is not a new finding within the field of coaching, however, indicates the relevance of difficult moments when coaching children vulnerable to SEMHD. In this study, coaches experienced a number of overtly challenging situations, often more prevalent than situations captured in adult based coaching research. The findings of this study re-frame these difficulties as opportunities for relational development. Such an emphasis may support coaches to make best use of such moments, and avoid the self-doubt and blame that prevents difficult moments from being used to strengthen relationship.

Doubts, as in previous research, were found in this study to be a natural part of coaches' experience. Additional to De Haan's findings, however, coaches in this research seemed to be asking "What difference do I make?", "What is my specific contribution?" and "How should I work within the school context". These findings

suggest that working in the school context causes coaches to feel additional pressure to achieve specific outcomes and prove their worth to others and themselves. In this research, coaches frequently experienced personal doubts during difficult moments. Additional to previous research, however, when coaches failed to see past their doubts during these moments, it was found to be potentially debilitating to coaches' ability to reflect and use the opportunity to develop the relationship.

Logistical challenges had an additive effect on the challenges faced by coaches, tending, in particular, to reduce time that coaches and children spent together and therefore increase the number of difficult moments experienced. Lost time was the only difficult moment that children referred to, advocating the importance of this finding and the impact that it had on the children within this study.

6.3.3 Role positioning

Previous research has addressed the role positioning of coaches working with teachers in the school context, capturing the 'teeter – totter of coaching' along the teacher – administrator continuum as coaches, and others, adjusted to the new relationship (Anderson, Feldman, and Minstrell's, 2014). In the same way, some coaches in this study implied a teacher – parent continuum and frequently described what their relationship was not like, commonly positioning themselves as the 'in – between' person. With prolonged focus on the experience of relationship, however, this study was able to add to the research concerning coaches' perceived positioning, both in regards to their relationship and their coaching role. The findings of this research suggest that as this child - coach relationship developed, coaches' perception of their relational position shifted, corroborating the existence of a relational process. This shift in relational positioning seemed to be linked to changes

in the coaching approach, as different methods tended to be applied over the course of the relational process. This inference tentatively connects relational and coaching processes, put forward by others within the wider coaching field (Wilkins, 2000). This inference, therefore, supports the claim that coaching purpose, process and relationship are intertwined, supporting the importance of focusing on the relational development within a coaching intervention, for improving outcomes for children.

Contextual and individual factors were found to cause a shift in the relational dynamic, leading to shifts in coaches' relational position and coaching approach, and impacting upon the process of the relationship. On an individual basis coaches often perceived children to develop social and emotional strengths over the year, possibly due to their experience of attunement and subsequent secondary attachment. Such perceptions caused a shift in the relational dynamic and instigated the use of different coaching tools, for instance using play less to support expression. With regards to context, findings illustrated the complexities inherent in developing a coaching relationship, with children vulnerable to SEMHD, highlighting the often challenging social, educational and political contexts in which those vulnerable to SEMHD frequently reside. The acknowledgement of the impact of external influences on this coaching relationship differs from current research in this field, highlighting its likely importance for children with SEMHD. Such findings relate strongly to Bronfenbrenner's work regarding his bioecological theory of human development, which acknowledges the powerful interplay between an individual and the context in which they reside. In his later work, Bronfenbrenner gives additional emphasis to the role of personal characteristics in human development (Bronfenbrenner 1995). In this regard, the findings within this theme emphasise the

role of both the 'person' and the 'context' elements of Bronfenbrenner's work in the development of this child - coach relationship.

6.4 Strengths and limitations of the study

When establishing the worth and credibility of qualitative research, issues, which may have negatively affected or invalidated the research, should be openly discussed and reviewed (Cresswell 2012; Yardley, 2007).

6.4.1 Commitment and Rigour

The longitudinal design, requiring researcher commitment over the course of a year, enabled prolonged engagement and thick descriptions of the relational experience, known to increase the credibility of findings (Cresswell, 2012) as well as produce a rich picture of phenomenon.

The completeness of the data collection and analysis help to support the rigour of research. The use of a semi-structured interview approach allowed children and coaches to discuss issues most relevant to their experience, whilst also covering common ground. This enabled new and unexpected aspects of their concurrent experiences to emerge. As the duration period of the relationship varied slightly for different pairings, the focus on concurrent experiences may have caused aspects of participant's experiences to be missed, particularly with regards to reflections concerning the beginning and end of relationships. Braun and Clark (2006) note, the 'keyness' of a theme is not dependent on its frequency but whether it captures something important to the overall research question. Perceptions supporting themes concerning the beginning and end of the relationship, therefore, may not be as frequent, but are understood as crucial to the understanding of the process of relationship.

The clearly demarcated use of thematic analysis demonstrated the rigour of the analysis completed, whilst recognising the different ways the phenomenon of this relationship could be perceived or understood, in line with the epistemological and ontological assumptions of this research.

6.4.2 Sample

The transferability of these findings is restricted by the representativeness and size of the sample. Although an arguably sufficient number of participants for an exploratory study, only six children and six coaches from one TLG EI centre were interviewed in this research. The relatively small sample size of the study, however, enabled a deeper understanding of context and increased familiarisation, thought to support the transferability and credibility of results (Denscombe, 1998; Shenton, 2004). The longitudinal design also allowed for the collection of 31 interviews adhering to guidance provided by Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) and suggesting saturation, in regards to participants' experiences of the relationship in this context.

Triangulation with parent and teacher views, may have allowed for alternative perspectives and considerations concerning the child – coach relationship. This, however, would not have helped in answering the research questions, concerned with the process of relationship, as experienced by those within it.

Of the seven pairings only one child was female and only one coach was male, causing the respective views of these groups to be under-represented and advocating further research concerning the role of gender in the process of relationship. Future research may also need to incorporate a sample with a greater ethnic diversity as, given the predominantly white - British population in which this

research took place, the transferability of these results to more ethnically diverse populations should be questioned.

6.4.3 Researcher and Respondent bias

Though sustained effort was made to reduce participant anxiety, it must be considered that they might have found it difficult to be completely open and honest with the interviewer (BPS, 2002). Children may also have attributed additional authority to the interviewer, due to their age and therefore may have felt less able to share difficult experiences with me. Particular effort was therefore made for the participation of children, including using participatory methods for data collection and differentiating all information. As the sample was small and based in one setting, participants were made aware of the possibility of being recognised, which may have impacted upon their response. Transparency, however, was considered essential and it was hoped that this fact placed participants at ease. Every effort was made to help maintain participant anonymity, including choosing gender neutral names to protect the identity of the one female child.

I was alert throughout the research that my previous role within a TLG secondary setting could impact upon my understanding of findings and impact the behaviour of participants. This was addressed in a number of ways. Firstly, the research was carried out in a different local authority to the one I had previously worked. Secondly, I had had no previous involvement with those I interviewed, and my previous position was not discussed with participants. Thirdly, I reflected on my role and position to minimise unjustified interpretations or unwarranted selective attention throughout the data collection and analysis. I was aware of my previous affiliation to the charity and my feelings of support for their work, but used these feelings to motivate me to

produce a rigorous and credible piece of research so that processes could be refined and better outcomes achieved for children.

6.5 Directions for future research

There is much scope for future research with regards to coaching children with SEMHD and the impact and process of relationship. In light of the findings of this research, the impact and use of hope in the coaching relationship would be an interesting area for future research, as very little is currently known about its role in coaching relationships and outcomes. Further investigation of children's and coaches' experiences of beginnings and endings of relationships would also be of interest, as the concurrent exploration of experience in this study sometimes prevented these views from being captured. The use of self-directed multi-modal methods to avoid damaging the child – coach relationship at these, often difficult times, may be a way of gaining children's accurate reflections. Further research is needed to understand children's experiences of difficult moments, an aspect of the relational process frequently experienced by coaches but mentioned only rarely by children. Future research would add value by investigating whether children experience difficult moments in the same way as coaches, inferring the need for more specific questioning and exploration in this area.

This research helps to make tentative links between relational and coaching processes. Further investigation into this area, with regards to children with SEMHD, is particularly important, as this link would help to highlight the need for more sensitive measures concerning the outcomes of coaching, including a focus on relational impact and secondary attachments. This may also be relevant for other helping relationships with children with SEMHD.

Finally, the use and impact of the proposed model within this research could be an area for future research. The model could be used to support coaches within training, peer and one – to – one supervision and to help them consider different elements of their relationship as it unfolds. Coaches' experiences of this process and the impact that this has on children, would be an interesting direction for future research and a positive outcome of this study.

6.6 Summary of findings

This study captured the process of relationship between a child and coach on the TLG EI programme, included within this research, as well as the factors impacting upon this process. The findings helped to produce a model, depicting a process of relationship with three interacting factors. The model provides a concise overview of the relational process, enabling coaches to engage with the process, known to benefit outcomes for children. It provides EPs with a model that helps to inform their practice, with regards to supporting coaches, and increase their confidence to work alongside coaches working in schools with children with SEMHD. Finally, it provides TLG with a model, from which training and further opportunities to engage with the process of relationship, can be developed.

The specific aspects of the model provide a detailed insight into the different phases of the relational process. The beginning of the process helps to highlight and acknowledge the expectations, hopes and apprehensions experienced at the start of the relationship, drawing attention to the need to engage with these emotions. Next, the model highlights the role of 'taking an interest' in the other person in the development of relationship; thus showing the value of this stage at the beginning of the relationship. Its continued value, in moments of difficulty and when additional information is revealed, helps to explain the circularity of the model. The model also

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captures the mutuality of the relational experience and the beginnings of attunement between a coach and a child. In this phase, children and coaches were found to reciprocate their responses to one another, building their acceptance, trust, understanding and an affectionate regard for one another, through their collaborative interactions. In time, coaches and children were seen to respond to their relational experiences, demonstrating the presence of attunement and, in some cases, a secure secondary attachment. Coaches were found to attempt to meet children's needs through their interactions and children were found to respond to the relationship by opening up, feeling supported and valued and learning from their relationship with their coach. Finally, the model highlights coaches' and children's responses to endings, emphasising the confusing and difficult feelings of this time and advocating the need for support for both coaches and children.

The model also captures three interacting factors, providing a very useful insight for coaches and others working with children with SEMHD. The value of play for these children was pronounced, and was found to support the development of the relationship as well as support the relationship to bring about change for a child. Challenges within the relationship were found to bring about opportunities in which the relationship could be strengthened, a valuable learning point for coaches and others, working with children with SEMHD, to recognise. A coach's role was found to shift in response to changes in their relationship with a child, as well as changes within the child's context and character. This finding acknowledges the complex interplay between numerous factors within a child's life, and the importance of remaining flexible and open to working within children's current context.

Overall, the findings of this research highlight the subtle, yet important changes in the relational process, which seemed to have a number of beneficial outcomes for

this group of children, indicating the value in providing long term relational interventions for children vulnerable to SEMHD. The identification of relational phases and interactive factors enable a deeper engagement and understanding of the process of relationship taking place between a coach and child with SEMHD, and provide a frame work from which to support its development. More widely, the findings of this research tentatively indicate the social and emotional value of secure secondary attachments as an early intervention tool for children vulnerable to SEMHD; an area that, as Ainsworth (1989) identified over two decades ago, continues to require further research.

6.7 Recommendations

6.7.1 Recommendations for coaches

The model, provides an insight into the process of the child - coach relationship, explored within this research. It has been argued that an understanding of how a relationship progresses enables coaches to support the development of their coaching relationship, and therefore, improve the outcomes of coaching itself (De Haan, 2008). By illuminating the relational process and interacting factors, the model provides a lens, through which coaches could consciously engage and understand the development of their relationship. This should enable coaches to consider and modify their interactions throughout the relational process, in order to best support relational development, and bring about better outcomes for children with SEMHD. Specific recommendations for coaches are captured in Table 6 alongside the likely outcomes based on this research's findings.

Table 7: Recommendations for coaches

Areas for consideration	How could this be achieved?	Outcomes based on findings
Enabling a time where coach and child can take an interest in each other.	Coaches could use joint play activities that allow both coach and child to ask and learn about each other.	Child and coach anxiety will be reduced.
Being mindful about the use of play and its benefits in building relationship with children.	Coaches could use play to create opportunities for collaboration and working together.	There will be an increase of reciprocal interactions supporting relational development and outcomes for children.
Preparing children for the ending of the relationship.	Coaches could use a timetable to map out sessions clearly and reflect on endings in advance.	Coaches and children will be able to better manage their difficult feelings at the end of their relationship.
Using coaching within the parameters of play.	Coaches could comment on children's social and emotional successes within play.	Children will be able to better regulate their emotions and persist in their efforts to manage difficult situations.
Non-judgementally reflecting upon children's	Coaches could use statements beginning with	Children and coaches will be able to better manage

experiences of difficult moments together with them, as well as on own.	'I wonder…' to explore difficult moments alongside children.	their difficult feelings and the child – coach relationship will deepen.

6.7.2 Recommendations for EPs

The findings of this research provide an insight into the formation and growth of relationship for those in a position to support its development. EPs, well placed in the school system to work flexibly and creatively with those supporting children (Gaskell and Leatherhead, 2009), could use the findings to improve the use of coaching in schools for children with SEMHD. The model would enable EPs to assume a relational focus, providing them with a way to frame training and supervision for coaches, within the primary school setting. With a historically acknowledged 'strategic vantage point' within school systems (Loxely, 1978), EPs are best placed to extend and support coaching practices with children with SEMHD. The model could be used to extend coaching practice, by helping to create specific focus on the different aspects of the relational process and the features that support it.

EPs could use the model to introduce and highlight the importance of relational beginnings, dealing with apprehension and acknowledging hope, building reciprocity, developing attunement and dealing with relational endings. The model could also be used to introduce and discuss the use of play, the opportunities that challenges provide and the role of context for those children vulnerable to SEMHD. The findings help to recognise and value the importance of time and suggest that a coaching relationship may provide children, vulnerable SEMHD, with an opportunity to form a

secure secondary attachment in the school environment, potentially raising their social and emotional well-being.

All these features are of interest to EP's developing role in therapeutic work with CYP with SEMHD (Rait, Monsen and Squires, 2010; Atkinson, Corban and Templeton, 2011), and provide EPs with an opportunity to reflect further on their own and other's practice within this field. Specific recommendations for EPs with regards to this coaching relationship are captured in Table 7, alongside the likely outcomes based on this research's findings.

Table 8: Recommendations for EPs

Areas for consideration	How could this be achieved?	Outcomes based on findings
Adopting a supervisory role to help explore and understand difficult moments and difficult endings.	Individual or group based supervision. Work discussion groups could be a useful tool (Jackson, 2008)	Coaches will be able to better manage their difficult feelings and doubts, so the relationship can be strengthened and children supported.
Supporting coaches in noticing how they meet their child's needs and reflecting on this alongside the child. For example;	Training regarding the use of the psychodynamic ideas of attunement and attachment.	Coaches will become more attuned to the needs of children and the role of their interactions in meeting needs. Children's social and emotional development will be better supported.

'I wonder whether you enjoyed being in control of the time today, its nice feeling in control sometimes'.		
Improving coaches' use of play.	Training regarding the use of the child-directed play interactions.	The child – coach relationship will develop, supporting social and emotional outcomes.

6.7.3 Recommendations for TLG

The findings of this research provide an insight into the child - coach relationship for those central to the delivery and development of TLG's EI programme. The model provides a succinct overview of the relational process, and could be used within the initial training of coaches to address the different stages of relationship. This would help to normalise the experiences coaches are likely to encounter, relieving initial apprehension and self-doubt. The findings advocate the use of more regular peer supervision within which the model could be used as a tool to support coach reflections, regarding their relationship, known to improve outcomes for coachees (De Haan, 2008). The model could also be a useful tool during times of one – to - one supervision where coaches require support in understanding their interactions and relational experiences. Specific recommendations for TLG with regards to this coaching relationship are captured in Table 8.

Table 9: Recommendations for TLG

Areas for consideration	How could this be achieved?	Outcomes based on findings
Addressing children's initial apprehensions.	TLG could include activities regarding children's worries in their initial interview	Children will be able to better manage and deal with their initial apprehensions.
Providing a space for coaches to discuss and normalise apprehensions and doubts, reflect on difficult moments and endings, and build hopefulness.	TLG could set up and monitor regular peer, group and individual supervision.	Coaches will be able to better manage and deal with their relational experiences and beliefs. Helping to deepen relationship and support children.
Developing new materials to support different phases of the relationship. - Hope building - Taking an interest - Collaboration over time - Endings	TLG could develop; - Initial activities to broaden children's hopes. - Problem free materials from which coaches and children can learn about each other. - Collaborative activities such as a road map of	Coaches' and children's relationship will be better supported allowing for better relational and coaching outcomes.

	coaches' and children's time together. - Activates or projects that deal with endings of relationship.	
Supporting lines of communication in schools.	TLG could support coaches in meeting with school management, both in primary and secondary schools.	Coaches will have less doubts regarding school processes, leading to better outcomes for children.

6.8 Conclusion

The emphasis on the importance of relationship for those with SEMHD is widely acknowledged. Understanding and interacting with the process of the relationship is understood to impact on outcomes for those within a coaching relationship. The findings of this research, therefore, provide a framework from which to engage with a coaching relationship and enable its development and subsequent improved impact on children with SEMHD.

The findings of this research also highlight the importance of a number of interacting factors, providing specific recommendations for the role of EPs in supporting coaches' use of play and supervision, as well as capturing the role of context and individual characteristics. Recommendations for schools and TLG to commission further EP involvement are made, with regards to training and supervisory input. Finally, the identification of the strengths and limitations of this research process help to highlight future research directions, which would build on the insights of this research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Initial interview schedules (Pre – piloting)

Behaviour Coach Interview Proforma

Beginning of coaching

1. *Can you tell me what led you to become a behaviour coach?*

   - *Have these experiences impacted on your role now? How?*

2. *Can you tell me about your role?*

   - *What do you like or feel the strengths are of your role?*

   - *What do you perceive to be the challenges in your role?*

   - *What are the skills a coach needs to have?*

3. *How has it been going so far?*

   - *What type of things do they enjoy?*

   - *Are there things you have done that work really well?*

   - *Have there been any challenges?*

   - *How important is home school relationship?*

4. *How is this relationship developing?*

   - *How would you describe the relationship you have developed?*

   - *Are there things you have done that work really well when developing relationship?*

   - *Have there been any challenges?*

5. *How do you feel you are seen by the child you work with?*
   - *How do you hope to be seen?*

   - *Examples?*

6. *What do you think the child gains from this coaching relationship?*

   - *Do you think you will have a lasting impact?*

7. *What do you feel you gain from this coaching relationship?*

Is there anything else that is important about the coach and child relationship that I have not asked you about?

Middle and End of coaching.

1. *Can you tell me a bit about what it's been like being a coach?*

   - *How has your role developed?*

   - *What have been the challenges in your role?*

   - *What are the skills a coach needs to have?*

2. *How has it been going?*

   - *As a result of your support, what development have you noticed in your mentee?*

   - *Has there been unexpected areas of development? Examples?*

   - *What type of things do they enjoy?*

   - *Are there things you have done that work really well?*

   - *Have there been any challenges?*

   - *How important is home school relationship?*

3. *How is this relationship developing?*

   - *How would you describe the relationship you have developed?*

   - *Are there things you have done that work really well when developing relationship?*

   - *Have there been any challenges?*

   - *Has there been any surprising elements to this relationship?*

   - *Is it what you had expected?*

4. *How do you feel you are seen by the child / children you work with?*

   - *Has this changed? Have there been any surprising developments?*

   - *Examples?*

5. *What do you think the child gains from this coaching relationship?*

6. *Has your perspective changed from when you began coaching?*

7. *Do you think you will have a lasting impact?*

8. *What do you feel you gain from this coaching relationship?*

Is there anything else that is important about the coach and child relationship that I have not asked you about?

Child Interview Proforma

Beginning of Coaching:

Join the session for 10 minutes.

That was so fun / interesting – thank you for letting me join you today.

1. *How did you find today's session? (using scale)*

2. *What other things have you been up to in coaching time?*

   - *What have you enjoyed so far?*

   - *Are there things you have done well at?*

3. *How much do you like meeting with (coach name)? (using scale)*

   - *What makes you like it up to (number)?*

   - *What would make it (one number higher)?*

4. *What blob or blobs do you think X is? (using blob tree)*

   - *What makes you choose that / those blobs?*

5. *What blob would you be at school?*

   - *Does meeting with (coach name) make a difference to the blob you chose?*

6. *What blob would you be at home?*

   - *Does meeting with (coach name) make a difference to the blob you chose?*

7. *Look at this cartoon picture - Is there anyone in this picture you think would enjoy or need to meet with (coach name)?*

   - *What would you say to them to help them go and meet with (coach name)?*

Middle of Coaching:

Join the session for 10 minutes.

That was so fun / interesting – thank you for letting me join you again.

1. *How have things been going in coaching since I last saw you?*

    - *What have you been up to in coaching time?*

    - *What have you enjoyed?*

    - *Are there things you have done well at?*

2. *Last time we met you told me you liked meeting X about this much (point to scale). Has this changed? How much do you like meeting with X now? (using scale)*

    - *What makes you like it up to (number)?*

    - *What would make it (one number higher)?*

3. *Last time we met we coloured in this blob for X. Has X's blob changed now? Is there another blob that we should add? (using blob tree)*

    - *What makes you choose that / those blobs?*

4. *Last time we met we coloured in this blob for you at school. Has your blob at school changed now? Is there another blob that we should add? (using blob tree)*

    - *Does meeting with (coach name) make a difference to the blob you chose?*

5. *Last time we met we coloured in this blob for you at home. Has your blob at home changed now? Is there another blob that we should add? (using blob tree)*

    - *Does meeting with (coach name) make a difference to the blob you chose?*

6. *Last time you told me this person in the cartoon classroom looked like they would enjoy / need to meet with (coach name).*

    - *Now you have met with (coach name) for longer is there anyone else or have you changed you mind?*

    - *What makes you add this child?*

    - *What would you say to them to help them go and meet (coach name)?*

End of Coaching:

Join the session for 10 minutes.

That was so fun / interesting – thank you for letting me join you again.

1. *How have things been going in coaching since I last saw you?*

   - *What have you been up to in coaching time?*

   - *What have you enjoyed?*

   - *Are there things you have done well at?*

2. *Last time we met you told me you liked meeting X about this much (point to scale). Has this changed? How much do you like meeting with X now? (using scale)*

   - *What makes you like it up to (number)?*

   - *What would make it (one number higher)?*

3. *Last time we met we coloured in this blob for X. Has X's blob changed now? Is there another blob that we should add? (using blob tree)*

   - *What makes you choose that / those blobs?*

4. *Last time we met we coloured in this blob for you at school. Has your blob at school changed now? Is there another blob that we should add? (using blob tree)*

   - *Does meeting with (coach name) make a difference to the blob you chose?*

5. *Last time we met we coloured in this blob for you at home. Has your blob at home changed now? Is there another blob that we should add? (using blob tree)*

   - *Does meeting with (coach name) make a difference to the blob you chose?*

6. *Last time you told me this person in the cartoon classroom looked like they would enjoy / need to meet with (coach name).*

   - *Now you have met with (coach name) for longer is there anyone else or have you changed you mind?*

   - *What makes you add this child?*

   - *What would you say to them to help them go to and meet with (coach name)?*

7. *I have so enjoyed coming to see you and have brought you this star because I think you have been brilliant!*

Can we write in the star what you have become great at this year…

By coming to coaching I have become great at _____.

Appendix 2: Feelings scale for children's questions
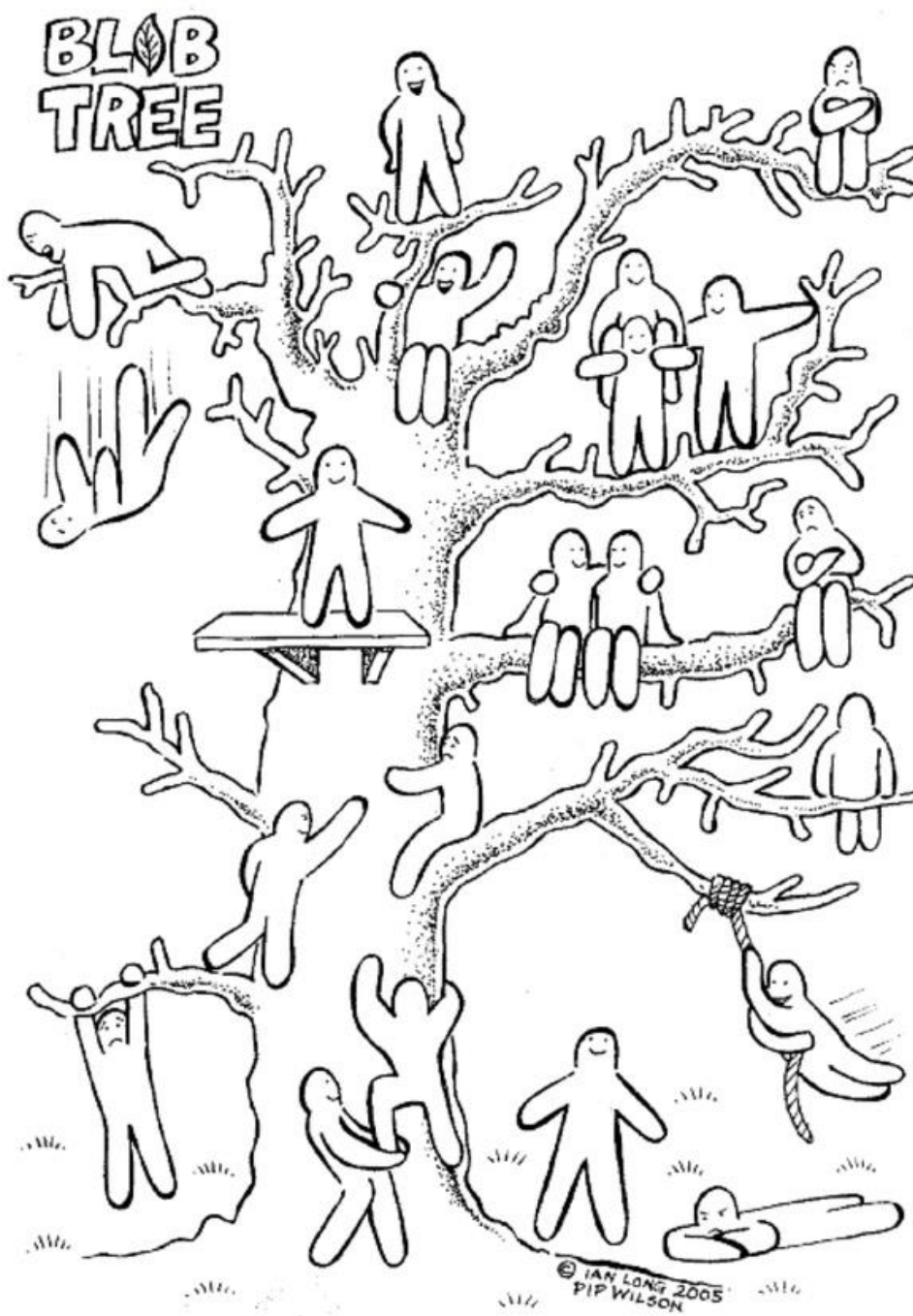
Feelings Scale

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

Appendix 3: Cartoon blobs for children's questions

Appendix 4: Cartoon classroom vignette for children's questions

Appendix 5: Interview schedules (Post – piloting)

Behaviour Coach Interview Proforma

Beginning of coaching

1. *Can you tell me what led you to become a behaviour coach?*
   - *Have these experiences impacted on your role now? How?*

2. *Can you tell me about your role?*
   - *What do you like or feel the strengths are of your role?*

   - *What do you perceive to be the challenges in your role?*

   - *What are the skills a coach needs to have?*

3. *How has it been going so far with (child's name)?*

   - *What type of things do they enjoy?*

   - *Are there things you have done that work really well?*

   - *Have there been any challenges?*

   - *How important is home school relationship?*

4. *How is this relationship developing?*

   - *How would you describe the relationship you have developed?*

   - *Are there things you have done that work really well when developing relationship?*

   - *Have there been any challenges?*

5. *How do you feel you are seen by (child's name)?*
   - *How do you hope to be seen?*

   - *Examples?*

6. *What do you think (child's name) gains from this coaching relationship?*

   - *Do you think you will have a lasting impact?*

7. *What do you feel you gain from this coaching relationship?*

Is there anything else that is important about the coach and child relationship that I have not asked you about?

Middle and End of coaching.

1. *Can you tell me a bit about what it's been like being a coach?*
   - *How has your role developed?*
   - *What have been the challenges in your role?*
   - *What are the skills a coach needs to have?*

2. *How has it been going with (child's name)?*
   - *As a result of your support, what development have you noticed in your mentee?*
   - *Has there been unexpected areas of development? Examples?*
   - *What type of things do they enjoy?*
   - *Are there things you have done that work really well?*
   - *Have there been any challenges?*
   - *How important is home school relationship?*

3. *How is this relationship developing?*
   - *How would you describe the relationship you have developed?*
   - *Are there things you have done that work really well when developing relationship?*
   - *Have there been any challenges?*
   - *Has there been any surprising elements to this relationship?*
   - *Is it what you had expected?*

4. *How do you feel you are seen by (child's name)?*
   - *Has this changed? Have there been any surprising developments?*
   - *Examples?*

5. *What do you think (child's name) gains from this coaching relationship?*

6. *Has your perspective changed from when you began coaching?*

7. *Do you think you will have a lasting impact?*

8. *What do you feel you gain from this coaching relationship?*

Is there anything else that is important about the coach and child relationship that I have not asked you about?

Child Interview Proforma

Beginning of Coaching:

Join the session for 10 minutes.

> *That was so fun / interesting – thank you for letting me join you today.*

1. *How did you find today's session? (using scale)*
2. **What other things have you been up to in coaching time?**
   - *What have you enjoyed so far?*

   - *Are there things you have done well at?*

3. *How much do you like meeting with X? (using scale)*

   - *What makes you like it up to (number)?*

   - *What would make it (one number higher)? OR* 'If it was possible to get even higher than a 10, what would make it even higher'.

4. *What blob or blobs do you think X is? (using blob tree)*

   - *What makes you choose that / those blobs?*

5. *What blob would you be at school?*

   - *Does meeting with (coach name) make a difference to the blob you chose?*

6. *What blob would you be at home?*

   - *Does meeting with (coach name) make a difference to the blob you chose?*

7. *Look at this cartoon picture.*

   - *Is there anyone in this picture you think would enjoy or need to meet with (coach name)?*

8. *Look at the child they picked and ask.*

   - *What would you say to them to help them go and meet with (coach name)?*

9. *Has meeting with (coach name) made any difference to you?*
   - *What difference have you noticed?*

   - *Has anyone noticed the difference in you? If so what have they said to you?*

Middle of Coaching:

1. *How have things been going in coaching since I last saw you?*
   - *What have you been up to in coaching time?*

   - *What have you enjoyed? Why does this work for you? What is special about it?*

   - *Are there things you have done well at?*

2. *Last time we met you told me you liked meeting X about this much (point to scale). Has this changed? How much do you like meeting with X now? (using scale)*
   - *What makes you like it up to (number)?*

   - *What would make it (one number higher)? OR 'If it was possible to get even higher than a 10, what would make it even higher'.*

3. *Last time we met we coloured in this blob for X. Has X's blob changed now? Is there another blob that we should add? (using blob tree)*

   - *What makes you choose that / those blobs?*

4. *Last time we met we coloured in this blob for you at school. Has your blob at school changed now? Is there another blob that we should add? (using blob tree)*

   - *Does meeting with (coach name) make a difference to the blob you chose?*

5. *Last time we met we coloured in this blob for you at home. Has your blob at home changed now? Is there another blob that we should add? (using blob tree)*

   - *Does meeting with (coach name) make a difference to the blob you chose?*

6. *Last time you told me this person in the cartoon classroom looked like they would enjoy / need to meet with (coach name).*

   - *Now you have met with (coach name) for longer is there anyone else or have you changed you mind?*

   - *What makes you add this child?*

   - *What would you say to them to help them go and meet with (coach name)?*

7. *Now you have met with (coach name) for a little while, do you think it has made any difference to you?*

   - *What difference have you noticed?*

   - *What difference has another person noticed? Teacher/ Parent/Carer.*

End of Coaching:

1. *How have things been going in coaching since I last saw you?*
   - *What have you been up to in coaching time?*

   - *What have you enjoyed?*

   - *Are there things you have done well at?*

2. *Last time we met you told me you liked meeting X about this much (point to scale). Has this changed? How much do you like meeting with X now? (using scale)*

   - *What makes you like it up to (number)?*

   - *What would make it (one number higher)? OR* 'If it was possible to get even higher than a 10, what would make it even higher'.

3. *Last time we met we looked at lots of different blobs*

What blob or blobs do you think X is now? (Using blob tree)

   - *What makes you choose that / those blobs?*

4. *What blob or blobs would you be at school now?*

   - *Does meeting with (coach name) make a difference to the blob / blobs you chose?*

5. *What blob would you be at home now?*

   - *Does meeting with (coach name) make a difference to the blob you chose?*

6. *Look at this cartoon picture.*

   - *Is there anyone in this picture you think would enjoy or need to meet with (coach name)?*

   - *What makes you choose this child?*

   - *What would you say to them to help them go and meet with (coach name)?*

7. *Now you have met with (coach name) for nearly a year do you think it has made any difference to you?*

   - *What difference have you noticed?*

   - *What difference has another person noticed? Teacher/ Parent/Carer.*

8. *I have so enjoyed coming to see you and have brought you this star because I think you have been brilliant!*

Can we write in the star what you have become great at this year…

This year I have become great at _____.

Appendix 6: Parental consent form

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: TLG Behaviour Coach Research

Thank you for taking a moment to read this letter.

I am delighted to tell you that Holy Trinity Weston has been selected to take part in research to support the successful delivery of a coaching programme for children. *As your child is currently engaging in a coaching programme I would very much value the opportunity to speak with them about their experiences.* I already work in schools and settings within a Local Authority, as a trainee educational psychologist, and my employment has been subject to the required safeguarding checks when working with children.

Information about the interview:

- **Three interviews** will be arranged over the course of the year and will take no longer than **20 - 25 minutes**.
- Interviews will take place for the last 20 - 25 minutes of your child's coaching session.
- Your child will be asked how they are finding the time with their coach in a child friendly manner.
- Your child **can request that they are with a known adult.**
- All of your child's interview responses will be **confidential** and the name of your child and the name of the school will not be identified in the research. Your child's data will be given a code and their name will only be known to the researcher.
- The interviews will be **recorded** using a digital recorder.
- At any time you can **withdraw** your child from the research process.
- At the end of the process, a copy of the report will be sent to Holy Trinity Weston for you to access.

If you are agreeable to this process please would you sign and return the consent for below:

I give my permission for my son/daughter to take part in the interview regarding the role of their Coach.

Please tick as relevant:
☐ I understand that my son/daughter's participation is voluntary and they are able to withdraw at any stage of the research process.
☐ I understand that the data will be anonymised and be kept confidential so will not be identifiable to the general population.
☐ I am however aware that, due to the small sample size, there is a small possibility of data being identified by someone who knows my son/daughter was in this study and knows them well.
☐ I understand that the interview will be tape-recorded but the data will not use my son/daughter's name.
☐ My son/daughter is able to do the interview on their own.

Sign_____

Name_____Son/daughter name_____

Appendix 7: Child information sheet

Research Information Sheet

My name is **Hannah** and I want to find out about the job of your **Coach**.

I am interested to find out:

- How your Coach helps you...
- What you do together...
- What you enjoy...
- What you're not sure about...
- What you would like to do more of...
- What you would like to do in the future...

There is no right Or wrong

There is no wrong or right answer.

To do this I will **meet with you** for 20 – 25 minutes **3 times** this year.

We will do different activities and talk together.

This will help me to understand how your Coach helps you.

After I have finished finding things out (researching) I will let you know what I have found.

If you are happy to help please read and sign the consent form.

Thank you.

Hannah Brooks

(Researcher and trainee educational psychologist
– this means I help students improve their learning).

Appendix 8: Child consent form

Pupil Consent – KEY STAGE 2

Consent to meet with Hannah

I, _____ (write your name on the line)

am happy to take part in the meeting about the job of my Coach.

Please **tick** the boxes if you agree:

☐ I understand I can stop taking part if I want to at any time.

☐ I understand I can ask for a break.

☐ I understand I do not have to answer all the questions

☐ I understand that what I tell you in the interview will be tape recorded so you can remember it.

☐ I understand that what I tell you may be used in a report but my name will be kept private. Someone might be able to guess it is me but only if they know me very well.

☐ I understand that you will not tell anyone what I said, unless I or another student may be at harm, then you will tell another adult in the school.

☐ I understand that I can request someone I know to join me in this meeting to help me feel comfortable.

Please sign your name _____

Year Group _____

Appendix 9: Child timetable

TIMETABLE

First chat...

February

(In January you heard about **Hannah** coming and told your coach – **'that's OK'**)

- **Today** you have a **normal session** with your coach for **25 minutes.**

- **Hannah will come and join your session for 10 minutes** ☺

- Coaching will finish **a little early** today

- **Hannah will chat with you for 20 minutes**

- If you wanted someone with you – they will be there too.

- **Hannah will drop you back to class or play and say BYE until June.**

SEE YOU SOON

Second chat...

June / July

(In May you heard about **Hannah** coming back to join your session and your coach asked you – **'is that OK?' – IF YOU SAID 'YES'...**)

- **Today** you have a **normal session** with your coach for **25 minutes.**

- **Hannah will come and join your session for 10 minutes** ☺

- Coaching will finish **a little early** today

- **Hannah will chat with you for 20 minutes**

- If you wanted someone with you – they will be there too.

- Hannah will drop you back to class or play and say **BYE** until **December.**

SEE YOU SOON

Third chat...

November / December

(In November you heard about **Hannah** coming back to join your session and your coach asked you – **'is that OK?' – IF YOU SAID 'YES'...**)

- **Today** you have a **normal session** with your coach for **25 minutes.**

- **Hannah will come and join your session for 10 minutes** ☺

- Coaching will finish **a little early** today

- **Hannah will chat with you for 20 minutes**

- If you wanted someone with you – they will be there too.

- Hannah will drop you back to class or play and say **BYE** and wish you a **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

Appendix 10: Coach information sheet

Behaviour Coach Research Information Sheet

I am a trainee educational psychologist, training at the Institute of Education (IoE) and working as an Educational Psychologist (in training) in Slough. Over the next 18 months I will be undertaking a research project as part of my doctoral thesis to become fully qualified.

TLG: the education charity has agreed to allow me to explore the role of the TLG Behaviour Coach. As part of my case study I would like to interview you in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the role. In particular I aim to understand the relationship built between children and their TLG Behaviour Coach and how this relationship is formed, supported and able to bring about change.

I hope that this research will help to illuminate the role of the 'child – coach' relationship and as such prove to be helpful to the children, families, school and wider communities in which they live.

Information about the interviews is as follows:

- Three interviews will be arranged at your convenience over the course of the year and will take no longer than 40 - 45 minutes.
- All interview responses will be confidential and you and the name of the school will not be identified in the research. Instead your data will be given a code and your name will only be known to the researcher.
- The interviews will be recorded using a digital recorder.
- All participants can withdraw from the research process at any time.
- At the end of the process, a copy of the report will be sent to TLG and the school in which you work for you to access.

As always, if it is highlighted that a child may be at harm, the child's wellbeing will counter the confidentiality of the research and the information will be passed on to the most appropriate person.

An interview consent form is enclosed to complete if you are happy to take part in these interviews. Please hand these forms to the head of your centre.

If you have any concerns or further questions about the research, please contact me using the details provided below.

I am very grateful for your support,

Hannah Brooks (nee: Rowland)

Trainee educational psychologist   hrowland@ioe.ac.uk

Appendix 11: Coach consent form

TLG Behaviour Coach Interview Consent

Consent of interview participation

I, _____ am willing to take part in an interview regarding the role of the TLG Behaviour Coach.

Please tick

☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am able to withdraw at any stage of the research process.

☐ I understand that my data will be anonymised and be kept confidential and will therefore not be identifiable to the general population.

☐ Due to the small sample size of this study, however, I am aware of the small possibility of data being identified by someone who knows I was in this study and knows me well.

☐ I understand that the interview will be tape-recorded but my data will be identified using a code.

Sign_____

Year group you work with_____

Email address/phone number _____
(for interview arrangement purposes):

Appendix 12: Head teacher consent letter

To whom it may concern,

RE: Information about Behaviour Coach Research

I am a trainee educational psychologist, training at the Institute of Education (IoE) and working as an educational psychologist (in training) in Slough. Over the next 18 months I will be undertaking a research project as part of my doctoral thesis to fully qualify as an educational psychologist.

I am working with the charity 'TLG: the education charity' on this research project, and aim to explore the role of TLG's Behaviour Coach. In particular I want to gain an understanding of how the child - coach relationship is perceived by those it impacts and how this relationship develops over time.

I am hoping that the findings of this research will help support the role of the Behaviour Coach, the schools in which they operate and in turn the students and families they work with.

As part of my research I will be interviewing Behaviour Coaches and children over the next year to find out their perceptions of the coach – child relationship over time.

I already work in schools and settings within a Local Authority and my employment has been subject to the required safeguarding checks when working with children. Any work an educational psychologist carries out with or for an individual student would always be explained to a parent and their consent gained.

If you would be happy for me to work with your students or if you would like more information concerning this research please contact me directly using the details below or speak to your TLG Early Intervention Co-ordinator.

I would be very grateful for your support.

Yours Faithfully,

Hannah Brooks (nee: Rowland)

Trainee educational psychologist

hrowland@ioe.ac.uk

Appendix 13: Children's visual prompt sheet

Remember I can always…

Skip the question

Take a break

End the interview

Withdraw
(Stop being part of study)

Interviewer - (Explained scale) How much do you like meeting with (coach).

Child - (Pointed to 10 out of 10)

Interviewer - What makes it a 10 (child)?

Child - Because she just like does fun stuff with me, where I used to have somebody else in year 5 and all we did was just sit there but me and (coach) come in here and we just like do art, we play games

Interviewer - Can you tell me a bit about it, what art and games?

Child - Err well she has a tennis ball and we play catch and we try do little tricks and we get a piece of paper and we record the scores or we do just like art so last week we were finishing off our, no not last week, the week before we were painting and doing papier-mâché

Interviewer - What were you making?

Child - Err skittles we made 4 skittles and where we got the tennis ball we thought why not make a little skittle court, so we got another ball

Interviewer - I have a feeling I have seen some of your skittles around. Is there anything that could happen that would make it 11, I know that's off the scale but is there anything that would take it off the scale?

Child - If she took me out swimming for a day because I haven't been swimming in 2 years

Interviewer - Ok so you would really like that.

Child - That would make it 100 – neewow (moving hand up in the air)

Interviewer – Ok, can you tell me what you have enjoyed best so far in coaching?

Child - Not being able to do learning in class

Interviewer - Ok so coming out of the learning and coming into here.

Child - We do really boring learning on Fridays, so I'm just like come on get me out. When she wasn't there last week I was like ugh ugh ughhhh

Interviewer - Is there something in coaching that you have done really well at?

Child - Hmm drawing

Interviewer - Drawing. Ok so this is my little blob tree. You seen one of these before?

Child - It's in the room that (coach) puts my stuff in, it's on the door nearest the head teacher's office I think. Quite near the blue door and then there's one there.

Interviewer - Good memory, ok here's a test for you what is the one by the door what are they doing?

Child - Swimming?

Interviewer - Yes good memory (explanation of blob tree).

Child - Why is he falling off the tree that's sad? That's compared to nothing (blob swinging from tree low down) he's gunna go ehhh splat (higher up blob swinging from tree). He's angry he's just like oh my god.

Ohhh He's like I wanna play with them

Happy

He's worried

He's like heeeey you can't catch me now

Interviewer - Which blob on here is (coach)?

Child - (Points)

Interviewer - What makes you choose that blob?

Child - (Draws)

Interviewer - I kind of understand it, could you say it to me?

Child - Coz she helps me no matter what, so if I'm feeling down then she picks me up again and we do fun things

Interviewer - How do you tell her when you feel down?

Child - hmm we have this little chart thing which she printed off and there's like four, no five or seven, little squares and there's feelings in them and I've coloured them in. The first day I came here I coloured them in and now we, I just like draw the shape and I write the thing in it and I colour it in and we don't talk about she just looks at the book and she can tell what I'm feeling.

Interviewer - So you draw that picture and she knows.

Child - Mmm hmmm

Interviewer - Ok this is a different one, how do you feel at school?

Child - hmmm well sometimes I'm like well I'm excited to see my friends, but when I just like sort of try and play with… somebody else has to come in and ruin it, so I'm just like what am I gunna do and then they start an argument, then I get a detention and then I'm just stuck like this (sad face) really.

Interviewer - Can you pick a blob that summarizes all that I don't know you might want to pick two blobs if you want to?

Child - Hmmm let's just say I feel like I'm falling off of the tree. And this is my friend A and I was just like where's my friend A that's me when somebody's hurting my feelings then (draws)

Interviewer - Ok so can you tell me how you feel in this one?

Child - Somebodies pushing me off a tree

Interviewer - Ok how do you feel in this one?

Child - Happy

Interviewer - Ok how does meeting with (coach) effect any of that, does it make any difference?

C- Because sometimes we just like talk about it, but when I'm too busy in my art it just comes out…so I'm like 'I've had a really bad day' today she goes 'why' and I'm like 'coz somebodies bullying me' and she and we just keep on talking about it because where I'm so busy in just like colouring or something I just like, I just like letting all it all out because that's why my mum signed me in to all this because normally you'll just find me crying into a corner and I'll be like this (sad face) and I wouldn't tell nobody and I'd just be like this (sad face) and I'd be unhappy for about a month.

Interviewer - So how have things changed now then, what's different?

Child - Well I actually tell my Mum and Dad how I'm feeling because the coaching has really helped.

Interviewer - What do you say?

Child - If just like they, coz my granddads died, if I feel upset then I just tell (coach) and then I feel more happy to go and tell my Mum and Dad because then I've told somebody that understands and then I can go and tell my Mum and Dad how it happened.

Interviewer - Can you pick one how you feel at home?

Child – (pointed to two) It's because down my way I live in a flat and people are just really mean there so I'm worried that somebody is just gunna come in the door and kill everybody because I've been having loads of nightmares and they won't go away but sometimes they stop.

Interviewer - Ok so you feel quite worried. What's this one feel?

Child - Because I'm happy with my family because they look after me

Interviewer - So two different things you're feeling. And has meeting with (coach) made any difference to how you feel?

C- Nod

Interviewer - Can you tell me a bit about that?

C- Well when I was at home, I used to shut myself in my bedroom and I wouldn't come out unless I like couldn't sleep or I just like didn't want to coz my Dad was there but now I'm just like out there two hours of the day

Interviewer - That's different, how does that feel?

Child - Good

Interviewer - Yeh I imagine it does.

Child - If it wasn't for the computers which is my Xbox I don't know how you draw them

(Drawing – lookup)

Interviewer - Ok next one, we are going to look at some other people apart from ourselves (show classroom and play game)

Child - That's me (child looking out of window)

Interviewer - Whys that you (child)?

Child - Because I'm always like 'oooo'

Interviewer - Who could do with meeting with (coach)?

Child - (Circled picture) Coz he's sad and he's just sitting there like why am I even here, why should I be at school?

Interviewer - What if the child says I don't wanna go.

Child - I'd say you should go because it really helps

Interviewer – (child voice) I don't think it will help

Child - It does.

Interviewer – (Gave summary of things said) Thanks so much I just have two more questions.

Has anyone noticed a difference in you?

Child - My friends and my family.

Interviewer – What have they noticed?

Child - Because normally, if I get angry I punch a wall or beat somebody up, but now I just talk away and like just talk to my friends about it and they'll tell me don't do it der der der der der

Interviewer - Last question, what difference have you noticed since meeting with (coach)?

Child - That its helped me because... and its helped them (family) because now they can actually do stuff with me like drawing and that, whereas when I kept in my room I used to be different, I used to say no go away I don't want you in ere, but now I'm just out there, I'm just playing with my little sister.

C- To not be associated with the school even though he sees me in and out of school coz he does nearly every day that's ok because he know I'm not staff but I'm not part of his family and I don't go back to see his family and report back er and I think it gives er particularly for him and for most of them just that space to talk though and think through things and stuff that you might not be able to in the home environment also in the school day because you are one of thirty you know it's a huge school out there the primary over 550 kids so you know it just gives him a bit of space to have that attention you know I think particularly for X in this instance it's the attention he rely benefits and even his teacher said that out of the two she has in her class he really benefits from seeing me he's watching the clock and you know he knows that I'm guna be there.

M- Yeh consistence

C- Yeh that sort of consistent time for him

M- Challenges

C- Erm at the moment their ok but I know for the other coaches sometimes they said they can use a room and that room hasn't been available you know its miscommunication other schools part as it is such a big school and maybe changing stuff around and not letting them know erm I haven't felt that at the moment but I know a couple of them have. I suppose the challenges with the role are because obviously I have spoken to his mum and she's fine it is that lack of communication with home as well it has been a little sporadic I mean she's just had a baby so its fair enough (laugh) in my instance. Erm I don't see there is any challenges in the role I mean obviously as I've just said to you my main concern is that there is stuff we suspect there is an element of DV within the home and even when I've met mum and interacted I can tell she is quite guarded and a little bit nervous I said everything fine everything's great so you know I think there's an element there but er it's not my role to investigate that my role is to sort of be with X but I do hope that he will open up to me and we can talk about it just so I can say to him that's not right and that's not good and I'm sorry that's happened to you so I feel he's a bit trapped himself with mum but yeh

Appendix 16: Table used when reviewing themes

Theme: Responding to relationship		
Sub - theme	**Code**	**Example extracts**
Able to talk	- Letting it all out - Sharing feelings - Sharing personal experiences - Sharing view of other	**Mark. T2 (Letting it all out)** 'Like I can get it all out' **Harley. T2 (Sharing feelings)** 'I wasn't there for a week, coz I got upset about something and I told her' **Jamie's coach. T3 (Sharing feelings)** 'He came out with this stuff like people don't bully me any more I feel more confident you know' **Mark's coach. T3 (Sharing personal experiences)** '(Talks about) things that are important to him, he says there's a girl that really likes him but she's Polish and she can't speak much English' **Harley's coach. T3 (Sharing view of other)** 'In secondary school he told me I'll be one, I am one of six people, or something, one of six people who listen'
Able to trust	- Able to rust - Becoming relaxed - Seeking comfort	**Mark. T3 (Able to trust)** 'It's still up in (coach's) room I keep forgetting to collect it' **Harley's coach. T3 (Becoming relaxed)** 'He's relaxed now he has calmed down now I can have, with him a good conversation even without having to do anything' **Charlie's coach. T2 (Seeking comfort)** 'He blew his nose hard and it obviously went into his ears and he ran to me and put his arms around me'
Seeking to meet the needs of the other	- Reassurance of safety - Enabling control - Increasing cases of success - Providing positive attention	**Harley's coach. T3 (Reassurance of safety and stability)** 'Some sessions maybe more fruitful than others but it doesn't matter I was there…there might be stuff in his life he can't rely on but I'll be there on a certain day and a certain if you know what I mean' **George's coach. T2 (Enabling control)** 'I was just like you need to ask him if he doesn't wanna tell you then that's fine it's not my place to tell you it's up to him' **Mark's coach. T2 (Raising self-esteem and cases of success)** 'I do I let him win games you know I am like that I let him win because it makes him feel and we laugh and we joke' **Charlie's coach. T2 (Providing positive attention and enjoyment)** 'I usually think of various things we could do erm so to sort of fit it and try to vary it a lot because he's quite a physical little boy'
Feeling valued	- Feeling valued - Feeling supported - Feeling understood	**Harley. T3 (Feeling valued)** 'She brought me a feeling book for twelve quid and some pens I didn't even just like out of nowhere she just said here, I was like cool' **Jamie. T2 (Feeling supported)** 'She like she like helps me get along with my feelings and erm helps me forget about all the bad things that happened' **Mark. T2 (Feeling understood)** 'She asks me what my days been and I say well good, bad (or) wobbly and then she like says ok'
Learning from other	- Learning from other	**Mark. T3 (Learning from other)** 'She helps me out when I need her and then like I do that when someone else needs help and like I take what x doing to me and I bring it in the school and help other people'
Wanting to include others	- Wanting to include others	**Charlie. T3 (Wanting to include others)** 'Like I make them because I can get share them with my class'

Appendix 17: Collaborative coding

I - Which blob on here is X?

C- (Points)

I - What makes you choose that blob?

C- (Draws)

I - Wow I kind of understand it could you say it to me

Recognition of support C- Coz she helps me no matter what so if I'm feeling down then she picks me up again and we do fun things **Key person**

I - Wow. How do you tell her when you feel down?

Process C- hmm we have this little chart thing which she printed off and there's like four no five or seven little squares and there's feelings in them and I've coloured them in the first day I came here I coloured them in and now we I just like draw the shape and I write the thing in it and I colour it in and we don't talk about she just looks at the book and she can tell what I'm feeling **Emotional function** – Empathy / Intuition.

I - That's amazing isn't that cool so you just draw that picture and she knows.

C- Mmm hmmm

I - Ok this is a different one how do you feel at school?

Frustration C- hmmm well sometimes I'm like well I'm excited to see my friends but when I just like sort of try and play with somebody else has to come in and ruin it so I'm just like **Friendships - Significant** what am I gunna do and then they start and argument then I get a detention and **Portioning blame** then I'm just stuck like this (sad face) really → Sense of helplessness **Social skill / adaptation**

I - Can you pick a blob that summarizes all that I don't know you might want to pick two blobs if you want to?

C- Hmmm let's just say I feel like I'm falling off of the tree **Feeling lost /out of control?**

I - So what does that feel like?

C- And this is my friend A and I was just like where's my friend A that's me when somebody's hurting my feelings then (draws)

I - Ok that's nice so can you tell me how you feel in this one

C- Somebodies pushing me off a tree

I - Ok how do you feel in this one?

I - Which blob on here is X?

C- (Points)

I - What makes you choose that blob?

C- (Draws)

I - Wow I kind of understand it could you say it to me

C- Coz she helps me no matter what so if I'm feeling down then she picks me up again and we do fun things – emotional supported through fun things.

I - Wow. How do you tell her when you feel down?

visual support to express feelings C- hmm we have this little chart thing which she printed off and there's like four no five or seven little squares and there's feelings in them and I've coloured them in the first day I came here I coloured them in and now we I just like draw the shape and I write the thing in it and I colour it in and we don't talk about she just looks at the book and she can tell what I'm feeling

I - That's amazing isn't that cool so you just draw that picture and she knows.

C- Mmm hmmm

I - Ok this is a different one how do you feel at school?

behv sanctions – s.o. fault C- hmmm well sometimes I'm like well I'm excited to see my friends but when I just like sort of try and play with somebody else has to come in and ruin it so I'm just like what am I gunna do and then they start and argument then I get a detention and then I'm just stuck like this (sad face) really

I - Can you pick a blob that summarizes all that I don't know you might want to pick two blobs if you want to?

C- Hmmm let's just say I feel like I'm falling off of the tree = failing out of tree).

I - So what does that feel like?

looking for friends C- And this is my friend A and I was just like where's my friend A that's me when somebody's hurting my feelings then (draws)

I - Ok that's nice so can you tell me how you feel in this one

C- Somebodies pushing me off a tree – falling off tree.

emotional awareness I - Ok how do you feel in this one?

C- Happy

I - Which blob on here is X?

C- (Points)

I - What makes you choose that blob?

C- (Draws)

I - Wow I kind of understand it could you say it to me

C- Coz she helps me no matter what so if I'm feeling down then she picks me up again and we do fun things). *Support when feeling down.*

I - Wow. How do you tell her when you feel down?

use of ✓
tools.

C- hmm we have this little chart thing which she printed off and there's like four no five or seven little squares and there's feelings in them and I've coloured them in the first day I came here I coloured them in and now we I just like draw the shape and I write the thing in it and I colour it in and we don't talk about she just looks at the book and she can tell what I'm feeling *use the book/but to express feeling*

I - That's amazing isn't that cool so you just draw that picture and she knows.

C- Mmm hmmm

I - Ok this is a different one how do you feel at school?

C- hmmm well sometimes I'm like well I'm excited to see my friends but when I just like sort of try and play with somebody else has to come in and ruin it so I'm just like what am I gunna do and then they start and argument then I get a detention and I then I'm just stuck like this (sad face) really ————→ *Reason of sad feeling in school*

I - Can you pick a blob that summarizes all that I don't know you might want to pick two blobs if you want to?

C- Hmmm let's just say I feel like I'm falling off of the tree

I - So what does that feel like?

C- And this is my friend A and I was just like where's my friend A that's me when somebody's hurting my feelings then (draws)

I - Ok that's nice so can you tell me how you feel in this one

C- Somebodies pushing me off a tree

I - Ok how do you feel in this one?

200