AN EXPLORATION OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS' VIEWS OF THE ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY IN THE ASSESSMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

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Volume one of the thesis submitted to The University of Birmingham for the degree of APPLIED EDUCATIONAL AND CHILD PSYCHOLOGY DOCTORATE

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June 2021

ABSTRACT

Spirituality has had a long history in UK educational legislation. It was cited in the 1944 Education Act as one of the main reasons for statutory education. The view of spirituality in this thesis, which was informed by UK research into the area of children's spirituality, was that it was a sense of purpose and meaning in life which may or may not incorporate a religious view.

Educational psychologists (EPs) carry out many functions within the UK educational system which include: the assessment of children; and consultation with key adults around the children, such as families and schoolteachers. One aim that the UK EP profession held as a value was to capture a holistic picture of the child. However, Gersch *et al.* (2008) and Ruddock and Cameron (2010) argued that spirituality was often a neglected area in EP practice and that without the incorporation of spirituality into EP assessments the whole view of the child was not captured.

In the early 1990s there was a children's spirituality project set up in the UK. This involved speaking with children about their views of their spirituality. Research from this project formed a "starting point" (Hay and Nye, 1996) in which children's spirituality could be understood: Hay and Nye (1996) introduced a conceptual map which consisted of nine subconcepts of how children experienced spirituality.

Bringing together UK research on children's spirituality together with UK educational documents, questions were asked to nine UK EPs in individual semi-structed interviews to investigate what their understanding of spirituality was with regards to EP practice and how useful the conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1996) was to their professional work. Participants were recruited using a self-selecting method within one geographical area of the UK and took

part in individual interviews held online during August 2020. The results were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

It was concluded that EPs could utilise the conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1996) to have shared discussions on spirituality and that this was a tool they could use across EP functions. However, the limitations of this thesis were acknowledged in that the conceptual map could not be taken forward as a completed framework because EPs felt that it did not contain age-relevant examples across the age ranges they supported. Yet, there were many areas for future research suggested: One way forward was to form a working group whose suggested aims were to further the empirical base of the conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1996), to raise awareness of spirituality with UK education legislation and guidance; and to make explicit the links between spirituality and those psychological theories and interventions which had a spirituality basis.

DEDICATION

I would like to thank my husband, Ben, and my son, Maddox, for their love and support during this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Professionally, there have been many educational psychologists who have been involved in my journey over the last three years to whom I would like to say thank you to:

The course team at the University of Birmingham. I cannot express enough how much I enjoyed studying this doctorate! Thank you for providing me with the tools and sparks to further my interests and knowledge about the profession. Most specifically, thank you to my course supervisor, Dr James Birchwood, for your time, trust and support.

Thank you to the placements and my supervisors involved in my doctoral journey. I learnt so much from each one and have fond memories of my time within these local authority teams. Specifically thank you to Dr Severine Thompson: I felt exceptionally lucky to have you as my supervisor during the final years of the doctorate.

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

PROLOGUE TO CHAPTERS 1 AND 2: A POSITION ON SPIRITUALITY

Prior to any discussion about spirituality in education, it was important to introduce the definition of spirituality which was adopted in this study. There were many definitions of spirituality which spanned a history of educational documents and research into spirituality. The view of spirituality adopted in this study was Nye's (1998) because of the coherence seen between this research and the definitions within key UK educational documents and psychological theories. Nye's (1998, p.119) broad definition of spirituality was that it was "a quality of human living that interferes with and embraces the meanings and mysteries at the depths of our experiences". This definition was also adopted because the research it emanated from had a specific UK focus on children's spirituality. The first chapter of this thesis discusses the history of spirituality within UK education guidance and this thesis's stance on spirituality with regards to religion. The conclusion from the discussion at this stage informs the stance adopted in this thesis that spirituality refers to a sense of purpose and meaning in life which may or may not incorporate a religious view. The literature review includes wider fields, including psychology, with regards to identifying important aspects of the understanding of the term "spirituality". It concludes with the need for professionals involved in education to consider spirituality in their work and argues that this was a key consideration for EPs due to the functions they fulfil within the UK educational system. The second chapter specifically focuses on children's spirituality which positions the term as: within a rights framework; including non-verbal aspects; evident in children's day to day and; potentially inherent in all children. This chapter concludes with the introduction of the conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1996) as a starting point to support discussions about children's spirituality with UK EPs.

CHAPTER 1: SPIRITUALITY IN UK EDUCATION

1.1 Literature search strategy

The literature search to form an understanding of children's spirituality in education within the UK was completed between June 2019 and August 2020. Initial scoping searches involved searching for the terms "spiritual" and "spirituality" in UK educational legislation and within the Educational Psychology in Practice Journal. The search then progressed to utilise three separate searches ("spirituality+children", "spirituality+children+UK, and "spirituality+UK") within the following research databases: Google Scholar, Elton B. Stephens Company (EBSCO), Scopus and Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC). Once relevant sources were identified, the reading of these sources then identified further literature to read, for example: Google Scholar identified Hay and Nye's (1998) Spirit of the Child, and through the reading of this book and its reference list further literature to read was identified, such as Hardy's Divine Flame (1966). The reading of some sources also prompted specific research: Crompton's (1998) discussions of children's rights to spirituality resulted in a separate search to read the original United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989). Due to many search returns identifying research which was published within the International Journal of Children's Spirituality this journal was specifically searched with the search terms "spirituality+children", "spirituality+children+UK, and "spirituality+UK". A catch-all search was then conducted which involved placing the search terms within Google and this identified the Mental Health Foundation's (2006) systematic review on spirituality.

1.2 The focus on spirituality in UK education legislation and guidance

Spirituality holds a long history in legislation and guidance relating to UK education: the Education Act of 1944 referred to the reason for statutory education as providing an education

which would “contribute to spiritual, moral, mental, and physical development” (p.4), not focused solely on the students, but on the “community” (p.4). Under this Act, local authorities had a legal duty to contribute to the spiritual development of the community by ensuring that education was “efficient” (p.4) and met the needs of their population. Researchers, such as Sagberg (2017) and Wright (2000), referred to this Education Act as one of the main factors which prompted research of spirituality in education. In 1977, a government document titled “Curriculum 11-16” [Department of Education and Science (DES), 1977a] stated that for children, aged eleven to sixteen, spirituality was to be explored across the curriculum (for example through art, music, and science), and that—alongside ethics and morals—it was of “prime” (p.11) importance that the curriculum contributed to it. In the “Curriculum 11-16” document (DES, 1977a), teachers were specifically instructed to teach children to value their spiritual capacities no less than their intellectual and physical abilities. The theme of including spirituality in the curriculum continued in the 1988 Education Reform Act, which stated that the curriculum needed to promote spiritual development of the pupils and of society, and in the Education Act of 1993, which brought in the legal responsibility of those inspecting schools to consider commenting on the spiritual development of pupils. In 1996, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) held a conference, at which it was agreed to research the topic of spirituality in education: it was deemed by the SCAA that the influencing factor for this conference was the lack of focus on spiritual development within education. The report (SCAA, 1996), which summarised key discussions from the conference, concluded that there was a common agreement among the delegates (which included educational professionals and parents) that spirituality was central to policy and the curriculum. In addition, the delegates agreed that teachers should be confident to understand and address the

"inner life" of students (p.6) with the focus on the importance of teacher training providers to include training on how to develop spirituality.

Furthermore, when the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) was set up, inspection of the spiritual development of pupils was one of the four main areas of their framework (1992). The Education Act of 2002 contained the word "spiritual" throughout emphasising the responsibility for spiritual development to be promoted throughout the curriculum. Later, the Education Act of 2005 placed the duty on the Chief Inspector to inform the UK government of schools' promotion of the spiritual development of its pupils. In addition, the Education Act (2005) referred to the Training and Development Agency for Schools—which had responsibility for raising teacher standards and for the entry routes to becoming a teacher—to make sure that when conducting these functions first and foremost it would:

"have regard, in particular, to the desirability of securing that the school workforce is well fitted and trained -

(a) to promote the *spiritual,* moral, behavioural, social, cultural, mental and physical development of children and young people." (Education Act, 2005, p.43, emphasis added)

It is still a requirement in the current enacted Education Act (2011) that the Chief Inspector has reported on the spiritual development of the students at the schools it has inspected. The current Ofsted School Inspection Handbook (Ofsted, 2019) has stipulated that schools which have not provided provision for spiritual development cannot be awarded a "good" status. In addition, England's national curriculum guidance (Department for Education, 2013) has continued to refer to providing a curriculum which promotes the spiritual development of pupils and of society.

However, the discussions on the reason for the term in such laws, guidance and research have highlighted its emotionally and politically charged origins. Some argue that when spirituality was included in the 1944 Education Act, it was due to an ethical response to move society forward after the World War Two atrocities and rather, as Wright (2000) framed it, an ethical stance instead of an ontological and epistemological view. Wright (2000) also focused on the politically charged aspect of using the term "spiritual" instead of the word "religion": Both Wright (2000) and Hay and Nye (1998) viewed it as an important event when the Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple decided to include the term "spiritual" in the 1944 Education Act: Priestly (who held a long history in the education field) later interviewed Hall (Temple's assistant). According to Priestly (1985), Hall's reflections on the inclusion of the word "spiritual" were the following: it was a term which, unlike religion, did not have a clear definition and ultimately it was hoped that it would bring church and state schools together because "they didn't know what it was" (Priestley, 1985, p.28); this event was referred to as "archiepiscopal jiggery-pokery" (Priestley, 1996, p.3).

The emotional and political nature of this term has not gone away in research: spirituality has often been equated with religion (e.g. The Mental Health Foundation, 2006) and some researchers (e.g. Hay and Nye, 1998; Tirri, 2009) have referred to the idea that spirituality was often used interchangeably with religion to provide linguistic variety. In addition, researchers in the field have referred to their own unease about using the term "spirituality" when speaking with others: Maslow (1976) reflected on his research journey, particularly his realisation of the need to reflect on his values when interviewing and of his need to understand spiritual experience before understanding it in others. He felt that the relationship between him and those he was interviewing could not simply be the relationship of researcher to subject. Referring to a positivistic natural science methodological stance, he viewed the

research process to involve too much detachment and distance from the research and thus argued for a more "investigator-brothers" (p.87) approach. He described this approach as having the researcher themselves involved in the journey of what they were studying and cited examples such as when researchers interested in the effects of psychedelic drugs conduct the experiment out of a "coldly clinical"(p.87) setting and become part of the group who take the drug. With regards to spirituality, he referred to the need to be "a small seer oneself before one can understand the great seers" (p.86). He argued that these forms of "precondition" (p.88) did not reduce the validity of the findings but instead focused the researcher on seeing the participant not selfishly as a form of instrument but as a focus on the other person in their own right. Margaret Crompton designed a training pack for the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) in the early 1990s and later wrote a book which sought to expand on these materials and ideas for social work practice. Crompton (1998) reflected on how her preparation for her book "Children, spirituality, religion and social work" (Crompton, 1998) was fraught with her own struggles to explain her understanding of spirituality. Crompton interviewed practitioners in a variety of roles related to children's services. From these discussions, Crompton produced a book which situated spirituality within the rights agenda and how it was shown in children's day to day. Her aim was to argue that attention to spirituality was part of consideration to the whole well-being of a child and that the book—"Children, spirituality, religion and social work" (Crompton, 1998)—would encourage the development of how to communicate such a topic with children: each chapter of the book ended with questions for the reader to reflect on, such as "can you think of ways in which aspects of everyday conversations with children known to you can be seen as expressing spirituality?" (p.53) and suggestions such as "give attention to expressions of spiritual experiences when reviewing progress and making plans with and for children"

(p.55). However, even Crompton herself referred to her initial attempts to communicate with others about spirituality as "stumbling" (p.27). Hay and Nye (1998), who are often referred to as key researchers within the UK context of children's spirituality, reflected that when recruiting for participants, they did not include the term "spirituality" in the consent forms sent out to parents as they were concerned that it would be misinterpreted and also only aligned with religion.

This therefore demonstrated the importance of critical evaluation and a consideration of the situatedness of the topic for this thesis. It was important that the literature discussed in this thesis was firstly evaluated in terms of its stance on spirituality, especially with regards to religion. A narrative approach was taken to reviewing literature in the introductory chapters of this thesis, with each research paper being situated within its wider context and assumptions. There has also been a clear focus on the UK educational context throughout this thesis and thus it was important to ensure that the research included held a UK focus in relation to the legislation and research it was born from. This was also informed by Tirri's (2009) view that discussion on spirituality must be linked to the contexts it was to be used in, e.g. education, to aid understanding of the appropriate meaning. Whilst this section of the thesis was being written, it could not be ignored that the Coronavirus pandemic was of extreme relevance to the UK, with the British Prime Minister reflecting that the operation of the UK government, like a war-time government, had resulted in bringing in measures which he had been "spiritually reluctant" (BBC, 2020) to do. Albeit a slight tangent to this introductory section, it was important to review the current educational context in comparison to the wider contexts and as such the role of what spirituality was in these contexts will continue to be explored throughout this thesis. Whilst the situatedness and also potential controversy of the term has to be taken into account throughout this thesis in the way of discussion, comparison and

critical evaluation of all of the evidence, the continued reference to the term in UK education laws supported the views of researchers such as Gersch *et al.* (2008) ,Wright (2000), Hay and Nye (1998) and Ruddock and Cameron (2010) and informed the stance taken in this thesis: spirituality was an aspect of children's lives which UK education, and thus UK educational professionals, have a legal responsibility towards it.

1.3 The debate between spirituality and religion in education

With regards to the term "spirituality" a debate which quickly surfaced, and so must be discussed first, was the position of spirituality and religion. When looking at researchers' views it appeared that religion was often deemed negative and as forming a narrower understanding of spirituality: for example Hay and Nye (1998) referred to religion as "get[ting] in the way" (p.8) of some people's understanding and referred to spirituality as not being the "exclusive property" (p.11) of religion. Maslow (1976) stated that one aim of his research was to demonstrate that spirituality was not exclusive to religion and that this needed an education which re-evaluated the position of spiritual values because it applied to all. When Coles (1990) (a psychoanalyst) interviewed children about their spirituality, he reported one child's comments that they felt spiritual questions did not have to be "asked in a religious language" (p.326) with the assumption echoed by Hay and Nye (1998) that the available language to talk about spirituality was often religious which they termed as "God-talk" (p.54). Coles (1990) also included his reflections on one case where he felt that as the interview progressed the child started to talk of spirituality without referring to religion and he termed this speech as "free" (p.137) of these terms which implicitly communicated the view that the religious language was at times a restrictive force.

Some have taken this view further and defined spirituality as separate to religion which Tirri (2009), who was analysing research in spirituality in education, referred to as a "standard" (p.246) theme in research. Crompton (1998) drew attention to the split in the rights relating to religion and spirituality in the articles of the United Nations (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child, for example: religion was referred to in the articles relating to a right to practice a religion and to not be discriminated against due to religious beliefs, whilst spirituality was included in the articles referring to promoting or protecting spiritual development through appropriate access to mass media, living conditions, employment and opportunities. Coles (1990) himself reported the views of his own son who stated that: "there's religion and then there's spirit" (p. xvii).

In addition, there was the argument amongst those researching spirituality that there was a need to recognise that this country's religious makeup had changed and acknowledge the secularity aspect of the UK (e.g. Wright, 2000). Researchers have highlighted that there was evidence that people who identified as secular or atheist could talk about experiences which were deemed as spiritual [for example: Coles (1990), Crompton (1998), Hay and Nye (1998), Maslow (1976)]. Davie, in 1994, drew an even more stark argument when referring to the UK as a nation which "believes without belonging" (p.1); Davie (1994) presented survey data which demonstrated that a vast majority of people in the UK reported they did not engage with regular religious practice yet a high proportion reported holding a belief in a higher power. Davie stated that this signalled a large shift in the paradigm of what it meant to be spiritual. Wright (2000) furthered this by arguing that for those who classified themselves as atheist, questions about the meaning and purpose of life were even more important and the answers to this were diverse. Even as far back as 1975, Rahner wrote about imagining a

world without religion and hypothesised that humans would still have the urge to reach out for something more (Rahner, 1975).

Yet there has been a warning about the neglect of religion in such conversations of spirituality. Coles (1990) reflected on over thirty years of experience of interviewing children around the world on their views of their own spirituality, and included a chapter in his book called "Christian Salvation" in which he described a lengthy conversation he had had with a twelve-year -old boy called Junior. Coles (1990) commented that the view of Jesus and the child's religious beliefs were a way for the family to come to terms with the death of Junior's older sister who had been run over by a car.

Hull (2009) has been cited as being one of the leading thinkers in a critical view of spirituality in education. Hull was Emeritus Professor of Religious Education at The University of Birmingham. He advocated the need for multi-faith dialogues in education and provided a definition of spirituality in comparison to religion: He stated that spirituality did include religion but that it was "a more comprehensive category" (Hull, 2009, p.2).

So, what if spirituality was conceptualised as something which did not necessarily have to be about religion but something which allowed religious aspects to be included? Interestingly some researchers hold the view that this was something new with regards to research on children's spirituality: Sagberg (2017) (an Emeritus Professor in Norway who had written about spirituality in education with regards to the UK's laws and guidance) argued that the ontological view that spirituality did not mean the same as religion was an area of research which was relatively new. However prior to this, Maslow (1976) stated how spiritual values and experiences, which involved feeling part of something bigger and a strive for meaning, were not just within what he termed "organised" (p.4) religions but within human biological nature and accessible to all. In support of his conclusion he referred to spiritual conversations

he had had with religious people and atheists alike. Hay and Nye (1998) referred to Rahner's (1975) arguments in adopting a stance that whilst religion provided a way to talk about spiritual experiences they argued there would be an inherent need to reach out for spiritual experiences which would exist without religion and that speaking about religion did not always encapsulate a spiritual experience. From this, Hay and Nye (1998) separated "God-talk" (p.54) from spirituality but accepted that spiritual experience could exist within and outside of religion. This view was shared within the field of children's spirituality, for example Gersch *et al.* (2008) argued for a broad approach to spirituality. Gersch *et al*. (2008) researched twenty-six children aged between nine and fourteen years old who attended London schools. Their sample consisted of eleven boys and fifteen girls. The children identified as having different religions: three reported having no religion, ten were Christian, seven were Hindu and six were Muslim. Each child was interviewed individually. The interviews consisted of a semi-structured nature with twelve open-ended questions including asking: whether they felt there was a reason for life; how the world was made; and whether they thought this impacted on behaviour. One conclusion Gersch *et al.* (2008) reached was that religion was key to some children's views of spirituality and impacted very heavily on these views, for example seeing the purpose in life as "a test" (p. 232) from their god whilst for some their views were not based on religion. In addition, UK government documentation has often approached spirituality as including religion but demonstrated an awareness that spiritual experience did not always have to be linked to religion, for example: the 1985 "Curriculum 5-6" document (Department of Education and Science, 1985) stated that the government acknowledged that religious education involved teaching about the area of spiritual experience but that students should also have opportunities for spiritual experiences from non-religious means, such as feeling awe at the natural world; and the "Spiritual and

Moral Development" paper (National Curriculum Council, 1993) clearly separated spirituality from religion by referring to all pupils as having the capacity for spiritual development.

It has to be clarified that "spirituality" as a term utilised within this thesis had much relevance to the UK educational discussions on "spiritual development" because the framing of the development of spirituality through key UK curriculum documents (such as National Curriculum Council, 1993 and SCAA,1996) was that it was ultimately an increased awareness and reflection of spirituality through having opportunities for spiritual experiences. Therefore, the focus in this thesis remained on spiritual experiences and the link to education and children.

However, there was the argument that embracing the view that spirituality may or may not include religion was confusing: Wright (2000) argued that the "supplement to Curriculum 11-16" (DES,1977b) issued in response to criticism of the earlier "Curriculum 11-16" (DES,1977a) caused more confusion by containing two contrasting views on spirituality: one view which deemed spirituality to be relevant to all and the other stated view which positioned spirituality as not being relevant to atheist or agnostic. The most succinct view which communicated the reason as to why it was important to adopt the stance in this thesis that spirituality may or may not include religion was communicated by Pascall (1992). Pascall (then Chairman of the National Curriculum Council which was set up from the 1988 Education Reform Act to assist in the curriculum implementation and assessment) argued that a view which only saw spirituality as religion would exclude those pupils and teachers who were not religious. He referred to these pupils as the majority thus potentially reflecting the acknowledgment of the secular nature of the current society. Instead he positioned spirituality as an aspect which was fundamental to being human (Pascall, 1992).

Specifically, from educational professionals, such as Gersch *et al.* (2008) and Ruddock and Cameron (2010), spirituality was positioned within the UK education laws and curriculum guidance to argue that it was the meanings and purpose children attached to their lives. Whilst Gillespie (2019) sought to research how spirituality intersected with teachers' spirituality and teaching practices, he stated that spirituality as relevant to education was a "seek" to understand experiences from the "sacred to the profane" (p.329).

Therefore, the stance adopted in this thesis was informed by researchers and the educational legislative documents cited above and positioned **spirituality as a sense of purpose and meaning in life which may or may not incorporate a religious view**. It was therefore important that any framework adopted for this research incorporated this view.

1.4 The need to investigate the role of spirituality in children's educational experiences

Despite the heavy prominence of spirituality within UK education legislation, it was this area in comparison to other areas mentioned in legislation, such as children's physical development, which has been argued to have received the least attention and resources (Hay and Nye, 1998; Wright, 2000). Government discussions and conferences on the area of spirituality in education, such as the SCAA (1996), were cited as lacking in legal power and resources (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2007). John Bowis from the Department of Health in his foreword to Bradford's (1995) book titled "Caring for the Whole Child: A Holistic Approach to Spirituality" argued that children's services must treat their spiritual needs with the "same concern"(p. iii) as physical, emotional and mental health. It also appeared that in some respects there was the view that the topic was under-researched: Hay and Nye (1998) argued that this amount of research on any other topic relating to children would be "considered unacceptable" (p. v). The concluding section of Ruddock and Cameron's (2010) article,

which presented Ruddock's doctoral research on children's spirituality, was referred to as an under-researched and "almost uncharted area" (p.31) in UK educational psychology. Ruddock and Cameron's (2010) article brought together key UK-based documents which discussed children's spirituality, such as Ofsted's (2004) criteria on what schools should do to support children's spirituality, and acknowledgement of Coles (1990) and Hay and Nye's (1998) research as important to providing a deeper understanding on children's spirituality. Ruddock (Ruddock and Cameron, 2010) designed a questionnaire on spirituality aimed at children which required them to rank thirty statements such as "I believe that the meaning and purpose of my life, the meaning behind the things I do, and my relationships are topics worth thinking about" on a seven-level Likert scale. This scale was never utilised for empirical data gathering as Ruddock sadly died during the doctoral study yet the published article of her work (Ruddock and Cameron, 2010) referred to the importance of increasing a focus on children's spirituality in the UK education system and within the educational psychology field (which was deemed to have previously neglected this area due to factors such as conceptualising spirituality as a sign of poor mental health). Ruddock and Cameron (2010) argued that raising the importance children's spirituality was important to counter the focus on more subject-focused outcomes in the UK education system. Gillespie (2019) interviewed five primary teachers, based in Kent, about spirituality, utilising semi-structured interviews. However, the questions asked were not detailed in the published article and so his unpublished thesis was utilised to investigate the nature of the questions. The interview schedule (Gillespie, 2017) asked participants about their views and personal stories which demonstrated: their spirituality; where they felt spirituality was within the curriculum; what impact spirituality had on their teaching; and whether they felt there were any barriers or facilitators to using their spirituality in their work. Whilst Gillespie's conclusion in the 2019

paper was centred more on teacher's spirituality, the more detailed findings in the doctoral thesis of the same empirical study concluded a wider discussion on the teachers' perspective that their spirituality encouraged deeper meanings when teaching as they did not view the children to be filled with knowledge but to be given skills to understand the world, their connections and relationships and that there were barriers to this including the way the subjects were separated, other staff perceptions on spirituality, and conceptualisations of what good teaching practice was. Thus, highlighting the argument that children's spirituality had not received the attention and resources it should have had within the UK education system. Crompton (1998) cited the following proverb: a child was like a house with rooms for physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. Whilst placing emphasis on the importance of spirituality as a domain for being human and the focus on the need to go into every room every day, the focus on rooms could also be interpreted as the view of compartmentalisation of a human. It was the view of compartmentalisation of humans—into body, mind and spirit—which Crompton (1998) argued was involved in Western-type thinking. Bradford (1995) argued that the government documents on spirituality held the implicit ontological view of development as consisting of separate entities. Crompton (1998) argued for the need for children to understand that these separations were artificial. It was argued that there was the need to capture the complex meanings of what spirituality meant for children with researchers describing spirituality as "frameworks of meaning" (Watson, 2017, p.10) which enabled children to: understand their life experiences; overcome adversity; and find purpose and meaning.

Crompton (1998) warned of the negative implications for the child when spirituality was not recognised and the well-being of the whole child was not given attention by practitioners. Crompton (1998) concluded her book with a declaration of rights of children for their

spirituality situating it within the story of Korczak who accompanied the children from his orphanage to a concentration camp in 1942. Thus, echoing Wright's (2000) view that the original inclusion of spirituality in educative legislation was due to the horrors of World War Two and a way to safeguard against any future such behaviours.

Again, reminders of the duty to look at this topic surface alongside a frustration that it had not yet been: Watson (2017) reached out to academics specifically by sharing being "fed up" (p. 7) of the rhetoric that spirituality was hard to define and argued that academics had a duty to move away from this by providing clear guidance to educational professionals.

1.5 The role of an educational psychologist (EP)

In reflection of the introductory comment in Ruddock and Cameron's (2010) research published ten years ago that it was an "almost-uncharted" (p. 31) area in educational psychology research, this thesis turned the focus to EPs within the UK. In the UK, EPs provide core functions to education of consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2002) with the overall aim of bringing psychology to education to facilitate positive change. EPs work at an individual level (e.g. with a child), at wider levels (e.g. with families and educational settings), and at wider strategic levels (e.g. with local authorities). Since 2014, when the current code of Special, Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) came in (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015), the upper age range of EPs' client base was expanded from age 16 to age 25. Many EPs hold a key statutory role in the assessment of education, health and care needs (The SEND Regulations, 2014). The advice must have included the young person's needs, outcomes and provision required to meet the needs and outcomes. In addition, there was a key theme that best practice of an EP, when completing the advice, was that they

had demonstrated that they had completed a holistic assessment of the young person (Joint Professional Liaison Group, 2020). Whilst writing over ten years ago, Ruddock and Cameron (2010) reflected on the recent move in the EP profession towards this holistic view to capture the complexity of a human and the need to incorporate focus on spirituality when assessing children as this was a facet to understanding life and was potentially important to positive outcomes for individuals.

However, despite calls for completing holistic assessments of children and young people, the place of spirituality in UK EP practice has not been widely discussed. In comparison to professional psychology training programmes internationally, which offer an integration of spirituality with psychology (see the clinical psychology programme offered at Columbia University for an example), there has been little – if any – reference to spirituality in UK psychology training programmes. Were psychologists—as Maslow (1976) strongly criticised them for—restricted by the focus on knowledge and answers that they were opposed to embracing a science which incorporated asking questions they did not know the answers to, such as spirituality? It also cannot be ignored that Gersch *et al*.'s (2008) conclusions for the profession over ten years ago was that spirituality was central to the assessment process carried out by EPs. Gersch *et al*. (2008) concluded that children engaged with spiritual-type questions and that this demonstrated an important aspect of how children understood their world and their behaviour: Gersch *et al*. (2008) cited a key finding that children had linked spiritual views to how they behaved, particularly with regards to how they interacted with each other. Gersch *et al*. (2008) argued that EPs needed to be asking questions about children's views of spirituality, including their purpose in life. Therefore, there appeared a need to explore the views of EPs on spirituality in their practice.

1.6 Spirituality within psychology and related disciplines

Whilst the previous discussions placed spirituality within the education system of the UK there was a need to capture the input of psychology to the topic as this related to the role and knowledge of an EP. Whilst being a topic which has been positioned as within a "multidisciplinary field" (Lee, 2020, p.1) there were also arguments that the definition of spirituality was starting to come together (Lee, 2020).

There were many references to the spiritual in seminal humanistic psychological work. For example Maslow (1976) positioned his views as a "new…psychology" (p.36) and argued that there needed to be more consideration in science of topics which came from human experience—such as spiritual values, love, creativity—which he felt had been largely ignored in the positivistic science paradigm. In addition, Maslow (1976) argued for a holistic view of people rather than seeing humans as distinct areas, such as the focus on cognition. In his theory of hierarchical needs Maslow (1976) referred to the higher needs (at the stages of self-actualisation and transcendence) as spiritual needs of a person's growth. The focus became more about growth than fulfilling a deficit. Maslow (1976) also positioned his theory against the psychoanalytical tradition arguing that the concept of the spiritual was not a delusion or illusion. Maslow argued that viewing humans in this way required a different kind of education and communication. In the higher spiritual stages, Maslow (1976) described experiences as involving: perceiving a unity and having an integration with the world; viewing the world as ultimately good and accepting the "evil" (p.63) parts and; experiencing emotions described as "awe, wonder" (p.65). During these experiences Maslow referred to humans as becoming less aware of the passing of time and where they were, which he termed as "spacelessness and timelessness" (p.63). Yet when most described Maslow's theory there

was no reference to these values as being spiritual nor of the last stage of his hierarchy -the "transcendence" (for an example see Salkind, 2008). There appeared a parallel to be drawn here from the lack of full inclusion of Maslow's (1976) theory and his inclusion of Allport's (1955) functional autonomy: Although Maslow (1976) made the point that he felt education was an example of functional autonomy—the idea that knowledge becomes separated from its origin and function and thus becomes self-validating—it appeared that Maslow's (1976) theory had become more of a list of needs than a focus and discussion on spiritual values.

Yet the topic of spirituality did not just sit within humanistic psychology. Opposing Maslow's (1976) criticism of the psychoanalytical approach as describing the spiritual as merely an illusion, some had suggested that the psychoanalytical approach had been on a journey (e.g. Hardy, 1966), with regards to the importance of spirituality to psychology. Freud was often referred to as a theorist who stated that any religious or spiritual thoughts were an illusion and based on satisfying unmet needs. However, in the book "Moses and Monotheism" published in the last year of his life, Freud (1939) reflected that moving to England after World War Two had given him freedom to communicate his views on religion further. Whilst making potentially controversial claims about the origins of Judaism, Freud's (1939) view on religious beliefs started to show something different about human psychology: in this book, Freud (1939) made the statement that by thinking about things in an abstract way, e.g. a belief in God, helped the individual to think of other abstract concepts and secure their development in topics such as mathematics and science. It also cannot be ignored that Carl Jung (1970) had a very similar view to Maslow: he viewed spirituality as something inherent in all and which was a strive for growth. Yet the view of religion and spirituality being positioned as an illusion has remained the dominant view taken by psychoanalysts post-Freud, for example: Coles (1990), who was a child psychiatrist trained in psychoanalysis, explained how thoughts

relating to spiritual matters were often considered through his training as signs of mental distress. Yet the influence of Freud's later thinking was shown through Coles' reminiscence of a conversation he had had with Freud's daughter, Anna Freud. Coles (1990) reported that when Anna Freud had read the data he had collected from children across the world, she felt he had missed something in the data which was not captured by his writings on children's views of their moral and political life. Coles (1990) wrote that Anna Freud encouraged him to relook at the recordings of the interviews with children. It was here that we saw an echo of Maslow's (1976) view that this topic often required a shift in attention. Coles (1990) cited the conversation with Anna Freud as one of the main influences of his book "The Spiritual Life of Children". He described how he moved from seeing these aspects as "evidence of a disturbed mind" (p.19) to conceptualising spiritual conversations as a way to understand how children overcame trauma, how they made sense of life experiences and also how it contributed to a holistic view of each child. Throughout Coles' (1990) book "The Spiritual Life of Children" it was clear that he was a reflexive researcher: Coles (1990) reflected that it was important he noticed his shying away from such a topic and also how he learned not to rush to classify what the children were showing or telling him but to truly listen to them. As part of this process, the children would often draw their views and thus an imagination element was prominent in Coles' (1990) book so much so that the middle part of the book was dedicated to the drawings produced by the children he interviewed. There were similarities to Maslow's (1976) discussion of spiritual experiences as involving a unity through Coles' (1990) descriptions from children such as "seeing god as in the sky…the sun... the moon" (Coles, 1990, p. 25). However whilst some parallels can be drawn between what Coles (1990) reported and how Maslow (1976) described experiencing spirituality, the inclusion of Coles' (1990) work in this thesis was more to evidence the point that this was one of the first key

approaches to psychology which acknowledged the spirituality of children. As a study, Coles' (1990) research was less to inform the method and analysis stages as Coles (1990) himself referred to his book as merely "one person's representation of what many young people have tried to convey" (p. 39) positioning the book as a "narrative" (p. 39) rather than an "analytic" (p. 39) account. This was most clearly seen in the chapter titled 'Method' which detailed conversations he had had with the children instead of detailing how he recruited the young people and how many children he spoke to during his research. Coles (1990) cited that this was a purposeful approach to distance any measurement of spirituality which he associated with notions of checklists and formulations.

The term "spirituality" has held a long history within the field of mental health (Crompton, 1998). Within the profession of psychiatry in the UK, a special interest group called Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group (SPSIG) has existed for over twenty years and has over 3,000 psychiatrists involved. The aims of SPSIG (2021a) involve acknowledgement that spiritual views were a protective factor in mental health distress and the incorporation of spirituality in mental health care. Like the government documents relating to education, SPSIG (2021b) stated that spirituality was not just for those who were religious. Spirituality was referred to as a universal aspect of a human which included a search for purpose and meaning (SPSIG, 2021b). This was reflected in their list of spiritual practices (SPSIG, 2021b) which listed religious activities such as taking part in forms of worship but also listed spending time in nature. The group also referred to spirituality-informed therapies as involving spiritual aspects such as compassion and forgiveness and being present in the form of mindfulness. In recommendations for good practice (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2013), it was highlighted that psychiatrists had a duty to routinely include the clients' spiritual beliefs in their assessment. One of the main reading materials on

the SPSIG website entitled “Handbook of Spiritual Care in Mental Illness” was that produced by the Birmingham and Solihull NHS trust (2015). In this document, spirituality was introduced as a key component in the holistic care of an individual and in their recovery and it argued for the need for therapists to be skilled to listen to their clients on topics such as the clients’ meanings and purposes in life.

To bring together what spirituality encompassed, I adopted Lee’s (2020) arguments that there were signs that definitions and discussions regarding the concept of spirituality had commonalities. Lee’s editorial in “The International Journal of Children’s Spirituality” stated that there were key themes emerging from the research on children’s spirituality and that the term should not necessarily be considered as “elusive” (p. 2) anymore but actually applicable for research which could have depth and richness to capturing these key themes such as awe and wonder and connectedness. The literature discussed above described spirituality as involving feeling unity, experiencing awe and wonder, imagination, a focus on the here and now and meaning/purpose. One framework which aligned with these views of what spirituality involved was Hay and Nye’s (1996) conceptual map of how children experienced spirituality. Therefore, this was the framework which provided the starting point for the data collection of this thesis.

CHAPTER 2: UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S SPIRITUALITY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will situate children's spirituality within the legislation and discussion on children's rights. It will also evidence examples and researchers' views about spirituality as including non-verbal aspects as well. Key theorists' views on spirituality being within children's day-to-day and as an inherent part of their nature will also form a key strand in conceptualising this thesis' stance on the concept of children's spirituality. Hay and Nye's (1996, 1998) research will be discussed as providing a starting point for this thesis research with regards to a model of how children experience spirituality and to support shared discussions on what understanding spirituality in this way could bring to the understanding of children's spirituality within EP's knowledge and professional experiences.

2.2 A role to protect and support children's spirituality

Children across the world have held a longstanding right to living conditions, resources and opportunities which support their spirituality. This became an international effort which started in the 1920s due to one English woman's concern about the famine and conditions children, particularly those in Austria-Hungary and Germany, were living in. Eglantyne Jebb with her sister Dorothy Buxton set up a fund called Save the Children (Save the Children, 2019) to protect children and promote their rights at an international level. Alongside this work, Jebb drafted the first charter of children's rights: In the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child (Assembly of the League of Nations, 1924), five main points related to what children (across all nations) must receive and the first point referred to the importance of spirituality to their development: "The child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually" (p.1).

Jebb's documents were later used to inform the legislative United Nations (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which was ratified by the UK in 1991. This legal document continued the reference to spirituality and as such included it in four of its articles: Article 17 referred to ensuring that the information which children had access to, e.g. mass media, promoted their spiritual well-being; Article 23 referred to ensuring that a child with disabilities had access to opportunities which promoted the child's development, which included spiritual development; Article 27 referred to a standard of living to support a child's spiritual development; and Article 32 referred to a child being protected from doing any employment work which was harmful to their spiritual development. Researchers in the field of children's spirituality, such as Crompton (1998), Watson (2017) and Sagberg (2017), have argued that an understanding of children's spirituality must include a recognition of their rights to spirituality.

2.3 Child voice and the nonverbal aspects when sharing views on spirituality

A great deal of literature on children's spirituality referred to the importance of promoting the voice of the child. Crompton (1998), in her book which argued for consideration of spirituality in social work, health and education, situated her discussion of spirituality within the criticism of an inattention to spiritual views: that often the child's voice was not listened to despite the ratification of the UNCRC. Stockinger (2019), who summarised the debates and discussions on the 16th International Conference on Children's Spirituality, referred to many academics discussing the importance of exploring spirituality with children and learning from them. This reference to learning from children was also reflected by Coles (1990) in his discussions with Anna Freud in which he reported that she encouraged him to not view that he was treating the children but to learn from them removing any assumptions which placed too little on the child. Coles (1990) described his conversations with a 10-year-old Hopi girl who

described her views on spirituality as God being in the sky, sun, moon and people, and when he asked why she had not shared this with her teacher, her response was "they listen to hear themselves" (p.25). In addition Gersch *et al.*(2008), who was one of the few UK educational psychologists to bring spirituality research into the profession, referred to the role of EPs in developing tools to investigate children's views but yet referred to this type of listening by EPs as an "uncharted area" (p.234).

Some research suggested that children's views of spirituality were better elicited by using means other than verbal. Crompton (1998) described how play therapy was used to support a child whose brother had died to explore spiritual thinking of life after death and explore meaning in life and argued for the need for practitioners to develop their own communication methods to support children with spiritual well-being. Coles (1990) reflected that sometimes language restricted the conversations he had had with children: he described how sometimes children could "go only so far, at least with words" (p.179). He reflected how drawings and non-verbal gestures showed insights into the children's spirituality. His book dedicated the middle part to some of the drawings which children had produced during his conversations with them. Albeit Coles (1990) heeded a very important warning: he reflected that the form did not necessarily have to be a drawing -especially because for some religions drawing an image of God would be considered a sin.

Coles (1990) also raised the importance of observation to the spiritual aspect of childhood: the need to observe and to resist the rush to categorise. Reminiscent of Maslow's (1976) humanistic views that it was best to take an "investigator-brothers" approach (p.87), Coles (1990) referred to seeing the children as a guide. Crompton (1998) also applied observation to the study of spirituality by stating that even if a child could not verbalise their views, their spirituality could be observed. Yet it was of interest to compare these views with the two

papers which brought the concept into UK EP practice –Gersch *et al.* (2008) and Ruddock and Cameron (2010)—who designed tools which relied heavily on literacy and verbal communication. However, Gersch *et al.* (2008) recognised that their interview schedule had not been piloted and questioned whether the questions may have been refined to include more age-specific questions to explore spirituality across children's age ranges. They concluded that further research on techniques to enable what they termed "spiritual listening" to occur was needed. Yet more recent development of Gersch *et al.'s* (2008) tool "Little Box of Big Questions" (for example see Robinson, 2015) still relied on verbal skills. Ruddock and Cameron's (2010) study had many similarities to Gersch *et al.*'s statements (e.g. both studies asked children about their thoughts on the reason for life) and thus was equally critically evaluated in their heavy reliance on the child or young person possessing a specific level of literacy. There was also a separate caution about Ruddock and Cameron's (2010) research in that the questionnaire was named as "Spiritual Quotient" which implied that should this research have been taken further it would have been used to score an individual based on their responses to the thirty written statements. Thus potentially removing the child's view of spirituality and replacing it with a spirituality score. This implied outcome of a questionnaire was less applicable to this thesis which has positioned spiritual development within the UK curriculum guidance (such as National Curriculum Council, 1993 and SCAA, 1996) and against notions of it being quantified for measurement.

2.4 Is there spirituality in children's day to day?

There was an assumption that spiritual experiences had to have an extraordinary quality to them: Maslow's (1976) theory was often cited as being split into those people who had spiritual experiences called "peakers" (p.19) and those that did not experience such things as "non-peakers" (p.22) Peak experiences were characterised by some as involving dramatic

transient experiences which Maslow (1976) described akin to being on top of Mount Everest. Yet when looking more closely into what Maslow wrote in his 1976 book "Religions, Values and Peak Experiences" he referred to experiences such as the wonder a mother could feel when looking at her baby and hinted at a potential misunderstanding of his theory by stating that the inclusion of these experiences was to "correct the tendency" (p. xvi) to see spiritual experiences as peak experiences. Hay and Nye (1998) argued that the assumption of spiritual experience as being only something extraordinary was an assumption which potentially caused the neglect of children's spiritual domain in favour of cognitive and moral dimensions.

There was evidence of spiritual experiences in children's day to day: Coles (1990) reported the conversations he had with a child called Natalie and concluded that her spirituality was very much lived in her everyday: Natalie verbalised that for her it was the connection she felt when her dog ran alongside her. Coles (1990) also reflected on his role as becoming a researcher who would talk to children about their everyday lives and that he saw a connection between the two. Gersch *et al.* (2008)—who also interviewed children in the UK—also concluded that the responses from the children contained many everyday aspects. For example: children's responses to questions about their purpose in life included those who were important to them and places they frequently visited. Ruddock and Cameron (2010) utilised the definition offered from positive psychology about spiritual experiences to argue that as a concept it was to be seen in the encounters an individual had with their everyday world.

2.5 Spirituality as an inherent feature

Maslow (1976), Coles (1990) and Ruddock and Cameron (2010) have argued that psychology aligned itself with a science which was more positivistic and thus ignored topics such as spirituality. A large piece of research which was often cited as an influencing factor in a

change to incorporating spirituality in science was that done by Alister Hardy in the UK in the late 1960s. Hardy (1966), who was a zoologist, gave a series of lectures which shared his theory that this awareness was biologically driven: it was something present in all of us and thus he termed it the "divine flame" (p. 21). He proposed a natural science which could incorporate research into spiritual experiences and cited developments of scientific research into areas such as ecology and ethology as demonstrating this change. He later set up the Religious Experience Research Unit to investigate his theory empirically. This later became the Alister Hardy Trust (2020) which had the overarching aim to emphasise the importance of spirituality to areas such as education and to also bring an inter-disciplinary research focus on contemporary spiritual and religious experiences. As of 2020, The Alister Hardy Trust held over 6,000 accounts of spiritual experiences and continued to publish a regular peer-reviewed journal.

Hardy's (1966) research was used to inform the ontological stance adopted by researchers in the field of children's spirituality. Hay and Nye (1998) stated that they adopted the view of spirituality as an inherent feature because Hardy's theory contradicted the other main theorists, such as Freud, and thus followed Popper's rule (1963) of being a "bold" (p.94) conjecture to the knowledge at that time. Hay and Nye (1998) also reported that Hardy's (1966) theory stood up well to scientific testing as opposed to other theories; they referred to research which equated spirituality with positive mental health and well-being thus arguing against Freud's view that spiritual views were a sign of an unhealthy mind. In addition, many surveys have demonstrated a high prevalence of spiritual experiences, for example: Hay's (2006) national UK survey of 1,000 participants concluded that 76% of people reported a spiritual experience. When Hay revised Hay and Nye's 1998 text "The Spirit of the Child" (Hay and Nye, 2006) the update (Hay and Nye, 2006) contained reference to studies using

brain imaging of when people felt they were having spiritual experiences: Hay (1998) referred to Newberg, d'Aquili and Rause's (2001) book called "Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief". In Newberg, d'Aquili and Rause 's (2001) book, they presented brain imaging studies of spiritual experiences: One study involved eight Buddhist monks. The monks' brains were imaged prior to a spiritual experience to produce a baseline and when they entered a state which they felt was a spiritual experience they tugged on a string and a radioactive substance was injected into their bloodstream. Using a Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography (SPECT) scanner, Newberg d'Aquili and Rause (2001) stated that brain activity was different during the spiritual experience. They concluded there was less activity in the brain regions focused on the recognition of the physical limits/boundaries of the individual and more activity in areas associated with focus and thus it was argued that this indicated that the brains had more of a focus on unity as the brain area responsible for the distinction between self and others was less active. Albeit Hay himself referred to the limitations of such studies, such as the need to be careful when concluding aspects from brain activity as brain activity was so complex, he cited this study as an example that since the 1998 text "The Spirit of the Child" (Hay and Nye, 1998) the field of scientific study of spirituality research was pursuing the idea that spirituality had a biological basis and was producing tentative conclusions which indicated a link between spiritual experiences and biological nature. Therefore, suggesting that an approach to spirituality which held the implicit assumption it was relevant to all, was a possibility.

Therefore, the ontological starting point for this thesis was influenced by Hardy (1966) to conceptualise spirituality as an innate capacity. Those that have taken on such views, such as Hay and Nye (1998) and Gellel (2018), have referred to the concept of spirituality as being part of a biological aspect of humans in which they interact with the tangible, objective

reality whilst there also being a constructed reality. This echoed Maslow's (1976) observation that spiritual experiences were perceived as having more of an independent reality of their own. Gillespie (2019) drew attention to the view that previous research on this topic often centred only on either wholly interpretivist or realist views. However, this thesis adopted the views of researchers in the field of spirituality cited above to take the stance of critical realism (to be discussed further in Chapter 3: Methodology).

2.6 So where to start?

The literature discussed thus far has suggested that children's spirituality should be explored in practice, and that there was a need for researching this topic further. EPs were positioned as professionals who carry out holistic assessments of the needs of children and young people, but the persistent lack of consideration of spirituality in EP work had been criticised (Gersch *et al.,* 2008); indeed the lack of consideration of spirituality had been questioned in a number of professional groups (e.g. Birmingham and Solihull NHS trust, 2015; SPSIG, 2021a). As such, the present thesis sought to investigate EPs' views of spirituality, and how they might consider its relevance in their work.

The starting point for the approach adopted in this thesis was from a research paper titled "Identifying Children's Spirituality: How Do You Start Without a Starting Point?" (Hay and Nye, 1996). Arguing that there was not enough empirical data in this area, Hay and Nye (1996) proposed a framework of how children experience spirituality by bringing together research from child psychology, spirituality and empirical data from their pilot studies. The definition of spirituality in their research was informed by Hardy (1966) and positioned as an innate capacity in children.

The aim of the conceptual map (Nye, 1998) was to create conceptual boundaries about what was meant by children's spirituality to move forward from other accounts, such as Coles'

(1990) which did not present a framework. There was a specific focus on identifying the features of spiritual experiences (Nye, 1998). The criteria for the conceptual map (Nye, 1998) was that it: was relevant to child psychology and children's life experiences; it linked to the definitions which already existed around this topic; it accommodated many examples of the form which spiritual experiences could take; and it reflected findings from the pilot studies.

The pilot studies (Hay and Nye, 1996) consisted of individual semi-structured interviews with thirty-eight children aged 6 to 7 years of age and 10 to 11 years of age. The children were selected at random from primary schools in Nottingham and Birmingham. The interviews were completed with the children whilst Nye worked within each school setting and for most children the transcriptions were of at least three separate meetings. For the narration of this pilot stage from Hay and Nyes' perspectives, please see chapter 5 in The Spirit of the Child (1998). Hay (2006) commented that for all of the children who were interviewed during the three years of the children's spirituality project, there were aspects of spiritual experiences within all of the children's accounts.

Hay and Nye theorised three main areas to how children experience spirituality. The first area was awareness-sensing. This referred to attention, not in the way as conceptualised towards a cognitive task, but rather a meta-awareness (aware of being aware). Due to the conclusion that they felt children would be unable to verbalise this area, it was broken down into: here and now [informed by Donaldson's (1992) and Vygotsky's (1962) theories and described as being in the present moment], tuning [informed by Schutz's (1964) theory and empirical reports of childhood spiritual experiences which referred to having a heightened awareness linked to an aesthetic experience], flow [informed by Csikszentmihalyi (1988) and deemed to occur when a challenging activity matched the skill level, it was enjoyed and done for the activity's sake) and focusing [informed by Gendlin (1981) and referred to experiencing the

body as a source of knowledge]. The second area was termed mystery-sensing. This referred to an awareness of something which was incomprehensible. This was broken down into: wonder and awe [informed by Otto (1950) and also referred to the experiences a child encountered which went beyond their current understanding and not just one deemed an ultimate mystery] and imagination (moving beyond material reality to discover new meanings and values). The third area was value-sensing. Informed by Donaldson (1992), it referred to a feeling about what mattered and a move from being self-centred to being able to transcend individual matters. This area consisted of three subthemes: delight and despair (when feelings of value and worth were communicated through intense emotions for example through children's concerns of environmental issues), ultimate goodness (the awareness of omniscience presence and unconditional love) and meaning (a search to understand and make sense of what was important). See Table 1 below which demonstrates each sub-concept with examples from Hay and Nye's research. Further reading on each sub-concept can be found in Hay and Nye's (1996) "Identifying Children's Spirituality: How Do You Start Without a Starting Point?"

Table 1: definition /examples of each sub-concept derived from Hay and Nye's (1996) research

Sub-concept	**Definition /examples derived from Hay and Nye's (1996) research**
Here and now	Being in the present moment. For example, not focusing on the past or the future but the present time instead e.g. When a child notices the grass outside the window and is transfixed by it.

Tuning	Being at one with something or having a heightened aesthetic experience. For example, feeling “at one” with nature.
Flow	When a person who is doing an activity moves from being attentive to it to being in the flow with it. Skiers, rock climbers and chess players have given subjective reports of experiencing this.
Focusing	Having an insight which is felt physically. Acknowledging that our bodies are sources of knowledge e.g. having a “felt sense” about a situation.
Awe and wonder	Feeling awe and wonder when we encounter the limits of our knowledge and feel a sense of mystery. For example, when thinking of the size of the universe.
Imagination	Going beyond material reality. For example, seen in children’s play, stories and artwork.
Delight and despair	Feeling delight or despair linked to a value or worth e.g. feeling despair due to environmental concerns.

Ultimate goodness	Link to unconditional love. For example: how the child views a parent when they comfort them by providing order against chaos and the child gradually becoming aware of the boundaries/limitations of this to form an understanding of unconditional love.
Meaning-making	A search and discovery of answers to questions such as "Who am I? Where do I belong? What is my purpose?"

There were many links to the above concepts from other research in the area of spirituality as discussed in section 1.5: for example: Coles (1990) referred to aspects of conversations he had with children about their spiritual experiences when children were centred in the here and now and felt tuning through a realisation of being part of the natural world. Hay and Nye (1996) brought these aspects together as categories and thus provided a conceptual map of children's experiences of spirituality.

Hay and Nye's (1996) starting point was often endorsed by others: Gellel (2018) referred to Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map as "pivotal" (p. 19) due to the way it interconnected awareness, meaning and connection. Gillespie (2019) in his research which investigated teacher's views of spirituality referred to Hay and Nye's (1996) categories as "useful" (p. 328) to analyse data to understand examples of spirituality. Crompton (1998) stated that she chose Hay and Nye's (1996) framework in her work encouraging social workers to consider children's spiritual development due to its holistic nature, how it allowed subjective responses and how it utilised ordinary language and vocabulary which adults and children could engage with.

Hay and Nye's (1996) framework also appeared relevant to the functions carried out by educational psychologists, including consulting with those around the child, training school staff and working with young people of a variety of ages who have a variety of language levels. Hay and Nye themselves situated their conceptual map as applicable to observations of children's speech and behaviour. Therefore, it was felt that Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map provided a discussion point with enough flexibility to enable thinking of how it could be used across EP functions and the language levels of the clients whom EPs work with.

However, it should be noted that Hay and Nye (1996,1998) reflected that they expected to uncover more themes as they carried out their research, in particular those highlighting the importance of relationships. However, when looking at the framework with this criticism in mind it could be argued that the concepts of 'ultimate goodness' and 'meaning' encapsulate relationships. However, it has to be noted that the conceptual map was focused on pilot studies with primary-aged children and the present thesis asked EPs to reflect on their experiences of working with a wide range of clients (from 0 years up to 25 years). In addition, Hay and Nye were often lacking in the precise details of their pilot studies in terms of exactly how they informed the conceptual map. Due to the understanding that Hay and Nye (1996) framed the conceptual map as an initial starting point for framing investigations of spirituality, the adoption of the conceptual map framed this thesis as an exploratory starting point for EPs' views to be captured about the role of spirituality in their work with young people.

Therefore, following the examination of key UK educational documents and research related to children's spirituality, the following can be concluded:

- Children's spirituality is important within UK education. It is deemed as relevant for all children and involves an awareness of their purpose and meaning through having opportunities to have spiritual experiences.

- Children's spirituality is important because research has shown children can talk about their spiritual views and it has been shown to be: a factor which affects their behavior towards others; a way to overcome tragedy; part of their identity and their view of the world; a way to capture a holistic view of a child; and a protective factor in mental health.

- Research on children's spirituality has yet to focus on the professional understanding and experiences of UK EPs.

2.7 Research rationale and questions

There were many mentions of the importance of spiritual development in UK education documents and as summarised by Gersch *et al.* (2008), Wright (2000), Hay and Nye (1998) and Ruddock and Cameron (2010) it was a legal responsibility for educational professionals. Yet the UK EP profession—whose work was often deemed as supporting schools— had not embedded spiritual development as one of its main psychological or educational focuses. However, over ten years ago there were two research papers (Gersch *et al*., 2008 and Ruddock and Cameron, 2010) published in the Educational Psychology in Practice (EPIP) journal which concluded that EPs should be listening to the views of children about their spirituality and that it was a key part of the assessment process. Yet there was no further work from EPs nor any evidence of a consideration of their views about children's spirituality in relation to their job role. It also became obvious that this research needed a starting point to

understand children's spirituality and the most researched, widely accepted, and potentially only psychologically informed approach was Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map.

Therefore, Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map became the starting point for this research and so the first research question became:

- what are EPs' understanding of spirituality in relation to Hay and Nye's (!996) conceptual map?

The second research question included focus on the usefulness of this conceptual map (Hay and Nye's, 1996) to the EP role by asking:

- how useful do EPs view the components of spirituality to their work with young people?

To situate this thesis as an exploratory study, the final research question investigated whether there were any tentative links to EPs prior knowledge and experiences through the research question of:

- do EPs feel that spirituality links to any other concepts in current EP practice?

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The structure of this methodology chapter was based on Denscombe's (2010) guidelines for good practice in social research, which argued for the need to justify the chosen approaches. It was important that the methodology of this thesis reflected reasons as to why spirituality—coming from a multidisciplinary field—was studied in the way this thesis approached it. Therefore, informed by Denscombe's (2010) approach, the structure of this chapter is as follows: research process, research design, research philosophy, participants and data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations and evaluation. Denscombe (2010) also highlighted the importance of research rationale and questions, and these have been discussed in the previous section. In addition, addressing Robson's (2002) view that researcher reflexivity was important to limit researcher bias, researcher reflections are presented throughout this chapter.

3.2 Research process

The topic of spirituality was decided in June 2019. The starting point for this research was the educational psychology journal "Educational Psychology in Practice" (EPIP) alongside searching for the inclusion of "spirituality" in UK education laws. From these initial searches I had identified conclusions which argued for the need for EP's to include spirituality in their assessments (e.g. Gersch *et al.,* 2008) yet there was no research which captured EP's views on the inclusion of spirituality in their work. Therefore, the research questions were based on capturing EP's understanding and experience of spirituality in relation to their work. The application for ethical approval was submitted in January 2019 and the completion of this form involved writing the: participant information form, interview schedule and the design of

the diamond rank activity based on Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map. Nine participants were recruited between June and July 2020 and the semi-structured interviews took place using videoconference software during August 2020. From September to June 2021 the interviews were transcribed, the data was analysed and the research project was written up. Table 2 contains the main points from the research process.

Table 2: main points in the research process

Date	**Event**
June 2019	I decided on the topic of children's' spirituality and I started reading research on educational legislation and research in journals relevant to EP practice. To extend my initial scoping searches, I used search engines, such as EBSCO and Google Scholar, to research the terms: "spirituality+children", "sprituality+children+UK" and "spirituality+UK".
September 2019	I decided to filter and search only for UK sources.
October 2019	I decided the research questions and drafted the ethical approval form.
January 2020	I submitted the ethical approval form to the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee at The University of Birmingham.

February 2020	I presented this thesis topic to an internal research panel from The University of Birmingham.
January 2020-January 2021	I completed wider reading from reference lists of texts already read and from references lists of research on spirituality in published journals.
June 2020	I was awarded ethical approval from the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee at The University of Birmingham.
August 2020	I completed further in-depth reading of the key theorists identified from reference lists of texts already read and from references lists from research on spirituality in published journals.
August 2020	I collected my data via online semi-structured interviews.
September 2020	I transcribed the interviews.
October 2020	I utilised thematic analysis to analyse the transcriptions.
December 2020-May 2021	I wrote up my research.

3.2.1 Researcher's reflections on the research process

The reading on the topic of spirituality almost felt like a schism, sometimes deemed irrelevant and sometimes deemed relevant by sources. Whilst there was sparse research in peer-reviewed journals for educational psychology practice, there were many books in other

disciplines which had the focus on spirituality. At this point I decided to focus solely on UK views due to the weight of the guidance from the government becoming a key part of my thesis and the decision to interview EPs working in the UK and within UK schools.

Whilst my research questions were decided early on within the research process, I continued to review them and also the decision to include the conceptual map (Hay and Nye 1996). However, all of my further reading emphasised their relevance to this thesis e.g. my further reading demonstrated many views that Hay and Nye's work (1996, 1998) was respected in the field. I also understood that as a trainee EP, it was important to remain neutral when exploring the topic in relation to EP practice. At this point in the research stage I remained neutral by checking my research questions did not force that spirituality must be included in EP practice and considering that EPs may deem the conceptual map not useful to their role.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Exploratory design

This thesis was an exploratory design. This type of design was defined by Stebbins (2001) as the design utilised when there was little known about the topic which held a wider aim to discover generalisations which lead to description and understanding, whilst Swedberg (2020) referred to this design as "an attempt to discover something new or interesting by working through a research topic" (p.17). Both definitions positioned exploratory research designs as opposed to replication or confirmation studies. No prescribed ways to carry out an exploratory study were documented (Stebbins, 2001, Swedberg, 2020). There were many types of exploratory design and this thesis appeared to fit within Swedberg's (2020) definition of the standard type of an exploratory study: "the goal is to explore a topic that is little known and to produce a publishable work" (p.40). This matched this research because the literature it was based on was very newly applied to psychological focus for EPs working within UK schools.

In addition, the phrase "starting point" was often used in the literature which informed this study for example: Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map was described by its own researchers as a "starting point" (p. 145). The role of the literature in exploratory studies was given new emphasis by Casula, Rangarajan and Shields (2020) as they argued that previous research could be used to guide a study e.g. using previous research as a framework. For this study, the conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1996) offered a way to view children's experience of spirituality and a way to bring shared discussion about what was meant by children's experiences of spirituality. An exploratory design also matched the purpose of the research questions: to explore the conceptual map and EP's understanding of spirituality within their role. It was also important that it enabled conclusions to not be predetermined (Stebbins, 2001), for example: this design had to be able to accommodate a variety of data such as the view that children's spirituality was not relevant to EP practice. This was what Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) emphasised was a key role of a researcher in exploratory research: it involved a researcher who could change direction based on the data. This design could also be used as a step to refine hypotheses and next steps if data supported a conclusion that there was more to investigate with this topic.

It was important to acknowledge the limitation of this design: There was debate in the literature about exploratory designs essentially being less clear (Stebbins, 2001) as there was no predetermined method and analysis. Therefore, Denscombe's (2010) structure to the methodology chapter was chosen because it embedded an approach which justified the reasons for methodological choice.

3.3.1i Why were other research designs not chosen?

The choice to not adopt a more fixed design, such as experimental, was ethical. It was deemed unfair to force practice e.g. to require EPs to utilise the conceptual map (Hay and

Nye, 1996) in practice, especially as the outcome would relate to work with young people and thus have influenced their lives. Whilst an experimental approach may in the future be more appropriate it was deemed a step too far for this research: I needed to capture EP's views first. There were also options within the more flexible design approach, such as an ethnographic design. The research could have recruited an EP who identified as using children's spirituality in practice. This approach however would then have focused too much on an individual's interpretation of children's spirituality and ultimately again missed the step of seeking a group of views about it. It would also have potentially formed a biased research project because it may have positioned a predominantly positive view of the assessment of children's spirituality.

3.3.2 Interview format chosen for this research

The interviews were semi-structured. This meant that the interviews had some set questions but also opportunity for exploration and prompts to further elicit the participants' viewpoints (Robson, 2002). Robson (2002) referred to how the semi-structure provides both focus and space. This was important to this research because I wanted to focus participants at times on the conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1996) but I also wanted to give them space to reflect on their professional views and experiences. Thomas' (2013) structure for planning for interview questions was employed in the planning stage so that I had three main questions and then prompts and further questions to explore (Appendix 1). The semi-structured aspect was also chosen because Robson (2002) referred to it as enabling the researcher to be responsive to what was said: to cohere to an exploratory design I had to be ready for the data to go in any direction (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012).

3.3.2i Why were other interview formats not chosen?

Group interviews were considered but from an ethical and logistical point of view they were not used. This was because the nature of the topic was potentially sensitive e.g. whilst the focus remained on professional views of spirituality, I had read in previous research (e.g. Crompton, 1998, Hay and Nye, 1998, Maslow, 1975) that the topic of spirituality can be met with uncomfortableness—even from the researchers themselves. Therefore, I wanted the interview to not be done in front of others. In addition, if participants later wanted to withdraw, it would have been difficult to remove one participant from a group transcript and then from data which essentially was analysing the data at a group level.

3.3.3 Resource: conceptual map

A brief version of the conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1996) describing how children experienced spirituality was sent to participants a week before their interviews. It had a task attached to it (Appendix 2) –of ranking the nine areas according to importance to their work with young people—to make sure that participants had read the different aspects and had some time to think about the conceptual map. It also gave a framework of what the participant could mean when talking about children's spirituality to remove it from a solely individual interpretation or an interpretation which would struggle to have practical relevance to understanding young people's experiences. It was important that participants understood the nine components and so the resource was shared with my supervisor in the early stages of this research to discuss if the definitions and thus the summary of previous research were able to be understood. From these discussions it was deemed important to include an example for each of the nine aspects and so these examples were added (Appendix 2).

3.3.4 Researcher's reflections on the research design

I felt the design decision emerged from the literature because key theorists in this topic, such as Hardy (1966) and Hay and Nye (1996), described their work as starting points. This

matched the stance that the research had to follow the direction from the data, even if this meant that the participants did not consider spirituality important.

3.4 Research philosophy

The ontological assumptions of research (a focus on what exists) (Robson, 2002) can be split initially into two main areas: realism and relativism. Relativism views reality/the world through the participant's perspective. There is no inclusion nor entertaining of the idea of an objective external world; the focus remained largely on meaning. However realism positions reality as existing independently of the human mind (Nilniluoto, 2002).

The epistemological understandings (of how we come to know things) (Robson, 2002) are also split into two opposing strands, that of: positivism and interpretivism. Positivism is focused on an objective reality where the research's focus was to draw out laws and discover and apply generalisations. In contrast was interpretivism, which is often termed as a reaction to positivism. Interpretivism views the world as having multiple realities and highlights the link between research and its context and situation: understandings can emerge but they are contextualised (Casula, Rangarajan and Shields, 2020).

Yet it is the middle ground, which is referred to by many terms that are dependent on how the spectrum of ontology and epistemology has been constructed, that underpins the present research. This is critical realism. Critical realism can be positioned to incorporate a view that there is something which exists independently of the human mind and that research can investigate some of these layers through the human mind (Robson, 2002). As Robson (2002, p. 41) stated, it: "provides a third way between positivism and relativism."

To further clarify the form of critical realism adopted in this study it was important to reflect on the work of Bhaskar (who is cited as the originator of critical realism). Interestingly whilst often quoted as the founder of critical realism, Bhaskar's (1975) theory focused on a term he

titled “critical naturalism”. This view of ontology was that the world existed in an objective form. However, in comparison to the physical world, the human world was more in a state of flux compared to natural systems and humans were theorised as able to reflect on the actions within this system consciously. In addition Bhaskar (1975) also theorised, through his concept of “transcendental realism”, that science had focused too much on cause and effect relationships and thus knowledge of the world was able to be gathered through improving scientific concepts to discover the objective reality and the mechanisms within that. Bhaskar (1975) theorised that there were levels to this ontology: the real (what exists, sometimes not accessible to humans), the actual (focused on what the real is activated e.g. the outcomes) and the experience (the experience of the real and actual).

Bhaskar’s (1975) explanation of the concepts which later became termed critical realism are important to this thesis because they support the approach taken to spirituality from Hardy (1966) –who wrote prior to Bhaskar and is a key theorist to this thesis—that spirituality was a topic which had a basis in realism but which held the mind as the “empirical starting point” (Hardy, 1966, p.210). Hardy also argued that spirituality deserved a place within scientific study as the development of the scientific method itself would enable study of “the external world as revealed by the senses” (p.33).

The critical realism stance was of importance to this study because it framed spirituality as that within the theoretical views it was based on, e.g. that it was innate (Hay and Nye 1996, Hardy, 1966), yet it also allowed for the study of views to construct understanding and experience of this phenomenon as experienced by EPs in their work. However, it has to be noted that critical realism is not a unified set of beliefs, framework or methodology (Archer *et*

al., 2016) and thus for this thesis it was used largely to position the topic of spirituality and had less influence on informing the data analysis and discussion stages.

In the last writings and development of critical realism as a theory which occurred in the early 2000's Bhaskar (2008) immersed himself within thinking about spirituality from a critical realist stance. This applied use of his theory was termed "Transcendental Dialectical Critical Realism" and held a view that the experience of "transcendence" were spiritual experiences about a spiritual reality, such as God existing within the real levels. These views have applied to critical realist study of spirituality through the framing that spirituality can exist but is accessed through subjective understandings. Thus embedding the applicability of a critical realist stance to research on the topic of spirituality.

Linked to epistemological positions were qualitative and quantitative approaches to research, defined broadly by Robson (2002): quantitative research refers to numbers whilst qualitative research refers to data that is not numbers. Yet the distinctions are not to be confused as ontological and epistemological positions, as in some cases research can use both. However, the assumptions underlying this thesis lent themselves to a qualitative approach. This was because it was felt that a qualitative inquiry would best suit the end purpose of capturing EPs' understanding of spirituality as linked to their work with young people and the views about Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map. This was determined to be through analysis of what was captured in the semi-structured interviews.

3.4.1 Researcher's reflections on the research's philosophy

It was important that I adopted approaches which would position the topic of spirituality within the previous literature, and also within the view adopted within my research: that spirituality was potentially a relevant topic for all young people who EPs work with.

3.5 Participants and data collection

3.5.1 Participant recruitment

During June and July 2020, five local authority educational psychology services within one geographical area of the UK were contacted via email. The email contained a recruitment poster (Appendix 4) which shared the title of the research and my contact details, and a participant information sheet which contained a brief introduction to the topic, details about what participation would involve, participants' right to withdraw and information about the storage and handling of the data (Appendix 4). Any interested parties were asked to contact myself via my University email address. The local authorities were chosen because they met the criteria of having employed qualified educational psychologists who carried out a range of duties, including statutory assessments of young people. This provided a self-selecting sample because the educational psychologists were required to respond to the request on a voluntary basis. This sampling strategy was chosen because the participants would meet the inclusive criteria due to how they were recruited, e.g. through their employers, and it ensured participation was not forced especially as previous literature had identified that spirituality could be a difficult topic to talk about.

It was important to highlight this thesis's stance on saturation in terms of the number of participants involved in this study. The stance was heavily informed by Braun and Clarke's (2021) views of using reflexive thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2021) stated that the notion of saturation involves having enough participants so that there is no need for more data. This has often been confused in research as equating to being able to operationalise the term and know in advance how many participants were needed and a concept which became an unquestioned aspect of good research—Braun and Clarke list many quality assurance checklists in their article which specifically ask for saturation such as the Critical Appraisal

Skills Programme (2018). They argue that the implicit view is that the data exist independently of the researcher and also prior to the analysis. They argue this is against the reflexive thematic analysis approach because this approach acknowledges that the data is produced as an output of the analysis process which involved the researcher. In addition, Braun and Clarke (2021) referred to sampling as a pragmatic activity: research was often done within timescales. This was relevant to this thesis because data collection had to be completed in a certain time-frame, in order to enable timely completion of the thesis. To acknowledge that research was done within timescales, Braun and Clarke (2021) referred to making more of an in-situ decision in relation to the richness and complexity of the data in relation to addressing the research questions. Braun and Clarke (2021) highlighted that this aspect brought in a subjective element to the data collection as there was no formula to calculate when enough was enough. I embedded this notion throughout the process of data collection by asking the following question after each interview: "Did I get enough data from that interview". I therefore felt it was important that—to address criticism that exploratory studies can often lack in detail in their method (Stebbins, 2001)— I detailed this step within the Interview section of this thesis.

I was aware that the recruitment of participants involved a self-selecting process. Ultimately, it would have been unethical to force participation particularly about a topic which previous literature had referred to as sometimes being seen as a taboo or a difficult and personal topic to talk about. Yet it was important that my conclusions reflected the limitations of the data as ultimately the analysis of the interviews were from a group of EPs who had enough interest in the topic to want to volunteer an hour and a half of their time. However, as I was aware of the potential to form a working group on spirituality in EP practice following the completion of the research, I felt it was acceptable to analyse data from those interested in the topic to form

the next steps, whilst remembering that it was not representing the experiences of all UK EP professionals.

I felt it was important that the understanding of the term spirituality was communicated to participants prior to the interview so a shared understanding of the concept, as relevant to EP practice, could be captured. Therefore, Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map and a diamond ranking activity (Appendix 2) was emailed to all participants a week before their interviews. A diamond rank was chosen because it was a thinking tool designed to facilitate talk around a specific topic (Rockett and Percival, 2002). I felt this was important as I was aware that the topic could be hard to talk about e.g. previous researchers have referred to their own difficulty (e.g. Crompton, 1998: Hay and Nye, 1998: Maslow, 1976). The diamond rank was also designed to also support thinking of the overarching relationships when organising the information. This was important because ultimately, the nine aspects in the rank were sub-concepts of how children experienced spirituality and so I did not necessarily want them to be thought of as separate. It has also been used as a participatory research tool due to how it engages participants and their views (for example see Niemi, Kumpulainen and Lipponen, 2015) and this was also an important aspect to this study because I felt that the EP voice was lacking in the previous research which had considered spirituality in EP practice (e.g. Gersch *et al.,* 2008 and Ruddock and Cameron, 2010). The full use of the diamond rank in this study was discussed further in the "Interviews" section below.

3.5.2 Participants

All participants who responded to the research flyer before the end of August 2020 were interviewed. There were nine educational psychologists from four West Midlands local authorities. There were three males and six females. All of the EPs were qualified: I felt it was important to recruit qualified educational psychologists as I wanted to capture reflections on

their doctoral training and also post-qualification experience relating to spirituality. The EPs ranged from newly qualified EPs with one-year-post-qualification experience to senior and principal EPs with over ten years' experience. The only other exclusion criteria related to ensuring that no EPs who had been my supervisor during the time the thesis was being formed were involved as they may have contributed to the development of the research. There were no further exclusion criteria as there were no theoretical bases from the previous literature to support participant exclusions.

3.5.3 Interviews

The biggest impact of the Coronavirus pandemic was that the interview location changed from being face-to-face in an office to being conducted online using the videoconference software Microsoft Teams. Therefore, prior to the interview being held, it was communicated to participants that they identified a venue which ensured their responses were not overheard and that I would be utilising a headset for my interviews and if they had a headset to consider using one too.

All participants received an emailed form of the diamond rank activity one week before their online interviews. This activity (Appendix 2) introduced participants to Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map by listing each aspect with a definition and an example. Participants were instructed to read each sub-concept of how children experience spirituality and decide which order they felt the sub-concepts would go—using the diamond rank structure—in order of important to their work with young people. Participants were told that this activity was used as a starting point to aid discussion and thinking about spirituality.

The interviews were recorded onto a dictaphone. The diamond rank was used as the starting point for the interview: all participants were firstly asked for the reasons as to why they placed the sub-concepts where they had on the diamond rank, whether the conceptual map

matched their understanding of spirituality within their work with young people and whether they could use these sub-concepts within their work. Each of these main three questions were supported with optional prompts and follow up questions (see Appendix 1). The interviews lasted between one hour and one hour thirty minutes.

After each interview, I wrote some brief notes of what was said and asked myself the following question: "Did I get enough data from the interview?" Examples of aspects which would assist in my decision that the interview did have enough data were: depth (did I get clear examples and reasons for their thinking?), and breadth (did they reflect on the nine aspects and talk about them in relation to their role?). I planned that if I felt that I did not have enough data that I would consider extending my recruitment and data collection for one extra month. However, this was not needed because I felt that the interviews did provide enough data and so no further recruitment of participants was done.

3.6 Data analysis

3.6.1 Thematic analysis and why it was selected over other approaches

Thematic analysis (TA), as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), was chosen for this research. This was because it was an approach which did not have a predetermined theory attached to its use; as this thesis was focused on EP views on what was likely to be a novel topic to participants, it was decided that the analysis approach should allow for the data to lead the development of themes (rather than any predetermined theory affecting how the data was interpreted). In addition, Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach was stated to be rigorous by having a clear step-by-step approach. This was deemed important to a project situated as an exploratory study: in order to overcome the criticism levelled at exploratory studies of not being explicit with the choice of method (Stebbins, 2001), a clear step-by-step method was chosen (see Figure 1). Since Braun and Clarke's (2006) seminal thematic analysis paper, they

have published further conceptualisations of thematic analysis (Braun *et al.*, 2019), including renaming to the procedure detailed in Figure 1 to "reflexive thematic analysis". Whilst this reflexive aspect highlighted the researcher's role as within the data analysis rather than the data existing prior to analysis, the step-by-step method of 2006 was utilised as the main method in this study. This was because Braun and Clarke have not replaced this method per se and the clear step-by-step guidance with the additional comments in their 2006 paper were utilised as check-ins during the data process to ensure fidelity to this procedure. Braun and Clarke (2020) situated their thematic analysis as within a "spectrum" (p. 37) stating there were types of thematic analysis where templates, e.g. a sample coding system could be generated from theory and created prior to data analysis. However, due to the lack of research on EP's views of spirituality to their role, the theory to generate such a template was lacking hence the orientation adopted of thematic analysis in this study took an inductive approach: the coding and subsequent themes were directed by the data rather than pre-existing theory. In addition, a critical relist stance was taken on that the assumption was that the data represented an assumed reality.

It was decided that there would be no rater reliability assessment nor member check activities for the data analysis stages. This was directly informed by Braun and Clarke's writings about their reflections on the thematic analysis approach which they now deemed as reflexive thematic analysis: Braun and Clarke (2013) specifically stated that inter-rater reliability and member checks were linked to positivist assumptions that the data was detached from the researcher and context. In qualitative research, they argued (Braun and Clarke, 2013), that research held a contextualised nature and they cited ways this occurred such as: holding the view there were multiple realities or that the data reflected the context-bound nature of reality (the latter example being more applicable to this study). It was argued to consider the

trustworthiness of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2013): for this study, this was done through the completion of the Quality in Qualitative Evaluation Framework (Government Social Research Profession, 2003 (see Appendix 3) and for the data analysis specifically Braun and Clarke's (2019) "Guidelines for reviewers and editors evaluating thematic analysis manuscripts" was applied (see Appendix 5), which demonstrated Braun and Clarke's (2013) premise that qualitative data can still be evaluated.

Table 3: phases of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Stage	**Action**
Familiarisation	Transcribe the data and re-read the data.
Generation of initial codes	Code the data in a systematic way across all of the data.
Search for themes	Bring the codes together into themes.
Review of themes	Check that the themes match the codes and also the entire data set. Generate a thematic map.
Define themes	Refine the themes and define them.
Write up the report	Place the data within the wider narratives of what has been found and what this means with regards to previous literature.

Another possible choice for the method/methodology would have been a phenomenological approach such as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) as this was the one often used in spirituality research due to its focus on spiritual experiences (e.g. Gillespie, 2019). However, to have used a phenomenological approach would have changed the focus on personal experiences which was not what this project was seeking directly. In addition, the data analysis of phenomenology would be coded per data

item and so it would held more of a focus on each individual; I decided that this study would benefit from group level data about spirituality because it could provide information about a group of EPs' views about the topic, and perhaps could be used as a starting point to form a special interest group (which was a potential next step from this research): Braun and Clarke (2020) argued that choosing thematic analysis over Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was suited to research which had the following aspects: a focus which was not just on personal experiences and sense-making, a focus not just on individual cases and when there was an action focus for the outcomes from the research. These aspects matched the description of the research in this thesis.

3.6.2 The Thematic analysis process

3.6.2i Data familiarisation

I transcribed all of the interviews (see appendix 6 for two full transcripts). Some argued (e.g. Nye, 1998) that not being involved in completing the transcription stage did not make them less familiar with the data but I found that transcribing the interviews, as Braun and Clarke (2006) stated, provided a key first step in familiarisation. Whilst transcribing, I immersed myself in the meanings of what was being said, in contrast to when I was also interviewer and more focused on what the next question would be. Once I had transcribed each interview, I re-read the data three times checking it alongside the recording and then re-read the transcripts two more times prior to coding.

3.6.2ii Generation of initial codes

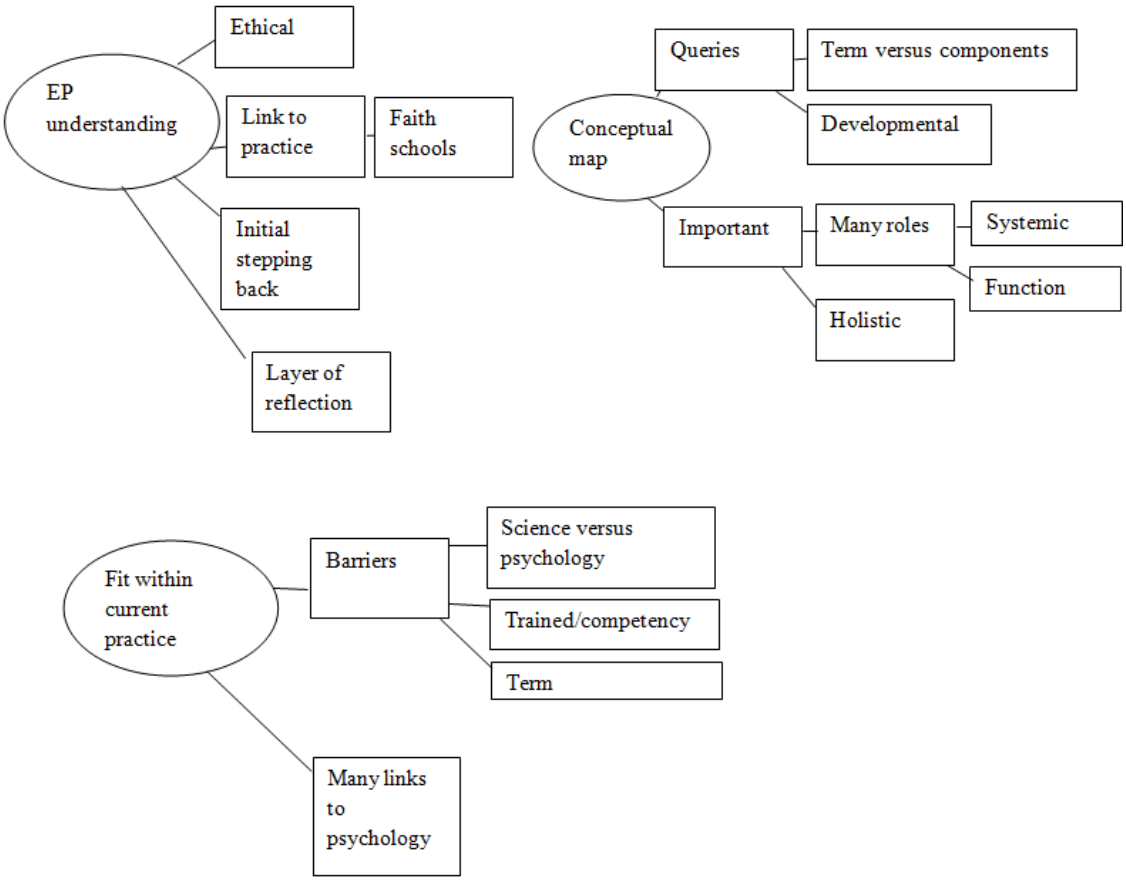
After the familiarisation stage, I read each transcript once and coded the text based on basic segments of meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I then repeated this three times to ensure that, as Braun and Clarke (2006) stated, as much of the data was coded as possible. Most parts of the transcripts were coded with at least one code. Braun and Clarke (2006) recommended

identifying each code to aid with identifying patterns, and this was done by colour-coding each code used. See Appendix 7 for a transcript extract demonstrating this.

3.6.2iii Search for themes

I then started to see where similar worded codes were, for example initially the "questions" in answer of research question one, were actually very similar to "queries" about the conceptual map so the data for these codes were brought together. This was part of what Braun and Clarke (2006) referred to as collation: bringing together all data which was relevant to a theme. This involved re-reading the transcripts twice in total to form the initial thematic map below. It was important at this stage that no codes were removed from the data set.

Figure 1: initial thematic map



3.6.2iv Review of themes

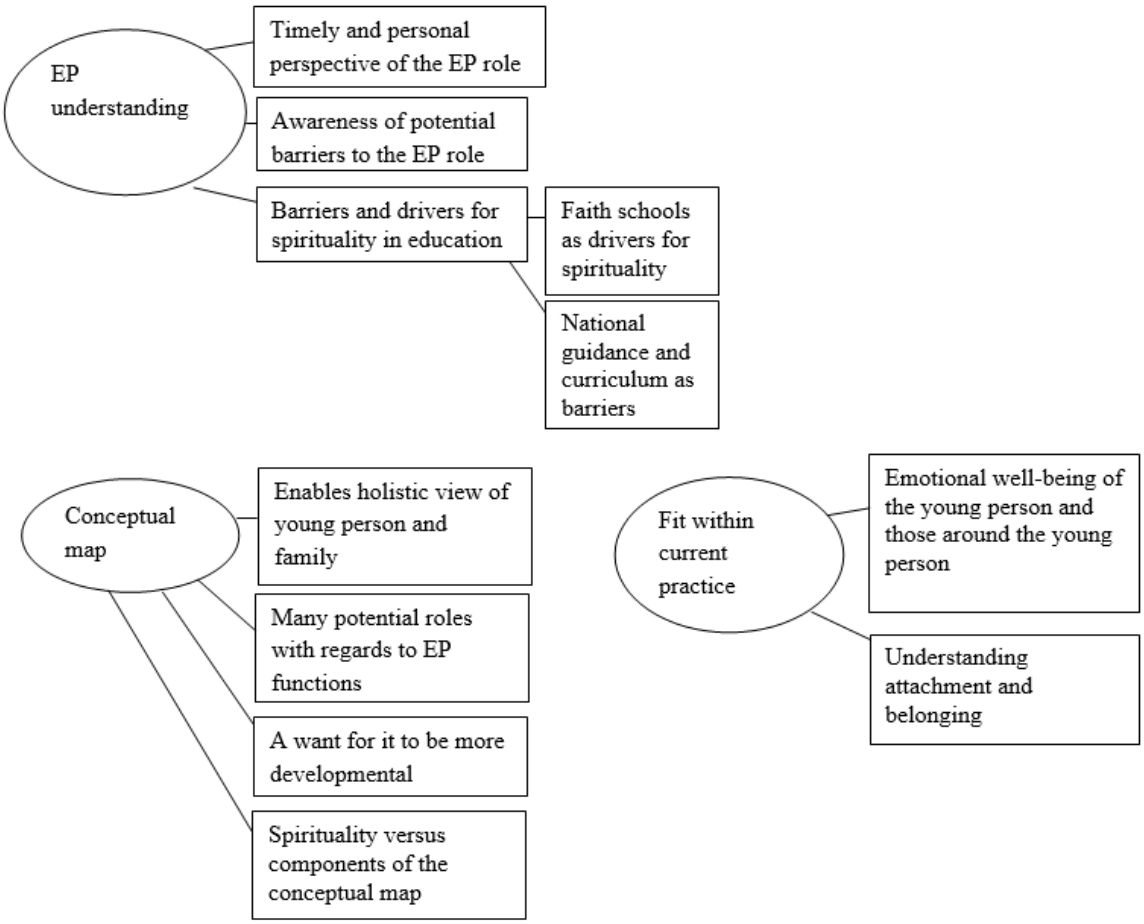
I then examined my themes with regards to Braun and Clarke's (2006) question of whether the data formed a coherent pattern within and whether the themes had clear distinctions between them. For the theme "barriers" I noticed that some of the barriers mentioned were more specific to Research Question Two with regards to the theme "term versus components" and that some barriers were also more about EPs' view of their role. I also noticed that whilst I had separated "initial stepping back" and a "layer of reflection" the data sets were very similar and at points overlapped so they became one theme. This was also the case for the subthemes of "systemic" and "function" for the theme relating to the conceptual map as having "many roles" in EP practice. It was also important to note that some themes had more data than others and that this was viewed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to not be a weakness to the analysis. Once it seemed that the thematic map was finalised, because the data supporting the themes was coherent and the themes were distinctly different to each other, I re-read the transcripts again, to ensure that all data was appropriately captured and represented in themes. This resulted in further identification of a subtheme relating to barriers relating to the national guidance and the curriculum.

3.6.2v Define themes and write up the report

Due to the thoroughness of the reviewing of themes, my analysis moved beyond individual semantics to, as Braun and Clarke (2006) described, the "story" (p. 92) of what each theme was telling. This involved considering the meaning of the themes in relation to the data, each other and also in relation to the research questions. During this stage I noticed that I renamed many themes to make them more specific for example: 'faith schools' became 'faith schools as drivers of spirituality'. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasised the need for themes to be named to provide the reader with an immediate understanding of what each theme referred to. See Figure 2 for the final thematic map.

Figure 2: final thematic map

(All themes were presented within square or rectangle boxes. The summary of research questions were within the oval shapes and were not themes but presented to help to organise the material.)



3.7 Ethical considerations

There were ethical considerations to make throughout the stages of this thesis from planning the research to drawing conclusions. The plan for this thesis with regards to the ethical considerations was documented in the Application for Ethical Review and received approval from the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee at The University of Birmingham in June 2020.

At the planning stage, it was deemed important to have the interviews conducted individually rather than in a group format because although the study's focus was on the practical relevance of spirituality to the professional working of EPs, there was the potential that EPs would be reflecting on their own beliefs. This choice protected the participant's right to withdraw because the other participants would not have been privy to the views of an individual who may have later chosen to withdraw from the study. It was also decided at the planning stage that the data recorded would only be the audio from the video interviews, as non-verbal cues were not considered important for the analysis.

With regards to informed consent, all participants were informed via the participation information sheet (Appendix 4): what participating in this research involved; how the data was to be handled; who was responsible for this research; that confidentiality would only be broken if there was a safeguarding concern and their right to withdraw and how they could enact it. Anonymity was not possible due to the interview method and participants were informed of this via the participant information sheet (Appendix 4). During this study, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in social distancing measures and so the semi-structured interviews were carried out online: the ethical approval paperwork was updated to reflect this move to videoconference software and to emphasise to participants that they were to choose a confidential space to hold the videocall. In addition, the videocalls required a password to connect to the link and an online waiting room was used to admit the participant so that the videocall only contained myself and the participant. All participants were informed of the procedures via the participation information sheet (Appendix 4). At the end of each interview, due to the impact of discussing potentially sensitive information, I checked that participants felt comfortable to leave the videocall and whether there were any final questions. After the videocall, all participants were emailed information which signposted them to local support

agencies, such as their local authority well-being services, and national charities, such as MIND.

Whilst the move from face-to-face to online interviews was directly due to the pandemic and occurred very quickly, the use of videocalls in research has been reflected on by researchers such as Nehls, Smith and Schneider (2015) who stated that it had started to become a viable way to gather data. Lobe and Morgan (2021) compared videocall interviews of dyadic and focus groups and concluded that those within the dyadic videocall felt more comfortable. This was important to this research as the topic can cause feelings of unease and it cemented my choice to make the interview dyadic in nature. Khalil and Cowie (2020) raised the importance of participants having access to the appropriate internet connection, hardware and software which supported my earlier decision to contact participants through their local authority employers as one reaction by local authorities was to provide employees with the technology for home working. There was also the reported finding from Khalil and Cowie (2020) that researchers and participants were more able to fit the videoconference into their domestic and professional responsibilities. This was something I found during the data collection phase as I appreciated not having to travel to venues to conduct the interviews and I noticed from my sample that some had travelled elsewhere in the country. In addition, there was the recommendation (Khalil and Cowie, 2020) that email exchanges were done prior to the interview: This occurred in this research due to the sending of the consent form and the diamond ranking activity (Appendix 2). Therefore, whilst the move to online interviews was not within my control, the assessment in terms of ethical considerations demonstrated that it was feasible and an appropriate way to conduct the interviews.

There were also many ethical considerations relating to the storage of data, which participants were informed of via the participation information sheet (Appendix 4). Due to the possibility

that the participant's voice could be recognised from the audio, the audio-recordings were transferred from the recording device to The University of Birmingham's Environment for Academic Research (BEAR) system in password protected files. Each transcription was assigned an ID code such as "participant number 1". All transcriptions were saved as individual password protected Word files on The University of Birmingham's BEAR Data share system. In addition, I was aware that the EP profession was a relatively small profession and the data might include reference to local authorities or schools and so it was planned that during the transcription, any references to individuals, organisations or geographical locations (e.g. names of schools, local authorities) would be replaced with pseudonyms. It was important to note that whilst pseudonyms were used, no data had to be removed because I did not think any of the data was so specific as to identify an individual.

3.8 Researcher reflexivity

I also reflected on the impact of the topic on myself as the researcher and so I kept a researcher's reflective journal during throughout the research process to identify where my interest in this topic had come from and my emotions during the research journey. Reflexivity was deemed as important to qualitative research (Barratt, Kajamaa and Johnston, 2020) because as a researcher in this study I have not been detached from the process: I have made decisions (even the starting decision of what to base my thesis on): I have been involved in the data analysis process (Braun and Clarke, 2020); and I have decided the conclusions which could be drawn from the data. In addition, the key authors on children's spirituality all included reference to their views of the topic as they researched it (e.g. Crompton, 1998, Coles, 1990: Hay and Nye, 1998). Whilst I have placed researcher reflections throughout this

thesis alongside explicit articulation of the methodological choices, I felt that a more personal reflection had been missing and thus it was included below.

I wondered if I was initially interested in this topic because I had recently become a mother and so I naturally felt my thinking became more orientated towards others and potentially involved more spiritual questions e.g. what sort of life did I want for my child? I noticed I had started to watch and enjoy a television series which had these sorts of themes in it too. In addition, whilst completing practice as a trainee EP, I had recently come across a strengths-based assessment approach to working and thus felt that there were other aspects of the role which focused less on barriers/problems which complemented my thinking of wanting to explore with children more than just their barriers to learning to help to move things forward. The journey involved a constant check-in because I became aware that ultimately the participants might not think spirituality, in terms of how it had been researched in the UK field of children's spirituality, had much relevance to the EP role. I think adopting an exploratory focus negated any worries about this and rather than framing it as a case study—which I was reluctant to do as I was not sure I had a theoretical "case"—the exploratory nature meant I could remain curious and thus conclude what the data showed. In addition, this was also why I did not want to focus on a definition in the interviews as I felt the interviews would have then been either agreement or disagreement about the definition but instead the aim was to explore the sub-concepts. I also wanted—potentially as at this point in my doctorate I had a young child who was not yet talking—to think about how EPs could think about children's spirituality using a framework or tool which did not solely rely on verbal communication. This became important as I felt it would be more universal in capturing children's views. Even if the answer was that it was not relevant, I had still explored the role

of spirituality in education legislation and had formed an understanding and confidence about what the term "children's spirituality" meant to UK education.

3.9 Evaluation of research quality

It was deemed important to evaluate this thesis using a qualitative research quality framework. The structure for this evaluation utilised the Quality in Qualitative Evaluation Framework (Government Social Research Profession, 2003). This framework was chosen because it was based on a comprehensive review of the literature on standards in qualitative research, in addition to evidence from key stakeholders in relation to qualitative research e.g. authors of qualitative frameworks and policymakers. It also stood out as a framework which had a focus on practical relevance: it was designed for assessing research which potentially had impact on policy and practice. Once the data analysis was completed and this thesis was written up to the conclusion section, the Quality in Qualitative Evaluation Framework was consulted. The framework gave examples of evidence of quality which would be within a research write up, for example: to determine "How well has the approach to and formulation of the analysis been conveyed?" (Government Social Research Profession, 2003, p.25) the framework detailed that the written output could include a description of the original form of data alongside a clear rationale for data analysis. I reflected on this thesis using the framework alongside the suggested possible quality indicators and noted down what evidence there was within this thesis' written output which supported my conclusions about quality. The authors of the Quality in Qualitative Evaluation Framework (Government Social Research Profession, 2003) concluded that it is for the assessor to judge the overall quality of the research output and that the quality indicators were only suggestions to support this process. See Appendix 3 for the completed evaluation in full. For this thesis, the completion of the evaluation was used

to inform the conclusion section, particularly with regards to informing discussion of the strengths and weaknesses.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The results of the thematic analysis were from individual semi-structured interviews with nine UK educational psychologists. See Table 4 for the demographic information of these participants.

Table 4: demographic information of the participants

Participant number	Gender	Job role
1	Female	Maingrade EP
2	Female	Senior EP
3	Male	Maingrade EP
4	Male	Senior EP
5	Female	Maingrade EP
6	Female	Maingrade EP
7	Male	Maingrade EP
8	Female	Maingrade EP
9	Female	Maingrade EP

Details on the thematic analysis process were presented in Chapter 3. As can be seen in Figure 2, the themes were grouped in accordance with answering each of the three research questions.

4.1 Research question one: what are EPs' understanding of spirituality in relation to Hay and Nye's conceptual map?

Research question one, "what are EPs' understanding of spirituality in relation to Hay and Nye's conceptual map?" , had three main themes.

4.1.2 A timely and personal perspective of the EP role

The global and political context of 2020 was brought into EPs' discussions on the topic of spirituality. Many referenced the recent Black Lives Matter movement as a movement which enabled conversations on topics, such as race inequality, to happen and wondered if this would extend to spirituality*: "there is maybe a window of opportunity to have some of these very human-level conversations" (Participant 8).* EPs reflected on whether there had been a potential cultural shift where it now felt comfortable to discuss "*politics, sex and religion" (Participant 3)* moving the conversations from "*coffee personal conversations" (Participant 5)* to being explicitly spoken about. In addition, some participants spoke of the pandemic as a time for reflection and a narrowing—escaping from the material world and having time as families—to focus on meaning for families and the cultures they resided in and the importance for EPs to explore this.

Participants' responses suggested that spirituality may have been in EP practice already, but that through discussion and consideration of the Hay and Nye (1996) framework it was brought out as an explicit perspective. It was about halfway through the interviews that all EPs reflected that through time and discussion they could link it to their practice, for example*: "I am sure that if I sat and studied those categories and looked at different aspects of the role that I could map onto them" (Participant 2),"this framework showed me that spirituality can sit differently … and is a part of my practice and I would say a lot of EP's practice" (Participant 3).* Once EPs had started to discuss the conceptual map of spirituality and explore the meaning of spirituality, many expressed the need to make it more explicit and wondered why the profession had not made the links explicit: "*It is there but is about*

bringing it out" (Participant 8), "Spirituality does not seem to be made explicit in the theories we come across" (Participant 5).

Yet many EPs had to step back to personal reflections to ultimately discuss and think about how spirituality linked to their work: Many spoke about the importance of spirituality to their own lives, such as their faith background, their life experiences (e.g. being a parent), and their view of the world (e.g. feeling a connection to nature). EPs were conscious that their own view meant that they picked up on different nuances of the conceptual map from Hay and Nye (1996): one EP spoke of asking themselves "*What sense does it make to me? There were bits that jump out at me like the here and now" (Participant 2)* whilst another EP reflected that *"I think I look for connection to nature so that idea for tuning and that is one way I conceptualise my own spirituality" (Participant 4)*. The permeation of boundary between personal and professional views was eloquently communicated by one EP's comment that they felt that ultimately EP practice was affected by individual spiritual views: *"We all carry our own spirituality around with us and inadvertently it affects all of our practice, how we view, so I don't think you can separate it in many respects EP practice and spirituality it is combined in who we are as a professional" (Participant 6).*

4.1.3 Awareness of potential barriers due to the EP role

There were many questions and reflections about whether the EP role could encompass spirituality which on closer inspection referred to a potential conflict between spirituality and the view of the EP role as being a scientist practitioner. Many EPs felt that spirituality could not be conducive to a "gold standard" of science which referred to having a clear link between a hypothesis and an evidence-based intervention in addition to a testing and evaluation of it. Ultimately there was a separation between the EP role as scientist practitioner and spirituality*:*

"because I am an evidence-based practitioner and a psychologist and all of what that means maybe there's a tendency to keep those separate" (Participant 3), "is it because part of the drive as scientist that scientist part cannot be captured we avoid it" (Participant 5). Yet through reflection there were potential ways to overcome this splitting through consideration of the history of science and the cultural situatedness of Western science, for example: "*CBT is a gold standard, a medical intervention, but actually there are influences of spirituality and I guess a sort of western science sort of eastern science comes out of spirituality versus science" (Participant 4).*

There were also many questions which came from an ethical perspective. There was a strong stance to avoid a sense of mystery around the role: *"we don't want to be a mystical profession, we operate within the realms of what people already know to make our practice more accessible" (Participant 4)*. Alongside this was the acknowledgement that psychology had been on a journey with regards to ethical practice and that alongside spirituality and religion they could all be used as a force for harm*: "we are all mindful that spirituality can also be used as a force for harm. .. I also say psychology has been used a force of evil pointing finger at religion when I could point the finger at psychology. Why are we throwing stones?" (Participant 5), "Punishment and extinction, those kind of concepts that's a form of psychology but that's not psychology which is necessarily embraced by the EP profession because it doesn't sit well" (Participant 7).* EPs also referred to the training element as forming their remit of what they confidently could practice as an EP, with spirituality not being a topic specifically taught to them during their training: *"I think we as EPs don't delve into it, we don't talk about, we are not trained in it" (Participant 1).* Alongside this was a concern that mindfulness—which was identified by EPs as a spiritual practice—had been taken on in the profession too readily and there was a need for more training and thought

about whether it was the appropriate intervention: *"Doesn't mean we can pick up a box of tools and say we do mindfulness" (Participant 5), "If we are to go into schools and use mindfulness because it has become popular it can sometimes deflect away from any problems in an organisation" (Participant 7).*

4.1.4 Barriers and drivers for spirituality in education

4.1.4i Faith schools as drivers for spirituality

EPs readily linked their understanding of spirituality to their experiences of working in faith schools. Some spoke of how the aspects of spirituality identified by Hay and Nye (1996) were embedded within faith schools*: "You can see how these things are embedded thinking about um the rituals involved in prayer, they are very here and now togetherness, a lot of tuning being at one with the community a wider sense of connection to something ethereal something divine. Thinking about how they are all connected to that and flow in singing and hymns all kind of flow activities and that are all part of the day to. And delight and despair is explored, not just the delight side" (Participant 4).* Some referred to Catholic faith schools as having external drivers of spirituality by referring to the inspection process by the Diocese.

4.1.4ii National guidance and curriculum as barriers

There were many questions from EPs about the role of organisations such as Ofsted with the assumed view that spirituality was not part of the guidance provided to non-faith schools at a national level: *"the DfE don't have any sort of drive, do they? There are influences but it is not across the board" (Participant 4). "I was thinking of spirituality and Ofsted are there any drivers?" (Participant 8).*

Many EPs referred to curriculum pressures as constraining children's spirituality: *"If we think of children developmentally and their sense of wonder and curiosity particularly when they start to explore environments and sometimes in the education system it squashes that because it has to. You have to do this because it is in the curriculum" (Participant 5), "Not being constrained by curriculum as well is a thing coming out for me here and following a child's lead" (Participant 8).*

4.2 Research question two: How useful do EPs view the components of spirituality to their work with young people?

Research question two had four main themes:

4.2.1 It enables a holistic view of the young person and their family

There was a sense that whilst EPs strive to gain a holistic view of a child, this was often not done and that the consideration of spirituality in assessment would focus on different aspects not currently captured: "*We take great pride of the narrative that our assessments and gaining understanding are holistic but I don't think they are, we assess the bits that are more tangible to us" (Participant 5), "If I was doing a statutory assessment for instance, it might be I could use the framework I could identify different aspects of the child to get a holistic picture" (Participant 2).* The current assessment process of a child was seen as curriculum focused and not child led and spirituality was offered as a contrast to this: *"I've been thinking about the curriculum and some of the assessments we do are skill based and I kind of think we are not always starting from the child. Spiritual is starting from the child" (Participant 8).* Some EPs also extended it to thinking that it would help to gather family and cultural views to aid understanding and views about having a special educational or health need: *"For some families with SEND it is seen as a blessing, for some it is seen as a mark you have done*

something wrong. It is not to make judgment but to understand some of those views and perspectives. Sometimes God will help, sending my child to that faith school will be a cure and to hear those views and respect them some parent's interpretation of special needs is affected by their own spirituality" (Participant 5).

4.2.2 It has many potential roles with regards to EP functions

EPs linked the concepts of spirituality to many of the functions they were involved in. EPs spoke about how these concepts could be observed and linked to formulating about children's behaviours when engaged in activities: *"I've seen children draw some really characteristic artwork and it can give them that tuning that flow in the process of really enjoying it and where does that come from? What are they thinking and feeling when they're drawing these things?" (Participant 1).* There was also reference to the Hay and Nye (1996) framework being used in consultation: "*It's a structured enough tool with enough wiggle room in it to lead any discussion because again what I understand of feeling delight and despair means something else to something else but that is what a good framework should be, it shouldn't be dictated to it should allow discussion and change in perspective. It is probably also a framework to use with young people as meta-cognition to think about their own thoughts that would be a lovely tool. Again that's consultation" (Participant 6).* There were many references to the importance of the systems around a child and how this framework could support implementing research which focused on change in the system: *"Maybe it is that they are not able to get to the flow state due to a mismatch between skills and the task so it might be a useful thing to share with teachers. Johnny clearly does not have the skills to do this task so he is not going to be in a state that encourages flow so how do we modify that task" (Participant 7), "I guess a lot of that links to communities and linking about school*

communities and families and thinking about promoting some of these things across a wider scale rather than within an individual level" (Participant 4). In addition, some EPs referred to it being something EPs could use themselves in assessments and also in supervision: *"The here and now is something about us both being present in this moment. So yeah I can see how that is important. And we talk about that as psychologists as establishing rapport but I don't know how much we, when we are busy doing the job but how much we take the time to be present ourselves" (Participant 2), "People often talk about how supervision feels and we often talk about the models of supervision which focus on the discourse and the things that you would talk about and understanding things from different perspectives but actually the feeling I wonder if you map on and use it to reflect on supervision and to why they feel a certain way" (Participant 4).*

4.2.3 A want for the conceptual map to be more developmental

Many EPs felt that aspects of the conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1996) were more relevant to young people at specific ages, for example: awe and wonder were positioned as occurring more within younger children whilst those aspects related more to a sense of self were linked to children who were teenagers: *"Children very young infants … experience everything and show a lot of wonder or surprise, at a bubble , or a smile" (Participant 1),* "*and what is my purpose? I think this is something a lot of young people struggle with especially young people in secondary school as they are having to make key decisions about where they want their life to go and they may be unclear about that. And it's not necessarily our job to kind of to do that for them but I think it's important perhaps for us to kind of help them along on that thinking process to some degree because I just think those things are really quite important this idea of meaning making" (Participant 7).* One EP mentioned the need for a range of age-relevant

examples for each component to help with the understanding of these aspects developmentally**.**

4.2.4 Spirituality versus components of the conceptual map

EPs stated that they felt that the wording of the components of the conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1996) was more useful than the use of the word "spirituality". The components were viewed as easy to understand and share with others: *"What I really liked about the framework it brought it down to simple terms and what could spirituality mean for children" (Participant 3).* Some even spoke of the want to not use the term "spirituality" when utilising the conceptual map: *"I think if you use the term spirituality with teachers you get a shutdown but you could use those concepts without mentioning it explaining they are good for well-being experiences and you may never mention spirituality at all. These themes we know are key to children's experiences and how do your classroom cultures reflect this and you never need to mention spirituality" (Participant 5).*

4.3 Research question three: Do EPs feel that spirituality links to any other concepts in current EP practice?

Research question three had two main themes: "Emotional well-being of the young person and those around the young person" and "understanding attachment and belonging".

4.3.1 Emotional well-being of the young person and those around the young person

All EPs interviewed linked spirituality to their knowledge and work about emotional well-being. EPs mentioned that the concepts reminded them of the five steps to well-being initiative from the government: *"Five ways to well-being and connection, spirituality is about connection on different levels and doing things for other people" (Participant 8).* Many EPs

spoke about how the concepts were frames to understand when there was poor emotional or mental health, for example: *"If you are highly anxious or depressed can you feel...you know…be curious about the world or are you just disheartened with the world do you have positive thoughts about yourself and others, do you care about where you belong or who you are and what your purpose is or the here and now" (Participant 1), "I think focusing is important because … it's a framework to have in your mind when working with children with anger or anxiety how much of an insight do they have as to what a particular emotion feels like and where they feel it in the body and what it means" (Participant 7).* In addition, many EPs reflected that therapeutic interventions also mapped onto the concepts with experiences of spirituality: *"I think I use mindfulness in CBT a big part of my practice and there is a big overlap like here and now for example is something and the focusing that resonated with me and they are really big part of CBT" (Participant 4).* Yet it was also linked to a form of psychology which was less focused on a medical model and more focused on having healthy emotional well-being, positive psychology: *"Let's dig a bit deep and say well if we help them to build a positive life potentially there might be less reason to engage in what is perceived as challenging behaviour and that is how I see spirituality stuff really fits in. I work a lot and inspired by positive psychology and search for meaning and meaningful activity. I am also interested in acceptance and commitment therapy and how it looks at being in the here and now it looks at accepting the experiences that you are having and you notice it and move towards your values. That really stands out to me as how it links to spirituality" (Participant 3).* It was also linked to a way to support the well-being of the professionals around the child, including the EP: *"Some of my colleagues have been involved in staff mindfulness sessions. It is a part of our work and staff well-being is part of our role" (Participant 7) , "It's very important for EPs to focus on their own emotional well-being and I think mindfulness and*

being in the here and now and having a spiritual outlook can help to nourish at the individual level" (Participant 7).

4.3.2 Understanding attachment and belonging

There was a strong link to the ultimate goodness aspect of spirituality and the work EPs do in school and with families around attachment. Whilst the EPs acknowledged they were not the one to provide this part of an attachment, they felt their role was to identify and support it: *"It can also be used for example I work with parents and we do work with things like around relationships like trauma-informed attachment strategies and working the teachers on building relationships and having playful connections that are safe and trusting. I think all of this fits in with that if we think about when a child has that sort of key adult or trusting relationship that could link to ultimate goodness" (Participant 1).* In addition, there was also reference to the theory of attachment but alongside current ways of EP working which involved technology*: "I suppose I was thinking of current practice some of the big work with video interaction guidance. Looking at connections with people, fine-tuning of parents tune into their children. That also links into a lot into that tuning and focus and the language is quite similar I suppose" (Participant 8).* Some EPs situated the concept of ultimate goodness within Maslow's hierarchy of needs: *"Maslow's hierarchy you identify what is your core belief that we all need to be connected to something or someone and that unconditional love gives children confidence to transition to who they want to be because they have the basis of trust and love" (Participant 6).* Many EPs also used the concepts to provide a reflective frame to understand the need for belonging: *"Meaning making especially in relation to who I am and where I belong. I use genograms a lot with children and families to understand the structure but I think you can have a lightbulb moment where children says so these are the*

people in my life and in my local authority families can get really complicated especially when people move into and out of lives so the meaning making is really important and these are things I hadn't thought about in a framework before" (Participant 4).

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The study's aims were to investigate EPs' understanding of spirituality, their views on the usefulness of Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map to their work with young people and whether spirituality linked to any other concepts in current UK EP practice. This was done through thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews from nine EPs. The data provided an initial first step in exploring EP's views in this area and bringing together literature from legislative material, psychology, health and EP practice. The use of Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map supported the bringing of this information together and provided a psychologically informed tool to use to start shared understanding on the topic.

5.1 Summary in relation to theory

EP's understanding of spirituality in their work with young people involved many aspects: one theme was the idea that spirituality was linked to the context of when it can be discussed, as summarised from the following quotation from participant 8 : *"a window of opportunity"*. This summarised historical views about when it was appropriate to discuss spirituality for example: Hay (2006) who was involved in the design and data collection of UK surveys on spirituality concluded that the increase in reported spiritual experiences was potentially due to the change of attitude towards talking about topics which were considered taboo, such as sex and spirituality. This "window of opportunity" to discuss spirituality, as referred to by participant 8, was the Covid-19 pandemic (due to people spending more time at home and within their families) and the Black Lives Matter movement (which bought to the fore conversations on race equality) therefore demonstrating that spirituality can never be discussed without thinking about the context it was discussed in. EPs also reflected that spirituality was in EP practice but at an implicit level. This calls to mind the previously

discussed criticism of Maslow's theory (1976) using Allport's theory (1955) of functional autonomy: Maslow's theoretical thinking had at times been separated from its basis. It was interesting to compare this to thoughts from EPs that when being asked to focus on spirituality, they could link it to a lot of theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Educational psychologists also positioned the view of spirituality as within the science versus religion debate especially with regards to psychology's positivist history and the identity of an EP as "*scientist practitioner"*: Some referred to wanting to keep certain things separate so that they could achieve a "*gold standard"* of science by capturing more "*tangible"* information and ensuring that the interventions selected were those based on science. This was reminiscent of the history of psychology and the debate between the positivist view and other aspects of human experience such as spiritual values (Maslow, 1976). However, when EPs considered spirituality versus science from an Eastern view there was less of a divide, for example: there was understanding expressed that CBT (which would be considered a gold standard intervention) did have an Eastern influence of spirituality in its origins. Therefore, further demonstrating the layers which impact on the understanding of spirituality, including the history of science from a global perspective.

It was also important that when EPs were discussing their identity as a professional that there was a key ethical strand within this role with regards to considering spirituality in their work with young people. EPs wanted to be sure that if they were to use aspects which had a spiritual basis that they were trained enough in them to deliver them appropriately and of the need to remain transparent. One often cited example which EPs stated they felt unsure of was the uptake of EPs delivering mindfulness and ensuring that EPs were appropriately trained in it. It also became obvious from the data analysis that EPs had to step back into their own

reflections to be able to consider spirituality in their professional role. This was something that was seen in literature on spirituality: Maslow (1976) referred to the need to adopt an "investigators brothers" (p. 87) approach as he felt he could not be a detached researcher when looking at this topic. In the introduction to her book on children and social work, Crompton (1998) referred to her own spiritual beliefs and stated that "inevitably" (p. xii) they would be evident in the book. In addition, the health guidance, such as the Birmingham and Solihull NHS trust (2015), included introductory questions to encourage reflection of one's own spirituality.

Interestingly EPs' understanding of barriers to spirituality were the curriculum and government drivers such as Ofsted. This was in contrast to the plethora of views from the government and working groups related to the curriculum since the 1944 Education Act who had ultimately summarised that spirituality had a strong place within education. Thus highlights the chasm between what was espoused and what was done, and embedding this study's rationale to conduct research into children's spirituality in education due to arguments from researchers, such as Hay and Nye (1998) and Wright (2000), that spirituality was often a neglected curriculum area. Faith schools were seen as drivers of spirituality and this was where the link to religion was clear: for example, EPs saw aspects from Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map in daily faith school experiences such as flow within the singing of hymns.

The second research question looked at EP's views on the usefulness of Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map. EPs reflected that the conceptual map supported understanding of young people in a holistic way which supported the view of researchers in the area of spirituality, such as Maslow (1976) and Coles (1990), the need for psychology to incorporate the view of an individual as a whole. The need to capture the holistic view of a person was

also in the guidance from the government on healthcare: The foreword to Bradford's (1995) work was written by John Bowis (who represented the Department of Health at the time) as placing spirituality within a context of "care for the whole child" (p. iii). EPs felt that considering the conceptual map aspects would move their assessments away from more curriculum-based information to gathering information about the person. A key quote which summarised this idea was that "*spirituality is starting from the child"*. EPs also shared that the conceptual map would help to capture the family and cultural community views about special educational needs. This was reminiscent of the original reference of spirituality in the Education Act (1944) of it being at a "community" (p.4) level.

EPs linked the conceptual map as relevant to many functions of their role. It was described that each aspect of the conceptual map could be used in observations of young people. This suggests that the map could be a more flexible tool to use in addition to the verbal tools that have been developed within existing EP research (such as Gersch *et al.,* 2008; Robinson, 2015; Ruddock and Cameron, 2010). This linked to my rationale to include Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map to explore spirituality because it provided clarity to an abstract concept and did not solely rely on verbal accounts of spirituality. This was a decision guided by comments from previous researchers such as Coles (1990) that with regards to spirituality, research could "go only so far…with words" (p.179) and the argument that observation could also be a valuable tool in understanding children's experiences of spirituality (Crompton, 1998). The conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1996) was also deemed as relevant to the work EPs do with those people and systems around the children. EPs described how the conceptual map would act as prompts in discussions and cited examples of how it could work with families and school staff. In addition, it was described how the conceptual map would support reflection during supervision through supporting EPs to think about the here and now, the

focusing and the flow of the supervision process. The area of linking spirituality-based aspects to supervision and consultation was an area not explored within EP practice but the data from this study has suggested it has a place. Albeit research in other UK psychology and counselling domains has raised the need to think about when gathering views of spirituality, as suggested in clinical documents, such as the Birmingham and Solihull NHS Trust (2015), how this was to be included in supervision with some arguing that there needed to be specific training for supervisors (Coyle and Lochner, 2011) so that spirituality could be discussed comfortably in supervision.

EPs raised that they wanted more from Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map: many participants questioned whether some of these concepts were more relevant at different ages such as awe and wonder when young people were discovering a lot of new things. There was also a mention of having age-specific examples for each of the aspects of the map. This identified the next stage of development for the map to make it most useful for EPs who work with a wide range of young people (0 years to 25 years).

EPs also spoke about how more comfortable they felt using the terminology provided by the conceptual map in contrast to the term "spirituality". The aspects provided by the conceptual map were described as "*simple"* and "*useful"* in comparison to spirituality which EPs stated could cause *"shutdown"*, a "*shy away"* or would "*put them off*". It cannot be forgotten that many researchers in this area (e.g. Coles, 1990; Crompton, 1998; Hay and Nye, 1998) also reflected on their own uncomfortableness of using the term when first researching spirituality. In addition, it has to be acknowledged that the inclusion of spirituality in the 1944 Education Act had received debate about why it was included (see Hay and Nye, 1998; Priestley, 1996; Wright, 2000) e.g. was it an ethical stance after World War Two? Was it a way to confuse

education and prevent conflicts between faith and non-faith schools? This debate drew attention to the need to be clear on why the term spirituality was being used in practice, which one EP referred to as "*being transparent"*.

The third research question was focused on investigating whether the EP's thought spirituality linked to any other concepts. A big link was made to mental health: the concepts in the conceptual map reminded some EPs of national well-being initiatives, such as the five ways to well-being (Huppert, 2009). EPs also said that they could use their knowledge of the conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1966) as a framework to investigate poor mental health and to build positive experiences. In addition, many acknowledged the role that spirituality had in support for mental health e.g. the focus on the here and now in acceptance commitment therapy and the links of tuning and flow to the engagement aspect of positive psychology's Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA) model. Therefore, indicating that spirituality had a place within EP's work in mental health (as was the case for other professions, such as psychiatry; Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2013). This was a key finding with relevance to current UK EP practice: the government changed the definition of the SEND category of "Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulties" to "Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs" (The SEND Regulations, 2014), further strengthening the potential role of EPs to contribute to the support for young people's mental health. The second theme in answer to this research question was that spirituality reminded EPs of their work focused on attachment and belonging. This was an interesting finding as Hay and Nye (1998) criticised their own conceptual map for not including a focus on relationships enough yet EPs spoke of the awareness the conceptual map gave to the love a young person received from caregivers and also school. In addition EPs reflected that the questions which were prompted by thinking about spirituality resonated with the work they

did on supporting young people to feel that they belonged in school, e.g. in peer groups, with staff members, and a way to support thinking about belonging and an identity which included the differences between people e.g. language, culture and faiths. This finding highlighted that Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map was a potential framework which could be used to support multi-spirituality discussions e.g. what gives you a sense of here and now? What gives you a sense of tuning; the being at one with something?

Whilst being still a very much "uncharted area" in UK EP practice, the topic was well-engaged with by the nine EPs and the findings demonstrated that spirituality was a concept which had relevance for EP practice alongside the conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1996) offering a potential framework to use across many EP functions.

5.2 Strengths

The evaluation of this study's strengths was supported by completion of the Quality in Qualitative Evaluation Framework (Appendix 3). There were many strengths identified in this research. Firstly, it placed a spotlight on the use and inclusion of spirituality in UK education legislation and highlighted that it was in many relevant documents to UK educational professionals and had been for a long time. It then looked wider to the other professions which could integrate spirituality in their work, e.g. mental health professions, and highlighted the use of the term in psychiatry (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2013) and the wider NHS (Birmingham and Solihull NHS trust, 2015) which held much relevance to the EP profession as mental health had formally become part of an EP's remit since the SEND Regulations' (2014) inclusion of mental health as an area need. The reflection in the introductory chapters on the role of spirituality in key theories enabled almost new discussions about their basis and brought some theories back to their original spirituality-

based endeavours. This was also achieved through the semi-structured interview format with EP's reflecting on some implicit aspects of their knowledge and practice which had spiritual bases. The interview approach with its inclusion of Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map brought to the attention of the small group of EPs interviewed a psychologically informed tool which could support thinking about spirituality. This was important because many researchers within the field of spirituality referred to the difficulty of integrating the many definitions of spirituality and how this had become a barrier to focusing on the term in education (e.g. Watson, 2017). The data and conclusions demonstrated that the tool not only enabled shared discussions, but it was deemed a tool which had many potential uses within a variety of EP's functions and would also help to support to achieve an EP's aims of best practice (Joint Professional Liaison Group, 2020) to capture a holistic understanding of an individual.

5.3 Limitations

The evaluation of this study's limitations was supported by completion of the Quality in Qualitative Evaluation Framework (Appendix 3). The limitations to this study will now be discussed most importantly because as Gorard (2013) argued, it was important to make clear any limitation in research because it protects the opportunity for further research. This was key to this study as there were many further avenues for research to explore the role of spirituality in UK EP work.

First and foremost, it had to be made clear that the voice of the participating EPs was not the voice of the UK EP profession as a whole. The reason this study had to be careful with assuming that the experiences of the real world as communicated by the EPs was how the world was experienced by all UK EPs was due to the way participants were recruited: the thesis relied on participants self-selecting/opting to be recruited. Therefore, there was a bias in

the data set because it captured the views of those who wanted to share their views on spirituality. However, the self-selection did not mean that the data and conclusions did not have relevance to the wider profession: from conversations prior and after data collection the group of participants were a group of EPs who shared a variety of reasons they wanted to participate, and the data showed a scope of EP experience within an area of the UK. Within a qualitative critical realist approach, the focus was less about generalisability as determined through positivist means and being focused on confirmation or refutation (Wynn and Williams, 2012) but more focused on gathering a range of experiences to determine the real world. In addition, often within the health and education professions, working groups have been set up to explore particular issues or interests which have relevance to the profession as a whole. One example was the spirituality group of UK psychiatrists (SPSIG, 2021a). The aim of this working group was to explore the role of spirituality in patient care and it can be seen how such a study as this study could complement and inform discussions held at a working group level. This will be discussed more in the recommendations section. It must also be acknowledged that this thesis could not determine the uniqueness nor similarities to other professional views, e.g. nurses, social workers etc., of children's spirituality and of international studies because the literature remained largely focused on the role of UK EPs.

There was also a limitation with regards to the conceptual map (Hay and Nye, 1996): it cannot be assumed that the conceptual map could be taken forward as it was. In contrast to Hay and Nye's (1998) own criticism towards the map—that it neglected relationships—the EPs in this study were able to link it to their understanding of relationships young people encountered e.g. unconditional love in schools and families. However, EPs were keen to see how this conceptual map would work across the age span of the young people that they work with (0-25 years): Research and theory were yet to establish age-relevant examples of the experiences

of spirituality for all of these ages. Yet this limitation did not mean the conceptual map was unusable: the participants described how the map could be used as prompts to discuss these aspects with the individual and those who knew the individual best to build joint understandings of what these aspects looked like for the individual.

Throughout this study the following two potential limitations have been at the forefront of decisions made to limit their effect: difficulty with defining spirituality and how one can build shared discussions and shared understandings of the term spirituality. This was where Hay and Nye's (1996) work had a key role. It was felt that the conceptual map was the appropriate tool to structure thinking about spirituality and to also structure the interviews when gathering data on the topic. The ability to draw data into themes and have coherence and clarity around them was a way to test that shared discussions had occurred. However, it had to be noted that ultimately the data did have a large focus on Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map and this produced more of a focus on the understanding of this and the application of these sub-concepts to the EP role. The second potential limitation which was focused on during the planning and writing stage was that there was an awareness from previous literature (Lee, 2020) that spirituality had been studied from many disciplines and continued to be. Therefore, it was important that once it was decided on the way that this topic would be studied that the reason to exclude other approaches was explicit and so Denscombe's (2010) structure to the methodology chapter was a way to communicate these decisions.

5.4 Recommendations for further research

To take this research further there were two main areas around the conceptual map which could be explored in relation to EP practice. Firstly, it could be evaluated and developed further to develop a framework which included age-relevant examples of the components.

This could be done through recruiting a local authority in a pilot in which EPs used the conceptual map within casework and when working with schools and to evidence the examples (see Appendix 8 for a template to support this further research). Secondly, educational psychologists may also wish to use the template in Appendix 8 to assist schools with evaluating their practices for spiritual development. The conceptual map could also be adapted as a framework for reflection in supervision (see Appendix 9 for a template to support this further research). This could be evaluated and developed through recruiting supervisors and supervisees to receive training on the aspects of spirituality from Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map and to trial using the tool in supervision. Evaluation of its use in supervision would be through the feedback from supervisor and supervisee in terms of whether they found it a helpful reflective tool and whether it drew attention to aspects of supervision not focused on before which EPs found important to the process.

This thesis started to address the spirituality aspects of theories relevant to EP practice, such as Maslow's (1976) thinking on his theory of hierarchical needs and track the development of thinking about spirituality in the psychoanalytical approach. Further research could analyse the spirituality aspect of other psychological knowledge and interventions relevant to EP practice which participants referred to in this research, such as cognitive behavioural therapies.

It may also be appropriate to raise the position of spirituality adopted within this thesis to the attention of stakeholders involved in the UK EP profession, such as the British Psychological Society's Division of Educational and Child Psychology and the Association of Educational Psychologists. This could be done through sharing the outcomes of this research which

would form the first step in the production of a position statement of spirituality in UK EP practice.

5.5 Implications and recommendations for policy and EP practice

The findings from the present group of EPs could support the development of a working group of EPs looking at spirituality in their practice. This thesis has informed the first steps of this process by providing an initial position on spirituality and aspects to consider in practice, alongside a general message that spirituality has relevance to UK EP practice. Aspects from the suggestions of further research which the working group could aim to address and share widely could be: to produce a position on spirituality with regards to EP practice; to raise awareness of spirituality in relation to educative legislation; and to make explicit spirituality-based aspects to theories and interventions. It may also be appropriate to organise conferences where current research on children's spirituality deemed relevant to UK EP practice was shared.

In addition, the working group may also wish to raise awareness of the role of educational psychology professionals in relation to children's spirituality, potentially at the point of entry to the profession-the Educational Psychology Doctorate training. This would include a focus on the term spirituality as discussed within key UK educative documents, a summary of how children's spirituality has been researched in the UK and the potential role of EPs within these areas (supported with empirical research, such as this thesis).

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to investigate EPs' understanding of spirituality in relation to their work with young people, seek their views on Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map and to explore if there were any links already to spirituality in their practice. Nine educational psychologists within one geographical area of the UK were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The interviews took place through videoconference software and the transcriptions were analysed using thematic analysis. Due to the structure of the interviews using Hay and Nye's (1996) research, the key findings were largely related to the conceptual map of how children experience spirituality. The participants felt there were implicit spirituality aspects of their EP role and knowledge base which the conceptual map made explicit; their thinking of spirituality in their practice questioned the role and positioning of the EP as a scientist-practitioner and ultimately brought to the fore the historical conflict of psychology in relation to science. In terms of practical applicability to their role, they suggested that the conceptual map enabled a holistic understanding by being viewed as child-led and allowing the views of family and cultures on spiritual aspects to be included in assessments, it helped EPs to understand mental health and belonging further by providing a framework to think about such concepts, and it also provided a vocabulary which educational psychologists felt they could use in their work almost favourably instead of the term "spirituality". Finally, the map served as a reflective tool with EPs reflecting on their own spiritualities and feeling that the map would serve a purpose to aid reflection on psychologists' supervision sessions and when working with a client.

6.1 Conclusion

This research demonstrated that a focus on spirituality, when framed by a psychologically informed tool, can support professional dialogues about the concept of children's spirituality with important implications for UK EP practice. It has the potential to be a concept which, when utilised as a framework, supported EP's aims to capture a holistic understanding of young people, be reflective and support well-being. This thesis has also provided the next steps for research in this field and potentially a rationale to form a working group whose aim could be to deliver on such next steps so that the wider EP profession can move forward with thinking about using spirituality-based frameworks for practice.

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8. APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: interview schedule

Questions	**Possible prompts**	**Possible further questions:**
Could you tell me about why you have placed each component where you have?	Tell me more about... Describe it for me... Can you provide an example? How have you established that opinion? What makes you say that? Is there anything else that you would like to add?	
Do the identified components of spirituality match your professional understanding?	Tell me more about... Describe it for me... Can you provide an example? How have you established that opinion? What makes you say that? Is there anything else that you would like to add?	
Could you use it in your work with a young person?	Tell me more about... Describe it for me... Can you provide an example? How have you established that opinion? What makes you say that? Is there anything else that you would like to add?	Does it link to anything you have ever come across? Do you think it could have any other uses?

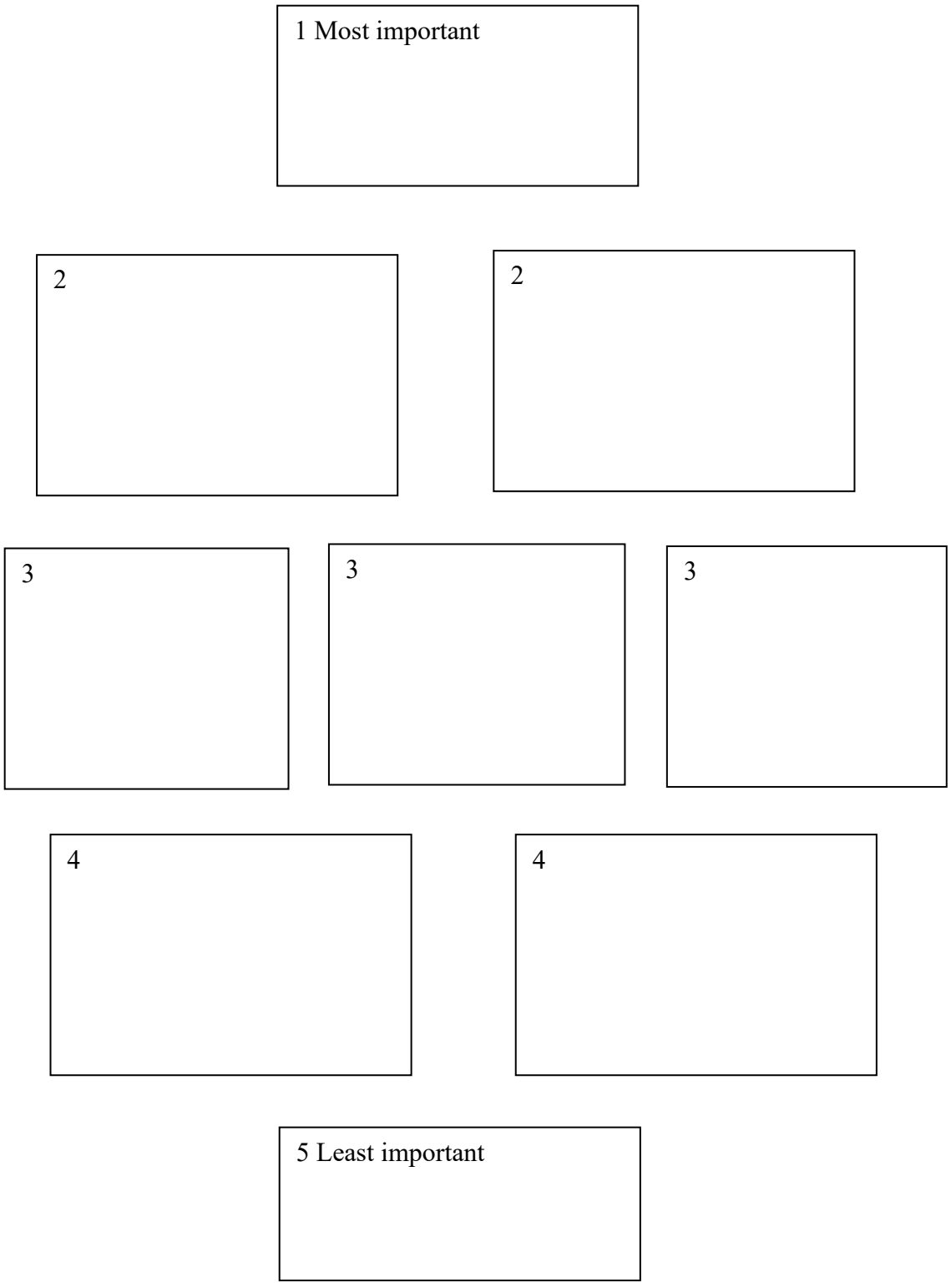
8.2 Appendix 2: diamond rank activity

Instructions:

Hay and Nye (1996) devised nine subconcepts of children's spirituality which will be used here as **a starting point to aid discussion and thinking about spirituality**.

Please read these subconcepts of how children experience spirituality and decide which order you feel they would go in order of importance to your work with young people.

Sub-concept	**Definition/examples derived from Hay and Nye's (1996) research**
Here and now	Being in the present moment. For example, not focusing on the past or the future but the present time instead e.g. When a child notices the grass outside the window and is transfixed by it.
Tuning	Being at one with something or having a heightened aesthetic experience. For example, feeling 'at one' with nature.
Flow	When a person who is doing an activity moves from being attentive to it to being in the flow with it. Skiers, rock climbers and chess players have given subjective reports of experiencing this.
Focusing	Having an insight which is felt physically. Acknowledging that our bodies are sources of knowledge e.g. having a 'felt sense' about a situation.
Awe and wonder	Feeling awe and wonder when we encounter the limits of our knowledge and feel a sense of mystery. For example, when thinking of the size of the universe.
Imagination	Going beyond material reality. For example, seen in children's play, stories and artwork.
Delight and despair	Feeling delight or despair linked to a value or worth e.g. feeling despair due to environmental concerns.
Ultimate goodness	Link to unconditional love. For example: how the child views a parent when they comfort them by providing order against chaos and the child gradually becoming aware of the boundaries/limitations of this to form an understanding of unconditional love.
Meaning-making	A search and discovery of answers to questions such as 'Who am I? Where do I belong? What is my purpose?'


1 Most important
2
2
3
3
3
4
4
5 Least important

8.3 Appendix 3: completed Quality in Qualitative Evaluation Framework (Government Social Research Profession, 2003)

Findings	
How credible are the findings?	The themes had a coherent logic and were able to answer the research questions. The themes were supported with direct quotes from the data. A checklist by Braun and 1992 was used to quality assure the data analysis.
How has knowledge/ understanding been extended by the research?	The aim of this study was situated within research and legislation. There was a reason to focus on the aspect of originality [EP's views on the topic and Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map in relation to their practice]. There were clear next steps for research and implications for EP policy and practice.
How well does the research address its original aims and purpose?	The research questions were referred to throughout the stages of the research e.g. the introductory chapters and in the results and conclusion stages. Each research question was answered. Albeit there was more of a focus on Hay and

	Nye's (1996) conceptual map in the data and thus answers to the research questions.
Scope for drawing wider inference – how well is this explained?	The context for wider application was discussed and the relevant scope for a wider inference was mentioned in relation to a working group context. This was supported with reasons embedded within the research process e.g. how participants were recruited. Next steps for what the working group may aim to research were stated in the conclusion.
How clear is the basis of evaluative appraisal?	The appendices contained a quality checklist of the data analysis method (Braun and Clarke, 2019). The Quality in Qualitative Evaluation Framework (Government Social Research Profession, 2003) has been completed to appraise the thesis as a whole.
Design	
How defensible is the research design?	The study adopted Denscombe's (2010) approach so that the reasons for the adoption of this research design have been communicated within the methodology chapter. There were clear reasons as to why

	this approach was chosen and this was stated within the methodology chapter. There were also reference to the research design within the conclusions drawn demonstrating the link between research design and conclusions from the data obtained using this design.
Sample	
How well defended is the sample design/ target selection of cases/documents?	Inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants was stated. No participants withdrew from the study. Therefore, the data reflected all of the participants who took part in this study. Care was taken about the extent of the conclusions drawn. Views of concepts related to participants, such as saturation, was informed by Braun and Clarke's writings and communicated within the methodology chapter.
Sample composition/case inclusion – how well is the eventual coverage described?	All participants were approached via their local authorities and thus had technology provided by their employer, e.g. email, a

	laptop and internet connection, to be able to participate in this study. In addition, the participants did not need a license to access the software used for the videocalls. A brief description of participants is described in the methodology chapter.
Data collection	
How well was the data collection carried out?	The data was based on audio-recordings which were clear and had no background noise in them. All interviews had the same structure which involved only asking three main questions. This enabled time and space for participants to talk about their thoughts.
Analysis	
How well has the approach to, and formulation of, the analysis been conveyed?	The methodology chapter contained a description of how the data was analysed at each stage of the thematic analysis. The thematic analysis was also subjected to a quality assurance checklist created by Braun and Clarke (2019).
Contexts of data sources- how well are they retained and portrayed?	The data used to support themes were often long quotes to demonstrate the context.

How well has diversity of perspective and content been explored?	The recruitment process wanted to capture a range of qualified EPs. The participants held a range of positions and years of experience. The data was re-read during the 'reviewing themes' phase specifically to look for any data not captured which was in contrast to the themes. The impact of this on the data was stated within the 'reviewing themes' section.
How well has detail, depth and complexity (i.e. richness) of the data been conveyed?	Quotes were used within the results section to present the themes in more detail. Each theme had a thorough write up in the results section. The quality assurance checklist created by Braun and Clarke (2019) was also used to reflect on ensuring that the themes created were not simply descriptions of the data (referred to as domain summaries) but held analytical aspects.
Reporting	
How clear are the links between data, interpretation and conclusions – i.e. how well can the route to any conclusions be seen?	The quality assurance checklist created by Braun and Clarke (2019) was also used to reflect on ensuring the themes created were not simply descriptions of the data (referred

	to as domain summaries) but held analytical aspects. Original data was used within the discussions of each theme.
How clear and coherent is the reporting?	There was a clear structure as summarised in the contents page. Subheadings were used to provide additional information such as an introduction to chapters. Researcher's reflections and quality assurance frameworks were used to reflect and demonstrate transparency on how the study was carried out.
Reflexivity and neutrality	
How clear are the assumptions/theoretical perspectives/values that have shaped the form and output of the evaluation?	The theoretical perspectives were referred to throughout this thesis and this thesis was situated within the theoretical underpinnings of the previous literature it was based on [e.g. Hay and Nye's (1996) conceptual map was based on Hardy's (1966) ontological view of spirituality). These theoretical perspectives also informed the type of thematic analysis chosen.
Ethics	

What evidence is there of attention to ethical issues?	The ethical considerations section in the methodology evidenced ethical considerations were throughout this research process. The researcher also completed researcher's reflections throughout the methodology chapter evidencing attention to ethical considerations.
Auditability	
How adequately has the research process been documented?	All changes to the research, e.g. the impact of Covid-19 on the prevention of holding face-to-face interviews, has been documented within the thesis. The steps of the whole research process were given in an overview at the start of the methodology chapter. The steps within the process of data analysis were explained within the methodology chapter.

8.4 Appendix 4: participant information sheet

Participants wanted for doctoral research

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

I am a year two Trainee Educational Psychologist currently studying at The University of Birmingham. I am looking for 8-10 Educational Psychologists (EPs) to take part in a research project which will form part of my doctorate. The research title is 'What are Educational Psychologists' views on the role of spirituality in their work with young people?'
I would like to recruit qualified EPs.

The participation will involve one online individual face-to-face interview (using MS teams) lasting a maximum of one hour and twenty minutes. **Further information is available on the participant information sheet.**

If you are interested in taking part in this research, please contact me at:

Thank you for taking the time to read this request and I look forward to hearing from any interested parties.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Participant information sheet

Purpose

The concept of spirituality has a significant history in UK education legislation: One of the main purposes for UK statutory education was to contribute to children's spiritual development (Education Act, 1944). The Education Reform Act of 1988 furthered the importance of spirituality due to its requirement that the curriculum taught in schools promoted this development in the pupils and also in society. The most recent Education Act (2011) built on the accountability of spirituality by instructing Chief Inspectors to ensure that they take into account the students' spiritual development when determining the quality of educating provided by a school.

Eleven years ago, UK educational psychology research concluded that children could answer questions relating to their spirituality (Gersch *et al.,* 2008). Gersch *et al.* (2008) concluded that spirituality was a central concept in the assessment of children and argued that educational psychologists should be listening to children's views of their spirituality.

This research would like to seek EP's views about their understanding of spirituality in relation to their work with young people. I would also like to provide a response to Gersch *et al*.'s (2008) research conclusion by investigating which of the components of spirituality EP's feel is most relevant to their practice when working with young people.

Method

This research will use an online individual face-to-face semi-structured interview lasting for a maximum of one hour and twenty minutes (using MS teams). You do not need to have the MS teams application to participate. The invitation to participate will be sent to your email address. The video will not be recorded. It will only be the audio from the interview which will be recorded and this will be done using a dictaphone. At the start of the interview I will ask for your full name, date of birth and address to verify your identity. The audio recording will not start until after this verification. Included in this interview time, there will be ten minutes at the start of the interview spent on explaining the interview process and gaining verbal consent and then the last ten minutes of the interview will be spent on debriefing the participant and answering any further questions that the participant may have.

Each participant will be given a diamond ranking activity via email and asked to rank nine statements. The materials relating to this activity will be given one week in advance of the interview. This is a starter activity for the interview in the hope that it will generate verbal contributions from the participant about the term 'spirituality'. Please note that there is no right or wrong answer to this activity. The interview will then proceed through three main questions asking participants about their thoughts of the nine statements, asking if the statements match their thoughts about the concept of spirituality and how they feel the concept could be relevant to their work with young people.

Each interview will be audio-recorded on a dictaphone and transcribed verbatim. I do not feel that note-taking to record the interview would be sufficient as I would like the raw data to not include any of my summaries or interpretations of what was said. Therefore, if participants do not want it audio-recorded, this will end their involvement in the study

Data handling and storage

Participants' responses will be treated as confidential because I will not refer to participants' names in the research, instead each participant will be given a participant number and a pseudonym. However, anonymity will not be possible due to the face-to-face interview method of data collection.

Your email address, date of birth, address and any other contact details will be deleted from my records as soon as the interview is completed/ or if you decide to withdraw it will be the date of your withdrawal.

The audio recording will be saved onto The University of Birmingham's Birmingham Environment for Academic Research (BEAR) system. Information about this system is available at:https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/it/teams/infrastructure/research/bear/index.aspx

The audio will be transcribed. Once the audio-recording has been transcribed, the audio file will be deleted so that the participant's voice will be removed from the data set. The

transcription will be allocated a participant number and pseudonym and the file will be saved onto BEAR. During the transcription, any references to individuals, organisations or geographical locations (e.g. names of schools, local authorities) will be replaced with pseudonyms. If the information provided is too specific and I feel may identify the individual, organisation or local authority I will not include it in the transcription. However, if during the interview the participant disclosed information which threatens their safety, referred to conducting behaviour which is illegal or which will harm others, it may require me to follow the seek guidance from my research supervisor and follow the necessary safeguarding procedures.

The data analysis will follow a thematic analysis approach by drawing out themes from what participants have said in the interviews. I may use direct quotes from what a participant has said in my write up but the participant will be referred to by a number and a pseudonym.

The write up of this study will be used as part of my research to gain the doctorate of Applied Educational and Child Psychology awarded from The University of Birmingham. I may also write-up the research in one or more of the following: journal article, poster, book and/or conference presentations.

All paper and electronic documents will be retained for 10 years. The paper documents will be shredded using a cross-cut shredder and placed in confidential recycling**.** A 10-year expiry date will be set for the electronic data stored on BEAR.

Risks

Risks	**Action**
Talking about spirituality is a sensitive issue and you may have an emotional response.	To move the discussion away from personal experiences, I have designed my questions to focus discussion on participant's work as an Educational Psychologist. In my debrief, I will check that participants feel comfortable prior to leaving the interview room and I will also signpost them to support agencies.

Withdrawing from the research

Participants have the right to withdraw from this research without having to provide a reason.

Once participants have signed the consent form and an interview date has been arranged, they can withdraw in the following ways:

- Prior to the interview: they can notify me via the email address provided on the consent form.
- In situ (online): they can verbally inform me during the interview that they want to withdraw.

- Retrospectively: they can contact me via the email address provided on the consent form up to 10 calendar days after the interview.

If the right to withdraw is exercised, I will destroy the transcription and any notes via a confidential waste method. The information would not be destroyed if any information of a safeguarding nature had been disclosed during the interview. If this was to be the case, the participant would be informed that this information may have to be passed on as per their local authority safeguarding guidelines.

Responsibility:
This project has been ethically approved by The University of Birmingham Ethical Review Committee.

My university tutor will be supervising this project and their details are provided below:
Name: Dr James Birchwood
Email address:

If you are unhappy about anything during the research experience you are able to contact my researcher supervisor on the above contact details.

References:

Education Act 1944, c.31. Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/7-8/31/contents/enacted (Accessed 1 June 2019)

Education Act 2011, c.21. Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/21/contents/enacted (Accessed 1 June 2019)

Education Reform Act 1988, c.40. Available at:http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/40/pdfs/ukpga_19880040_en.pdf (Accessed 8 May 2019)

Gersch,I. , Dowling,F. , Panagiotaki, G. and Potton, A. (2008)'Listening to children's views of spiritual and metaphysical concepts: A new dimension to educational psychology practice?', *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 24 (3),pp. 225-236.

Mental Health Foundation (2006) *The impact of spirituality on mental health*. Available at: https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/impact-spirituality.pdf (Accessed 10 June 2019)

8.5 Appendix 5: completed Guidelines for reviewers and editors evaluating thematic analysis manuscripts (Braun and Clarke, 2019)

1. Is the use of thematic analysis (TA) explained (even if only briefly)?	Yes
2. Do the authors clearly specify and justify which type of TA they are using?	Yes. Reference to both the original 2006 Braun and Clarke paper is made in addition to subsequent writings on the categorisations of TA.
3. Is the use and justification of the specific type of TA consistent with the research questions and aims.	Yes. In the methodology section the justification was provided.
4. Is there a good 'fit' between the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the research and the TA?	Yes. The justification situated the reasons for thematic analysis from a theoretical and conceptual basis.
5. Is there a good 'fit' between the methods of data collection and the specific type of TA?	Yes. The basis for conducting interviews and how the data was analysed fit together.
6. Is the specified type of TA consistently enacted throughout the paper?	Yes. The inductive and critical realist type of reflexive TA was referred to throughout.
7. Is there evidence of problematic assumptions about TA?	No. The methodology chapter was clear on the type of TA was chosen. No supplementary approaches were used and no concepts from other forms of method/methodology were incorporated such as a focus on line-by-line coding or inter-rater reliability. Clear justification of the reasons for this were stated in the methodology chapter
8. Are any supplementary procedures or methods justified and necessary or could the same results have been achieved simply by using TA more effectively?	Supplementary procedures were not involved.
9. Are the theoretical underpinnings of the use of TA clearly specified?	Yes.
10. Do the researchers strive to own their own perspectives (even if only briefly) e.g. their personal and social standpoint and positioning?	Yes. Justifications and reflection from the researcher were throughout the methodology chapter.
11. Are the analytic procedures used clearly outlined?	Yes in a table and a written account in the methodology section.
12. Is there evidence of conceptual and procedural confusion?	No. The methodology chapter was clear on the type of TA chosen. No supplementary approaches were used and no concepts from

	other forms of method/methodology were incorporated such as a focus on line-by-line coding or inter-rater reliability.
13. Have the authors fully understood their claimed approach to TA?	Yes. There was detail in the methodology chapter of what specific approach to TA was adopted.
14. Is it clear what and where the themes are in the report?	Yes in a thematic map at the end of the methodology chapter and each theme was explained within the results section.
15. Are themes reported domain summaries rather than fully realized themes?	The themes captured the essence of the data. This was done during the "defining themes" stage.
16. Is a non-thematic contextualizing information presented as a theme?	No. The researcher was clear that the research questions were separate to the themes.
17. In applied research, do the reported themes give rise to actionable outcomes?	Yes. The conclusion referred to future research and next steps.
18. Are there conceptual clashes and confusion in the paper?	No
19. Is there weak or unconvincing analysis?	The number of themes matched what Braun and Clarke stated was typical e.g. so there were not too many nor too less themes. There was clarification in the methodology chapter of when the codes changed into themes and what a theme needed to have e.g. a theme had to not overlap with another theme.
20. Do authors make problematic statements about the lack of generalisability of their results and implicitly conceptualize generalisability as statistical generalisability?	No. The research was clearly identified as an exploratory study and not as a case study and so was very careful of not positioning generalisability from a 'case'. The caution around generalisability came from using a self-selecting sample. The findings were based as relevant for a working group context. There was clear clarification of the stance on concepts such as generlisabiity in the methodology chapter.

8.6 Appendix 6: two full transcripts

	Transcript of Participant 4	**Line number**
Researcher:	Could you tell me about why you have placed each component where you have?	1 2
Participant:	Spirituality is something I don't openly think about but looking at the model that you sent over a lot of it resonated with me and things that are embedded in my practice. I think I use mindfulness in CBT, it's a big part of my practice, and there is a big overlap like here and now for example is something and the focusing that resonated with me and they are really big part of CBT and different approaches like Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. Things that we don't think about and something that isn't in my practice is flow which I thought was interesting and awe and wonder I thought was really interesting and it is something we don't inspire enough in our practice. However, we don't want to be a mystical profession, we operate within the realms of what people already know to make our practice more accessible. Important within my approach to my work within a humanistic perspective and that positive regard and ultimate goodness kind of closely related to that kind of idea that everyone is essentially good and have good qualities. Imagination: that's important too and I do sometimes to slip into a narrative based approach especially with young children and topics that are difficult so I draw narrative and play especially in my work with young children. It's kind of a less core component of my work but that might be just me and the approaches of psychology I use and my interpretation of the part of the model. Meaning making especially in relation to who I am and where I belong. I use genograms a lot with children and families to understand the structure but I think you can have a lightbulb moment where children says so these are the people in my life and in my local authority families can get really complicated especially when people move into and out of lives so the meaning making is really important and these are things I hadn't thought about in a framework before. I think what I think is important to my practice is different to what children think is important to them. Most important: ultimate goodness I think our humanistic approach is essential to my practice, that has to be in place I don't think I could be a psychologist without that belief then in position two is meaning making helping children, professionals and parents to understand the situation and add meaning to things that may be confusing and to add a formulation or hypothesis to that to help them understand. Focusing as well, is quite high up there too linking those that sensation and our physical sensations impact our understanding of the situation. Delight and despair, focused on enjoyment rather than despair, but promoting that sense of enjoyment, value and	3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44

	worth. Imagination in there as well: imaginative play and being able to explore things that are not as direct. Having here and now in there as well what's in the present and what can you control in the moment. In position four I had tuning and flow, I think tuning could link to attunement with relationships and nature that aesthetic experience. Flow is something again not part of my practice but I am aware of the benefits of flow in my own life. The last one well it's under the others awe and wonder, due to not wanting to be that mystical person there shouldn't be a sense of mystic around our practice. I think it's a sense of mystery that kind of are there something that I don't know or that we don't know and we can't make sense of there are two ways no one knows the answers which kind of sometimes is the reality but you are always aware of tuning that understanding for a hypothesis even if it is wrong and I work by testing hypothesis. This is my best guess. Or the other way of thinking I know and you don't know, because I know things that you don't know and that is the expert role. I have an understanding that you don't have and that is not how I practice as a psychologist and you aim to support with knowledge or understanding gaps. This is how they are positioned in the media and it is important to challenge that rhetoric. I was thinking that imagination would be higher (from a children's view) and here and now and focusing would be much lower because you have to be quite conscious of those things and it takes practice to become of those aspects but things like flow would be higher especially around flow in computer games and there's a lot of research around flow and gaming isn't there. The sense of flow whether colouring or computer games or hobbies and often flow gets overlooked. Awe and wonder definitely would be a lot higher up. That sense of always learning new things and making new discoveries. I put imagination in the middle but that could be higher for a child too. I think they are the mains things that would be higher that I scored quite low.	45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77
Researcher:	Do you think it could have any other uses?	78
Participant:	I think certainly in terms of discussion with other psychologists in supervision. There are processes that go on in supervision. People often talk about how supervision feels and we often talk about the models of supervision which focus on the discourse and the things that you would talk about and understanding things from different perspectives but actually the feeling I wonder if you map on and use it to reflect on supervision and to why they feel a certain way. It's difficult to pull that apart and be more specific for example the here and now such as where are we and the focusing on how are you feeling about that let's focus on that and I do think you enter into a flow a back and forth and it definitely maps on. I think just looking at this I find it interesting how the concept of spirituality described like this does permeate practice which is seemingly non-spiritual like CBT is a gold standard, a medical	79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92

	intervention, but actually there are influences of spirituality and I guess a sort of Western science sort of Eastern science comes out of spirituality versus science.	93 94 95
Researcher:	Do the identified components of spirituality match your professional understanding?	96 97
Participant:	I was quite surprised by the framework. Spirituality is something that I do not think about as a framework for professional practice. I thought that questions would have been around I think there were elements of being in the moment but having not read around spirituality I thought that they would be about meditation mindfulness and being connected to a wider elements like religion for example I think that it is in there but the way the model describes it is much more accessible and makes ethereal nature of spirituality more tangible as you can break it down into areas which can help you to reflect more clearer on what it is. I was surprised about how accessible it was especially as I wouldn't describe myself as openly spiritually. I think I look for connection to nature so that idea for tuning and that is one way I conceptualise my own spirituality but yeah I wouldn't have described it in that way without the framework so it helps you to funnel down key concepts. I am conscious I have focused on my own spirituality from a professional perspective and I haven't really thought about how it could be present in the young people we work with. I think that is an area of exploration for myself. I wondered about models of child development and applying some of these concepts I wasn't sure how to apply in terms of ages and stages of development and neurodiversity how they would engage in some of these elements so things like imagination and imaginative play I wondered how appropriate that would be for some children. Some children like to focus on what they know, the peripherals of their experience and being open to new experiences can be a real challenge for some and that is there safety blanket. For young children as well some prerequisite skill for example focusing when trying to go over it in CBT how does your body feel now and breaking that apart, like a body scan like a mindfulness activity can be challenging for children and adults. Mapping some of these ideas onto Piaget's stages of development thinking about when children working at a less abstract level these ideas might be too abstract for them so I am not sure how appropriate they would be to begin to apply. We could begin to think about some of these concepts and I can see how they would be really useful for example meaning making and something to work towards. I think how in terms of the way it is presented it reminds me of the resiliency you need to be fulfilled to support development or at as protective factors. That crude checklist approach okay so they haven't got enough flow experiences in their life, let's try to provide some flow or they are not in the here and now enough and engaging in imagination too much do we need to ground them and bring them back to the here	98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141

	and now more. My gut instinct is that that isn't what spirituality and that this isn't what the purpose of this is. To make something more spiritual in essence sounds contradictory as it sounds like something that cannot be increased. But I guess it comes back to a sense of what it is, I guess there's a lot of debate about the definition too and I guess a lot of that links to communities and linking about school communities and families and thinking about promoting some of these things across a wider scale rather than within an individual level. This would overcome some of the scale based approaches because a lot of these things are bigger than the individual and for children they need to be given the opportunity to develop some of these skills and they are not things that are kind of innate the skills you need to build for organisations to think about to embed / some of the religious schools I go to you can see how these things are embedded thinking about um the rituals involved in prayer, they are very here and now togetherness, a lot of tuning being at one with the community a wider sense of connection to something ethereal something divine. Thinking about how they are all connected to that and flow in singing and hymns all kind of flow activities and that are all part of the day to. And delight and despair is explored, not just the delight side. That ultimate goodness is the main thing especially in regards to Christianity the idea that you eventually you will go to heaven and everything will be okay. I can see that it is a part of those schools. An organisational approach and this is the tool for reflecting for how sterile education has become over recent years. But then at the same time that's the practise that you see that are spiritual in schools aren't secular they are linked to a religion but we are more of a secular society so having spirituality linked to religion probably isn't appropriate for everyone anymore. I guess that's the question, how can you improve that? I know some schools have an ethos, an acronym and maybe that's their way of trying to build some of those kind of essential beliefs. That tuning…that being one at a school…we are a community and we are working towards a common goal but it is rare that those values are embedded within a school outside of a poster. Should it be measured? I don't know. What's the implications if someone isn't spiritual is that a bad thing a good thing. I guess everyone has the same amount it is just expressed differently. It feels really uncomfortable to measure it, my layman's opinion I guess. It is really difficult because it sits within that context of a wider society e.g. looking at that school then how is the DFE spiritual? The wider society spiritual and where does that come from? I guess in contrast to that-the church schools have organisational stuff there and inspected like the diocese for the catholic schools and how they align. There is a drive for spirituality there. I think whereas the DfE don't have any sort of drive, do they? There are influences but it is not across the board. I	142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189

	guess spirituality it is a localised thing, is it? There is the community level rather than a national level-as DfE operates. If I was to put this into a framework I feel it feels better at an organisation mesosystem with schools and supporting them to be more spiritual if there's a benefit to that and that's the other thing I don't know. I think some of the ideas in the model could be promoted and would have a benefit e.g. mindfulness has a really good evidence base for promoting well-being emotional regulation but how do the other elements of that model influence the school community and the individuals within that and to know more about this. It is certainly an interesting concept and it adds a layer to practice to think about that model and how it could be integrated.	190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201

	Transcript of Participant 6	**Line number**
Researcher: Participant:	Thinking about the conceptual map, could you tell me about why you have placed each component where you have? It was quite fascinating actually. Sometimes it was easy for me to say that's not a priority but the most important for me was unconditional love. I think it goes back to Maslow's hierarchy you identify what is your core belief that we all need to be connected to something or someone and that unconditional love gives children confidence to transition to who they want to be because they have the basis of trust and love. Second one was being in the present moment: I think that's for me that's how I live my life so that was an easy one for me because that's how I try to view me and my practice and delight and despair-having the ability to feel those things comes out of the other two. The search of discovery and feeling awe and wonder as my middle three then down to four when being in flow and tuning having an insight which is felt physically. I felt they were all part of the higher ones I had put so least important was being at one with something not that that isn't important it just didn't feel as important as the others. We can't generate the bond of unconditional love as an EP so in that respect it is the furthest away from what we do but we are the ones trying to build that bond with that key figure in school. Also in a multi-agency way we are the ones supporting alongside to help parents and carers and key significant people in young people's life to demonstrate how to build that bond. Unless that young person feels love, feels connected, feels that sense of belonging then they cannot achieve like Maslow's hierarchy you cannot achieve. Our role is to support people along that journey to demonstrate show and young people to accept and understand and trust all those love and belonging they are shown, I think. That's what I think. Being in the present moment and feeling	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

	delight and despair. I suppose again if we link it to the EP we are helping young people despite their past to function in the present so they achieve and be who they want to be and we are ninety nine per cent of the time in the present with the young person or that carer or that member of staff they are feeling the crisis the problem the difficulty in the moment. To be able to feel the extreme of emotions and linking it to the sense of personal value, personal worth. If you haven't got the sense of worth for yourself you won't enlist it onto anything else.	32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40
Researcher:	Did it link to anything you have ever come across?	41
Participant:	A lot of the statements linked me to work I had done a lot on attachment but looking at it now it is any type of EP role now I have been talking to you but initially it went down social, emotional, attachment related practice that we do maybe because we do a lot of it that's a lot of our work but maybe putting unconditional love at the top maybe that skewed my view. It relates to a young person: a young person has to feel connected to their teacher to academically achieve and connected to their peers. To develop social skills, a person with physical needs has to sense a belonging to feel they can achieve in that setting.	42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52
Researcher:	Could you use it in your work with a young person?	53
Participant:	It reminds me a lot of the resilience wheel we do looking at how to build a young person's resilience looking at their nature the environment and social ways and this could be a way of unpicking a young person's particular needs using it as a consultation framework. What element does he or she find difficult? Or as a staff group what do you feel you need to be focused on as a school? Also as a way of training around this area. Training to schools on how to support spirituality and the areas of and how to develop a young person's understanding of themselves of their world their centre of who they are in relation to lots of different things how to develop their beliefs. I think. Maybe spirituality to me has a religious link as well but that is because of my beliefs and it wouldn't necessarily be that for another EP so I read some of these statements in light of my own beliefs which is my own spirituality but it doesn't actually say that there is not a religion connotation to any of them if you don't feel that there is. This surprised me as when I first got the title I thought more religious but spirituality is a non-biased way to talk about what you feel spirituality is without having to have your own preconceptions and biases and judgments. I think there could be another element to it I think it is a very PSHE topic isn't it this framework looking at who a young person is. I like that "where do I belong? Who am I? What is my purpose?" and it's those questions that we need to make sure we provide young people with a load of information and make sure people do now skew material put to a young person	54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79

	to have a complete search for answers for materials to do with spirituality and opportunities to ask answers without preconceptions and be open to answer questions and leave your own spirituality to one side. I think we need to help young people to develop their own spirituality without any media biases or professional bias coming in. Young people are on social media, Instagram posts and Facebook posts, they are not streams of information that are not factual they are provided for by people who have their own understanding what the stories are and it is really tricky as an adult to shift through your own understanding and find an element of truth for young people growing up in that taking on board messages and facts as they are presented and not feeling like they need to question that. Just because you are given a statistic or a headline or told this that religion…that religion… non religions… science… doesn't mean you accept it, ask the questions: that's where the search for discovery is and what your truth is and that's spirituality where you fit who you are. In our work as EPs that kind of comes through a lot, we do a lot of personal construct psychology we are trained to be able to recognise what our constructs are to put to one side and we see and observe as much as we can and when consulting with teachers and how they are presenting information can be through their lens their construct. Doing a PSHE lesson talking about social situations it is through their lens. I am not sure we are—when teachers—very good at checking out, genuine supervision, to keep a check on how messages are being put across. It's a structured enough tool with enough wiggle room in it to lead any discussion because again what I understand of feeling delight and despair means something else to something else but that is what a good framework should be, it shouldn't be dictated to, it should allow discussion and change in perspective. It is probably also a framework to use with young people as meta-cognition to think about their own thoughts would be a lovely tool. Again that's consultation. We all carry our own spirituality around with us and inadvertently it affects all of our practice, how we view, so I don't think you can separate it in many respects EP practice and spirituality it is combined in who we are as a professional. But I think something like this brings it out in the forum and makes it a tool to talk about we talk a lot about our own history things that affect our practice our school experience our family life but I don't think spirituality is highlighted to talk about and it has been a nice thing to talk about it. Spirituality is a really positive thing for me and I wonder those people who don't feel that whether this framework is something they want to engage with and whether the spirituality term would put them off and what the term conjures up.	80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127

8.7 Appendix 7: extract from a transcript

It reminded me of personal construct		31
psychology-that sort of-because all of the	link to PCP meaning	32
themes I think are about the child's constructs.		33
What is life all about? They are massive		34
questions, existential questions. They are things		35
–if you look at developmental psychology these	developmental	36
are themes that young people do and have to		37
explore. But I don't think when they are in		38
education that they actually focus on their		39
ideas on why they exist and is there a higher	restrictive factor: education	40
power. I did read one of the articles you		41

8.8 Appendix 8: potential questions relevant to EP casework

Sub-concept	Definition/examples derived from Hay and Nye's (1996) research	Example questions relevant to casework:
Here and now	Being in the present moment. For example, not focusing on the past or the future but the present time instead e.g. When a child notices the grass outside the window and is transfixed by it.	When is the young person in the moment?
Tuning	Being at one with something or having a heightened aesthetic experience. For example, feeling "at one" with nature.	Does the young person feel "at one" with anything?
Flow	When a person who is doing an activity moves from being attentive to it to being in the flow with it. Skiers, rock climbers and chess players have given subjective reports of experiencing this.	When is the young person in "flow"?
Focusing	Having an insight which is felt physically. Acknowledging that our bodies are sources of knowledge e.g. having a "felt sense" about a situation.	Does the young person have any "felt senses"?
Awe and wonder	Feeling awe and wonder when we encounter the limits of our knowledge and feel a sense of mystery. For example, when thinking of the size of the universe.	What makes the young person experience awe and wonder?
Imagination	Going beyond material reality. For example, seen in children's play, stories and artwork.	When does the young person go into their imagination?
Delight and despair	Feeling delight or despair linked to a value or worth e.g. feeling despair due to environmental concerns.	What feelings of delight and despair does the young person have?
Ultimate goodness	Link to unconditional love. For example: how the child views a parent when they comfort them by providing order against chaos and the child gradually becoming aware of the boundaries/limitations of this to form an understanding of unconditional love.	Who represents ultimate goodness for the young person?
Meaning-making	A search and discovery of answers to questions such as "Who am I? Where do I belong? What is my purpose?"	What meanings does the young person hold about their life?

8.9 Appendix 9: potential questions relevant to supervision

Sub-concept	Definition/examples derived from Hay and Nye's (1996) research	Example questions relevant to supervision
Here and now	Being in the present moment. For example, not focusing on the past or the future but the present time instead e.g. When a child notices the grass outside the window and is transfixed by it.	On casework: Do you have any reflections on your clients being in the moment which you want to bring to supervision? On supervision: Are there any aspects of being in the moment you want to reflect on?
Tuning	Being at one with something or having a heightened aesthetic experience. For example, feeling "at one" with nature.	On casework: Do you have any reflections on your clients' feelings "at one" with something which you want to bring to supervision? On supervision: Are there any aspects of feelings "at one" with something you want to reflect on?
Flow	When a person who is doing an activity moves from being attentive to it to being in the flow with it. Skiers, rock climbers and chess players have given subjective reports of experiencing this.	On casework: Do you have any reflections on your clients' flow in activities which you want to bring to supervision? On supervision: Are there any aspects of feeling in flow you want to reflect on?
Focusing	Having an insight which is felt physically. Acknowledging that our bodies are sources of knowledge e.g. having a "felt sense" about a situation.	On casework: Do you have any reflections on your clients' feelings of felt senses which you want to bring to supervision? On supervision: Are there any aspects of feeling a felt sense you want to reflect on?
Awe and wonder	Feeling awe and wonder when we encounter the limits of our knowledge and feel a sense of mystery. For example, when	On casework: Do you have any reflections on your clients' experiences of awe and wonder which you want to bring to supervision?

	thinking of the size of the universe.	On supervision: Are there any aspects of experiencing awe and wonder you want to reflect on?
Imagination	Going beyond material reality. For example, seen in children's play, stories and artwork.	On casework: Do you have any reflections on your clients' entering into their imagination which you want to bring to supervision? On supervision: Are there any aspects of entering into your imagination you want to reflect on?
Delight and despair	Feeling delight or despair linked to a value or worth e.g. feeling despair due to environmental concerns.	On casework: Do you have any reflections on your clients' feelings of delight and despair which you want to bring to supervision? On supervision: Are there any aspects of feeling delight and despair you want to reflect on?
Ultimate goodness	Link to unconditional love. For example: how the child views a parent when they comfort them by providing order against chaos and the child gradually becoming aware of the boundaries/limitations of this to form an understanding of unconditional love.	On casework: Do you have any reflections on who represents ultimate goodness for your clients which you want to bring to supervision? On supervision: Are there any aspects of who represents ultimate goodness you want to reflect on?
Meaning-making	A search and discovery of answers to questions such as "Who am I? Where do I belong? What is my purpose?"	On casework: Do you have any reflections on the meanings your clients' hold about their lives which you want to bring to supervision? On supervision: Are there any aspects on the meanings you hold you want to reflect on?