

Running head: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WHO

The Role of School for Children who have Relocated because of Domestic  
Violence and Abuse

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### **Abstract**

There is a scarcity of research that considers the role of school for children who have relocated because of domestic violence and abuse. In spite of this, the impact on school age children is well evidenced and can have severe long-lasting implications for a child in their ecosystem (CAADA, 2014; Sterne & Poole, 2010). This research used qualitative methodology and a social constructionist perspective underpinned by Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory to investigate how children 7 – 10 years experienced school when they had relocated because of domestic violence and abuse. Data was collected from five children using vignettes and drawings. Four Deputy Head Teachers, one Inclusion Manager and five Educational Psychologists were interviewed using a semi-structured interview. Thematic Analysis was used to analyse the accounts of children and school professionals. The findings showed children felt under threat in the classroom and playground. They used strategies to self-protect and self-care at school and actively sought support from adults and peers to aid their resiliency. Children experienced complex emotions linked to school relocation. They described loss, sadness and frustration as well as the benefits of relocation related to renewed feelings of safety. School professionals reported social, emotional, behavioural and academic needs for children. They used individual, group, whole school and borough wide approaches to support children affected by domestic violence and abuse despite facing barriers related to the secrecy surrounding this social construct, role and resource restrictions. The findings of this study have direct implications for supporting children and families who have been affected by domestic violence and abuse as well as

education, health and social care professionals working with them. Implications for educational psychology practice are discussed.

*Keywords:* domestic violence, domestic abuse, school, relocation, education, educational psychology, primary school, ecosystem, bioecological, resilience, childhood

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is my own.

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Signed .....

Ms Amy Stanton

Legally Mrs Amy Levene

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 The Context of the Research

There is a national disparity in the educational outcomes of children who experience domestic violence and abuse (DA) compared to their mainstream peers. Among other factors, child victims exhibit higher levels of social, emotional and mental health needs, are at increased risk of self-harm and death, cognitive delay, disrupted schooling and poor physical health (CAADA, 2014; Sterne & Poole, 2010). In the UK, an estimated 1.8 million children live DA (Jutte, Bentley, Miller & Jetha, 2014). Of these children, at least 50% are believed to have experienced direct physical harm. DA is highly correlated with child deaths, and features in 50% of reports of UK child deaths (Jutte et al., 2014). In the context of school, findings estimate that one child in every classroom is affected by DA (Meltzer, Doos, Vostanis, Ford & Goodman, 2009). However, recent reports suggest the true figure is far higher (Walby, Frances & Tower, 2016).

Though school age children spend approximately 35 hours per week in school, the question of how DA impacts on their education remains largely unaddressed (House of Commons, 2008). There is a paucity of research that examines the perspectives of children who have experienced DA, in particular in relation to school life and school relocation. The small body of research which has asked children about their school experiences suggests that children who have encountered DA value school (Wagstaff, 2009) and that school can offer a nurturing supportive environment (Baker & Cunningham, 2009). However DA can also disrupt schooling for reasons such as sudden departure and relocation

(Stafford, Stead & Grimes, 2008). Research suggests that children be listened to and communicated with about DA, and recommendations have been made for the DfE to commission greater exploration into children's views (Guy, Feinstein & Griffiths, 2014).

The impact of DA on children relates directly to the role and responsibility of professionals working in schools (McKee & Mason, 2015). In 2005, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) issued the first guidance to assist schools in their response to child victims of DA. In addition, over the past decade, amidst new legislation such as Claire's Law (Home Office, 2014) and A Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls (Home Office, 2014), research has begun to scrutinise how schools can promote healthy relationships and bring prevention work into the curriculum (CAADA, 2014; Guy et al., 2014; Home Office, 2014). However, as this gradual shift takes place, a lack of understanding exists about the perspectives of school professionals (SPs) in relation to supporting children who have experienced DA. Furthermore, there is no general approach to training, organisation of the school system or consistent use of evidence based practice to respond to the needs of children who have experienced DA (Guy et al., 2014; NUT, 2005).

A handful of studies have asked SPs about their experiences of supporting children affected by DA. Findings show that teachers and educational psychologists (EPs) can lack confidence in this area. Ellis reported that teachers feel "deskilled" and "uncertain" (Ellis, 2012, p. 116). Similarly, Gallagher described how EPs felt "powerlessness" and "frustration" in relation to DA cases (Gallagher, 2014, p. 59). In light of the recent call by the Association

of Educational Psychologists' (AEP) for the government to "ensure the children's workforce is trained adequately to understand and address the importance of eradicating domestic violence" (AEP Manifesto, 2015, point 2b), it would be valuable to better understand EPs' perspectives and this underrepresented area of research.

In light of the above, greater examination into the perspectives of children and SPs in relation to DA and school life is necessary and will contribute to empirical research, professional practice and positive child development. To promote outcomes for children, it is paramount their views are represented.

## **1.2 Summary and Aims**

This research attempts to contribute to better outcomes and educational provision for children who have experienced DA. By drawing on available literature, theory and research, it brings to the foreground the perspectives of children and SPs, taking into account wider ecological systems and processes (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The research suggests that by examining children's experiences of school pre and post relocation because of DA, as well as by eliciting the views of SPs, it becomes possible to better understand how to effectively offer children who have encountered DA, support in the context of school. The aims of this study are relevant for children and families who have encountered DA, education, health and social care professionals working with children and professionals in wider systems. The research demonstrates the values and beliefs of children, and can assist

professionals supporting children in school. Ultimately, it attempts to provide greater insight and clarity into this complex and underreported area of research.

### **1.3 Key Definitions**

In this report the following cross-government definition of “domestic violence and abuse” is used:

any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional (Home Office, 2014).

Women’s Aid (2014) shares the same definition as the Home Office and this is widely recognised in the United Kingdom.

This research will discuss DA where a man is the perpetrator of the abuse. This should not be interpreted as diminishing the stark reality that DA is encountered regardless of gender and sexuality. The National Office of Statistics (ONS) (2014) reported that approximately 700,000 men experienced DA between 2012 and 2013 (Home Office, 2014). However, the stance taken is reflective of the research; evidence that shows a significantly larger number of women than men experience DA (CAADA, 2014).

The term “domestic violence and abuse” (DA) rather than “domestic violence” (DV) will be used throughout this research to reflect the wide range of abusive behaviours which may be experienced beyond physical violence to incorporate sexual, psychological, emotional and economic abuse (Women’s

Aid, 2014). However, where literature is directly cited, the researcher will replicate language used within that particular study.

When discussing children who have experienced DA, this research will use terminology thoughtfully in an attempt to acknowledge children as socially active and influential in determining the construction of their own lives (James & Prout, 1990). This supports a distancing from discourse which positions children as silent recipients of DA situations. This research seeks to build on the work of the past decade that also aims to understand the actions and responses of children in relation to DA (Allen, Wolf, Bybee & Sullivan, 2003; Callaghan, Alexander, Sixsmith & Fellin, 2015; Överlien & Hydén, 2009).

In this research, educators who work in schools are referred to as “school professionals” (SPs). This includes professionals such as: special educational needs and disabilities coordinators (SENDCos), deputy head teachers (DHTs), head teachers (HTs), inclusion managers (IMs), educational psychologists (EPs) and teachers.

#### **1.4 Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis is organised by chapter. The next chapter provides a review of the literature, setting the scene for the wider context of DA by looking at its prevalence, legislative and academic policy, the impact of DA on children, children’s experiences of relocation and the role of SPs. In Chapter 3, Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory is introduced, alongside theories of resilience and literature that relates to constructions of childhood. The lives of children affected by DA are examined in relation to the theory. Chapter 4 presents the methodology, outlining the design, participants, procedure,

materials, methods of data analysis and ethical issues in this research.

Chapters 5 and 6 report on the results from children and SPs. The decision to report findings from Research Question 1 in Chapter 5, and collapse findings for Research Questions 2 and 3 in Chapter 6 enabled the researcher to balance reporting of child and adult perspectives, rather than give relative weight to reporting adult viewpoints. This is fitting the intention to keep children at the heart of this research and supports the notion that children's social relationships and cultures are important to study in their own right independently of their social construction by adults (James & Prout, 1990; 2015). In chapter 7 a discussion of key findings takes place, including implications for professionals working in education and educational psychology. The limitations of the research are presented and areas for future research and practice are discussed.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter is presented in three parts and introduces literature relevant to the research. At the outset, the prevalence of DA in the UK is considered, including the current legislative context and policies available to support women and children who have experienced DA. The second part explores children's lives at school. DA is presented in relation to children's mental health, and representations of school are proposed as a site which can protect and promote children's resilience. Children's experiences of relocation are also considered. The final part of the chapter reviews the role of SPs, suggesting that SPs can play a key role in giving support to children who have experienced DA. Barriers to professional practice are also discussed<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.2 Prevalence of DA

DA is recognised as a public health concern that affects more than one third of all women worldwide (WHO, 2014). In a summary of evidence, Guy et al. (2014) reported that 8 million people in the UK have been victims of DA. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) gives weight to this figure, showing that 30% of women and 16.3% of men experienced DA between ages 16 and 59 in England and Wales. Statistics report that two women are killed each week by a current or former partner, equating to the death of one woman every three days (ONS, 2015). These figures have, however, been disputed as a gross underestimation. Evidence from Walby et al. (2016) show that the ONS fails to

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<sup>1</sup> Details of the literature search can be found in Appendix A.

account for nearly half of attacks on women, specifically when the assailant is known to the victim, because the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) caps the number of separate crimes that can be reported by a single respondent. This leads to the experiences of high frequency victims of DA being excluded. Walby et al. illustrated that lifting the cap would increase the percentage of violence against women by partners and acquaintances by 70-100% (Walby et al., 2016).

Though less is known about the prevalence of children living in households with DA, 1.8 million are estimated (Jutte et al., 2014). One in five children is believed to have experienced DA, with 25% having witnessed at least one episode by age 18 (Jutte et al., 2014; Radford et al., 2011). Further, an estimated 130,000 children live in UK households with high-risk DA, at significant risk of harm or death (CAADA, 2014). Although these figures demonstrate the prevalence of DA, the lack of self-reporting by families and children themselves makes it impossible to elicit the exact figure of children living with DA (Jutte et al., 2014).

### **2.3 Legislative Shifts**

Over the past two decades, significant legislative developments have helped to protect women encountering DA. New developments include: the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act (2004), The Forced Marriage Civil Protection Act (2007), Claire's Law (2014), the DV Court (SDVC), Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) (Home Office, 2004, 2007, 2014). These shifts mark a significant progression from the 1850s, when a man was legally permitted to



beat his wife as long as “he used a rod not thicker than his thumb” and 1895, when hitting a wife was only legal between 7 am and 10 pm to avoid noise disturbance at night (Davidson, 1978, p. 95). However, although social views about DA are modulating, “alarming and unacceptable” weaknesses have been documented in relation to police responses in England and Wales (T. May, personal communication, March 27, 2014). Following an investigation by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), Theresa May condemned the police service for treating DA as “a poor relation” to other police activity. The report cited “significant failings, a lack of visible police leadership and direction [and] poor victim care” (T. May, personal communication, March 27, 2014). These community factors have real life implications for women and children living with DA.

The relocation of women and children to safe housing away from a perpetrator can be obstructed by community factors such as cuts in public sector budgets. Between April and July 2014, 10 specialist domestic violence services were closed because of funding cuts (Women’s Aid, 2014) and in 2014, the Government made moves toward the privatisation of children’s social services, including child protection. These moves could drastically impede women and children’s access to safe housing and support from professional agencies in relation to experiences of DA. They also undermine the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989), which declares that every child has the right to feel safe and be safe from all forms of violence and harm.

**2.3.1 Commitment to children.** In spite of the aforementioned barriers, the current government has demonstrated a growing commitment to protecting children who have experienced DA. In 2010, “A Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls” was published (Home Office, 2010). Updated in 2014, this identified prevention, awareness and attitude change as key areas to address in relation to DA, including the vital role school can play in education and safeguarding (Home Office, 2014). Furthermore, in 2014 the government launched the “Troubled Families Programme”, supporting vulnerable families, which included DA as a discretionary criterion (Department for Communities & Local Government, 2014). The programme was extended in 2015 and now aims to support 400,000 vulnerable families (Department for Communities & Local Government, 2015).

Policies such as the Allen Review (2011), the Munro Review of Child Protection (2011) and the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) emphasise the importance of a co-ordinated approach to safeguarding and taking a child-centred approach to supporting children affected by DA. Statutory duties outlined in the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out the legal framework for the protection of children, establishing the welfare of the child as paramount. Furthermore, DA is now recognised as a child protection concern, which has led to the extension of the definition of harm to include “impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another” (The Adoption & Children Act 2002, Section 120), a shift fundamental to protecting the safety of children. As a shift in focus has taken place towards child protection, children’s experiences of DA have moved beyond the private sphere of home into public spaces like school. This brings to the foreground the role of school and more

specifically the question of how schools respond to the needs of children who have experienced DA and relocated for this reason.

**2.3.2 The role of school.** Whilst the aforementioned legislative changes have increased the protection of women and children against DA, the role of school and education in protecting children, including children who have relocated school as a consequence of DA, is less well represented. On the one hand, schools have a statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in England and Wales (Education Act, 2002, Section 175). The Education Act stresses the role of schools in developing a safe learning environment, which provides information about relevant services to children and young people and personal, social and health education (PSHE), where reference to DA is made. However, though this may be the case, PSHE remains a non-statutory subject on the school curriculum (DfE, 2014). The Department for Educational and Skills (DfES) (2006) states that schools have a requirement to “contribute through the curriculum by developing children’s understanding, awareness and resilience” (DfES, 2006 p. 7) and the Education and Inspections Act (2006) places a duty on schools to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical wellbeing of pupils.

However, while these guidelines exist, less is known about what happens in practice. As far back as 1975, the Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into Violence in Marriage (1975) recommended that “much more serious attention should be given within our school and further education system to the problems of domestic conflict” (House of Commons, 1978, p. 1364). In a later publication, Living Without Fear (1999), the government committed to addressing DA

through raising awareness and education in schools. In 2005, the NUT issued the first guidance for schools on DA. However, the Home Affairs Select Committee (2008) reiterated, “Education on these issues seems to be at best variable and at worst non-existent” (House of Commons, 2008, p. 6). Giving weight to this, a “YouGov” survey showed 9 out of 10 women reporting that they had not learned about DA in school, while 70% said they would want to (Refuge, 2009).

In defence of this state of affairs, McKee & Mason (2015) write that there has been a shift towards schools providing early intervention and prevention alongside recognition and response to child protection concerns through the curriculum and whole school approaches. For example, national charities have developed resources that can be used in the classroom during PSHE and Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) classes. In 2010, Women’s Aid released the Expect Respect kit in conjunction with the Home Office (Women’s Aid, 2010). In 2014, The Department of Health, Public Safety and Social Services (DHSSPS) and Department of Justice (DoJ) released the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Consultation Strategy 2013–2020 (Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety & Department of Justice, 2014). This presented a vision of “zero tolerance” to domestic and sexual violence and abuse where a priority action is for “teachers to have the necessary skills to teach sensitive subjects, including child abuse, and domestic and sexual violence” (Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety & Department of Justice, 2014, p. 10; McKee & Mason, 2015).

While these shifts are essential, at present little is known about the degree to which schools use these interventions, the success of implementation, the quality of teaching or the views of children in relation to these programmes. Furthermore, though DA is recognised as a key driver of homelessness (Fitzpatrick, Pawson, Bramley, Wilcox & Watts, 2013; Hutchinson, Page & Sample, 2014) and St Mungo's Homeless Charity and Housing Association (2014) reported that 50% of women who accessed their service had experienced DA (Hutchinson et al., 2014), at present little is known about what occurs when children relocate school after being made homeless with their mothers following DA. On top of this, investigation into how SPs support the well-being of children in school following relocation is lacking.

The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), a national charity working with the Government and local authorities in the UK, aims to provide evidence and advice on early intervention to tackle the root causes of social problems for children and young people (EIF, 2016). The EIF states that the Department for Education (DfE) must explore how to improve the quality and quantity of effective education programmes in relation to DA (Guy et al., 2014). Moreover, the DfE should give weight to understanding how children experience school and how professionals respond to these pupils (Guy et al., 2014). Although Article 12 of the UNCRC (1989) states that children have a right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, and ethical debates argue for the inclusion of children in research as a means to protect them and give them a voice (Alderson & Morrow, 2004; James & Prout 1990, 2015), currently there remains a dearth of research which investigates children's experiences of school life in relation to DA.

## **2.4 Children's Lives at School**

Thus far, this literature review has focused on discussing the prevalence of DA and providing a critique of the current legislative, political and educational landscape in relation to children's experiences of DA. It is now important to turn to the experiences of school for children who have experienced DA, including those who have relocated school for this reason. An examination of academic literature will follow. This will critique research evidence which has consistently shown the vast and long-term damage that DA can cause to children and the severe implications for their experience of school life. However, it is equally important to evaluate studies which have explored children's resilience in relation to DA.

**2.4.1 Impact of DA on children's mental health.** A wide body of literature has documented the impact of DA on children's mental health (CAADA, 2014; Sterne & Poole, 2010; WHO, 2014). Evidence has suggested that children experiencing DA are at greater risk of depression, anxiety and anti-social behaviour. They may lack empathy, experience difficulty forming relationships and have poor communication skills (CAADA, 2014; Sterne & Poole, 2010; WHO, 2014). Research has demonstrated that children experiencing DA can have lower educational attainment and economic productivity across their lifetimes and are more likely to be perpetrators or victims of violence themselves (CAADA, 2014; Sterne & Poole, 2010; WHO, 2014). While these findings are illuminative, Överlien (2010) stresses that the majority of research regarding DA has been collected quantitatively and has

been aimed at describing the effects of children's "exposure" to DA (Överlien, 2010, p.82).

To examine children's perspectives of school life when they have experienced DA, it is helpful to begin by considering the environmental conditions children can encounter at home. These fragile home conditions have been the focus of much of the research literature to date (CAADA, 2014; Cater, 2004; Överlien & Hydén, 2009). At home, DA can compromise the parenting children receive in the early years and beyond. It can result in parents lacking empathy for their child's experience and children being unsupported in understanding what DA is and how to recover from the trauma they have experienced (Holt, Buckley & Whelan, 2008). More than this, research has shown that in one third of cases, children who experience DA encounter a "toxic trio" of factors, where at least one parent has additional mental health and/or alcohol dependency needs (CAADA, 2014 p.4). While extreme, these are not the only parenting factors increasing risk for children. Children living with DA are victims of physical harm, emotional abuse or neglect by a parent in 62% of cases (CAADA, 2014). While significant, in contrast to these findings, recent evidence has reported that child and mother victims of DA promote one another's recovery from trauma, raise each other's confidence, self-esteem and support rehabilitation (Katz, 2015).

Thinking about the aforementioned findings in relation to children's experiences at school, it is evident that there can be a significant impact for children in the school environment. Buckley, Holt & Whelan (2007) argued that "very few children, if any, will escape the experience of living with domestic

violence unaffected” (Buckley et al., 2007 p.300). They claimed that encountering “fighting and frightening” occasions at home led children to develop anxiety in relation to their personal safety and that of their siblings and mothers. Cleaver, Unell & Aldgate (2011) give weight to this suggestion with their finding that living with DA could cause children to be preoccupied by thoughts of parent safety during the school day, leading them to wish to return home. They added that when the roles of “caring” and “cared for” were reversed, children could develop an increased sense of responsibility for themselves and family members (Cleaver et al., 2011). These findings have been echoed elsewhere. Children can be hyper-vigilant, continually scanning the classroom and distracted from their work (Buckley et al., 2007; Sterne & Poole, 2010). Comparisons can also be drawn between the experience of young carers and children affected by DA who may be caring for an abused parent and/or living with a parent who has additional mental health and/or alcohol dependence needs (CAADA, 2014). Sempnick and Becker (2013) argued that caring responsibilities led to higher rates of absenteeism, late arrival at school and leaving early (Sempnick & Becker, 2013).

As mentioned at the outset of this section, quantitative research has impressed how DA can impact on children’s mental health development. Some of the most cited studies have reported that DA increases internalised (e.g. depression and anxiety) and externalised (e.g. aggression and anti-social) behaviours (Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt & Kenny, 2003; Martin & Clements, 2002; Meltzer et al., 2009). When Kitzmann and colleagues (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 118 studies (Kitzmann et al., 2003), they found that 63% of children who had experienced DA scored lower on psychosocial measures than those



who had not. Outcomes for children who had encountered DA were not significantly different from those of physically abused children. Children demonstrated increased levels of cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social need (Kitzmann et al., 2003). Looking specifically at externalising behaviour, a UK study reported that DA makes a child almost three times more likely to develop a conduct disorder (Meltzer et al., 2009). These findings are given weight by Lundy and Grossman's (2005) sample of 4,636 children who experienced DA. One third were described as aggressive, one fifth had difficulties adhering to rules due to acting out, peer difficulties and depression bringing them to the attention of teachers (Lundy & Grossman, 2005). In a more recent example, 52% of children who experienced DA had behavioural problems, 39% difficulties adjusting at school and 52% social development needs (CAADA, 2014).

Findings contributed by Kitzmann et al. (2003) Meltzer et al. (2009) and Lundy and Grossman (2005) provide extensive evidence of how significantly DA can affect the lives and mental health development of children. This should not be undervalued and gives weight to the relevance and necessity of better investigating, understanding and supporting the needs of children. Presently though, further investigation would be beneficial. Kitzmann et al. (2003) collected data between 1978 and 2000 and this is now outdated. In addition, although adult participants placed higher emphasis than children did on the impact of DA on children, it is only possible to speculate why due to the quantitative nature of the research. For example, children may have minimised the impact of DA via self-report ratings, mothers may have reported a greater impact of DA on children due to their own stress or may have experienced the

DA episode differently. Comparatively, the methodology employed by Melzer et al. (2009) could have prevented children from becoming active participants able to construct meaningful, full responses during the research process. Meltzer et al. (2009) used the Development and Wellbeing Assessment (DAWBA) to collect data. Although this instrument is reported to have high validity across community and clinical samples, it was originally created to generate psychiatric diagnoses and can be administered by a computer or a researcher. When developed, items were purposely kept short in length for convenience (Goodman, Ford, Richards, Gatwood & Meltzer, 2009). The point of note is that while these studies illustrate the high impact of DA, as a next step children's own perspectives would be well received in relation to this body of evidence. Burman (2003) writes that today society tends to emphasise adult reconstruction of childhood trauma rather than investigating the child's real experience (Burman, 2003). This is related to constructions of childhood and the way children and childhood are depicted through society in relation to adult representations. Explored further in Chapter 3, this reiterates the need to understand children's own actions and perspectives in relation to DA and school life.

There is also evidence of a need to look more closely at how child gender may impact on school experience when DA has occurred (Baker & Cunningham, 2009; Cunningham & Baker, 2004; Martin & Clements, 2002). Cunningham and Baker (2004) reported that research is divided in opinion about the impact of DA on girls and boys, which may be because studies amalgamate young people of different ages into one group for analysis. Kitzmann and colleagues (2003) agreed in suggesting that no clear pattern of

gender has yet emerged in research on the outcomes of children who have experienced DA. However, Baker and Cunningham (2009) argued that messages about gender roles permeate society and children's daily lives. Children may pick up messages from violence, including: "men's needs are more important", "men deserve to get what they want" and "men shout to get their own way" (Baker & Cunningham, 2009 p. 202).

As mentioned above, the impact of DA on children is clear. However, less has been documented about children's experiences of school life when they have experienced DA. Having said this, research evidence is available (Alexander, MacDonald & Paton, 2005; Baldry, 2003; Buckley et al., 2007; Callaghan & Alexander, 2015). Buckley et al. (2007) reported that children who experienced DA felt rejected by peers and lacked confidence and self-esteem. Children had a tendency to compound their own isolation through their behaviour (Buckley et al., 2007). Alexander et al. (2005) asked children "experiencing" and "not experiencing" DA about their perceptions of the impact on young people; the two groups perceived this differently. Pupils "experiencing" DA suggested it would cause: suicidal, lonely and isolated feelings, whereas "non-experiencing" pupils indicated anger as a key emotion (Alexander et al., 2005). This study provides valuable findings and highlights how young people internalise a range of emotions in relation to DA. Furthermore, the contrast between "non-experiencing" and "experiencing" pupils reiterates that children's perceptions of how victims of DA feel can be inaccurate. This study was limited since information was collected from one secondary school. Greater insight into children's emotional development at primary school age would be illuminative.

Children's own accounts of school life have also shown concerns about bullying, victimisation, isolation and loneliness (Baldry, 2003; Buckley et al., 2007; Callaghan & Alexander, 2015; Holt, Kaufman Kantor & Filkelhor, 2009). Whereas Holt et al. (2009) found that children living with DA were more frequently bullies than victims of bullying (Holt et al., 2009), Buckley et al. (2007) reported children feared being bullied at school and their home circumstances being revealed. These findings resonate with Alexander and colleagues (2005) who stated that children experiencing DA felt a need to hide their "secret" to avoid shame, sadness and vulnerability if others found out (Alexander et al., 2005, p.188). Callaghan and Alexander (2015) give weight to these findings. They showed that children experienced bullying and complex relationships with adults and peers, influenced by violence at home (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015).

It may be that children's bullying experiences are linked to increased stress or internalised perceptions of how to behave related to DA (Creeden, 2008; McCrory, De Brito, Sebastian, Mechelli, Bird, Kelly & Viding, 2011; Saltzman, Holden & Holahan, 2005; Sterne & Poole, 2010). McCrory et al. (2011) reported that exposure to persistent DA can interfere with neural pathways, causing increased neural activity, heightened physiological arousal, higher levels of cortisol and an elevated heart rate (Creeden, 2008; McCrory et al., 2011; Saltzman et al., 2005). Creeden (2008) reinforces these findings, stating that toxic stress can elevate a fear response, leading to increased anxiety and vigilance (Creeden, 2008; McCrory et al., 2011; Saltzman et al., 2005). While physiological defences may be of purpose in a violent household where DA is occurring, at school they could exacerbate maladaptive behaviour

in response to perceived, but not real threat related to bullying or victimisation. Adding to this discussion, Sterne and Poole (2010) suggest that children's behaviour may result from negative modelling of how conflict is resolved in the home (Sterne & Poole, 2010). This idea is given weight by Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), however it has also been met with criticism. O'Dell (2007) argues that by perceiving children as passive agents we are "denying children's lived experiences" and dismissing how children actively survive and fight abuse (O'Dell, 2007 p. 390). O'Dell reiterates that although children may exhibit behaviour based on modelling, they may equally choose not to. These contributions impress the importance of undertaking research where the child is encouraged to be a co-researcher rather than an object of research (Freeman & Mathison, 2009).

The above discussion highlights that a wide range of difficult emotions and behaviours can be experienced by children related to DA. Moreover, that children's social, emotional and mental health needs can impact on their lives at school. Less research has examined what occurs for children at school when they have relocated because of DA. This will now be explored.

**2.4.2 Experiences of relocation.** DA can lead families to seek shelter and protection from violence. Mothers and their children can be forced to flee their homes, declare themselves homeless and move into temporary accommodation (Moore & McArthur, 2011; Stafford et al., 2008). In 2014, Hutchinson et al. reported that 50% of families who declared homelessness had experienced DA (Hutchinson et al., 2014). Homelessness and relocation is, without doubt, a reality for women and children who have experienced DA.

A small body of literature has considered what occurs for children who relocate home and school because of DA. However, relocation literature within DA focuses mostly on moves to different types of housing (Burt, 2001; Mullender, Hague, Iman, Kelly, Malos & Ragan, 2002; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Stafford et al., 2008; Swick, 2007). To the researcher's knowledge, no study has looked solely at what children experience when they relocate school because of DA, with this as the main emphasis of the study.

When women and children relocate because of DA, they can live in a web of anxiety and remain fearful following relocation, because of a heightened anticipatory stance for violence to occur (Swick, 2007). Swick (2007) reported that the formulation of mental schema based on prior experiences can mean that the brain can become programmed to anticipate violence even when the prospects of violence do not exist (hyper-vigilance) (Swick, 2007). On top of this, the conditions of homeless living can be stressful. Homeless shelters can be organised around rules to ensure safety and maintain order. However, these conditions can promote feelings of stress and isolation (Swick, 2007). Mothers report more negative interactions with their children in shelters because of the lack of physical and psychological space (Burt, 2001) where they are, traditionally allocated one room with access to communal living areas shared with other families.

Children's identity, personal possessions and re-settlement experiences have also been reported to be important in relation to relocation (Ni Laoire, White, Tyrrell & Carpena-Mendez, 2012; Stafford et al., 2008). Stafford et al. (2008) found that children fleeing DA with their mother often left home with few

or no belongings, leaving loved pets and precious things behind, not knowing when they would return. Stafford et al. added that children can carry strong feelings of resentment about relocation (Stafford et al., 2008). Ni Laoire et al. (2012) found that when child migrants encountered new contexts and educational environments with different social norms following relocation, they engaged in different ways (Ni Laoire et al., 2012). For example, when children were confronted by being “new” in a “new” area, city and school, they could develop complex concepts of place and belonging and new, flexible and hybrid forms of identity to express complex feelings of belonging and not belonging (Ni Laoire et al., 2012, p. 133).

Given that DA is directly correlated with family homelessness and relocation, it is important to further understand what occurs for children in relation to their lives at school when they experience DA and relocate for this reason. In relation to school life, children can have difficulties related to: losing friends, school disruption, unsettled housing and friendship rebuilding following relocation (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Stafford et al., 2008). Moore and MacArthur (2011) reported it can take children 4-6 months or longer to establish good relationships within their new school following DA. However, since their study focused on homelessness, not exclusively families affected by DA, it is important to extend our understanding in this area and investigate what children value at school and what they find difficult when relocating because of DA. For example, in spite of the aforementioned findings, school can provide a protective and supportive site for children who have experienced DA (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Wagstaff, 2009). Children value having a trusted person to talk

to, loyal friendships and a stable school environment (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015; Moore & McArthur, 2011). The next section brings to the foreground how relevant and protective school can be for children who have experienced DA including those who have relocated for this reason.

**2.4.3 School as a positive place.** Schools are central agents for meeting the academic and pastoral needs of children (McKee, 2013). National statistics reveal that approximately one child in every classroom experiences DA (Meltzer et al., 2009), although this figure is likely to be grossly underestimated given the most recent prevalence figures for DA (ONS, 2014; Walby et al., 2016). As such, school may offer an ideal environment to aid children who have experienced DA.

Research shows that school plays a vital role in building children's resilience when they have encountered DA by providing stability, a sense of belonging and fostering feelings of safety (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015; Cunningham & Baker, 2004; Moore & McArthur, 2011). Moore and McArthur (2011) reported that children who live with DA value school not only because they enjoy learning and socialising, but also because school provides stability when home circumstances are chaotic (Moore & McArthur, 2011). While Moore and McArthur's findings are useful, their research considered families living in different circumstances (e.g. DV, parental mental health difficulties and family breakdown), and results were not differentiated by family situation. Cunningham and Baker (2004) found that school provides an opportunity for pupils to engage conscientiously in school life and extra-curricular activities to avoid going home (Cunningham & Baker, 2004). Research has also suggested that following



relocation because of DA, becoming involved in school and the community is empowering for children and families. Engaging parents and children in productive roles where they can develop views of their own competence is important (Flick, 2007). These findings give weight to school being a context of high value following DA, though as documented earlier, children can struggle to focus and engage (Buckley et al., 2007; Cleaver et al., 2011) and can fear bullying and risk at school related to DA at home (Baldry, 2003; Holt et al., 2009).

## **2.5 The Role of SPs**

There is evidence to suggest SPs can play a key role in supporting the lives of children who have experienced DA (Baker & Cunningham, 2009; Creeden, 2008; Garcia-Moya, Brooks, Morgan & Moreno 2014; Women's Aid, 2014). Creeden explains that when a child is protected by a supportive relationship with an adult or adults, the ability to cope with everyday challenges will be easier as children's stress responses will return to baseline more quickly (Creeden, 2008). Garcia-Moya et al. conceptualise this relationship as "teacher connectedness". Connectedness has been described as an academic environment where students believe that educators care about their learning and them as individuals (Garcia-Moya et al., 2014). In their study, Garcia-Moya et al. measured "teacher connectedness" by asking pupils for feedback to statements such as: "my teachers are interested in me as a person," and "my teachers encourage me to express my own opinions in class" (Garcia-Moya et

al., 2014 p.5). Although they found “teacher connectedness” was significant to pupils, the style of questioning used in the study led to closed rather than extended pupil responses. It would be helpful to look more closely at children’s relationships with teachers and other SPs, with the opportunity to study relationships using open questions, when children have experienced DA.

Research has also highlighted that certain teaching approaches, may be beneficial to children who have experienced DA (Barker & Cunningham, 2009; Dods, 2013). Barker and Cunningham (2009) reported that children benefitted from an adult role model, pro-social attitudes, clear rules and consequences, praise focusing on behaviour rather than the child and hearing requests in a normal tone and volume (Baker & Cunningham, 2009). Dods (2013) found that children did not seek expert knowledge from teachers, but looked for teachers who provided safe learning environments, a willingness to connect and strong relational skills (Dods, 2013).

These findings are important, though further examination would be fruitful. Dod’s (2013) research involved children who had experienced trauma rather than DA specifically. Baker and Cunningham (2009) looked at children in the pre-school environment. It would be helpful to build on this work by asking primary age school children what they find supportive within their relationships with SPs when they have experienced DA.

Despite research promoting the importance of children’s relationships with educators in school, in practice there can be barriers to relationship building when DA has occurred (Buckley et al., 2007; Ellis, 2012; Gallagher, 2014; McKee & Mason, 2015). Ellis (2012) reported that it is essential to help

teachers feel empowered to support children affected by DA. However, her research stated that teachers feel “vulnerability” (p.113), “fear of becoming overwhelmed and “deskilled” (p.116) in relation to DA. Similarly, Gallagher (2014) found that EPs felt “powerlessness”, “frustration” and “not knowing” in relation to situations of domestic violence and abuse (Gallagher, 2014 p.59). EPs could play a key role in supporting children and schools when children have experienced DA (Ellis, 2012, Gallagher, 2014; Wagstaff, 2009;). Their psychological skills and knowledge related to children’s development makes them well placed to support children’s progress, devise programmes, foster resilience and support staff in relation to DA. However, in practice EPs have tended to be less involved on DA cases. This may be related to barriers faced when supporting children who have experienced DA.

The invisibility and fear surrounding DA as a topic may have implications for teachers and EPs working in schools. Gallagher (2014) stated that inherent difficulties exist because of the invisibility and secrecy of DA impacting on EPs’ casework in this area. She added that children have been marginalised and minimised in the dominant discourse of DA as an adult problem (Gallagher, 2014). In relation to teachers, Ellis (2012) reported that they feel caught in a dilemma between wanting to know more about the children’s background and not wanting to know too much. They receive information on a “need to know basis”, yet are unclear about what they “need to know” (Ellis, 2012).

Similarly, some commentators within DA literature have discussed DA as a social construct which remains deeply seated in discourses of silence and fear (Nicolson, 2010). Although today DA is acknowledged as socially and

politically intolerable, for several centuries the issue remained hidden from the public eye. Nicolson (2010) writes that the discourse surrounding a topic can constrain and limit the boundaries of a perceived reality, as well as provide new meaning and opportunity (Nicolson, 2010). This suggests that the discourse surrounding DA may directly impact on how professionals respond to children in the school environment. Evidence supports this; for example, Buckley et al. (2007) asked children about their school experience in the aftermath of DA. Children reported feeling anxious about being bullied and described difficulties in concentration and problems with attainment (Buckley et al., 2007). During interviews, children explained bullying may not have occurred if teachers were more informed, understanding and open to talking about their situation. Giving weight to this claim, McKee & Mason (2015) write that teachers are called on to protect the safety and well-being of pupils as a priority, through provision of a curriculum that teaches children how to stay safe. However, there is a lack of awareness among teachers about DA as a child protection concern and the impact it has on children (McKee & Mason, 2015).

There are complex safeguarding guidelines around supporting children who have experienced DA: "Professionals receiving information about domestic violence should explain that priority will be given to ensuring that the child/ren and their mother's safety is not compromised through the sharing of information" (Section 28.9.7, London Child Protection Procedures, 2016). It follows that children and families may receive different experiences from SPs different school contexts. Guy et al. (2014) write that there is wide variation in the guidance provided on dealing with DA (Guy et al., 2014). These points are worthy of note given that children often relocate school once or more, when

they have experienced DA (Stafford et al., 2008; Sterne & Poole, 2010).

Children's experiences of school life may vary according to SPs' knowledge and experience of working with children following DA.

Broadly speaking, this matter would benefit from greater exploration. The literature reviewed above highlights the importance of examining children's own perspectives of what takes place at school, in the classroom or playground, and in the wider environment, as well as how SPs support children who have experienced DA. It would be beneficial to understand which professionals children turn to, and the significance they place on their relationships with adults in the school environment. Furthermore, research is needed to examine what children perceive as supportive and effective at school given the prevalence of DA (ONS, 2014; Jutte et al., 2014; Walby et al., 2016), the frequency of relocation (Bancroft, 2004; Hutchinson et al., 2014; Stafford et al., 2008) and the impact on children's mental health (CAADA, 2014; Sterne & Poole, 2010).

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of the academic and policy literature. Key issues around the legislative and economic landscape have been identified, with acknowledgement that relocation because of DA can be a significant disruption and stress for women and children. In addition, while extensive research has documented the damaging impact DA can have on children's mental health, evidence suggests that school and children's relationships there can play a supportive role in fostering emotional wellbeing. The following chapter will introduce the theoretical frameworks relevant to

understanding the role of school relocation for children who have experienced DA.

## **Chapter 3 Theoretical Contributions**

### **3.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter draws on bioecological systems theory, theories of resilience and theories of childhood to consider children's experiences of school when they have relocated school because of DA. Within this chapter, each frame of the person-process-context-time (PPCT) model is referred to in relation to the research evidence reported in Chapter 2.

### **3.2 Using Bioecological Systems, Resilience and Childhood Theories to Examine Experiences of DA and Relocation**

Bioecological systems theory provides a foundation to examine the role of school for children who have experienced DA and relocated for this reason. By drawing on the tenets of the person-process-context-time (PPCT) model, the bedrock of bioecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), it becomes possible to comprehensively explore this phenomenon. In this chapter the PPCT model is presented alongside theories of resilience and theories of childhood.

The PPCT model regards personal characteristics and reciprocal interactions (proximal processes) as key in person development, concepts closely linked to enhancing and maintaining resilience. The model also stresses the significance of contexts and systems (the micro-, meso-, exo- and macro-system) occupied by the child during development. These ideas are complimentary to childhood theories and the "New Paradigm of Childhood" (James & Prout, 1990, 2015 p. 4), specifically the notion that childhood is a social construct, and that children have the power to influence and direct their

own lives within and across contexts (James & Prout, 1990, 2015).

### **3.3 Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory of Development**

DA can impact on a multitude of aspects of the child's developing self: social, emotional and mental health development; relationships in the family, peer group and wider social circles; and academic and cognitive functioning (CAADA, 2014; Stern & Poole, 2010). Children's experiences are shaped by their personal characteristics and interactions and are simultaneously influenced by cultural and social processes over time (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; James & Prout, 1990, 2015). Given these multiple multi-layered influences, bioecological systems theory provides a valuable framework to consider the role of school for children who have relocated because of DA.

Though less well-known than eco systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), bioecological systems theory was developed by Uri Bronfenbrenner with Stephen Ceci in the second decade of Bronfenbrenner's work (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). During this period, Bronfenbrenner revised and extended eco systems theory, which led to the development of the process-person-context-time (PPCT) model. Bronfenbrenner claimed that ecological systems theory overstated the role of context and undervalued personal influences in relation to one's own development. This was explicitly relayed when he stated: "it is useful to distinguish between two periods; the first ending with the publication of the *Ecology of Human Development* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and the second characterised by a series of papers that call the original model into question" (Bronfenbrenner, 1999 p. 4). While Bronfenbrenner criticised his own work, evidence suggests that ecological systems theory always considered the



individual within surrounding contexts and never solely focused on contextual factors (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory focused on the child in context and how a series of nested systems shaped development. It suggested the prominence of the micro-system (where the child spent direct contact time with family, school and peer group); the meso-system (where interactions took place between different elements in the micro-system); the exo-system (referring to communication between environments where the child was not directly situated) and the macro-system (broader cultural and social structures shaping child development). Bronfenbrenner later introduced the chrono-system, which related to the influence of history and continuity over time on the developing person. He contended that each interactive system influenced the social, educational, cultural and psychological development of the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Although the concepts outlined above remained embedded in the PPCT model, bioecological systems theory proposed the equal prevalence of four frames related to personal development: "process", "person", "context" and "time". The micro-, meso-, exo- and macro-systems were reframed under the "context" tenet of the model, while the "chrono-system" was repositioned under the frame "time".

Bioecological systems theory can be used to closely consider children's experiences of school relocation as a consequence of DA. This provides a framework to reflect on the "personal characteristics" of children and SPs, the "processes" which occur between them and significant others, the "contexts"

children may inhabit when they have encountered DA and relocated school for this reason, and how “time” may influence children’s and professionals’ experiences in relation to DA. Tudge et al. (2009) stated that on examination of 25 scholarly papers (2001-2008) which claimed to base themselves on Bronfenbrenner’s theory, only four relayed which model they used and drew on this appropriately. As such, this chapter explicitly explains how bioecological systems theory is relevant to this area of research.

### **3.4 “Proximal Processes” between Children and Significant Others in their Micro-system**

A central tenet of the PPCT model is the influence of “proximal processes” on the developing person. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) described proximal processes as: “the engines of development” (p.798). These bi-directional interactions occur between the individual and people, objects and social symbols in their environment. Proximal processes are key in shaping children’s developmental outcomes when they occur regularly and over time. The form, power, content and direction of the processes are affected by factors such as: personal characteristics, the nature of the environment and change over time. Proximal processes occur between children and adults in immediate face-to-face settings (for instance, at home and school). This illuminates the importance of children’s relationships in the context of the home and school environment.

Proximal processes can powerfully shape childhood development, whether the child is developing in a “normative” or “non-normative” environment. In a non-normative situation where a father is exhibiting DA to a

mother, the development of the child is at stake. Cater (2004) writes that in situations of DA, the actions of the father and the interactions of the mother and father with one another and with the child will impact on the child's developing self, including their perception of their father and mother, family life and violence in general. This has implications for the child's development of relationships both at home and in other places (e.g. at school).

Accentuating the fundamental importance of family relationships in relation to DA, Osofsky (2003) states that, "the most important protective resource to enable a child to cope with parent violence is a strong relationship with a competent, caring, positive adult, most often a parent" (p. 38). Katz (2015), however, pinpoints that childhood health and wellbeing are best maintained when the mother can retain a high standard of parenting. While these notions emphasise the significance of relationship quality to resilience, evidence conflicts with this ideal, demonstrating that DA can impede mothering skills. Research found that mothers experiencing abuse have more aggressive relations with their children and can become absorbed by the abuse, leading them to attend to few other aspects of their lives (Anooshain, 2005; Williams & Mickelson, 2004). In spite of this, Katz (2015) offers that children and mothers with past experiences of DA can play key roles in promoting one another's recoveries. Katz found that, alongside early support from professionals, mothers and children used strategies such as reassuring one another about the past, present and future, rebuilding each other's confidence and supporting one another to understand the past (Katz, 2015). These ideas reinforce that proximal processes that occur in the family home are pivotal in child

development and children's internalisation of how to relate to people in their lives.

Similarly, the teacher-child relationship can be conceptualised as a proximal process which impacts on both parties. Pianta, Hamre & Stuhlman (2003) stated that the relationship is an active system influenced by the characteristics of the school professional, the child and individual mental representations of the relationship, in the context where it occurs. Osher, Kidron, Decandia, Kendziora & Weissberg (2016) reported that educators can protect children's resilience by forming positive, secure and supportive relationships and enabling children to develop healthy peer relationships. These ideas give weight to the importance of children's "connectedness" with SPs (Garcia-Moya et al., 2014 p. 188) examined in Chapter 2.

Although children who have experienced DA are at higher risk of bullying (Baldry, 2003; Holt et al., 2009), processes between children can provide a strong, supportive place to build trust. Callaghan and Alexander (2015) found that friends offered mutual support, a place for self-expression and the development of trust (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015). Wagstaff (2009) reiterated that children consistently commented on the importance of their relationships with friends (Wagstaff, 2009). Reciprocal interactions between children and their peers therefore may be crucial in building resilience following relocation because of DA.

This section has highlighted how proximal processes with other children and their family, peers and teachers are paramount and may be critical for bolstering resilience following relocation because of DA.

### **3.5 “Personal Characteristics”, Resilience and Children as Active in Constructing their own Lives**

Within the second frame of the PPCT model, Bronfenbrenner posited that people bring personal characteristics to social situations, which he classified as “demand”, “resource” and “force” characteristics. “Demand” characteristics were defined as those acting as an immediate stimulus to the other person, e.g. gender, or age. “Resource” characteristics were defined as the cognitive and emotional resources a person brings to social encounters based on past experiences, skills and material resources. “Force” characteristics were those related to personal motivation or intent to influence one’s developing self.

In situations where a child has encountered DA and relocated school for this reason, their personal characteristics, as well as the personal characteristics of others, will impact on their relational experiences (Pianta et al., 2003; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). These characteristics will be embedded in proximal processes taking place in different contexts and the wider systems.

For example, although an extensive body of literature has demonstrated that children who have experienced DA are at increased risk of social, emotional and mental health difficulties (CAADA, 2014; Kitzmann et al., 2003; Sterne & Poole, 2010), as explored in Chapter 2, a child’s ability to cope in a situation of adversity and embody resilience will depend on their personal characteristics, the characteristics of others and reciprocal interactions which occur between them. Although definitions historically considered resilience to be

a personality trait, recent definitions have recognised it as a “dynamic, modifiable process” (Rutter 2006, p.2).

The relationship between “personal characteristics” and resilience has been given weight by theorists in recent years. Kloep and Hendry (2011) stated that the link between “resources” and “challenges” is inescapable: “it is impossible to view resources, without looking at challenges at the same time: the two are inexorably linked, in fact they are part of the same open system and what we are really analysing is not resources on the one hand and challenges on the other but the relationship between the two” (Kloep & Hendry, 2011 p.13). They stated that “resources” alter and change over time, being highly interactive and influenced by biological and socio-structural variables which are unequal in distribution across individuals and influence their development. This can be evident in relation to a mother experiencing DA, whose lack of emotional resources may influence proximal processes between herself and her child and her child’s development of her own personal characteristics, or “resource characteristics”.

Although few studies have considered children’s active responses, or “force” characteristics, in relation to their capacity to show resilience in situations of DA, such work is beginning to emerge. Callaghan et al. (2015) showed that children who have experienced DA respond actively by obtaining support from people outside the home and protecting other victims within the home. Överlien and Hydén (2009) reported that all of the children in their study had an active response to DA in the home. Children responded actively during violent episodes and discussed what they wished they could have done or

imagined doing in future DA situations (Överlien & Hydén, 2009). Allen et al. (2003) shared similar findings, reporting the strategies children used in response to DA situations. They found that although children exhibited similar emotional responses to abuse against their mothers, they used different responses to different DA situations at home.

The above findings highlight two critical points in relation to the “person” frame of the PPCT model. Firstly, children’s “force characteristics” come into play in situations of DA, since they are motivated, active and respond to DA episodes. Secondly, children’s actions are embedded in context- and situation-specific experiences (Allen et al., 2003). These points signify the importance of considering how children use context in relation to DA (explored in the next section).

Importantly, the aforementioned studies also position children as active agents, capable of influencing and affecting their own personal outcomes. These notions are embedded within constructions of childhood theories and the “new paradigm of childhood” (James & Prout, 1990, 2015 p. 4). Within their model, James and Prout proposed that:

1. Childhood is a social construction which provides an interpretive frame for contextualising the early years of human life.
2. Childhood is a variable of social analysis and cannot be separated from variables such as gender, class or ethnicity.
3. Children’s social relationships and cultures are important to study in their own right, and should be considered independently of their social construction by adults.

4. Children are actively involved in the construction of their lives and the lives of others around them and the societies they live in.
5. Researchers should focus on the ongoing roles children play and the meaning they themselves attach to their lives.
6. Proposing a new paradigm of childhood involves engaging with the process of constructing childhood in society, since children's needs are embedded in the practice and identity of childcare professionals (James & Prout, 2015).

Although research is beginning to show that children are active in situations of DA, and have their own perspectives to share in relation to their prior experiences, most studies have demonstrated the damaging repercussions of DA and position children as “passive” “witnesses” of DA, rather than individuals whose actions are independently meaningful and relevant. These ideas fit with the history of childhood studies and romantic representations of childhood as a period of innocence, free from cares and responsibilities, which occurs in opposition to adulthood (Prout, 2005). Perceiving children as active is not an attempt to overlook the risk and damage DA can cause, but rather supports the small body of research which has shown they can and do actively respond in situations of DA.

### **3.6 The Role of “Context” in Relation to Space, Place and Constructions of Childhood**

Within the third tenet of the PPCT model, Bronfenbrenner presented the role of context. As discussed earlier in this chapter (section 3.3), Bronfenbrenner wrote extensively about contexts in the child's ecosystem and what they represented. He termed these: the micro-system, meso-system, exo-



system and macro-system. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of eco systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

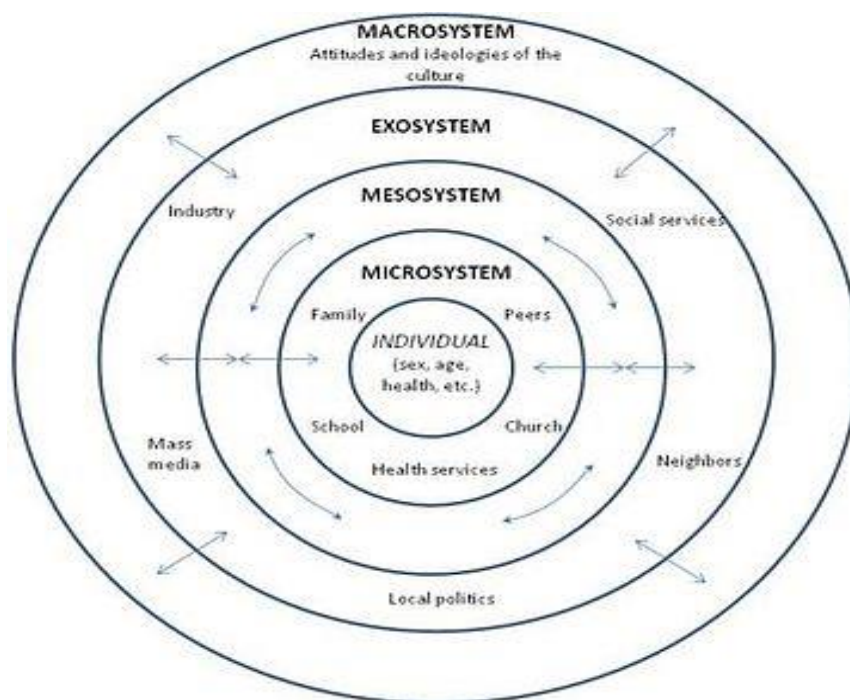


Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's Eco Systems Model

To date, research which investigates what occurs in the context of school when DA has been encountered has been underrepresented. However, given that children spend approximately 35 hours per week at school, it is reasonable to suggest that what takes place there is of great consequence. School can be a place of value and support (Baker & Cunningham, 2009; Callaghan & Alexander, 2015; Wagstaff, 2009), where relationships are developed with adults (Creeden, 2008; Garcia-Moya et al., 2014;) and SPs engage with children, children's families (the meso-system) and professionals in networks around them (the exo-system) (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

Furthermore, given the mental health needs of children who have experienced DA, as reviewed in Chapter 2 (section 2.4.1), it is useful to

consider how to build children's resilience across the contexts they inhabit, including school, when DA has taken place. Taking an ecological standpoint, MacDonald and O'Hara (1998) proposed a 10 Element Map to contemplate factors which enhance and inhibit children's mental health at the micro- meso- and macro- levels. They classed environmental quality, self-esteem, emotional processing, self-management skills and social participation as important in enhancing mental health. These classifications provide a framework for thinking about children's resilience cross-contextually as a complementary model to the "context" frame of bioecological systems theory.

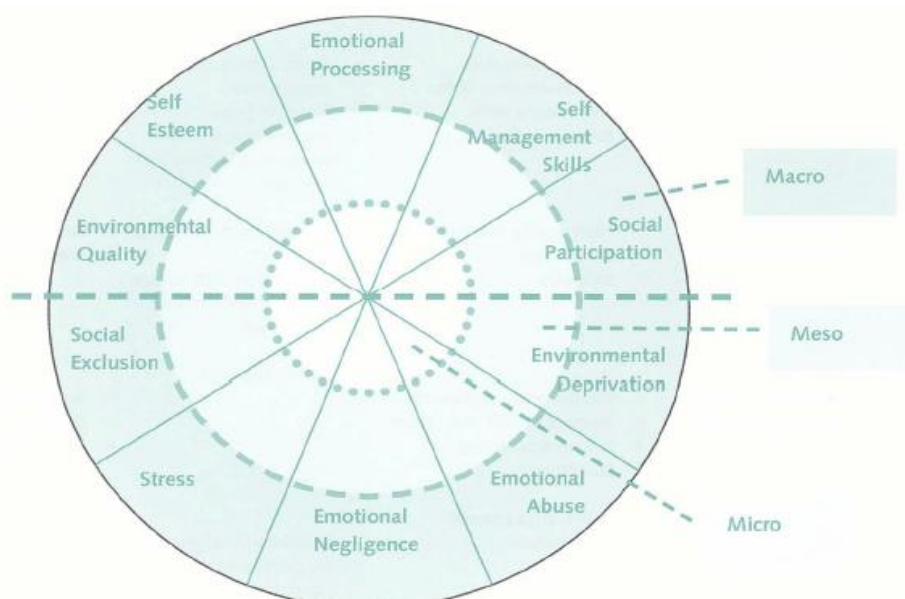


Figure 2: MacDonald and O'Hara's 10 Element Map.

Hall (2010) used MacDonald and O'Hara's 10 element map to elicit children's perspectives regarding the school context when they had social, emotional and mental health needs. Hall revealed that the child participants in her study showed a preference for certain areas of the school linked to their emotional processes. For example, children talked about feelings of concern in

relation to the playground and their preference for the learning mentor's room (Hall, 2010). Though Hall did not conduct her research with children who had experienced DA, this work highlights the significance of how children with mental health needs access space and places across the school.

Tuan (1977) distinguished between "space" and "place". While "space" was proposed as an abstract, geographically bound area, which is fluid and within which one can move, "place" was described as a particular location, concrete and meaningful. Tuan wrote of "space" and "place" being integral to one another, saying that lived experiences enable spaces to become places as value is given to them (Tuan, 1977). As explored in Chapter 2, children who have experienced DA may be operating at a higher level of vigilance, experiencing elevated levels of real/perceived threat, be at increased risk of mental health difficulties, of being bullied or of exhibiting bullying behaviour and/or relationship difficulties (Baldry, 2003; CAADA, 2014; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Sterne & Poole, 2010). As such, it is logical to propose that the spaces and places children encounter in school may be used by them in a particular way in light of their experiences of DA and relocation.

The physical design and spatial features of schools give SPs power over pupils – for instance in the classroom, the corridors and the playground (Collins & Coleman, 2008). Collins and Coleman (2008) propose that school spaces and the classroom have been designed to encourage adult authority and surveillance and to encourage the social and behavioural control of children. Andrews and Chen (2006) state that schools have been built with little means of permanent escape for children. As such, if fearful situations arise, children may

draw on spatial tactics to self-protect. For example, they might wish to avoid particular areas where bullies are known to act (Andrews & Chen, 2006). These ideas sit in contrast to other research literature that suggests that school can be a place to build resilience, provide stability and get away from DA at home (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015; Cunningham & Baker, 2004; Moore & McArthur, 2011; Proctor, 2015).

Proctor (2015) investigated how children inhabited and navigated spaces in their school lives and attributed meaning to them. She proposed that people *learn* emotional repertoires in social interactions, which occur in situated places. For example, “feeling rules” can be socially constructed parameters which guide how people “perform” emotion in particular situations. If a child’s emotional response is framed by the school’s feeling rules, then a child could respond in the way they believe is emotionally appropriate rather than in tune with their embodied experience. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that a child who has experienced DA may have “performed” emotions based on the “feeling rules” in the family home. This may also have implications for their use of space in the school environment.

Though few studies have considered how child victims of DA navigate space, Callaghan and Alexander (2015) considered children’s use of areas in the family home when DA had been experienced. They reported that children took action to protect and heal themselves through their use of physical, embodied and relational spaces, using spaces for security and comfort. Children engaged actively in watching, listening and monitoring their

environment and then made decisions based on what they observed to keep themselves and others safe (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015).

Historically, understandings of violence have not often been theoretically situated within the “new paradigm of childhood” (James & Prout, 1990, 2015; Lombard, 2015). As such, violence has not been explored as a phenomenon with spatial and temporal aspects, both of which are integral to this paradigm. The “new paradigm of childhood” proposed that the notion of childhood is a socially constructed, historically and culturally specific constitution upheld through discourse. This acknowledges children as actors in the social world, capable of determining their lived experience and future (James & Prout, 1990, 2015). In relation to these notions, Lombard states that it is crucial to understand representations of space by talking to young people themselves (Lombard, 2015). These ideas are important for understanding children’s perspectives when they have experienced DA and relocated for this reason.

### **3.7 How “Time” Shapes Children’s Lives and Discourses of DA**

In the final tenet of the PPCT model, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) wrote about “micro-time”, “meso-time” and “macro-time”. Micro-time refers to what occurs during the course of a specific situation, meso-time to the impact of interactions which occur with consistency in developing environments used by the person and macro-time to individual processes which vary according to specific historical events at different developmental stages in the child’s life.

Only a few studies have considered children’s experiences across time in relation to DA (Moore & McArthur, 2011; Mullender et al., 2002; Stafford et al., 2008). Time is also relevant to understanding how SPs support children who

have experienced DA. For example, “macro-time” relates to broader social and cultural discourses impacting on DA as a construct over time. The way society perceives and positions DA has consequences for professionals working with children and families affected by DA at this point in history. At this point in time, the role of SPs in relation to DA is under-represented in research, and studies have suggested that SPs feel underprepared when supporting children in relation to DA (Ellis, 2012; Gallagher, 2014). This reiterates that the concept of DA, and professionals’ and children’s perspectives on it, are embedded in a wider temporal framework. This area would benefit from greater exploration.

### **3.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has drawn on bioecological systems, resilience and childhood theories to examine ways to create a framework for considering the role of school for children who have experienced DA and who have relocated for this reason. The PPCT model was used to guide the chapter, and the four frames “person”, “process”, “context” and “time” were examined in detail alongside the research literature. The next chapter will present the methodology for the current research.

## Chapter 4 Methodology

### 4.1 Chapter Overview and Research Questions

The literature and theories relevant to undertaking the research have been explored, and the methodology will now be presented. In order to capture the perspectives of children who have experienced DA and relocated school for this reason, and the views of SPs working with children in the context of the school, it was important to develop a research design appropriate to this aim. The research design, the philosophical position taken by the researcher and the methods of data collection were carefully considered. The participants, the process of recruitment, the materials and methods chosen for data analysis were developed in keeping with the research aims. The consideration of ethics in the research took place fully. This chapter provides justification of the methods used in this research in response to the research questions. It begins by presenting the research questions.

- **Research question 1.** What are children's experiences of school when they have experienced DA and relocated school for this reason?
- **Research question 2.** What are SPs' experiences of supporting pupils who have experienced DA, including those who have relocated to their school for this reason?
- **Research question 3.** What are EPs' experiences of supporting schools and pupils when pupils have experienced DA, including pupils who have relocated school for this reason?

## 4.2 Research Paradigms and Philosophical Position

This research was qualitative in approach and adopted a social constructionist epistemological perspective underpinned by relativist ontology. This philosophical position well suited the research questions and design, since relativist ontology seeks to understand how individuals make sense of their world, from a subjective and socially constructed standpoint.

The researcher sought to make sense of social phenomena and understand the real world experiences of children and professionals and the meaning individuals ascribed to their experiences. These perspectives are central to a qualitative design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Elliot, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). As Willig (2008) explains: “qualitative research is concerned with meaning in context” (Willig, 2008 p. 149). This definition is pertinent to the current study, which considered meanings generated within the context of the school at a specific point in time, i.e. in relation to a child’s relocation because of DA. In a more recent publication, Willig stated, qualitative data can “aim to give voice to those whose accounts tend to be marginalised or discounted” (Willig, 2013 p.11). Children’s perspectives on their experiences of DA in relation to school life, in particular in relation to relocation, are underrepresented in academic literature and policy. Taking a qualitative approach provided a means to “give voice” to the participants involved (Willig, 2013 p.11).

The ontological position adopted was one of relativism: the belief that there is no single truth but multiple realities. Relativists regard reality as subjective and socially constructed. Relativist ontology seeks to understand



how different individuals make sense of their world (Burr, 2006). The relativist perspective was fitting and matched the researcher's interest in unearthing the subjective reality of a group of children and SPs. The researcher believed multiple realities would exist among participants, each subjective and socially constructed.

Social constructionist theory posits that people develop their understanding of reality in conjunction with others rather than within themselves. Knowledge is viewed as a social invention, dependent on wider systems and community perspectives, governed by normative rules, historically and culturally situated (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). This perspective differs from social constructivism, which posits that learning takes place by individuals as a consequence of social interaction.

DA is socially constructed and embedded in socially mediated ideas and assumptions in society. The different meanings associated with women's experience of DA have a long history of attention in academic literature. Historically, a woman experiencing DA was termed a "battered wife" or "battered woman": a description that depicts a woman who is powerless and a victim (Nicolson, 2010 p. 81). Feminists contested the notion of "battered women" in the 1970s, and today a woman may be described as a survivor of domestic abuse (Nicolson, 2010). This generates an image of someone resourceful and active in determining their future. For a woman who has encountered DA, being able to recognise her experience as such may be emotionally and intellectually liberating, encouraging her to leave the abuse

(Nicolson, 2010). As such, the social construction of DA is relevant, has shifted across time and continues to change.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the meanings children ascribe to their experiences of DA are beginning to be given credit in research literature. Social constructions of DA have mainly positioned children as passive in violence, however academic literature has begun to represent children's active reactions, responses and perspectives in regards to living with DA (Allen et al., 2003; Callaghan & Alexander, 2015; Överlien & Hydén, 2009). Endorsed by shifts in childhood studies and a move away from child development being principally located in domains of developmental psychology, the "new paradigm of childhood" provided a specific lens to view children and childhood (James & Prout, 1990; 2015 p. 4). This stressed the notion of childhood as socially constructed, historically and culturally specific and upheld through discourse. It acknowledged children as agents and actors in the social world (James & Prout, 1990, 2015).

The social constructionist epistemological position is also well aligned to this research because it complements the researcher's use of bioecological systems theory. As discussed in Chapter 3, a child's construction of reality is developed in reciprocal interactions with people in their micro-system and in relationships between those people (meso-system) in conjunction with wider social and cultural contexts (macro-system). A professional working with a child who relocated school because of DA may have developed their understanding of reality for this child through their personal construction of DA formed in

response to their other lived experiences (e.g. working with families, attendance at training, wider reading, personal experiences related to DA).

### **4.3 Context of this Research**

This research seeks to add a new dimension to the existing literature and elicit the perspectives of children and SPs to better understand children who have experienced DA and relocated school for this reason. To ensure the child's perspective was kept at the heart of the research, SPs were interviewed after data had been collected from children. This enabled the researcher to reflect on children's views when generating the interview schedules and conducting interviews with SPs.

In order to develop a robust research design, guidelines developed by Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) and Elliot et al. (1999) referring to criteria pertinent to quality qualitative research were consulted. Building on Elliot's proposition that the researcher is integral to the research process and should reflect on his/her position continuously while seeking to understand the position of participants, the researcher adopted a reflective stance throughout the research process. A journal of reflections was kept during the research process, extracts of which are included in Appendix B.

To increase the breadth and richness of data, the researcher collected data from multiple perspectives. A multi-method, multi-informant approach was taken. For instance, children's data was gathered using drawing, vignettes and verbal discussion. This was a useful strategy in light of the sensitive area of research. Children and SPs were also asked questions about their understanding of similar topics (e.g. a child starting school following relocation

because of DA). In keeping with researcher's constructionist position, data triangulation was not used in attempt to obtain a 'true' reading, a single, or overall 'truth'. Rather, as Silverman (2014) argues data triangulation was considered a means to produce 'an assembly of reminders about the situated character of action' (Silverman, 2014, p.92). This notion is given weight by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) who reported data triangulation 'is best understood as a strategy that adds rigor, breath, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p5; Silverman, 2014).

The research was structured in two parts, as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1

*Structure of the Research*

	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Data Collected</u>	<u>Research Question</u>
Part 1	Five children: three girls and two boys	Visual and verbal data including vignettes	RQ1. What are children's experiences of school when they have experienced DA and relocated school for this reason?
↓			
Part 2	10 SPs:  one IM, four DHTs and five EPs	Verbal data:  semi- structured interview	RQ2: What are SPs' experiences of supporting pupils who have experienced DA, including those who have relocated to their school for this reason?  RQ3: What are EPs' experiences of supporting schools and pupils when pupils have experienced DA, including pupils who have relocated school for this reason?

#### 4.4 Part 1: Data Collection from the Children

**4.4.1 Recruitment of the children.** To conduct Part 1 of the research, ethical approval was applied for and received from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee at UCL Institute of Education (IOE). Thereafter, the researcher

contacted a London based DA housing project supporting women and children who have relocated because of DA, where she had prior links. Following meetings with the Director of Supported Housing, the Project Manager, children's workers and project staff across three London sites, the researcher met a selection of families to explain the aims of the research and discuss child participation. The researcher spent informal time playing with children living at the DA housing project and their siblings at this stage to build rapport.

Each family (mother and child) which was consulted about child recruitment was receiving support from the DA housing project. Mothers were contacted after consideration alongside the DA project workers as to family circumstances and whether the child met the inclusion criteria. Children and mothers were given an information sheet, written in clear accessible language, providing details about the research. Children and their mothers signed written consent forms before data was collected. A child risk assessment was developed and discussed with the DA project manager (Appendices C-F).

After consent was received, the researcher met each child twice (at minimum) and data was collected. The researcher continued to spend informal time with child participants prior to and following data collection. The researcher met each child's mother to ensure families were informed of the research aims. The researcher reflected on whether to recruit children's mothers in addition to children to provide a more in depth perspective. However, following a period of contemplation mothers were not recruited. This decision was made in light of evidence which reports the complex and fragile dynamics which can exist between children and their parents (both perpetrator and victim) when DA has

been experienced. It was therefore felt that the children were likely to feel most empowered and disclose information more easily if their mothers were not included, thereby gaining better access to children's voices.

These steps led to the recruitment of five children: two males and three females.

**4.4.2 The child participants.** To gather rich information that could be explored in depth, a purposive sampling strategy was used. This style of recruitment involves subjective sampling and the judgment of the researcher in relation to participant selection (Patton, 2014). Purposive sampling was used throughout the project. A number of inclusion criteria were also developed prior to approaching the mothers and child participants for this study. This provided an ethical approach to collecting data and ensuring the safety of respondents. As such, children were required to:

- be living in safety with their mothers, separate from the perpetrator, at the point of research involvement;
- be considered a suitable participant by DA housing project staff;
- be in mutual agreement with their mother in regards to their involvement in the research;
- have relocated school as a consequence of moving home because of DA;
- be enrolled at a mainstream primary school;
- have relocated school within 12 months prior to the outset of the research;
- and
- be between 7-10 years. This stage, known as "middle childhood" or "the school years" was selected for consistency. DA research shows that

interparental violence causes differential impact at different ages (Barker & Cunningham, 2004). School age children tend to show traits such as aggression, conduct problems, disobedience, fear, anxiety, guilt, shame, academic problems and self-blame, whereas adolescents show greater amounts of substance misuse, risk of suicide and engagement in violent relationships (Carlson, 2000 p326).

The details of the children who participated in the study are shown in Table 2 below:

*Table 2: Record of Child Participants' Details*

<u>Details</u>	<u>Family Circumstances</u>
<i>Annie – age 10, year 6, number of school relocations: 1.</i>	<i>Annie was living in supported housing with her mother when we met. By the second meeting, they had relocated into the community. Annie lived at the DA refuge for approximately 12 months prior to relocation into the community. She had relocated school once because of DA. Annie did not disclose details of the DA, but explained she “saw everything”, and this was upsetting and emotional for her.</i>
<i>Claire – age 9, year 5, number of school relocations: 1.</i>	<i>Claire lived in supported housing with her mother, and they had moved six weeks before the research began. Claire had relocated school once because of DA. She explained that she and her mother had relocated because of threat and stalking by her mother’s ex-partner. Claire had attended her primary school for less than one month when we met.</i>
<i>Rachel – age 7, year 3, number of school relocations: 3.</i>	<i>Rachel lived in supported housing with her mother and younger brother, who was a toddler. She had lived at the DA refuge for approximately six months when we met and had relocated school three times. She explained that she and her mother and brother had relocated because of physical violence by her mother’s ex-partner. Rachel had attended her primary school for approximately six months when we met.</i>

<i>Benji – age 10, year 6, number of school relocations: 1.</i>	<i>Benji lived in supported housing with his mother and younger sister. He had lived at the refuge for approximately 12 months and had relocated school once because of DA. Benji did not disclose details of the DA other than saying that arguments took place between his mother and father, leading to relocation.</i>
<i>Sunny – age 7, year 3, number of school relocations: 1.</i>	<i>Sunny lived in a shared house in the community with his mother, toddler sister and another family. He relocated home approximately four months before our first meeting. He had been at his school for approximately three months when we met, and had relocated school once because of DA. He explained that he had relocated because of physical violence from his father against his mother.</i>

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**4.4.3 Materials.** Data collection took place in an interactive way, which children have reported makes research participation more enjoyable (Hill, 2006). Each participant was considered to be an active participant and co-researcher, encouraged to construct a meaningful account of their experiences during the research process (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). These approaches fit the social constructionist perspective and the theoretical position of the current research.

There were two main qualitative approaches used with the children: a visual drawing task and vignette interviews. The visual drawing task was borrowed from a report commissioned by the Scottish Government with Women's Aid, the NSPCC Centre for UK-wide Learning in Child Protection (CLiCP) and the University of Edinburgh (Stafford et al., 2008). In this report, Stafford and colleagues constructed visual accounts with children and young people to explore their experiences of relocating home in the aftermath of DA. The researcher borrowed this idea, changing the concept of moving home to moving school following DA. During this task, the researcher asked children to



describe their experience of relocating school because of DA. A series of prompts were available (Appendix G), adapted from an interview schedule developed by Hall (2010), who in her research sought to understand pupil perspective by asking school children (age 7-11 years) with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties about their experiences of school life (Hall, 2010). Hall drew on MacDonald and O'Hara's 10 element map, an eco-systemic model which complements Bronfenbrenner's (1979) systems theory and has been recommended as a tool which EPs can use when taking on a researcher role (Cole, Daniels & Visser, 2012; MacDonald & O'Hara, 1998).

To increase rigour and secure a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives of the participants, the researcher used vignettes as a second data collection method. O'Dell and colleagues (2012) describe vignettes as "short stories about a fictional character or fictional scenario appropriate to a particular study. The story places the behaviour of the character in a concrete context and allows the researcher to explore participants' views on the issues arising from the situation" (O'Dell, Crafter, Abreu & Cline, 2012 p. 703). Barter and Reynold (1999) suggested that vignettes can be used for three main purposes in social research: to explore actions in context, to provide a less threatening way to explore sensitive topics and to clarify people's judgements (Barter & Reynold, 1999). Braun and Clark (2013) also wrote that vignettes are well suited to studying potentially sensitive topics.

This fitted well with the research topic addressed in the current study. Previously, vignettes have been used to explore the impact of violence (Barter, Reynold, Berridge & Cawson, 2004). In line with published guidelines, each

vignette aimed to be true to life, fictional and about a child in a similar circumstance to that of the research participant. Participants were asked how a character in a story should or would react to a particular situation (Barter & Reynold, 2000; Braun & Clark, 2013; O'Dell et al., 2012). In order to ensure vignette quality, the researcher returned to the literature and developed a series of extracts. The first story talked about Sophie, age 8, who relocated home and school with her mother and younger sister. The second introduced Zara, age 9, who moved school three times because of DA. The third story spoke of Callum, age 8, who experienced bullying and friendship difficulties following relocation. The final story, about Neil, age 7, included how he was distracted in the classroom following relocation. The researcher drew on findings from the pilot stage of the research when creating the vignettes, and each story was grounded in literature about the impact of DA on children. Key questions were included, such as: How do you think Callum feels at his new school? What tips and advice would you give Sophie if you were her friend? Can Zara's teacher help her? If so how? The vignettes, which were reviewed and discussed with the researcher's academic supervisor, are included in Appendix H.

#### **4.5 Part 2 – Data Collection with SPs**

**4.5.1 Recruitment of the SPs.** Part 2 of the research involved data collection from ten SPs from five mainstream primary schools and one educational psychology service (EPS), where the researcher was on placement as a trainee EP. To protect the confidentiality and safety of children, data collection from professionals took place in a different borough from those where the child participants were located.

The researcher submitted a research application to the London borough where she wished to undertake part 2 of the research. The borough accepted and agreed to host the research. A risk assessment was developed and approved before contact was made with schools. Thereafter, the SENDCo at each mainstream primary school in the borough was distributed an information sheet and written consent form (Appendices I-K).

To encourage engagement, follow-up calls were made to schools approximately a week after distribution. In some cases, this led to a member of staff other than the SENDCo being recruited, e.g. the DHT. When follow-ups were made, the researcher first contacted schools she believed were located close to DA housing services in the borough. This enabled the researcher to recruit schools she believed would have greater experience of supporting children who had experienced DA and relocated school for this reason, which fits the research aims.

When contacting members of the EPS, EPs were invited to a semi-structured interview to enable discussion about this sensitive topic on an individual basis, which felt appropriate given the topic of discussion. These steps led to the recruitment of ten SPs: four DHTs, one IM and five EPs.

**4.5.2 Participants.** As with the child participants, participant selection was based on interest and response. Selection criteria for SPs were stipulated: they were required to:

- work at a mainstream primary school or the EPS in the borough;
- have experience supporting or being involved with at least one child who experienced DA and/or relocated school for this reason;

- work in a school different from any which a child participant involved in the research attended or had previously attended. This criterion was set for ethical reasons, to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of child and family; and
- for EPs: work as a fully qualified EP at the local authority rather than as a trainee or assistant EP.

Table 2 on the next page presents information about SPs who participated in the research.

Table 3

*Record of School Professional Participants' Details*

<u>ID</u>	<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Time in Role</u>
EP1	Harriet	Female	EP	5 years
EP2	Samantha	Female	EP	2 years
EP3	Louise	Female	EP	2 years
EP4	Freya	Female	EP	3 years
EP5	Eleanor	Female	EP	3 years
DHT1	Claudia	Female	DHT	7 years
DHT2	Bianca	Female	DHT, IM and SENDCo	9 years
DHT3	Lauren	Female	DHT	Information not given
DHT4	Petra	Female	DHT	8 years
IM1	Josie	Female	IM and SENDCo	3.5 years

**4.5.3 Materials.** Semi-structured interviews were used to explore the views of the 10 SPs. Using this approach enabled a range of open-ended questions to be asked, supported by the themes of the research and informed by the research aims. The researcher hoped to facilitate an interaction in which the participant could explain their perspective in their own words. Separate interview schedules were devised for SPs working at one school (i.e. DHTs/IM) and EPs working at a borough level. Although certain questions overlapped (e.g. their experiences of supporting children, useful methods and resources for giving support, perceived barriers) others did not (e.g. their experiences of enrolling a child in school, relevance to the EP role, how prepared EPs felt to support children). Interview schedules can be found in Appendices L-M.

The open nature of the semi-structured approach meant that new ideas could be developed during the interview. This individual approach also fitted with the sensitive and complex subject area, and enabled participants to speak openly within the interviews. Prior to constructing the interview schedules, previous literature was consulted and the researcher reflected on data gathered from child participants during Part 1.

#### **4.6 Pilot Study**

The purpose of the pilot study was three-fold:

- to spend time understanding the experiences of at least one child and one SP in relation to the role of school following a child's relocation because of DA;
- to spend time speaking with key professionals working in the DA sector to review the research materials and gain guidance from experts in the field;

- to reflect on the usefulness of the data collection methods, having used them during the pilot.

The pilot study was undertaken with one nine year old female, “Claire”, and one primary school HT, “Sally”, located at a mainstream primary school in an area of high deprivation in West London. Links to Claire and Sally were provided through the DA Project, with which the researcher has connections. Selection procedures were based on convenience, and care was taken to ensure that participants were well informed about the nature of the research and the pilot before deciding whether to participate in the pilot.

During the pilot data collection session, Claire constructed a drawing to represent her experiences at her previous and new schools. She was chatty and articulate and appeared to enjoy using coloured crayons. The researcher’s prompting questions and vignette were accessible and stimulated discussion.

The interview schedule provided useful prompts. The vignette enabled Claire to reflect on more difficult feelings a pupil experiencing DA might have about relocating, their new school and classroom. The researcher used reflective and active listening skills, positive reinforcement, clarification and summary of information to support Claire in actively constructing an account of her school experience.

Claire’s account gave the researcher the opportunity to consider ideas for initial coding and themes which might arise during the TA. Though TA with this amount of data was not possible, the researcher could take detailed notes and reflect on her observations. Braun and Clark describe these steps as important during the first step of TA (Braun & Clark, 2006). The session with

Claire reiterated the usefulness of using vignettes, and the need to take a relaxed, reflective stance in the session, with the researcher following prompts by the participant as much as using her own prompts. Following the pilot stage, the researcher chose to develop a wider repertoire of vignettes to use during the main phase of the research.

Interviewing Sally was equally valuable. Questions were accessible and Sally gave full responses, providing a comprehensive account of her experience as a head teacher working in a mainstream primary school with experience of accepting pupils relocating because of DA. Though the interview was informative, the researcher left wondering about the perspectives of other members of staff and how prepared and aware they felt teaching pupils following relocation because of DA. The researcher was curious to find out more about the role of the EP, and wondered how Sally felt about DA as a social construct. The researcher took these reflections forward into the main data collection stage of the research.

#### **4.7 Data Analysis**

Thematic Analysis (TA) was used across all parts of the research to analyse verbal and visual data from the children and SPs. TA offered a flexible qualitative approach for organising and describing rich data in detail. TA is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data, which is theoretically and methodologically sound (Braun & Clark, 2006). TA also fits with a constructionist qualitative approach and examines how events, meanings and experiences are the effects of discourses operating within society (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In order to manage the large dataset, analysis was conducted in

the qualitative analysis programme QSR NVivo 11. Transcripts ranged from approximately 25 minutes to one hour 10 minutes in length.

Braun and Clark (2006) wrote that while it is important for the researcher to be explicit about their epistemological and ontological positioning, TA provides “qualitative analysis guidelines” rather than “rules” for analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006 p.86). The flexibility of TA enabled the researcher to adopt this approach to analyse all aspects of the children’s data, including that gathered through use of vignettes and visual data. When children were constructing their visual accounts of relocation, the researcher sought to understand the story being told by the participant (Riessman, 2007). The researcher asked about the sequence of unfolding events, and this was central to the methodology. However, by adopting a TA rather than a narrative TA frame (Riessman, 2007, 2008), the researcher was not wedded to keeping the child’s sequential story intact or to taking a case-centred approach (Riessman, 2007). Greenhalgh (2005) commented that in narrative analysis the story is taken as a whole rather than being segmented into themes (Greenhalgh, 2005). The flexibility of TA allowed the researcher to use this approach while applying the tenets of narrative TA and remaining reflective of the sequential journey being constructed by the participant. Epistemologically, TA and narrative TA are well suited to the social constructionist position. The researcher was aware that children may not wish to divulge information in the order it occurred, and this may be related to sensitive topics arising. This led to TA becoming the ideal approach to adopt.



Data analysis was conducted following Braun and Clark's suggested framework, taking into account open and focused coding (Esterberg, 2002; Braun & Clark, 2006). Open coding was used to identify the dominant experiences in the children's lives, identified through persistent words, phrases and concepts in the data. Emphasis was placed on identifying the most important data in relation to the research question, rather than the frequency of coding to theme and subtheme (Braun & Clark, 2006). The role of the researcher was active. Patterns and themes were selected intentionally with interest for reporting partially led by the theoretical positioning of the researcher. The researcher was aware that it would not be possible to purely voice participant views, due to the selection, editing and decisions she made in relation to the data (Braun & Clark, 2006). Data analysis took place across the data sets, incorporating the data used from the data corpus: the data items, individual pieces of data and data extracts (Braun & Clark, 2006).

The researcher followed a series of six steps outlined by Braun and Clark's framework.

1. Familiarisation with the data was achieved through reading, re-reading and generating initial connections in the data (verbal and visual). This was supplemented by consideration of the research aims and the theoretical models contributing to the development of the research.
2. Code generation (termed "nodes") occurred across the datasets using NVivo11.
3. NVivo11 was used to gather "nodes" into overarching themes. Themes contained subthemes, which were also generated using NVivo11. Further exploration of subthemes took place using diagrams to check the density of

coding to notes. This enabled prominent themes to be identified. A selection of thematic maps can be found in the data analysis chapters. The number of references coded to each sub theme was shown to indicate the degree to which a topic was discussed and the number of SPs who contributed to that subtheme. Using NVivo11 also enabled identification of times when data had been coded to more than one node; this enabled greater clarity of themes and subthemes.

4. The themes were reviewed in relation to a thematic map of the analysis.

Coded nodes were refined to ensure that all participants had contributed across parts 1 and 2 of the research.

5. Themes and subthemes were defined and named.

6. The researcher produced the analysis chapters using a selection of supportive quotes to illuminate elements of subthemes and the difference between participants across themes and subthemes. An example coded transcript from parts 1 and 2 of the research can be found in Appendices N and O.

**4.7.1 Visual analysis.** TA was applied as a means of eliciting common themes from the images produced by the children (Braun & Clark, 2006). During the TA, each child participant's verbal and visual data was analysed as a single unit. A similar approach was used by Campbell, Skovdal, Mupambireyi, and Gregson (2010), when they used drawings and stories to analyse children's stigmatisation of AIDS-affected children (Campbell et al., 2010). The research also drew on guidelines provided by Saldaña (2013), Kuhn (2003) and Freeman and Mathison (2009) to guide analysis of the visual images created by the children.

Saldaña (2013) suggested a holistic, interpretive lens guided by strategic questions. He wrote that careful scrutiny of and reflection on images documented through field notes and memos will generate language-based data to accompany visual data (Saldaña, 2013). Saldaña added: “I have yet to find a single satisfactory approach that rivals the tacit capabilities of human interpretation and reflection. Trust your intuitive impression when analysing and writing about visual materials” (Saldaña, 2013 p.57). Similarly to Saldaña (2013), Kuhn (2003) did not advise creating too narrow and restrictive a lens when interpreting visual images. Instead he suggested analysing qualitative categories such as: elements (objects, persons), structure (people’s actions), people (e.g. child, teacher), environment (e.g. grass, sun, animals), objects (e.g. table, bridge) or text (title, label, words). Kuhn also proposed an evaluation of space, location, social relationships and activities while paying attention to the thematic evaluation of drawings (Kuhn, 2003). The researcher was guided by these suggestions as well as strategic questioning suggested in the literature for interpreting children’s drawings (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). A selection of Freeman & Mathison’s questions given to guide visual analysis, are presented in Table 4 on the next page.

Table 4

*Questions Used to Guide Visual Analysis*

<u>Focus</u>	<u>Analysis questions</u>
Subject Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the physical features of the image?</li> <li>• What is the relationship of the image to the current practices? To identities? How is the image socially situated?</li> <li>• What common experiences are invoked?</li> <li>• How does the image relate to bigger ideas, values, cultural constructions?</li> </ul>

- Image Creation
- What are the design features? Are images scaled or mapped?
  - What values and knowledge are communicated by the creator?
  - How does the image relate to values of the time and place?
- Audience Viewers
- What impact does the image have on viewers?

A breakdown of the stages of data analysis are illustrated in Table 5

below:

Table 5

*Stages of Data Analysis*

<u>Dataset 1</u>	<u>Dataset 2</u>	<u>Data Corpus</u>
Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Analysis of Visual and Verbal Data using TA and supplementary approaches (Kuhn, 2003; Freeman & Mathison, 2009; Saldaña, 2013).	Analysis of SPs Data using TA including presentation of thematic maps.	Discussion pertaining to Datasets 1 and 2.
Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7

#### 4.8 Ethical Considerations

This was an ethically sensitive study. The research elicited children's and professionals' perspectives, asking for insights into participants' lives and experiences. The researcher has over 10 years' experience working with vulnerable children and adults, including four years of direct work with children and women who encountered DA. The researcher holds an enhanced DBS certificate, was a Samaritan for five years and has extensive experience of working with professionals and vulnerable clients. She has read the relevant ethical guidelines (British Psychological Society, 2009; Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2014; Code of Human Research Ethics, 2014).

Alderson and Morrow (2004) discuss the ethics of social research with children. They note that one of the biggest ethical challenges is the disparity in power and status between adults and children (Alderson & Morrow, 2004). Morrow writes that “respect” should be a methodological technique in itself, and the researcher should set aside tendencies to take children for granted, and “accord them a provisional status” (Morrow, 2004, p.11). Within this research, care was taken to explain, according to a child’s age and ability, information and consent forms. A full explanation of the research aims was provided. Where a mother consented for their child, the child could decline and no effort was made to persuade the child to participate. Children were given the opportunity, time and space to speak for themselves about their lives and school experience. Children were informed that they could withdraw at any time, which ultimately led to one child exiting the research earlier than anticipated.

Care was taken to ensure that adult participants understood their rights. The full scope of the research was explained to SPs and they were informed that they could exit at any point. Although SPs had shown an interest in being interviewed and were not considered vulnerable, the researcher was aware that the sensitive nature of the topic could activate feelings of emotional discomfort. As such, a risk assessment was developed and reviewed by the local authority.

The researcher was mindful of the individual characteristics of each child and the level of experience of each adult. Literature explains that researchers should not assume that children are a homogenous group, since children’s accounts will be affected by variables such as gender, age, ethnicity and personal characteristics such as shyness and willingness to talk to adults

(Alderson & Morrow, 2004). This fits with a social constructionist epistemological approach.

Confidentiality was of particular importance. Confidentiality fears may have acted as a barrier, preventing children from speaking out. A sensitive approach was taken, and children and adults were encouraged to participate in interviews in a way that felt comfortable. The bounds of confidentiality were explained to both children and adults. Alderson and Morrow (2004) suggest that researchers be aware of their responsibilities as adults to ensure that children do not suffer harm at any stage in the research process (Alderson & Morrow, 2004).

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, and only the researcher had access to the original interview transcripts and data. Audio files and transcripts were password protected and stored securely. All names and identifying information were changed to protect anonymity. Adults, children and mothers were informed that the researcher would break confidentiality if she felt that information shared by children or adults could lead to the direct harm of them or another person. It was important to explain this in a sensitive and honest way at the outset of the research.

#### **4.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has presented the methods of the current research. The following chapter will outline the results which developed from analysis of the children's data using TA.

## Chapter 5 Analysis of Children's Data

### 5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the results of the TA of data from Part 1 of the research. Children constructed visual accounts to represent their experiences as well as giving verbal feedback. As part of the data collection process, children were asked their opinions about characters described in four vignette accounts<sup>2</sup>. Children's responses to vignette data have been included in this chapter.

The data responded to research question 1: What are children's experiences of school when they have experienced DA and relocated school for this reason?

### 5.2 Presentation of Themes

Three overarching themes were generated through TA of the children's data, with each overarching theme housing subthemes. To indicate the extent of discussion that took place in relation to each subtheme, the frequencies of quotes to subtheme are shown in diagrams throughout this chapter in brackets. The number of children who contributed to each subtheme is referred to using the number (n) in brackets. Children's quotes given in relation to a vignette are shown using a capital "V". This chapter makes reference to five children: girls Annie (age 10), Claire (age 9) and Rachel (age 7) and boys Benji (age 10) and Sunny (age 7). Figure 3 on the following page presents themes and subthemes.

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<sup>2</sup> The four vignettes can be found in Appendix H.

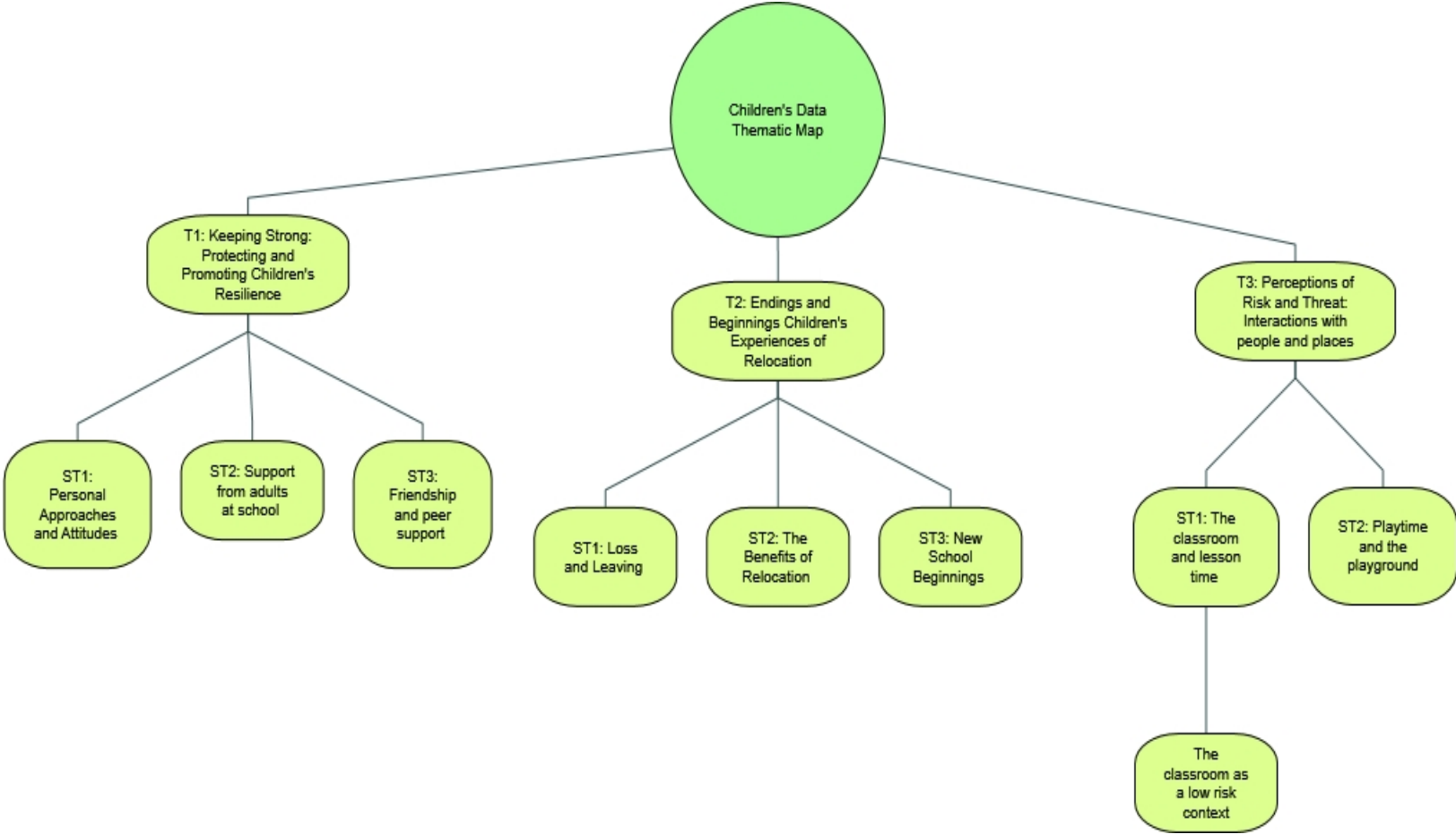


Figure 3: Thematic Map from Analysis of Children's Responses to RQ1



### 5.3 Theme 1: Keeping Strong: Protecting and Promoting Children's Resilience

Theme 1 presents data that considered the children's strategies for self-support that fostered their own resilience in school. The first subtheme refers to children's personal approaches and use of objects and places as a means to self-care and self-protect. Subthemes 2 and 3 relate to the importance of professionals and peers in aiding children's resilience. This theme is relevant to helping SPs better understand what children do to support themselves, and what they perceive as supportive in the school environment.

Figure 4 below illustrates this theme, its subthemes and the frequencies of coding to subtheme:

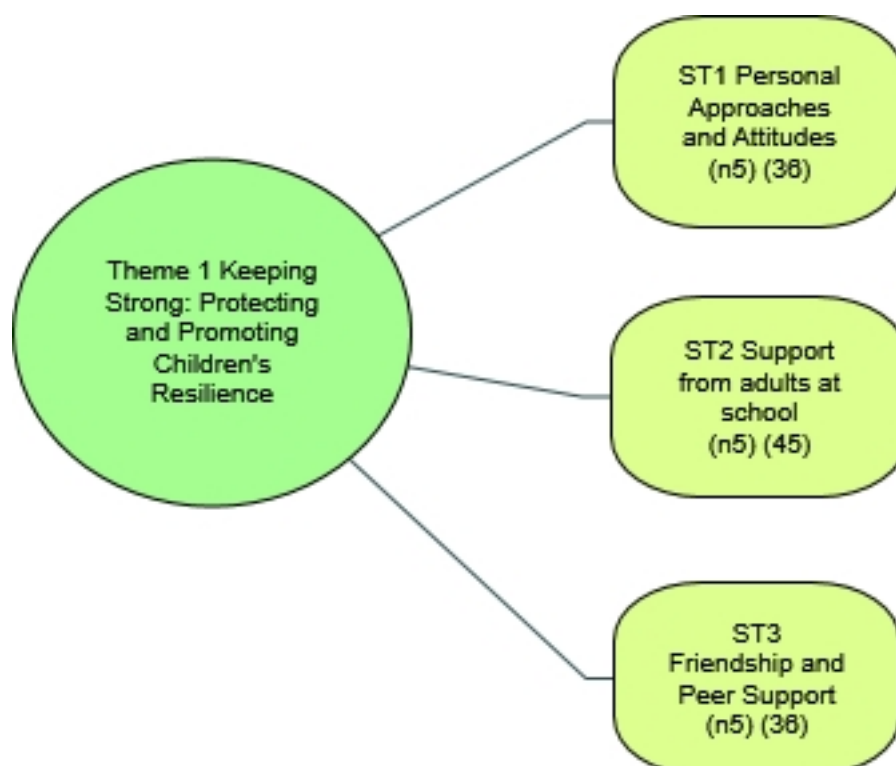


Figure 4: Theme 1 and Subthemes from Analysis of Children's Data

**5.3.1 Subtheme 1: personal approaches for resiliency.** This subtheme presents children's personal approaches used for resiliency at school. Children conveyed that using attributes (e.g. humour, bravery and honesty), sharing their feelings and navigating their environment strategically enabled them to self-nourish and protect (n5). When talking about vignette character "Callum", whose story described his experience of spiteful behaviour from another pupil, Annie explained how Callum could support himself.

*He could say, "Miss can you please find me some friends? I am kind of lonely and I do not like it." Or, when I used to be at school one day I wanted to be this girl's friend really badly and I said "Hello what's your name" and that's when we started a conversation and that's when she said "do you want to be friends?" And I said "yes", and then we were friends. So I think he should do the same. (Annie)*

Anne acknowledged that school could feel lonely; however, she illustrated two methods a child could use to self-aid: approach a teacher or instigate a new friendship. In this excerpt Annie reiterated how important friendship is ("I wanted to be this girl's friend really badly") and the success she experienced when she took steps to befriend another pupil. Although she positioned the teacher as a supportive figure, Annie did not rely on her and used her own resources.

Speaking about her experience of being bullied, Claire relayed how she used protective strategies to help herself.

*When I was in year three, there was a boy who fancied me who was in year six but he used to bully me. So I used to try and be naughty so I could miss my break time....He used to follow me around the playground and make fun of me and go near me and kind of like show off and that was it, and I was at the other side of the playground, and he shouted to me "will you marry me?" and I walked up to him and said "no that's never going to happen". (Claire)*

On the surface, the bullying Claire received could be perceived as innocuous, particularly when the boy asked: "will you marry me?" Claire may have misinterpreted the boy's attempts to develop a friendship. Her use of the phrases "he used to follow me around the playground" and "go near me" suggested that the boy's repeated attempts to be close to Claire were key to her being upset. Claire and her mother relocated because of stalking by her mother's ex-partner. In her excerpt, Claire demonstrated resiliency by deciding to confront the boy ("I walked up to him and said 'no that's never going to happen'"). Claire also used a physical strategy to protect herself in school ("I used to try and be naughty so I could miss break time"). She reported that she used "naughtiness" to move to a different part of the school where it was "peaceful".

*I went to the playtime room...and did work. I kind of liked it there because it was all peaceful, and I like doing work so I went there...but I said "I didn't really be naughty to get into the playtime room, I just said I don't really want to go outside because I am being bullied", and she said,*

*“well if you want you can go to the playtime room to work there instead of going outside” and I said “yes”. (Claire)*

Here, Claire demonstrated resilience again. She was honest in letting the teacher know why she was “naughty” and then used the playtime room legitimately. Claire’s relationship with her teacher seemed to enable her to explain the reasons for her misbehaviour. The teacher also supported her in relocating to a place she felt safer. Similarly, when seven year old Rachel talked about her school experiences, she described how she self-nurtured by bringing soft toys to school.

*I took a toy in and everybody was like “Ohhh Rachel is bringing a toy in”... “you shouldn’t bring toys in,” but the teacher knew why I was bringing a toy in...because of what happened at home...mummy let me bring one in and keep it at school. Teddies, dogs, anything. (Rachel)*

Rachel used a particular strategy to self-care. Though she explained she brought toys into school because adult authority enabled this to happen (“mummy let me”, “the teacher knew”), Rachel also demonstrated her independent strength of character when, despite being mocked and scolded by pupils, she continued bringing toys in. Sunny’s experiences were similar to Claire’s in that he visited a separate room in school to look after himself. Similar to Rachel, Sunny referred to animals (real in his case) which helped him feel happy. A visual image drawn by Sunny with a supporting excerpt is presented below. This brings to life the importance of animals to Sunny at his new school.

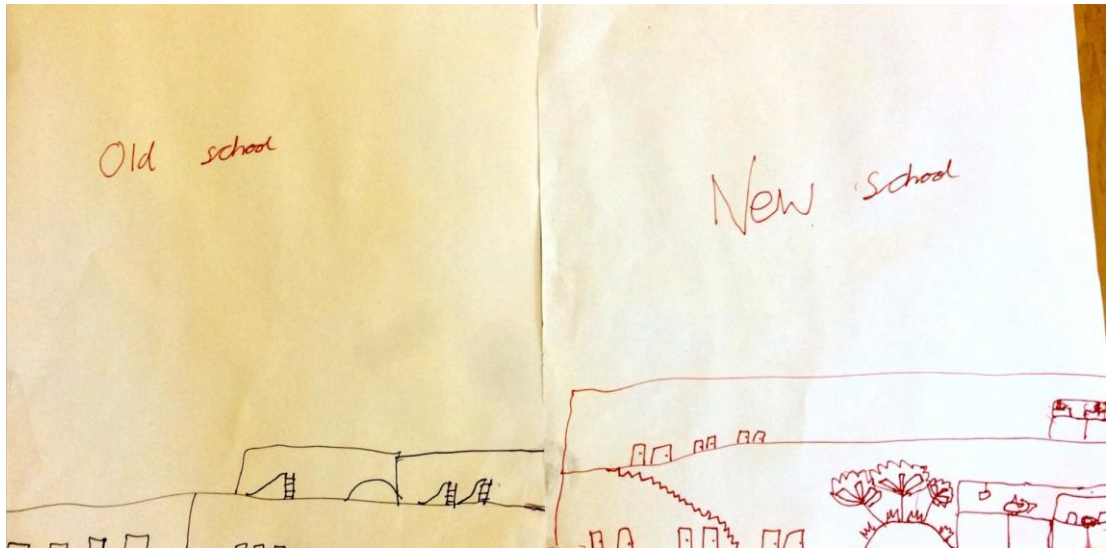


Figure 5: Visual Image: Sunny

*There's like the animals upstairs it's so cool it's like owls and stuff and there's hamsters and guinea pigs downstairs...there's fish downstairs as well....I'll make a smiley face....The baby owls are cute you know. [Do you like playing with them?] Yeah I love it...I always go there... I always go upstairs to see them...these are the owls' houses...wait let me draw the handle. It looks weird when there's no handle on the door. There's the big hill, there's a tree, you get to climb on the tree...when you have a little rest you go upstairs and see them [the owls]. (Sunny)*

Following relocation to his new school, Sunny visited an area of the school where owls were kept to “rest” during lesson time. Sunny explained that the animals at his school were happy (“I’ll make a smiley face”) and he enjoyed being with them (“really cool”, “I love them”). He reiterated how much this place meant to him (“I always go there”) and why he visited (“to have a rest”). Though Sunny’s picture included visual images of his “old” and “new” school, representing different points in time, there was a contrast between the images.

The features drawn on the “new school” suggested an increase in feelings of resilience following relocation. This was conveyed through the environmental features (hill, tree, animals) which implied life and growth; the objects (homes, doors with handles) which suggested containment and safety, and the structural features (stair climbing/tree climbing), which indicated progression and movement upwards. These features contrasted to how Sunny represented his “old school”. There were no safe routes to reach different places (e.g. staircase/door handles) or environmental features (e.g. trees/animals). In addition, the colour used on Sunny’s “new school” representation was red, which contrasted with the black colour used to represent his “old school”. The “old school” image also feels sparse of activity and “life” in comparison.

This subtheme has shown how children use independent thought and action to self-support and self-protect in school. The children drew on different approaches, highlighting the importance of friendship, using space to self-soothe and comforting toys legitimised by adults in the school environment.

**5.3.2 Subtheme 2: support from adults at school.** In this subtheme, children talked about the importance of teachers when they had experienced DA (n5). Children highlighted teacher approaches and interventions that supported their wellbeing at school.

Ten year old Benji referred to his aggressive behaviour throughout our discussion. However, when talking about support he received from teachers he conveyed that their input enabled him to reduce his aggression.

*Now in what's it called playtime if you do anything physical you get told off...and if your teacher tells you off in lunch time and they tell your*

*teacher you could get told off also...and then you'll miss like a whole lunch time and get detention. If you do it again you miss two. If you do it again you miss three. It adds up one every time...like now that's happened I stopped now fighting...It's fine because then like nothing bad could happen. Like when you're older like someone like you beat them up you could get into prison. (Benji)*

Following relocation to his new school, Benji mentioned that the teachers paid close attention to his behaviour. It appears from his quote that a behaviour management plan was implemented and this reduced his aggressive behaviour. With this strategy in place, Benji could envisage a future where “nothing bad could happen”. Benji made a connection to an identity he wanted to have. This was made possible following the implementation of clear boundaries by adults, in a traditionally less structured part of the school (i.e. the playground). Similarly, Annie described how teacher discipline was important for preventing problems escalating. Annie described this as a caring approach.

*The teachers are really, really nice and they really care like if someone does something wrong. They don't just leave it like some people do. If someone hurts someone or someone has a cracked head, or they're being rude or racist or something like that they are put in detention for a week. Lunch time or break time so they learn their lesson. (Annie)*

Annie, like Benji, reported that physical fights could occur in school. Annie's phrase (“learn their lesson”) reiterated that it was important to her that people who hurt others were punished and justice was restored. Although within the two aforementioned excerpts Benji is positioned as an aggressor and Annie

as somebody fearing aggression, both children highlighted the benefit of teachers enforcing boundaries as a form of protection. Similarly to Annie and Benji, Rachel referred to the possibility of physical injury occurring at school. Talking about how a school teacher could help vignette character “Zara” at school when she had experienced DA, Rachel explained, “*She [the teacher] can help her when she needs help. She could kind of like tell her it’s okay when she’s sad and when she needs to go to first aid*” (Rachel - V).

Both emotional and physical support were mentioned as important by Rachel. Rachel assumed a child would feel sad and would visit first aid, and she positioned the teacher as somebody authoritative who could help in this scenario. Rachel showed that teacher empathy and reassurance was important (“tell her it’s okay when she’s sad”).

Similarly, Claire explained that school children benefitted from emotional support from SPs. Claire explained that the school counsellor helped her feel happy.

*They take you out of class and let you do what you want, draw and stuff. Make you feel happy so you can like forget about what happened in your past and feel like you can make a new life and start again and stuff, and you can maybe feel better....It’s really important to me because if I feel upset and I want to share stuff, and I feel someone is going to say “stop being a bit dramatic”, or I feel like I haven’t got anyone to talk to, then you know someone like Miss Joshie is there....Then like you could tell her what’s happened so you don’t feel like you’ve got no one to talk to,*



*and a bit crowded or something, like you've got all these people but you can't talk to anyone there. (Claire – V)*

Claire directly attributed being able to “feel happy”, “forget what happened in your past” and “start a new life” to the presence of an SP available to help her contain her emotions. Although Claire talked about being surrounded by “all these people”, she felt “you can't talk to anyone there”. This is an astute perception; Claire described what she needed, as well as how she could be perceived as “dramatic” by people around her. She assumed that the reaction to her sharing her feelings would be negative, and she raised the idea of being surrounded by people (fitting in the context of a busy school) while having nobody to talk to, although she appreciated having an important teacher she could disclose to. Claire's visual image reinforced the importance of adults to her at school.

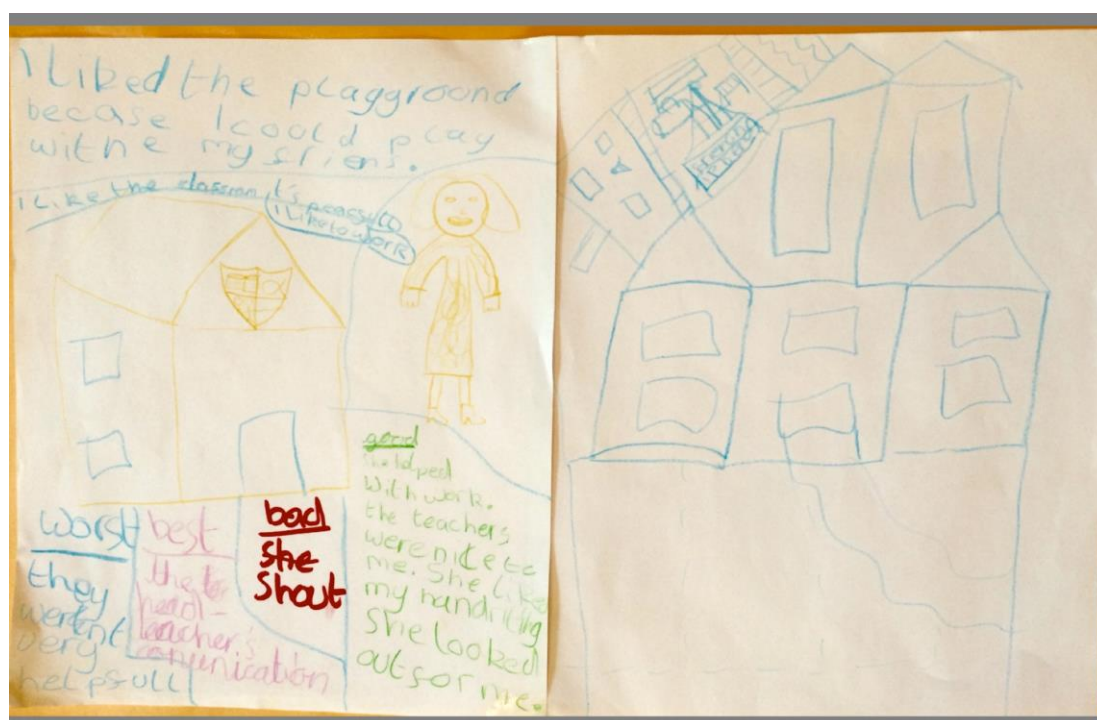


Figure 6: Visual Image – Claire

Claire's visual image depicted her old school (left) and her new school (right). She had been attending her new school for under a month when she drew the image and she focused on drawing her "old school". Claire labelled her image with phrases applied to the class and head teacher. She wrote about positive experiences ("she looked out for me", "the teachers were nice to me", "she liked my handwriting") and negative ("shout", "they weren't very helpful") when describing SPs at her school. The image of the class teacher was as large as the image of the school. This highlighted the significance of school teachers to Claire.

When Annie talked about how a teacher could provide emotional support, she conveyed that not all children would want to share their feelings with an adult face to face but might still want emotional support through other means. Annie chose to use the "worry box" to write notes to the class teacher rather than seek out face-to-face support.

*My teacher and some other teachers have a worry box so you can write a note and then put it in a worry box, what worries you or if you have a problem. Instead if you don't want to say it in her face you can write it down in the note...I think that's pretty good. I usually use that...I like it. That may be something the kids that want to speak to the teacher that are too shy or something, they can write it in the worry box...when people might like hurt my feelings or stuff like that. (Annie)*

Annie referenced "shy" and "quiet" children who "do not want to cause a problem" throughout her dialogue. This could be connected to her experiences of DA and the way she self-managed and kept safe at home. Annie's

preference for a “worry box” fits with this idea of “not causing a problem”. She may have felt this intervention gave her more anonymity and increased feelings of safety.

Across this subtheme, all of the children also referred to teacher’s communication styles. Sunny explained his preference for his teacher being polite, and not shouting, saying: *“When I get in trouble she says it nicely. She says it like in a polite way. She wouldn’t shout”* (Sunny). Similarly, all of the children talked negatively about teachers shouting.

This subtheme has shown the approaches and strategies children perceived as helpful from teachers at school. It has highlighted children’s preference for structured boundaries to protect them from harm, empathy, opportunities to express their emotions both directly and indirectly and the avoidance of shouting in the classroom.

**5.3.3. Subtheme 3: Friendship and peer support.** All children talked about the importance of friendship for increasing feelings of wellness at school. They described how different attributes friends had were important to them. Rachel recalled how being with her friend Lucy was the best part of her school experience.

*Lucy took my hair bobble because I had two in. I took one out to do it again. So I’ve gone “Lucy”, and she’s snatched it and ran off. And I’m like “Lucy come here” (Laughing). Cos that was actually the funnest bit of being at that school being with, chasing Lucy and being with Lucy yeah.*  
(Rachel)

Rachel described a fond memory of playing with Lucy at school. For Rachel, playing with this one “best friend” (relayed in another part of her dialogue) was “the funnest bit of being at school” . Children often talked about one significant peer, or a “best friend” (n4).

Using the story of vignette character “Callum”, Sunny described the sort of person Callum might like to befriend at school. Similar to Rachel, Sunny reported that “fun” and “laughter” was important. However, Sunny also sought out friends who would protect, be caring and call on adult support when needed.

*Maybe he’s funny and a bit laughy...a kind friend like share stuff maybe like sharing pencils so if he can’t reach the pencil pot he can give one to him...like when you fall over he helps you. If you can’t get up he can lift you up and then get the teacher. (Sunny – V)*

Similarly to Sunny, when Annie talked about the characteristics of friends, she described how her friends could help by caring and mediating when she needed protection.

*At my new school they are really nice. If I got hurt they said to help me and tell someone and get a teacher, and if someone hurt me really bad they used to talk to them and ask them why they did that and stuff...so yeah they would used to go up to them they would ask me what happened I would tell them what happened. One of them would speak to the teacher and the other would speak with the person. (Annie)*

Annie emphasised the importance of friends as caring mediators who talked to peers and asked “why did they do that?” as well as fetching adults for additional support.

Subtheme 3 has shown the characteristics the children perceived as important in friends, as well as how friends supported their emotional well-being in school. The children relayed the importance of friends to have fun with during outdoor play, as well the importance of friends being caring, and mediators who could protect them when they were hurt.

**5.3.4 Summary of theme 1.** The first theme has described three key facets of self-care and resiliency mentioned by the children. Children demonstrated their own strategies and approaches to self-care. Input from teachers and friends was also seen as paramount and enabled children to feel have fun and feel safe and protected when physical and emotional altercations occurred. Figure 7 below presents a summary of a range of interventions and approaches children suggested as supportive to resilience at school.

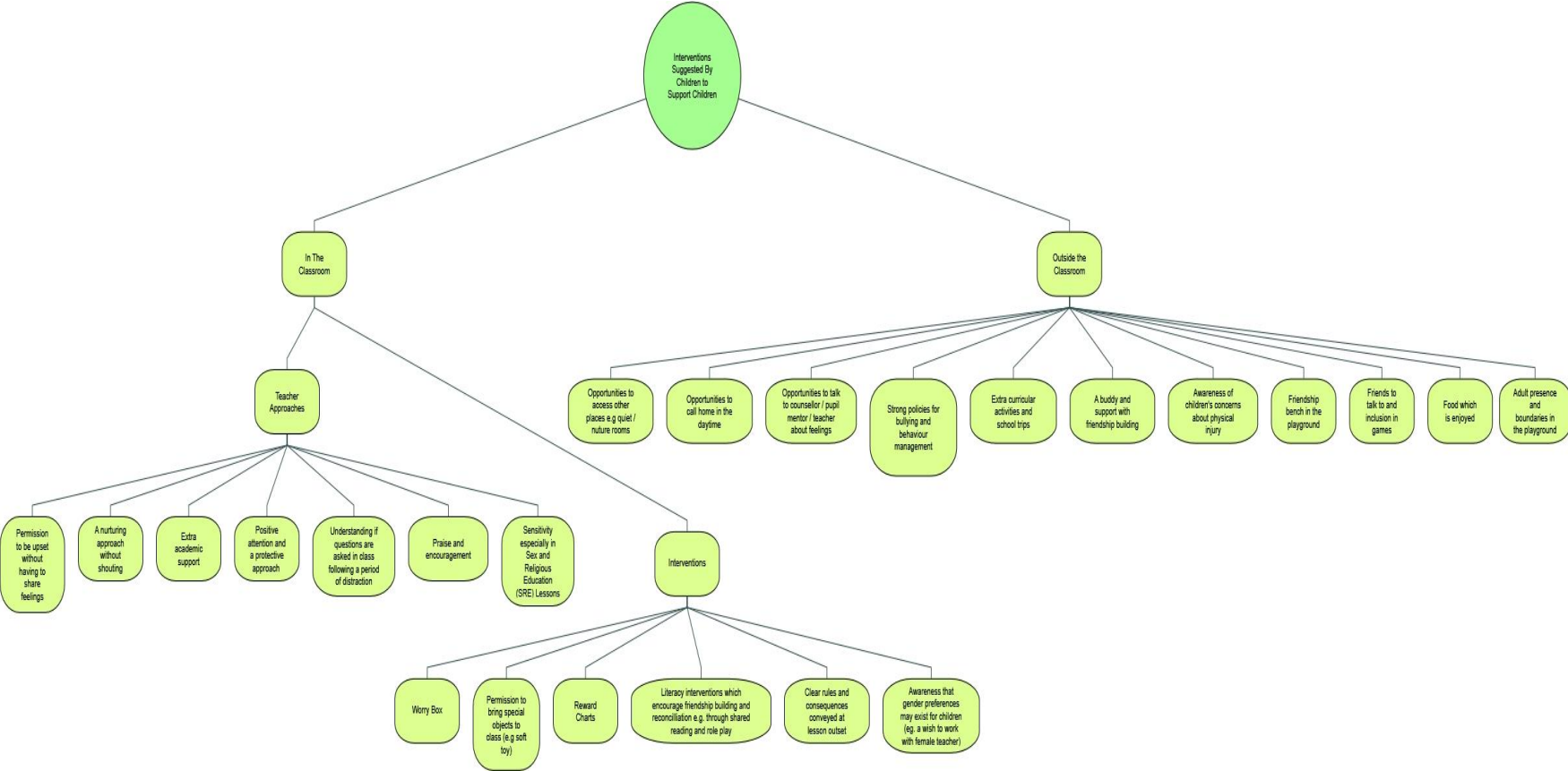


Figure 7: Summary of Interventions Suggested by Children

## 5.4 Theme 2: Endings and Beginning: Children's Experiences of Relocation

Theme 2 presents data developed from children's experiences of relocation. This theme includes children's accounts of loss, leaving people and possessions, the perceived benefits of relocation and how children felt about beginning life at a new school. Figure 6 below illustrates this theme, subthemes and frequencies of coding to subtheme.

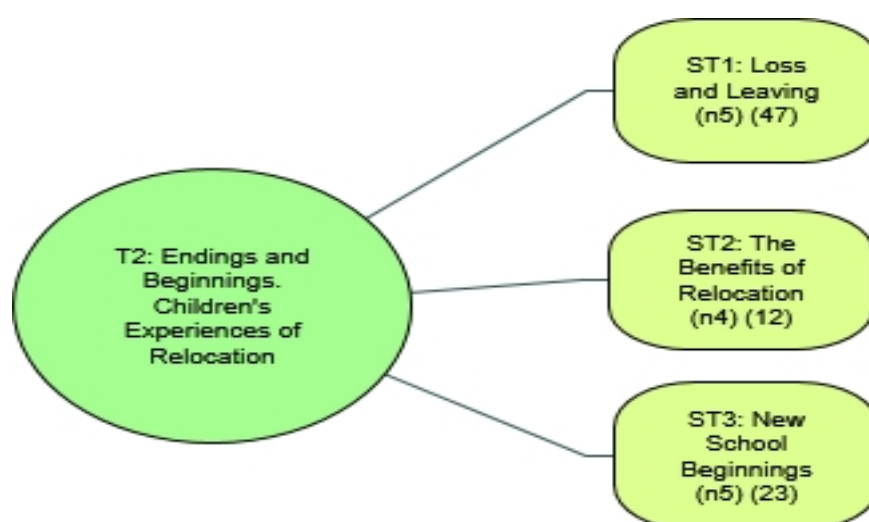


Figure 8: Theme 2 and Subthemes from Analysis of Children's Data

**5.4.1 Subtheme 1: loss and leaving.** In this subtheme, children commented on their experiences of leaving. They referred to leaving friends (n4), family members (n2) and possessions (n2). They described being unprepared for the move and how this occurred without warning (n5).

When Claire talked about how vignette character "Zara" may feel about relocating school, she reported that the character would feel sad to leave her

friends. For Claire, this was mixed in with feelings of guilt and concerns about being selfish.

*She's worried she's going to upset her friends so she's feeling a bit mean and selfish...saying bye to all of her friends and not thinking about them, just thinking about herself. But it's not that way because she's moving away from her danger and her friends would understand but...a bit guilty as well. (Claire – V)*

Although Claire talked about the feelings of the vignette character, it is indicative of potential feelings she may have held herself when leaving her friendships from her old school. Claire suggested a range of feelings (“mean”, “selfish”, “guilty”) related to leaving friends behind. Similarly to Claire, Rachel talked about leaving friends: *“Scared and frightened...because she might miss all her old friends and she doesn't really want to miss her old friends”* (Rachel – V).

Rachel suggested how a child may feel about relocation. Her words exemplified fear, although there was also a tension for Rachel between what was taking place (i.e. relocation) and what the vignette character may want to take place. Rachel relayed that the character “doesn't really want to” miss her friends. This suggests a lack of influence and the emotional pain Rachel felt over her own relocation.

When the boy participants talked about relocation, they conveyed that friends were important, although the emotions they attached to their experiences differed. Rather than focusing on feelings of fear or worry, they talked of feelings of frustration.



*I didn't understand, my mum didn't tell me nothing about it and it was like a shock we just went straight here...I couldn't even say bye to my friends and say I'm not going to come to this school. (Benji)*

Benji's excerpt conveys a feeling of injustice. As above, his language emphasised a lack of influence in relation to relocation and a sense of being overpowered. Benji also stressed the unpreparedness he felt in regards to relocation. Similarly, Sunny relayed that a vignette character whose story described her moving school three times would feel "*frustrated. Maybe because she doesn't want to move so many times to so many different schools*" (Sunny - V).

Although not referring directly to himself, Sunny's discourse reiterated that a child would not want to relocate school so many times. This brings to the forefront emotions children may feel when they are taken away from their former environment, which are likely to impact on their new school experiences. When Annie talked about her experience of relocating, she reported feelings of exhaustion and apprehension.

*I don't like it when I keep moving and moving and moving. It's just really tiring and you have to carry loads of stuff around with you and you have to move schools as well. It will just be difficult for you. You have to learn to meet different people, do it again and again and again. You don't even know how those people are, they might be horrible, they might be nice. (Annie)*

Similarly to the other children, the emphasis for Annie was on meeting new people ("again and again and again") and on how tiring and uncertain the

prospect of building new relationships could be. A sense of the need to draw on physical and mental resources was conveyed.

As well as talking about leaving people behind, some children (n2) talked about leaving possessions. Rachel referred to the belongings she abandoned. Again there was a sense of powerlessness she had from preventing this.

*I miss my dog Snowy...It's a white dog that looks like the dog from Tintin [children's television programme]...I really miss him because he's cute and cuddly...I think he's still at the other house...and my Elsa [Walt Disney princess character] dress is at the other house...half the things are at the other house...if all this stuff wasn't here and you added a bit of the other room to this room there's lots of stuff this size. This room. Full of stuff. (Rachel)*

Rachel used the room where the data collection took place to convey accurately the large quantity that had been abandoned. Rachel's degree of detail indicated how important her possessions were to her and her need to express this precisely.

This subtheme has conveyed the difficult emotions children experience in relation to relocation from their old school and family home. The children (n5) conveyed a lack of ability to control what was happening for them.

**5.4.2 Subtheme 2: the benefits of relocation.** Although, as shown in subtheme 1, children demonstrated feelings of sadness, grief, worry, frustration and fear in relation to relocation, they also conveyed feelings of relief. This

subtheme illuminates that, alongside difficult negative emotions, children perceived relocation as important and necessary in bringing DA to an end and providing an opportunity to live safely. When discussing a vignette character, Annie talked about how the dangers of DA ultimately meant a family made the right decision to relocate.

*If she stayed there the problem would've got bigger and bigger and someone could've got proper hurt or something would've been damaged...because men can be strong. I'm not just saying this about dads this can be anyone...people can be strong because we do have muscles...and it's like if they just hold you from your neck and bang you like three times on the floor you can die. Or they strangle you and you can die as well...she could've got hurt herself because for example, imagine if she tried to save her mum and her sister instead she might have got hurt...so I think they all, I think they all did the right thing to leave so they're all safe. (Annie – V)*

Annie's graphic language showed an awareness of the frail and precarious home conditions for children affected by DA and their mothers. In the excerpt, Annie pointed out the dangers to the mother, sister and child (in actively trying to save the mother). She reiterated her awareness that DA could escalate and kill, and therefore deduced that relocation was necessary. Annie's visual image, presented below, reinforces both the negative and positive emotions she felt in regards to relocation and the significance of her journey.

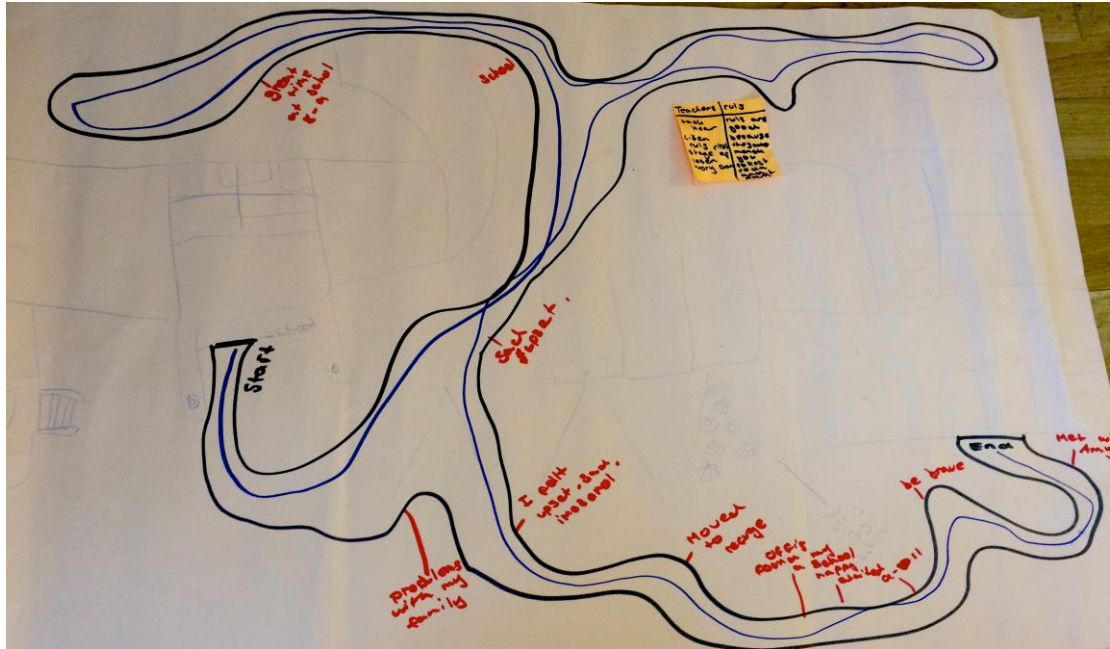


Figure 9: Visual Image<sup>3</sup> – Annie

The overarching feature of Annie’s visual image was what she termed the “maze” or “path”. This winding black “maze/path” with a blue line running through it and red text labels represented Annie’s journey from her old to new school. Although two settings were depicted on Annie’s visual image (her old and new school), both were drawn in pencil and were given less status than the “maze/path” and the relocation journey. Annie labelled her picture to represent how she felt at different stages of her journey (“I felt upset, sad, emotional”) as well as the benefits of relocation (“office found me a school”, “happy excited”, “brave”). Annie’s labels show that she realised the need to “be brave” following relocation. The benefits of relocation were also suggested through Annie’s inclusion of environmental features (a flowerbed) on the “new school”, suggestive of life and growth. Annie also placed one post-it on her “new school”

<sup>3</sup> This image has been modified to protect anonymity of the child

image which explained that “rules are good” in the classroom. This suggested relative feelings of containment and safety in the new school environment.

When Rachel talked about relocation, she relayed the confusion she felt combined with “slight happiness”.

*I was kind of confused with what was going on but I was slightly happy that we were moving...because I remember, I still remember when John pinned mummy up to the sink by her neck to get Ben off of her and when I was holding onto Ben to go to the next door neighbours to get help, John took Ben off me and threw me across the room...and I hurt I literally hurt around here I had a red mark from the side of my neck round to the middle cos my neck went like that on the sofa. (Rachel)*

Similarly to Annie, Rachel graphically described the dangers of DA. In contrast to Annie, Rachel referred to an experience she had personally encountered. The direct, explicit description illustrated how Rachel internalised the events that took place. In spite of her fears and worries associated with relocation (subtheme 1), she considered this, at least in part, a positive step. Rachel’s visual image, presented below, further hints at the turbulence of relocation and the mixture of feelings she felt about this. She commented, “*Some handles. I can’t forget the handles...they may be a bit wonky but...I just thought cos if someone goes ‘ahhh’ and wobble they have to hold on*” (Rachel).



Figure 10: Visual Image – Rachel

Rachel drew a picture of her old and new school. She drew three buildings for each school image and her images did not look dissimilar from one another. The colours, shapes and sizes were almost equal, and she stuck a post-it on each image with text reading “my old school” and “my new school”, with a child smiling. The child’s smiling face and the object’s placement and depiction (school buildings) give a sense of balance to the picture which is perhaps indicative of no remarkable differences between Rachel’s old and new school experiences. The objects (the school buildings) appear solid and stable, although the bridge is less sturdy. Rachel decided to add handles to the bridge, noting their importance (“I can’t forget the handles”). The environmental features (grass and sky) took up the most space on the picture, and their dominance felt overwhelming rather than peaceful (as might be expected for an

open space). There is a sense of unsettledness and wind in the grass and sky, exerted more over the “old school” than the “new school” image. This could indicate slight calm following relocation. Overall, Rachel’s picture suggests the turbulence she felt in relation to relocation, the need for “handles” (support) on the journey and the relative balance and grounding that school provided.

Claire also reported how a mother, sister and child could feel both sad and happy about relocation. As with Rachel’s and Annie’s accounts, Claire focused on relocation providing safety for a family.

*Happy at the same time...because she is leaving all the danger. Her sister might feel upset because she is used to that home and her mum might feel happy and upset at the same time...she might feel happy ‘cos she’s getting her kids out of danger so they wouldn’t get hurt and mostly she wouldn’t get her so she can protect her kids. (Claire)*

Although neither Benji nor Sunny relayed positive feelings about relocation through the vignette, or directly when talking about their own experiences, when Sunny talked about his feelings of sadness related to DA he described how vignette character “Zara” might imagine a different life away from violence.

*She might feel a bit sad because when her mum and dad were fighting if her mum got really hurt... I’ve seen that happen. [What might she have been thinking?] Thinking of a happier life...imagining she had a really nice house maybe...a really nice school, where the whole school wants to be her friend and she might say yes. (Sunny)*

Subtheme 2 has highlighted that the children had a complex understanding of DA and expressed multiple emotions in relation to their experiences. Despite experiencing difficult feelings, children also perceived the benefits of moving away from DA and wished for and wondered about a happier living environment.

**5.4.3 Subtheme 3: new beginnings.** In subtheme 3, children talked about how they (or a vignette character) felt about starting a new school following relocation (n5). Children talked about difficulties (n5) and positive aspects (n2) related to beginning a new school. Annie reported how a child could worry about feeling lonely or laughed at. *“She would feel worried because everyone would laugh at her that she’s a weirdo and she’s a loner and stuff. She can feel emotional because friends are important...she can feel sad because she is lonely”* (Annie - V).

In this excerpt, Annie perceived the child as a “weirdo”, somebody different from others without friends (“loner”). Her excerpt reflects her certainty that a child “would” experience worry about being laughed at, while feelings of loneliness and sadness were less absolute (“can”). When Claire thought about school relocation, she reported a fear of being bullied.

*She might feel a bit left out because all of the people there have been there longer than her and she might have thought “why didn’t I move there earlier. Or why did I move there? I want to go back to my old school”. Because she doesn’t know any of the people...so she might feel a bit worried if she doesn’t make friends or if she gets bullied again.*

(Claire – V)



Similarly to Annie, Claire described how a child may fear being excluded and lonely. She pointed out that they may wish to return to their old school because of feelings of worry. Children also spoke about positive emotions a child could experience when starting a new school related to renewed feelings of safety. Talking about a vignette character, Rachel explained, "*She probably feels safer than before...because she got hurt so I think she would feel happier and safer*" (Rachel - V)

Subtheme 3 has highlighted how children feel about starting at a new school following relocation because of DA. The subtheme has highlighted difficult emotions connected to fitting in, being accepted and loneliness. However, it has also shown that children might feel safer in school following relocation.

**5.4.4 Summary of theme 2.** This theme has presented the internal conflict children experienced in relation to relocation following DA. It first presented how children felt about leaving people and possessions. It then went on to report the positive aspects children perceived related to relocation. Finally, it described what children felt about beginning a new school. Although children conveyed a range of challenging emotions related to moving, they also highlighted the importance of relocation to ensure family and personal safety.

### **5.5 Theme 3: Perceptions of Risk and Threat: Interactions with People and Places**

This theme highlights children's feelings of threat and danger in the classroom, playground and wider contexts. At school, lesson time and playtime

were most often cited as points when children felt at risk (n5) although other places were also mentioned (e.g. the bus, the internet, the refuge).

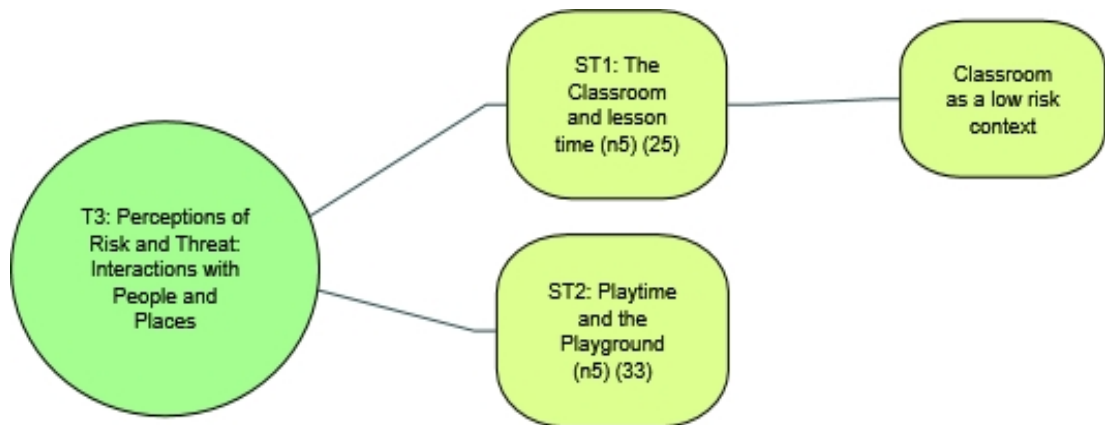


Figure 11: Theme 3 and Subthemes from Analysis of Children’s Data

**5.5.1 Subtheme 1: the classroom and lesson time.** When children referred to feelings of fear and threat in class, they conveyed that the structure of the classroom environment led this to be a more containing place than other areas of the school (e.g. the playground) (n3). However, in class they were affected by threat internally (i.e. in their imagination) and in their communication with teachers. Though teachers were consistently described as important in bolstering resilience (theme 1), children also described how teachers could exacerbate feelings of concern. For Annie, the classroom represented a safe place: *“Actually it’s really well made and it keeps me safe from any problems...there’s no problems, everyone is focused, nothing bad is going to happen”* (Annie).

Annie’s excerpt suggests that the building’s structure (“really well made”) as well as what took place in the classroom (“everyone is focused”) embedded

feelings of safety for her. Her quote suggests that the controlled, predictable structure of the classroom helped her feel safe. This may be indicative of a child who has experienced turbulence at home, as expected in Annie's case. In spite of Annie's perception of the classroom as containing, she also relayed that certain scenarios made her feel unsafe.

*We've got this maths thing that helps my class. We've got people like you have headphones they speak on computers and they show you. You can have a woman and a man. Mine's a man...I didn't want a man, I wanted a woman because like men are different and I just wanted a woman. Women are kinder, men are rude. (Annie)*

Annie's description aligned with other comments she made throughout our discussion about men. Even though the classroom felt safe to her, communication with a man in this safe place was not wanted. Although Annie did not know the man assigned to her as part of an in-class learning intervention, she immediately attributed characteristics to him and men in general ("men are rude"). In this instance, Annie's perceptions of men dominated how she felt taking part in the learning intervention. Similar to Annie, Benji reported that the classroom was somewhere problems were less likely to happen. However, Benji highlighted that problems would resurface in other places (e.g. the playground). Benji's excerpt reveals that when he felt under threat in class, he waited to access an area where there was less adult presence in order to exert his anger.

*Can I say something from Callum's thing? Some people be bad to me in class. Some people be bad to me in class. If they say something nasty, at playtime I get really angry and I go beat them up. (Benji)*

When Claire talked about how vignette character "Neil" might feel in the classroom following relocation, she conveyed feelings of threat, which stemmed from a fear of being hurt.

*He might be daydreaming that he was threatening him again. He might feel a bit distracted because he's trying to work and then all the stuff in the past might be coming into his mind. He might be daydreaming that he found out where he's living and then he comes to threaten him again and it all starts over again. (Claire – V)*

Claire talked about how a vignette character may find it difficult to focus in class due to internalised fear about the perpetrator arriving at the school in spite of a conscientious approach to focus on his work ("he's trying to work"). Claire conveyed how a child would daydream about being threatened and also reported how a teacher could make a child feel safe when this occurred.

*Not like shout at her, but listen to her and like so if she [vignette character] puts up her hand and asks a question she [teacher] doesn't say "that's a silly question" 'cos she might not have been listening 'cos she was too upset. So I think she might be able to tell her what she's doing again so that she properly understands. (Claire – V)*

Claire highlighted how the teacher's response (shouting/embarrassment) could make the child feel inadequate and unsupported. This is pertinent given

that following relocation, information sharing between staff is often minimal to protect a child's safety.

Similarly to Claire, Rachel relayed how a vignette character could get into trouble with a teacher because of distractedness related to DA.

*She might be telling him that he's not settling in well that he's been in trouble three times. But he might not be settling in well because he's thinking about the other stuff and not school. Because he's still slightly scared...scared of something that's happened before that might happen again...at home he might think that his dad's gonna...(trails off). (Rachel – V)*

Similarly to Claire's excerpt, Rachel raised the issue of residual fear. Rachel suggested that a child may continue to think about "other stuff" from previous incidences. These thoughts are carried into the school experience even after relocation to safety. This reinforces how important it is for SPs to understand the impact of DA on children and how this can lead them to feel preoccupied in class.

This subtheme has shown that while the structured nature of the classroom reduces confrontation between peers and increases feelings of safety, children may feel intimidation and threat following relocation, related to prior experiences of DA.

**5.5.2 Subtheme 2: playtime and the playground.** Children talked about their experiences of playtime and outdoor places at school (n5). There was evidence from all children that in outdoor places, with a lesser adult presence,

more risky and dangerous events could, and did occur. These events involved friendship difficulties (n5), real or perceived violence (n4) and risks to safety (n5). At playtime, children cited the playground, corridors, the woods and unrestricted parts of the school as areas where risk could occur.

When Sunny talked about his experience of playtime, he relayed how a physical altercation had taken place between himself and a peer:

*One of my friends who wasn't my friend they were mucking around and stuff...they were trying to box me up...but at least I'm stronger...at least when he tried to kick me I held his legs and I made him jump up and then he fell and then he tried to punch me and I was like "come on mate boom boom one here and one here" [How did that make you feel?] super cool.*  
(Sunny)

When Sunny recalled an altercation that took place with a peer, his recollection of his display of aggression was partly positive ("super cool"). He appeared to show pride related to his retaliation. Sunny's language, ("come on mate", "boom") sounded grown up in contrast to his young age of seven, which may have been related to a wish for greater power, strength or status than he felt. This could fit with his experience of DA and a feeling of responsibility or increased desire to self-protect. Later, Sunny relayed that the scenario had been imagined, rather than being a factual account.

*Wished but I couldn't do it. There were so many grownups. I only wished. I was running away and then I jumped over something and when he tried to jump over me he was too low and then he tripped over. He got so angry he went off with my friend.* (Sunny)

Sunny's excerpt implies both his wish to be physically aggressive (possibly related to his beliefs about what "being a man" involves, perhaps linked to the DA encountered) and his simultaneous fear of violence which led him to "run away". Sunny's reference to the presence of authority preventing him from behaving in the way he wished also indicated a fear of authority, which could also be related to experiences of DA. An ultimate feeling of abandonment was conveyed when the "perpetrator" got so angry, he left with Sunny's friend. While this allowed Sunny to be "safe" it also left him unsupported.

Benji also reported that at playtime physical fights broke out between peers.

*In this school last year, someone told me "your mum is fat" and then I got very mad. I got very mad. I kicked him in the tummy like five times. I punched him in the back about ten times and I banged him on the shed about twenty times...It actually happened all of it...it made me angry and annoyed because it's my mum. Like one of the most important people in your life. (Benji)*

Similar to Sunny, Benji's experiences of violence appeared to be connected to his home environment. Feelings of protectiveness towards his mother's identity exacerbated his anger and provided him with justification for attacking a pupil. Benji's description conveyed his perception of the control and power he could exhibit in the playground. He went on to describe how after exhibiting violence, he moved on quickly from the episode: *"When it's already happened and I went and beat them up it's already fine. I don't really bother. I don't bother about it because I've already just taught them a lesson"* (Benji).

Benji's talk about physical aggression appeared to be infused with a need to restore justice. Benji conveyed that after inflicting aggression "it's already fine". It was important for him to convey that he could move on quickly. Benji's excerpt suggests the importance of SPs developing interventions, other than physical violence, to help "restore justice". Similarly to Sunny, Benji appeared to feel justified in his behaviour. This may be related to what happened in the home environment.

The girl participants (n3) also relayed that break time was a time when risky situations occurred between peers. Rachel described a fight that took place during break time.

*I had to solve arguments...shouting ones. Where two friends made an argument over each other and I was the only one who started to split it up and then loads of other people came and helped like split the argument up...my friends were getting hurt cos some of them were punching, fighting, kicking, half of the boys did it to the girls and the girls did it to the boys, and the girls did it to the girls, the boys did it to the boys. [How did you feel when you saw that?] Scared...that they would get hurt like mummy...that someone would fall over and hurt their head or someone would get punched or something. (Rachel)*

Rachel's excerpt explicitly demonstrates a link between her experiences of DA and fear in the playground. Rachel's internalised sense of responsibility ("I had to solve arguments") conflicted with her fear ("scared...that they would get hurt like mummy").



This subtheme has described how outside of the classroom, children felt more vulnerable, displayed more anger and feared becoming hurt.

**5.5.3 Summary of theme 3.** Theme 3 has highlighted various contexts where children spend their time at school, and the feelings of danger and risk they attach to different environments. By developing insight into how children perceive the places they frequent following relocation because of DA, it becomes possible to effectively support them within these places, reducing feelings of threat, danger and risk.

## **5.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has described how the three overarching themes developed from the children's data. Children's resiliency at school, their complex emotions related to school relocation and the risks they perceived in different parts of the school developed as key. This chapter provides important information about how SPs can support children in the school context.

## Chapter 6 Analysis of School Professionals' Data

### 6.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the results of the TA of data from part 2 of the research collected from interviews with SPs.

The data responded to research questions 2 and 3.

- What are SPs' experiences of supporting pupils who have experienced DA including those who have relocated to their school for this reason?
- What are EPs' experiences of supporting schools and pupils when pupils have experienced DA, including pupils who have relocated school for this reason?

### 6.2 Presentation of Themes

Three overarching themes are presented, generated through TA of 10 semi-structured interviews. Each overarching theme houses three subthemes. As with the children's data, diagrams at the beginning of the section dealing with each theme indicate in brackets the number of quotes relating to each subtheme, while the number of SPs who made reference to each subtheme is shown using the letter "n". Reference is made to 10 SPs, consisting of one inclusion manager (IM1), four deputy head teachers (DHTs) and five EPs.

Figure 12 on the next page presents themes and subthemes developed from the SPs' data.

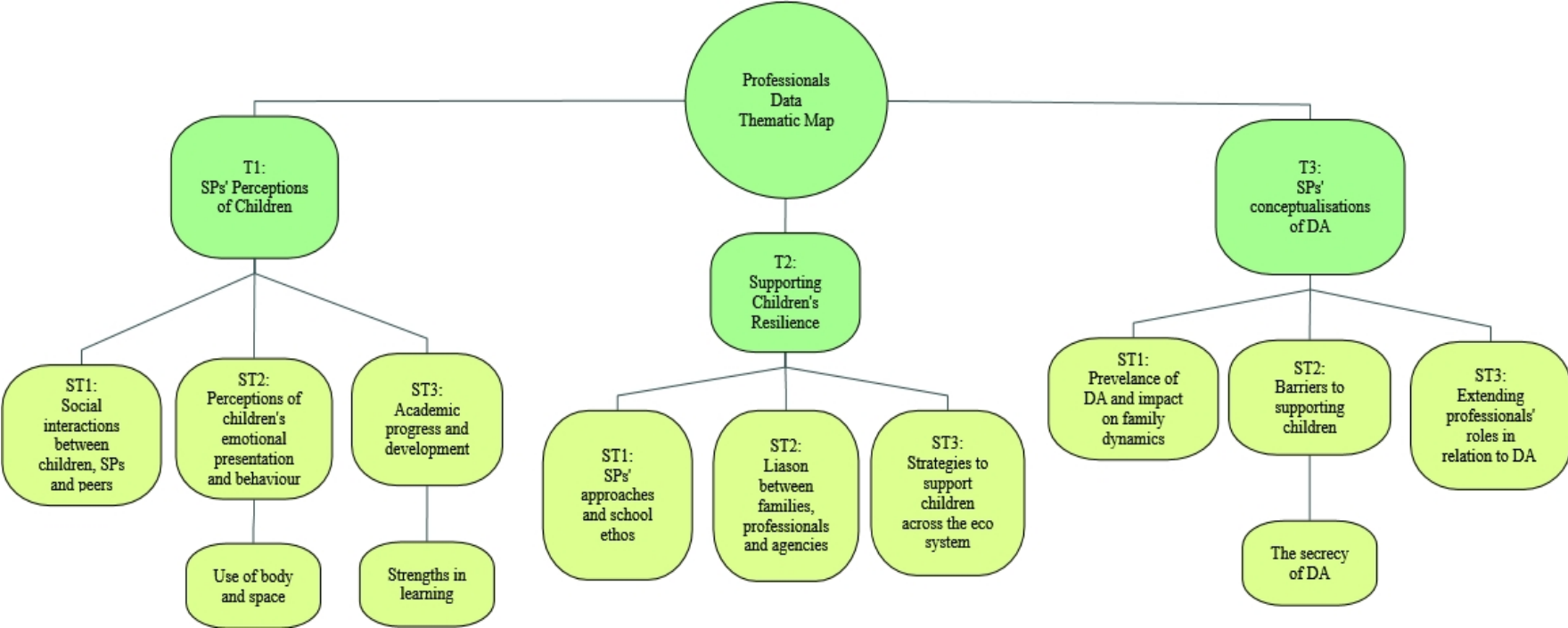


Figure 12: Thematic Map from Analysis of SPs' Data Responding to RQ2 and RQ3

### 6.3 Theme 1: SPs' Perceptions of Children

Theme 1 describes SPs' perceptions of children in the classroom and the wider school. The content of the theme refers to children's social interactions, emotional presentation, behaviour and academic achievement. Figure 13 below presents this theme, its subthemes and the frequencies of coding.

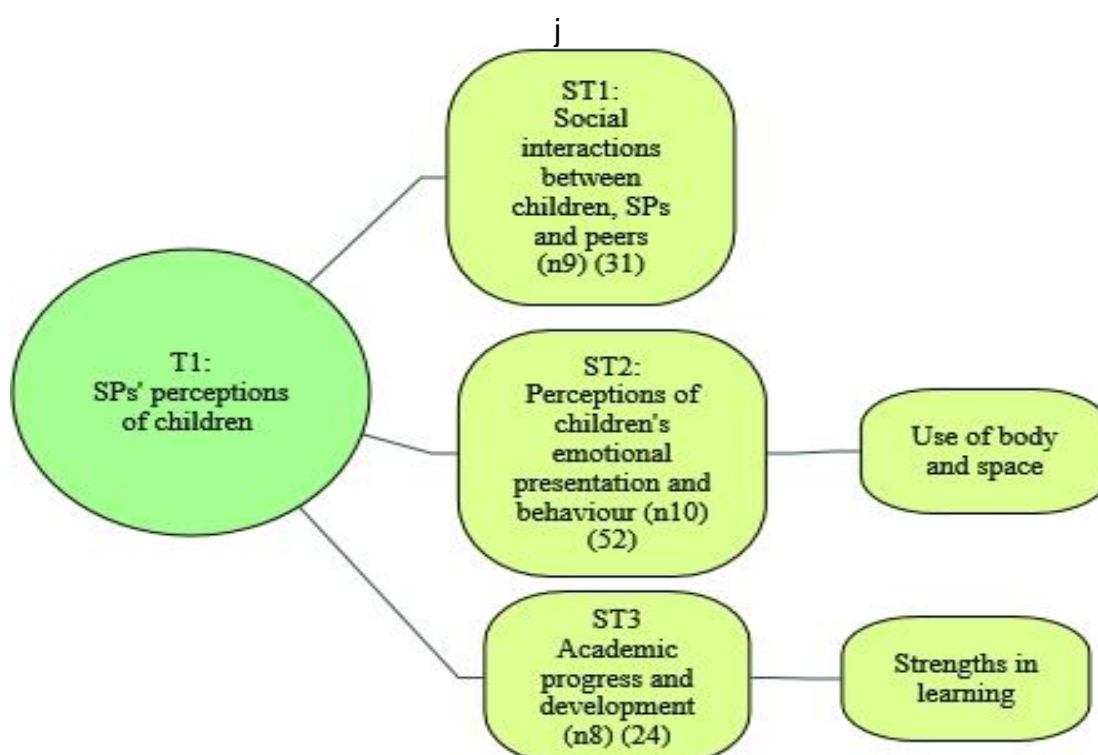


Figure 13: Theme 1 and Subthemes from Analysis of SPs Data

#### 6.3.1 Subtheme 1: social interactions between children, SPs and

**peers.** In this subtheme, SPs (n9) described social interactions that took place between pupils, adults and peers. They talked about children's difficulties with relationship building and maintenance. They highlighted their perceptions of children's distrust of adults and professional services, as well children who kept a distance from adults or wished to stay close to them. SPs also referred to the impact of relocation on children's social interactions.

Deputy head teacher Lauren (DHT4) was located at a school near a local refuge. She reported that children avoided investing in “long term” relationships following relocation because they expected another possible move.

*There's an issue around trusting adults, there's an issue around bothering to invest in a relationship because you've had this upheaval from where you've been and bothering to invest in a relationship and be prepared to give an adult a go and see something long term is something that some children don't do. (Lauren – DHT4)*

Lauren highlighted her recognition of the risk and effort associated with relationship building for children following relocation (“bothering” to “give an adult a go”). She demonstrated a tension in the development of relationships between SPs and children impacted on by relocation. Lauren’s excerpt suggests that relocation could negatively affect the child’s development of relationships.

Similarly to Lauren, inclusion manager Josie (IM1) mentioned children’s reluctance to invest in adult relationships. However, Josie provided a different explanation to Lauren, attributing this to a history of monitoring by professional agencies.

*Children that have had that kind of experience of constant social services involvement, police or turbulent relationships. Children that have lived in hostels and then moved back home and then moved back out again, that kind of thing, they are so cautious about what they talk about, don't trust adults very well and you have to work at trying to break down those barriers. (Josie – IM1)*

Josie described children's lack of trust of professionals and reiterated the significance of SPs' personal approaches and their motivation to improve the adult-child relationship ("you have to work hard").

SPs also talked about the fact that, following relocation, children's classroom relationships could also be impacted on because of the nature of DA. Bianca (DHT2) reported how the safeguarding policies at her school led to the classroom teacher not knowing about the child's experience of DA.

*Sometimes what I know has happened is for example, distractibility, which irritates the teacher, which then results in punishment or red cards or consequences because the teacher has no awareness of where that child is coming from, because we don't reveal this information. So that is a challenge. (Bianca – DHT2)*

Bianca demonstrated the complexities and conflicts embedded in the school system which could arise when supporting child victims of DA. Although information was restricted from the class teacher to safeguard the child and family, the child was then at a disadvantage in the classroom and was punished for being distracted.

SPs also explored the psychological impact they perceived DA to have on children's social development. EP Harriet (EP1) worked as an EP in schools and held an advisory role on a team supporting complex families.

*Some children, they may have an ambivalent and resistant relationship towards other adults...they may be really hypersensitive to always wanting an adult near them, they are not that interested in the learning*

*task...others who have learnt it's really the best option to avoid adult contact and therefore they may get on with some tasks but their learning will be impacted because they'll find it difficult to receive information.*

(Harriet – EP1)

Harriet highlighted how children's relationship-building in school was impacted on by their experience of relationships at home ("best to avoid adult contact"). Harriet's excerpt also demonstrates how the children she supported managed physical space in the relationships ("wanting an adult near" or "avoiding contact").

When talking about children's interactions following relocation, SPs also described friendship difficulties for children who had experienced DA. Following relocation, Samantha (EP2) suggested that peer relationship-building may be challenging because of a child's history of DA.

*Socially, how do you, particularly for this child because of his other needs, how does he then start forming friendships again? And what's the explanation that he has to give to his friends of why he's just turned up? What's the message that's been given to him and then what message does he have to give to his friends?* (Samantha – EP2)

Samantha asked how a child's identity would be impacted following school relocation. She highlighted how the power and control dynamics embedded in DA as a construct could have significant implications for a child ("what's the explanation he has to give?"). From her perspective, the child's identity development would be affected by the message they had been told to deliver by adults ("what message does he have to give?"). This could have

implications for the child's openness with peers, relationship building and how others perceive the child at school.

Similar to Samantha, Josie (IM1) highlighted the difficulties children could experience in peer relationships. Josie illuminated the complex communications she noticed in children's social relationships following DA, as well as the desire for peer acceptance by children.

*She can be quite manipulative. She does things to get attention. She orchestrates arguments between friends and then swoops in and is the one that sorts things out and then everyone, it's all kind of because she's amazing, she's come in and she's been the mediator. But the children haven't realised that actually she was the one that kind of lit the torch paper, started everything up and then came back into defuse things.*

(Josie – IM1)

From Josie's perspective, this child sought to be the saviour of the group and the instigator of tensions. The degree of strategy Josie described could be connected to feelings of threat at school and the development of methods by children, to self-protect in "riskier" places (e.g. the playground). This excerpt reaffirms the important role SPs can play in supporting children's social relationships.

Subtheme 1 has shown how SPs perceive children's social interactions in school. It has conveyed SPs' perceptions of the challenges children face when building and maintaining relationships with adults and children. This subtheme has also suggested the power adults can have over children's



expressions of identity and information sharing following relocation because of DA.

**6.3.2: Subtheme 2: perceptions of children's emotional presentation and behaviour.** Subtheme 2 describes the impact of DA on children's emotional presentation and behaviour in the context of school (n10). SPs talked about children's emotional processing (n8) and displays of challenging behaviour (n6). This subtheme also includes how difficulties with concentration impacted on children's emotional processing and behaviour, as well as how children used space and place strategically in school.

Referring to a child's emotional demeanour, Eleanor (EP1) reported the following.

*I guess he presented in a manner of that sort of self-sabotaging – “I hate school, I don't want to do this, this is rubbish, I can't do it” and that immediate fear of failing, would rather not put themselves in the situation to fail at all. (Eleanor – EP4)*

From Eleanor's perspective, fear felt by a child led him to disengage and reject school rather than confront the feelings associated with possible failure. Bianca (DHT2) also talked about the emotional presentation of a child. However when giving her description she simultaneously described his mother's demeanour.

*They arrived in the middle of a year because their family circumstances had changed because the abusive relationship was finally over and they were a wreck, all of them. Mum is a wreck, has very little capacity to*

*support at home. Youngest child, 7 or 8, an emotional wreck every morning because although the relationship was abusive he was really missing his dad. (Bianca – DHT2)*

Bianca talked of a family who relocated mid-year. She reiterated the lengthy nature of DA (“finally over”), and complexities such as mothering capacity, loss and bereavement felt by the child. Bianca positioned the mother and child equally. Both were described as “emotional wrecks”, implying the destructive nature of DA from Bianca’s perspective and an equal lack of resilience of both mother and child.

When Claudia (DHT1) highlighted how a boy presented emotionally and behaviourally following relocation, she focused on the child’s physical behaviour.

*He was very teary when he first started, understandably. He’s also, especially now, a big big boy and he kind of uses his weight. He’s quite physical with other children. He’s not fighting and things but he is very very physical. (Claudia – DHT1)*

Claudia reiterated how a pupil was noticeably physical in his relationships when he had experienced DA. The use of body and behaviour was also commented on by other SPs in contrasting ways. For example, whereas Claudia suggested aggressive embodiment, Petra (DHT4) described the “passive” and “jittery” demeanour of child victims of DA, saying, “*They would be withdrawn or jittery, the children that flinch, but very kind of passive, very quiet, very – this is private*” (Petra – DHT4).

Petra reiterated a common trend of passivity among children she supported following DA. Although Petra perceived children as passive, she described their bodily response as visible (“jittery”, “flinch”). This contrast of body and behaviour may be connected to children’s compliant behaviour at home (as a means to self-protect while living with DA), while their body was still on high alert. Petra went onto report how one child misbehaved at school as a way to remove herself from the classroom and spend time in another part of the school.

*One of the families that’s arrived, the eldest of the four, every day she either comes to see the head or me or goes to the Sunshine Room, which is a safe space that we have in the school for lunch times... It’s interesting that she’s come in. Initially she found out that if there was some disruption in the class you might miss five minutes of your break and she did that. I think she did that to get in, to be in. So one of the conversations I had with her last week was, you know you can just come, you don’t need to talk in class. (Petra – DHT4)*

Although, as in the excerpt above, Petra’s personal awareness about the impact of DA enabled her to see past the pupil’s misbehaviour, this could have been missed or misinterpreted by an SP in a different context, or one with no information about a child’s background. For example, Freya (EP5) relayed how hyper-vigilant behaviour affected a child’s use of space in class, although this was considered unacceptable by the school: *“This child would kind of get up and walk out of the room, and in this kind of school that was completely*

*unacceptable. But he was again, very hyper vigilant and we put in a system of safe spaces” (Freya, EP5).*

In Freya’s example, her involvement with a child who had experienced DA led to a system of “safe spaces” being installed to support him in the classroom and wider school. Petra and Freya illuminated how children’s use of space was relevant when they had experienced DA and that this could be responded to differently in different school environments.

Subtheme 2 has demonstrated SPs’ perceptions of the emotional and behavioural impact of DA on children’s actions in school. It has illustrated the impact of DA on children’s emotional presentation, as well as how children used space and body to communicate their needs following DA. This subtheme has also shown how differences in SPs’ responses could have direct repercussions for children in the school environment.

**6.3.3: Subtheme 3: academic progress and development.** Subtheme 3 developed in relation to children’s academic progress and development (n8). SPs referred to difficulties children experienced with attainment and academic progress (n8) and reported positive developments which occurred following relocation because of DA (n5). Lauren (DHT3) described how a child’s “love” of school enabled her to make the most of opportunities at school following relocation.

*You will get the ones who actually, occasionally you get children who thrive, who really seem to love what is being offered and really welcome the fairness of school. We had one little girl who just adored being in school and made the most of every opportunity here and loved the*

*children in the class, loved the teacher, loved coming to school and it was really happy, it was obviously a really happy place for her, which was maybe because it previously hadn't been. (Lauren – DHT3)*

In this excerpt, Lauren conveyed her perception of school as a “fair” place with opportunities for children to thrive following relocation because of DA. In her example, the culture of the school and relationships in the school directly contributed to the child’s emotional resilience (“loved the teacher”, “loved the children in the class”).

When Petra (DHT4) described school as a positive place for children following relocation, she highlighted the importance of giving children permission to “switch off” from experiences of DA they had previously encountered.

*There's a sense of this is as a safe place and I don't really want to, I want to not be able to think about it for these seven hours and I'm happy. And we try and read kids like that where it feels like, actually, if this is where they want to be and they want to just function in an ordinary capacity we don't push it. (Petra – DHT4)*

Petra illuminated how the “context” (safe place) and “time” (seven hours) aspects of children’s school experiences were key to enabling and supporting rehabilitation following DA. Petra also described a respectful, patient approach taken towards children (“we don’t push it”).

Although SPs described children’s positive progress in school, they also referred to academic difficulties as a result of DA.

*He was locked in a cupboard at home and was also quite abused. Dad threatening mum with a knife attempting to cut off parts of her hand and things like that. This particular child as he grew up he went onto get a statement of special educational needs, mainly for ESBD<sup>4</sup> but also moderate learning difficulties and social communication difficulties.*

(Harriet – EP1)

Harriet (EP1) reported the combined presentation of emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, alongside learning and social communication needs, for a child who had experienced DA.

Children's social, emotional and behavioural needs were mentioned frequently by adult participants, in addition to many other learning difficulties: autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and language and communication difficulties. One SP also linked a child's handwriting difficulties to underlying emotional needs.

Children's academic difficulties were also linked to environmental factors. Talking about how academic achievement could be influenced by environmental circumstances associated with DA, Eleanor (EP4) commented,

*they might have had less opportunities for reading because their parents were preoccupied with other horrible worries and things going on. They'll be starting a new school, so any difficulties they are taking with them attainment wise, gaps in their learning because of those disadvantages are going to be magnified. (Eleanor – EP4)*

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<sup>4</sup> Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties

From Eleanor's perspective, the early home environment could impact directly on a child's academic progress at school. Eleanor highlighted how limited parental presence could reduce opportunities to learn in a house affected by DA and how disrupted schooling could have implications for academic progress.

**6.3.4 Summary of theme 1.** Theme 1 has presented a range of ways SPs perceived children in the school environment in relation to DA and relocation for this reason. Subtheme 1 encapsulated the way DA could have repercussions for children's social interactions. Subtheme 2 considered the impact on children's emotional presentation and behaviour at school and subtheme 3 looked at the impact of DA on children's academic progress. Theme 1 also considered children's positive school experiences.

## **6.4 Theme 2: Supporting Children's Resilience**

This theme developed from SPs describing the multitude of ways they could foster children's development within and beyond the school environment following DA. This theme refers to individual approaches adopted by SPs to support children. It demonstrates the importance of liaison between families, professionals and services and suggests a range of supportive interventions, programmes and resources which can be used to support children's resilience and recovery from DA at school. Figure 10 below presents this theme, subthemes and frequencies of coding.

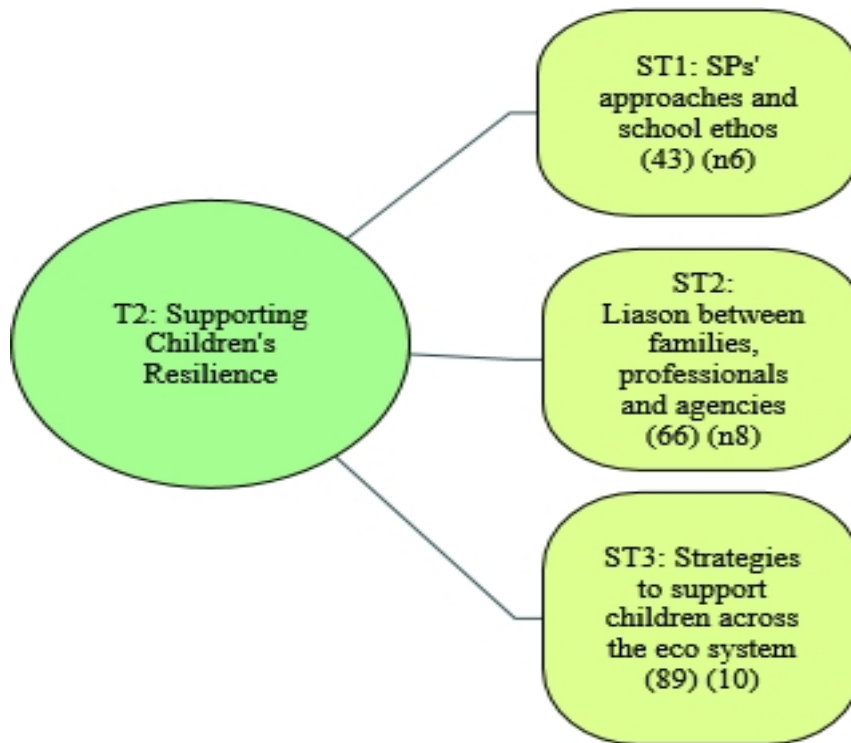


Figure 14: Theme 2 and Subthemes from Analysis of SPs Data

**6.4.1 Subtheme 1: SPs' approaches and school ethos.** SPs talked about their school's personal ethos and/or their professional approach to supporting children who had experienced DA (n6). They conveyed differences between school approaches, however all DHTs and IM1 (n5) relayed how their school environment used strategies to support children who had experienced DA. EPs (n5) described to various extents how their approaches to DA influenced their involvement on cases. This could conflict with role barriers, explored later in theme 3.

Schools had individual policies to support children affected by DA. Petra (DHT4) described their school's "no shouting policy", giving children two to three weeks to settle prior to assessment and having up to four members of staff



trained to a high level of safeguarding. Inclusion Manager Josie (IM1) talked about teaching safety modules to children during school inductions.

When Lauren (DHT3) described pupil enrolment following relocation she conveyed the personal reward of seeing children make progress.

*We go into it with a positive attitude and it's just lovely to see how the children can thrive in the right place, given the right situation and the right input from everyone that they can do well...Initially the main focus is on sort of building self-esteem really and helping children to just understand what we are about, it's just helping them to make progress where they are at and there's no right or wrong and there's no judgment and whatever and just getting to celebrate what they can do and making progress on that. (Lauren – DHT3)*

Lauren (DHT3) explored the school's commitment to building child resilience and showing empathy to children post relocation. Lauren described a collaborative commitment towards the child from SPs, which required "the right input from everyone". While Lauren described the school's ethos, Josie (IM1) referred to how individuals' personal responses could directly influence a child's rehabilitation.

*There's an organisation that deals with domestic violence. They do kind of group work for kids that have all experienced domestic violence...we would take the child during school hours, take the child down there, which goes kind of above and beyond, because in theory it should be the parent coming, or even a social worker, coming to collect them. (Josie – IM1)*

Josie highlighted how she supported a child's attendance at an off-site therapeutic group by taking the child to the group herself. Although this involved going beyond her role requirements, Josie commented on a lack of prioritising by other adults (e.g. social worker or parent) and her wish to support the child in receiving therapeutic input. In this case Josie's willingness and motivation made a difference for the young person.

In relation to her school's ethos, Petra (DHT4) reported that the school used a specific information sharing approach to support children.

*We probably share a lot more information than most schools do because they'll be interacted with at lunch time, at play time, there's a sense of often I only need to say "fled domestic violence". They don't need to know the "nitty gritty" who of hit who or things like that but they'll know that and brief support staff who work in that classroom. (Petra – DHT4)*

Petra's excerpt accentuates how, from her perspective, her school disclosed more information to staff across the school environment than many. Information was given to staff in the playground and classroom ("fled domestic violence") to support the child.

When EPs talked about their personal approaches, they highlighted how their responses or actions led them to support children outside of their traditional role expectations. EP Louise (EP3) reported that following a consultation with two parents and a school SENDCo regarding a child presenting with aggressive behaviour, she took steps to uncover more about DA at home.

*Afterwards the SENDCo said: “Do you think there’s something funny between mum and dad’s relationship? I just felt like he was very domineering”. I said “okay”, and I was trying to unpick what was going on and then she said, “oh I know there was an incident a while ago”...She didn’t know any specifics so I said “oh maybe we should find out a bit more about that”. (Louise – EP3)*

Louise’s excerpt illustrates that, although a SENDCo and an EP were unaware of the details of a child’s experience of DA (“she didn’t know any specifics”), the personal approaches adopted by Louise and the SENDCo led to an extended discussion taking place around the topic. Furthermore, this excerpt illuminates the complexities of professional enquiry in relation to DA. In this instance, the conversation about DA took place after the consultation with the parents. This is important, since discussion about DA in front of two parents could exacerbate the risk for the mother and child.

This subtheme has shown how SP approaches and school ethos have direct implications for children who have experienced DA. The subtheme has highlighted different approaches adopted by SPs and how these can protect and support children. This subtheme has also highlighted some risks and complexities associated with DA and the importance of understanding these in relation to professional attitude and school ethos.

**6.4.2 Subtheme 2: liaison between families, professionals and agencies.** Within this subtheme professionals made reference to a range of agencies and professionals they liaised with in relation to supporting children

who had experienced DA (n10). The list below provides a breakdown of professionals mentioned:

- Borough child protection lead
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Child's grandparents
- Child's mother
- Classroom teacher
- Complex Families Team
- Domestic Violence Services
- Educational psychologist
- English as a second or other language tutor
- Family support team
- Family therapist
- Parent counselling service
- Play therapist
- Police
- Previous school's child protection officer
- Refuge worker
- Safeguarding Children Board
- School child protection officer
- School counsellor
- School deputy head teacher
- School head teacher
- School inclusion manager

- School inclusion officer
- School learning mentor
- School SENDCo
- School teaching assistant
- Social care professionals

SPs described a variety of situations in which they worked collaboratively with other professionals to support children affected by DA. Harriet (EP1) talked about her role in a team supporting complex families.

*I help support the family workers to go do their job. There is very much about building trust and building a relationship with the family. At the moment that has been very much around taking them to do different activities, giving them different life opportunities, helping them access different sport things that they might not normally or culturally may not have been deemed acceptable in some ways. (Harriet – EP1)*

In this excerpt, Harriet reported that she was in an advisory position, supporting a team of family workers to provide support to children who had experienced DA. In this role, Harriet supported women and children to undertake new activities, build positive relationships with family workers and access new opportunities in the community. EPs also supported children who were exhibiting academic and learning difficulties following experiences of DA.

Bianca (DHT2) explained:

*I am engaged with the [educational] psychology department because I'm probably going to apply for an EHCP for this child. But then we have*

*discussions about whether this is truly an academic...whether it's a learning disability or caught up in the wider picture of his family...I would try and unpick those things with the psychology team. I've had advice from CAMHS about how to support children...So CAMHS and Educational Psychology. (Bianca – DHT2)*

Bianca talked about how at a school level she requested support from the EPS and CAMHS to decipher how to best support the child at school. Bianca's excerpt highlights that, although the EPS were called upon to support with Education Health and Care Planning (EHCP), a longer discussion then took place about how much the child's experience of DA could have impacted on their learning difficulties. Whereas Bianca called upon CAMHS and the EPS, Petra explained that she was also in close contact with the local refuge.

*We've got really good links with the refuge, they normally give us a call and say "we've got a family" so a family support worker or there's a social worker might come on that tour with mum, predominantly mum, and then there would be an initial meeting...we normally ask for a picture of the perpetrator. In the office there's a cupboard that we have pictures of men, generally, men. (Petra – DHT4)*

Petra's excerpt illuminates how, as well as calling on therapeutic input for a child (e.g. CAMHS, EPS), schools liaised with social care, refuge services and the child's family to provide thorough support following relocation. Petra also reported that "we normally ask for a picture of the perpetrator", highlighting a particular strategy her school used to ensure the safety of children following relocation.

This subtheme has provided insight into the types of liaison which occur from SPs' perspectives in relation to DA as well as the collaborative working which occurs between different professional agencies.

**6.4.3 Subtheme 3: strategies to support children across the ecosystem.** In this subtheme, SPs talked about interventions they believed could be or had been supportive for children who had relocated because of DA. Interventions mentioned included those that could be used with children in the classroom (n7), through group work (n4), through direct therapeutic interaction (n10) at a whole school or local authority level (n4) and via training and supervision for staff (n7).

SPs explained a variety of ways they supported children inside and outside the classroom. In the classroom, Josie explained how children were asked to participate in a "circle time" at the beginning of the year, where they nominated two "trusted adults" to be their emotional "go-to" person.

*We have like a keeping myself safe activity at the beginning of the academic year and there's lots of circle times and things like that. Two named adults, we always pull on that. So sometimes kids don't want to talk, and it may be that they may not want to talk to myself or the CP lead, so we utilise the adults that we have and say okay, if they are a trusted adult then talk to them and they can feed back to us. (Josie – IM1)*

Josie's excerpt highlights how her school used combined methods – "keeping myself safe" activities and "circle times" – to help children feel safe at school. Children also had access to specific "trusted adults" to talk to if they did

not want to talk to the child protection lead or Josie. In this way, the children developed knowledge about how to self-protect and who to talk to when needed.

At a whole school level, Claudia (DHT1) highlighted how helping families financially enabled children to access new opportunities.

*We've done things like paid for them to go to afterschool club. Or one boy we've got at the moment loves art, so we are going to fund him to go to our art club here. Yes, quite often teachers will ensure that some of the children are put up for going on trips and that kind of thing. So a little bit extra, I guess, than most children would get. (Claudia – DHT1)*

Giving one child a “little bit extra” enabled him to access many more opportunities at school, i.e. he could increase a personal interest (love of art), attend after school club and access more trips at school.

When Petra talked about her school, she described a tailored monitoring system that had been set up to ensure the child's notes remained confidential and up-to-date.

*We have a whole monitoring system...we have these little white books so as soon as a family arrive like that, they get a book, they get a monitoring book, people make notes and they stay confidentially locked in classrooms... I read them all before I go home every Friday. (Petra – DHT4)*

The above illuminates Petra's commitment and vigilance around the structured monitoring system at their school.



Louise (EP3), explored how there was scope for EPs to support children, schools and families using consultation. Louise explained,

*I mean, consultation I think is so important in these situations. So even at that information gathering stage, even by just unpicking exactly what's going on, asking those kind of questions definitely with a SENDCo or teacher that's involved with one of these kids. I think consultation is really important, giving them [staff] space to work through their own thinking.*

(Louise – EP3)

Louise's excerpt highlights how EPs could support a child by opening up the discourse around DA during school consultation. In this way, Louise conveyed that EPs could support school staff with their thinking about DA and how this impacted on children at school.

**6.4.4 Summary of theme 2.** This theme has presented a range of ways SPs described supporting children's resilience in the school environment. The first subtheme relayed how SPs personal approaches and the ethos of schools were important in supporting children. The second subtheme described how SPs liaised with a wide range of professionals to give children support following DA. The final subtheme brought to the foreground a range of strategies and interventions professionals were using which they felt would be helpful in supporting children who had experienced DA. Within this subtheme, a range of interventions were highlighted by SPs that could be used to support children. These are presented in Figure 15 on the next page.

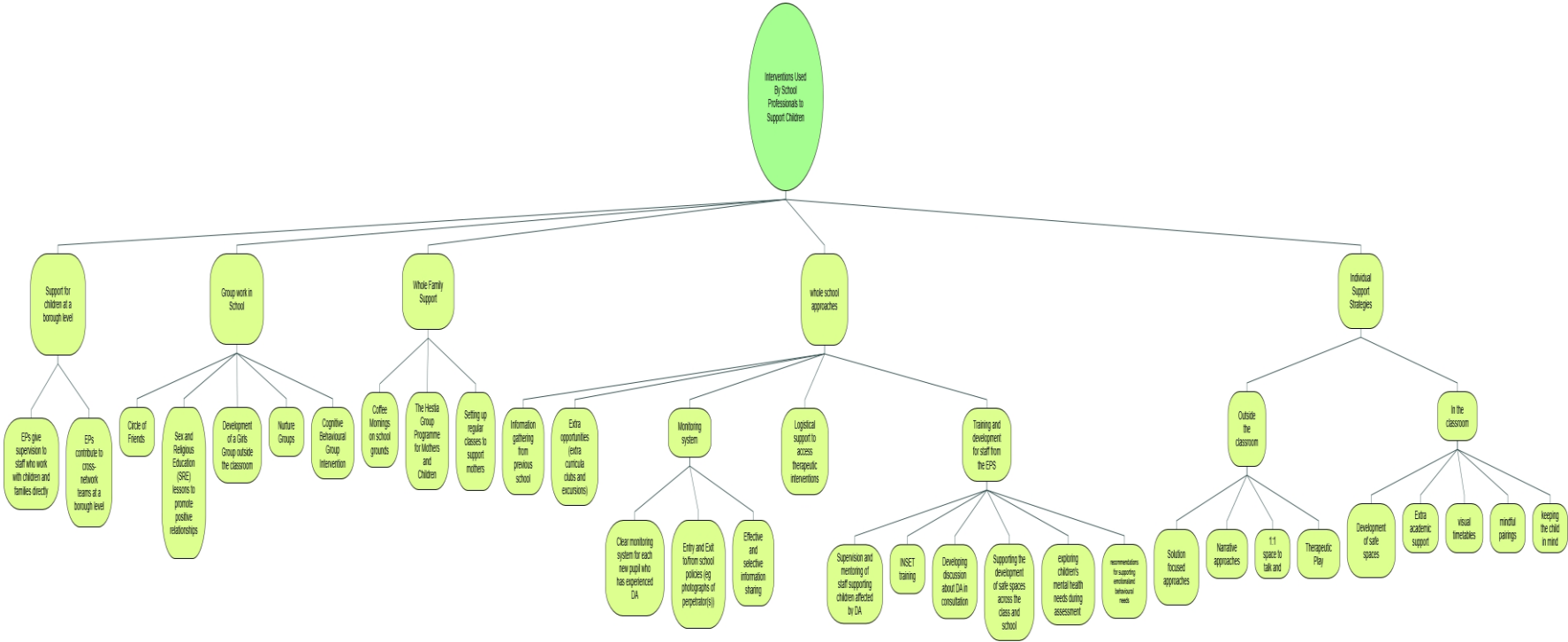


Figure 15: Summary of Interventions Suggested By SPs

### 6.5 Theme 3: SPs' Conceptualisations of DA

This theme developed in response to SPs' comments about DA as a social construct. In this theme, SPs described the prevalence of DA in their schools, the community and how they perceived DA to impact on children and families. They highlighted how DA presented barriers to their work and how their attempts to support children could be met by challenges. This theme also included SPs' comments about how to increase opportunities to support children affected by DA now and in the future. Figure 12 presents this theme, with subthemes and corresponding frequencies to coding.

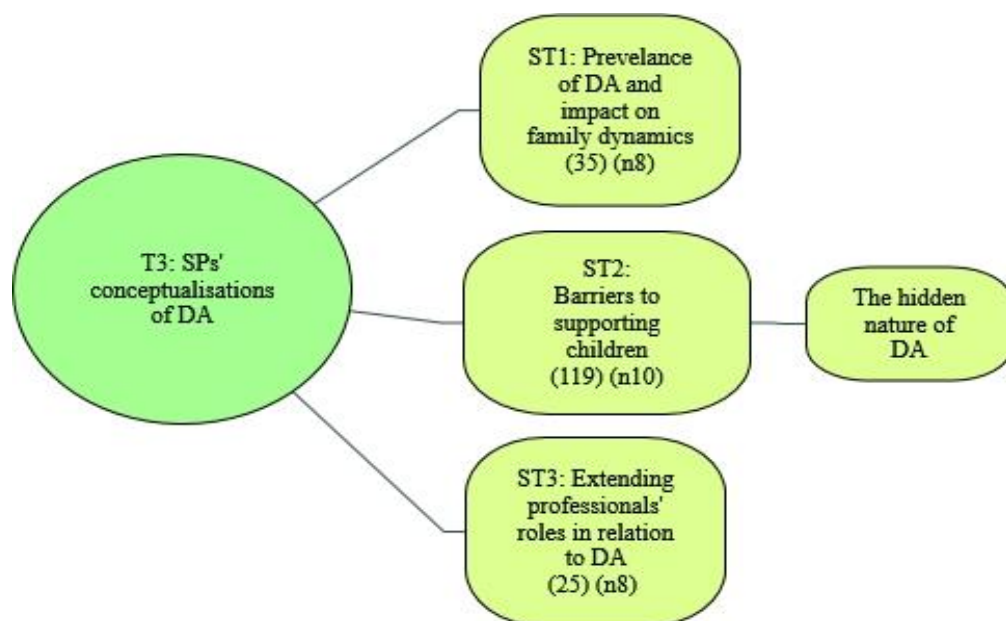


Figure 16: Theme 3 and Subthemes from Analysis of SPs' Data

**6.5.1 Subtheme 1: the prevalence of DA and impact on family dynamics.** In this subtheme, SPs talked about the high prevalence of DA in school and the community (n8). They described the family dynamics children might encounter and how they believed that DA occurred in cycles (n5). Speaking from her position as an Inclusion Manager, Josie (IM1) reported:

*we've got year 3, year 5, year 1, year 4 and year 2. So basically from Year 1 to 5 we've got cases of domestic violence...they take up at the moment I would say about three quarters of our [child protection] caseload. (Josie – IM1)*

Josie highlighted how common DA was at her school. Though this high prevalence, could be linked to her interest in partaking in the research and the school's location near a refuge, Josie's quote reiterates how important it is for professionals to have an awareness of how DA impacts on children to ensure they are supported at school. EPs (n3) also explored the prevalence of DA. However, they referred to prevalence in the community. Talking about the presence of DA and the importance of professional input, EP Louise (EP3) reported:

*domestic abuse is just everywhere, and I think it's not reported a lot of the time. So I think it's EPs and people who are in schools and actually meeting families and meeting children. I think it's so important that we have this awareness and it is something that is in our head and that we know how to support. (Louise – EP3)*

Louise's comment suggests that although she believes DA should be prioritised by SPs ('in our head'), presently it is not. Louise stressed that DA is all around us and that SPs are well placed to support children and families and require greater awareness and knowledge of how to support children effectively. When EP Harriet (EP1) talked about the prevalence of DA in the community, she described the long-term impact on children and young people.

*Unfortunately, the children who have been exposed or been experiencing abuse are then likely to continue that, and it means that they are not attending school or they get kicked out of school, so excluded, and then that means that they often get involved into crime or in with other gangs so they can belong to something. Then that has huge impacts on community and safety and then they aren't going to get into work and employment they are then in prison. (Harriet – EP1)*

Harriet (EP1) suggested a position of powerlessness for children experiencing DA. She emphasised that a child could find his or herself excluded from school and imprisoned. Within Harriet's excerpt, this spiralling of negative events appears to be linked to society's construction of DA rather than directed by the actions of the child ("they get kicked out of school", "they aren't going to get into work").

This subtheme has highlighted SPs' views about the high prevalence of DA at a school and community level. This serves to underline the presence of DA within our communities as well as the need for professional awareness and intervention.

**6.5.2 Subtheme 2: barriers to supporting children.** Subtheme 2 developed in response to SPs' (n10) descriptions of barriers which impacted on their ability to support children who had experienced DA. SPs alluded to the secrecy surrounding the construction of DA (n10). They also talked about barriers related to time, resources and money (n6). EPs specifically talked about additional obstacles, such as uncertainty about the responsibilities of their role, barriers around role construction and the wish for greater knowledge

specifically related to DA. The majority of professionals also talked about a lack of experience of supporting children specifically following relocation (n7).

When EP Louise (EP3) talked about her role, she described how the stigma attached to DA prohibited a full discussion with everyone involved from occurring.

*A lot of the time it's really sensitive, there's nearly like a stigma around it in a way....I mean it's such a big deal and it felt like we should have had a full discussion...We had a very sensitive conversation about it, but it was nearly kind of like, it was nearly like a shameful thing of kind of like, after the meeting...I think consultation is really important...and make[s] it less of a taboo subject or something really scary that has to be said in a whisper. (Louise – EP3)*

Louise highlighted her perception of DA as a secretive topic. The “whispering tone”, “shame” and “taboo” Louise described illuminated how conversations about DA took place quietly and sensitively. This could be partly related to the danger of discussing DA openly and the possible risk to mother and child and partly related to the construct of DA itself. This exemplifies how the secrecy surrounding this construct goes beyond the home and impacts on professional discourse and action.

Bianca (DHT2) similarly relayed how experiences of DA would be kept hidden by families.

*Mum very much presented as “here are my wonderful children, we are all fine everything is okay” and it wasn't until we got to know the children*

*that we said, “okay come in, we are a little bit concerned about progress”, and then the family story came out. (Bianca – DHT2)*

In Bianca’s excerpt, a mother chose not to disclose her experiences of DA until the school queried the children’s progress at school. This excerpt reinforces how information may not be volunteered by women survivors or their children until a reason (such as academic progress) leads to the information being shared.

As well as referring to the hidden nature of DA, some SPs highlighted a need for more training and a better understanding of the most current research around DA. When Samantha (EP2) talked about barriers to supporting schools, children and families, she described a lack of certainty about discussing the topic of DA.

*How easy is it? I think it would be easier if I was more confident, if I knew more about it and knew that it was okay to keep questioning or it was okay to go down this route...because I think in the back of my head I know it’s had a massive impact on the child but how I would communicate that and get that across to other people, I don’t feel confident to do that. (Samantha – EP2)*

Samantha’s excerpt illuminates how difficult it can feel to approach and openly discuss the topic of DA. Although Samatha believed DA has had “a massive impact”, the sticking point came in relation to how to raise and discuss this with other professionals. This raises the need to develop clear guidelines for SPs working with DA to enable more discussions to take place, more often and more openly between professionals.

While Samantha highlighted her uncertainty around how to broach the topic of DA, Harriet (EP1) described how the EP role itself could present boundaries, saying, “We probably are well placed to give quite a lot of support to the children who are experiencing it. I think there’s something about how our role is perhaps construed or boundaried at times”.

Harriet highlighted how in spite of having many skills relevant to supporting children who experienced DA, the construct of the EP role added a layer of difficulty to becoming involved in cases.

SPs also conveyed how following children’s school relocation because of DA, it could be a struggle to find the amount of resources needed within a short time frame.

*We’ve got to allocate things quite quickly for some of the children, and that’s a lot of people, extra time... you’re thinking “okay we are going to have to find the resources somewhere because it sounds like they need it”. (Lauren – DHT2)*

This excerpt suggests how from Lauren’s perspective children require a high level of intervention following relocation. Her quote conveys time and resource barriers, although these are overcome in spite the strain this causes for the school (“we are going to have to find the resources somewhere”). This reiterates the motivation Lauren felt to support children affected by DA following relocation.

This subtheme has conveyed a range of barriers highlighted by SPs in relation to supporting children following relocation because of DA. While



professionals most commonly spoke of a lack of information or insight into DA due to the hidden nature of the phenomenon, SPs also referred to a lack of time, resources and boundaries related to the construct of their own roles. However, this subtheme has illuminated that, in spite of many challenges, SPs' motivation and intent led them to give support to children in spite of the barriers they faced.

### **6.5.3 Subtheme 3: extending professionals' roles in relation to DA.**

This subtheme developed in relation to SPs' descriptions of opportunities to increase their involvement with children and families affected by DA (n8). Petra (DHT4) described how sewing classes were arranged at her school as a way into supporting women affected by DA in the community. Petra reported that organising classes gave women a reason to visit the school, which became an opportunity to support those living with DA.

*We ended up running sewing classes actually, they wanted sewing machines and things and that was how we got them in and then bit by bit that was how we got to teach SRE and do some of that. But now as I said they are very vocal. (Petra – DHT4)*

Petra's excerpt demonstrates how she and a colleague found an opportunity to provide extended support to the wider community and that slowly, over time, they taught women about DA. When EP Harriet (EP1) explored how the nature of DA could be confronted, she focused on changing dynamics in the local authority, leading to greater provision for families.

*We are opening things up much more to this idea of whenever a referral comes into any service in [the borough] trying to screen for all of these*

*things. So it might be that you've got a young person presenting with behavioural difficulties or emotional problems in school and/or other learning difficulties that would mean that then triggers, actually we need to look at the whole family to see what else is going on. (Harriet – EP1)*

Harriet talked about an increase in screening for DA and the borough's approach of considering an entire family's circumstances if a significant mental health need was flagged for a child. SPs also talked about how they wished to see their role develop in relation to DA in order to support more families in moving forwards. EP Freya (EP5) explained, *"I think it would be really useful to have a set of guidelines for us as a service. In one of my previous services they had what they call consultation frameworks for different needs"* (Freya, EP5).

Similarly, Louise talked about how to extend the EP role and highlighted her wish for greater training in this area.

*I would love us to have a service training day or something on it where we actually get to look in detail about the most up-to-date research, the resources that are out there. Yes, because I think we need to raise our awareness. (Louise – EP3)*

This subtheme has reiterated how times are changing in relation to the support children receive following experiences of DA. Within this subtheme, SPs explained innovative methods used at the whole school and borough levels, as well as giving ideas for how they wish to extend their knowledge moving forwards.

**6.5.4 Summary of theme 3.** This theme has explored DA as a social construct. It has shown that at this point in time there is a high prevalence of DA in schools and the community and that SPs are aware of this and notice the implications for children and families. This theme has also considered how, in spite of this prevalence, many barriers exist across professional frameworks which prohibit professionals from delivering support within their roles. Finally, this theme has illuminated the interest and motivation professionals have in relation to supporting children and families affected by DA by extending professional knowledge and practice.

## **6.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has considered the views of professionals who have worked with children affected by DA who have relocated to their school for this reason. The chapter began by considering the ways DA affects children in their day-to-day school lives, from the perspective of SPs. It went on to describe strategies and intervention used to bolster children's resilience in the context of the school. Finally, the construct of DA was explored in relation to professionals' roles and opportunities for future practice. Chapter 7 will discuss the research findings in more detail.

## **Chapter 7 Discussion**

### **7.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter discusses the findings of the research, making links to theory and existing research literature. It will commence with an overview of the contribution of this research to existing theoretical and methodological frameworks. The key findings will be presented in response to the research questions and a discussion around the links with existing research literature will take place. In keeping with the research design, the PPCT model will be used to frame this discussion (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Implications for SPs will be considered, as will be the limitations of the research. Areas for future research and practice will be discussed.

### **7.2 Unique Contributions of this Research**

The aim of this research was to develop insight into the role of school for children who had experienced DA and relocated school for this reason. The research sought to gather the views of children and SPs in order to better understand this phenomenon. The researcher brought her own knowledge, perspective and characteristics to the research. She had spent several years working closely with children and their mothers following relocation because of DA. The researcher believed this held her in good stead and enabled her to respond in what she felt to be a sensitive and informed manner when meeting with children. When collecting data, the researcher drew on approaches such as: reflective listening, summarising and clarifying children's perspectives to show empathy and support them in feeling heard. This was also a way to 'check out' their points of view (e.g. 'I think what you are saying is.....does that sound

right or perhaps not?'). The researcher sought to create a warm climate where participants felt safe and motivated to contribute to the research. She attempted to do this by integrating general talk outside of the topic area, by bringing humour into sessions and by following the children's leads (e.g. engaging in play with the children during the data collection sessions when they self-withdrew from the topic area and began to play). These approaches seemed to be well received by participants.

Certain adjustments occurred during the research process. For instance, one child sought to clarify more than once, whether her class teacher would know what had been disclosed during the data collection session. During that session and beyond, the researcher reiterated she would not be contacting or sharing information with staff from any of the children's schools.

When collecting data the researcher was aware of the arrangement of the room where she met children. On the one hand the data collection sessions, by necessity took place in the refuge environment and it is unclear what the children's general feelings about the data collection space was. It is possible this made them feel more secure with data collection because they were familiar with the space. More generally the refuge may have been symbolic of upheaval. However, the researcher attempted to put the children at ease and reduce power imbalances by sitting together with them on the carpet or at a table rather than sitting on a chair while the children sat on the floor. The researcher also considered how much information she wished to disclose. She was open during conversations and shared her point of view, albeit mindfully, without disclosing what she felt were more personal details about herself. The

researcher also used the children's questions as an opportunity to find out more about their views on matters (e.g. when a child asked whether the researcher had been abroad the researcher responded and asked about their experiences abroad). Outside of data collection room, the children were able to observe the positive relationship between the researcher and the DA housing project workers. The researcher felt this supported the building of trust between participants and the researcher, since the participants also shared relationships with the project workers.

Unique contributions have arisen from this research. It offers a new approach for examining children's experiences of school and school relocation when they have encountered DA. Theoretically, the researcher examined this area of research using Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model. Given the multi-layered processes and complex interactions which take place across the child's eco system when they have experienced DA and relocated for this reason, the four tenets "process-person-context-time" provided a comprehensive framework to consider this non-normative childhood experience. Secondly, the researcher proposed that when children's experiences were considered within Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological framework, the prioritisation of their capacity to be resilient resulted in a focus on their resources and strengths. By thinking about children's resilience, it was possible to unpack how SPs and the school context could aid children's development and recovery from DA. Thirdly, positioning this discussion within debates on theories of childhood and the "new paradigm of childhood" led to childhood being perceived as a social construction, which is as distinct and complete as is adulthood, while children were recognised as important and influential in constructing and determining

their own lives and futures and the lives of those around them (James & Prout, 1990; 2015; Prout, 2005). This research has shown how these three complimentary theories can be used together as a multi-faceted approach to examine the role of school for children who have relocated because of DA. Bioecological theory also provided a robust framework to examine the experiences of SPs supporting children who have experienced DA. The findings suggest how each tenet of the model is relevant to how children are supported by professionals in the school context.

This research has also made a contribution to the development of research methodologies. A strength of the research is that it used a multi-method multi-informant approach. The data was collected from children (using visual, verbal and vignette data), SPs working full time across five mainstream primary schools and EPs based at an EPS. This enabled triangulation of roles, perspectives and contexts in relation to DA. To the researcher's knowledge, this is the first example of qualitative research to involve both SPs and children which examines the role of school and school relocation for children who have experienced DA.

Time was taken to develop robust research materials grounded in previous literature and theory to produce rich detailed findings (Barter & Reynold; 2000; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Hall, 2010; MacDonald & O'Hara 1998; O'Dell et al., 2012; Stafford et al., 2008). The three-layer approach used to triangulate children's views fits with the perception of children as competent and accomplished research respondents (James & Prout, 1990). As such, the theoretical approach and methodologies used in this research offer new

empirical evidence collated from children and professionals focusing on relocation and movement from schools because of DA.

### **7.3 Presentation of Key Findings**

The key findings of this research will now be discussed within each tenet of the PPCT model, drawing on past literature and previous research.

**7.3.1 Proximal processes.** The findings show that the children's experiences of school were largely shaped by reciprocal processes with teachers, friends and material objects. These interactions, which Bronfenbrenner and Morris describe as "the engines of development", formed the basis for maintaining the children's resilience as well as exacerbating feelings of risk in the school environment (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006 p.798). As stated by Pianta et al. (2003), children and teachers are engaged in "proximal processes", and these active systems are influenced by the characteristics of both parties and their mental representations of the relationship within the context in which the relationship occurs (Pianta et al., 2003).

In their interactions with teachers, children conveyed that explicit boundaries and consequences for "bad behaviour", with clear rules and expectations, were important. These findings echo previous research which has conveyed the importance of a structured learning environment with routine, boundaries and predictability for children who have experienced DA (Haeseler, 2006; Sterne & Poole, 2010).

Children indicated their preference for teachers who were kind, caring,



friendly and helpful and didn't shout. They sought out teachers who were "especially nice", would "hear your stories" and ask "are you okay?" They conveyed the importance of teachers being nurturing, empathic and understanding and looked for teachers who were reassuring and gave praise. They felt supported by teachers who responded to friendship difficulties, bullying and physical injury in the playground. These findings resonate with past literature which conveys that teachers are instrumental as caring adults who notice children and show empathy with their life circumstances, their wellbeing and what they have experienced (Dods, 2013). Dods (2013) found that following trauma children did not seek expert knowledge from teachers, but rather looked for a teacher who provided a safe learning environment, a willingness to connect and strong relational skills (Dods, 2013). These findings resonate with responses from SPs, who highlighted the importance of children building trusting, positive relationships with adults to bolster their recovery and resilience.

Although classroom teachers were talked about most often, children mentioned receiving support from first aid teachers, head teachers, lunch time helpers and school counsellors. These professionals were important in aiding resilience in school. This fits with findings from Women's Aid (2014), which place high value on the significance of having a trusted adult to share difficult feelings with.

Findings from SPs described how children could be distant, distracted and defensive in their relationships with adults. They could be withdrawn and quiet or loud and sensitive, wanting a teacher close by. These findings are

fitting with previous DA research which has shown children make complex and situated decisions about who they keep close and at a distance (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015). Professionals also highlighted that children could exhibit emotional, behavioural and learning needs at school. These findings echo literature which has considered how DA can impact on children's mental health (Alexander et al., 2005; CAADA, 2014; Kitzmann et al., 2003).

Although children highlighted the significance of teacher support in bolstering their resilience, they also described difficulties in their relationships with teachers. They talked of a fear of strict teachers, shouting and being scolded. Through the personalisation of vignette characters, children talked about their difficulty concentrating in the classroom. They referred to interfering thoughts of the perpetrator returning to cause harm to children and mothers. In these situations, children talked about how a teacher could scold a child for not listening or for mishearing information about their school work. These findings resonate with previous literature (Buckley et al., 2007; Cleaver et al., 2011). Cleaver et al. (2011) found that DA could lead children to fear for parent safety, develop an increased sense of responsibility for themselves and family members and wish to return home from school during the school day (Cleaver et al., 2011; Sterne & Poole, 2010).

Findings from SPs gave weight to children's perspectives. Schools shared information with class teachers to differing extents and children could get into trouble for distractibility when the classroom teacher did not have information about the child's home circumstances. Similarly, findings from

McKee and Mason (2015) show that there is a lack of awareness among teachers about DA and its impact on children (McKee & Mason, 2015).

These findings illuminate tensions which can arise between protecting and sharing information when a child has relocated because of DA. It is paramount that information is restricted to protect the child and family. McKee and Mason (2015) state that teachers are called on to protect the safety and wellbeing of pupils. However, the findings also suggest a challenging balance between the class teacher being given insight into how the child may feel or behave in class because of DA and the need to safeguard and restrict information sharing. The importance of the child-teacher relationship at school is given credit by a body of literature which links a positive relationship to better outcomes for children (Creeden, 2008; Dods, 2013; Haesseler, 2006; McKee & Mason, 2015; Osher et al., 2016; Pianta et al., 2003). Mullender et al. (2002) argue that children need teachers and staff who know what the impact of DA can be so that they will have some understanding of children's experiences and the impact on their schooling, without breaking confidence (Mullender et al., 2002).

The findings also show that the children's experiences of school life were dominated by reciprocal interactions shared with peers. Both male and female participants sought out friends who would "guard" them from problems, intervene and care for them. The two younger children who participated (seven to eight years) talked about friends to have fun with, who laughed with them. These findings relate to previous research literature which considered friendship making for children from disadvantaged families and reported children looked

for caring and protective friends who safeguarded them from bullying and isolation (Ridge, 2003). More recent research has also shown that children who have encountered DA have complex strategies for forming and maintaining friendships (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015).

The findings show that the children felt concerned about bullying, physical fights and threats occurring at playtime. They worried that physical fights could escalate, leading to an injury like those endured by their mothers, and in one case was explicitly inflicted on the child herself. Research by Buckley et al. (2007) stated that children feel anxious about bullying and being bullied following DA. They reported that children believed that if teachers had been better informed the bullying could have been stopped (Buckley et al., 2007). Giving weight to this idea, the findings here showed that children did not always believe that teachers intervened appropriately to prevent bullying from taking place, which led children to use self-support strategies such as relocating to a safe part of the school.

There were differences between how male and female participants responded to feelings of threats at school, although both suggested the importance of restorative justice which punished the instigator of the perceived problem. While male participants wished to use, or used, physical retaliation, female participants engaged in conversations and saw themselves as problem-solvers. Female participants showed a greater tendency to remove themselves from the threat by relocating to a different part of the school or by calling on the protection of teachers. While female participants viewed physical retaliation negatively, male participants conveyed a sense of pride and masculinity in

relation to this. However, they acknowledged that the presence of a teacher prevented fights from escalating and that this was positive. These findings foreground the importance of teaching children ways to feel that justice has been restored without them having to resort to aggressive behaviour.

SPs also described how children could experience difficulties in building and maintaining friendship. Children could exhibit controlling, attention seeking and aggressive behaviour. Though literature has shown that friends are an important source of support, aid resilience and provide continuity (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015; Holt et al., 2008; Mullender et al., 2002; Sterne & Poole, 2010), children can also show difficulties in friendship making and maintenance (Buckley et al., 2007; Sterne & Poole, 2010).

Literature has also reported that 52% of children exposed to DA experience behavioural problems (CAADA, 2014). In this research, children's aggressive behaviour seemed to be born from frustration and a wish to respond to a perceived threat by retaliating in order to restore justice. For male participants, this appeared to be linked to discourses of masculinity. The findings show that children consistently responded to feelings of threat during peer interaction either by responding to the situation itself by or talking about how they wished they had responded. Överlien and Hydén (2009) similarly found that when describing their responses to violent episodes, a child talked about how they acted or wished they had acted (Överlien & Hydén, 2009).

As well as talking about their reciprocal interactions with teachers and friends, children talked about the importance of objects, materials and animals when they had experienced DA. The findings highlight the importance of objects

as a means to self-protect and self-soothe at school in relation to DA. One child brought soft toys into school because of her experiences of DA at home.

Though mocked by classmates, the approval of two authority figures (parent and teacher) enabled her to withstand the taunting and continue to bring in toys to self-support. Other children talked about the importance of objects such as “worry boxes”, “reward charts”, and the “friendship bench”, which gave support and reassurance. Literature has shown that children who have experienced DA show a preference for special objects (Wagstaff, 2009).

**7.3.2 Personal characteristics.** When the children talked about school life, they referred to a range of difficult feelings. These included: loneliness due to a lack of inclusion, fear of aggression or bullying, shyness in the classroom, worry about friendship-making, sadness and worry in relation to their experiences of DA. Children referred to these characteristics when talking about themselves and/or describing how a vignette character might feel about school when they had experienced DA. These findings resonate with the research literature, which has described some of the challenging emotions children feel when they have experienced DA (Alexander et al., 2005; Baldry 2003; Buckley et al., 2007).

However, all children in the current research also used personal characteristics to act, respond, self-care, self-protect and self-develop at school. They used “force characteristics” (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) and showed their motivation to be resilient through their verbal responses, visual images and use of vignette to highlight how a vignette character could help himself/herself when they had experienced DA.

For example, they talked about: bravery when making new friendships, confidence and standing up to threats from peers, humour and having fun, ignoring negative comments, sharing feelings with adults and seeking support from children and grown-ups. Children explained that these characteristics had, would or could help them or a child who had experienced DA cope with the emotional and physical demands of school life. This fits with the literature, which has remarked on the prominence children place on peer and adult input, care and protection (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015; Creedon, 2008; Osher et al., 2016; Ridge, 2003). Moreover, it showed that when children have the opportunity to be part of nurturing relationships with adults, this leads to better outcomes (Pianta et al., 2003).

When talking about the vignette characters, children “gave advice” to the imaginary characters who had relocated school because of DA. In their “advice”, they suggested that characters needed to be strong, be themselves, be calm and switch off from the past. Their advice was to “remember that things take time” and “not to give up”.

The findings also showed that SPs used their own personal approaches, which affected their involvement in DA cases. Their “force” characteristics were deployed in conjunction with their “resource characteristics” and their prior experience and knowledge of DA (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). For example, professionals sought out innovative ways to support pupils in spite of time and resource barriers. They used laughter, spent time trying to break down barriers and suggested the importance of nurturing and pro-social and fair approaches for children. While professionals used personal attributes to support children,

there was no set paradigm, shared approach or pedagogy in place. This aligns with previous observations in the research literature about a range of approaches used in to DA (Guy et al., 2014).

**7.3.3 Context.** Within both bioecological theory and eco systems theory, the importance of context is reiterated in relation to person development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). While they are growing up, children encounter a range of micro contexts, one of which is school. The findings of this research show that children find small hubs to move to within the context of the school as a means to self-protect, away from either adult authority or peers.

Findings from SPs and children show that the children used space strategically. They sought out areas which felt safe, peaceful and provided a means of escaping riskier parts of the school. Although research has relayed the importance of thinking about how young people use space in relation to violence (Lombard, 2015), and how children navigate the school in relation to their emotions (Andrews & Chen, 2006; Colins & Coleman, 2008; Hall, 2010; Proctor, 2015), this study uniquely considered children's use of space in school when they had experienced DA, as represented by children themselves. Lombard (2015) stated that until now the research literature has examined the spaces where violence occurs rather than the representation of space by young people themselves (Lombard, 2015).

Children talked about playtime as a comparatively risky time of day when fights could break out, leading to physical injury away from adult authority. Physical aggression was concerning and linked to children's memories of what



had happened to their mothers. This could cause stress and anxiety, and subsequently children might want to move into other parts of the school. These findings resonate with Andrews and Chen (2006), who noted that the design of the school can prevent victims of bullying from escaping. They can be forced to use spatial coping tactics and avoid known places where bullies act (Andrews & Chen, 2006). The findings also highlight that the need to feel safe superseded other motivations (e.g. the motivation to be perceived positively by the teacher), as long as the result is being placed in a safer part of the school. Similar research has shown that children who have experienced DA use spaces tactically to self-protect and self-soothe in the home environment (Allen, 2003; Callaghan & Alexander, 2015; Överlien & Hydén, 2009).

As well as navigating space to avoid threats from peers, children used space as a means to avoid teachers. This occurred at break time as a way to perform risky behaviour (e.g. visit prohibited areas or exhibit aggression) and in lesson time to leave the classroom. The findings highlight the importance of creating safe places for children in the classroom and wider school.

Similar to these findings, previous research has shown that children attach different emotions to the various areas they navigate in the school environment (Proctor, 2015). It is important that SPs are aware of behaviours children exhibit when they have experienced DA in order to empower children to share their true feelings and prevent them from resorting to misbehaviour as a means of relocating to safer parts of the school.

The findings show that the classroom was a comparatively “low risk” area. In the classroom, boundaries, structure, rules and authority increased

feelings of safety and prevented negative outbreaks from occurring. This sat in contrast to the playground, where there was less teacher input, older children could be intimidating and physical injury could occur. Collins and Coleman (2008) write that the classroom is organised in a way intended to facilitate adult authority and surveillance and aid the social and behavioural control of children. The internal space of the school is manipulated to produce more compliant pupils (Collie & Coleman, 2008). These ideas align with childhood being a social construction where children are passive objects of socialisation in an adult-led society (Prout, 2005). In combination with a caring and pro-social teaching approach, children in this research showed a preference for boundaries and structures across school spaces. This relates to literature which has shown that children who have experienced DA benefit from a nurturing environment, predictability through routines, pro-social attitudes and clear expectations (Baker & Cunningham, 2009; Hessler, 2006).

SPs commented on the culture and ethos of the schools they worked in. They highlighted the importance of a whole-school nurturing environment, vigilance about child safety, monitoring and information sharing. The findings raise the importance of promoting a fair non-judgemental environment, mentoring, building self-esteem and showing patience in relation to building relationships. SPs noted that school can be a meaningful, positive and safe place for children who enjoy the fairness and structure of the environment. These findings are supported by evidence which has shown school to be a domain where relationships with adults and peers can be fostered and children can develop feelings of safety and belonging (Moore & McArthur, 2011; Osher et al., 2016).

In order to build resilience and support children across the school and beyond, participants spoke at length about different ways children could be supported: in the classroom (creation of safe spaces, mindful pairings, visual timetables), outside the classroom (girls' groups, therapeutic group intervention) and across the wider school and community (teacher training, whole school monitoring system, extra-curricular activities).

Findings from SPs show that they supported children at the meso-, exo- and macro levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Professionals liaised with the children's mothers and services including social care, CAMHS, Family Support, NHS professionals and refuge workers to effectively support children. A range of professionals have been linked to supporting children who have experienced DA (Guy et al., 2014; Sterne & Poole, 2010).

A summary of interventions children and SPs suggested as supportive in building children's resilience at school can be found in Appendix P.

**7.3.4 Time.** This research looked specifically at children's experiences of school relocation because of DA. Although previous research has looked into relocation because of DA (Moore & McArthur, 2011; Stafford et al., 2008) rarely has research directly considered children's views about school life in this situation.

When "time" was incorporated into this research, "micro-time", "meso time" and "macro time" were considered (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). The findings highlight what happened during "micro time" in the course of single activities or interactions at school, at home or during relocation. The

mentioned parts of this discussion have examined “micro time” experiences for children and professionals at school.

Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994) also referred to “meso time”, the extent to which interactions occur with consistency over a developing person’s environment. A strength of this research is that it considers children’s experiences of school life both pre- and post- relocation because of DA. Previous research has rarely looked directly at children’s experiences at both of these points in time. The findings show that loss and grief occurs for children. Children talked about feelings of sadness, stress, frustration and fear related to relocation. Female participants felt concerned about friends left behind. They described guilt and selfishness and referred to worry about friends’ safety following relocation. These findings echo previous research which has referred to relocation (Mullender et al., 2002; Stafford et al., 2008).

Children relayed feelings of tiredness, a lack of preparedness for departure and being upset in relation to leaving family members, friends and personal belongings without warning. Possessions and personal belongings were marked as important in relation to relocation (Moore & McArthur, 2011; Stafford et al., 2008; Ni Laoire et al., 2012).

When children talked about leaving, there was also a consistent allusion to the lack of control they experienced in regards to relocation. This fits with the theories of childhood literature and the idea of adults dictating children’s development and experiences. However, in spite of this, female participants demonstrated a wish to keep themselves and family members safe. They had internalised memories of DA, held views of the destruction it could cause, and

suggested relocation as important and necessary to achieve safety in spite of a range of negative emotions which co-existed in relation to it.

When thinking about relocation to a new school, children commented on concerns over whether they would be included and make friendships. They talked about the importance of “buddies” and “mentors” available to support them at school. SPs also talked about the difficulties children had around relationship building. They cited a lack of trust in adults following long term involvement with monitoring agencies and a reluctance to invest in long term relationships in case they relocated again. Moore and McArthur (2011) note that it can take up to six months or longer for children to establish good social relationships within their school following relocation.

Professionals also empathised with the difficult position children could be placed in, having to explain their reason for arriving and relocation to new friends. One SP noted how children’s information sharing would depend on parameters they had been set by other adults. This again resonates with theories of childhood literature and the power adults have over children, not only regarding relocation but also in regards to how they construct their identity and share information about themselves following relocation. Identity has been marked as important in relation to relocation for migrants in previous studies (Ni Laoire et al., 2012).

SPs’ responses to children, as well as children’s own responses, were also dominated by “macro time”. This term refers to the fact that developmental processes vary according to the historical events occurring at specific points in time. For example, the cohort of children and SPs involved in this research will

hold different perceptions of DA, as a social construct, to those held by children and professionals who may have been involved in research about DA one or two decades ago. As academic literature and policy has shown, the response of society to children and women who have experienced DA at a community, social and educational level has changed over time. As discussed in Chapter 2, understandings of DA have shifted dramatically (Davidson, 1977).

The findings show that when children talked about school life they conveyed awareness of risk and danger, combined with empowered and innovative suggestions about how to self-help in school. Children were active and pro-active in creating individual ideas, demonstrating personal actions, conveying what was important and in the advice they would give to other children in their situation.

When SPs talked about the support they gave to children, they were confined by the parameters of their professional roles, their knowledge of DA and their expectations about how their time and resources would be used. For example, although all of the adult respondents involved in this research had supported children who had experienced DA, EPs were sometimes less frequently knowingly involved in cases than other SPs. Some cited barriers such as the difficulty of becoming involved in cases or a lack of clarity of their role in relation to DA. All SPs talked about the hidden and secretive nature of DA, the complexities of supporting children and their families because of the embedded risks, and a lack of time and resources available. These findings resonate with previous literature which has considered the role of EPs in relation to DA (Ellis 2012, Gallagher, 2014).

The findings show that the current climate presents a number of barriers to supporting children who have experienced DA in all areas. However, SPs continually find ways to overcome these hurdles and use their professional knowledge and experience to develop innovative practices to support the achievement of positive outcomes for children.

#### **7.4 Limitations of the Research**

There are a number of limitations to the current research. Firstly, limitations may have arisen from the selective sampling design, which meant that the SPs who participated were already wedded to caring about DA. Secondly, three of the five child participants lived in supported housing at a women's refuge throughout the research. This has been suggested as a methodological weakness of DA research (Cleaver et al., 2011). Limitations of this research were also related to constraints of time and resources. The amount of work the researcher could produce in the time available was also limited.

#### **7.5 Future Research and Practice**

As an extension of this research, the views of children and SPs should be examined more closely in relation to school life following DA and relocation. Although this research has provided an insight into this area, it would be beneficial to conduct large-scale research across schools in the UK to elicit the views of children about how they can be best supported at school when they have experienced DA. The findings make it clear that more resources should be employed to examine children of primary and secondary school age. This would raise the profile of DA in schools, increase staff awareness across the school

system and ensure that professionals feel equipped and confident to discuss DA in professional meetings where children's resilience and recovery can be focused upon.

### **7.6 Implications for Schools**

This research has highlighted the pivotal role SPs can play when children have experienced DA and relocated school for this reason. As demonstrated, children experience a range of complex experiences and emotions when they move school because of DA. Throughout this research, the personal characteristics, approaches, responses and ethos of SPs and the school environment have been shown as pivotal to improving outcomes for children who have experienced DA and relocated for this reason.

A number of suggestions were offered by children and SPs as valuable in relation to supporting children in school following DA. These suggestions were presented in chapters 5 and 6 and are also available in Appendix P. Many of these suggestions provide further support to previous research that has identified how children who have experienced DA can be supported in education (Ellis, 2012; Gallagher, 2014; Hessler, 2006; McKee & Mason, 2015). This list is not exhaustive, but suggests a summary which is relevant at this point in time according to the views of the children and SPs involved in this research.

### **7.7 Implications for EP Practice**

The findings of this research highlight a number of ways in which EPs



can provide support to children, schools and families in response to DA. By working jointly with schools and other professionals, EPs can play an important role in consolidating the advice and support available to schools to enable them to meet the educational, social, emotional and mental health needs of children who have experienced DA.

In this research, while children who had experienced DA were vulnerable, they also showed resilience at school. They engaged in processes with people, objects and animals, and navigated spaces strategically to self-protect and self-soothe at school. They also struggled in peer relationships and had friendship difficulties and complex emotions to contend with. Each of these areas is relevant to the support and advice EPs can give schools. EPs can recommend interventions to increase pupil-teacher connectedness, think about safe places across the classroom and school, and support the emotional resilience of children and staff supporting children in the classroom and wider school.

EPs can raise the profile of DA and awareness across their schools and local authorities. They can ask about children's histories of DA in planning meetings with SENDCos and in school consultations, in particular when complex family dynamics and mental health needs for a child have been flagged up. A home consultation provides another opportunity for EPs to ask about DA if a parent has raised concerns about their child's mental health and is separated from a former partner. It would not be safe to discuss DA in the presence of two parents together, unless it was raised by the parents, since this could exacerbate the risk for the victim and child.

EPs can be vigilant about picking up on the language used by children, families and professionals and extending conversations. They can notice information given by SENDCos and parents, and if the environment is safe they can extend the conversation to unpack whether DA may be affecting the child and their school experience. When assessing children on an individual basis, EPs are equipped to notice children's discourse and whether their language suggests they may have experienced DA. If this occurs, EPs can request to undertake further assessment to look more closely at the child's needs, and thereafter recommend direct therapeutic input from themselves or another professional when relevant.

EPs can provide therapeutic intervention. A child and his/her mother who have experienced DA and relocated may benefit from an intervention to support their communication and interaction with one another. The child may benefit from attending a small group intervention and the parent from a parenting programme. EPs are skilled in delivering evidence-based therapeutic work on a one-to-one (CBT, therapeutic play, solution focused therapy), systemic (video interactive guidance, parenting support) and group (CBT, positive relationships, relaxation, assertiveness, bullying) basis and devising bespoke programmes in response to the needs highlighted by schools.

At a whole-school level, EPs can support schools in developing policies and practices that address the social, emotional, mental health and safeguarding needs of children who have experienced DA. EPs can provide INSET training to develop staff skills, knowledge and understanding. EPs can also play a key role in coaching, supervising and training schools, staff and

parents about DA and its impact on children. If a school provides therapeutic intervention from a learning mentor or a member of their pastoral team, EPs are well placed to supervise and coach staff.

At a local authority level, EPs can contribute to wider teams and forums where they have opportunities to support families who have experienced DA by supervising support workers, coaching and mentoring.

EPs also require suitable training provided through the EPS to increase their confidence and knowledge in relation to their role on DA cases when school relocation has occurred. The research findings highlighted that EPs can feel ill equipped to recognise and support children who have relocated due to DA. To support EPs in this area, DA can be raised in EPS team meetings; EPs can collaboratively discuss how they can open and extend thinking about this topic and relocation both in the EPS and school environments. DA can also be explored collectively at team service days, in reflective group workshops and during supervision where EPs can reflect on DA as hidden yet present in EP work. Taking these steps can increase the motivation, knowledge and confidence as well as the consistency of EP practice on cases where children have experienced DA and relocated for this reason.

A summary of methods EPs could use to support children who have experienced DA can be found in Appendix P.

## **7.8 Conclusions**

Distinguishing it from other research, this research has considered the role of school for children who have experienced DA and relocated school for

this reason. It has examined the perspectives of children aged between seven and 10 years and SPs. This study has highlighted the relevance of using an ecological approach, bioecological theory, to understand this phenomenon, while drawing simultaneously on constructions of childhood and children's resilience literature. It has used a range of qualitative data materials, grounded in theory and research, to examine how children and SPs experience school when a child has relocated because of DA. The findings highlight that children draw on their own personal characteristics to increase resilience, self-protect and self-soothe in the school environment when they have experienced DA. Children also value the importance of peers and teaching staff as protective and caring mediators who increase feelings of safety, decrease anxiety, sadness and fear and give emotional and physical support as part of their relationship with children and through interventions in the classroom and the wider school. The findings reiterate that SPs are aware of the significant impact experiencing DA has on children's mental health and academic progress. In spite of time and resource barriers and boundaries around professional roles they are committed and motivated to protect children who have experienced DA, drawing on a number of strategies to do so, including taking advantage of their personal characteristics, employing whole school approaches, liaising with professionals across the child's ecosystem and using emotional (e.g. direct and indirect therapeutic) and practical (e.g. safe spaces, extra curricula activities) input in the classroom and wider school. These methods were meaningful to children, who wished to feel safe at school and used strategies implemented by professionals as well as the context of the school itself and other areas to increase their feelings of safety (e.g. navigating to certain parts of the school to

increase safety).

The findings highlight that school relocation is significant to children. They experience grief, loss, sadness, worry and frustration in relation to leaving people and belongings. However, they also have an understanding of the complex emotions connected to DA and the importance of relocating to safety for themselves and members of their family. Professionals noted how disrupted schooling could impact on relationship building, trust of adults, motivation and academic progress. However, they also found that school was a place where children had permission to switch off and could enjoy a safe, structured and nurturing environment.

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## Appendix A

## Information from the Literature Search

This section provides information on the search strategy and keywords used to conduct a search for literature relevant to this thesis. Initially, literature published in the UK was the primary search focus. However the limited information available led to the inclusion of research from the United States, Europe, Africa and Australia. A manual search of the bibliographies of relevant UK-based studies took place, giving access to recently published articles related to the research.

The UCL Institute of Education Library catalogue, electronic databases and grey literature was consulted. A search of the literature was conducted using a range of databases including:

**British Education Index (BEI)**

Sources in the *British Education Index* include education and training journals, mostly published in the UK, along with some international literature. The BEI indexes more than 238,000 articles published in UK journals

**Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)**

This includes journal articles and research reports in the field of education, including citation and abstract information from over 750 educational journals and related documents. Indexing and abstracting database.

**PsychINFO**

Over 13000 journals in psychology and related fields, including peer reviewed articles, books and dissertations.

**PsycARTICLES**

A database of full-text articles from journals published by the American Psychological Association, the APA Educational Publishing Foundation, the Canadian Psychological Association, and Hogrefe Publishing Group.

**Electronic Thesis Online Service (EThOS)**

ETHOS is a British Library resource facilitating the search of more than 300,000 theses from 127 British Universities.

Search terms used to focus the search included:

- Domestic abuse
- Domestic violence
- Intimate partner violence
- Family violence
- Child\*
- School age
- Pupil
- Parent
- School
- Educat\*
- Educational psychologist
- Teacher
- Professional
- Qualitative
- Child voice
- Pupil voice
- Professional voice
- Ecolog\*
- Resilien\*
- Relocat\*
- Change
- Move
- Home\*

Search Example:

("domestic violence" OR "domestic abuse" OR "intimate partner violence" OR "family violence" ) AND child\* AND (school OR educat\* OR professional)

## Appendix B

## Reflective Journal Extracts

**Reflective Diary Extracts**

**Extract 1** *Today was interesting. I visited one of the refuges and spent time playing with some children in the garden, then loads more children joined in. We played garden games like hide and seek and 'What's the time Mr Wolf.' I met some of the mums too and talked about my research. They seemed interested but didn't ask many details they were all rushing between tasks. It's important I return soon to meet everyone again. Life here seems stressful.*

**Extract 2** *Just held my first session with my first child participant. She was only 7. We play games for a long time, then her mum came and we looked at the child's arts and crafts things she had made at school. Her mum seemed really pleased she is taking part in the project and kept talking to me about bullying she's experienced and how many times she's had to move school. Then the girl and I held the session. It was so interesting and she was so engaging. She talked a lot and I was surprised at how few prompts I used. School is so important for these children...*

**Extract 3** *Today I visited a boy in the community (living in shared accommodation). I felt emotional hearing about what took place for him. It was amazing how use of the vignettes enabled him to really open up about things. I can't believe how much some of these children have experienced. It is useful to reflect on the sadness and respect I felt for this young man. These children show strength and bravery on a daily basis...*

**Extract 4** *I have begun transcribing the children's interviews. I feel privileged playing back their audios. I am reflecting on how important it is to use their words respectfully to best represent their experiences in a way which portrays their views accurately. These children have complex feelings and emotions in regards to their understandings of DA and relocation.*

**Extract 5** *I had supervision today and found myself feeling overcome by my own feelings as I described what was beginning to develop through analysis of the children's data. I could hear my voice sounding emotional as I described some of the things coming up. It feels very important to convey their strength as well as the challenges they have faced accurately.*

[University Logo]

## Appendix C Information Sheet for Children



**Hi my name is Amy, I would like to invite you to take part in my research. This is about how children and young people who move school because of tough times at home, feel about school life. It would be great to spend time with you drawing, colouring and hearing about your views.**

If you would like to take part, we can meet up and think together about what school means to you. We can draw pictures of your old and new school and think about things like: what happened when you moved school? What's different at your new school? Who's important? What do you do if things get tough? What makes you happy at school? What could make school even better?

If you would like to take part, I will visit you at the place where you live. I can visit a few times to hear all your thoughts and views. I'll only visit when you and your mum let me know it's a good time.

Your views are really important. They will be written in my university research project and some things you say might be shared with schools and teachers to help them understand how children feel.

But... I will always keep your name and information about you (and anyone you talk about) completely confidential. Confidential means, I will keep it private and not tell anybody else. I will meet with different children, but promise to keep all children's names and identities private so nobody knows who said what.

I will only tell another adult something you say if I think you or somebody else could be hurt. This is to keep you safe. If that happens I will always talk to you about it first.

After the project I will write to you and your mum about the important things I found out from speaking to all the children I spent time with. I will bring you the picture(s) we made together and if you like, you can keep them.

It's your choice whether you take part. Nobody will be upset if you don't want to take part, or if you decide to take part and change your mind later. If you have any questions you can call me on []

[University Logo]

### Appendix D Information Sheet for Parents

**Hi!** My name is Amy Stanton and I am an Educational Psychologist in Training. Educational Psychologists work with children and young people and help make positive changes for them at school in terms of their learning, social and emotional development. Educational Psychologists also work closely with schools and parents. Before being an Educational Psychologist in Training I worked at [] where I supported children who had moved to the refuge or community because of domestic abuse.

I am spending time at [] because I am completing a research project. As part of this I am interested in hearing the views of children and young people who changed school when they moved house because of domestic abuse. This is really important because by listening to children's views, we can help schools understand more about how to support children at school.

As part of the research, I would like to meet [child's name] around three times across a two-week period. I can come to the place where you live for each meeting at a convenient time for you and [child]. Together, [child's name] and I will create a picture that includes their thoughts and feelings about school life both past and present. Our meetings will be fun, creative and interactive. I will ask mums and the children's worker to be close by if children want to talk about things after my visits. I won't ever share what your child has talked about. The only time I will tell another adult anything they say is if I think they, or someone else could be at risk of harm.

Your child's views are really important. They will be written in my university research project and some things they say might be shared with schools and teachers to help them understand how children feel when they move schools because of domestic abuse. However, [child's name] and your family's personal details will never be shared. These will always be kept completely confidential.

At the end of the project I will write to you and [child's name] about the important things I found out. I will also give [child's name] their picture(s) to keep if they would like to. With yours and [child's name] agreement I would like to record our discussions so I remember all of the important ideas mentioned. I will make sure that this information is kept private and safe and I will destroy any recordings as soon as the recordings have been transcribed.

It is entirely voluntary for your son/daughter to take part. If they decide they want to, and change their mind later that's okay. They can also change their mind at any point.

Thank you for reading, please fill in the consent form if your child would like to

take part in the project.



[University Logo]

## Appendix E Consent to Participate in Research Form

<b>Consent to take part in Amy's Research</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
1. I have read the information sheet and understand the information provided and my role in Amy's research.	
2. I understand that Amy may share my views with schools and that my thoughts and ideas will be written in Amy's research, but I know that Amy will protect my identity and keep my details confidential at all times.	
3. I understand that it is my choice whether I take part in Amy's research and if I decide to, and later change my mind I can leave at any time.	
4. I agree to take part in Amy's research.	
5. I am willing for the things I say, draw and write to be seen and shared to help researchers in the future as long as my personal details are kept completely private.	

My Name (Name of Child) \_\_\_\_\_

My Signature (Signature of Child) \_\_\_\_\_

My Mum's Signature (Signature of Parent) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F

## Risk Assessment for Child Participants

Hazard/risk identification	Risk rating (Likelihood & Impact)	Risk Management Plan – Control measures	Who	When
<p><b>Risk No: 1</b></p> <p>Child may feel emotional discomfort during or after an interview</p>	<p>Likelihood – low</p> <p>Impact – low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children will be asked about their school experience rather than the nature of the domestic abuse they have experienced.</li> <li>- The child’s mother, project children’s worker and project manager will be on-site to provide support if needed.</li> <li>- The project operates a 24/7-telephone helpline and in an emergency the nominated child protection officer will be easily contactable.</li> <li>- The child will have access to Childline should they feel upset after the interview.</li> <li>- The researcher will stay on-site after the interview and provide a list of telephone helplines to children if necessary.</li> </ul>	<p>Interviewer</p> <p>Children’s worker</p> <p>Mother</p> <p>Project manager</p>	<p>During refuge or community interview</p>
<p><b>Risk No: 2</b></p> <p>Emergency takes place during interview e.g. perpetrator</p>	<p>Likelihood – low</p> <p>Impact – high</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All child interviews will take place in a secure location with additional security.</li> <li>- Project workers including the children’s worker and/or project manager will be present at the property when the interview takes place.</li> <li>- Should any emergency arise the interview will be terminated and the child follow steps given by the project workers and/or mother.</li> </ul>	<p>Interviewer</p> <p>Children’s worker</p> <p>Project manager</p>	<p>During refuge or community interview</p>

locates family.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In any emergency the nominated child protection officer will be easily contactable. The local police station are aware of the refuge and the location is marked as a priority.</li> </ul>	mother	
<p><b>Risk No: 3</b></p> <p>Emergency takes place at the house not directly involving the child or their family</p>	<p>Likelihood – low</p> <p>Impact – medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The interview will be held in the living room, lounge or playroom (centrally located in the house) so children will be easily accessible should an emergency arise.</li> <li>- The project workers and the child’s mother will know the location of the interview.</li> <li>- The researcher will keep her mobile telephone on at all times and be easily contactable.</li> <li>- In any emergency, the nominated child protection officer will be easily contactable. The local police station are aware of the refuge and the location is marked as a priority.</li> </ul>	<p>Interviewer</p> <p>Children’s worker</p> <p>Project manager</p> <p>Child’s mother</p>	<p>During refuge interview</p>
<p><b>Risk No: 4</b></p> <p>The child discloses an incident of harm to the interviewer</p>	<p>Likelihood – Low</p> <p>Impact – High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The child will have relocated to safety with their non-abusing parent.</li> <li>- The interviewer will explain the bounds of confidentiality to the child.</li> <li>- The project child protection officer will be easily contactable.</li> <li>- If this occurs, the child will be able to access support from the child protection officer, the children’s worker, the project manager and the child’s mother.</li> </ul>	<p>Interviewer</p> <p>Children’s worker</p> <p>Project Manager</p> <p>Child’s mother</p>	<p>During refuge or community interview</p>

## Appendix G

## Verbal Prompts for Children's Data Collection

Prompts will be used in a flexible, optional way as and when appropriate during the research process.

**1. Environmental Quality**

- What are the best parts of the school? Where do you like spending your time? What's your favourite place to go?
- Why is that the best place?
- What do you like to do when you are there? / E.g. What games do you play?

**2. Emotional Processing (Feeling Positive)**

- What places make you feel good about being at school?
- What do you like about your school?
- Who is important to you at school?
- When do you feel happy in school?

**3. Emotional Processing (Processing Feelings)**

- Is there anywhere you don't like spending time at school? What's the reason?
- Do you wish school were different? If so, how could it be even better?
- What did you let classmates know about the reason you moved school?
- Does anything happen to make you feel upset, worried or cross at school? What might be on your mind? Who do you talk to?
- Have you had any difficult encounters with friends or teachers? What happened then?
- How does life at home make a difference to life at school?

**4. Self-Management Skills**

- Do school people (e.g. teachers / friends) make you feel happy and help you in school?
- How does the teacher help? Which adults do you speak to at school if you are feeling upset, angry or worried?
- How do friends help? What about other children or classmates?
- If they don't help you, how come?
- What do you do to take care of yourself at school?

**5. Participation**

- Are you a member of any clubs at school?
- What clubs do you like doing best?
- Do you like joining in at school? How come?

## Appendix H

## Vignettes for Children's Data Collection

**Sophie.**

Sophie is 8 years old and lives with her mum and sister Rachel who is 3 years old. Sophie and her mum and sister moved out of their old home because it was no longer safe to live there. When they moved house Sophie left her friends and changed her school. Sophie wasn't sure how she felt moving out of her old house. Sophie recently started at a new school and has been there for a few weeks.

*Questions*

1. *Why do you think Sophie had to move?*
2. *How do you think Sophie feels about having to move out her old school?*
3. *What do Sophie's mum and sister feel about moving?*
4. *How do you think Sophie feels at her new school?*
5. *What tips and advice would you give Sophie about starting her new school if you were her friend?*
6. *Can Sophie's teacher help? If so how?*

**Zara.**

Zara is 9 years old and lives with her mum and two younger brothers. Zara, her mum and brothers have had to move home twice during the last year because it became unsafe for them to stay at their house. Zara is now in year five and she has had to start at a new school three times.

*Questions*

1. *Why do you think Zara had to change schools three times?*
2. *How do you think Zara feels about changing school again?*
3. *How might Zara's mum and brothers feel about moving?*
4. *How do you think Zara feels at her new school?*
5. *What tips and advice would you give Zara about starting school again if you were her friend?*
6. *Can Zara's teacher help her? If so how?*

**Callum**

Callum is 8 years old and lives with his mum and older sister. Callum recently moved house because it was no longer safe for him, his mum and sister to live at home. Callum began a new school this term. He likes most of his class but there are some people he's not sure about. One boy has been nasty at break time and Callum thinks it might be to do with him knowing why Callum moved school. It's been playing on Callum's mind.

*Questions*

1. *Why do you think Callum moved schools?*
2. *How do you think Callum feels at his new school?*
3. *Why do you think the boy is being nasty to Callum?*
4. *If you were Callum's friend, what advice would you give him about the best way to make friends at his new school?*

**Neil**

Neil is 7 years old. He's in year 4 and just finished his first week at a new school. Neil moved house because it became unsafe for him and his mum to live in their old house. Neil enjoys being at school but sometimes finds himself feeling distracted in class. He likes his head teacher but he is not sure about the classroom teacher.

*Questions*

1. *Why do you think Neil had to change school?*
2. *How do you think Neil feels about moving school?*
3. *Why might Neil feel distracted in the classroom? What could be on his mind?*
4. *Why does Neil like the head teacher and not the class teacher?*
5. *What about the other teachers Neil likes and dislikes?*

**Overall**

*Which character is most like you and why? Which character is least like you?*

[University Logo]

## Appendix I

**PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET FOR SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS****What is this all about?**

Approximately one child in every classroom is, or has previously been affected by domestic violence and abuse. The aim of this research is to understand how these children are doing at school. I am interested in hearing school professionals' views and experiences of supporting pupils who may have experienced domestic violence and abuse and/or relocated school for this reason.

**Who are you?**

I am an Educational Psychologist in Training on placement at London Borough of Camden. I am in my final year of the Professional Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology at UCL Institute of Education. This research forms part of my doctoral thesis.

**What am I being asked to do?**

You are invited to take part in an interview. During the interview I will ask questions about your views and experiences related to this topic. We will be together for around 30 minutes.

**What are my rights?**

Your comments will be made anonymous in all reporting documents. If you decide to take part and change your mind later you can withdraw at any time. With your permission, I would like to audio record the interviews. No one will hear the recordings or be able to connect specific participants with reported project findings. All names and contact details will be stored securely and password protected. The only circumstance where confidentiality may be broken is if you indicate that the health and safety of a child or young person is at risk and action needed to protect the child. In this instance I may be required to talk to someone in Camden CSF but would discuss this with you first. As part of this project I have also spoken to primary aged children who fled their home and changed school because of domestic violence. This part of the research took place in a different borough.

**What happens after the interview?**

The findings will feed into the research project and may be published in a suitable peer reviewed journal, or summarised in other reports. With your permission the anonymised transcript will also be archived for potential future use by other researchers. When I have completed the research I will write to you with an account of the findings.

**What do I need to do if I would like to take part in the research?**

You can email me at [] and we will arrange to meet at a place and time convenient to you. I will also follow this letter with a telephone call in a week. Thank you for considering taking part in this important research.



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## Appendix J

## Consent Form for School Professionals

<b>Consent Form for School Professionals</b>	
<b>The Role of School for Children who Have Relocated Following Domestic Violence and Abuse</b>	
I have read the information letter about the research	<input type="checkbox"/> (please tick)
I agree to be interviewed for this research project	<input type="checkbox"/> (please tick)
Name _____	
Signed _____ Date _____	
Researcher's Name	
Signed _____ Date _____	

## Appendix K

## Risk Assessment for School Professionals

Hazard/risk identification	Risk rating (Likelihood & Impact)	Risk Management Plan – Control measures	Who	When
<p><b>Risk No: 1</b></p> <p>School professional may feel emotional discomfort during or after an interview for personal reasons</p>	<p>Likelihood – low</p> <p>Impact – low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professionals will not be asked any personal questions during the interview.</li> <li>- In the event that any professional experiences emotional discomfort because of personally experiencing domestic violence and abuse, the researcher will provide relevant helpline telephone numbers such as Camden’s free counselling service for professionals, Victim Support Camden, The National Domestic Violence Helpline, Women’s Aid and the local Samaritans.</li> <li>- The researcher holds an MSc in Counselling Psychology. The researcher was previously a Samaritan and volunteer at Victim Support London for several years. The researcher has experience of supporting women and children survivors of domestic violence and abuse.</li> <li>- The nominated child protection officer at the school will be easily contactable if their support becomes useful or relevant, e.g. if any professional discloses domestic violence in the home and their child could be at risk.</li> <li>- The researcher has the details of Camden social care team and the local police.</li> <li>- The researcher has stipulated the bounds of confidentiality in an information letter to the school and her duty to disclose should she feel any person may be at risk of harm.</li> <li>- This is an “opt-in” piece of research and all participants can withdraw at any time.</li> </ul>	<p>Professional</p> <p>Child</p>	<p>During interview</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No professionals being interviewed are considered vulnerable. All will be part of the staff team at a mainstream primary school in the borough.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Risk No: 2</b></p> <p>School professional may feel emotional discomfort during or after an interview when speaking about a vulnerable pupil or family they have supported.</p>	<p>Likelihood – low</p> <p>Impact – low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In the event that any professional experiences emotional discomfort when speaking about a vulnerable pupil or family who has experienced domestic violence and abuse, the researcher can provide relevant helpline telephone numbers, such as Camden’s free counselling service for professionals and the local Samaritans.</li> <li>- The researcher holds an MSc in Counselling Psychology. The researcher was previously a Samaritan and volunteer at Victim Support London. The researcher has experience of supporting women and children survivors of domestic violence and abuse.</li> <li>- The nominated child protection officer at the school will be easily contactable if their support becomes useful or relevant, e.g. if any professional discloses that a child at their school could be at risk at the present time.</li> <li>- The researcher has the details of Camden social care team and the local police.</li> <li>- The researcher has stipulated the bounds of confidentiality in an information letter to the school and her duty to disclose to the borough should she feel any child may be at risk of harm.</li> <li>- This is an “opt-in” piece of research and all participants can withdraw at any time.</li> </ul>	<p>Professional</p> <p>Child</p>	<p>During interview</p>

<p><b>Risk No: 3</b></p> <p>School professional may disclose that a pupil or young person is at risk of harm from domestic violence and abuse</p>	<p>Likelihood – Low</p> <p>Impact – High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All professionals have been explained the bounds of confidentiality in a letter prior to interview.</li> <li>- The researcher will reiterate this verbally at the beginning of the interview.</li> <li>- The researcher has contact details for Camden social care team and the police should this become relevant at any stage.</li> <li>- The child protection officer at the school will be easily contactable.</li> <li>- All participants will be reputable professionals aware of the child protection and safeguarding policies at their school and their duty to support any child who may be at risk of harm.</li> </ul>	<p>Professional</p> <p>Child</p>	<p>During interview</p>
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## Appendix L

## Semi Structured Interview Schedule for School Professionals

- Discuss confidentiality and anonymity and ask permission to record. Refer to information sheet that includes these details (keep a copy to hand).
- Talk about the purpose of the research.
- Explain the structure of the interview
- Give a definition of DA.
- Explain that during the interview all the EPs' experiences of supporting children who have experienced DA will be useful to hear.

**School Interview Schedule Questions:****School Enrolment**

1. Have you ever dealt with a situation that involved a child/ren who experienced DA? Can you describe what happened?
2. Tell me about the children who moved to your school because of DA? If you are unsure, how about children you have worked with where you believe there was a history of DA?
3. Are there any particular challenges or issues when integrating children with a history of DA into school? E.g. how do you prepare the teacher? What happens in terms of information sharing?
4. What processes do you have in place when children who have experienced DA join the school? (e.g. were you given information about their background and experiences? Did you feel you were given all the information you needed at the time? Did anything different happen during the child's enrolment from when you enrol a child with no such history?)

**Support in School**

Now I would like to talk about supporting children while in school.

1. When it comes to teaching and supporting these children once they start, what do you think are the main issues you face as a school?(Prompts: social, behavioural, emotional demeanour and/or approach to learning at school)
2. Are there any particular challenges/difficulties in supporting them in school?
3. How prepared do you feel supporting children affected by DA?
4. What, if any, have you found useful when supporting these children?  
*Prompts: Any resources? Input from any professionals? Any techniques?*

5. To what extent are you (and colleagues) aware of existing guidelines available for schools relating to DA? (NUT, 2005; Women's Aid Educational Toolkit, 2014). Have you ever used these?

### **The Child's Wider Ecosystem**

6. What involvement have you had with children's families once the child starts at your school?
7. Which services, if any, support you in supporting children who have experienced DA?
8. How much involvement have you received from the Educational Psychology Service?
9. What about other agencies e.g. social care, CAMHS, refuge support?

*Thank you very much for your time. That's it from me. Is there anything else I haven't asked you that you think it's important for me to know?*

## Appendix M

## Semi Structured Interview Schedule for EPs

- Discuss confidentiality and anonymity and ask permission to record. Refer to information sheet that includes these details (keep a copy to hand).
  - Talk about the purpose of the research.
  - Explain the order of questions.
  - Give a definition of DA.
  - Explain that during the interview all the EPs experiences of supporting children who have experienced DA will be useful to hear.
1. Have you ever dealt with a situation, which involved DA? Can you describe what happened?
  2. If not, have you worked on a case where you suspected DA or where a child experienced something you consider comparable? Can you describe that situation?
  3. What impact do you think DA could have on a child's experience of school?
  4. What impact do you think relocation to a new school may have on a child who has experienced DA? Can you give any examples?
  5. What challenges or issues do you think EPs face in relation to supporting children who have experienced DA?
  6. How prepared/equipped do you feel to work with children who have experienced DA and/or children who have relocated school for this reason?
  7. What might EPs do in practice to help children and/or help schools support children who have experienced DA?
  8. What, if any, have you found useful when supporting these children or do you think could be useful? Prompts: Any resources? Prompts: Input from any other professionals? Which ones? Prompt: Any techniques? Or any specific psychological theories?
  9. What additional input/support/information would help you increase your involvement and/or ability to support children who have experienced DA and/or relocated school for this reason?
  10. What are your views in relation to the relevance and importance of EPs supporting children who have experienced DA? *Prompts: Is the impact of DA on children relevant to our work as school based psychologists? How easy is it for EPs to be involved in this area?*
  11. Is there anything I have not asked you that you think it's important for me to know in relation to EPs working with children who have experienced DA?

*Thank you for your time*

## Appendix N

## Coded Extract of Interview Transcript – Child Participant

Transcript	Initial Codes
<p>R: The year before when I was in Year 3, there was a boy who fancied me who was in Year 6 but he used to bully me</p>	<p>Bullying in the playground Bullying by an older child</p>
<p><b>I: Oh no</b></p>	
<p>R: So I used to try and be naughty so I could miss my breaktime</p>	<p>Seeking to relocate away from playground</p>
<p><b>I: Ah, so by missing your breaktime you did not need to be outside with him. Did you talk to anyone about that?</b></p>	
<p>R: Nearly every day I talked to the people at school, like the people on the playground. They just said go to Miss [] because that's his teacher. So I went to Miss [] and she said well maybe if you stop telling him off then he'll stop it. So I stopped that for a couple of days and it just got worse.</p>	<p>Seeking support from teachers at playtime. Perception of poor response from teachers</p>
<p><b>I: Oh no so what did he do?</b></p>	
<p>R: He just used to like follow me around the playground and make fun of me and go near me and kind of like show off and that was it and I was at the other side of the playground and he shouted to me, 'will you marry me' and I walked up to him and said 'no'.</p>	<p>Awareness of space (goes near me). Resonates with personal experiences of threat in family home? Display of resilience</p>
<p><b>I: You said 'No'</b></p>	<p>Resilience</p>
<p>R: I said 'no that's never going to happen'</p>	
<p><b>I: You said 'no that's never going to happen' that sounds like a good thing to say.</b></p>	<p>Awareness of space. Decides to leave</p>
<p>R: And then I walked off and he just kept on following me.</p>	
<p><b>I: Ah, and then what?</b></p>	<p>Mixed feelings about older children</p>



<p>R: And then he left the school. But I had 'Big Me's' called [] and [] so it was kind of upsetting for me but then..</p> <p><b>i: What did you say?</b></p> <p>R: I had 'Big Me's' called () and ()</p> <p><b>I: Ah okay, so what was the Big Me's job?</b></p> <p>R: They just like looked after me. So they kind of helped me when he was bullying me so it was kind of upsetting for them to leave as well</p> <p><b>I: Did they leave as well?</b></p> <p>R: Yeah. So it was kind of upsetting for me But then I was happy as well because Toby Ted left.</p> <p><b>I: So Toby Ted left and then that kind of, did that solve the problem when Toby Ted left?</b></p> <p>R: Yeah, then I was going outside and enjoying my playtime</p> <p><b>I: That's good. So the playground was somewhere that was really important to you at your old school but there was a period of time when it wasn't a very nice place for you to be sometimes.</b></p> <p>R: (Nodding)</p> <p><b>I: So you know when you were like, I didn't go to the playground because I just didn't want to be there I used to try and skip my playtimes and stuff</b></p> <p>R: Ummm</p> <p><b>I: Where did you go then when you weren't in the playground?</b></p>	<p>Learning mentors who support emotional resilience</p> <p>Loss of learning mentors (Big Me's)</p> <p>Mixed feelings about people leaving – relief and sadness Does this resonate with relocation?</p> <p>Can enjoy play without threat.</p> <p>Relocation to safe space Peaceful Enjoys school work</p>
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<p>R: I went to ummm playtime room and did work. But I kind of liked it there because it was all peaceful and I like doing work so I went there</p> <p><b>I: So you know out of every place in the whole school what was your very favourite place?</b></p> <p>R: Ummmm. Probably my classroom. It was like really big and we had a nice teacher but sometimes she shouted too loud.</p> <p><b>I: Oh no, did she?</b></p> <p>R: Yeah. Yeah she didn't shout at me. But I said, I didn't really be naughty to get in playtime room I just said I don't really want to go outside because I'm being bullied by Toby Ted and she said, well if you want to you can go to the playtime room and do work there instead of going outside and do work there instead and I said yes.</p>	<p>Preference for classroom Nice teacher Dislike of teacher shouting</p> <p>Display of resilience – honesty to teacher.</p>
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## Appendix O

## Extract of Transcript with School Professional Participant

Transcript	Initial Codes
<p><b>I: Is there anything that you find that's specific or particular that's helped or helps children who have been affected by domestic abuse?</b></p> <p>R: One, and it's something I was trained in was an intervention called drawing and talking, which is great, it's a form of art therapy. Sorry if I'm being patronising.</p> <p><b>I: No not at all. Can you talk a bit more about it?</b></p> <p>R: I wouldn't say it's an intervention but it's a provision whereby it's set over a course of 12 weeks or 12 sessions, so your frequency can be... you can do it once or twice a week. You give the child a plain piece of paper and a pencil and they can draw and you give them no limitations, no boundaries, they can draw anything that they want and you are not to judge them. You literally give them between 15 and 30 minutes and they can draw anything that they want, and then once they've drawn, you give them time to finish and then you ask them questions about the drawing. So nothing is personalised. It's not about how you are feeling. If a child draws a house you can ask things about how's the house feeling, has the house ever been hurt?</p> <p>So in the beginning you get kids really testing your patience or thinking that they are testing your patience by drawing things that are really... can be really explicit in terms of guns or murder or violence or things that they know they shouldn't be drawing in school. So an example of a child I worked with about three, four years ago, he used to draw me for about the first four sessions being killed in really horrific ways and he was always like the puppeteer that</p>	<p>Direct therapeutic intervention (Support Strategy)</p> <p>Direct therapeutic intervention (explanation of the approach)</p> <p>Structured time-frame</p> <p>This anonymous / indirect approach is favoured</p> <p>Emotional presentation of child during therapeutic intervention.</p> <p>Resilience / personal approach of the SP is relevant</p> <p>Severe / extreme images conjured up by child towards SP</p>

<p>would orchestrate me being kind of bludgeoned to death.</p> <p>When he realised that I didn't rise to it, I wasn't shocked, horrified or annoyed by it, that stopped, and by the end of it we were either, I always seemed to be in the images and he was also, by the end of it I was seen as more of a carer or we were friends in some of the images.</p> <p><b>I: Yes, that's really great, thank you. You've mentioned a couple of really interesting things as you've been talking. What are the main issues or things you see from the children themselves when they've had this background?</b></p> <p>R: So, for us, in terms of children that... first of all, children that are savvy enough that know the system, that have been in it from pretty much day one...</p> <p><b>I: Yes. And not necessary just within that talking and drawing but just generally?</b></p> <p>R: No, no, just generally. But in terms of children that have had that kind of experience of kind of constant social services involvement, police or turbulent relationships. We've had children that have lived in hostels and then moved back home and then moved back out again, that kind of thing, they are so cautious about what they talk about, don't trust adults very well and you really have to work at trying to break down those barriers. So for us in school, things like banter and laughter, there's a real family feel to our school, so children can... without kind of pushing boundaries.</p> <p>An example being earlier on, the nursery children know of our Year 3 teacher as Mr Doughnut Face and it just came from one thing. But those things about trying to breakdown barriers with the kids and know that they can trust you and also not giving children false promises. Always we are so transparent with the kids. And it can have</p>	<p>The personal approach of the SP</p> <p>The motivation / intent of the SP was supportive and resilience building for the child</p> <p>The impact of monitoring services on the child</p> <p>Cyclic nature of DA.</p> <p>Distrust of adults (social relationships)</p> <p>The personal approach of the SP (work hard..)</p> <p>Laughter and 'banter'</p> <p>Personal approach of the professional / ethos of school builds trust.</p> <p>Social relationships with peers.</p>
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<p>an impact on their behaviour in terms of peer relationships. So sometimes even the support that we give isn't about one-to-one stuff but it could be that we have things like circle of friends or circle of support</p> <p><b>I: Can you talk a bit about what would happen there?</b></p> <p>Okay. So usually, class teachers, say, for example, if it was historical domestic violence and we weren't necessarily made aware of it or it's something that's happened years back and certain things trigger, so especially the parents, their relationship is volatile and something significant has happened.</p> <p>So, for example, we've got a child in Year 5 and their sibling is in Year 1, at the moment, historically, there were things with parents, there was domestic violence, and even though they split, Dad still was very aggressive and there was a couple of incidents of bordering on stalking and then physically attacked the mum in the home when returning the children at the weekend. Things kind of plateau and they sort themselves out, but then something has happened... so at the moment the big thing is about Christmas and that's triggered...</p> <p>So in the last couple of weeks this child in Year 5, it's had an impact on the relationships with her friends, so she can be quite manipulative, she does things to get attention, she orchestrates arguments between friends and then swoops in and is the one that sorts things out and then everyone, it's all kind of her because she's amazing, she's come in and she's been the mediator, but the children haven't realised that actually she was the one that kind of lit the torch paper, started everything up and then come back in to defuse things. So stuff like that.</p> <p>We have a girls group, which we've had before, and not just because of domestic violence, but just girls, especially when they</p>	<p>Group intervention to support resilience (circle time)</p> <p>Secrecy of DA (weren't made aware)</p> <p>Cyclic nature of DA Description of family dynamics Dangers of DA</p> <p>Impact of DA on social relationships</p> <p>Child's wish to problem solve / mediate</p> <p>Group intervention (girls group)</p>
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get to a certain age... but we have a girls group where they meet once a week and again that's with a learning mentor and then we can address it accordingly.	
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## Appendix P

## Summary of Interventions Suggested by Children and School Professionals To Support Children

<b>Interventions Suggested By Children to Support Children</b>	
<b>In the classroom</b>	Worry box
	Awareness that gender preferences may exist for children (e.g. a wish to work with a female teacher)
	Permission to bring special objects into class (e.g. soft toy)
	Reward charts
	Clear rules and consequences conveyed at lesson outset
	Literacy interventions that encourage friendship building and reconciliation (e.g. through shared reading and role play)
<b>Teacher approaches</b>	Permission to be upset without having to share feelings or permission to “switch off”
	A nurturing approach without shouting
	Extra academic support
	Positive attention and a protective approach
	Understanding if questions are asked again by the pupil following a period of distraction
	Praise and encouragement
	Sensitivity in particular in SRE lessons
	Clear routine and structure
<b>Outside the classroom</b>	Opportunities to access other places in the school (e.g. quiet / nurture rooms)
	Opportunities to call home in the day time
	Connections to animals and nature
	Enjoyable foods
	A “buddy” and support with friendship building
	A mentor (e.g. from an older year group)

	Opportunities to talk to counsellor / teacher / trusted adult about feelings
	Sports opportunities and outdoor play
	Extra-curricular activities and school trips
	Friendship bench in the playground
	Group play opportunities and time to relax
	Strong policies for bullying and behaviour management
	Awareness of children’s concerns about physical injury
	Friends to open-up to and inclusion games
	Adult presence and boundaries in the playground

<b>Interventions Suggested By School Professionals To Support Children</b>	
<b>In the classroom</b>	Development of safe spaces
	Teacher keeping the child “in mind”
	Mindful pairings in class
	Extra academic support
	Visual timetables
<b>Outside the classroom</b>	Cognitive behavioural approaches
	An open space to talk
	Use of solution focused approaches
	“Draw your feelings out” intervention
	Narrative approaches
	Therapeutic play
	Psychotherapy
	Combined DV programme – therapeutic parent and child support group
	Nurture groups / circle of friends / circle of support
Girls group outside of the classroom (to support friendships)	



	Keep myself safe group
	Assertiveness programme
	Talking about positive relationships / SRE Lessons
	Social skills group and self-esteem group
	Therapeutic group programme for children (e.g. CBT)
<b>At a whole school level</b>	Whole school monitoring system for child and family
	The nomination of “trusted adults” by children
	Access to extra-curricular activities, clubs and excursions
	“Coffee mornings” or equivalent about DA.
	Information gathering from previous school
	Clear monitoring system for each new pupil who has experienced DA
	Entry/exit to/from school approaches (e.g. photographs of perpetrators?)
	Selective and affective information sharing

### **Additional Methods EPs Can Use to Support Schools, Children and Families**

In the classroom	Recommend ways to increase pupil-teacher connectedness
	Think about safe places across the classroom and school
	Interventions to support focus and distractedness
Outside the classroom	Ask about children’s histories of DA in school consultations
	Ask about children’s histories of DA in home consultations if a parent has raised concerns about a child’s mental health and is separated from a former partner. It would not be safe to discuss DA in the presence of two parents together unless the parents had raised it together
	Provide direct therapeutic work:

	Evidence based therapeutic work on a 1:1 basis (CBT, therapeutic play, solution focused), systemic (VIG, parenting support), group basis (CBT, positive relationships, relaxation, assertiveness, bullying), devising bespoke programmes.
	Give supervision to a learning mentor, a member of a pastoral team who may be giving direct therapeutic input to a child.
	Pick up on language used by children, families and professionals and extending conversations and unpack the conversation to see if the DA may be impacting on the child and their school experience
	INSET training. Coach, supervise and train schools, staff and parents about DA and its impact on children
	Contributions to wider teams and forums at a borough level where they have opportunities to support families who have experienced DA (e.g. supervising support workers, mentoring)
At a whole school level	Support staff through consultation
	Raise the profile of DA
	Develop schools' confidence about dealing with DA
	Bring professional agencies together
	Ask about children's histories of DA in planning meetings
	Assess children on an individual basis taking note of language used