

Volume One

**EMOTIONAL WELLBEING: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE 'ON ROAD'**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

Qualitative literature exploring the mental and emotional wellbeing of children and young people (CYP) in gangs (also referred to by the UK slang term 'on road') is sparse, despite current literature suggesting detrimental impacts of gang involvement upon the mental health of members. This research explores the lived experiences of CYP 'on road,' including how CYP describe the impact of these experiences on their emotional wellbeing, and how CYP describe coping and support mechanisms in relation to their wellbeing. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to analyse semi-structured interview data from three male CYP who were actively involved in or had previous involvement with life 'on road.' Findings suggest a short-term fulfilment of the psychological needs of participants comes at the cost of detrimental and potentially long-lasting negative consequences to their emotional wellbeing and life outcomes which may be challenging for others to support. This research offers a unique contribution to current literature. Insight into difficulties recruiting participants from this population are explored, with implications for Educational Psychology practice also discussed.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACEs:	Adverse Childhood Experiences
ADHD:	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
APPG:	All-Party Parliamentary Group
BAME:	Black, Asian and minority ethnic
BPS:	British Psychological Society
CBT:	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
CSJ:	Centre for Social Justice
CYP:	Children and young people
DfE:	Department for Education
DHSC:	Department of Health and Social Care
EP:	Educational Psychologist
FFT:	Functional Family Therapy
GCSE:	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HM:	Her Majesty
IPA:	Interpretative Phenomological Analysis
MAC UK:	Music and Change United Kingdom
MST:	Multisystemic Therapy
NEET:	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
PRU:	Pupil Referral Unit
PTSD:	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
UNCRC:	United nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
YJB:	Youth Justice Board
YOT:	Youth Offending Team
WHO:	World Health Organisation

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

The introduction chapter will focus on the key aspects of this thesis. First, gangs will be introduced, with a focus on definition, prevalence, and the current context of UK gang operation. The other key element of this thesis is mental health; similarly, information regarding the mental health of CYP will then be introduced.

## 1.2 Overview of gangs

### 1.2.1 Terminology

Harris et al. (2011) report that gang members can have differing views on what they perceive a gang to be, with some individuals experiencing collective offending within the context of cohesive friendships, and others describing gangs as competitive and hierarchical structures. These findings are synonymous with other literature suggesting gangs to be fluid in structure, stemming from ordinary friendships, and having a strong identity (Aldridge and Medina, 2007; Harris et al. 2011; Mares, 2001; Marshall et al. 2005; Young et al. 2007).

During initial scoping discussions for the present research, consultation with key workers supporting CYP involved in street gangs heeded caution in use of the term 'gang,' suggesting to avoid its use completely. Key workers felt that its use could potentially jeopardise the researcher's ability to build rapport with participants, and

possibly act as a barrier to their engagement with the research completely. The decision was therefore taken not to use the term 'gang' with participants, instead using the UK slang term 'on road' as a less abrasive term. Joseph and Gunter (2011) conceptualise 'on road' as a reference to street culture as seen in public, with Hallsworth and Silverstone (2009) emphasising the threat of violence associated with the term 'on road', a space where participants emphasised the the threat of violence, and an obligation to ascertain a certain mastery of violence in order to survive and ward off threats.

Hallsworth and Silverstone (2009) carried out research which focussed on a British perspective of guns, crime, and social order; participants used the term 'on road' often to describe volatile and violent street culture where individuals have made a commitment to make money illicitly. Some participants labelled this as a chosen way of life, or the outcome of exclusion from mainstream society, where being 'on road' facilitated a sense of freedom, authority, and empowerment which could allow them to overcome limits of a rule based and hostile society. One could also end up 'on road' due to high levels of unemployment, underemployment, and living in socioeconomically poor environments (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009). Whilst life 'on road' can be navigated in groups or 'gangs', this is not always the case. As such it should be noted that the term 'on road' is distinct from the term 'gang' and is not intended to be used in the current research as an alternative like for like term to describe a 'gang'. More so, the term 'on road' in the current research is intended to refer to individuals who have experienced navigating life 'on road' as part of a group, as opposed to just individually; it was hoped that the use of this terminology would support rapport building with participants during recruitment and data collection.

Harris et al. (2011) further support the avoidance of using the term 'gang' and advise caution to practitioners labelling individuals as gang members. Many participants in their study resisted the label, resulting in several participants refusing to proceed with the study until this label rejection was accepted by the researchers. In this thesis, both terms are used interchangeably, as the literature reviewed uses both terms. However, when interacting with participants, the term 'on road' was used.

The gang definition used in this research will be that proposed by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ, Pickles, 2009, p.21) which conceptualises street gangs as:

*“a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of CYP who: (1) see themselves, and are seen by others, as a discernible group; and (2) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence. May also have any or all of the following features: (3) identify or lay claim to territory; (4) have some form of identifying structural feature; and (5) are in conflict with other similar gangs.”*

This definition was devised by the CSJ working group with the intent to be applied universally after having assessed all various gang definitions used in the UK and USA (Pickles, 2009). This definition was also considered for use with the current study as it was utilised by the Public Health England briefing 'Mental health needs of gang-affiliated CYP' (Hughes, Hardcastle, and Perkins, 2015).

### **1.2.2 Prevalence**

The Children's Commissioner (Longfield, 2019) reports that 27,000 CYP people in the UK between the ages of 10-17 years are members of a street gang. Of this number however, only 6,560 CYP were known to children's services and Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). The number of CYP involved in gangs may be hard to accurately ascertain, as Andell (2019a) states, the term 'gang' is often over-used to describe many groups of CYP in the UK that engage in relatively harmless misbehaviour.

### **1.2.3 County lines**

There has been a shift noted in the role of street gangs in England. Andell (2019a) highlights the significant change in the distribution of class A drugs such as heroin and crack in the UK involving English gangs. This change in local distribution mechanisms has been termed 'county lines', which are defined by the Home Office (2018, p.1) as:

*“gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons”*

County lines is a growing national issue, with over 2000 separate mobile phone lines (in use for county lines purposes) reported in 2019 compared to 700-1000 estimated lines in 2017, and an annual turnover upwards of £0.5 billion (Ministry of Justice,



2019). Whittaker et al. (2018) report how current London gangs have moved towards a more professional business approach aimed at maximising financial gain. As a result, gangs avoid visible displays of membership to avoid attracting police attention, value territory as a marketplace to be maintained, and focus on maximising financial gain by forming coalitions with other gangs to control drug markets UK-wide through county line operations.

### **1.2.3.1 County lines child exploitation**

Victims exploited by gangs for county line operations are often CYP, commonly males aged 15 to 17 years, though CYP as young as 11 years of age have been reported as being exploited (Ministry of Justice, 2019). The Home Office (2018) publication 'Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County lines guidance' states how county lines are typified by a form of power imbalance in favour of those who are perpetrating the exploitation, and this can be due to a number of factors including age, gender, cognitive ability, status, physical strength, and access to economic and other resources. An exchange is also common in county lines exploitation as a method of control, where the victim is offered or promised something they want or need such as money, clothes, or drugs to create a debt bondage. Gangs may also offer victims intangible rewards such as protection, status, or perceived friendship and affection. An exchange can also be the prevention of a negative incident occurring such as the victim engaging in county lines to stop threat or harm to his or her family (Home Office, 2018).

Gangs are known to target vulnerable CYP for exploitation, including those who are in care, have been excluded from school and attend Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), have physical or learning disabilities, are economically vulnerable, lack a safe and stable home environment, are socially isolated, have prior experience of neglect and abuse, and have mental health and substance misuse issues (Home Office, 2018). Further push and pull factors associated with gang involvement will now be explored in more detail.

#### **1.2.4 Push and pull factors**

Macfarlane (2019) notes how becoming associated with gangs can carry an increased risk of experiencing danger, violence, and isolation from family life. It is therefore interesting to explore the many push and pull factors that impact on CYP's involvement in gangs.

##### ***1.2.4.1 Sense of belonging***

Pickles (2009) highlights how family breakdown, and fatherlessness in particular, is a key risk factor in CYP gravitating towards gang culture. This can foster a sense of inadequacy, rejection, and anger in CYP growing up in fatherless households (Pickles, 2009).

Maslow et al. (1970) proposed an ecological framework to understand the needs of individuals entitled the 'Hierarchy of needs.' Visualised in the form of a pyramid, the theory suggests that basic needs such as shelter, food, and water, along with

emotional and physical safety, love and belonging, and esteem must first be met in order for individuals to achieve self-actualisation. Several authors have noted that gang membership can meet some of these needs. Harris et al. (2011) note a need for connectedness as a significant psychological factor associated with gang involvement. Gangs are described in this context as the alternative family who offer CYP who are isolated and lack strong social and family relationships a source of support and sense of belonging. In this report two teenage males from Lewisham in London felt that family breakdown “messes children up” and can make them more likely to behave violently and join gangs (Pickles, 2009, p.95). McDaniel (2012) found familial factors to be one of the strongest predictors of gang involvement and delinquency, including violence at home, parental alcohol and drug abuse, and parental criminality.

Peer rejection for CYP can also have a major impact in adolescence, a time where great value is placed on the approval of peers (Hughes et al. 2015). Social exclusion can have a detrimental impact on CYP’s mental health and has been linked to anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, and social withdrawal (Platt et al. 2013). Twenge et al. (2001) also found the links between social exclusion and aggressive behaviour, where CYP who perceive themselves to be excluded from society tend to show more disregard for rules and facilitate aggressive behaviour. Hughes et al. (2015) report how social exclusion may also encourage CYP to seek social support from gangs.

#### ***1.2.4.2 Low self-esteem***

Alleyne and Wood (2010) describe the dynamic link between gang membership and self-esteem. CYP who demonstrate low self-esteem are more likely to look towards

gangs to increase their sense of self-worth compared to peers with higher levels of self-esteem and confidence. Self-esteem is considered an important factor in determining whether a young person joins a gang, engages as a gang member, and decides to leave the gang (Dukes et al. 1997).

#### ***1.2.4.3 Protection***

Melde et al. (2012) found that protection from the threat of violent victimization was a big motivating factor for CYP joining gangs. Low-socioeconomic communities can harbour an increased sense of fear and risk of exposure to crime and anti-social behaviour, where criminality can serve as a means of protection from victimisation (Harris et al, 2011; Jacobs, 2010; Ojo, 2007). Communities can also live in fear of reprisals and serious repercussions for speaking out against gangs in the community, who appear to enforce the “law” in these communities (Pickles, 2009).

Thus, anxiety and fear over future victimisation can draw vulnerable CYP to gangs for protection and can prevent those already involved in gangs from leaving (Boden, 2019; Hughes et al. 2012).

#### ***1.2.4.4 Status and respect***

Harris et al. (2011) also noted status and respect as an important psychological need that gangs were able to fulfil, with gang affiliation leading to increased levels of respect by peers.

#### **1.2.4.5 Financial gain**

Harris et al. (2011) found the need and desire to make money as central to the experience of gang members in their study. Gangs were seen as a means of facilitating survival for participants. This was also linked to a sense of desperation and hopelessness about the future associated with living on the fringes of society. Gangs also helped participants to adopt a business mindset and so view themselves positively as entrepreneurs, often feeling vocational status and competence.

Harris et al. (2011) also found however that as gang affiliation can be seen as a means of making easy and quick money, this was not always linked to social exclusion but a reflection of greed, impatience, and reluctance to engage in legitimate work.

#### **1.2.4.6 School exclusion**

The Timpson review of school exclusion (DfE, 2019) highlights the many negative life outcomes of excluded CYP, including lower GCSE pass rates, becoming NEET, and being at higher risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of crime. The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG, 2019) suggest a link between school exclusion and increased youth violence, including an increase in knife crime. CYP excluded from mainstream schools were also considered at high risk of being groomed and exploited by criminal gangs.

#### **1.2.4.7 Ethnicity**

A recent report by the Ministry of Justice (2020) report the racial disparity currently present within the criminal justice system in the UK. The report highlights the overrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals within the criminal justice system. Statistics on race and the criminal justice system provided by the Ministry of Justice (2018) show how the proportion of stop and searches by police has increased for all minority ethnic groups since 2014/15. The report also highlights a greater number of ethnic minority CYP in prison, with 40% of prisoners aged under 18 being black or mixed ethnicity. Overall, a higher proportion of minority ethnic CYP were remanded in custody, had higher custody rates, and received longer custodial sentences compared to white defendants.

Ministry of Justice (2020) highlights the negative connotations associated with the term 'gang,' and notes how careless use of the term 'gang' without actual evidence can disproportionality affect BAME individuals. The Youth Justice Board (YJB, 2007) also note how indiscriminate use of the term 'gang' can serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy, with it feasible that the term could reinforce and heighten an existing problem. It is thus an important consideration for practitioners working with at risk CYP, as a key element of gang culture is identification with the gang, and so practitioners should seek to avoid reinforcing this dynamic (Pickles, 2009).

## **1.3 Overview of mental health needs of CYP**

### **1.3.1 Terminology**

During initial scoping of the current research, consultation with key workers who support CYP involved in street gangs suggested that 'mental health' was too abrasive a term to use with participants. Key workers felt that the use of the term 'mental health' could potentially hinder rapport building between participants and the researcher, and even completely jeopardise any participant engagement with the study. As a result of these consultations, the decision was taken to use the term 'emotional wellbeing' with participants of the current research.

The interchangeable use of the terms 'mental health' and 'emotional wellbeing' have been explored in previous research. Pavis et al. (1996) found that lay people in Scotland were more comfortable with the term 'emotional wellbeing' than 'mental health,' as they linked the latter to mental illness. More recently, organisations such as Cardiomyopathy UK (2017) interchangeably use the terms 'emotional wellbeing' and 'mental health,' stating that service users, along with their friends, families, and carers stated a preference in using the term 'emotional wellbeing' to describe mental health.

The current research will use the term 'mental health' as is reflected in the current literature pertaining to the mental health needs of CYP in gangs. However, when interacting with participants, the term 'emotional wellbeing' was used to refer to and describe their mental health.

### **1.3.2 Mental health as a continuum: links between wellbeing and mental health difficulties**

Emotional wellbeing can be conceptualised as the presence of life satisfaction and positive affect with an absence of negative affect (Diener, 1984; Diener et al. 1999). Keyes (2005, 2007) states wellbeing as an important element of mental health. Franken et al. (2018) also highlights the importance placed on wellbeing within the mental health definition proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2005) which is:

*“A state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”*

Regan et al. (2016) state how the term ‘emotional wellbeing’ is sometimes used interchangeably with ‘mental wellbeing,’ particularly in relation to CYP. The Children’s Commissioner’s review on the subjective wellbeing of CYP with mental health needs in England (Apland et al. 2017) conceptualise mental health as being on a continuum, with an individual’s mental health being recognised as constantly evolving, dynamic, and influenced by a range of environmental, familial, congenital, and health related factors. There is a growing number of research studies demonstrating how psychopathology and wellbeing are two related dimensions of mental health (Franken et al. 2018). For instance, research suggests that wellbeing can reduce the risk of future incidence of psychopathology (Schotanus-Dijkstra et al. 2016; Trompetter et al.



2017), with individuals demonstrating lower levels of wellbeing being 7 times more likely to be depressed a decade later (Wood and Joseph, 2010).

### **1.3.3 The concept of mental health and wellbeing: A shift away from positivism**

The World Health Organisation (2001, p.98) declared the stigma and discrimination towards individuals suffering from mental health difficulties as the “single most important barrier” to overcome in mental health interventions. The extensive use of biomedical models in educating the public on mental illness (Corrigan, 2018; Foster, 2017) has caused the unintended effect of promoting categorical beliefs of distance amongst the public and facilitating emotions of pity and fear. Mental health related stigma is argued to be a multi-dimensional concept including the co-occurrence of status loss, negative affect, social distancing, discrimination and prejudice (Gronholm et al. 2017; Link and Phelan, 2001; Pescosolido and Martin, 2015). Walsh and Foster (2021) thus contend a serious need for new mental health interventions to be rooted in the ways in which the public make sense of mental health.

McCann (2016) states how biomedical models of mental health which are rooted in positivism have negatively influenced how mental health difficulties are experienced, viewed, and depicted within society, and argues the need for current diagnostic systems rooted heavily in positivism to be aware of the social constructionist element in diagnosing mental health difficulties. The social constructionist view of mental health focusses on learning the ways in which individuals create their world in relation to others (Sampson, 1993, McNamee and Gergen, 1992; Gergen, 1994). Social constructionism shifts the focus more towards the external world instead of focusing

on an internal deficit within the individual (McNamee and Gergen, 1992). It can also be argued that mental health difficulties are social constructs that have been formed through historical and cultural conversations between groups of people and not solely from an internal deficit within the individual (Sampson, 1993). McCann (2016) thus argues how a heavily positivist diagnostic model is a narrow approach which deems individuals with mental health difficulties as passive bystanders who have pathological problems, and fails to acknowledge individuals as active participants within their cultures that have their own conceptual and historical views about mental health. Labelling someone with a mental difficulty can thus have drastic ramifications to them being able to participate within their culture, even though the label was intended to help them (McCann, 2016).

The current research has considered the terminology to be used with participants when referring to mental health sensitively, taking on board findings from literature pertaining to the use of the phrase 'mental health' as stigmatising and linked to mental illness (Pavis et al. 1996). The use of the term 'wellbeing' can be argued to refer to a more subjective experience of wellbeing, both mental and physical, and may resonate more with individuals who may be more likely to relate to experiences of emotional distress at some point in their lives but not a mental health condition.

Though constructionist perspectives view reality as constructed entirely within and through human discourse or knowledge, the current research adopts a critical realist position whereby there is a reality that exists that is mediated through human interpretation and experience (Fletcher, 2017). Pilgrim (2014) highlights the reality of mental health in context-bound events where individuals may present with bizarre

actions and communication that disturb everyday expectations of compliance to rules, and can lead to real consequences impacting family and workplace functioning, conformance to the norms of conduct in public, and the psychiatric framework of labelling to control psychological anomalies in society. A critical realist lens as adopted by the current research seeks to explore participants interpretations and experiences of this reality.

#### **1.3.4 Prevalence**

The most recent up-to-date survey on the mental health needs of CYP in England conducted by Sadler et al. (2017) revealed that one in eight 5-19-year olds had a mental health disorder. Key findings include:

- 8.1% of 5-19-year olds had an emotional disorder such as anxiety and depression, with higher rates in girls than boys, and anxiety disorders being more common than depressive disorders
- 4.6% of 5-19-year olds had behavioural disorders, characterised by persistent and repetitive patterns of violent and disruptive behaviour, with higher rates found in boys than girls
- 1.6% of 5-19-year olds had a hyperactivity disorder, characterised by hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattention, with higher rates found in boys than girls

Sadler et al. (2017) found a slight overall increase in rates of mental health disorders, with rates rising from 9.7% in 1999 and 10.1% in 2004, to 11.2% in 2017. Emotional

disorders have also become more common in 5-15 year olds in both boys and girls, whereas other disorders including hyperactivity, behavioural and other less common disorders remaining stable in prevalence. Rates of mental health disorders were also found to be higher in older age groups, with one in six 17-19 year olds having a mental disorder.

### **1.3.5 Impact of Mental Health difficulties**

'Transforming children and CYP's mental health provision: a green paper' (DHSC and DfE, 2017) notes the significant impact mental health difficulties can have on CYP's lives. This includes an increased risk of disruption to their education via exclusions and time off school compared to peers with no mental health difficulties (Green et al. 2005). Longitudinal research also demonstrates how CYP experiencing mental health difficulties are more likely to experience long-term economic impacts on areas including continuous employment, income, and receipt of welfare benefits (Goodman et al. 2011; Knapp et al. 2016). Borschmann and Patton (2018) report that CYP who experience mental health difficulties in their mid to late teens are less likely to be engaged in any formal education, training, or employment in their early twenties (Rodwell et al. 2018) and are at greater risk of substance abuse disorders (Mars et al. 2014).

Asselmann et al. (2018) found that experiencing mental health difficulties during adolescence and young adulthood could have a potential negative impact on transitions to adulthood and independence, achieving financial independence and the ability to form life partnerships. Literature also suggests that having mental health

difficulties in adulthood can also lead to an increased involvement in the criminal justice system (Durcan 2016; Goodman et al. 2011; Odgers et al. 2006).

Sadler et al. (2017) found that CYP who had experienced adverse life events were more likely to have mental disorders compared to those who had not experienced adversity in their lives. The link between adversity and mental health difficulties will now be explored in more detail.

### **1.3.6 Links between Adversity and Mental Health**

A large body of literature suggests that the experience of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can contribute significantly towards behavioural, emotional, and mental health difficulties including substance misuse, self-harm, and a variety of mental health conditions such as psychosis (Bellis et al. 2014; Breedvelt, 2016; Edwards et al. 2003; Tew, 2011). Certain ACEs such as physical, sexual, and psychological abuse have been found to have a significant negative consequence for mental health (Janssen et al. 2004).

Burstow et al. (2018) report that CYP who experience an ACE are often exposed to several ACEs, with the experience of violence at home correlated with psychological abuse and physical maltreatment, in addition to adversity linked to economic deprivation.

Burstow et al. (2018) also report that the risks of poor mental health are not distributed evenly across society, with those experiencing exclusion or disadvantage more at risk

(Tew, 2013). Key vulnerable groups at greater risk of mental health difficulties will now be explored.

### **1.3.7 Vulnerable groups**

The aforementioned Green Paper (DHSC and DfE, 2018) highlights vulnerable groups who demonstrate a higher prevalence of mental health difficulties. For instance, there is an increased prevalence of mental health needs amongst looked after CYP (Hughes, 2017), with 45% of looked after CYP having a diagnosable mental health difficulty compared to 10% of all CYP (DHSC and DfE, 2018; Meltzer et al. 2003).

CYP who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) also demonstrate higher rates of mental health difficulties and substance misuse issues compared to their non-NEET peers (Goldman-Mellor et al. 2016). Being NEET can facilitate involvement in crime (Allen, 2014). Literature also demonstrates a greater detrimental impact when being NEET lasts for a longer period of time or begins at a younger age, particularly due to NEET being linked to an increased likelihood of low-quality work or low wages later in life, and an increased likelihood of unemployment (Allen, 2014).

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2016) found that 25% of boys in Young Offender Institutions report emotional or mental health difficulties. Research by Hughes et al. (2015) also presents the increased mental health difficulties experienced by CYP involved in gangs, with 1 in 10 males and 1 in 3 females at risk of self-harm or suicide. The mental health needs of gang members will be the focus of the literature review in Chapter 2.

#### **1.4 Structure of volume one**

This volume is comprised of 5 chapters. This introductory chapter has explored the two key aspects which are the focus of this thesis, gangs and mental health. Chapter two will present a review of the literature pertaining to mental health needs of gang members, with the gap in literature the current research hopes to contribute towards.

Chapter three will present methodological considerations of the current research, with discussion around Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), and the researcher's ontological and epistemological position. Research methods will also be presented, including ethical considerations, reflexivity, trustworthiness of the current research, and procedural information relating to data collection and analysis.

Chapter four will present the findings of the current research in relation to the research questions, and discussion in relation to previous literature. Chapter five will provide a conclusion to the current research, including a summary of findings and their unique contribution to current literature. Recruitment difficulties will also be discussed, along with a critical evaluation of the current research, implications for educational psychology practice, and recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will first present a review of the literature relating to gang involvement and its impacts on gang members' mental health and wellbeing. Due to the limited qualitative research in this area, a narrative review will first be presented on wider research pertaining to the mental health needs of gang members. Aligning with the aims of the current study, the focus of the literature review will then hone into a systematic search of research studies specifically using qualitative methodology to explore the mental health and wellbeing of CYP in gangs. Finally, the gap in literature will be explored, with a summary of the aims and research questions of the present study.

### **2.2 Mental health needs of gang members**

Gatti et al. (2005) state that gang members are unique from other offender and delinquent groups due to the higher levels of violence they engage with compared to these groups. Wood and Dennard (2017) found that the higher levels of exposure to violence which street gang members experience can be detrimental to their mental health and is associated with a range of psychological difficulties including symptoms of paranoia, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and anxiety.

In the largest UK study exploring the mental health of gang members, Coid et al. (2013) conducted a cross-sectional survey with 4,664 men aged between 18-34 years



in Great Britain with the use of random location sampling. The study aimed to compare trauma and psychiatric morbidity of non-violent men, violent men, and gang members. Participants were sampled from two areas, the London borough of Hackney and Glasgow East in Scotland, both of which included high levels of gang activity and violence. Research findings demonstrated that gang members scored higher on all measures of psychiatric morbidity, including anxiety, anti-social personal disorder, psychosis, and alcohol and drug dependence. Gang members were also more likely to demonstrate hostile ruminations, experience and be fearful of violent victimization, and be more likely to use violence when disrespected.

Wood et al. (2017) reinforced these findings in their study involving self-administered questionnaire data from a sample of 1,539 adult males aged 19-34 years. Participants were classified into three groups, namely gang members, gang affiliates (who were involved in gang violence but did not claim gang membership), and violent men. Wood et al. (2017) found that gang members demonstrated higher levels of psychiatric morbidity, and experienced severe levels of violence, along with serious and life threatening injuries compared to violent men and gang affiliates. This study was the first to examine how even gang affiliates, who are described as those who have loose associations with gangs (Klein, 1971), along with gang members, present with more self-harm and suicide attempts, and experience more domestic violence and violence at work compared to violent men who are not affiliated with gangs.

Both studies by Coid et al. (2013) and Wood et al. (2017) were able to avoid selection bias associated with clinical samples by using a large sample size and community-based design to examine the associations between violent behaviour and different

categories of mental health difficulties. Both studies however used self-report measures, not clinical interviews, to capture data which could have, by the researchers' own admission, underestimated true prevalence of such factors and could influence findings.

Despite these limitations however, findings from Coid et al. (2013) are consistent with US research demonstrating the links between gang affiliation and mental health difficulties. For example, Harris et al. (2013) conducted a retrospective review of records obtained by a juvenile probation department which covered 7,615 CYP aged between 13-17 years. Findings highlighted gang members as having higher rates of PTSD related symptoms, substance use, conduct disorder, and oppositional defiant disorder than non-gang members.

Similarly, Corcoran et al. (2005) from a sample of 73 CYP, compared gang members to non-gang members aged 13-19 years and found gang members reporting significantly more mental health symptoms and external behaviour difficulties including delinquency. Gang members were more likely to report suicidal behaviour, hallucinations, delusion, a desire to kill, repetitive thoughts and behaviours, and anxiety than non-gang members.

Madan et al. (2011), who also attempted to explore whether gang membership in early adolescence was linked to internalized mental health difficulties, collected questionnaire data from 589 participants with a mean age of 13 years. Findings suggested gang membership was positively linked with suicidal behaviour, witnessing community violence, and delinquency, but not to anxiety or depression.

Macfarlane (2019) states that in order to understand the psychological influence of gang culture, its impact on individual mental health conditions may need to be considered as underlying processes within each may differ. As such, the following sections will further explore the findings of Coid et al. (2013), namely the impact of gang membership on trauma, depression, suicidal behaviours, and substance abuse.

### **2.2.1 Gangs and trauma**

Several studies demonstrate high levels of PTSD amongst young offenders which are commonly linked to violent experiences (Abram et al. 2004; Ruchkin et al. 2002). A meta-analysis on the effect of exposure and mental health outcomes of community violence on CYP was conducted by Fowler et al. (2009). Analysis across 114 studies found that those who have witnessed community violence, which is much more common in gangs, are significantly more at risk of developing PTSD. PTSD was predicted by victimization, hearing about, or witnessing community violence.

Kerig et al. (2016) found that both victims and perpetrators of violence can suffer an adverse psychological impact. This study, consisting of 660 CYP from a detention centre (176 girls and 484 boys aged from 11-18 years) explored through questionnaires how perpetration of violence impacts on the mental health of gang members. Results indicated that gang members who experienced traumatic incidents presented with posttraumatic stress symptoms such as emotional numbing, dissociation, and perpetrator trauma. Symptoms of PTSD can be more prominent if

the individual has capacity for guilt or an emotional attachment to their victim (Papanastassiou et al. 2004).

Barnes et al. (2012) highlight that gang members are a high-risk group for experiencing multiple types of trauma, termed polytraumatization. Types of trauma suffered by gang members can include injury sustained from physical fights, direct victimization, and vicarious victimisation such as through injury and incidents that occur to loved ones (Gustafsson et al. 2009).

Compared to those who have experienced a single traumatic event, polytraumatized CYP demonstrate higher levels of depression, anxiety, anger, conduct problems, emotional symptoms, traits associated with ADHD such as inattention and hyperactivity, and issues with their peers (Gustafsson et al. 2009). Ross and Arsenault (2018) analysed literature reviewing the relationship between early childhood trauma and later delinquency. Quantitative analysis was also conducted on a larger police database consisting of 25,375 males under the age of 28. Findings demonstrated links between traumatization and the perpetration of violence. More specifically, being witness or victim to a traumatic incident before the age of 12 significantly correlated with the involvement of violence in adolescence or young adulthood.

Nydegger et al. (2019) also proposed that the increased risk of mental health difficulties amongst gang members could be attributed to polytraumatization. In their study involving 441 gang members between the ages of 14-19, findings demonstrated that 90% of participants experienced polytraumatization and this was positively associated with PTSD and depressive symptoms, delinquency, and drug distribution.

This study however was again a cross-sectional survey and so causality cannot be determined from findings.

### **2.2.2 Depression**

Research suggests that gang members may actually demonstrate lower levels of depression (Coid et al. 2013; Madan et al. 2011); Macfarlane (2019) notes several possible explanations for such findings. For instance, gang violence could be seen as a “displacement activity” to disperse the harmful effects of a traumatic childhood (Madden, et al. 2013). This is also supported by the findings of Coid et al. (2013) who found that violent men had lower levels of depression compared to non-violent men. Macfarlane (2019) also posits that individuals with depression may be less likely to join gangs.

Subsequent research however has challenged the findings of Coid et al. (2013) by demonstrating that gang members may have higher rates of depression compared to the general population (Petering, 2016; Watkins and Melde, 2016). This could be due to an exposure to violence triggering internalising behaviours, similar to the links between gang membership and anxiety (Fowler et al. 2009). Ultimately as concluded by Macfarlane (2019), the relationship between gang membership and depression may be a more complex one compared to other psychiatric morbidities, and so further research is required on how different risk factors impact the levels of depression amongst gang members and conversely how gang membership affects depressive symptoms.

### **2.2.3 Suicidal behaviours**

In attempts to explain the findings of Madan et al. (2011), which demonstrate that witnessing community violence and delinquency can positively mediate the relationship between gang membership and suicidal behaviours, Osman and Wood (2018) hypothesise whether the typically lower levels of academic attainment common amongst gang members may facilitate a difficulty in their ability to articulate their emotions and mental health difficulties. This may result in them deviating towards more externalising behaviours such as suicidal behaviour to ease internal distress.

Madden et al. (2013) state how increased rates of suicide amongst gang members may be explained by the fear of victimisation and the externalisation of violent ruminations. Melde et al. (2009) proposed that acceptance within the gang requires an individual to control one's own fear of victimization and thus show no signs of fear, as demonstrating fear can put the individual at risk of being kept on the fringes of gang activity or being removed from the gang completely. Gang membership may also facilitate higher levels of stigma and negative attitude towards mental health difficulties amongst CYP which could prevent them from seeking help (Corrigan et al. 2005; Macfarlane 2019; Pinfold et al. 2003). As a result of this, the inhibition of fear can have a considerable impact on CYP. Wegner et al. (1987) suggest that pre-occupation and rumination of certain thoughts can make an individual more susceptible to such thoughts and make the thoughts stronger. Silver et al. (1983) suggests how suppression can act as a barrier to an individual's tendency to find meaning in a traumatic event which can disrupt effective coping processes.

This research suggests the potentially detrimental cyclic effects of not seeking mental health support, as suppressing negative thoughts and emotions may further strengthen their potency, and this could act as a barrier towards effective coping for the individual. Individuals may turn to suicidal behaviour in such instances to alleviate this internal distress.

#### **2.2.4 Substance abuse**

Ariza et al. (2014) analysed longitudinal survey data from the offending Crime and Justice Survey (OCJS) containing information on self-reported offending and victimization for CYP aged 10-25 years. Results indicated drug use as a common outcome of gang membership in England and Wales. Heald (1986) notes how alcohol in particular can be used by members to increase their confidence in their ability to face danger and is also used to numb pain from violent altercations (Vigil and Long, 1990).

There is a wealth of literature suggesting a positive association between alcohol intake and mental health difficulties (Bell and Britton, 2014; Boden et al. 2011; Gea et al. 2013; Rogers et al. 2000), with the potential for mental health difficulties to worsen due to alcohol intake. Excessive alcohol intake can negatively influence the mental health of individuals by disrupting family relationships and employment (Boden et al. 2011), as well as through direct biological mechanisms that may reduce white and grey brain matter and disrupt neurotransmitter functioning (Buhler and Mann, 2011). Alcohol use may also lead to further mental health difficulties, heavier alcohol and drug use, physical inactivity, poor diet, and a reduced protective socioeconomic and social

environment (Bell and Britton, 2014; Greenfield et al. 2002) Degerud et al. (2020) demonstrated increased mortality rates associated with high alcohol intake in those with mental health difficulties.

MacKenzie et al. (2006) conducted interviews with 383 self-identified male gang members to explore marijuana use in youth gangs. Findings suggested the integration and normalization of marijuana use in gang members' day to day activities. Reasons for marijuana use varied, from peer pressure, to self-medication, escape, and disinhibition. Marijuana was often described positively, where participants felt that it's use was not linked to violence and unpredictability but instead helped to calm and mellow them and help them to cope with stress. Coid et al. (2013) found how rates of drug use is higher in gang members, which could be due to the close link gangs have with the local drugs economy (Bennett and Holloway, 2004).

Hindley et al. (2020) demonstrate the potential acute risks associated with cannabis use, including the presentation of psychotic and psychiatric symptoms in healthy adults. In their review, Memedovich et al. (2018) concluded that marijuana use is associated with a range of negative effects on mental and physical health (however they cautioned that research in this area is inconsistent, and of variable quality). Pratt et al. (2019), in a systematic review exploring the benefits and harms of cannabis, also noted an inability to draw conclusions due to an inconsistency of findings and lack of rigorous evidence. They however also found that mild harms of cannabis use were frequently reported, and that these may outweigh the potential benefits of cannabis-based medicines.



The research presented above suggests that substance misuse is associated with poor physical and mental health outcomes. The high levels of substance misuse in gang members implies that this may be one particular mechanism by which the mental health of gang members is compromised.

### **2.3 Mental health: a contributor of gang involvement**

Thus far the literature presented has largely focussed on the facilitation of mental health difficulties through gang membership. Hughes et al. (2015) briefing entitled 'The mental health needs of gang-affiliated CYP' however highlights how the relationship between gang-affiliation and poor mental health can operate in two directions. As discussed, gang involvement can have an adverse impact on members' mental health, however individuals who present with mental health difficulties can also be drawn to gang-affiliation or may be actively recruited by gangs due to their vulnerability (Home Office, 2018).

A theory proposed by Thornberry (1987) entitled 'Interactional Theory' has been used by Macfarlane (2019) as a framework to explain the high prevalence of mental health issues amongst gang members. Thornberry (1987) (cited in Macfarlane, 2019, p.414) in an attempt to explain the significantly higher rates of violence found in gang members as opposed to non-gang offenders, proposed the 'Interactional Theory.' The theory is underpinned by three mutually reinforcing and inter-related factors including: selection, where gangs actively recruit members who are already delinquent; facilitations where the gang can provide opportunity to engage in criminal behaviour;

and enhancement, which enhances delinquency of members who are already at high risk of crime.

Macfarlane (2019) applied this theory to the mental health of those in gangs. Here, the theory is underpinned by three mutually reinforcing and inter-related factors including: selection, where gangs actively recruit members who already demonstrate high levels of mental health difficulties; facilitation, whereby gang membership facilitates the development of mental health difficulties; and enhancement, whereby gang membership enhances covert psychiatric morbidity to become more apparent.

In relation to the 'selection' aspect of this theory, there is research evidence which supports the notion that those with existing vulnerabilities can be drawn to gang culture. For example, Craig et al. (2002) conducted a cross-sectional study with a sample of 142 boys divided into 76 gang members and 66 non-gang members aged between 11-14 years. Data was obtained through questionnaires completed by parents, teachers, peers and the participants themselves which looked into behaviour and delinquency. Results indicated that traits associated with ADHD such as hyperactivity and inattention, as well as oppositional behaviour, were a risk factor for gang participation. This could be due to gangs actively searching for individuals who demonstrate traits of hyperactivity and inattention, or that they may become more apparent when in a gang (Craig et al. 2002; Macfarlane, 2019). This falls in line with the factors of selection and enhancement proposed by Interactional Theory (Macfarlane, 2019; Thornberry, 1987).

Gang activity can also appeal to CYP who present with externalising and sensation seeking behaviours, and impulsivity (Hughes et al. 2015). Similarly, for those with conduct disorder and antisocial personality disorder, Macfarlane (2019) states how such individuals may be more likely to join gangs as other gang members may reaffirm their attitudes and values.

## **2.4 Mental health intervention for gang members**

Wood et al. (2017) suggest that the psychiatric morbidity demonstrated amongst gang members may warrant clinical intervention. Hughes et al. (2015, p. 20) highlight the numerous additional barriers that gang-involved youth may face compared to non-gang involved youth when attempting to access support for their mental health such as:

- Reluctance to recognise or admit mental health difficulties in a culture where resilience and toughness is expected and could be perceived as a threat to the individual's safety, status and position within the gang.
- Previous negative experiences either personally or vicariously through family and friends that can lead to a lack of trust in using statutory organisations
- Fear of criminal activity being exposed along with the risk of raising suspicion of fellow gang members may cause reluctance to engage with services
- Fears of personal safety being compromised due to the geographical location of services being in rival gang territory, or proximity to services that may be accessed by fellow gang members such as youth offending services

Novel approaches are thus required to overcome such barriers and promote the mental health and wellbeing of CYP in gang affected areas. One such example of good practice in the UK is 'street therapy' provided by Music and Change (MAC) UK. The service has developed a framework termed the Integrate Model which involves multi-agency professionals such as psychologists, youth workers and social workers operating away from typical service settings, and out into the community. Here, MAC UK professionals engage in 'street therapy' with excluded and vulnerable CYP in environments in which they feel comfortable.

Evaluation of the use of the Integrate Model has been conducted by the Centre for Mental Health (2018). Focussing on two UK based projects using the Integrate model (Durcan et al. 2017 and Stubbs et al. 2017), the evaluation revealed that the model was highly successful in engaging marginalised CYP, and CYP involved in or at risk of offending. Involvement with the project increased CYP's mental health awareness and reduced the stigma surrounding mental health. CYP and staff across both projects reported that the mental wellbeing of CYP improved. The project was also successful in helping CYP to reduce offending behaviours and make better life choices.

Other approaches and interventions that have been highlighted by Hughes et al. (2015) as contributing to positive outcomes for offenders and CYP involved in gangs include mentoring programmes, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for supporting anxiety and depression (Townsend et al. 2010); trauma-focused interventions to manage anxiety and maladaptive thoughts linked to traumatic experiences and reducing symptoms of PTSD (Cary and McMillen 2012); functional family therapy (FTT) and multisystemic therapy (MST) to utilise strengths and reduce undesirable

behaviours of CYP at risk of, or already involved with the criminal justice system (Henggeler and Sheidow 2012; Butler et al. 2011).

Garbarino (2015) considers the parallels between gang-involved youth and child soldiers, with both groups likely to develop a “war zone mentality”. Kerig et al. (2013) argues that research on gang-involved youth should be informed by research on child soldiers given the many levels of commonality between the two groups. Garbarino et al. (2020) argue that gang members should be considered a protected group under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as are child soldiers, and intervention that is effective at preventing recruitment of child soldiers and reducing traumatic symptoms resulting from the perpetration of violence should also be considered for gang-involved youth. Interventions highlighted by Garbarino et al. (2020) further support the use of FFT, MST, along with Trauma focussed CBT, and narrative exposure therapy to help support the mental health needs of gang-involved youth.

## **2.5 Qualitative research exploring the mental health needs of gang members**

The vast majority of the literature examining the mental health of CYP in street gangs employs quantitative methodologies. When carrying out literature searches, there were significantly less qualitative research papers in this area. Employing qualitative methodology to explore the impact of gang life on mental health is important, as Pawelz (2018) states, such research with this population can be a tremendous source of information and provide rare insights. Furthermore, Andell (2019b) states how although quantitative measures can offer estimations of the scale and re-occurrence

of a given problem, they have the fundamental disadvantage of being unable to explain a phenomenon's causal features. Matthews (2014) suggests that some activities may be unsuitable for quantification and so cannot be measured in a meaningful way via quantitative approaches. As such, it would be hard with quantitative approaches to understand processes of socialisation that may influence individuals to feel safe within a street gang (Andell, 2019b). Qualitative approaches therefore may be more suited to focus on the drivers which impact upon the manifestation of gangs in specific neighbourhoods, along with motivations, values, or attitudes which are dependent on context (Andell, 2019b).

With this in mind, and in line with the aims of the present research, this literature review will now present a systematic search of qualitative research exploring the mental health and wellbeing of CYP in gangs.

### **2.5.1 Inclusion criteria**

The search focussed on studies using qualitative methodology to explore the mental health and wellbeing of CYP up to the age of 25 who are gang members. Initial scoping searches revealed a paucity of qualitative research in this area; as such, the search criteria were widened to include studies conducted outside of the UK. Similarly, unpublished theses as well as peer reviewed papers were included. One study with a participant age range of 18-35 was included because many of that particular study's participants would have met the age criteria.

The final search inclusion criteria were:

- Qualitative studies exploring mental health and wellbeing of CYP in gangs
- Published in peer reviewed journals or unpublished theses
- Carried out in any country
- Participants aged up to 25 (however, as noted above, one study was included as the age range of participants was 18-35, and thus likely to include participants up to 25)
- Participants are members of a gang

### **2.5.2 Search strategy**

An initial search was conducted using the terms 'mental health', 'wellbeing' and 'gangs' within 4 databases: ProQuest, PsychINFO, EBSCO, and Web of Science. Additional searches were conducted on Google Scholar to identify any papers that may not have appeared through initial database searches. Reference sections of eligible papers were also searched.

The systematic search produced 1455 results. After reviewing abstracts to determine whether the study met inclusion criteria, only 2 studies met the search criteria.

### **2.5.3 Search results**

An overview of the two included studies are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Overview of study characteristics

<b>Study</b>	<b>Type of paper</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Population characteristics</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Sampling technique</b>	<b>Research design</b>	<b>Data collection method</b>	<b>Data analysis</b>
Gutierrez et al. (2020)	Peer reviewed journal article	Los Angeles, USA	Former female gang members from BAME backgrounds  Aged between 18-35.	6 females  (2 Latinas, 3 African American, 1 Arab / Muslim)	Purposive sampling	Qualitative, Grounded theory approach	Semi-structured interviews	Grounded theory analysis
Farran (2014)	Unpublished thesis	London, UK	Recruited from MAC-UK mental health charity.  Ethnicity, gender and age not specified	12 (6 CYP and 6 professionals)	Purposive sampling	Qualitative, Grounded theory approach	Semi-structured interviews	Grounded theory analysis



Of the studies included one was a USA based peer reviewed journal article (Gutierrez et al. 2020) whilst the other was a UK based unpublished thesis (Farran, 2014). Both studies had many similarities, including the adoption of a grounded theory approach, semi-structured interviews for data collection, and purposive sampling which is a method of sampling common in seeking out hard to reach populations – in this case, gang members (Pawelz, 2018). Sample sizes ranged from 6-12 participants, with small numbers noted as a commonality amongst previous gang research studies (Boden, 2019).

Gutierrez et al.'s (2020) research consisted of female ex-gang members from BAME backgrounds aged between 18-35. Farran (2014) recruited 6 mental health professionals and 6 gang-associated CYP who were or had previously worked with the mental health charity within which this study took place. Neither gender, age, nor ethnicity of participants were stated, however.

Farran (2014) aimed to explore the outcome of gang involved youth's engagement with a mental health charity project. Data was collected from six professionals and six CYP working at the charity project via semi-structured interviews, with data analysis underpinned by grounded theory analysis. Key findings from the research included the importance of building rapport and trust in facilitating positive change, along with a service structure to enable CYP and professionals the time to establish therapeutic relationships that can facilitate positive change. The research valued the voice of CYP and made a conscious effort to present these voices at the forefront of the research.

Gutierrez et al. (2020) also sought to negate the oppression faced by female gang members and champion the voice and narratives of its participants so that interventions, otherwise informed by male dominated research, could be informed by female voices also. Six participants from BAME backgrounds engaged in semi-structured interviews with open ended questions encouraging participants to describe their experiences in their own terms. As with Farran (2014), data was analysed using grounded theory analysis. The research was able to present the various forms of trauma, sexual and psychological abuse, bereavement of loved ones, oppression faced by female gang members, and reasons for joining gangs as a way to escape from abuse, poverty, and family neglect.

It is interesting to note that both studies chose grounded theory methodology which seeks to generate a theoretical-level account of particular phenomenon, though often this requires a particularly large sample size (Smith et al. 2009). Both studies in this instance had between 6-12 participants, though a sample size of 25 has been recommended for grounded theory research (Thomson, 2010) and as such this could be considered a weakness of both studies.

Despite this limitation, both studies have demonstrated the potential of qualitative research for informing intervention and practice when working to support the mental health needs of gang members. Gutierrez et al. (2020) presented implications for mental health training and practice to support gang involved females, whilst Farran (2014) demonstrated how findings of qualitative research championing CYP's voices can have a wide range of practitioner and service level implications to work towards positive mental health outcomes for gang associated youth. This included the

importance of practitioners being non-judgemental and allowing the time to develop trust and alliance with CYP and not pushing them too quickly. For example, investing longer in the pre-engagement process with marginalised CYP at first contact as opposed to beginning assessment and intervention immediately was emphasised. Although the importance of professionals engaging in broader activities with CYP, in addition to intervention-centred encounters was highlighted in order to become approachable for support when needed, this has funding implications at service level.

As Gutierrez et al. (2020) aimed to address a gap in literature, namely in capturing the absent voices of female gang members within the literature, similarly the current study aimed to address the paucity of literature capturing CYP's voices who are 'on road' in the UK. The following section will further explore the gap in literature that the current study seeks to address.

## **2.6 Gap in literature and rationale for present study**

The implications of research findings as highlighted in this chapter are that gang membership can undermine members' mental health, and that individuals with existing mental health difficulties can be attracted to gang membership. Currently however the mental health of CYP in gangs is under researched in the UK. Wood and Dennard (2017) argue that mental health deserves more attention in gang research. Frisby-Osman and Wood (2020) also state that research exploring the relationship between mental health and community violence currently lacks attention in terms of gang involvement. They further state how "understanding the unique effects of gang membership on mental and emotional health requires a lot more attention if we are to

counteract gang-related violence and *prevent* youth from joining gangs” (Frisby-Osman and Wood, 2020, p. 106). Furthermore Kearney (1998) argues how a lack of research focussing on gangs can leave professionals such as therapists with little empirically based guidance, which is important and “necessary for adequate and realistic treatment planning” (Kearney, 1998, p.56).

As the current chapter has shown, there is a lack of qualitative research, whereby the voice of CYP in gangs is underrepresented. The importance of capturing the voice of CYP is noted in Article 12 of the UNCRC (1989, p.5) which states that “parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child”. The Young Minds’ ‘Your voices Amplified’ report (2018) also emphasises the importance of attaining CYP’s voices to help shape and inform mental health services. Despite this however, qualitative mental health studies which capture the voice of gang members are sparse.

It is thus clear that further research is needed to increase our understanding of the mental health experiences of street gang members, with a view to informing policies and intervention strategies in order to address these mental health needs, particularly if gang membership is to be addressed and reduced (Wood et al. 2017), and if successful rehabilitation of current gang members is to be achieved.

Schools also have an important role in supporting the mental health needs of vulnerable CYP, as noted in the ‘Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision: a green paper’ (DHSC and DfE, 2018). This includes CYP at risk of or affiliated to gangs. Mental health can have a direct impact on a child’s development

and learning, and CYP who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health may struggle in school (Deighton et al. 2019). Failure to support the mental health needs of CYP may contribute to risk of school failure (Finning et al. 2019). CYP involved in gangs are also known to be at risk of several poor life outcomes in addition to mental health difficulties as found by Gilman et al. (2014), including higher rates of self-reported crime, imprisonment, earning illegal income, drug dependence or abuse, and poor general health. It is therefore important for Educational Psychologists and other professionals working with this group of CYP to have an improved understanding of their mental health and wellbeing, and how to best support their needs.

The aim of the present study was to explore the lived experiences of CYP involved in street gangs, and how gang involvement impacts on the mental health and wellbeing of gang-involved youth, in addition to exploring enablers and barriers to accessing support for their wellbeing. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was thus chosen as the framework for this research as it allows participants to explore and make sense of their own major life experiences (Smith et al. 2009).

*Figure 1: Insights into the research process: research proposal*

When organising the research proposal for the current research, the sentiment amongst my colleagues and peers at the time was one of caution, with some even recommending me to change my research completely from working with CYP involved in life 'on road.' I feel this was done in good faith as many of these colleagues had experience conducting research or working on a daily basis with this population, and they heeded caution of the many difficulties that would be faced from gaining ethical approval, participant recruitment, and the high engagement required in interviews for an IPA study from a population known for low levels of engagement. This could ultimately have led to a revision of my thesis idea at a later date and could have delayed my qualification as an Educational Psychologist. Although I appreciated these warnings, in addition to the initial scoping of literature which revealed limited research in the area, these warnings only served to facilitate a stubbornness and determination to follow through with the current research even though it had many risks for my own personal qualifications. I hypothesised that the sheer difficulty and barriers one would face when hoping to research this population group could be enough to put them off the idea, hence leading to sparseness in the literature, and this was not something I was willing to give in to.

## **2.7 Research questions**

- Research question 1: How do CYP 'on road' describe the impact of their experiences on their emotional wellbeing?
- Research question 2: How do CYP 'on road' describe coping and support mechanisms in relation to their emotional wellbeing?

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHOD**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter details the methodology and method for this research. This will involve discussing the researcher's position on ontology and epistemology, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the qualitative research approach chosen for this study, ethical considerations, recruitment, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness, and reflexivity.

### **3.2 Methodology**

#### **3.2.1 Ontology and Epistemology**

Ontology is described as “the nature or essence of things and so ontological assumptions about social reality will focus on whether a person sees social reality – or aspects of the social world – as external, independent, given and objectively real, or, instead, as socially constructed, subjectively experienced and the result of human thought as expressed through language” (Opie, 2004, p. 20). The former here is considered a realist ontological position, with the latter being considered as a nominalist ontological position (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

Epistemology is described as “the theory of knowledge, thus epistemological assumptions concern the nature of knowledge, what constitutes knowledge and what it is possible to know and understand and re-present” (Opie, 2004, p. 21). If knowledge

is viewed as hard, tangible, and objective, this will require the researcher to undertake an observer role whilst aligning to methods of natural science. If knowledge however is seen as personal, subjective, and unique, this imposes on the researchers “an involvement with their subjects and a rejection of the ways of a natural scientist” (Cohen, 2018, p. 5). The former is considered as a positivist epistemological approach to social science, whilst the latter is considered to be an interpretivist approach (Thomas, 2013).

The present research was underpinned by a critical realist philosophical perspective. Critical realism is an alternative epistemological approach to positivism and interpretivism (Denscombe, 2010). The main ontological assumptions underlying critical realism as highlighted by Denscombe (2010) include:

- Reality exists independently of any individual’s interpretation or experience of it
- Reality is not always observable
- The impact of reality is not always predictable
- Social reality is complex and not necessarily revealed by things that can be measured or observed

This approach compliments the theoretical underpinnings of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which is the method of analysis used in the present research (to be discussed in more depth below), as the critical realist researcher does not discover theories nor collect facts, but instead recognises that facts are interpreted and that it is impossible for a researcher to understand the world in a completely



neutral and objective way. The researcher's influence is seen as more open, with the beliefs and values of the researcher becoming an active consideration in the way social realities are explained (Denscombe, 2010).

Hardy and Majors (2017) state that due to IPA's focus on sense making and on the participant's understanding and perceptions that inform the researcher's interpretation, IPA is compatible with the epistemological position of critical realism. Critical realism has also been proposed as an appropriate philosophical approach to research with gang members. Andell (2019b) proposes a critical realist approach towards gang research in order to help understand the determination of human actions involved in gang life and our responses to it. Here a critical realism of gangs acknowledges individual experience but also searches for deeper ontological levels of causal mechanisms, including both agency (free will) and structure (the neighbourhood).

### **3.2.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)**

IPA is a qualitative approach which aims to examine how individuals make sense of their major life experiences. This approach has been theoretically informed by phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography, which are proposed to be three central pillars of the philosophy of knowledge (Smith et al. 2009).

### **3.2.2.1 Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is a philosophical approach to the study of experience. The main focus underpinning phenomenology is exploring what the experience of being human is like, particularly what comprises our lived world and the things which matter to us. Based predominantly on the work of Husserl (1927), who first stated the importance of focussing on experience and its perception, and then further developed by Heidegger (1962/1927), Merleau-Ponty (1962), and Sartre (1956/1943), who each contributed a view of a person as being immersed and embedded in a world of relationships and objects, culture and language, projects and concerns.

A key value of this approach for psychologists is in its ability to provide a rich source of ideas about how to examine and understand lived experience. As such within IPA research, attempts to understand an individual's lived experience is interpretative and focusses on the individual's attempt to make meaning out of their actions and the things that happen to them (Smith et al. 2009).

### **3.2.2.2 Hermeneutics**

Hermeneutics forms an important theoretical foundation for IPA research and is concerned with the theory of interpretation. Heidegger (1962/1927) again a key contributor within this theoretical underpinning of IPA, argued the importance of the researcher in facilitating and making sense of phenomenon being examined. As such it is important to acknowledge that the researcher will bring their own assumptions, preconceptions, and experiences to the process. Double hermeneutics is thus a key

element of IPA, whereby the researcher attempting to make sense of the participant's attempts to make sense of their lived experiences (Smith et al. 2009).

Within this double hermeneutic element of IPA, Ricoeur (1970) presents a hermeneutic of empathy to reconstruct the original experience in its own terms, and a hermeneutic of suspicion which utilises theoretical perspectives from outside to illuminate and understand the phenomenon. Smith (2004) and Larkin et al. (2006) suggest employing a centred position between both of these hermeneutics to uncover the meaning of experience. That is, to embrace an empathetic stance and imagine what it is like to be the participant, whilst also being critical and probing for meaning in ways in which the participant might be unable or unwilling to do themselves (Eatough and Smith, 2017). This approach serves to provide a rich understanding of the phenomenon being studied and remaining close to the participant's sense making whilst also involving the researcher to put aside things previously accepted at face value so that a multi-layered narrative of potential meanings can be developed (Eatough and Smith, 2017).

With this in mind, Gadamer (1990/1960) emphasises the aim of IPA in allowing the phenomenon being explored to speak in its own voice, without being contaminated by the preconceptions of the researcher. Reflexive thinking is thus encouraged throughout the research process to achieve this.

'The Hermeneutic Cycle' is an important component within hermeneutics which embodies a dynamic relationship the whole and the part, with the understanding of one unable to happen without understanding of the other. The hermeneutic cycle is

thus important when thinking about the method in IPA research, which is an iterative approach where engagement with data is dynamic (Smith et al. 2009).

### **3.2.2.3 Idiography**

Idiography forms the third key theoretical underpinning for IPA and is concerned with the particular. Within IPA this operates on two levels. The first is in the sense of detail and thus in-depth analysis, and secondly in understanding how particular experiential phenomena have been understood from the perspective of particular people in particular contexts (Smith et al. 2009). IPA thus utilises small, carefully situated and purposefully selected samples, whereby an individual can be seen to offer a unique perspective on their involvement in or relationship to the phenomena of interest. Warnock (1987) argues how delving into the particular can bring us closer to the universal. For instance, individual cases may make us better positioned to consider how we and other people would deal with the situation being explored despite that individual at face value having completely different personal circumstances to our own (Smith et al. 2009).

### **3.2.2.4 Concept of the Gem**

One valuable interpretative tool used in IPA that Smith (2011) proposed is the concept of the gem, and it's ability to illuminate and enhance understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon being studied. Eatough and Smith (2017) note how gems can include singular remarks to small extracts from an interview which the researcher may

be drawn to and may feel is important in understanding how a person understands their world (Ashworth, 2008).

Smith (2011) proposed three different types of gems: shining, suggestive, and secret. Shining gems are those where meaning is obvious, whereas suggestive gems are less obvious and require the researcher to work harder to uncover the meaning whilst moving repeatedly within and around the hermeneutic cycle. Secret gems are easily missed and present themselves only through high levels of attentiveness with the interview data (Eatough and Smith, 2017).

#### ***3.2.2.5 Rationale for choosing IPA***

IPA was chosen as the qualitative approach for this study as it aligned with the researcher's aims of a detailed and nuanced exploration of participants' lived experiences of being involved 'on road' and the impact that this has on their emotional wellbeing. The present study also sought to explore the perspectives of gang involved youth with regards to coping and support for their wellbeing.

IPA was thus chosen as the framework most suited to meeting the aims of the current research, allowing the researcher to understand and interpret participants exploring and making sense of their own major life experiences (Smith et al. 2009). The analysis process of IPA is described later in this chapter. Alternative methodologies were considered during the initial scoping of the current research, an overview of which is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Alternative methodologies considered

<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Critique in relation to current research</b>
<p><b>Grounded Theory</b></p> <p>As a method provides guidelines on category identification and establishing links and relationships between them.</p> <p>Developing theory is the end product of this approach. Provides an explanatory framework to understand the phenomenon under investigation.</p>	<p>Theories pertaining to the high prevalence of mental health needs amongst youth ‘on road’ is sparse, and so this approach could have been used to further contribute to this gap in literature.</p> <p>Main aim of current research was to explore lived experiences of participants as opposed to theory development.</p> <p>Large sample sizes are required for this methodology which would have been difficult given the population of the current study deemed hard to reach and recruitment difficulties faced within the current research.</p> <p>Could be argued that this approach does not embrace questions of reflexivity.</p>
<p><b>Narrative Analysis</b></p> <p>Interested in the ways in which individuals organize and bring order to experience, including content and structure or people’s stories. Focus on how narratives relate to sense making.</p>	<p>Focus of the current research was on the lived experience of participants, not necessarily on the chronological ordering of incidents and structure in which participants expressed their experiences.</p> <p>This approach can deviate from individual experience and focus more on the social characteristics of narrative (Murray, 2003).</p>
<p><b>Thematic Analysis</b></p> <p>Method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns, also known as themes, within the data.</p>	<p>Themes that are identified, coded, and analysed would need to be an accurate reflection of the entire data set. In such instances, depth and complexity of data can be lost (Braun and Clarke, 2006).</p> <p>This therefore would not have aligned with the aims of the current research</p>

	<p>which sought to capture rich detail and nuance of participant's experiences, placing importance on themes pertinent to individuals even though this may not have necessarily accurately reflected the entire data set.</p>
<p><b>Ethnography</b></p> <p>An approach used to gain insider knowledge of people's lives by participating in their lives for a period of time.</p>	<p>A single interview carried the risk of being able to build enough rapport with a participant in order for them to feel comfortable to express a rich and detailed insight into their experiences. This was particularly pertinent in the current research given the general difficulty in engaging CYP 'on road', as stated by key adults who work with them, and the difficulties of recruiting participants.</p> <p>An ethnographic approach over a period of time, within the third-party charity working with 'on road' youth was thus considered as a way to negate this potential issue to facilitate rapport and a sense of approachability between the researcher and participants. This approach could have also allowed triangulation of data via observational data. Given the nature of research being conducted in professional doctorate, this approach was not practical to implement.</p>

(Based on Smith et al. 2009; Willig, 2013)

*Figure 2: Insights into the research process: choosing IPA*

Choosing IPA was definitely a risk when working with the target population of the study given they are known to present with low levels of trust for research, and engagement given the secrecy surrounding things that occur 'on road' (Nydegger et al 2019). I could have quite easily ended up in a situation where I did not have enough information from interviews that a study like IPA would require. At the same time I was reflective of my practice as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, and particularly aware that rapport building is as or more important than the particular approach you use with CYP. If the rapport strong, I felt that any approach can 'work.' I thus proceeded to move forward with IPA with a strong belief that my rapport building skills would lead to successful data collection.

### **3.3 Method**

#### **3.3.1 Design**

A case study design was utilised to achieve the aims of this research. A case study as stated by Thomas (2013, p. 150) "involves in-depth research into one case or a small set of cases." The case study design is advocated for IPA research as it allows the researcher to develop an in-depth understanding of an individual's distinctive experience whilst also being able to explore shared themes (Smith et al. 2009).

#### **3.3.2 Recruitment**

##### ***3.3.2.1 Inclusion criteria***

For participants to take part in this research they had to be aged 11-25 (i.e. secondary school age upwards), and meet the street gang definition proposed by Pickles (2009, p.21) which states:



*“a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of CYP who: (1) see themselves, and are seen by others, as a discernible group; and (2) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence. May also have any or all of the following features: (3) identify or lay claim to territory; (4) have some form of identifying structural feature; and (5) are in conflict with other similar gangs.”*

Participants met inclusion criteria whether they had current or previous street gang involvement. This inclusion criteria was important to ensure the homogeneity required for participant samples in IPA research. This is because within IPA research, participants are selected in order to gain access to a particular phenomena or perspective being researched, and so a homogenous sample is required for whom the research questions of the study will be meaningful (Smith et al. 2009).

### **3.3.2.2 Sampling**

The sampling method used in this study was a successive sampling approach. This approach was suggested by Pawelz (2018) as a means of successfully accessing hard to reach populations such as those involved in gangs. The successive sampling approach is one that combines purposive sampling and snowball sampling.

Purposive sampling is a technique commonly used within qualitative research for identification and selection of participants that are particularly knowledgeable or experienced with the phenomena of interest (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Snowball sampling is applied in instances where there is difficulty in gaining access to participants with targeted characteristics. Snowball sampling is a convenience

sampling method whereby existing participants can recruit further participants through their acquaintances (Naderifar et al. 2017). Smith et al. (2009) also note that in addition to snowball sampling, potential participants are frequently recruited for IPA research via referral from various types of gatekeepers; a result of the researcher's own contacts; and opportunities.

Within the context of this research, purposive sampling was predominantly used to highlight 'periphery persons' (Pawelz, 2018) as points of recruitment for individuals working in gangs. Periphery persons are described by Pawelz (2018) as experts with context and insight knowledge who can facilitate safe access for the researcher to the target population. As such periphery persons in the context of this study that were approached included YOTs, third party charitable organisations working with youth at risk of or involved in gangs and those working with ex-gang members, individuals in the community, PRUs, and schools and post-16 settings within which the researcher was a link trainee educational psychologist. This led to the recruitment of two participants (to be discussed in more detail later). It was hoped that snowball sampling would then facilitate new contacts from those initially introduced by successful periphery persons. This approach led to the recruitment of one further participant (to be discussed in more detail later).

### ***3.3.2.3 Difficulties with recruitment***

The process of contacting and liaising with periphery persons to recruit participants began in the autumn term of 2018 and ended in the autumn term of 2019. Despite contacting a number of statutory and non-statutory third-party organisations working

with youth involved in gangs, many of these avenues were unsuccessful. Please refer to chapter 4 for a more in-depth discussion and reflection on recruitment difficulties faced within this research.

### **3.3.3 Ethical considerations**

#### ***3.3.3.1 Ethical approval***

The Code of Human Research Ethics produced by the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2014) was adhered to in guiding the ethics of this research. Ethical approval for the current study was granted by the University of Birmingham's Ethical Review Process (see appendix 1 for application for ethical review).

#### *Figure 3: Insights into the research process: gaining ethical approval*

Gaining ethical approval for the current research felt like a momentous feat. From my initial research idea, ethical approval was something that always felt like a barrier that would be hard to overcome. However, after several back and forth communications with the University of Birmingham's Ethics board, and support from my supervisor, ethical approval was attained. I felt very energised at this point and eager to start data collection. A research idea that was deemed by many as almost impossible at the research proposal stage had now become very real and possible.

#### ***3.3.3.2 Informed consent***

Consent for participation was obtained prior to any person participating in the study. Prior to involvement participants were informed about the nature of the research being undertaken in written form via information sheets, and then again verbally on the day of the interview. Potential participants also had the opportunity to ask any questions

before choosing to opt in or out of the study. Participants were then invited to complete a consent form, indicating whether or not they give consent to participate. If participants were happy to take part in the study, the interview commenced.

Participant P1 was not affiliated to any host organisation. The researcher used their insider knowledge to identify a periphery person who was able to facilitate safe access to the participant. This method of utilising insider knowledge has been demonstrated in previous research as an effective approach when recruiting participants for gang related research, such as that used in a recent UK study on 'road life' and street culture conducted by Bakkali (2018). An initial discussion was had with the periphery person regarding the consent process for the study. The periphery person then informed the participant of the nature of the research via an information sheet, and this was again reinforced verbally to the participant on the day of the interview by the researcher before their consent was gained. This was to ensure that the participant had made an informed decision to participate in the study.

For participants P2 and P3, the researcher relied on the host organisation to use their knowledge from their work and associations with the CYP to select potential participants who are capable of making informed decisions. Again, participants were informed of the nature of the study via information sheets, and this was reinforced verbally to the participant on the day of the interview by the researcher before their consent was gained.

Participants of the current study were over the age of 16 and so did not require parental consent, however obtaining parental consent for potential participants under the age

of 16 was considered. As such, parental information sheets and consent forms (see appendix 2) were prepared in addition to participant information sheets and consent forms (see appendix 3) for potential participants under the age of 16.

#### ***3.3.3.3 Right to withdraw***

Participants were informed in writing (via information sheets, please see appendix 3) and verbally immediately before data collection of their right to withdraw from the research at any stage – i.e. before, during, or after the study. Participants were told verbally and in writing that should they wish to withdraw from the study after the interview, they would be able to withdraw their data within 2 weeks of the interview being completed, and should they wish to withdraw from the study within his window, their data would be deleted and therefore not used. It was also stated clearly on information sheets and verbally that the consequence of withdrawal from the study would be of no detriment to their relationships with their organisations.

On information sheets, participants were also given contact details of a key adult in their organisation, the researcher, and researcher's supervisor should they wish to withdraw or know more about the research.

#### ***3.3.3.4 Confidentiality***

As participants were from a vulnerable population (street gangs), the importance of maintaining confidentiality throughout all stages of the study was important given the

potential nature of the topics discussed. Breach of confidentiality could have caused problematic outcomes for participants (Kearney, 1998).

Participants were informed that confidentiality would be maintained throughout all stages of the study. Participants were assigned identification numbers that were matched to their names, organisation name (if applicable), and Local Authority on a secure database. Audio recordings of interviews were identified by participant ID numbers only. Participants were informed that the researcher would be the only person who would have access to their data. Participants were also informed that no other individuals outside of the research team and staff members (and particularly neither the gang to which they belong, nor any other gang), would be informed that the participant was involved in this study and that everything the participant says would be kept confidential.

Participants were informed that confidentiality would only be breached in exceptional circumstances where there was concern regarding the safety of another individual, themselves or others, or if they divulged information regarding illegal activity for which they had not yet been prosecuted. Participants were informed that such information would potentially need to be shared with the police and that this could result in future prosecution. Participants were therefore encouraged on information sheets and verbally on the day of the interview by the researcher not to disclose any information regarding illegal activity for which they have not been prosecuted.

### **3.3.3.5 Risks**

The most likely cause of distress from participation in this study would be the invocation of painful feelings during the interview (Barker, Pistrang & Elliott, 2002). During the interview if difficult feelings were evoked, the researcher felt confident in using the therapeutic skills which were used in daily practice as a trainee educational psychologist to acknowledge and contain emotions and difficult feelings expressed by participants (as recommended by Braun and Clarke, 2013). This however would be considered 'in the moment' empathic support, and not a formal intervention. A de-brief was also provided after each interview and sources of further support were also discussed with participants.

Organisations and periphery persons were also asked to highlight low risk participants to prevent the likelihood of a potential emotional outburst during the interview, thus protecting the emotional wellbeing and safety of participant and researcher. It was also requested that, if the participant was accessed via an organisation, a key member of staff who knows the participant well be available should any difficulties emerge during the interview. Two participants (participants P2 and P3) were supported by one organisation, a charity that supports CYP affiliated with street gangs, based in a large urban area. The organisation in question followed the above protocol appropriately.

Participant P1 was identified by a periphery person who was approached because of the researcher's insider knowledge and networks. The periphery person stated that this potential participant was no longer in a street gang and stated that he was seeking to gain employment. The periphery person ensured the researcher that this participant

was low risk and safe to engage with for the purposes of the current research. The periphery person was also present during the interview process to further mitigate any potential risk. The participant and periphery person met with the researcher in a public place to carry out the interview.

### 3.3.4 Participants

Table 3: Overview of participants

Participant ID	Age	Ethnicity	Brief background
P1	24	Asian British: Pakistani	<p>P1 had a largely 'typical' upbringing devoid of offending behaviours. He entered life 'on road' from the age of 16 as a means to make money. He was charged with assault and robbery during this time but was not sentenced.</p> <p>P1 was part of a group which experienced a back and forth rivalry with an opposing group. This rivalry was punctuated with violent incidents, one of which resulted in the death of one of P1's close friends.</p> <p>At the time of interview P1 was no longer involved in life 'on road' and is currently NEET.</p>
P2	17	Black British	<p>P2 entered life 'on road' at the age of 14 initially engaging in street robberies. This escalated into drug dealing, and P2 would later be charged with conspiracy to distribute the Class A drugs Crack and Heroin via a County lines operation. During this time P2 had also received exclusion from</p>



			<p>mainstream school and was on placement at a PRU.</p> <p>P2 has served time on two accounts in a Young Offender Institute (YOI). After serving his first sentence P2 received a diagnosis for ADHD for which he takes medication.</p> <p>At the time of the interview P2 was wearing an electronic monitoring tag and was out of education. He had a court date scheduled for the month after the interview for breaching his court order. This could result in him serving time in a YOI for a third time.</p>
P3	17	Black British	<p>P3 was witness to and victim of domestic violence as a child from his mother's partner. He entered life 'on road' at the age of 13. During this time, he would be excluded from mainstream school and was placed in a PRU.</p> <p>P3 served time in a secure children's unit at the age of 14 for stabbing another young person during a conflict.</p> <p>At the time of interview, P3 was out of education. He was wearing an electronic monitoring tag and was currently being investigated for conspiracy to supply drugs via County lines operations and money laundering.</p>

### **3.3.5 Data collection**

Smith et al. (2009) note how IPA is suited to data collection methods such as interviews as they invite participants to offer detailed and rich accounts of their lived experiences. In the current research, each participant engaged in an in-depth semi-structured interview as part of a case study design. The interviews lasted between 45-60 minutes. Semi structured interviews were chosen as a data collection method for this research because whilst they allow the interviewer to cover a predetermined list of topics and themes, there would also be sense of flexibility in altering the wording of questions and allow the researcher to give explanations to the participant where required. Semi-structured interviews were also chosen because they allow the researcher the opportunity to modify the order of questions, skip inappropriate questions, and including additional ones based upon the researcher's discretion of what seemed suitable with the participant (Robson, 2002). The use of semi-structured interview also allows a follow up of thought-provoking responses and exploring participant answers further. The semi-structured interview being face-to-face also offered the advantage of the researcher picking up on non-verbal cues of participants which may have reversed or changed the meaning of their verbal response (Robson, 2002). These considerations were also in line with recommendations made by Smith et al. (2009) regarding the conducting of semi-structured interviews within IPA research.

The interview schedule was informed by the guidance of Smith et al. (2009) and as such included questions designed to be open and expansive, free from making assumptions about the participant's concerns or experiences. Questions were also

formulated in a way that would not lead participants to particular answers. As was the case with Smith et al. (2011) however, the interview schedule was utilized occasionally during interviews, with the researcher instead relying more so on clarifying meaning derived from participants as they were describing particular topics (e.g. “How did that make you feel?” “What was that like for you?”) and summarizing and reflecting points to prompt further discussion. Please refer to appendix 4 for a copy of the interview schedule.

It was requested by two participants (P1 and P3) that the interviews be conducted in a car situated in a public car park. In one interview the periphery person was present in the car, and for the second interview, the periphery person was present outside the car. A third interview (for P2) took place within the offices of the third-party charity, with the periphery person present in the office.

### **3.3.6 Data analysis**

The analytical focus of IPA is directed towards the researcher attempting to make sense of the participant’s attempts to make sense of their lived experiences. As such IPA involves approaches from the descriptive to the interpretative, and from the particular to the shared. IPA also encompasses principles that commit to understanding the participant’s point of view, along with a psychological focus on personal meaning making in particular contexts (Smith et al. 2009). The analytical process is described as an ‘iterative process of fluid description and engagement with the transcript’ with ‘a constant shift between different analytical processes’ (Smith et al. 2009, P. 81).

Within the current research, a framework was used based on the work of Smith *et al.* (2009) to give clarity and structure to the process of analysing the collected data (see table 4).

*Table 4: Stages of IPA analysis (as adapted from Smith et al. 2009, p.82-101)*

<b>Step 1</b>	Transcription	Verbatim transcription of each participant's audio recording.
<b>Step 2</b>	Reading and re-reading	Immersion in the original data, ensuring the participant is the focus of analysis. Gaining an understanding of the overall interview structure and how narratives may bind certain sections of the interview.
<b>Step 3</b>	Initial noting	Examining the semantic content and language use on an exploratory level. Notes made on descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments made by the participant.
<b>Step 4</b>	Developing emergent themes	Based on initial noting made in step 3, the volume of detail is reduced whilst maintaining complexity. Mapping connections, interrelationships, and patterns between exploratory notes.
<b>Step 5</b>	Searching for connections across emergent themes	Mapping how the researcher thinks the themes highlighted in step 4 fit together. Innovation is encouraged in terms of organizing the analysis. Some emergent themes may be discarded dependent on the original research questions and their scope. Looking for a means to draw together themes in a way which points to all the interesting and important aspects of the participant's account.
<b>Step 6</b>	Moving on to the next case	Move to the next participant account and repeat steps 2-5 whilst trying to set aside (bracket) knowledge and assumptions of previous interview.
<b>Step 7</b>	Looking for patterns across cases	Looking for patterns and connections across cases, and how a theme in one case may illuminate a different case. Identifying individual and shared meanings.

Once participant audio files had been transcribed, reading and initial note taking commenced for each participant's transcription. This involved making detailed comments and notes on the data reflecting descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments made by participants. Descriptive comments focussed on describing the things which seemed to matter the most to the participant alongside interpretative comments aiming to understand why participants had these concerns (Smith et al. 2009). Linguistic comments aimed to reflect on language used by the participant and how the content and meaning was presented by them. Please see appendix 5 for exploratory comments made on the transcripts of the current research.

Once exploratory comments were made, these were analysed to identify emergent themes. Themes were expressed as concise phrases which aimed to capture and reflect the understanding provided by the initial note taking. Emergent themes aimed to capture the participant's original thoughts and words in addition to the researcher's interpretation. Please see appendix 5 for potential emergent themes noted on the transcripts of the current research.

The next step in analysis involved searching for connections across emergent themes. Emergent themes which were identified in the previous stage of analysis were now revisited to see how they fit together. The focus of this stage of analysis was to look for a means of drawing emergent themes together into a structure which allowed the researcher to present the most important and interesting aspects of the participant's account (Smith et al. 2009). In the current research emergent themes were listed in chronological order in a new document. Clusters of related themes were formed via

colour coding. Please see appendix 6 for insight into this process for the current research.

A few approaches were utilised as recommended by Smith et al. (2009). Abstraction was used to identify any patterns between emergent themes. Similar themes were clustered together and given a new name 'super-ordinate' theme name. Subsumption was also an approach used to develop super-ordinate themes. This involved certain emergent themes attaining super-ordinate theme status to help bring together a cluster of related themes. Numeration was also an approach used to take account of the frequency with which particular themes were presented in the participant's account. However this was used cautiously, as themes were also identified from things mentioned only once or fleetingly by the participant if the research deemed them important to the participant.

In the current research a master table of themes was developed to organise and structure how the researcher felt the themes for each participant fit together (please see appendix 7). This table also helped to move away from individual analysis for each participant and more towards a macro analysis looking for patterns across cases. This table helped to organise how themes were nested within super-ordinate themes, and helped to capture the most important things about the participants.

Larkin and Thompson (2012) also note the importance of peer validation within the data analysis stage of IPA research. Peer supervision was thus utilised with fellow novice IPA researchers, in addition to supervision provided by researcher's university tutor to ensure checking of emergent themes coming from the data analysis.

### **3.3.7 Bracketing**

Bracketing is a methodological approach that was embraced during the research process. This approach is used within phenomenological research to help the researcher to put aside their own beliefs and assumptions about the phenomenon being researched (Carpenter, 2007). Lopez and Williams (2004) suggest how bracketing allows the researcher to maintain an open attitude in letting unexpected meanings emerge in the data. The researcher 'bracketing' their own experiences helps them not to influence and bias the participant's understanding of the phenomenon being explored so that participant's life experiences can be accurately described (Chan et al. 2013).

In qualitative studies the researcher is the primary instrument to collect and analyse data. As such Crotty (1996) argues it impossible for qualitative researchers to be completely objective, though being aware of one's own perceptions, interests, thoughts and values can help to set aside things that can influence the research process.

Within the current study, the researcher used several strategies as suggested by Chan et al. (2013) to achieve bracketing. This included mental preparation and reflexivity before commencing research to facilitate a sense of humbleness to learn about the experiences of CYP 'on road' and an attitude of conscious ignorance about the phenomenon under investigation. Reflexivity as suggested by Chan et al. (2013) is a

key cognitive activity that can help to identify the researcher's potential influence in the research process (please see section 3.3.9 for more information).

As reviewing literature can impact one's preconceptions of the research topic (Chan et al. 2013), during the initial scoping of literature, this was stopped once the researcher had enough understanding of the mental health needs of gang members to justify the research proposal for the current study, whilst maintain a sense of curiosity around the topic. Although through this initial review of the literature I became aware of certain narratives I was conscious not to bias the data collection and analysis. I was keen to allow participants space to talk freely and share their lived experiences without me skewing their story to fit a narrative I had become aware of during the literature review.

During data collection, a semi-structured interview schedule was utilised so that data collected would be generated by open-ended questions that guided the research rather than dictate it by the researcher's own knowledge on the topic and information uncovered in the initial scoping of literature, whilst allowing the researcher the freedom to probe interesting insights provided by participants (see section 3.3.5 for more information on data collection).

During data analysis, in addition to the researcher acknowledging that their own interpretations may influence data analysis, measures were followed to enhance the trustworthiness of the data analysis process which will now be explored further.



### **3.3.8 Trustworthiness**

Thomas (2013) notes how the evaluative constructs of validity, reliability, and generalizability which are synonymous with quantitative and experimental research are not always compatible when exploring the complex nature of the social world.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose that the concept of 'trustworthiness' of a qualitative study is more significant to evaluating its' worth, and so have suggested a model consisting of four components of trustworthiness relevant to qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The following section describes the steps taken in line with the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) to maximise the trustworthiness of the current research.

#### **3.3.8.1 Credibility**

Credibility can be likened to internal validity in quantitative research and is an element which allows others to recognise the experiences contained within the study through the interpretation of participants' experiences (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011). Researchers can establish credibility by looking for similarities within and across the accounts of participants. As stated by Krefting (1991), credibility can be attained within a qualitative study when an accurate interpretation of human experience is presented that people who share the same experience would recognize immediately. Within this research, by following the IPA model of data analysis as proposed by Smith et al. (2009), this allowed for themes to be developed through the process of examining similarities within individual participant accounts as well as across them. Reflexivity

was also applied in the research process to maximise the credibility of the research and is addressed in more detail below. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) note how member checking can also increase the credibility of a qualitative study. Member checking refers to returning to participants after data analysis to ensure that the researcher's interpretations of the collected data are recognised by participants as accurate representations of their experiences (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011). However, in the present research, member checking was unable to occur. This will be discussed in more depth in chapter 5.

### ***3.3.8.2 Transferability***

Transferability can be likened to external validity in quantitative research and refers to the extent at which findings of a particular inquiry can be applicable in other contexts or with other participants / subjects (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Thomas and Magilvy (2011) state how providing dense descriptions of demographics and geographic boundaries of the study can help to establish transferability. Though the aim of the current research is to develop EP practice, research findings can be transferable to inform the practice of other professionals working with youth 'on road'. Similarly, other researchers in different geographical locations working with youth 'on road' may consider adopting the methods used within this study to see if similar results are obtained.

### **3.3.8.3 Dependability**

Dependability can be likened to reliability in quantitative research and refers to the degree with which another researcher can follow the decisions taken in the present research (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011). Within this research, it was hoped that dependability was achieved by describing the specific purpose of the study, inclusion criteria of participants, and a detailed account of data collection, data analysis, the interpretation and presentation of research findings, and the techniques used to establish credibility of the data. This can allow other researchers a structure to follow and replicate the research dependably.

### **3.3.8.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability can be likened to objectivity in quantitative research and refers to a self-awareness of how the researcher's own preconceptions affect the research (Thomas and Magilvy, 2011). During this research, a reflexive journal was maintained to achieve this. A more in-depth discussion on reflexivity (including the reflexive journal) is provided below.

### **3.3.9 Reflexivity**

Charmaz (2006) highlights the importance of reflexivity in interpretative research, whereby the interpretivist researcher should reflect on and take account of how their assumptions and views may have impacted on the research in order to interpret and make sense of the complexities of the multiple realities that are involved.

Reflexivity is viewed as a process of continual critical self-evaluation and internal dialogue of the researcher's positionality and an active acknowledgement and recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome (Berger, 2015; Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Guillemin and Gillam, 2004).

A goal of reflexivity thus is to monitor the researcher's intimate role within the research in order to enhance the accuracy and trustworthiness of the research and credibility of its findings (Buckner, 2005; Cutcliffe, 2003). As Ruby (1980, p. 154) states, "being reflexive in doing research is part of being honest and ethically mature in research practice."

I am a male researcher of Asian British heritage and therefore share a similarity with my participants due to being an ethnic minority male. I myself however have never experienced life 'on road', though I do have the experience of close friends and family members being 'on road'. Through their experiences I have been able to observe the detrimental impacts leading this life can have to one's emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, through my professional experience working as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, I have worked with CYP at risk of joining gangs. With these personal and professional experiences in mind, along with extensive reading around the topic, I decided to undertake this research to capture the voice and experiences of CYP 'on road', as this was something – to my surprise – which was underrepresented in current research. My reflexivity throughout the research process was captured using a reflexive journal. An example excerpt from this journal can be found in appendix 8.

### **3.4 Chapter summary**

The current chapter has presented the methodology and methods adopted by the current research. Chapter 4 will now present research findings and a discussion of how these findings pertain to existing literature.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

The following chapter will outline findings obtained from participant interviews and analysis. Findings have been presented under the research question to which they pertain to, with a table providing an initial overview of superordinate and sub themes to be explored.

Smith et al. (2009) state that the findings and results sections of IPA research can be presented in one section. Thomas (2013) furthermore states that within applied social research it is often difficult to separate findings and discussion chapters. As such, findings will be discussed as they relate to literature.

Direct quotes from participant transcriptions will be presented in italics, with all reference to participants' names, geographical locations, and organisation names all removed to guard anonymity. Corden and Sainsbury (2006) report how research users feel participants' use of swearing in qualitative research can help to build a picture of that person and show their depth of feeling. It has therefore been decided to leave participants' swearing unedited.

**4.2 Research question 1: How do CYP ‘on road’ describe the impact of their experiences on their emotional wellbeing?**

*Table 5: Overview of superordinate themes and sub themes for research question 1*

<b>Superordinate theme</b>	<b>Sub theme</b>
Positives of life ‘on road’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You feel like you’ve got somewhere you belong”</li> <li>• “It’s fast money innit”</li> <li>• “Everyone wants to be a somebody”</li> <li>• “I knew there were people that would help”</li> </ul>
“You was kicking off every couple of days”	
Negative psychological consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It get’s you paranoid”</li> <li>• “Some nights you can’t sleep”</li> </ul>
Exploitation	
“Not really looking forward to anything”	
Impact on relationship with family	
Adverse childhood experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of domestic violence</li> <li>• “Not having a father figure”</li> </ul>
“If it’s beef then your all beefing...there’s no questions”	

## 4.2.1 Superordinate theme: Positives of life 'on road'

### 4.2.1.1 Sub theme: "You feel like you've got somewhere you belong"

All participants reflected on the positive aspects of life 'on road'. The idea of the gang as a family was stated by P1 and P3, with both participants valuing a sense of belonging this harboured.

*P1: We always were together day in day out you get me. Late nights, every day you get me. So, we were just seeing each other as family. We helped each other, we ate together, everything you get me. If one of us was having a munch, all of us were having a munch ... It was kinda nice still.*

*P3: You feel like you've got a nice little strong family around you, you feel like you've got somewhere you belong I suppose. Errm I suppose yeah you feel like you've got a brotherhood around you.*

This is in line with research suggesting a certain status that may be associated with gang involvement. Those with low self-esteem may join gangs to bolster their sense of self-worth (Alleyne and Wood, 2010).

With the 'Hierarchy of needs' framework proposed by Maslow et al. (1970) in mind, it can be hypothesised that participants in the current study lacked a sense of belonging and connectedness at home and within their educational provision, an important psychological need which they sought to attain from the gang.



Research has suggested how gangs can act as a substitute family and offer a sense of belonging to isolated CYP who lack strong family or social relationships (Harris et al. 2011; Jacobs, 2010). CYP who join gangs often have troubled childhood histories and gang membership may provide a sense of belonging that is central to their social identity (Pickles, 2009).

P1 distanced himself from the 'gang' label and strongly emphasised the idea of his friendship group as a family at the time. He did however state that many other people around them would judge and label them as a gang.

*P1: At the time there was no gang. We were just seeing each other as family you get me. You know what it is, if you chill with a group of people, they're gonna see you as a gang anyway ... but obviously it's probably not that you're just judging a book by its cover.*

P1 expressed the innocence of youth and aloofness his friends had during those times. As such he felt that they did not act up or live up to any labels people placed on them.

*P1: You're a kid man you don't care and that you know what I'm saying you're young you don't care. It's just it is what it is you get me. Let them say what they want to say*

Harris et al. (2011) also reported that individuals saw their gang as supportive, cohesive, and stable friendships. Though P1 appeared to present a lack of care for

what others labelled his friendship group, Harris et al. (2011) caution practitioners about their use of labelling CYP as gang members as they can resist the label.

#### **4.2.1.2 Sub theme: “It’s fast money innit”**

All participants’ accounts talked about the financial benefits of being ‘on road’. The plight of poverty was particularly emphasised in P1’s interview, which was a driving factor to turning to illicit means to quickly make money ‘on road’. P3 highlighted that turning to life ‘on road’ for financial gain was seen as a last resort.

*P1: ‘On road’ is when you make money on road you get me. Obviously, the problems ‘on road’, the beef with people and that comes with making money you know what I’m saying.*

*P3: if a young boy was ‘on road’ ... they’ve been erm put in a predicament or put in a mindset where they’ve got nowhere else to go but out ‘on road’ with their people to do ... whether it’s legal things, illegal things, anything to get by*

P2 referred to the benefits of ‘on road’ in providing ‘fast money’, in addition to an increased sense of importance this facilitated.

*P2: Like it’s fast money innit. So yeah. You feel like ... you’re the man innit cah you’re just making fast money.*

Harris et al. (2011) report the need and desire to make money as central to the experience of gang members. Benjamin (2014) found how participants' constructions of social strain with regards to a lack of economic opportunity, and a need to resolve this strain, helped to legitimise the role for criminal behaviour. It seems that this was the case for the participants in the present study.

Making money 'on road' seemed to facilitate an entrepreneurial mindset amongst P1 and P2, building skills such as profit making and sharing, and accounting for financial losses.

*P1: We all had different ways of making money you know what I'm saying we all hustled and that. But we all brought money to the table and that you get me ... everyone had different parts and that ... obviously everyone's broke so everyone's scraping up money ... Everyone's doing what they gotta do to get their change and obviously ... you split the profit.*

Boden (2019) highlights how gangs can act as a source of provision both financially and by facilitating a sense of vocational value and competence for the individual. Research also suggests a relation between the role of offending in attaining material opportunities and the role of the gang as a business (Agnew, 2016; Boden, 2019; Densley, 2012; Harris et al. 2011). Whittaker et al. (2018) also highlights how gangs have moved away from focussing on postcodes, that is defending their geographical areas and territories from outsiders to demonstrate their physical prowess and courage, towards a more organised business approach to their illegal activities aimed at maximising financial gain.

In P2's account below he looked to analyse things that went wrong 'on road' and used these as opportunities to adapt so that he could maximise his profits. P2 also seemed to trivialise his time spent away from home for 3 months due to setting up his own county line, almost seeing this as a work experience placement which gave him many learning opportunities to improve in the future. P2's account highlighted his sense of business competency (Agnew, 2016), vocational purpose (Harris et al. 2011), and entrepreneurialism (Densley, 2012) 'on road'.

*P2: When you take a couple losses ... you just gotta put the effort in. You just have to minimise to think what you took the loss for. So say like if you spend money and you took a loss, you have to minimise spending money.*

With P1 experiencing low expectations from his education setting, and similarly P2 and P3 placed in PRUs after exclusion from mainstream settings, this may have acted as a strong pull factor to life 'on road' for participants, with this life providing a means of securing economic success (Pitts, 2007; DfE, 2019; Young et al. 2014).

#### **4.2.1.3 Sub theme: "Everyone wants to be a somebody"**

P1 felt that a need for attention and seeking external validation from peers was particularly pertinent with today's youth 'on road' compared to his time where things would be more discrete.

*P1: Back in my day there was no internet bullshit you get me you won't put your problems on social media ... you'd just see each other and dealt with it. Now ... your posting bullshit of you robbing each other's chain and you're telling man you robbed his chain. Fuck that, that's just between you two ... keep it between you two.*

P1 also felt that those who were financially secure and were fulfilling their need for attention and social status amongst their peers by turning to life 'on road' were misguided. P1 felt that those who were 'on road' out of desperation tended to keep their daily activities to themselves, whereas others were desperate to gain attention from their peers.

*P1: Kids that don't need to do this are dumb, they're stupid. They just want people to recognise them ... You get man that are serious and keep their shit quiet and that bruv, they don't talk about ...how they made their money or what they're doing or whatever you get me. But then you get some man talk every single thing they do. Man busts a fart and he goes around and tells the whole strip ... nowadays clout drives it. Everyone wants to be a somebody.*

This is reflective of findings of Harris et al. (2011) who note status and respect as an important psychological need that gangs are able to fulfil, with gang affiliation facilitating increased levels of respect by peers. It is also interesting to note the age disparity between P1 and younger people 'on road' who he refers to. Findings of Whittaker et al. (2020) touch on a generation gap between younger and older gang members, particularly in their adoption of social media use and the value it provides

them. Social media use is more prevalent amongst younger gang members who feel they may have more to gain in establishing a fearsome reputation online to warn off rival competitors, and to form a brand recognition of goods and service provided to potential customers. Conversely senior members of the gang who have already established their reputation can prefer to keep a lower public profile to avoid unwanted attention from police (Storrod and Densley, 2017; Whittaker et al. 2020).

#### **4.2.1.4 Sub theme: “I knew there were people that would help”**

P1 and P3 both emphasised a sense of protection that being in a gang provided, with them being able to stand up to others when required.

*P1: You know what it is, we just stood our ground you know what I’m saying ... No one’s taking no shit from no one you know what I’m saying. You have to stand your ground. You don’t think in them times and that.*

*P3: I suppose we was in a gang but we wasn’t the type of gang to go out and rob old ladies or robbing things like that we’d just be a gang rolling around and if there was a problem then either one of us would deal with it.*

P3 also felt a sense of comfort knowing that his family would be protected during his absence.

*P1: The positive thing was I knew if anything happened to me and my family needed help or something, I knew there were certain people out there that*

*would help them ... where if my little brother or my older brother, or someone try and rob my house, or they got into a kick off or whatever ... even if I'm dead you get me they'd still have their back ... I could put my fucking life on that shit you get me.*

Boden (2019) highlights how gangs can provide a source of protection for its members. Criminality can serve as a means of protection from victimisation for individuals in low-socioeconomic communities where there is an increased sense of fear and risk of exposure to crime and anti-social behaviour (Harris et al. 2011; Jacobs, 2010; Ojo, 2007).

#### **4.2.2 Superordinate theme: “You was kicking off every couple of days”**

All participants spoke of experiencing violence ‘on road’, whether as a perpetrator or as a victim. Making money ‘on road’, particularly in other geographical areas, would be the cause of conflict and problems for participants.

*P1: Everyone's broke, everyone wants money you know what I'm saying ... to make money you're going in next ends you get me you're not gonna stay in your own area and make money. Your gonna go next place and the next man ain't gonna like it. So obviously next man's gonna have issues and your gonna beef and that.*

P3 also felt that being in a gang as opposed to being ‘on road’ as an individual led to more incidents of violence.

*P3: Yeah I'd say the gang is much more negative than just being 'on road' I suppose in violence*

This is in line with research from Gatti et al. (2005) which states how gang members are unique from non-gang associated offenders due to the higher levels of violence they engage with compared to these groups. Gang members are also more likely to carry weapons (Bennett and Holloway, 2004).

P1 described how violent encounters were commonplace 'on road,' and found it almost difficult to express verbally the sheer intensity and frequency of these encounters.

*P1: There were bare run-ins. You know what it is, it's hard to put in words you know what I'm saying. There's so much shit that happened, and you'd think it's like ahh once every here and there, nah man you was kicking off literally every couple of days every 2 days you'd see each other boom boom boom you know one of them ones. It was constant you get me.*

P3 also referred to conflict as commonplace within gangs. Conflict could be triggered over very trivial issues.

*P3: Street gang ... I don't really agree with them myself which is like ... different postcodes going to war over minor minor problems in my eyes. Post code wars, it may be to do with money or a family problem or It could be ... nowadays it*



*literally can be anything. I've seen things happen over females or over a bottle.*

*Things like that.*

*P3: As a kid you don't really know what life's about, so you just argue over the smallest things*

P3 also highlighted trivial arguments within the group itself which was seen as a negative to being in a gang.

*P3: Sometimes you might not see eye to eye with each other, sometimes one might get jealous of the other, these are the cons. You might have a little scuffle with each other, or you might have...as a Kid I've seen enough of them arguments with my friends and that over silly little things.*

This is in line with findings from Aldridge and Medina (2007) who found gang related violence involved interpersonal and inter-group rivalries, with the disputes within the gangs themselves linked with jealousy, debt, family, friends, and romantic relationships.

All participants highlighted the importance of initiating altercations when 'violated' or verbally disrespected by others.

*P2: I had my fights, had my problems ... ones where I react or didn't like the way someone spoke yeah yeah. You can't get violated*

It is interesting to hypothesise whether violent reactions to disrespectful treatment comes from low self-esteem in the individual or contrarily, a high regard for one's self. All participants in this study presented as confident CYP, particularly in contexts that may have required them to stand up for themselves or their peers. Participant accounts would highlight a strong belief in their own ability, as seen in P1's account below.

*P1: Obviously, I don't mind going anywhere, with anyone, because I know about me you get one of them ones, I don't care about you, because I know about me*

P2 and P3 also moved away from gangs to working 'on road' individually, which demonstrates high levels of self-esteem according to Dukes et al. (1997) who highlight the relationship between self-esteem and gang membership, with higher levels of self-esteem linked with gang exit. Participant accounts also resonate with Baumeister et al. (1996) who argue that violence appears to be a common result of threatened egotism rather than low self-esteem, that is when highly favourable views of one's self are disputed by a person or circumstance.

P1 also highlighted how travelling via public transport and on foot in the relatively small geographical area in which he resided increased his vulnerability to being victim of a violent attack. There was a sense of being unable to escape the potential of violent incidents occurring, and as such having to be vigilant at all times during daily life.

*P1: bruv you're in the same area you know what I'm saying. Your gonna bump into each other you get me. You're on foot, you're both on foot, no one's driving,*

*no one's doing that, you're both on foot. You gotta be prepared, you gotta be ready, and you gotta hold it down you know one of them ones.*

P1 detailed a particularly harrowing experience as a teenager where he was a victim of a vicious beating at the hands of a rival group.

*P1: I'm waiting by the bus stop. And then, this is broad daylight, and about 10 man pull up with bats and bars and whatever, I don't know if they had a knife on them or whatever you get me but thank god I never got stabbed that day you get me. Obviously, they started whacking their bars ... imagine I remember lying on my back and that, getting whacked in my face you get me with bars and bats ... and then, I passed out. My head went numb. I just remember getting hit in my face and that and my whole face went numb I couldn't feel nothing.*

P3 detailed a violent incident at the age of 14 where he became involved in a physical conflict which quickly escalated into him initiating an unplanned stabbing.

*P3: I went to meet my friends and then what happened was erm, there ended up being like an argument err a scuffle, and I ended up being involved in a stabbing incident and ended up stabbing someone. At that time, it was all like ... it was a very fast situation*

P3 detailed the immediate impact of this event on his wellbeing; and specifically reflected on the relationship between the event and his thoughts and feelings. This

account highlights the impulsive nature of violence, with no consideration of consequences until after incidents had occurred.

*P3: I'm thinking oh my God, obviously what's happened? What's life come to basically that's exactly what I was thinking. I'm so young and I'm in a place like this. I wasn't expecting it like I had a knot feeling in my tummy honestly. That day it felt like, I didn't eat or nothing I just felt, I felt like I wasn't me*

P1 also spoke of the impact of violence on other members of his group. He shared the impact of one incident where his friend was killed during a conflict with a rival group. The 'tit for tat' violence between groups was also touched on.

*P1: My one mate ... he lost it. He was grabbing any single person and try and stab them and that. I had to grab him back and hold him back and that, he lost it you get me ... he got locked at the end of that anyway. A few months after he died my man was in jail. You know one of them ones.*

*P1: At the time it was just revenge on my mind thinking yo you gotta do this you gotta do that you get me your bredrin's dead you get me. No matter who it is, someone's gonna get it.*

Wood (2014) note that when the gang is perceived to be victimised, this can be considered a crisis situation for the gang and may require a need for quick decisions to be made, leading to groupthink (Janis, 1972). This can help to explain the actions of participants highlighted in the current theme, as groupthink – in a gang context –

can prevent an adequate appraisal of a potentially more sensible alternative action, often instead making hasty decisions regarding retaliation which will often involve violence (Wood, 2014) as was evident throughout the current theme.

Mrug et al. (2016) note how CYPs' exposure to violence in their communities can be linked to an emotional desensitisation which can in turn lead to serious violence in the future. P1 stated that experiencing so many violent altercations over time led to a feeling of desensitisation to violence.

*P1: You know what, because it's been so long, and you've been doing it for so long and you've been kicking off and that, all this bullshit is normal, you don't really think.*

These findings are in line with previous literature highlighting the high levels of exposure gang members have to violence (Coid et al. 2013; Wood and Dennard, 2017). Barnes et al. (2012) highlight how gang members are a high-risk group for experiencing trauma associated with injury sustained from physical fights.

#### **4.2.3 Superordinate theme: Negative psychological consequences**

P1 and P2 both discussed the negative psychological consequences of life 'on road'. These were reflected within subthemes of hyperarousal, and sleep difficulties.

#### **4.2.3.1 Sub theme: “It gets you paranoid”**

A particularly pertinent impact of experiencing violence ‘on road’ as revealed in P1’s interview, is that of a constant state of hyperarousal, or what he would term ‘paranoia’ in his daily life to keep himself and his friends safe from potential threats in the environment. As such P1’s interview detailed his daily experience of the physiological reactions associated with the ‘fight or flight’ response to help facilitate immediate reaction to a perceived threat.

*P1: Yeah. It gets you paranoid... you’re always...looking around you get me. Like right now, if a car drives past me right now you get me or it slows down there, I would fully think yo who’s that? You get me like is that someone I’ve got a problem with? And my heart starts racing, my adrenaline starts pumping, boom, soon as they drive off its calm again you know one of them ones. I get, now, it’s just paranoia all the time you know one of them ones.*

The ‘fight or flight’ response was also referred to in P2’s interview in reference to police encounters. In the incident described by P2, he detailed a sense of urgency and focus to remove incriminating evidence on his person before the police caught him on the street.

*P2: At that time, it’s the adrenaline innit. So obviously boom, your just like yo, you’re not panicking but your just like yo ima need to try and get rid of something innit.*

P1 felt that there were pros and cons to being in such a constant state of arousal. Though it can help to keep him aware of threats and ensure his safety, it can also impede on his ability to relax when socialising with friends.

*P1: I like it that I'm paranoid because it keeps me aware of my surroundings and that. So it's rah good in a sense but obviously sometimes I don't like it because I'll be chilling with a group of man and boom, I get paras because someone's pulled up and I get, I get ready, I try and get ready, try and start my car, try grab my...whatever the fuck I have to grab and, you get me be ready and make sure if, if something goes down, no one gets hurt you get me.*

As the interview progressed, it allowed P1 to start making sense of his current presentation, particularly in how his past experiences 'on road' have helped to shape the difficulties he experiences today. As such P1 was mindful that his experience of violent conflict in his past have conditioned him to being in a constant state of hyperarousal in his current daily life.

*P1: You know what it is I've never thought about it like that you know one of them ones. In a sense yeah you get me, in a sense yeah. I never thought. Because I've been paras for a long time. Like I get paranoid a lot, for a long time you know one of them ones. Obviously after incidents.*

P1 felt that hyperarousal to threats was commonplace in individuals who experience life 'on road', despite what they may choose to share or withhold in relation to this.

*P1: Anyone 'on road' ... if they say they ain't paranoid they're chatting shit and that you get me. If you kicked off now and that persons saying I'm gonna fucking come back and I'm gonna get you, your telling me you're not gonna be paras and that? Them man ain't telling the truth. You would be paras bruv, no matter who you are, no matter how bad you are, no matter how big you are, you're gonna be sitting there thinking man could roll on me any single fucking time. Any car pulls up your going to get paranoid.*

P1's account reflects findings within literature highlighting how exposure to high levels of violence in gangs, whether as victims or as perpetrators (Kerig, 2016) can negatively impact members' mental health, including association with a variety of psychological difficulties including paranoia, PTSD (of which hyperarousal is a symptom), and anxiety (Abram et al. 2004; Barnes et al. 2012; Coid et al. 2013; Ruchkin et al. 2002; Wood and Dennard, 2017). As can be seen in P1's account, these symptoms continue to be pervasive in his daily life and impact negatively on his wellbeing and quality of life, even though he is no longer involved in life 'on road'.

#### **4.2.3.2 Sub theme: "Some nights you can't sleep"**

P1 detailed how the experience of violent conflicts in his past lead him to experiencing sleep difficulties in his daily life. He reflected that sleep difficulties were particularly prevalent during passive moments in his life, where he would ruminate on historic incidents. P1 presents a unique perspective from P2 and P3, in that he is able to describe the longer-term consequences of being 'on road'.



*P1: I can't sleep. You know what it is, there's ways...fucking hell bruv...how do I put this...you know what it is, there's some nights you can't sleep, some nights you can and that. You know what it is as years go by, the things still there, but it fades and that, because you're doing other things ... Your mind don't cross it until you're in bed you know one of them ones and you're on your own and your lying down and you think about certain things and sometimes you can't go sleep.*

As with hyperarousal, sleep difficulties are also a prevalent symptom of PTSD (Belleville et al. 2009; Giosan et al. 2015). Hughes et al. (2015) also note sleeping difficulties amongst CYP involved in gangs. Joao et al. (2018) reports the detrimental impact of sleep impairment on one's mental health in clinical and non-clinical populations. In this research poor sleep quality was associated with increased depression, anxiety, and stress. Furthermore, Belleville et al. (2009) report the important role sleep plays in PTSD, finding that poor sleep quality has an impact on PTSD symptom severity and perceived mental health.

#### **4.2.4 Superordinate theme: Exploitation**

P1 reflected on the exploitation of CYP by 'olders' 'on road' to become involved in drug dealing. Olders were described to take advantage of the materialistic desires of CYP from an early age, particularly those living in poverty.

*P1: If you're going school and that and your bredrin's got the freshest garms, nice shoes, nice phone, and you're coming into school with some fucked up*

*Nikes, ripped up and that, a jack that stinks, smelly clothes whatever you were bought up different. So if man offers you money or any way to make money and any way to live better you're going to take it.*

This is in line with findings of Harris et al. (2011) who found gang affiliation can be seen as a means of making easy and quick money, and this is not always linked to social exclusion but a reflection of greed and impatience.

*P1: Certain people I know it's their fault the youngsters are the way the youngsters are you get me. In different areas you get me. Because you always get someone bad in your area ... doing what they're doing and that, and they put this in the kid's mind from young*

Here P1 seemed to lament this exploitation of CYP 'on road'. A concept P1 used frequently was the concept of 'on road' as a seed being 'planted' into his mind and the minds of other CYP from an early age by others 'on road'. As such the idea of turning attention away from education and to life 'on road' was almost a gradual process which grew over time. He felt that at an early age CYP could be conditioned to follow a particular path, whether good or bad, and that this would be hard to break over time. Again, likened to the analogy of planting a seed, it seemed that the idea of 'on road' was firmly rooted and hard to remove from his mindset. P1 felt that because CYP were now being exploited from an early age, this was exacerbating violence 'on road'. P1 felt that the increased sense of importance and status 'on road' from an early age will further act as a barrier to supporting these CYP. Ultimately P1 expressed a sense of disappointment that had he ultimately become the average of the bad role models

that he was surrounded by, and that had he been surrounded by positive role models, he would have had better outcomes in his life.

*P1: if I was a kid now and I was planted ... maths maths maths I'd be sick at maths you know what I'm saying. But if your young bruv and you're on the strip and your broke and your just walking around chilling in the park and that and some olders come to you like yeah yeah yeah you wanna make money likkle man dadada they see them with a big gold chain, nice watch, nice care whatever bruv that shits getting planted in their head you get me and their mind and that. They're thinking yeah, I wanna be like ... Your bought up with that shit in your head you get me that's what you know and that.*

*Figure 4: Insights into the research process: the need for more interpretation*

The initial draft of my findings and discussion section was very descriptive with sparse levels of interpretation. As such it definitely fell into the pitfalls a novice IPA researcher makes as Smith et al. (2009) note.

I remember this account by P1 relating to the seed being planted in his mind as the starting point in me trying to be more interpretative with the data.

Exploitation of CYP by gangs for county lines operations has been highlighted in reports by the Ministry of Justice (2019) and the Home Office (2018). Exchange is also common in county lines exploitation as a method of control, where the victim is offered or promised something they want or need; in P1's account this was money and materialistic possessions such as clothes. P1's account also reflected stage one of the 'grooming line' highlighted by Barnardo's (Shepard and Lewis, 2017). This is the targeting stage in which groomers identify vulnerability within the intended victim, and

work towards gaining a sense of trust and friendship with them. The vulnerability discussed by P1 was the victims' money problems.

Interestingly P2's account provided a differing perspective to entry 'on road'. Far from being exploited, P2 in his own words "*went on the run*" for 3 months to pioneer his own county line. As such P2 presented as an ambitious freelancer attempting to establish himself as an on-road drug dealer. P2's experience 'on road' thus provides a contrary to the narrative in the literature regarding exploitation, in that not all CYP 'on road' are exploited into selling drugs, as some are attracted to the idea of county lines and will seek out opportunities themselves.

#### **4.2.5 Superordinate theme: "Not really looking forward to anything"**

P1 reflected on how his experiences 'on road' negatively affected his life outcomes and outlook for the future. P1's account portrayed his current life as a mundane existence with nothing to look forward to.

*P1: I feel like if I never went through all of that shit, I would have been different now (laughs). I'd have been a different person. I probably would have been closer to my family, had a job, everything you get me. Now it's just, I'm just going day by day. I don't really do shit. I just chill you get me. Try and fucking make the day go by and that. Go sleep start another day. That's what it is. Not really looking forward to anything. I'm not really fucking planning anything.*

P1 also expressed a sense of regret in missing out on experiences growing up due to being 'on road'. These included missing out on social experiences, going to university, and travelling. P1 described a sense of discomfort to do these things in the present.

*P1: A lot of people my age you get me they've been on holiday; they've done a lot of things you get me. They've been uni, they've been clubbing. Bruv I've never had a chance to do none of that you know one of them ones. Now when times come where I can do things like that, I don't feel comfortable because I never went past my comfort zone back when I was a kid ... Now I'm able to do that bruv I'm not feeling comfortable, so I won't do it*

#### **4.2.6 Superordinate theme: Impact on relationship with family**

All participants spoke of the impact that being 'on road' had on their relationships with their family. P1 shared how he was distant from his family for most of his time 'on road' (which was several years). P1 emphasised a deep regret about missing the opportunity to spend time with his parents in their prime years. P1 shared how he is currently making up for all the time lost with his parents.

*P1: I didn't see them for years man. I was always out you get me ... when you grow old and that and you look back you think yo your parents are getting old now too ... all them years you wasted because of your own bullshit, they grew old ... and you can't take that back ... So now that time you got to build that relationship and to chill with them and to get to know them and do certain things*

*and that, that's been wasted because you don't know how long they got left now you know what I'm saying because they're old.*

P1 also spoke of a sense of anxiety for his siblings when they are out in the community, as he is aware of the dangers that could face them 'on road'.

*P1: When my brothers go out, I get worried you know one of them ones when they go certain places ... I know what the ends are like you get me. I know what late nights are like, I know who be's about and that. I know you can get robbed and that you get me. People out there lurking tryna rob ya, there's shotters on the corner, group of man be chilling you could get stabbed for no fucking reason*

P2 and P3 highlighted the turbulent relationship with their mothers as a result of their experiences 'on road'. P3 noted how his relationship with his mother was "up and down". P2 was particularly reflective of the fact that his actions were causing an unnecessary burden for his mother to carry.

*P2: It's been up and down innit. Like obviously stress and that dadada and that man just brining unnecessary drama to her house and that, unnecessary problems and that. So obviously she's like, obviously, she's going to be pissed off innit. But, after a while she came around and that then yeah, we just worked it out from there innit.*

Hallsworth and Silverstone (2009) found that gang membership of CYP can lead to conflict within the family. The accounts of the participants also support the findings of

Young et al. (2014) who found that parents can be under immense pressure from the many difficulties faced with parenting a troubled gang member.

P2 was very aware of the undue burden his behaviour 'on road' was placing on his mother and would try his best to alleviate this. Though P2 had noted he was averse to receiving advice, he did listen to his mother's advice to take medication for his ADHD to alleviate the stress his presentation was bringing to her.

*P2: I'm like yo fam I'm not taking meds fam ... so, I refused it innit. Then obviously one of the reasons why is cah my mum innit. I don't wanna put bare stress on my mum innit ... then after that I started doing meds*

#### **4.2.7 Superordinate theme: Challenging early childhood experiences**

P3's interview reflected on the impact of his difficult early childhood experiences. This was reflected within the sub themes of experiencing domestic violence, and the impact of growing up without a father figure.

##### ***4.2.7.1 Sub theme: Experience of domestic violence***

P3's interview discussed the difficulties he experienced in his early childhood where he was witness to, and victim of domestic violence. P3 felt that as he matured with age, he began to feel the effects of these adverse childhood experiences on his presentation.

*P3: I used to see my mum get errm what is it domestic violence with her ex-partner ... It wasn't a nice sight ... As you start to grow your mind starts to get, starts to mature your start to understand what is actually happening and that's where, I think that's probably where the anger comes from sometimes in kids where, from what they see growing up.*

P3 emphasised a sense of helplessness when being victim to domestic violence as a child. He felt that during this time his anger was being bottled up until eventually he started to present with aggression and violence at the age of 13 when he first entered life 'on road'.

*P3: I've been numb I remember I got hit a couple times by her partner, But I suppose that's where the anger comes from, the anger started to come from as a kid is because when you're a child and you've got a grown man hitting on ya, you can't, you actually can't do nothing can you because you're a child. A child's got no power over a man, over a grown man have they so I suppose you just start holding things in and then it gets to like a certain amount of time there's only so much pressure a bottle can take before it bursts.*

Witnessing domestic violence in the home has been classified as an 'Adverse Childhood Experience' (ACE) and has been found to be highly predictive of poor emotional, behavioural, and mental health outcomes for CYP (Bellis et al. 2014; Breedvelt, 2016; Edwards et al. 2003; Tew, 2011). Hughes et al. (2015) also note the negative impact of ACEs in early childhood, including domestic violence, and the influence this can have on CYP's social and emotional development, and the



increased chance of them adopting harmful behaviours and poorer life outcomes later in life (Anda et al. 2006; Bellis et al. 2014). Recent research (Wolff et al. 2019) highlights how ACEs, many of which are associated within families absent of nourishing parent-child relationships, can predict gang involvement for CYP who offend by the age of 18.

#### **4.2.7.2 Sub theme: “Not having a father figure”**

Pickles (2009) highlights how family breakdown, and fatherlessness in particular, is a key factor in CYP gravitating towards gang culture. P3 noted that the lack of a father figure during this time to correct his aggressive behaviours was a reason for his aggressive and unruly behaviour towards his mother. It was also a major reason behind his decision to enter ‘on road’ at 13.

*P3: I think that was just mainly down to me wanting to be out more because I was growing up. I suppose me not having a, like a father figure or a male figure in my life growing up I suppose as well.*

*P3: Around my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday that’s when I started to get more violent. And I think that was mainly down from me becoming unruly towards my mum and having no one there to correct me and say no that’s wrong. So, I suppose whatever was wrong I thought was right in my eyes cuz I didn’t know different.*

P3’s account is in line with findings reported by Pickles (2009) which state the absence of the father, i.e., a positive male role model, in the home conjures a sense of

inadequacy and rejection within CYP growing up in fatherless households which can often be internalised to create anger and resentment. This can be seen at the point of P3's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday where he started to become more outwardly aggressive, almost as a means to start releasing the pent-up anger from his childhood. Pickles (2009) also note that CYP with absent fathers lack positive masculinity being modelled to them. P3 stated that no-one addressed his unruly behaviour, which he thought was appropriate because he did not know any better. However, it should be noted that conclusions about the impact of absent fathers align with the concept of a traditional nuclear family, and does not necessarily reflect modern society. As such, these conclusions should be treated with caution.

P3 also reflected that an incident at the age of 14 where he stabbed a peer in a fight, was again in part due to the anger that had built up throughout his childhood.

*P3: From there went like a blur and really fast and then ... ended up getting stabbed but like that incident there I think it was mainly because like, the anger that was built up in me and for someone to disrespect me and like ...*

It is also possible that witnessing domestic violence as a child may also have modelled how to handle conflict with violence. Baldry (2003) found that CYP who grow up in violent homes may learn and be encouraged to use violence in interpersonal relationships to dominate others (Baldry, 2003; Fantuzzo et al. 1999; Spaccarelli et al. 1995). Research has suggested that CYP who are exposed to domestic violence are more likely to demonstrate aggressive behaviours and engage in fighting (Baldry

2003; Fantuzzo et al. 1999) and are at greater risk of criminal behaviour later in life (UNICEF, 2006).

#### **4.2.8 Superordinate theme: “If it’s beef then you’re all beefing...there’s no questions”**

Loyalty was something touched on by P1 and P3’s accounts of their experiences ‘on road’, with both participants demonstrating an unwavering loyalty towards their peers. Loyalty was considered important to the concept of being in a gang. If one member of the gang had an issue, all members of the gang were expected to support that member in conflict.

*P1: A real gang, obviously, they got each other’s back innit. They treat each other like family and that. If it’s beef then you’re all beefing you get me there’s no questions, there’s no right or wrong you get me. You’re all together and that’s what gang is.*

*P1: I ain’t no dickhead if my bredrin’s kicking off I’m kicking off you get what I’m saying. That’s what it was like.*

*P3: I suppose if you’re in a gang, errm and if your just say one of your friends get for example jumped, then if you’re in a gang the whole gangs gonna wanna ride back*

In P1's account above there was a sense of immorality in that unquestioned loyalty was expected in the gang whether rightly or wrongly given the particular circumstance. This is in line with literature such as Alleyne and Wood (2010) which states that in order to adhere to the group norms of criminal activity, gang members need to adjust their social cognitions to resolve the cognitive dissonance which arises from their involvement in criminal activity. An approach gang members may use to reduce their cognitive dissonance is to morally disengage (Alleyne et al. 2014). This can allow individuals to justify harmful acts and resolve the self-condemnation and cognitive dissonance that are associated with violating one's personal moral standards (Bandura et al. 1996). Further research suggests that street gangs will set aside their moral standards to engage in illegal behaviour (Alleyne and Wood, 2010).

In many instances, the demonstration of blind loyalty to the gang led to negative consequences for P1 and P3. In P1's case the peers involved in an incident wrote statements against him which led to a charge for robbery and assault whilst also being removed from his college course. In P3's case he ended up serving time in a secure children's unit for stabbing a someone his peer had an issue with.

*P1: Yeah I got fucked I couldn't, I had to leave my course and that you get me... I got a record now and what I wanted to do it had to be, I had to have a clean record and that you get me. So I couldn't do much.*

*P3: Errm when I was 14 the stabbing that was kinda to do with that still because I've got involved with something due to my bredrin but me being the person ... if one of my mates had been like touched or violated for example, it would be a*

*bit weird for me to just sit there and watch or listen about it, I'd feel like I'd have to do something about it.*

Over time, particularly during these times of difficulty this loyalty was often not reciprocated. These incidents of unloyalty from their peers eventually impacted the trust participants could place in others

*P1: It changed me. It fucked with my head and that. It made me feel like I couldn't do certain things and that, that I wanted to do and that you know what I'm saying. And I feel like the people I was chilling with, obviously it fucked me up and that innit. I shouldn't have chilled with them people. It changed a lot of shit for me. At home, everything.*

Both participants' accounts emphasised the dissipation of loyalty from their peers when police became involved in incidents. In the case of P3, this unreciprocated loyalty was also a contributing factor to him working by himself 'on road' as opposed to within a gang.

*P1: I started hearing that the people I got arrested with wrote statements against me and that saying it was me that did everything you get me ... obviously it's stressful you get me you're young and you start stressing you get me. You're sitting there thinking you're going jail for something you ain't even done.*

*P3: In my eyes when it comes to getting locked up there ain't no gang it's just you man ... no one's there when you need them and when the police get ya ... it's just you on your own no one else.*

P1 also highlighted how experiencing stress from incidents 'on road' could both exacerbate his anger and facilitate more arguments with others, and also lead to him to become more socially reclusive, particularly as a reaction to times where his loyalty was not reciprocated by his peers.

*P1: I had issues anyway you get me. I used to have anger problems when I was young and that I used to get pissed off. I still do you get me. And fucking obviously that, it made it worse. I started kicking off more ... I was stressed and that I was going out on my ones, I weren't really linking anyone like that, and I was kicking off and that with a lot of people.*

P1's account here reflects the theory proposed by Macfarlane (2019) in relation to explaining the prevalence of mental health needs amongst gang members, particularly enhancement, whereby gang membership may enhance covert psychiatric morbidity to become more apparent. In P1's context, his anger was exacerbated due to being involved in incidents 'on road.'

*P1: ...I knew a few people that were already in jail you get me that, obviously they were in for a while so I never got to chill with them. So, once they come out, obviously that's when everything started and that. All the madness and that.*

P1's account here is reflective of the selection stage of Thornberry's (1987) Interactional Theory, whereby gangs seek to recruit members who are already delinquent. In this instance, P1 felt more comfortable being by himself during this period than socialising with peers he felt were dissimilar to him. He instead waited for his similar minded friends to be released from prison. This is further supported by Macfarlane (2019) who notes that individuals may be more likely to join gangs as other gang members may reaffirm their attitudes and values.

P2 and P3 were particularly reflective of the fact that this blind loyalty bought unnecessary problems for them, and this led them to question the idea of the gang completely, with participants willingly moving towards working by themselves 'on road'. As such these accounts lament a loss of an internal locus of control of one's actions when in a gang and so now seek to reclaim an internal locus of control by working independently.

*P3: if you're 'on road' (on your own) erm, and one of your friends have been touched ... you don't have to worry about being pressured into going to do some negative stuff do you, you can just make your own decision of alright, that's happened they got to have done something to cause that so I'm just gonna leave it there and do my own thing I suppose*

*P3: The gang thing is dying out a bit. Everyone's jumping in their singular routes now ... because of the headaches. Like say for example someone's 'on road' in a group, the groups got some responsibility to one thing, everyone's gonna*

*hear that headache. Whereas if there's only one person and there's no group, and he's got some responsibility, only he's gonna hear that headache no one else*

P2 also commented on his preference to work 'on road' by himself. His reasons were motivated by financial reasons, but he also touched on having to share 'losses' with other members of the group.

*P2: Say if you work by yourself, you earn more money. Boom, you can't really blame no one else for your losses. Errm, it's easier to control. But say if you're working with your bredrins, you have to half your profit, don't really mind. Boom. But if they take a loss, you have to take that loss as well. So yeah it just depends innit.*

As noted in literature, gang members are eager to adopt group norms and social practices so that they are accepted (Hogg and Giles, 2012). Within the accounts above, the commanding influence of conforming to social norms of others is apparent, even when others are wrong (Asch, 1951). Rimal and Real (2003) note how adherence to ingroup norms can result from a member's fear of receiving social sanctions given to those who violate norms, as the potential rejection of their friends can be particularly threatening (Baron and Kerr, 2003).

P2 and P3 clearly expressed a sense of disagreement with the norms of the gang early in their life 'on road', particularly with a requirement to demonstrate blind loyalty to members and support them in their conflicts with others. Wood (2014) notes the



concept of pluralistic ignorance in that individual group members may privately reject a social norm though still abiding by it publicly because they believe that the other members of the group are in favour of it (O’Gorman, 1986; Reid et al. 2005). However, over time as noted in the accounts above, pluralistic ignorance appeared too heavy a burden to carry and P2 and P3 deemed it necessary to stop presenting to avoid further unnecessary negative consequences this would bring them.

#### 4.3 Research question 2: How do CYP ‘on road’ describe coping and support mechanisms in relation to their wellbeing?

Table 6: Overview of superordinate themes and sub themes for research question 2

Superordinate theme	Sub theme
Enablers and barriers to seeking support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Not a lot of people can relate”</li> <li>• Approachable and ‘down to earth’ professionals</li> <li>• Influence “of street cred”</li> </ul>
Individual coping strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I used to drink and smoke”</li> <li>• “I write bars”</li> <li>• “I could be in worse places”</li> </ul>
Support from others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family support</li> <li>• Peer support</li> <li>• Professional support</li> </ul>
“Everyone’s grown up...you have to move on”	

### **4.3.1 Superordinate theme: Enablers and barriers to seeking support**

All three participants highlighted enablers and barriers to them seeking support for their emotional wellbeing. This was reflected in sub themes which included the importance of lived experience, approachable and 'down to earth' professionals, a stubbornness to support, and the influence of their street reputation.

#### ***4.3.1.1 Sub theme: "Not a lot of people can relate"***

The accounts of P1 and P3 both reflected on the importance of finding people with similar lived experiences when accessing support for their difficulties. P1 felt that it was particularly difficult for him to find people who could relate to the experiences he had been through, even those who have experiences 'on road' but not to the extent and gravity of P1's experiences. As such he tends to keep things to himself.

*P1: Not a lot of people can relate. Even certain people that I meet now, that are on, whatever road or whatever you get me, they can't relate. What I was going through at their age or what I was going through now, they're 20, 21 or 22 or whatever, bruv whatever their doing now when they kick off blud it looks like, it looks like fuck all you get me, baby play and that.*

P1's sense of trust in others also seemed damaged after many experiences with disloyal and disingenuous people in his life thus far which seemed to fuel a sense of apprehension to share his thoughts and feelings with others.

*P1: There's not a lot of people you can relate to nowadays though. A lot of people lie and bullshit and that. You can tell when someone chats shit and that. I don't know fam. I've met certain people that lie.*

P3 also emphasised the importance of lived experience in professionals who work with CYP 'on road.' P3 felt that the academic qualifications of many youth workers today did not equip them well to empathise with youth 'on road.'

*P3: I know there's youth workers these days where they've been through ... something similar whereas I know there's youth workers out here nowadays where they've not been through ... the system or nothing to do with the road. They're just putting workers that have been through college and university, got their degree and there just putting them in there.*

*P3: There's too many out there that have just been on a good path all their life and they're just tryna teach you what the other side looks like when they've never seen it in my eyes.*

P3 also felt that youth workers today were very 'process' focussed and often state the obvious to CYP with regards to the consequence of their current actions. P3 felt that there was a lack of empathy and understanding of the nature of the things CYP 'on road' have experienced in their pasts leading up to the youth worker's involvement.

*P3: you put someone in the room where they just tell him ah ok if you keep doing this your gonna go to jail, if you keep doing this you can die ... they're not*

*telling you about the friends he's lost in the past, he's not telling him about his time in jail, he's not telling him about how the system works, he's just telling him what's going to happen, he's not telling him what has happened.*

P1's interview also referred to a sense of unrelatedness with others as a barrier between himself and accessing support from professionals. P1 also felt that professionals present as clinical and money orientated, and so lacking a sense of genuine care for the individual.

*P1: I've never been to a professional. I doubt they'll understand you know one of them ones. They're just gonna sit there and boom write down whatever come before next appointment pay them the next £25-30. They just make money you get me (laughs) they ain't gonna understand. That's how I see it as.*

P1's account here reflects the findings of Farran (2014), which stated the importance of professionals investing more in the pre-engagement process with marginalised CYP at first contact as opposed to beginning assessment and intervention immediately. This can facilitate approachability of professionals when CYP feel the need to seek support. In P1's experience however this seemed to be lacking and this description of professional support was very cold and clinical, devoid of a real sense of care for individuals.

During the interview P3 demonstrated a sense of responsibility to use his lived experience to change the lives of other CYP who may be going through similar life experiences as he has been through.

*P3: As soon as this case is over, I will make my change cah it seems to be the right way to go man, even if like out of 100 kids even if I'm only changing one child it's still something you've still changed one child.*

Importance of professionals with lived experience to support CYP in gangs is highlighted by Hall and Ackerman (2018). Lived experience is emphasised with great importance by UK organisations such as St Giles Trust to help support CYP involved in gangs or at risk of criminal exploitation. As such they note that professionals with lived experience can improve the engagement rate of these extremely vulnerable CYP (Hall and Ackerman, 2018).

Participant accounts within this theme also resonate with the work of Girard (1962), who argues that with regards to mentoring within criminal justice settings, personal transformation does not occur spontaneously, rather it is inspired by others, and that the desire to change is dependent on social models. Mentors here are described as role models, with their previous experience of offending making them a credible point of connection for mentees. Their stories of change are thus more worthy of respect and admiration.

In support of Girard (1962), Buck (2017) further argues that desistance from crime may not be solely dependent on social opportunities, a person's self-concept, or maturation, but can also be prompted by what individuals see others desire. Buck (2017) noted it was not desistance from crime in itself that mentees desired in exchanges with mentors, but more so to help others in the ways they had observed in

their mentors. This could explain P3's desire to change his life for the better and use his lived experience to help others in a similar position to him.

#### **4.3.1.2 Sub theme: Approachable and 'down to earth' professionals**

P3 emphasised the importance of professionals being 'down to earth' when seeking their support. As such he highlighted certain characteristics of such professionals, including a willingness to listen, accessibility, demonstrating honesty, and giving CYP the space to express what they feel comfortable to share. Professionals demonstrating these qualities could harbour a good sense of rapport with him.

*P3: Yeah, they're really down to earth. You might get the odd one or two that might look down on you and think you're a naughty child but 98% of the staff in the place they'll be willing to listen to what your problems are. They'll tell you exactly what you said like ... only tell me what your open and willing to tell me about yourself ... and you don't have to go looking around bushes for a member of staff to talk to you can just open your door and you'll see a member of staff that you'll get to know.*

In the quote above it is interesting to note that P3 would be unreceptive to staff labelling him a 'naughty child.' This implies such staff were disregarding a holistic understanding of many interplaying factors in P3's life leading to his current presentation and suggest that he was beyond help. Though there is a sense of individual responsibility on P3's part to engage with support, staff response may not help matters if they adopt an individual model of disability which regards people with

disabilities as having something 'wrong' with them. This is opposed to the social model of disability which shifts the focus away from functional limitations of individuals with impairments on to problems caused by disabling environments, cultures, and barriers (Oliver, 1996).

An important indicator of approachability P3 highlighted would be the way in which professionals dressed. P3 stated a sense of discomfort in talking to professionals in suits which would negatively impact on his engagement with them. P3 also touched again on a very process focussed approach from professionals who were more concerned with completing paperwork then connecting with the individual.

*P3: When you're comfortable with someone cah ... when you're kids you don't really wanna sit with a man in a suit I suppose ... you dress cool you get me ... my little brother has been going through a bit. I can tell you my little brother would gladly come down and sit with you because you're not dressed in a suit you're not here with a pen and pad and that your cool and your calm about yourself*

*Figure 5: Insights into the research process: importance of rapport*

From the inception of the idea of the current research, rapport was something that was given great importance to as I felt it would be the key to make this study successful, particularly within the data collection phase. Much work was done consulting with key adults working with this population to help facilitate this rapport. This included sensitivity around terminology regarding mental health and gangs, to physical presentation, and my own consideration into the subtleties of rapport such as eye contact, mirroring of the participant's pace in conversation, and transparency to instil trust, empathy and genuineness (Beaver , 2011). P3's comment above about the sense of comfort in our engagement validated all of these efforts and it made for a proud moment in the research

Literature notes how gang members can develop a culture of opposition to legitimate authorities (Alleyne and Wood, 2010; Moore and Vigil, 1987). This can begin with a rejection of social institutions such as school where individuals instead identify with their gang (Wood, 2014). Gang members can also demonstrate a less favourable disposition towards adults in legitimate roles such as teachers, police, and businessmen than their non-gang related peers (Drury, 2010; Short and Strodbeck, 1965).

P3's account also reflects recommended practice proposed by the Youth Justice Board (YJB, 2010), who place emphasis on the effective allocation of case workers which can include taking into account characteristics such as humour and the approachability of case workers in order to increase the chances of engagement with CYP.

#### ***4.3.1.3 Sub theme: Influence of "street cred"***

Street reputation or 'street cred' was something that was referred to by P1 and P3 when talking about seeking support for their emotional wellbeing. Both participants had contrasting views, however. P3 was wary of sharing his feeling with others if he felt this would jeopardise his street credit 'on road.' P3's actions 'on road' were heavily influenced by what others would think as opposed to what he wanted for himself.

*P3: If it's something you feel like people are gonna find a way to ... destruct your street credit then you ain't gonna tell them nothing are you ... as a kid you*



*think about either your street cred or what people think of you ... you don't think of what you're looking at and what you're doing.*

P3 thus felt that support from family members with lived experiences 'on road' was the best form of support for CYP 'on road' to access as this would guard their street reputation from their peers and those who they were trying to impress.

*P3: Speak to someone in their family in my eyes is the best thing to do. Speak to someone who's been through something similar ... if they speak to their family member the family members gonna wanna help they're not just gonna sit there and laugh at them and then go tell everyone.*

Over time and an accumulation of negative experiences 'on road', P3 stated that he no longer cared about guarding his street credit, particularly as his street credit accounted for nothing during times of difficulty.

*P3: In my eyes when it comes to getting locked up there ain't no gang it's just you man... I don't care about street cred anymore*

Conversely P1 felt that his high level of street credit and reputation 'on road' meant that he would be able to share his emotions without fear of jeopardising this. His reputation was so high 'on road' that his peers would be fearful of him and would avoid anything that would lead to conflict with him.

*P1: You can cry and that in front of man, if man know that you're about certain things, they're not gonna say nothing you get me. They'll keep their head down. They won't even fucking mention it again. You get me it's just about that. You're not really scared; people be scared of you; you know what I'm saying.*

#### **4.3.2 Superordinate theme: Individual coping strategies**

All three participants spoke of unique individual coping strategies they used to cope during times of difficulty 'on road.' This was reflected in sub themes of substance use, writing music lyrics, and the use of cognitive behavioural approaches.

##### ***4.3.2.1 Sub theme: "I used to drink and smoke"***

Ariza et al. (2014) highlights the prevalence of drug and alcohol in gangs in England and Wales. Vigil and Long (1990) note how alcohol can be used by gang members to numb pain from violent altercations. P1 shared how he would predominantly drink alcohol as a means of coping during times of difficulty. This was a coping strategy he leant on from an early age.

*P1: I used to drink. That's it, drink. Been drinking since I was young anyway. I used to drink. Drink and smoke that's it.*

P1 shared how drinking alcohol was a common coping strategy amongst his group of friends at the time, particularly when coping with the death of their friend after a violent conflict with an opposing group.

*P1: Obviously so he died, fucking, I was drinking bare ... I was drinking way worse then. I was spending like, probably, fuck knows over £100 on liquor a day I think in them days easily. And that was just me drinking ... at them times everyone was drinking*

Rheingold et al. (2004) note how loss of a close friend in adolescence can increase the risk of depression, PTSD, and substance abuse and dependence. Liu et al. (2019) also found that death of a close friend was linked to a negative impact on physical and psychological wellbeing, as well as social functioning. These adverse impacts were significantly in those who were not socially active, with social connectedness playing a significant role in bereavement outcomes. With P1 often socially reclusive during this time, these findings give insight into the potentially detrimental impact bereavement was having for him during this time.

During the interview P1 was able to reflect that alcohol was not really an efficient means of coping as it would lead to further problems for him due to poor decision making under the influence of alcohol.

*P1: I get too drunk and then I do certain things that I don't...really.... wanna do you get me. I end up doing stupid things and that.*

MacKenzie et al. (2006) also note the normalization of marijuana use in gang members' day to day activities. P1's interview also made casual references to smoking marijuana during his time 'on road.' He made reference to a period of time where he

presented quite reclusively and would tend to stay in his room and smoke at a time where many of his friends were in prison, and other friendships had broken down due to acts of disloyalty towards him.

*P1: It was a thing where I was always in my room bunning up and that, chilling.*

P1 also reflected on his peers who also smoked marijuana at the time to mask their thoughts and feelings.

*P1: When they drift away in their own fucking world and that after taking two tokes off a zoot bruv I know what man's thinking about.*

#### **4.3.2.2 Sub theme: "I write bars"**

P1 found it hard to share his thoughts and feelings with others, however writing lyrics ("bars") to songs was one method he used from a young age to process his turbulent lived experiences.

*P1: All the time. All throughout it. I've got bars in my phone in my yard and on tape, stories about everything you know what I'm saying.*

Although P1 shared that his current friendship group give positive praise to his lyrics and encourage him to make music, he again lamented the lack of relatedness between his current friendship group in that he felt that they were unable to comprehend the importance of writing lyrics as a method of coping with his difficulties.

*P1: So, when I spit my bars and that my friends are like yeah yeah they're hard they're hard you should make a tune. But they don't understand this is a way I talk about my shit and that you know what I'm saying. It's a way of talking about my shit.*

A systematic review by Lozon and Bensimon (2017) highlights how gangs use music as means through which to reflect on the violent realities they experience. Pinkney and Robinson-Edwards (2018) highlight how music lyrics can be vital for gang members as a means through which to express their narratives, particularly when they may have limited access to certain social structures within society such as education and training, and employment.

#### **4.3.2.3 Sub theme: "I could be in worse places"**

During P3's account of his lived experiences 'on road,' there were several instances where he would positively re-frame difficult situations as a means of coping.

*P3: I only got 3 years do 18 months. And even though that's still quite a long time, I thought to myself thank god because I could have been looking at 6 years do 3 years ... So then, even though my mum and everyone was distraught in the courtroom, I thought I can't ask for anything more than this really.*

P3 also described his first day serving time in a secure children's home. He was immediately perceptive to the serene nature of the setting and was as such mindful that he could have been in a YOI which would have been a more challenging environment.

*P3: I could have been in a worse place if I'm honest. So, I stepped in the place and I wasn't thinking oh god this is gonna be easy. I thought ok, I could be in worse places.*

*P3: Even though you're locked away you're being done a big favour because you could have been put in a place where it was like 23 hours be locked up a day.*

A sense of acceptance was present in the account of P2, particularly of negative consequences associated with life 'on road'. This helped P2 to cope with negative incidents 'on road' as they occurred. P2 detailed one incident when he was caught by undercover police in the community with incriminating evidence on his person which would lead to a prison sentence.

*P2: Yeah then obviously I'm just calm from there I said oh fam fuck it now. Like I already knew that they're gonna find it anyway, so man didn't really, man wasn't really thinking about it too tough innit. Then yeah. Cah either way you jump in one of them games you just prepare yourself. You can't be shocked if you go jail innit.*

Sykes and Matza (1957) argue that the use of cognitive techniques can neutralize feelings of guilt and shame following engagement in harmful behaviour. Esbensen and Weerman (2005) provide evidence that gang members do use neutralization techniques, though it is unclear what specific techniques they employ. The findings of the current research may shed light on such techniques, though it is interesting to note that P2 and P3 were using these cognitive behavioural approaches unknowingly. Techniques highlighted above such as re-framing thoughts in difficult situations and acceptance are both strategies used within CBT which is a recommended intervention to support individuals experiencing high levels of anxiety (Greenberger and Padesky, 2016) and can be beneficial in reducing anxiety in young offenders (Townsend et al. 2010).

### **4.3.3 Superordinate theme: Support from others**

All three participants spoke of times 'on road' where they accessed support from others. This was reflected in subthemes of support accessed from their families, peers, and professionals.

#### ***4.3.3.1 Sub theme: Family support***

All participants acknowledged the importance of family support during their time 'on road.' During the difficult times of the participants' journeys, especially for P2 and P3, support from their mother, whether material or emotional, was highlighted. Though all participants had turbulent relationships with their families, these relationships ultimately strengthened over time.

*P2: cah she's (mother) the only one who I phoned, apart from my friends innit. But she's the only one who like, basically like sent me stuff, sent me money, sent me clothes. Like, I relied on her more innit, and obviously I realised like yo fam pshh, you can't do nothing without your people's help innit. And if you ain't got the relationship then you're fucked basically.*

Similarly, P3 also reflected on his mother's support during his time in a secure children's unit. P3 shared how his mother was the only one there for him during this time. This is in line with findings of Bubolz (2014) who noted disillusionment when gang members felt betrayed or abandoned by their gang when they needed them the most.

*P3: But when it comes to the jail place it's you on your own ... none of my friends tried to contact my mum and ask how I was or nothing*

*P3: My relationship with my mum has always been up and down still but when I was locked up, I built a good strong bond with my mum ... there ain't no one there for you more than yourself or your mom ... when the shit hits the fan she will be there for you.*

As such P2 highlighted the respect many youth 'on road' had for their mothers and would attack those who verbally disrespected their mothers in YOI.



*P2: cah the majority of people in there have more like respect for their moms then their dads ... cah obviously some people don't have respect for their dad innit or their dads not there innit.*

P1 emphasised family support as one of the main ways to help CYP involved 'on road,' however he felt that there were certain cultural barriers, particularly for BAME CYP, to approach their families about support for their experiences.

*P1: You know what it is bruv they're families need to speak to them. You know what it is I feel like you know in certain communities, families can't speak to their kids properly you know one of them ones. Asian families and that and other families, black families, they can't really speak to their families openly about certain things because they know they'll get into trouble or they're not gonna approve or they're not gonna help them out and their advice is gonna be shit and that*

Research recognises that a major barrier for BAME CYP to the participation in therapeutic services can be a fear of judgement from their families (Hunter et al. 2018).

P2 and P3 both spoke about their turbulent relationships with their mothers however over time their experiences 'on road' facilitated a strong bond between them. This may highlight P1's account that initially it may be difficult for families to cope with the difficulties of their children associating with life 'on road', and so may require time to accept the reality of the consequences their children are facing before being able to provide any support deemed useful by the CYP.

#### **4.3.3.2 Sub theme: Peer support**

P1 shared that during difficult times his close and trusted group of friends were able to talk to each other about their feelings, however there were many points in P1's story where he was alone due to his friends going to jail, losing their lives, moving away from the area, or cutting contact with him.

*P1: We'd talk amongst ourselves when we were together yeah. But, you know what it is, when you're not together innit and everyone's gone ... I was the only one at that time when everything was happening, I was the only one that was still here, that was still 'on road' and not in jail or not dead ... I'm there alone I had no one to talk to bruv you get me. And there's not a lot of people you wanna talk to and that because you can't trust people*

P1 noted however that the topic of wellbeing would not appear in conversation unless initiated by the individual. As such although he may have seen certain members of his peer group struggling with their emotional wellbeing, he would often be unable to help them unless they asked for help or initiated the conversation on their feelings. There was also a sense of emphasis being placed on being an adult, and as such a responsibility of looking after one's self and guarding emotions from others. P1 elaborated that often he would tend to keep things to himself as a result.

*P1: You'd just keep it to yourself. I've got a mate far worse than me you get me; he's fucking crazy after everything happened. Fully crazy, nuts you get me. And*

*till this day he don't speak about how he feels and that. I can tell you get me because we've known each other for so long bruv. I can tell when some man's feeling a certain way you know what I'm saying. And he's always feeling a certain way even when he's laughing and that you can tell bruv you get me.*

*P1: You can't (help). You know one of them ones. You're a man bruv you get me. You don't mention things unless the person mentions it. I could say 'yo what's wrong?' and man ain't gonna tell me unless my man comes to me and be's like 'yo I'm feeling this way' then I could you get me chat to him about it, try and get it off his head try and advise him on certain things and that you get me. Man were like that with me you get me. You don't really talk about your issues like that as much you get me.*

P1's account here is in line with previous literature which states a need for gang members to show no signs of fear (Melde et al. 2009). It also hints at a level of stigma towards mental health difficulties which can prevent help seeking in gang members (Corrigan et al. 2005; Macfarlane 2019; Pinfold et al. 2003). P1 noted one peer in particular who was struggling with mental health difficulties though he felt unable to help him unless this peer initiated the discussion. This suppression of negative emotions and lack of support seeking as demonstrated by this peer can be detrimental to effective coping mechanisms (Silver et al. 1983).

#### **4.3.3.3 Sub theme: Professional support**

P3 was the only participant who shared the impact of accessing support from professionals when serving time in a secure children's unit. P3 stated that if he felt comfortable with professionals, he would tend to open up to them. This appeared to have a particularly positive impact for P3.

*P3: And I did start talking to staff about my problems and my troubles. And then as soon as I started to talk to people and staff, I started to feel like, a bit more relieved of a bit of stress. Like my shoulder, my head and everything just felt less pressure and I felt like every day I woke up I didn't feel as angry or as upset that I'm not home*

It seems whilst placed within the secure children's unit, this offered P3 the time required to build rapport with professionals. This reflects the findings of Farran (2014), where the importance of practitioners being non-judgemental and allowing the time to develop trust and alliance with gang-involved CYP was important to achieving positive mental health outcomes. This also further reinforces theme 4.3.1.2 regarding the importance of being an approachable professional when working with youth involved 'on road.'

#### **4.3.4 Superordinate theme: "Everyone's grown up...you have to move on"**

All three participants had differing levels of experience of life 'on road', particularly with regards to their maturation and disengagement from the road. P1 no longer engaged

in life 'on road' and stated the importance of growth to prevent being trapped in a perpetual cycle of crime and violence.

*P1: Everyone's grown up. We all did what we had to do at that time, and then you have to move on. If you don't move on your stuck in a cycle.*

P1 expressed a sense of regret looking back at his time 'on road'. In this account there was a sense of reflecting on a time in his younger years where he knew no better. P1 felt that a failure to engage in growth would be detrimental to the emotional wellbeing of those 'on road'.

*P1: Everyone that's been in the same position as me or whatever same position, when they grow older and when they grow out of it their gonna regret it ... all that paranoia that stress is gonna get to them one day you know one of them ones and when they're old they're just gonna sit there and regret it ... , but some people don't grow out of it*

Throughout P1's account there was a sense that the accumulation of many acts of disloyalty against him took their toll, along with naturally 'ageing' out of life 'on road'. Findings from Harris et al. (2011), Decker et al. (2014), and Tonks and Stephenson (2019), all found that individuals had joined gangs when younger and more immature, realising with age that there was more to life than being in a gang. Gormally (2015) found that the most commonly cited reason for disengagement from gangs is growing out of the gang.

P3 appeared to be seriously considering his exit from life 'on road', particularly because of his newfound role as a father.

*P3: I'm a father now as well so ... me thinking of things like makes me think wow like talking about my story nowadays makes me shake cuz I couldn't imagine doing anything like that now because I've got my child, I've got my son there now.*

This falls in line with literature suggesting increased family responsibilities can facilitate gang exit, where parenthood can instil doubts as to whether their current lifestyle is beneficial (O'Neal et al. 2016; Tonks and Stephenson, 2019). Parenthood can also lead gang members to see that there is more for them to live for than the gang (Decker et al. 2014), and parenthood can provide a new identity for the individual which can motivate them to lead a more sustainable life trajectory (Moloney et al. 2009).

P3 also seemed particularly impacted by the time spent away from his family and friends, and as such was making a concerted effort moving forward not to engage in behaviours that could lead to this again.

*P3: I'm gonna try my most and that not to make it happen, like go back to jail. I suppose like when you see your family or when you see like a friend that you haven't seen for so long it makes it hit you like wow, I can't spend this much time away from you again*

Again, this is in line with findings of Harris et al. (2011) which suggest that being placed in prison triggered positive change for gang members. This also bought a physical removal from the gang which can also help with disengagement from the gang (Bubolz, 2014). P3 here also demonstrates a great sense of self-reflection, which led him to re-evaluate his priorities and goals for the future and realise that life 'on road' would not support these new aspirations of being a good father and a friend. The impact of gang members' own personal reflections such as those demonstrated by P3 on gang disengagement have been demonstrated in literature (Rice, 2015; Tonks and Stephenson, 2019).

Contrary to P1 and P3, P2 was still fully entrenched in life 'on road'. Interestingly prison sentences failed to deter P2's current presentation, though his account did suggest that his time in prison was relatively easy for him because he knew people inside, and as such this nullified the consequences of his actions 'on road'.

*P2: Then obviously now, man knew a couple people in there anyway so boom, it was basically like a, not walk in the park but like a walk in the park.*

Throughout P2's account it was clear that he was quite an ambitious individual who wanted to make a success of himself 'on road'. P2 seemed to use setbacks as opportunities to learn to better navigate through life 'on road' as opposed to using them for opportunities of growth away from this life.

The following account by P1 highlights the importance of the timing of interventions when trying to support CYP 'on road'. P1 emphasises the difficulty of supporting CYP

in the early stages of life 'on road' who may present with a particularly stubborn resistance to change.

*P1: They won't listen. You could get could olders to go chat to them, like someone that they will look up to like 'yeah yeah I wanna be like my man,' you could have them go chat to them they ain't gonna change they ain't gonna listen.*

Consequently, the different maturation points highlighted by the three participants may have implications for their engagement with support. P2 was honest in sharing his current stubbornness to advice and this was concurrent with P1's perspective above. Though he was appreciative of the team of professionals involved to support his needs, P2 felt that once he had an intention to do something, he would have to follow it through despite professionals advising him otherwise.

*P2: Errm, I had bare support around me innit ... Errm like my social workers, YOT, boom, obviously (organisation) ... Obviously, I didn't listen to none of their support. I just done what I wanted ... the supports tryna be like 'yo don't do this, try and find something else' ... but once my mind's set I'm going to do it and I will complete it.*



## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of research findings, highlighting the original contribution of this research. Reflections on recruitment difficulties will be explored, along with a critical evaluation of the research, implications for the practice of Educational Psychologists (EPs), and recommendations for future research.

### **5.2 Overview of findings and unique contributions of the study**

The current study makes a unique contribution to the sparse literature which captures the voices and lived experiences of CYP 'on road' in the UK, and how these experiences can impact on their emotional wellbeing.

In line with existing literature, the current study found how CYP can turn to life 'on road' in the quest for a sense of belonging, peer attention, financial reward, and protection from threats present within the deprived environments within which they live. However, participants discussed how their experiences of life 'on road' had a detrimental impact on their emotional wellbeing.

They become at high risk of experiencing violence both as victims and as perpetrators, which can lead to negative psychological consequences such as hyperarousal and sleep difficulties. Life 'on road' was also shown to have a detrimental impact on the participants' interpersonal relationships with family and peers, and on future life

aspirations. The current study gained insight into the impact of bereavement of a close friend faced by youth 'on road' and how they attempt to cope with this, particularly in the case of P1. Challenging early life experiences were also shown to have a negative impact on the CYP's presentation, particularly with regards to the impact of domestic violence and fatherlessness on levels of aggression and conflict resolution demonstrated later in life.

The current study was unique in that it was able to gain insight into the lived experiences of CYP 'on road', revealing the complex nature of loyalty they feel they must demonstrate 'on road', with a forced sense of group conformity often forcing a moral disengagement for them to justify harmful acts. Another unique finding of the current study was that participants talked of moving away from working within gangs 'on road' in order to avoid the additional stressors associated with blind loyalty and conformity to group norms. Exploitation of CYP to join life 'on road' was also explored, though interestingly the views of the participants was that some CYP may actively seek opportunities of involvement.

The current study highlighted the importance CYP place on working with approachable and empathetic practitioners with lived experience of life 'on road', and how the protection of street reputation can act as a potential barrier to support seeking. Insight was also gained on coping strategies used by participants, including substance use and the expression of thoughts and feelings through music. This study makes a unique contribution in capturing CYP's use of strategies that were seemingly cognitive-behavioural in nature to reframe and cope with engagement in harmful behaviours or when faced with difficult situations 'on road' (including involvement with police, violent

altercation, and incarceration). Unique insight into the importance of family support when involved in life 'on road' was also gained, particularly relating to times of difficulty where CYP would often be abandoned by their peers, and would rely on support from their family, particularly their mothers in the case of P2 and P3.

The current study also aligned with current literature (Tonks and Stephenson, 2019) in highlighting maturation points as key for disengagement in life 'on road'. This has clear implications for implementing support for CYP 'on road', as timing intervention before a maturation point has occurred is likely to lead to unsuccessful outcomes. As such early intervention targeting CYP at risk of joining life 'on road' may be key. Boxer et al. (2015) notes how the impact of mental health interventions is significantly reduced with gang involvement. Fast et al. (2017) propose that this may be due to gang involved youth becoming entrenched in cycles of imprisonment, destitution, addiction, and mental health crisis which can act as a barrier towards protective factors such as access to mental health services. The prevention of gang affiliation in the first place therefore may be a more effective approach to meet the psychosocial difficulties associated with gang involvement (Macfarlane, 2019).

For CYP who are involved 'on road', literature (Buck, 2017; Girard, 1962) note how desistance from crime may not rely solely on maturation and can be prompted and inspired by social models such as mentors with similar lived experiences. This emphasises the importance of implementing mentee support for CYP involved 'on road'. This was the case for P2 and P3 who were recruited through an organisation who employ key workers with similar lived experiences, making them credible points of connection for CYP.

The current research has also demonstrated that for professionals without this lived experience of life 'on road', using the correct approach with CYP, namely an empathetic and down to earth approach and presentation, whilst being mindful of the use of labels that could potentially hinder rapport building, can help to engage CYP in rich conversations exploring and making sense of their difficulties.

### **5.3 Reflection on recruitment difficulties**

A major difficulty encountered in the current research was the recruitment of participants. These difficulties mainly involved the unresponsive nature of statutory and non-statutory organisations who were approached regarding the research, and a requirement to complete additional ethical protocols specific to certain Local Authorities or organisations approached which were beyond the scope of the timeline for the current research. In using the model of reflection proposed by Schon (1983), this section will provide reflections noted before, during, and after the recruitment process.

#### **5.3.1 Reflections before recruitment**

Prior to commencing the current research, the researcher was cautioned by various professionals working with this population of the general sense of distrust such CYP had in engaging with professionals, particularly those unfamiliar to them, and a general lack of engagement with conversation around their behaviours 'on road'. As such before fully committing to the current study the researcher had a strong awareness of

facing potential recruitment difficulties and consequently received discouragement from some professionals to undertake the current research. The researcher however was passionate to capture the voices and lived experiences of youth 'on road' as they pertained to wellbeing, something sparse in the current literature.

To increase the chances of success for the current study, the researcher continued to liaise with professionals with high levels of experience working with youth 'on road'. Further caution was heeded by experienced professionals not to use the term 'gang' with participants so as not to potentially risk their disengagement with the research. The term 'on road' was used instead by periphery persons and on information sheets when introducing the study to potential participants.

### **5.3.2 Reflections during recruitment**

During the process of recruiting participants, many of the statutory and non-statutory organisations approached were unresponsive to the researcher's communications, some cited a lack of capacity to accommodate the study, and others stated a requirement to complete additional ethical protocols in place for individual organisations and Local Authorities in order to gain ethical approval for the research, all of which were beyond the scope of the timeline within which the research had to be completed.

During this initial period of securing recruitment of participants, one third-party charity working with those involved in gangs in the local authority within which the researcher was based demonstrated an interest in taking part and helping recruitment for the

study. This however would be subject to support for the study being agreed by the senior leadership team overseeing the charity.

During this time the search for participants was extended UK wide, with services in neighbouring local authorities and cities in the UK contacted, however again this was unsuccessful for many of the same reasons highlighted above.

The recruitment process was ongoing now for close to one year. By the autumn term of 2019, there was a lack of success with engaging statutory and non-statutory organisations in supporting recruitment for the study up to this point; therefore the researcher, through their use of insider knowledge and networks which has been outlined as a recruitment approach used in previous UK based gang research (Bakkali, 2018), was able to identify a periphery person in the community through which the first participant for the study was recruited.

Shortly afterwards the third-party charity which had initially shown interest in supporting the study had also received clearance from their senior leadership team to support recruitment for the study. Despite there being only a small number of CYP who met the criteria for the study within the organisation, and some of these CYP expressing disinterest in taking part in the study when approached by their key workers, a further two participants were eventually recruited from this organisation.

### **5.3.3 Reflections after recruitment**

Reflecting back on what helped recruitment of all three participants who took part in this study, taking advantages of small windows of opportunity as they arose was very important. For instance, for the first participant (P1), the researcher was contacted by the periphery person without prior warning and was told that the interview could only take place on that day and must commence within the hour. Similarly, with the third-party charity, the researcher was contacted to carry out an interview with a participant (P2) later the same week, during the 2019 Christmas break. Though it was planned that only one interview was to take place on this day, the key worker asked whether the researcher could stay and conduct another interview shortly afterwards as another potential participant (P3) had just been contacted and had agreed to participate in the study. In this sense flexibility had to be demonstrated by the researcher in order to access participants.

Overall, the researcher had to demonstrate a strong sense of perseverance, assertiveness, and flexibility throughout the recruitment process. The researcher is confident that with more time, more participants could have been recruited with the study, though unfortunately the current research was constricted by its nature of being a professional doctorate and the time pressures associated with this.

## **5.4 Critical evaluation of the research**

Nydegger et al (2019) demonstrate how gang research can feature a substantial amount of missing data from participants, largely due to the stigma and secrecy

around gang activity, potential sensitivity of questions asked, and a potential lack of trust participants may have had for the study and researchers. Though this could be true for the current study, particularly given that participants were warned before commencing interviews to not share any incriminating evidence not already known to services working with them, the present research was still able to obtain a detailed insight into the lived experience of CYP 'on road'. This can be considered a strength of the current study and a success given that this is a population deemed hard to reach (Pawelz, 2018). A clear strength of utilising IPA within a case study design was the level of depth and detailed information gained from participants to answer the research questions of the study.

IPA as a methodology however does have the disadvantage of not sufficiently acknowledging the role of language used by participants to communicate their experiences (Tuffour, 2017). Smith et al. (2009) acknowledge how although IPA is primarily concerned with gaining insight into experience, meaning making is situated within the context of discourse, narratives, and metaphors.

Tuffour (2017) also questions whether IPA can accurately capture meanings of experiences as opposed to just opinions of it. As IPA relies on the accounts of participants and the researcher's role in interpreting this, this implies a need for researchers to have the required communication skills to effectively capture the nuance of experience. Willig (2013) suggests that IPA may not be suitable to study the experiences of individuals who may not be able to articulate them in the sophisticated manner required by this method. Although the researcher of the current study feels that participants largely engaged well and expressed their experiences in



a rich and detailed manner, an air of secrecy will always surround CYP 'on road' given that their experiences will be linked to criminality. This could consequently impact the way in which this population choose to express their experiences and may question the suitability of IPA as a suitable approach for conducting research with 'on road' involved youth. Particularly with recruitment difficulties in mind, researchers may not have the opportunities to lean towards more expressive participants, but rather conduct research with any participants they are lucky to recruit. The current study was fortunate in that P1 and P3 were very expressive, as P2 had a sense of apprehension and succinctness to his responses. Tuffour (2017) however also cautions that selecting eloquent and expressive participants however may be elitist and suggest that only those with a desired level of fluency are the ones allowed to describe their experiences.

Generalizability of research findings off the current research may also be in question due to the small sample size of three participants. Denscombe (2009) states that this does not invalidate the use of the case study design, though it should be acknowledged as a methodological weakness. Cohen et al. (2018, p.390) further argues that whilst recognising methodological weaknesses of the case study design, it stands "alongside and equal to other kinds of research in social science and education research."

Furthermore, a lack of generalizability of findings can only be deemed a significant weakness if viewed from a traditional hypothesis testing perspective associated with positivism (Coolican, 2018). This study however encourages the reader to think in terms of theoretical generalizability, which as Smith and Osborn (2007, p.530) state is

“to consider the results in the light of their own professional experience when assessing the potential prevalence of the phenomenon.” Theoretical generalizability in the context of this research on educational psychology practice when working with CYP ‘on road’ could include the importance of early intervention to meet the psychological needs of CYP safely in school and prevent involvement ‘on road’, consideration of trauma informed practices for CYP actively involved ‘on road’, approaches required to build rapport with this population and engage them (as highlighted in section 5.2), as well as supporting and working in close liaison with trusted mentors with lived experience who can help implement intervention work. Implications for EP practice is discussed in more detail in section 5.5.

Due to the difficulties faced with gaining access to participants within this population, member checking (returning to participant with themes highlighted by the researcher to ensure their accuracy in representing participant experiences) to further consolidate the credibility and trustworthiness of research findings was unable to take place. It is accepted that this could be deemed a weakness for the current study, though the researcher attempted to negate this by following the model of trustworthiness proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). With the use of this model, steps were taken to ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings. Furthermore, Larkin and Thompson (2012) note that member checking may be inappropriate within IPA research due to its interpretative nature, and that peer validation may be more appropriate. Peer supervision with fellow IPA researchers was thus also utilised to ensure the checking of emergent themes during the data analysis procedure.

## 5.5 Implications for Educational Psychologists

EPs have a key role in supporting the needs of CYP in educational settings and so should be informed of the challenges faced by CYP who are at risk of, or actively involved 'on road', so that the impact of these difficulties can be attenuated.

Waddell and Jones (2018) note the importance of early intervention and the key role primary school settings have to play to prevent gang and youth violence. This report noted the importance of school-based programmes focussed on fostering CYP's social and emotional skills which can impact later involvement in violence, crime, aggression, substance misuse and mental health difficulties. Waddell and Jones (2018) also noted the importance of a better integration of early help arrangements within primary schools to facilitate in-school and wider family support for vulnerable CYP. EPs have a key role in helping primary schools to achieve this. EPs are well positioned within schools to liaise with school staff to identify CYP who may be vulnerable to life 'on road'. Early intervention can thus be planned with the aims of fostering a strong sense of belonging for pupils. This is an important psychological need which should be prioritised within school to avoid CYP seeking this from life 'on road', as the participants of this research did to the detriment of their overall wellbeing. EPs can also help to support the implementation of early intervention to meet the emotional and attachment needs of CYP from turbulent home environments (Boden, 2019).

EPs have skills to elucidate and provide support for CYP's social, emotional, and mental health related difficulties such as those demonstrated by participants of the

current study, including the implementation of conflict resolution approaches, support with emotional regulation and emotional literacy skills, and the early assessment and intervention of difficulties typically associated with ADHD (as was reported by the participants of this study). EPs can also support schools to embed opportunities for success within the educational planning for pupils to foster their sense of self-efficacy as learners and facilitate positive self-esteem. Such support can help to prevent school exclusions for CYP who present social, emotional, and mental health needs. Research has highlighted the many negative life outcomes of CYP who have been excluded from school, including lower GCSE pass rates, becoming a victim or perpetrator of crime, and becoming NEET (DfE, 2019). With two participants of the current study placed within PRUs during their education, this is particularly important given the link between exclusions and increased violence and knife crime in England and Wales, with the increase in unstructured time associated with alternative provision placements acting as a catalyst for involvement in crime (All-Party Parliamentary Group, 2019). Research also highlights the lower academic outcomes of CYP in alternative provision, and negative experiences reported by pupils including feeling isolated (Graham et al. 2019).

EPs can also use person centred approaches to help highlight strengths and plan for the future vocational aspirations of CYP. This is important given all participants demonstrated a sense of entrepreneurialism which life 'on road' was able to facilitate, in addition to facilitating a sense of competence for participants who had not achieved successful educational outcomes in school. Person centred approaches can be used to highlight and build upon such entrepreneurial skills and business competency in

participants whilst in school, with a vocational goal for them to work towards with the support of key adults around them.

EPs helping to support CYP in preparing for adulthood is also important to prevent CYP becoming NEET in the future, as was the case for P1 who currently remains NEET at 24 years of age. Despite having a strong motivation to do social work as a teenager, a lack of support, encouragement, and a positive outlook on his future from key adults during the critical time of his first involvement with police seemed to encourage P1 to see life 'on road' as his only option to attain success in life.

In the use of such approaches, supporting staff should ensure that the voice of CYP is central as they prepare for adulthood. Consideration to embed a strong sense of agency and internal locus of control for the CYP should be given, particularly as the current study found these traits to be highly important to CYP 'on road'.

The current study also found a sense of disengagement from CYP supported by staff who viewed the CYP's difficulties through a 'within child', individual model of disability (Oliver, 1996). This highlights a key role EPs can play to shift negative staff attributions so that they can feel more positive and empowered about their ability to make an impact in meeting the needs of such CYP, which in turn may empower CYP to engage with staff support. Group problem solving approaches such as Circle of Adults (Wilson and Newton, 2006) can be used with key adults supporting the CYP to encourage and collaboratively develop an intervention plan underpinned by a holistic understanding and formulation of the CYP's needs.

For CYP actively involved in life 'on road', EPs can provide therapeutic support for CYP on a 1:1 basis or can upskill trusted adults and mentors who have good levels of rapport with the CYP to provide therapeutic support for them during times of difficulty. The current research does demonstrate how it can be hard to support CYP if they have not yet reached a maturation point. EPs however can use approaches such as Motivational Interviewing to move CYP towards accepting intervention and engaging in an active process of change (Atkinson and Woods, 2010). When delivering 1:1 intervention, adopting a community-based approach such as that utilised by the MAC-UK mental health charity to meet CYP in environments where they feel comfortable should be adopted to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes.

Given the high prospect of experiencing trauma 'on road' through violent incidents, EPs can also deliver training on trauma informed practice to educational and third-party settings working with CYP 'on road'. Costelloe et al (2020) also note how EPs are well placed to provide targeted and whole school bereavement support to CYP and school staff. This can be particularly useful where CYP may be grieving the loss of a close friend from conflict 'on road'. The complex trauma experienced by CYP 'on road' could mean that more specialist mental health support is needed; in such cases, professionals such as EPs and support workers could support these CYP to access specialist mental health services.

Waddell and Jones (2018) note the difficulties of multi-agency working as a barrier to preventing gang and youth violence. EPs placed in local authorities can help to negate such difficulties and can play an important role to liaise with relevant professionals and

encourage collaborative working to ensure the difficulties faced by CYP at risk of or involved in life 'on road' can be supported successfully.

## **5.6 Future research**

Given that the participants of the current research were all BAME and male, future research could explore the lived experiences of CYP from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the UK. The current research could also be extended by exploring the lived experiences of females 'on road', and in securing larger sample sizes of participants. A larger scale qualitative research study with CYP involved 'on road' would be useful in testing the findings of the current research. This could help to establish whether themes highlighted in this research are applicable beyond its 3 participants to the wider population of CYP 'on road'.

Ethnographic research based in organisations working with this population may be useful in observing and interacting with CYP 'on road' over time. This could help to build stronger rapport and trust with participants, leading to a more enriched insight into their lived experiences.

## **5.7 Concluding comments**

The current study has contributed to the limited literature exploring the lived experiences of CYP 'on road', including an insight into their emotional wellbeing, and coping and support mechanisms. In seeking a fulfilment of their psychological needs of belonging, protection, financial gain, vocational status and competence, CYP 'on

road' risk facing detrimental and potentially long-lasting consequences to their emotional wellbeing and life outcomes which can be challenging for others to provide support for.

This is a population that EPs have a key role in supporting, both in helping schools to meet the needs of CYP at risk of joining life 'on road', and to mediate the impact of difficulties in instances where CYP are actively involved 'on road'. This study has made unique contributions to this topic area, highlighted implications for EP practice, and has made recommendations for future research.



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## APPENDICES

**Appendix 1:** University of Birmingham ethical review application

**Appendix 2:** Parent information sheet and consent form

**Appendix 3:** Participant information sheet and consent form

**Appendix 4:** Interview schedule

**Appendix 5:** Full participant transcriptions which demonstrate initial levels of IPA analysis for each participant. This includes step 3 (initial noting), and step 4 (developing emergent themes)

**Appendix 6:** Excerpts demonstrating step 5 (searching for connections across emergent themes) of IPA data analysis for each participant

**Appendix 7:** Excerpts demonstrating step 5 and 7 of IPA data analysis

**Appendix 8:** Reflexive notes made during the research process

## Appendix 1: University of Birmingham ethical review application

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW</b></p>
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### Who should use this form:

This form is to be completed by PIs or supervisors (for PGR student research) who have completed the University of Birmingham's Ethical Review of Research Self Assessment Form (SAF) and have decided that further ethical review and approval is required before the commencement of a given Research Project.

**Please be aware that all new research projects undertaken by postgraduate research (PGR) students first registered as from 1st September 2008 will be subject to the University's Ethical Review Process. PGR students first registered before 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 should refer to their Department/School/College for further advice.**

### Researchers in the following categories are to use this form:

1. The project is to be conducted by:
  - staff of the University of Birmingham; or
  - postgraduate research (PGR) students enrolled at the University of Birmingham (to be completed by the student's supervisor);
2. The project is to be conducted at the University of Birmingham by visiting researchers.

**Students undertaking undergraduate projects and taught postgraduate (PGT) students should refer to their Department/School for advice.**

### NOTES:

- An electronic version of the completed form should be submitted to the Research Ethics Officer, at the following email address: [aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk). Please **do not** submit paper copies.
- If, in any section, you find that you have insufficient space, or you wish to supply additional material not specifically requested by the form, please it in a separate file, clearly marked and attached to the submission email.
- If you have any queries about the form, please address them to the [Research Ethics Team](#).

**X** Before submitting, please tick this box to confirm that you have consulted and understood the following information and guidance and that you have taken it into account when completing your application:

- The information and guidance provided on the University's ethics webpages  
(<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Ethical-Review-of-Research.aspx>)
- The University's Code of Practice for Research  
([http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/docs/COP\\_Research.pdf](http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/docs/COP_Research.pdf))

**UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW**

*OFFICE USE  
ONLY:*  
Application No:  
Date Received:

**1. TITLE OF PROJECT**

Emotional wellbeing: Lived experiences of CYP in street gangs

**2. THIS PROJECT IS:**

- University of Birmingham Staff Research project   
 University of Birmingham Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student project   
 Other  (Please specify):

**3. INVESTIGATORS**

**a) PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS OR SUPERVISORS (FOR PGR STUDENT PROJECTS)**

Name: <small>Title / first name / family name</small>	Dr James Birchwood
Highest qualification & position held:	PhD , AppEdChPsyD Academic and Professional Tutor, Applied Educational and Child Psychology
School/Department	School of Education
Telephone:	
Email address:	

Name: <small>Title / first name / family name</small>	
Highest qualification & position held:	
School/Department	
Telephone:	
Email address:	

**b) PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF ANY CO-INVESTIGATORS OR CO-SUPERVISORS (FOR PGR STUDENT PROJECTS)**

Name: <small>Title / first name / family name</small>	Dr Huw Williams
Highest qualification & position held:	EdPsyD. Academic and Professional Tutor, Applied Educational and Child
School/Department	School of Education
Telephone:	
Email address:	

**c) In the case of PGR student projects, please give details of the student**

Name of Course of Principal	Mr Maniinder	Student	
	AppEdChPsvD	Email	
	Dr James		

Name of		Student No:	
Course of study:		Email	
Principal			

4. **ESTIMATED START OF**      Date:  **PROJECT**  
**ESTIMATED END OF**      Date:  **PROJECT**



## 5. FUNDING

List the funding sources (including internal sources) and give the status of each source.

<i>Funding Body</i>	<i>Approved/Pending /To be submitted</i>
N/A	

**If you are requesting a quick turnaround on your application, please explain the reasons below (including funding-related deadlines). You should be aware that whilst effort will be made in cases of genuine urgency, it will not always be possible for the Ethics Committees to meet such requests.**

This is doctoral research that needs to be completed by Summer 2020, in order for the supervisor's student to complete the Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate in time to begin full-time professional practice in September 2020. The current study relies on a quick turnaround to ensure that there is ample time for participant recruitment, data collection, data transcription, analysis, and writing, before submission in Summer 2020.

## 6. SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Describe the purpose, background rationale for the proposed project, as well as the hypotheses/research questions to be examined and expected outcomes. This description should be in everyday language that is free from jargon. Please explain any technical terms or discipline-specific phrases.

The proposed project aims to explore the lived experiences of CYP in street gangs, with a particular focus on participants' mental health and emotional wellbeing.

#### **Gap in literature regarding the mental health of CYP in gangs in the UK**

- Current research (Public Health England, 2015) suggests that gang affiliation can negatively impact on mental health. Wood and Denard (2017) found that street gang members have higher levels of exposure to violence which can be detrimental for mental health and is associated with a range of psychological problems including symptoms of paranoia, PTSD, and anxiety.
- Gang members are under pressure to suppress feelings of anxiety and fear, as those that show this risk being ostracised by the gang (Melde et al, 2009).
- Gang activity can increase CYP's risks of conviction and arrest (Gatti et al, 2005). Potential and actual involvement with the criminal justice system can trigger anxiety for CYP (Leon, 2002).
- Substance use can increase CYP's risks of mental health problems (Meier et al, 2012), and alcohol and drug use (e.g., cannabis) can be prominent in gang life (Ariza et al, 2013). In addition to being a recreational activity, substance use may serve to increasing gang members' confidence and numbing emotional stress (Hunt and Laidler, 2001).
- CYP with poor mental wellbeing can be drawn to gang-affiliation. A certain status may be associated with gang involvement. Those with low self-esteem may join gangs to bolster their sense of self-worth (Alleyne and Wood, 2010). Gangs may offer a source of support to isolated CYP who do not have strong social or family relationships. CYP who join gangs often have turbulent childhood histories and gang membership may provide a sense of belonging central to their social identity (The Centre for Social Justice, 2009).
- Current research however is largely USA based and from a Criminology and Forensic perspective. The mental health of CYP in gangs is under researched in the UK. As stated by Wood and Denard (2017), Mental health deserves more attention in gang research. The implications of research findings as highlighted above are that gang membership may undermine members' mental health, and/or that individuals with existing mental health problems may be those attracted to gang membership. Research is needed in this area to increase the understanding of the mental health of street gang members, with a view to informing policies and intervention strategies in order to address these mental health needs, particularly if successful rehabilitation of gang members is to be achieved.

#### **Importance of capturing CYP's voices**

- The importance of capturing CYP's voices is well understood. Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) for instance states that "When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account."
- However, UK research which captures the voice of CYP in gangs is currently scarce. And yet, this is a group of CYP that is known to be at risk of poor life outcomes, in a number of domains including higher rates of self-reported crime, receipt of illegal income, incarceration, drug abuse or dependence, poor general health, welfare receipt and lower rates of high school completion (Gilman et al, 2014).
- Qualitative studies based on interviews with gang members are limited, yet such research with this population can be a tremendous source of information and provide rare insights (Pawelz, 2018).
- The NHS 'Voices Amplified' report (2018) highlights the importance of capturing the voices of CYP in helping to inform and shape mental health services.

#### **Importance to local context**

- In addition to adding to the wider literature regarding the mental health of CYP in gangs, the proposed research will also meet local priorities: An increased focus on the mental health of CYP in gangs is highlighted as a key area of development in the UK Local Authority in which the research will be conducted; their 'Preventing Gang Involvement and Youth Violence Strategy 2016-2019' was recently released.

#### **Benefits and implications for practice**

- Schools have a key role to play in supporting the mental health needs of vulnerable children and CYP, as highlighted in the Department of Health and Social Care and Department of Education's joint publication 'Transforming children and CYP's mental health provision: a green paper' (2018). This includes those at risk of or affiliated to gangs. Mental health directly impacts on learning and development, and children who are facing mental health difficulties may struggle in school (Deighton et al, 2018). Failure to support the mental health needs of pupils may contribute to absenteeism and risk of school failure (Finning et al, 2019). It is therefore important for Educational Psychologists and other professionals working with this population to have an improved understanding of their mental health and wellbeing and how to best support them
- Kearney (1998) highlights how paucity of formal research studies on gangs can leave professionals such as therapists with little empirically based guidance, which is important and 'necessary for adequate and realistic treatment planning' (Kearney, 1998, p.56).

#### **Research Questions**

- What impact does being in a street gang have on CYP's emotional wellbeing? What are their lived experiences of emotional wellbeing?
- What are the enablers and barriers to CYP in street gangs accessing support for their emotional wellbeing?

## 7. CONDUCT OF PROJECT

**Please give a description of the research methodology that will be used**

It is proposed to answer the research questions by implementing a multiple case-study design study. It is hoped that 5 participants will be recruited in this study (for more information on participant recruitment and consent, please see sections 9, 10 and 11).

Participants will take part in a one-hour in-depth semi-structured interview as part of a multiple case study design. Semi structured interviews were chosen because a real strength in this method of data collection is that it will allow the interviewer to cover a predetermined list of issues, though it will allow flexibility in changing the wording of questions and allow explanations to be given to the participant, in addition to modifying the order of questions, omitting inappropriate questions and including additional ones based upon the interviewer's discretion of what seems suitable with the participant (Robson, 2002). The semi-structured interview is also chosen due to its advantage in allowing for the follow up of thought-provoking responses and exploring answers. The semi-structured interview being face-to-face also offers the advantage of the interviewer picking up on non-verbal cues of participants which may have changed or reversed the meaning of their verbal response (Robson, 2002).

Data will be analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore the lived experiences of participants. IPA was chosen for the proposed study because it is a commonly-used approach to the analysis of individual case-study data in which lived experiences of participants are explored (Smith et al, 2009). This approach has been used successfully to explore the data of qualitative studies with marginalized communities in past research such as Chan and Farmer (2017).

## 8. DOES THE PROJECT INVOLVE PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE OTHER THAN THE RESEARCHERS AND SUPERVISORS?

Yes  No

Note: 'Participation' includes both active participation (such as when participants take part in an interview) and cases where participants take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (for example, in crowd behaviour research).

**If you have answered NO please go to Section 18. If you have answered YES to this question please complete all the following sections.**

## 9. PARTICIPANTS AS THE SUBJECTS OF THE RESEARCH

Describe the number of participants and important characteristics (such as age, gender, location, affiliation, level of fitness, intellectual ability etc.). Specify any inclusion/exclusion criteria to be used.

The research will involve participants in West Midlands street gangs who are aged between 11-25 years. The aim is to recruit 3-6 participants.

Organisations that will be approached for participants (see section 10) will be made aware by the researcher the need to recruit participants who were deemed suitable and low risk. Thus, suitable participants will fall under the criteria for 'street gangs' as identified by the Centre of Social Justice which include:

*(1) see themselves, and are seen by others, as a discernible group; and (2) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence. (3) identify or lay claim to territory; (4) have some form of identifying structural feature; and (5) are in conflict with other similar gangs.*

Participants who meet the criteria above, in addition to being assessed as low risk of exhibiting an aggressive emotional outburst during the interview, will be selected. This level of risk will be assessed by the particular organisation working with the CYP. Parents of potential participants must know about their child's gang membership.

## **10. RECRUITMENT**

Please state clearly how the participants will be identified, approached and recruited. Include any relationship between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (e.g. instructor-student).

*Note: Attach a copy of any poster(s), advertisement(s) or letter(s) to be used for recruitment.*

Third sector organisations, Youth Offending Teams, and Educational Psychology Services, in the West Midlands will be approached via email and telephone in order to first gauge their interest and willingness in helping highlight participants for the study. Schools in the Local Authority in which the researcher works will also be approached in this way. All organisations/ services will be emailed with a study outline and to ask whether they work with CYP who may be suitable (see Appendix \* for a copy of this email). If there is no response to the email within 10 working days of sending, then a telephone call will be made to discuss the study and gauge interest. If there is interest in the study, and confirmation of potential participants, a meeting will then be arranged with a key member of staff from the organisation to discuss potential participants in their organisation for the research.

If potential participants are identified by the relevant organisations, then participants will be recruited via a two-step process. Firstly, parents of participants who are under the age of 16 will be sent a study pack, containing a study information letter, consent form, and stamped return envelope for parents to return the signed form. If completed parental consent forms are not received within 10 working days of posting, then the relevant organisation will make a telephone call to the parent, to (a) check for receipt of the letter, and (b) ask if they could return the consent form (to indicate whether or not they give permission for their child to be approached to participate in the study).

Second, potential participants whose parents have given permission (or who are age 16 and over), will be approached by the relevant organisation for verbal permission to meet the researcher. Here, potential participants will be given study information sheets. Should potential participants agree to meet the researcher, on the proposed day of the study interview, the researcher will discuss the nature of the study, using the information sheet as a guide. Then, participants will be invited to complete a consent form, before commencing the interview.

Please see appendices for the consent forms and information sheets that will be used to inform potential participants about the nature of the study and what participation will entail.

## **11. CONSENT**

**a)** Describe the process that the investigator(s) will be using to obtain valid consent. If consent is not to be obtained explain why. If the participants are minors or for other reasons are not competent to consent, describe the proposed alternate source of consent, including any permission / information letter to be provided to the person(s) providing the consent.

Prior to involvement participants will be informed about the nature of the research that is being undertaken in written form via information sheets, and then again verbally on the day of the interview immediately before data collection. Two age-appropriate information sheets will be made for the study – one for post-16 age, and one for CYP under the age of 16. For CYP under the age of 16, parental consent will also be sought, and so there will also be an information sheet highlighting the nature of the research for parents, with an opportunity for them to phone the researcher prior to the study regarding any queries. As mentioned above, parents will be posted an information sheet and consent form, with organisations making a follow-up telephone call, should there be no response within 10 working days of postage. Consent for participation will be obtained prior to any person participating in the study. The researcher will rely on the host organisation to use their knowledge from their work and associations with the CYP to select potential participants who are capable of making informed decisions. On the day of the interview, potential participants will be informed of the nature of the study, and will be invited to complete a consent form, indicating whether or not they give consent to participate. Potential participants will have an opportunity to ask any questions before choosing to opt in or out of the study. Participants will be able to withdraw from the study at any time up until 2 weeks after the interview takes place (please see box 13(a) for more information).

*Note: Attach a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (if applicable), the Consent Form (if applicable), the content of any telephone script (if applicable) and any other material that will be used in the consent process.*

**b) Will the participants be deceived in any way about the purpose of the study? Yes  No**

If yes, please describe the nature and extent of the deception involved. Include how and when the deception will be revealed, and who will administer this feedback.

## 12. PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Explain what feedback/ information will be provided to the participants after participation in the research. (For example, a more complete description of the purpose of the research, or access to the results of the research).

A summary report will be written and offered to participants and host organisations as a way to relay findings to them. If participants and/or organisations state a preference to meet the researcher again at a later date to gain verbal feedback of the findings and implications of the study, this will also be offered. Participants will be informed of both methods of feedback and their preferred method will be noted after the interview (with options for written feedback, verbal feedback, or both). Host organisations can relay their preferred method of feedback to the researcher during the initial meeting aimed at scoping participants prior to interviews.

## 13. PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL

- a) Describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project.

Participants will be informed in writing (via information sheets) and verbally immediately before data collection of their right to withdraw from the investigation at any stage – i.e. before, during, or after the study. Participants will be told verbally and in writing that should they wish to withdraw from the study after the interview, they will be able to withdraw their data within 48 hours of the interview being completed, and should they wish to withdraw from the study within his window, their data will be deleted and not used. On information sheets, participants will be given contact details of a key adult in their organisation, the researcher, and researcher’s supervisor should they wish to withdraw or know more about the research.

- b) Explain any consequences for the participant of withdrawing from the study and indicate what will be done with the participant’s data if they withdraw.

It will be stated clearly on information sheets and verbally that the consequence of withdrawal from the study will be of no detriment to their relationships between their organisations.

Any data collected prior to the withdrawal will be deleted immediately. Recordings of the interviews will be deleted, and consent forms will be shredded.

## 14. COMPENSATION

Will participants receive compensation for participation?

i) Financial

Yes  No

ii) Non-financial

No

Yes

If **Yes** to **either** i) or ii) above, please provide details.

As a thank you for taking part, participants will receive a £20 voucher for a sports retail store. This will be funded by the researcher.

If participants choose to withdraw, how will you deal with compensation?

Participants who withdraw will still be given a £20 voucher for a sports retail store.



## 15. CONFIDENTIALITY

- a) Will all participants be anonymous?  
Yes  No
- b) Will all data be treated as confidential?  
Yes  No

*Note: Participants' identity/data will be confidential if an assigned ID code or number is used, but it will not be anonymous. Anonymous data cannot be traced back to an individual participant.*

Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of data both during the conduct of the research and in the release of its findings.

Participants will be informed that confidentiality will be maintained throughout all stages of the study. Participants will be given assigned ID numbers that will be matched to their names, organisation name, and Local Authority on a secure database. Audio recordings of interviews will be identified by participant ID numbers only. Participants will be informed that the researcher will be the only person who will have access to their data. Participants will also be informed that neither the gang to which the participant belongs, nor any other gang, will know that the participant has been involved in this study and that everything the participant says will be kept confidential. Participants will be informed that confidentiality will only be breached in exceptional circumstances where there is concern regarding the safety of another individual, themselves or others, or if they divulge information regarding illegal activity for which they have not yet been persecuted. Participants will be informed that such information may need to be shared with the police and that this could result in future prosecution. Participants will therefore be encouraged on information sheets and verbally on the day of the interview by the researcher not to disclose any information regarding illegal activity for which they have not been prosecuted. In an event where such information is disclosed, the designated safeguarding lead will be told of the disclosure. Participants will be told where possible if information needs to be disclosed with the safeguarding lead.

If participant anonymity or confidentiality is not appropriate to this research project, explain, providing details of how all participants will be advised of the fact that data will not be anonymous or confidential.

## 16. STORAGE, ACCESS AND DISPOSAL OF DATA

Describe what research data will be stored, where, for what period of time, the measures that will be put in place to ensure security of the data, who will have

access to the data, and the method and timing of disposal of the data.

Steps will be taken to safeguard the security of information and data that is gathered, in line with GDPR. This will involve storing all data, particularly papers containing identifiable personal information (for example signed consent forms) in files that are stored in lockable filing cabinets.

Audio and all other electronic data and files will be stored according to data storage and retention requirements as outlined in the University of Birmingham's Code of Practice for Research. BEAR data share, which is compliant with the Data Protection Act and Safe Harbour scheme, will be used to store electronic data. I also understand that the data collected should be preserved and accessible for up to 10 years.

**17. OTHER APPROVALS REQUIRED?** e.g. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks or NHS R&D approvals.

YES     NO     NOT APPLICABLE

If yes, please specify.

The researcher, and supervisor, both have full DBS (CRB) clearance.

**18. SIGNIFICANCE/BENEFITS**

Outline the potential significance and/or benefits of the research

The research will provide more information on the lived experiences of CYP in gangs, with a particular focus on their mental health and wellbeing. This is important as this group is known to be at risk of poor long-term outcomes in a range of domains of functioning, including mental health. The need to listen to the voices of these CYP is also well documented, and this research could inform the development of appropriate support and interventions for this group.

Participants will be informed that their participation will help our understanding of the lived experiences and mental health of CYP who are thought to be involved with gangs. Participants will be informed that the research will ultimately help professionals to give appropriate support to CYP who are in (or have been in-) gangs.

**19. RISKS**

a) Outline any potential risks to **INDIVIDUALS**, including research staff, research participants, other individuals not involved in the research and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap

The most likely cause of distress would be the invocation of painful feelings during the interview (Barker, Pistrang & Elliott, 2002). During the interview if difficult feelings are evoked, the researcher can use therapeutic skills which I use on a daily basis as a trainee educational psychologist to acknowledge and contain emotions and difficult feelings expressed by participants (as recommended by Braun and Clarke, 2013). However, this will be 'in the moment' empathic support, and not a formal intervention. A de-brief will also be provided after each interview and, if necessary, sources of support can be discussed. During all interviews, it will be requested that a support worker be present on site from the organisation should any concerns arise.

Organisations will be asked to highlight low risk participants to prevent the likelihood of a potential emotional outburst during the interview, thus protecting the emotional wellbeing and safety of participant and researcher. It will also be requested that a key member of staff who knows the participant well be available should any difficulties emerge during the interview.

Safeguarding and safety procedures of the organisation from which participants have been recruited will be familiarised by the researcher and adhered to.

As participants will come from a vulnerable population (street gangs), the importance of maintaining confidentiality throughout all stages of the study will be extremely important given the potential nature of the topics discussed. Breach of confidentiality could cause problematic outcomes for participants (Kearney, 1998). Please see section 15 for more details on how this will be managed.

**b)** Outline any potential risks to **THE ENVIRONMENT and/or SOCIETY** and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap.

I am not aware of any risks the research may pose to the environment and /or society.

**20. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ETHICAL ISSUES RAISED BY THE RESEARCH?**

Yes  No

**If yes, please specify**

## 21. EXPERT REVIEWER/OPINION

You may be asked to nominate an expert reviewer for certain types of project, including those of an interventional nature or those involving significant risks. If you anticipate that this may apply to your work and you would like to nominate an expert reviewer at this stage, please provide details below.

Name
Contact details (including email address)
Brief explanation of reasons for nominating and/or nominee's suitability

## 22. CHECKLIST

Please mark if the study involves any of the following:

- Vulnerable groups, such as children and CYP aged under 18 years, those with learning disability, or cognitive impairments
- Research that induces or results in or causes anxiety, stress, pain or physical discomfort, or poses a risk of harm to participants (which is more than is expected from everyday life)
- Risk to the personal safety of the researcher
- Deception or research that is conducted without full and informed consent of the participants at time study is carried out
- Administration of a chemical agent or vaccines or other substances (including vitamins or food substances) to human participants.
- Production and/or use of genetically modified plants or microbes
- Results that may have an adverse impact on the environment or food safety
- Results that may be used to develop chemical or biological weapons

Please check that the following documents are attached to your application.

	ATTACHED	NOT APPLICABLE
Recruitment advertisement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Participant information sheet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consent form	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Interview Schedule	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 23. DECLARATION BY APPLICANTS

I submit this application on the basis that the information it contains is confidential and will be used by the University of Birmingham for the purposes of ethical review and monitoring of the research project described herein, and to satisfy reporting requirements to regulatory bodies. The information will not be used for any other purpose without my prior consent.

I declare that:

- The information in this form together with any accompanying information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.
- I undertake to abide by University Code of Practice for Research ([http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/docs/COP\\_Research.pdf](http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/docs/COP_Research.pdf)) alongside any other relevant professional bodies' codes of conduct and/or ethical guidelines.
- I will report any changes affecting the ethical aspects of the project to the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Officer.
- I will report any adverse or unforeseen events which occur to the relevant Ethics Committee via the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Officer.

**Name of principal investigator/project**

**Date:**


Please now save your completed form, print a copy for your records, and then email a copy to the Research Ethics Officer, at [aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk). As noted above, please do not submit a paper copy.

## Appendix 2: Parent information sheet and consent form

### Parent Consent Form and Information Sheet

Dear Parent/Carer,

#### **Who am I?**

My name is Manjinder Basi, I am a trainee educational psychologist from the University of Birmingham. I am currently working in Wolverhampton Educational Psychology on placement. Educational Psychologists work with children, families, and schools to make learning a positive experience and promote emotional and social wellbeing.

#### **Why am I writing to you?**

As part of my training, I am conducting a research project which is interested in learning about how CYP involved in street gangs talk about their emotional wellbeing. I will be interviewing CYP at the **(organisation name)** office to talk about this. I am writing to you to request your permission for me to approach your child to take part in the study.

#### **What is the research about?**

The research aims to explore the lived experiences of CYP involved in street gangs, exploring the ups and downs of life with them and how this has an impact on their emotional wellbeing. I am also interested in exploring their views on factors that may help them in accessing support for their emotional wellbeing during difficult times, along with factors that may act as a barrier to them seeking support. It is hoped that the findings from this project will help us to better understand the wellbeing of CYP in gangs and how we can best support them.

#### **Why has my child been selected?**

**(organisation name)** staff have helped me in identifying CYP who may be willing to talk with me about these topics. Your child has been identified as it is known that they are (or have been) involved in a street gang. Your child will be asked whether he/she is interested in taking part and will be given a consent form and information sheet.

#### **Does my child have to take part?**

No, participation is voluntary. If you are happy for your child to take part in this project, I will also ask your child to sign a consent form separately. Your child can withdraw from the interview at any stage. Information collected from the project can be withdrawn up to 2 weeks after the interview. If you want to do this, then either speak to **(name)** at **(organisation name)** or email me at the address below.

#### **What will taking part in the project involve?**



Your child's participation in the study will involve an individual interview lasting between 45-60 minutes. If your child changes their mind about taking part, they have the option of leaving the interview at any time.

### **What will happen to the information collected?**

The interview will be recorded using an iPad Pro and some notes will also be taken. Only me and my university supervisor will listen to the recording. The recording, and any notes taken at the interview, will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet. Ten years after the project is completed, the recording and notes will be deleted.

I will not use your child's name, **(organisation name)**, or the local authority's details when I write up the findings from the interview. All information collected from the interview will be anonymous. If your child identifies themselves as a gang member, neither the gang to which he/she belongs, nor any other gang, will know that they have been involved in this study. Everything your child says will be kept confidential.

If, however, information is shared with me which I feel puts either your child, or someone else in danger, or if information regarding past illegal activity (not already prosecuted) is divulged, I will have to share this information with the designated safeguarding member of staff **(staff member name)** at **(organisation name)**, following child protection procedures. This could result in future prosecution, and such information may subsequently be required by the police. Participants are therefore encouraged not to share any instances of illegal activity for which they have not already been convicted.

I will write a report based on the findings from the interviews which will be shared with **(organisation name)** and other educational psychologists that work in the local authority. The findings will also be shared with your child in a summary report. I will also write up the findings for my university thesis.

### **Are there any risks?**

During the interview there may be things discussed which could bring up difficult feelings for your child. I will take steps to ensure that your child feels supported if this happens. Your child will also be debriefed after the interview and I will give them information about services they can access to support them.

### **Next steps**

If you are happy for your child to take part in this project, please complete the consent form below and return to **(organisation name)** by (date). If you would like to find out more information or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me, my academic tutor, or **(organisation name)** via the details below:

<b>My details</b>	<b>Supervisor details</b>	<b>(organisation name) details</b>
Manjinder Basi <b>Trainee Educational Psychologist</b>	James Birchwood <b>Professional Tutor</b> <b>University of Birmingham</b>	
Tel:	Tel:	Tel:
Email:	Email:	Email:

Yours sincerely,

Manjinder Basi  
**Trainee Educational Psychologist**

---

**Parent/Carer Consent**

*Please tick your responses:*

I agree for my child to take part in this research

I do not agree for my child to take part in this research

**Name of child:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Carer name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:**

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3: Participant information sheet and consent form

### Experiences of life 'on road'

#### What is this about?

- I want to talk to CYP about life 'on road' and how this can impact on their emotional wellbeing. Emotional wellbeing is a combination of being positive, being able to meet the ups and downs of life, and generally being happy with life.
- I also want to try to find out what CYP think about support for their emotional wellbeing and what this might look like

#### I need you!

- If you would like to participate, I would like to carry out a one-hour interview with you to talk about your story and experiences about the ups and downs of life 'on road' and how it has impacted on your emotional wellbeing
- I also want to gain your views on the best ways to support the emotional wellbeing of CYP living this lifestyle

#### Is it private?

- I will be audio recording the interview with you so I don't forget anything we talk about. Afterwards I will listen to the recording and write up the discussion on a computer.
- When I write down the recording of the interview, every name and place will be changed so that you or anyone that you talk about can't be identified
- All information on computer will be kept password protected
- My supervisor and I will be the only people who have access to this data
- If you identify yourself as a gang member, neither the gang to which you belong, nor any other gang, will know that you have been involved in this study. Everything you say will be kept confidential.
- If, however, you say anything that suggests you, or someone else, might be at risk of harm, or if information regarding past illegal activity (which has not already been prosecuted) is shared with me, then I will have to share this information with the designated safeguarding member of staff (**staff member name**) at (**organisation name**), following child protection procedures. This could result in future prosecution, and such information may subsequently be required by the police. You are therefore encouraged not to share any instances of illegal activity for which you have not already been convicted. I will let you know if I have to do this.
- You can withdraw your information up to 2 weeks after completing the interview. If you want to do this, then either speak to (**name**) at (**organisation name**) or email me at the address below.

#### Are there any risks?

- We might talk about things that could bring up difficult feelings for you. If this happens I will do my best to support you.

- I can tell you about ways you could access support after if you think this would be helpful

**What do you get for taking part?**

- As a thank you, I will give you a £20 gift voucher for a sports retail store.

**Do I have to take part?**

- No – you can opt out at any stage of the study without giving an explanation and your relationship with **(organisation name)** will not be affected in any way. If you want to withdraw your interview from the study, then you have up to 48 hours after the interview to do this.
- If you are happy to take part I will ask you to sign a consent form

**Contact details**



**Participant Consent**

Research study:

***Lived experiences of life ‘on road’***

I have read the information letter about this research study. I understand what is going to happen and what I am being asked to do. I would like to take part in this study.	YES	NO
I understand that what I say will be kept confidentially unless I share anything that suggests myself or someone else is at risk of harm	YES	NO
I understand that I can leave the study at anytime without having to say why	YES	NO

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4: Interview schedule

Issue Topic	Possible Questions	Possible Follow-up questions	Probes
<b>How they define street gangs, life on road, and emotional wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you understand by the phrase 'life on road'?</li> <li>• What do you understand by the term 'emotional wellbeing'?</li> <li>• What does the term 'street gang' mean to you?</li> </ul>	<p>You mentioned xxx, what did you mean by that?</p> <p>Do you identify with the 'street gang' label?</p> <p>Would you say you were in a street gang? Why / why not?</p>	<p>Repeating what participant has said / demonstrate active listening with head nods and eye contact</p>
<b>Lived experiences of life on road and it's impacts on emotional wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to me about life 'on road' – what is it like? What was your journey into this lifestyle?</li> <li>• How / in what ways does life 'on road' impact positively on your emotional wellbeing?</li> <li>• How / in what ways does life 'on road' impact negatively on your emotional wellbeing?</li> <li>• Thinking about your life before you were 'on road', do you think you emotional wellbeing was better or worse?</li> <li>• Does the 'street gang' label have an impact on your emotional wellbeing?</li> </ul>	<p>It's interesting that you mentioned xxx, tell me more about that.</p>	<p>Period of silence</p> <p>Repeating what participant has said / demonstrate active listening with head nods and eye contact</p> <p>That must have been hard</p> <p>Thank you for sharing that with me.</p>
<b>Support for emotional wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking about your life before you were 'on road,' do you think it would have been easier to deal with / talk about difficult feelings?</li> <li>• Being 'on road', how easy is it to talk about your emotional wellbeing with others? If so (i.e. difficult / easy), why?</li> <li>• Who do you find is the best person to speak to if you are struggling with difficult thoughts and feelings?</li> </ul>	<p>What type of things should professionals be thinking about when looking to support CYP 'on road'?</p> <p>What sort of questions do you think professionals need to be asking to CYP 'on road'?</p>	<p>Go on</p> <p>Repeating what participant has said / demonstrate active listening with head nods and eye contact</p> <p>That's really insightful, so what you're saying is...</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you feel like there is support out there for the emotional wellbeing of CYP 'on road'?</li> <li>• What would ideal support look like for you to help you to deal with difficult thoughts and feelings?</li> </ul>		
<b>Anything else?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything we have not covered that you would like to mention or talk about which you think would be useful or important to know for people who want to understand and support the wellbeing of CYP in street gangs?</li> </ul>		

**Appendix 5: Full participant transcriptions which demonstrate step 3 (initial noting) and 4 (developing emergent themes) for each participant**

<b>Participant 1</b>		
Key: <b>Descriptive comments;</b> <i>Linguistic comments;</i> <u>Conceptual comments</u> I: Interviewer P1: Participant 1		
<b>Emergent Themes</b>	<b>Transcript</b>	<b>Exploratory Comments</b>
Criminal activity (drugs)	I: What do you understand by the phrase 'on road'?  P1: Errm, I understand 'on road' is when you're doing things on road like shotting and stuff and that you get me. You're living by the road and that you get me. Doing shit like that.	<b>Shotting (selling drugs) linked to being on road</b>
Money  Conflict with others due to money	I: Is there anything more you can say on that?  P1: Obviously it's just shotting really. 'On road' is when you make money on road you get me. Obviously, the problems 'on road', the beef with people and that comes with making money you know what I'm saying.  I: So the main focus is about money?  P1: Yeah.  I: What do you understand about the term 'emotional wellbeing'?	<b>On road is essentially explained as illicit ways of making money which can lead to arguments and conflict</b>  <b>Money</b>

Differences in coping with emotions / MH	<p>P1: You know what it is, everyone deals with, I see it as everyone deals with their shit their own way you get me. If you're feeling a certain type of way certain man will drink, certain man will smoke, certain man go out and kick off with people, whatever you get me. Obviously everyone has their way of dealing with shit.</p>	<p><b>Individual differences in dealing with one's emotional / mental health difficulties</b></p>
current gangs  Current Gangs as groups of friends	<p>I: And what do you understand by the term 'street gang'?</p> <p>P1: Street gang. There's bare gangs nowadays. Nowadays obviously if a group of man chill together they come up with names nowadays you get me. They ain't even really gang like that you get me. But they'll come up with names. Everyone's making gangs nowadays.</p>	<p><b>Discrediting / dismissing current 'gangs'</b></p> <p><b>Groups of friends socialising and label themselves</b></p>
Loyalty  Sense of belonging  Friendship group / gang seen as family	<p>I: You said they wouldn't be 'gang like that.' What does that mean?</p> <p>P1: Obviously nowadays a group of ... I could swear and that innit?</p> <p>I: Yeah.</p> <p>P1: A group of pussies can chill you get me, a group of dudes and that could chill together but they're not really gang cos them man ain't really gonna help each other if something happens. So they just call themselves gang. A real gang, obviously, they got each other's back innit. They treat each other like family and that. If it's beef then your all beefing you get me there's no questions, there's no right or wrong you get me. Your all together and that's what gang is. Nowadays it's all just little kids chilling together.</p>	<p><b>Loyalty important – current gangs lack loyalty</b></p> <p><b>Family</b></p>



Unquestioned loyalty	I: And you know when it comes to gang versus 'on road', are they the same or are they different?	<b>One person's problem becomes everybody's problem. Unwavering loyalty at all costs</b>
Current Gangs as groups of friends	P1: I feel like now it's the same. Now it's the same. Now everything's the same still. Gang, on road.	<b>Dismisses current gangs as friends socialising</b>
Road as a way of life	I: So you could use it interchangeably and know what someone's referring to?	<b>No differentiation in terms used to describe gang / on road lifestyle</b>
Dismissive of label	P1: You know what it is, not a lot of people say 'on road' anymore you get me. It's not even like that you get me. Now it's just, obviously, 'it is what it is' situation you get what I'm saying. Man just chill together. Everyone's broke, everyone wants money you know what I'm saying. And then next man, to make money you're going in next ends you get me you're not gonna stay in your own area and make money. Your gonna go next place and the next man ain't gonna like it. So obviously next man's gonna have issues and your gonna beef and that.	Dismissive of label
Way of life	I: You know you talked about how money is important, and how with gang you've got each other's back, can you tell me more about making money together as a group?	<b>It's just the way life is.</b>
Poverty drives illicit money making	P1: Errm, fucking ... how'd it be like ... it's like, I'm not saying me personally you get me, but obviously people shot you get me. Group of man will get together. Obviously everyone's broke so everyone's scraping up money and that you know what I'm saying. Everyone's doing what they gotta do to get their change and obviously you pick up something, you get me and then you	<b>Poverty driving the chase for money.</b>
Money making leads to conflict		<b>Money made in areas outside of one's own can lead to conflict with locals in said area</b>
Selling drugs		
Withholding information		<b>Talking about others selling drugs to make money. Distances self from this.</b>

<p>Poverty drives illicit money making</p> <p>Drug dealing</p> <p>Working as a group</p> <p>Profit sharing</p> <p>Unplanned assault</p> <p>Demonstration of loyalty to others causing issues</p> <p>Unable to socialise with friendship group due to them being in prison</p>	<p>shot and that you get me. You each have a certain amount of things on ya, you make that, after everything's gone you split the profit. That's how it starts you scrape money you get me. You don't have money in your pocket you know what I'm saying.</p> <p>I: Yeah. So, I'm really interested in your story, and if there was any point how you maybe entered 'on road' or gang in terms of your life. Can you tell me about that story? You can start from way back or early on, like even as far as primary onwards.</p> <p>P1: You know what it is, everything was calm I'll tell you straight. From young everything was calm. I was about fucking 16 or something you get me, about 16 and I was in a training centre doing fucking next course and that, and then fucking I used to chill with a group of man though you get me, out of that training centre. So I must have been on my break, and must have been chilling with them lot and them man go 'let's go to the park' and that. So went there whatever whatever. One, two things happened and must have got into a little kick off, got arrested, went through some bullshit court. Obviously I got charged, I got sentenced and everything. And obviously I knew a few people that were already in jail you get me that, obviously they were in for a while so I never got to chill with them. So once they come out, obviously that's when everything started and that. All the madness and that.</p> <p>I: You know you said training centre, what was that?</p> <p>P1: It's like, you know if you get kicked out of college and stuff, and school and stuff, they send you to a centre and you do one, two</p>	<p><i>Pauses may indicate he is finding it hard to express without possibly implicating oneself and or others?</i></p> <p><b>Poverty leads to money making by any means</b></p> <p><b>Describes process of drug dealing as a group</b></p> <p><b>Groups sharing profits made from different (illicit?) money-making ventures</b></p> <p><b>Upbringing up to the age of 16 devoid of 'on road' / illicit behaviours</b></p> <p><b>Describes entry into 'on road.'</b></p> <p><b>Incident in park during a break time lead to arrest, charge and court procedure</b></p> <p><b>Kick off (fight). Backing up his friends in this conflict led to arrest</b></p> <p><u>Demonstration of loyalty to back up mates caused issues for participant</u></p> <p><b>Unable to spend with a group of friends in jail during this period of his life. When these</b></p>
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Experience with Justice system	<p>courses like employability, business. You only get to do like two, three courses there. One of them ones. I had probation after that. While I was in centre this whole thing happened. Obviously I left centre and that cos I was going on, my court case went on for like fucking year and a half, two years. I turned 18 when they sentenced me. And obviously it was bare bullshit still.</p>	<p><b>friends were released his entry to on road began.</b></p>
Sense of injustice with sentencing	<p>I: Can you talk much on that case? Like what case you caught?</p>	<p><b>Describing training centre he was placed in</b></p>
Withholding information	<p>P1: Obviously it was a few cases of robbery, few assault, offensive weapon, and obviously a few other things that I don't really want to mention you get me.</p>	<p><b>Probation after incident along with court case</b></p>
	<p>I: So, mind me, you said you met these group of guys that led to this at that training centre?</p>	<p><b>Upset with sentencing – <u>feeling sense of injustice?</u> Sentencing process very long</b></p>
Demonstrating loyalty to peers	<p>P1: Nah I knew these guys from before you get me because I used to go college and I met them in college, and we used to chill together and stuff you get me. When I got kicked out of college I went centre so fucking it was one of them ones I just knew them, and I didn't really chill with people from centre so we used to link up for my break and stuff.</p>	<p><b>Description of charges received – unwilling to disclose full details</b></p>
Longing for sense of belonging	<p>I: What impact did that have because that seems like a big kind of life event at that point given everything was calm up to then.</p>	<p><b>Friends made in training centre – would hang out in unstructured times</b></p>
First experience with Justice system	<p>P1: You know what it is, I never been arrested before you know what I'm saying. Before that, obviously before that it was school. In school if feds get called and that it's not really a big issue you get me it all gets dealt with in school. You know when your out of</p>	<p><b><u>Demonstrates loyalty to people he had not known for too long to the extent of engaging in violent assault to support them They provide him with sense of belonging in absence of close friends</u></b></p>

<p>First involvement with police outside of school</p> <p>MH and wellbeing impacted by experience with police - anxiety of consequence / anxiety of unknown</p> <p>Anxiety relief once released by police</p> <p>Disloyalty shown to participant / victim of snitching</p> <p>Injustice of charges given</p> <p>Impact of sentence / involvement with</p>	<p>school, and then it's the first time you get involved with police and then they arrest you and your going up, I wasn't expecting it you get me. I was sitting there thinking in that cell what the fuck bruv you get me. I was thinking yo I'm gonna get fucked now. And then I was there for like about 16 hours, 18 hours or something before I got interviewed. And they ain't even told nothing to my family nothing about anything you get me. So I'm young you get me, I'm shook right now in station I think I'm getting bagged and that, I'm going jail and that. That's what my mind is telling me and that. And then fucking my interviews happened, dadada. I wasn't as stressed after the interview. After the interview I knew I was coming out. And then once I got released it was all ok first, and then obviously I started hearing that the people I got arrested with wrote statements against me and that saying it was me that did everything you get me. And that's when the whole bullshit ... obviously it's stressful you get me you're young and you start stressing you get me. You're sitting there thinking you're going jail for something you ain't even done. Cos obviously I told you before you get me, I kicked off and that, but you get me I never robbed no one.</p> <p>I: Ok, so initially you thought, obviously your nervous this is new to you, you did the interview, you felt alright, but then obviously behind your back the people that you were with kind of, you got fucked and that.</p> <p>P1: Yeah I got fucked I couldn't, I had to leave my course and that you get me. The teachers come to me you get me, the ones that teaching me and said yo you got charged with this, you've been</p>	<p><b>Never arrested in life until now.</b></p> <p><b>Police involvement in school not considered a big deal however this is not the case outside of the school with arrest – unexpected</b></p> <p><b>Anxiety about potential consequences / prison time</b></p> <p><b>Experiencing feelings of fear sitting in police station</b></p> <p><b>Not as anxious / stressed after police interview as he was let go</b></p> <p><b>Other peers involved in incident demonstrate disloyalty and place blame and responsibility of incident on participant – this leads to stress and anxiety again</b></p> <p><b>Injustice – admits assault but refutes robbery</b></p> <p><u>First act of disloyalty by peers against participant in his story</u></p>
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<p>Criminal Justice on educations and future aspirations</p> <p>Negative experience with professional (teachers)</p> <p>no hope for future</p> <p>Criminal record hindering future aspirations</p> <p>Friends – not a gang</p>	<p>sentenced, whatever whatever’s happened, whatever whatever, there’s no point you carrying on this shit now you get me because if you carry on your not gonna be able to get a job. So you’re just going to be wasting your time. So I just fucking left it.</p> <p>I: Why is that because you’ve got a mark on your record?</p> <p>P1: Yeah yeah I got a record now and what I wanted to do it had to be, I had to have a clean record and that you get me. So I couldn’t do much.</p> <p>I: Out of interest what course was it? What would it have led to?</p> <p>P1: It was, I wanted to do social work back in the day and that. So I was doing health and social care for a bit and then I wanted to go Uni for it after my centre I was doing level 3 and then half way through that, that’s when all of that happened. Cos you know with the centre too the course was fast track and that. It weren’t like long level 1 level 2 was like that, when of them ones it happened in the same year. So fucking, I was gonna go soon and then I was gonna complete that course, probably stay there for a little longer, and then once I’m turned 18 I would have went to Uni and stuff you get me or whatever. But I couldn’t do it.</p> <p>I: You know at that moment, when you were chilling with those group of people innit, was it explicit then that we’re gang, or did it happen too quickly to put a label on it?</p> <p>P1: We weren’t no gang we was just chilling. You know one of them ones. We weren’t no gang. We didn’t even kick off, we didn’t do</p>	<p><b>Disloyalty of peers led to participant being removed from his course</b></p> <p><b>Teachers advised participant to leave course – ‘no point’ in continuing</b></p> <p><u>Lack of support / good advice from professionals – teachers? Left participant with no hope for his future – maybe this sets the seed for the participants entry on road in the future as a means to make money – as legal avenues for making money may seem closed off to the participant at this point</u></p> <p><b>Receipt of a criminal record now closed career option relevant to his course</b></p> <p><b>Planned to do social work – hoped to go to university but this path was now blocked due to criminal record</b></p>
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<p>Unplanned incident</p> <p>Innocence of youth</p> <p>Demonstrating unquestionable loyalty to peers</p> <p>No respect for those who are not loyal</p> <p>Loyalty not reciprocated by peers</p> <p>Peers move on</p> <p>Emotional outbursts after experiencing disloyalty / court-anger</p>	<p>nothing, we were just kids. We used to go college and shit like that, we'd just left school you know what I'm saying. We weren't no gang. We were, obviously we were just kids and that so on breaks and that you wanna chill, you wanna go eat some food. It weren't even planned, it's just we went to the park then there was people there you know what I'm saying. And these man had problems with them people.</p> <p>I: And so, you had to get stuck in?</p> <p>P1: I ain't no dickhead if my bredrin's kicking off I'm kicking off you get what I'm saying. That's what it was like.</p> <p>I: Yeah, but obviously when it came full circle, they didn't have your back like you had theirs?</p> <p>P1: Nah. In court, in the station and that, in the statements and that, that's what happened.</p> <p>I: And how did that affect your, in terms of emotional wellbeing?</p> <p>P1: You know what it is, I started kicking off more, you know one of them ones. Obviously I was going through that bullshit and them lot all disappeared and we couldn't see each other, they moved house or whatever. So erm I was stressed and that I was going out on my ones, I weren't really linking anyone like that, and I was kicking off and that with a lot of people. And then when my mates come out of jail and that, obviously I was with them, obviously they had my back you know one of them ones.</p>	<p><b>The peers involved in this incident were just college friends who would socialise together - not a gang. An unplanned circumstance during unstructured time led to an unfortunate incident</b></p> <p><u>A sense of innocence in that 'we were just kids' and 'had just left school' – maybe lack of innocence is prerequisite to entry on road?</u></p> <p><b>Loyalty emphasised – must back up friends during a conflict.</b></p> <p><u>Lack of respect for those who do not show loyalty. Those who do not do this labelled derogatory term</u></p> <p><u>Though participant demonstrates unwavering loyalty – peers did not reciprocate this under pressure of police involvement</u></p> <p><b>Incident / court procedures led to participant demonstrating more emotional / angry outbursts. Peers involved in incident left the area.</b></p>
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<p>Solitary life until desired peers back from jail</p> <p>Regret of socialising with disloyal peers</p> <p>Anger issues from youth</p> <p>Loyalty towards peers led to negative consequences</p> <p>MH impact by potential prison consequences – stress and anxiety</p> <p>Solitary living</p> <p>Alcohol to cope with emotional distress</p>	<p>I: So, it seems to have affected you</p> <p>P1: it changed me. I ain't gonna say it never changed me. It changed me and that. It changed me it fucked with my head and that. It made me feel like I couldn't do certain things and that, that I wanted to do and that you know what I'm saying. And I feel like the people I was chilling with, obviously it fucked me up and that innit. I shouldn't have chilled with them people. It changed a lot of shit for me. At home, everything.</p> <p>I: In what ways did it change you and how did you look at the world differently?</p> <p>P1: You get pissed off. You know what it is, I had issues anyway you get me. I used to have anger problems when I was young and that I used to get pissed off. I still do you get me. And fucking obviously that, it made it worse. You know when I stress and that it made it worse and that. Stressing about that and thinking I'm gonna get locked for some bullshit and that. Obviously, it made it worse and that. I used to get pissed off all the time and kick off at yard, not talk to anyone, not talk to my family. I used to be out 24/7, I never used to be at home. You know one of them ones. I stopped doing shit and that.</p> <p>I: How did you cope with that? Did you have any strategies to cope?</p> <p>P1: I used to drink. That's it, drink. Been drinking since I was young anyway. I used to drink. Drink and smoke that's it.</p>	<p><b>Participant not socialising with anyone during this time until his friends who were currently in jail were released. Participant adamant that friends from jail were loyal like him and had his back.</b></p> <p><b>Participant states incident changed him – he couldn't pursue his future plans and this was mentally difficult to process</b></p> <p><b>In hindsight wishes he never socialised with college friends</b></p> <p><u>Participant would rather have no friends at this point if he can't trust them / deem them loyal to him – as loyalty to new friends made in college and a misperceived sense of their loyalty got him into trouble – and had a major potential consequence on his future</u></p> <p><b>Participant changed in the sense of becoming angrier – had anger issues growing up and incident exacerbated this</b></p> <p><b>Stress / anxiety about potential prison sentence and serving time. Participant more reclusive, not talking to anyone including family. Stopped doing things. Always out of the house</b></p>
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<p>Court procedures</p> <p>Positive experience with professional in criminal justice system</p> <p>Negative experience with professionals – uncaring / insensitive</p> <p>Phoning family and friends during times of stress</p> <p>Happy after positive outcome of criminal justice system</p>	<p>I: So, did you serve time for that incident?</p> <p>P1: Nah basically after the court case imagine, the officer that arrested me came to my court case. Obviously, because it went on for so long and they kept adjourning my case and that, obviously, when you go court you got to do a pre-sentence report. Pre-sentence report is when you see the, it's like a probation officer and you go to see them. They write a report about you, like what type of character you are and that, and err obviously she never sent the report. She must have been late in sending it or some bullshit. And this woman fully helped me and I didn't know her at all I'm telling you that now I didn't know her. She helped me, she come to court. Last thing I heard before they took a break on my sentencing was 4-year custodial sentence, and then they took a lunch break the fucking dickhead. I'm out there stressing ringing my boys, my family and saying safe to me I got all my shit with me. Fucking, went inside, boom, the woman's there and give my report now you get me. So fucking, she's gave a verbal report. And she just said tot them that obviously it was a mistake and that, he's a kid, he's made a mistake, and I can tell he's not like that, whatever whatever bullshit you get me. That rah helped and he said I'm gonna take that into consideration, and I'm gonna give you a suspended sentence instead. But if you do anything, it's gonna come straight back to me and obviously, I ain't gonna be light on you after that you get me. Just take this as you get lucky or whatever, he said that to me and boom, suspended, I was gassed.</p> <p>I: So how did that make you feel? That outcome?</p>	<p><b>Drinking alcohol as means to cope during this time</b></p> <p><b>Court procedure</b></p> <p><b>Professional helping was looked on favourably</b></p> <p><b>Professionals not caring – taking lunch break after stating potential consequence</b></p> <p><b>Participant stressed – phoning family and friends during stressful time</b></p> <p><b>Pre-sentence report took participant's crime free history into account</b></p>
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<p>Looking favourably on those who look out for him – positive experience with professional</p> <p>Belief in fate / karma</p>	<p>P1: you know what it is, I felt like a stranger had my back and that. You know one of them ones cah I didn't know this woman. I was there obviously telling her, I wasn't even telling her anything we was just speaking and obviously she came in, obviously I feel like it was all meant to be and that. That's how I see it as. Because she could have just sent that report, she was obviously late because she was busy with her own shit you get me. And I feel like it was god's plan and that. Obviously, she come gave a verbal and I got let go and I got lucky. That how I see it as.</p> <p>I: have you always been like that in terms of religious and...</p> <p>P1: You know what it is I'm not religious, you know what it is I just believe in, I believe in certain things you get me. I believe in karma; I believe in them type of things. I feel like if you do good, good things will happen, you do bad, bad things are gonna happen you know what I'm saying.</p> <p>I: Ok so how did the story progress for you after that?</p>	<p><b>Happy with result – pre-sentence report helped ease punishment</b></p> <p><b>Professional / stranger looking out for participant – meant a lot for participant</b></p> <p><b>Fate – it was meant to be</b></p> <p><b>Referring to god's plan / higher power attributed to positive outcome</b></p> <p><b>Not religious but believe in karma</b></p>
<p>Resorting to crime to make money with peer group released from prison</p> <p>Illicit money making leading to conflict in neighbouring areas</p>	<p>P1: Obviously, after that, after I got sentenced, I started chilling with... I stopped going college, I stopped doing anything with that, I just did what I had to do to make bare change, and then I was chilling with the geezers that just come out of jail. I met a few other people and we were all making money together whatever whatever. Then obviously, like I said it brings problems innit you're in next people's areas. It brings problems and that. And then, obviously, bare beef, bare bullshit, and yeah, my bredrin passed away, next bredrin got locked, bare people ghosted and now I'm here you know what I'm saying.</p>	<p><b>Stopped college, started making money and socialising with peers released from prison</b></p>

<p>Road life leading to negative life outcomes of those around him – death / jail</p> <p>Cant be financially supported by family so resort to other means to make money</p> <p>Poverty – no ownership of property</p> <p>Living in deprivation</p> <p>Emphasise on socialising with friends</p> <p>Dismissive of 'gang' label – just friends spending time together</p>	<p>I: So, all that happened from that first incident until now?</p> <p>P1: From 2013 to 2015, staring 2016. Your just chilling, your only young, you ain't got money you know what I'm saying. Obviously, you're from certain areas, your living in council areas you know what I'm saying, council house areas and that. You're not owning the house there you know what I'm saying. And obviously you ain't getting money off your family so you gotta do what you gotta do you know what I'm saying.</p> <p>I: So, when you said people had come out of prison, after that incident had you known them previously?</p> <p>P1: You know what it is, there was certain people I knew, and there were certain people I knew as friends you get me; they knew them. And there was a thing where we all got together. Everyone just started talking and obviously we clicked. Some of us clicked, some of us already knew each other from young so it was one of them ones. We all just started chilling together.</p> <p>I: And would you say that is what someone would have labelled as a gang at that point?</p> <p>P1: At the time there was no gang. At the time there was no gang. We were just seeing each other as family you get me. We always were together day in day out you get me. Late nights, every day you get me. So, we were just seeing each other as family. We helped each other, we ate together, everything you get me. If</p>	<p><b>Started making money with peers released from prison – led to problems with people whose areas they went to make money</b></p> <p><b>Led to some peers getting prison sentences, peer death, and people losing touch with participant during this time</b></p> <p><b>Emphasises socialising with friends</b></p> <p><b>Poverty – no money, living in deprived areas</b></p> <p><b>No ownership of property</b></p> <p><b>No family support financially led to gaining money by any means necessary</b></p> <p><b>Peer group consists of old and new friends</b></p> <p><b>Got on well and socialised more together</b></p>
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<p>Friends seen as family</p> <p>Sense of belonging in group looked at positively</p> <p>Different roles within peers group to make money and share profit</p> <p>Labelled incorrectly by others as gang</p>	<p>one of us was having a munch, all of us were having a munch you know what I'm saying. It was like that. It was kinda nice still.</p> <p>I: And at that point were you guys 'up to no good' in terms of making money together?</p> <p>P1: We all had different ways of making money you know what I'm saying we all hustled and that. But we all bought money to the table and that you get me. We all did something. Everyone had different parts and that.</p> <p>I: In your timeline looking back at all of it would you have ever labelled any point of it as gang or would you always say it was family / group of friends?</p> <p>P1: You know what it is, if you chill with a group of people, they're gonna see you as a gang anyway. If I see a group of white man now chilling in a pub, I'm gonna think yo that's a gang you know what I'm saying. If one of them kicks off now they're all gonna kick off. Obviously if one black man chilling with a group of next 10 black man they're a gang you get me, Asian man chilling they're a gang you get me that's what everyone sees it as but obviously it's probably not that your just judging a book by its cover you know what I'm saying.</p> <p>I: And did people judge you guys like that?</p> <p>P1: Yeah of course of course.</p> <p>I: And how would that label make you feel?</p>	<p><b>Emphasises that peer group was not a gang – just a group of friends who spend a lot of time together</b></p> <p><b>Saw peer group as family. One person's success was everyone's success</b>  <i>Ends sentence on a positive reflection – participant seems to hold that time in high regards</i></p> <p><b>Different ways of money making in the group – different roles</b></p> <p><b>Everyone collectively bought money to table</b></p> <p><u>Implication that money was shared amongst group – describes group like an organisation – 'we all had our roles'</u></p> <p><b>Other will label a group of friends as a gang</b></p> <p><b>Groups of similar ethnicities together can be labelled a 'gang' – if one person has an argument the group will support them</b></p>
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<p>Childhood innocence to behaviours growing up</p> <p>Way of life</p> <p>Defending self from others / standing ones ground as a group</p> <p>Autopilot in behaviours – no thinking to them</p> <p>Money made in other areas leads to conflict</p> <p>Group did not rep a certain postcode or area</p>	<p>P1: You're a kid man you don't care and that you know what I'm saying your young you don't care. It's just it is what it is you get me. Let them say what they want to say.</p> <p>I: Would you live up to it?</p> <p>P1: You know what it is, we just stood our ground you know what I'm saying so it's not about living up to it, we stood our ground and that. No one's taking no shit from no one you know what I'm saying. You have to stand your ground. You don't think in them times and that.</p> <p>I: So how did the story progress from that point? You said one of your bredrin's had passed away.</p> <p>P1: Yeahh. Fucking, obviously it brings problems you get me like I said if you're in other people's areas and that. And we was everywhere we didn't really class an area you get me. A gang, another thing you get me a gang is someone that reps postcode bullshit too you get me that's what I see as a gang. We wasn't reppin. We were just a group; we were just from different areas you know what I'm saying just chilling with each other. But none of us were scared you get me, so we weren't no victims you get me, you know what I'm saying at the time and that. And people didn't like that because we never had no ends, we're in their area doing whatever, we got into some problems with certain man and that, one two things escalated and then, obviously I'm not saying what happened but obviously certain man, obviously a lot</p>	<p><b>Not what it looks like – judging book by cover</b></p> <p><b>Participants peer group labelled / deemed as gang by others</b></p> <p><b>Childhood innocence – don't care / lack of worry</b></p> <p><b>Is what it is – ignore what others are saying</b></p> <p><b>Group stood their ground and would not allow violation from anyone</b></p> <p><b>Automatic – don't think</b></p> <p><b>Making money in other areas (by illicit means?) leads to issues – peer death</b></p>
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<p>socialising in different areas with friends</p> <p>Not victims – no fear was shown by peer group – not looked on favourably by others</p> <p>Conflict can lead to death</p> <p>Unexpected death of peer</p> <p>Individual differences in dealing with impact of death</p> <p>Slow to process death of peer</p> <p>Death / life events on this level can reveal peoples true character during difficult times</p>	<p>of people died you get me. It wasn't just my friend or whatever. A lot of people died from a lot of sides and that.</p> <p>I: And when it comes to the death of a friend, how did you deal with that?</p> <p>P1: It was the first time still I lost a friend and that. It was mad. I weren't expecting it. You know what it is, for everyone else, for the rest of them, the rest of my boys and that, they were all crying or whatever whatever, but you know what it is, it didn't impact me straight away I'll tell you straight. The first day, I didn't believe it you know what I'm saying, it was one of them ones. I heard the news and that, and I was shocked or whatever whatever, but I didn't believe it at the time. As days went by and that, and then I started... my mans in the morgue now, fucking he's gonna get buried soon, all of that bullshit. Autopsy's been done and fucking, it's just bullshit you get me. It fucks with your head still. And then, you know what it is, you know when you chill with a group of people, and then someone dies, that's when you realise, that's when you see everyone's true colours and that. You see who's really on it and who's not, you know one of them ones. You always see fake people, and then obviously in them days I saw a lot of fake shit and that. You know one of them ones.</p> <p>I: And how did you process that low? What did you do to cope?</p> <p>P1: Drinking. I was drinking way worse then. I was spending like, probably, fuck knows over £100 on liquor a day I think in them days easily. And that was just me drinking.</p>	<p><b>Gang's rep postcode according to participant but his peer group did not do this – went to many areas and did not assign selves to one area</b></p> <p><b>Just friends – socialising in different areas</b></p> <p><b>Not victims – no fear and people did not like this – did not like the participant's group taking liberties in their areas</b></p> <p><i>Not sharing / stating everything that happened</i></p> <p><b>Many deaths on all sides / opposing groups</b></p> <p><b>Peer death unexpected</b></p> <p><b>Others in group impacted more by death than participant</b></p> <p><b>Participant did not believe news – took a while for news to sink in and impact participant</b></p> <p><b>Reflecting on process / procedure of death</b></p> <p><b>Death can reveal people's true colours – who is loyal and real and who is fake</b></p>
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<p>Many unloyal and fake during times of difficulty</p> <p>Alcohol to cope with emotional distress of peer death</p> <p>Group drinking alcohol as means to cope with death / emotional distress</p> <p>Assaulting others as means of coping with distress</p> <p>Group not tied to postcodes</p>	<p>I: How old would you have been then?</p> <p>P1: When he died 2015... I would have been about 18/19 not sure, probably about them ages, 19 or something. This is after my court case and everything.</p> <p>I: How did your other friends cope with the death?</p> <p>P1: At them times everyone was drinking, you know one of them ones. My one mate, I ain't gonna say no names, he lost it. He was grabbing any single person and try and stab them and that. I had to grab him back and hold him back and that, he lost it. You get me. But he was going through his own bullshit he got locked at the end of that anyway. A few months after he died my man was in jail. You know one of them ones.</p> <p>I: you mentioned you lot weren't repping postcodes, but you ended up being in different areas. So, was that all because you were clashing with people in different areas who were in gangs? Who were protective over their areas?</p> <p>P1: Nah you know what it is, nah man, it's just that, obviously as I said, if you're on, not on road, but if your like, living like that, your obviously making money in certain ways you know what I'm saying, and your not repping no ends, your whole group is from different different areas, some man are from, say fucking Erdington, and some man are from next ends you get me or whatever whatever, so, obviously when you lot are chilling together you're not chilling in one place, you're not chilling on</p>	<p><b>These days of participants life he came across many who were considered fake and unloyal</b></p> <p><i>Whose on it – meaning who is willing to stand loyal and back up the cause of the group</i></p> <p><b>Drinking alcohol to cope with death – excessive drinking every day</b></p> <p><b>19 years old when peer died</b></p> <p><b>Other peers drinking alcohol to cope</b></p> <p><b>One peer impacted really negatively – trying to hurt / kill others to try and deal with emotional distress – received jail sentence for behaviours a few months after death</b></p> <p><u>Was peer trying to attack innocents or those involved with death of peer as a retaliation – participant leaves out details but could have successfully retaliated due to jail sentence received a few months later</u></p>
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<p>Socialising in different areas</p> <p>Socialise more comfortably in familiar areas</p> <p>Travelling to different areas to socialise</p> <p>Excessive alcohol drinking to cope with death</p> <p>Police investigation of the group rivalry leading to arrests</p> <p>No snitching against enemies – display of loyalty to street code</p>	<p>one man's block all the time all day you get me. Because you're not from there either you get me. If I'm chilling in Erdington I don't wanna go chill there all day that's not my ends you get me, that's not where I was bought up you know one of them ones. So, we always used to trek. Sometimes we used to go areas, fucking posh areas you get me and just base there you know what I'm saying. Sutton Coldfield and that. You get me and just chill. That's it.</p> <p>I: So, then what happened after that period?</p> <p>P1: Obviously so he died, fucking, I was drinking bare, you know what it is it got, it got to a point, obviously, after he died, certain man got locked up you know one of them ones, certain man, and, because there's camera footages you get me. So certain man got locked up because of that incident you get me. Because the feds had suspicion because obviously it was an ongoing thing between the two groups you get me, the two of us and that. So obviously the feds, obviously clocked on wagwan wagwan and they must have arrested them and remanded them because they were doing their own investigation and shit. And errm obviously no one snitched so them lot come out. And I remember the day they come out, I was chilling in the yard, and a group of man, certain certain people, the people that I was close to, they've gone jail at this time you get me, and these lot just come out of jail, and errm, obviously someone's rang me saying so and so's outside of jail dadada he wants to see you. I go safe. Cut the phone, boom, errm I must have booked a taxi from the yard and that. I looked at these man I goes yo, obviously, so and so's back and he wants to see me. These man go yo let us know how it</p>	<p><b>Group from different areas – not linked to postcode</b></p> <p><b>Socialising in different areas</b></p> <p><b>Wouldn't socialise in unfamiliar areas for too long</b></p> <p><b>Used to travel far out to different areas to socialise</b></p> <p><b>Excessive drinking to cope with death</b></p> <p><b>Camera footage of conflict led to sentencing of peers</b></p> <p><b>Police suspicion – knowledge of rivalry between the two groups</b></p> <p><b>Ongoing police investigation</b></p>
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<p>Arranging conflict to settle dispute</p> <p>Disloyalty shown by peers</p> <p>Olders have big influence on how disputes are settled</p> <p>Olders – heirarchy on streets</p> <p>Problems continue after dispute</p> <p>Disloyal friends discarded</p> <p>Travelling in community via public transport and foot – increased vulnerability</p>	<p>goes. Obviously, I was thinking you man are dickheads and that you know one of them ones I told them man you man are dickheads and that. They let me go there on my ones whatever I went there, did what I had to do I kicked off, it was just a scrap and that. Obviously, their olders were there and certain people I knew were there cuh we were initially from the same area you know one of them ones, so I was bought up around there with them lot. So, I knew a lot of their olders. So, it was a thing where, instead of someone getting really hurt, because they were really trying to hurt me when I got there, but instead of someone getting really hurt, they said yo just scrap it out and that. So, we had a scrap and that. Obviously, there were still problems after it, after the scrap or whatever whatever, still problems and that. But after that all them people that left me and let me go there on my ones, obviously I left them, told them to fuck off and stopped chatting to them. Everyone that I was close with, that I really used to chill with they were all in jail, you get me, one geezers fucking snaked me, rest are dickheads / pussies, and I was on my ones. I used to walk around on my own and smoke. I used to go to different different areas on foot and that. And I knew a few few people. And obviously certain people seen me and they helped me, you know one of them ones. Obviously, everyone knew my bredrin died, and boom, my other bredrins are locked and that, and they knew that fucking, obviously, I'm on my own at these times you get me. And they all had, I wouldn't say love you get me, at the time I'd say its respect and that. They had a respect for me and that. Because I showed them respect you know what I'm saying. I weren't a dickhead to them, they kept it nice and they rah bought me through and helped me out at the time and that.</p>	<p><b>No snitching – not even against opposing group – allowed them to leave jail early</b></p> <p><b>Close friends in jail</b></p> <p><b>Phone call to arrange meet up with opposing group once they were released from prison</b></p> <p><b>Peers at this time around participant show no loyalty – don't attend meeting / fight with him – labelled derogatory term</b></p> <p><b>Olders of opposing group present</b>  <u>Olders hinting at a sense of hierarchy / organisation on the street level– appear to be highly respected</u></p> <p><b>Olders prevented serious injury / escalation of situation</b></p> <p><b>Olders ordered a fight to settle dispute – however problems continued after this</b></p> <p><b>Discarded 'friends' who showed no loyalty and did not attend this altercation with participant</b>  <b>Participant travelling in community via foot – can't drive</b>  <b>Participant solitary – not socialising with anyone – as loyal peers in jail</b></p>
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<p>Solitary by choice</p> <p>Looks favourably at peers who help during times of distress</p> <p>Withholding information</p> <p>Smoking weed to cope</p> <p>Respect important amongst peers</p> <p>Socialisation with peers help to cope with distress</p> <p>Showing a lack of trust towards peers – trust in self</p>	<p>I: Were these people you had grown up with?</p> <p>P1: Nah these people I weren't grown up with. These people are people I met, I just met you know one of them ones. I just met them through, it wasn't even a thing where we used to chill together. We used to just see each other and shake hands and that. And these man rah seen me and they rah picked me up you know one of them ones. I was walking and I was in my own thoughts walking you get me. And I walked from, a long way you get me. I'm not gonna say from what ends but a long way. And then, on foot especially, and then I was smoking my zoot I was just walking, and obviously a car pulled up, pulled out their hand, called me over, and I jumped in the car. And I never chilled with these guys before you get me. And because I had respect and they knew what was going on, they rah showed me love you get me. They rah put me in the car and took my mind of certain things and that. You know one of them ones.</p> <p>I: And you felt like this had a boost to your wellbeing because you felt they had your back?</p> <p>P1: Yeah of course. You know what it is, at the time it wasn't even a thing where I felt like they had my back. At the time I was just thinking yo, I didn't give a fuck at the time you know one of them ones. My bredrins just died and I was going through my own bullshit you know what I'm saying. If someone said chill or whatever then I'd just jump in and chill you get me. But I'm still lost in my own thoughts. I didn't trust them, I didn't, obviously, I trusted myself. Obviously, I don't mind going anywhere, with</p>	<p><u>Participant reverts to reclusive behaviours after shows of disloyalty from those considered loyal friends in past</u></p> <p><i>Labels peer snake for disloyalty</i></p> <p><b>Describes those who helped in during this low time – out of respect for each other</b></p> <p><b>Those who helped during this time were loose acquaintances from past.</b></p> <p><b>Gave participant lift when they saw him on street – walking back from quite a distance</b></p> <p><i>Secretive / holding back details</i></p> <p><b>Smoking weed</b></p> <p><b>Respect for previous acquaintances and vice versa – offered lift and participant accepts</b></p> <p><u>This and proceeding socialising took participants mind off situation – helped him to cope even if for a short period – maybe a hint that reclusive behaviour not good for wellbeing and socialising helps</u></p>
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<p>Amenable to socialising with others if asked</p>	<p>anyone, because I know about me you get one of them ones, I don't care about you, because I know about me, you know one of them ones.</p>	<p><u>Looks favourably on these people even though not a revered loyalty between them over time – similar to professional who helped him with pre-sentence report</u></p>
<p>Confidence and trust in self to keep himself safe from threat</p>	<p>I: How do things like this impact your relationship with your family?</p>	<p><b>Boost to wellbeing</b></p>
<p>Distance from family</p>	<p>P1: I didn't see them for years man. I didn't see them for years. I was always out you get me. Like before, you know what it is, it was a thing where I used to remember my mum and dad with black hair you get what I'm saying. They had dark hair and that and walking without a walking stick. Now, it's literally recently when I seen them again you get me. Now properly I started speaking to them again, talking whatever trying to get to know each other. All them years I never spoke to them, never spoke to my brothers. Never seen my brothers. I was literally out all night, all day I was out, all night I was out. I probably come home about, I stay somewhere else sleep somewhere else, and come home about 7 or somewhere, have a shower, get changed whatever, freshen up, not see nobody head back out.</p>	<p><b>Would socialise if asked by others by lost in own thoughts – can't focus on present</b></p> <p><b>Didn't trust them</b></p> <p><b>Confident in own ability to handle self just in case these participants were out to hurt him – confidence to go anywhere due to this self-belief in ability to defend self</b></p>
<p>Regret of distance from family</p>	<p>I: And how long did this last for where you were living like that?</p>	<p><b>Distant from family for years – during the story thus far from post-16 case</b></p> <p><b>Reminiscent of parents when they were younger with a hint of regret</b></p>
<p>Focusing on building relationships with family now</p>	<p>P1: Right after my court case. About 2013-2014, 2015, 2016, err, 2016 I was a little, staying home a little bit but not as much you get me but that was because I was fucking..., but I still wasn't seeing no one you know what I'm saying I was in my room. Back then I had 3 floors in my yard. So, the first floor was just me you get me. Everyone else was down below. So, it was a thing where I was always in my room Bunning up and that, chilling. And when</p>	<p><b>Now talking to parents and making up for lost time – building relationship with them</b></p> <p><b>Out all the time day and night for years – never saw brothers – only home to shower and change clothes – would sleep elsewhere</b></p>
<p>Distance from family during on road time</p>	<p>I: And how long did this last for where you were living like that?</p>	<p><b>Now talking to parents and making up for lost time – building relationship with them</b></p> <p><b>Out all the time day and night for years – never saw brothers – only home to shower and change clothes – would sleep elsewhere</b></p>

<p>Solitary / reclusive – avoiding contact with family</p> <p>Smoking weed to cope</p> <p>Regret of distance with family during youth</p> <p>Reflection of parents ageing / wasted time</p> <p>Building relationships with family now</p> <p>Awareness of severe potential consequences before meeting between rival</p>	<p>I went out, I never used to see anyone you know one of them one's doors used to be closed and that you know what I'm saying.</p> <p>I: Looking back do you regret that you were distant from your family?</p> <p>P1: Yeah of course. It wouldn't have helped me, but you know what it is, you know when you grow old and that and you look back you think yo your parents are getting old now too you know what I'm saying. And all them years you wasted because of your own bullshit, they grew old you know one of them ones and you can't take that back you know one of them ones. So now that time you got to build that relationship and to chill with them and to get to know them and do certain things and that, that's been wasted because you don't know how long they got left now you know what I'm saying because they're old.</p> <p>I: Back when you said were involved in a scrap, did you know that that was what you were walking into?</p> <p>P1: Yeah of course. I wasn't even thinking it was gonna be a scrap I was thinking it was either, someone's gonna die you know one of them ones. I'm not gonna say who but that's what my initial thought was when I went down there. And you know what it is, it was a thing where I went past my yard and I could have picked up something. And at the time I weren't even thinking. I thought you know what, fuck it. I just walked past my house and went down the road where everyone was, and boom it happened you know what I'm saying.</p>	<p><u>Where is he staying during this time – trap house / county line inference possibly?</u></p> <p><b>Nearly 2-3-year period of living this way and distant from family</b></p> <p><b>Transition back to normality – still reclusive from family initially – staying on top floor of house</b></p> <p><b>Smoking weed in room and relaxing When leaving house would do so without interacting with family</b></p> <p><b>Regret of distance from family during this time</b></p> <p><b>Laments parents aging – realises they are getting old – hits him</b></p> <p><b>Laments lost time – wasted time- certain things that could have been done together can't be done now</b></p> <p><b>Building relationship with parents now - don't know how long they have left now</b></p>
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<p>Thoughts of grabbing weapon for self=defence / protection</p> <p>Incidents geographically close to home</p> <p>Desensitisation to violence</p> <p>Revenge at all costs</p> <p>No rumination over past</p> <p>No regrets about past actions</p> <p>Past important in building current character</p> <p>Worry for brothers when they are in</p>	<p>I: What is that like going on a journey where you know that this is what's going to happen? How does something like that impact you?</p> <p>P1: You know what, because it's been so long, and you've been doing it for so long and you've been kicking off and that, all this bullshit is normal, you don't really think. You know one of them ones. At the time it was just revenge on my mind thinking yo you gotta do this you gotta do that you get me your bredrin's dead you get me. No matter who it is, someone's gonna get it. And that's what my mind was telling me. I weren't really... afterwards, until this day I don't think of it you know one of them ones. I ain't saying what I did or whatever you get me, but I don't think about it like that. I don't regret it you know what I'm saying. I don't regret nothing. I fully don't. Obviously, I'm not... fucking how else can I put it, I'm happy with the way I turned out because you've got to go through certain shit you get me. And I'm happy I see the world the way I see the world you get me instead of how next man sees the world and that you get me.</p> <p>I: How do you see the world now?</p> <p>P1: You know what it is, my brothers are good people and that. My brothers go out, I get worried you know one of them ones when they go certain places, I get worried. I know what the ends are like you get me. I know what late nights are like, I know who be's about and that. I know you can get robbed and that you get me. People out there lurking tryna rob ya, there's shotters on the corner, group of man be chilling you could get stabbed for no</p>	<p><b>Knew what he was getting into earlier with 'meeting' – knew it would be a bad situation</b></p> <p><b>Thoughts that someone was going to die</b></p> <p><b>Infers to picking up weapon from home but decided against it</b></p> <p><b>Happened close to home</b></p> <p><b>Desensitized to such incidents involving violence - Don't think as a result</b></p> <p><b>Revenge – must do whatever it takes to exact revenge on friend's death – against anyone on opposing side</b></p> <p><b>Doesn't think about that time now</b> <i>Withholding information</i></p> <p><b>No regrets on actions during that time</b></p> <p><b>Past events made him who he is today</b></p>
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<p>certain parts of community</p> <p>Knowledge of the streets worries participant re his family</p> <p>Brothers different to participant</p> <p>Back and forth rivalry with opposing group</p> <p>Violence immediate upon seeing rival and vice versa</p> <p>Violent incidents</p>	<p>fucking reason. I know all of this shit you know one of them ones. So I get worried about my brothers when they go out and that you know one of them ones.</p> <p>I: How many brothers do you have?</p> <p>P1: I've got 2 brothers. Ones older ones younger.</p> <p>I: And you worry for both of them?</p> <p>P1: They're both not like that you get me. Not like me and that you get me.</p> <p>I: So, what was the story after the scrap happened?</p> <p>P1: After that, it was just a back and forth thing with each other you get me. After that scrap I weren't chilling with no one it was just a thing where, when I'd see them guys it was on and when they'd see me it was on. But because we lived in the same ends, their olders knew my olders and whatever whatever knew each other's people and whatever. The olders come to a thing where no one's going to no one's house. You can't do nothing by no one's house and that. Don't get no one's family involved. Soon as you're off the street, or off the block and that, and you see each other do whatever the fuck you're doing, you know one of them ones. Don't get your families involved. So, it was one of them ones. Every time they seen me, imagine, one time they seen me blood they're in a Golf GTI of something, and fucking, they try and run me over. I was young them days too, I think I was about 18, 19 them days too. This is like a week after my</p>	<p><b>Proud that he sees the world the way he does</b></p> <p>Worries for bothers – <i>they're good people – inference that they are <u>'different from him – he sees himself as a bad person?</u></i></p> <p>Knows what the streets are like – many avenues to get robbed or killed for no reason, shady characters etc – <u>sees self like a shady character?</u></p> <p><b>Brothers not like him – maybe not as strong or street savvy as him? Refers to them as <u>good people earlier. Maybe you have to be a certain type of character to be on the roads</u></b></p> <p><b>Back and forth rivalry continues between opposing group</b></p>
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<p>Influence of elders on rules of engagement</p> <p>ON foot and public transport increasing vulnerability</p> <p>Withholding information</p> <p>Violent incidents cause paranoia</p> <p>Anxiety from previous life events</p> <p>Fight or flight response to perceived threats in environment</p> <p>Constant awareness / paranoia</p> <p>Daily life impacted by anxiety / awareness</p>	<p>breddin died, and they try and run me over. They try and run me over, fucking 9 guys chasing me around with knives and that around bits and that. And, obviously... certain things happened and that, but obviously...I stayed alive that night you get me. I was ok and that.</p> <p>I: Have you had a lot of close calls like that? How does that impact you mentally?</p> <p>P1: Yeah. It gets you paranoid... you know what it is, not at the time, but it just gets you, your always...looking around you get me. Like right now, if a car drives past me right now you get me or it slows down there, I would fully think yo who's that? You get me like is that someone I've got a problem with? And my heart starts racing, my adrenaline starts pumping, boom, soon as they drive off its calm again you know one of them ones. I get, now, it's just paranoia all the time you know one of them ones. It's not even a thing that it bothers me because I'm good, I like it that I'm paranoid because it keeps me aware and that. Keeps me aware of my surroundings and that. So it's rah good in a sense but obviously sometimes I don't like it because I'll be chilling with a group of man and we're sessioning and boom, I get paras because someone's pulled up and I get, I get ready, I try and get ready, try and start my car, try grab my...whatever the fuck I have to grab and, you get me be ready make sure if, if something goes down, no one gets hurt you get me.</p> <p>I: How long have you been like that? Or do you think it is a result of the life you've lived?</p>	<p><b>On sight – whenever someone seen on either side resulted in violence / attempts at violent attacks</b></p> <p><b>Elders – rules made not to engage in violence near each other's houses – can't get families involved</b></p> <p><b>Tried running participant over in car</b></p> <p><b>Young during this time – on foot and public transport so odds of exposure increased to victim of violence</b></p> <p><b>Group of 9 chasing participant with knives and weapons – managed to stay alive</b></p> <p><i>Withholds information on incident</i></p> <p><b>Violent incidents / close calls trigger paranoia</b></p> <p><b>Anxiety</b></p> <p><b>Always Hyper-vigilant – symptoms of PTSD</b></p> <p><b>Fight or flight response – heart racing, adrenaline</b></p> <p><b>Constantly paranoid to this day – PTSD</b></p>
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<p>Anxiety / awareness key to protect self and others</p> <p>Possible use of weapon to protect self</p> <p>Reflection on how life events have shaped current presentation</p> <p>Anxiety prevalent on road due to potential threats to life</p> <p>Anxiety prevalent despite bravado individuals may show</p> <p>Violent incidents leading to difficulties sleeping</p>	<p>P1: You know what it is I've never thought about it like that you know one of them ones. In a sense yeah you get me, in a sense yeah. I never thought. Because I've been paras for a long time. Like I get paranoid a lot, for a long time you know one of them ones. Obviously after incidents. Anyone on road, if you say, if anyone on, not on road, but anyone that's on them bullshit ones you get me...they'll tell you get me. If they say they ain't paranoid they're chatting shit and that you get me. If you kicked off now and that persons saying I'm gonna fucking come back and I'm gonna get you, your telling me you're not gonna be paras and that? Them man are gassin. Them man ain't telling the truth and that you know one of them ones. You would be paras bruv, no matter who you are, no matter how bad you are, no matter how big you are, you're gonna be sitting there thinking man could roll on me any single fucking time. Any car pull up your going to get paranoid. You know one of them ones.</p> <p>I: How else do close run-ins impact you?</p> <p>P1: I can't sleep. You know what it is, there's ways...fucking hell bruv...how do I put this...you know what it is, there's some nights you can't sleep, some nights you can and that. You know what it is as years go by, the things still there, but it fades and that, because you're doing other things whatever whatever, all the things are happening in your life, your busy and that. Your mind don't cross it until you're <i>in</i> bed you know one of them ones and you're on your own and your lying down and you think about certain things and sometimes you can't go sleep, or sometimes you're so tired you don't get a chance to think you know one of them ones. And just knock out.</p>	<p><b>Happy that paranoia keeps him safe and alert of dangers in environment – paranoia doesn't bother him in this instance</b></p> <p><b>Paranoia can impact daily life – socialising with friends and participant can get paranoid by events in his environment – need to be alert and ready to protect self and group</b></p> <p><b>Infers to picking weapon of some kind close by to protect self and others</b></p> <p><b>Reflecting on paranoia based on interview – first time he reflects that this may be due to how he grew up as a victim / perpetrator of violence</b></p> <p><b>Paranoid for a long time</b></p> <p><b>All on road experience this despite bravado claims – all will be anxious if they have been threatened with violence</b></p> <p><b>No matter how big, threatening, or confident you are the idea of being attacked at any moment keeps people on road paranoid</b></p> <p><b>Violent incidents / close call – lead to difficulties sleeping</b></p>
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<p>Ruminate on events during passive moments in life</p> <p>Alcohol as means of coping</p> <p>Alcohol can lead to further problems / erratic behaviour</p> <p>Consistent violent incidents on daily basis – part of life</p> <p>Violence spurred by being in same geographical area as rivals</p> <p>Being on foot / public transport increases vulnerability to violence</p> <p>Must be aware / vigilant at all times</p>	<p>I: And even now would you resort to drink to cope if you're feeling low?</p> <p>P1: Yeah.</p> <p>I: Does it help you?</p> <p>P1: Not really because I get too drunk and then I do certain things that I don't...really.... wanna do you get me. I end up doing stupid things and that.</p> <p>I: So, how did your story continue?</p> <p>P1: There were bare run-ins. You know what it is, it's hard to put in words you know what I'm saying. There's so much shit that happened, and you'd think it's like ahh once every here and there, nah man you was kicking off literally every couple of days every 2 days you'd see each other boom boom boom you know one of them ones. It was constant you get me. If it was a thing where it was once a month you hardly run in, bruv you're in the same area you know what I'm saying. Your gonna bump into each other you get me. You're on foot, your both on foot, no one's driving, no one's doing that, your both on foot. You gotta be prepared, you gotta be ready, and you gotta hold it down you know one of them ones. I've been attacked bruv, I got fucked up and that. I went to give my bredrin money and that, my mate...I got set up and I lost connection with this mate too you get me and me and him stopped chilling together. Obviously, my mines rang me saying his job or whatever whatever, so as a good friend,</p>	<p><b>Although slightly faded the memories of incidents remain</b></p> <p><b>Ok when busy as no time to think but when passive thoughts can be more present – especially when lying in bed before sleep</b>  <u>Are impacts then greater now for P1 as he is currently NEET – not much to keep his mind busy?</u></p> <p><b>Tiredness helps keep thoughts out of head</b></p> <p><b>To this day drinking alcohol is used to cope</b></p> <p><b>Alcohol doesn't really help – can make things worse – lead to erratic behaviour without thought for consequences</b></p> <p><b>Many violent encounters continued</b></p> <p><i>Hard to put the violence into words – difficulties in emphasising the fact that it was a constant and ever-present part of life during this time on a daily basis</i></p>
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<p>to defend self and others</p> <p>Disloyalty from peer despite own loyalty to him and his family</p> <p>Public transport / foot increases vulnerability</p> <p>Violent incident – victim of brutal assault by group</p>	<p>I had a certain amount of money at the time you get me. Saying his mum lost his job. And I was cool with all his family you get me. We all used to smoke together. Even his mum and that you know what I'm saying fam. And fucking, I went there, I dropped my man some change and that. Dropped him a couple bills, dropped him some loud and that, smoke. And then fucking kept it stepping. And these days I'm catching bus you get me, and I'm a couple stops away from him you get me. So, I jumped on bus, I'm waiting by the bus stop again. And then, this is broad daylight, and about 10 man pull up, about 9 / 10 man or whatever whatever, fucking couldn't even count how many man, could have been more, could have been less. Fucking bare man pull up with bats and bars and whatever, I don't know if they had a knife on them or whatever you get me but thank god I never got stabbed that day you get me. Obviously, they started whacking their bars and obviously I started kicking off, I was on my own and there was a lot of them. They started doing what they were doing, they dragged me from a fucking foot across into an alleyway and behind a bin and that. And they started...imagine I remember lying on my back and that, getting whacked in my face you get me with bars and bats and that you know one of them ones. And then, I passed out. My head went numb. I just remember getting hit in my face and that and my whole face went numb I couldn't feel nothing. And then fucking, I passed out and I woke up fucking on my stomach, curled up behind a bin and that. I opened my eyes and I see a bag of blood on the floor. Shit dragged myself across the floor. Obviously, there's a black geezer standing there watching because, imagine, the alleyways not even a alleyway it's like a library. And the library stairs are going upwards you get me so next to it there's</p>	<p><b>Consistent threat of violence – being in the same area doesn't help as you run into each other constantly</b></p> <p><b>On foot – increases likelihood of being victim</b></p> <p><b>Vigilant at all times – must be ready for attack and to attack others</b></p> <p><b>Incident where he was set up by what was considered a close friend</b></p> <p><b>Another show of disloyalty by others to the participant</b></p> <p><b>Was close friend – close with his family, would smoke weed with his mother, still betrayed by him</b></p> <p><b>Participant showing loyalty – looking out for friend by giving money and weed to him but this was not rewarded</b></p> <p><b>On foot / public transport – increasing vulnerability</b></p> <p><b>Group pulled up with weapons to violently assault participant unconscious</b></p> <p><b>Vivid memory of incident</b></p>
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<p>Help from civilian</p> <p>Bad experience with Health professional</p> <p>Disregard shown by health professional</p>	<p>a garbage bin and shit you know one of them ones. So, they've took me behind that garbage bin. And that geezers on the stairs looking at me thinking yo why's this man curled up in the corner and that. I woke up and he's asking me if I'm ok and that. I tried speak and spat out blood. I'm thinking fuck bruv I've got fucked you get me. I couldn't even get up you get me. And my arms hurting I couldn't feel my arm. Dragging myself across the floor on to the back to the bus stop, whatever you get me, sat on the thing, went through my phone, tried to find someone to pick up. The guy said yo you need an ambulance? Obviously, tried to speak again, couldn't speak and nodded my head. My man called a ambulance for me, and fucking, ambulance come, took me in the ambulance, they rah didn't even fucking, they rah didn't even help me. They made me clean myself up. The bitch gave me a fucking a wipe and that and said yo wipe your face and that. I can't even see where the fuck I'm bleeding from. Gave me some water, spat out the blood and that. I said I couldn't feel my arm and that, and they goes ahh, grabbed my arm touched it up, and said we can't feel no broken bones we can't take you hospital. I'm thinking what the fuck you mean you can't feel nothing, how can you feel a broken fucking bone you know one of them ones. I go yo at least drop me up the road because I'm limping too you get me, I can't even fucking, I'm dizzy and everything you know one of them ones I feel like I just woke up, and these are saying na na we're going opposite direction. Boom, left me there and that. Looked back up the road they're going in the same direction I'm telling them to. And I was just there you get me sitting down back on the bench and that, face is all fucked I don't even know what my face is looking like. I rang my fucking bredrin, told him what the sketch is, he's all pissed whatever whatever. Fucking</p>	<p><b>Broken arm</b></p> <p><b>Couldn't speak – blood pouring</b></p> <p><b>Drags self across floor</b></p> <p><b>Civilian helps participant</b></p> <p><b>Nodding head to gesture to civilian the need for ambulance</b></p> <p><b>Not a good experience with health professional</b></p> <p><b>Ambulance staff were not deemed supportive</b></p> <p><i>Talking passionately about the professionals involved and their disregard for him</i></p>
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<p>Communicates with friends and family during distressing time for support</p> <p>Family provide support during difficult time</p> <p>Hypervigilance to avoid being victim of violent incidents</p> <p>Desensitisation to violence from young</p> <p>Unaware of difference to others</p> <p>Do not share thoughts and feeling because many perceived to not understand / can't relate</p>	<p>rang my family and my family come pick me up. You know one of them ones.</p> <p>I: Have you experienced beatings like this on numerous occasions?</p> <p>P1: You know what it is you try not to get caught slipping. You know one of them ones. So, it hasn't happened a lot of times. The times it has happened they were close calls and that. You know one of them ones.</p> <p>I: How do things like that impact on you?</p> <p>P1: I don't fucking know blud. Because you grow up that way, you don't, you don't, you don't realise you get me that your different and that. You don't realise you're thinking different and that. You know one of them ones. Where you whole, where your mind works and how you process things, everything's different you know one of them ones. Because it's not the same you keep it to yourself you know what I'm saying.</p> <p>I: Why's that? Why do you keep it to yourself?</p> <p>P1: Not a lot of people can relate. Even certain people that I meet now, that are on, whatever road or whatever you get me, they can't relate and that you know one of them ones. What I was going through at their age or what I was going through now, they're 20, 21 or 22 or whatever, bruv whatever their doing now when they kick off blud it looks like, it looks like fuck all you get me, baby play and that. Looks like fuck all and that. You know one of them ones.</p>	<p><b>Asked to be dropped off home but they refused even though he was going the way they were</b></p> <p><b>Phoned friend to warn of what happens – friend angry</b></p> <p><b>Family come and pick participant up <u>Despite links on road family are the ones to help during distressing time</u></b></p> <p><b>Try not to get caught – <u>and so hypervigilance and referred to above important to ensure this</u></b></p> <p><b>Many close calls but vigilance allows participant to stay safe and prepared</b></p> <p><b>Desensitised – grew up this way – all he knows</b></p> <p><b>Don't realise you think different – process events differently – because of this you don't share it with others who can't think this way</b></p> <p>People can't relate to you</p>
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<p>Disregards current gangs – don't experience level of violence that was pertinent in past</p> <p>Not many can relate to ones experiences</p> <p>Sensitive to those who lie about lived experiences – can't relate to them</p> <p>Moved on from road</p> <p>Grown out of that lifestyle</p> <p>Growth is important to avoid being stuck in cycle</p> <p>Particular with whom he socialises with now</p>	<p>I: Do you think you could talk to people if you could relate to them?</p> <p>P1: There's not a lot of people you can relate to nowadays though. You know one of them ones. A lot of people lie and bullshit and that. You can tell when someone chats shit and that. I don't know fam. I've met certain people that lie.</p> <p>I: How easy is it to talk about your emotional wellbeing with others?</p> <p>P1: You know what it is, like, even now when I get paranoid, and I be with certain certain mates, like certain mates now, like people I used to chill with back when my mate died I don't chill with them no more you get me because I've moved on from all that. I still stay, still keep in touch and that but we've grown up you know one of them ones. Everyone's grown up. We all did what we had to do at that time, and then you have to move on. If you don't move on your stuck in a cycle. You know what I'm telling ya. Fucking, now I chill with certain certain people and they don't understand me getting paranoid if a car pulls up like yo why you getting so paranoid for you know what I'm saying. Blud, obviously they don't understand you get me why I'm so paranoid and why I'm so fucking, I get pissed so quick. Obviously, everything you get me they don't understand. Obviously, I write bars you get me. So, when I spit my bars and that my friends are like yeah yeah they're hard they're hard you should make a tune. But they don't understand this is a way you get me. I talk about my shit and that you know what I'm saying. It's a way of talking about my shit.</p>	<p><b>Even those on road can't relate – those now don't go through the same things participant did – <u>link back to him disregarding current gangs?</u></b></p> <p><b>Disregards current gangs – <i>baby play</i> Violence not close to what it was in his day</b></p> <p>Not many can relate</p> <p>People lie – can tell when people lie</p> <p><u>Maybe combination of people being betrayed many times that he can tell for signs better of liars and disloyal people?</u></p> <p><b>Don't hang around those from the past / ties cut</b></p> <p><b>Moved on from road life</b></p> <p><b>Grown up now</b></p> <p><b>Have to grow out of road – otherwise stuck in cycle – <u>Almost referring to road as a 'trap'</u></b></p> <p><b>Particular with who he socialises with now</b></p>
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<p>Paranoia impacts daily life / socialisation with peers</p> <p>Writing music to cope</p> <p>Writing lyrics about experiences to express thoughts and feelings</p> <p>Some talk amongst peer group during difficult times</p> <p>Many incidents of solitary life means no one to talk to</p> <p>Can't talk about experiences to others because not many can relate to lived experiences</p>	<p>P1: How long have you been doing that?</p> <p>I: Since I was a kid man. Since primary school.</p> <p>P1: So, through all of the story we have discussed you would have been writing bars during that time?</p> <p>I: Yeah, all the time. All throughout it. I've got bars in my phone in my yard and on tape, stories about everything you know what I'm saying.</p> <p>P1: So, who is the best person to speak during difficult times? Was there someone you would speak to?</p> <p>I: Amongst ourselves when we were together yeah. But, you know what it is, when you're not together innit and everyone's gone, I was the only one at that time when everything was happening, I was the only one that was still here, that was still on road and not in jail or not dead. I was the only one here. Everyone else ghosted. Everyone else was busy with their lives. Some man have moved to Leeds some man have moved to different areas. Everyone's gone you know one of them ones. I'm there alone I had no one to talk to bruv you get me. And there's not a lot of people you wanna talk to and that because you can't trust people you know one of them ones.</p> <p>I: What about professionals? Could you trust them?</p>	<p><b>Paranoia can creep into daily life / socialising with friends – friends nowadays can't relate / understand participant's paranoid reactions</b></p> <p><b>Writes music / lyrics to cope and express feelings / story – friends encourage this but don't realise / fully comprehend the lyrics are reflecting a harsh live experience and reality</b></p> <p><b>Writing lyrics since a young age</b></p> <p><b>Lyrics written throughout participant's story – <u>coping mechanism?</u></b></p> <p><b>Talk amongst peers to cope with difficult times</b></p> <p><b>However there were times where participant was solitary due to jail / death of peers, others cut ties with participant or moved on with life</b></p>
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<p>Trust issues barrier to sharing feeling to others</p> <p>Professionals deemed money orientated – don't care / understand</p> <p>Specialist support never considered – keep it to self</p> <p>Others MH more affected</p> <p>Can pick up on cues peers are not well mentally</p> <p>Weed to cope</p> <p>Can't support peers with MH</p> <p>Must cope independently with MH</p>	<p>P1: I've never been to a professional. I doubt they'll understand you know one of them ones. They're just gonna sit there and boom boom write down whatever come before next appointment pay them the next £25-30. They just make money you get me (laughs) they ain't gonna understand. That's how I see it as.</p> <p>I: So back then it's not something you would have considered?</p> <p>P1: Nah you'd just keep it to yourself. I've got a mate far worse than me you get me he's fucking crazy after everything happened. Fully crazy, nuts you get me. And till this day he don't speak about how he feels and that. I can tell you get me because we've known each other for so long bruv. I can tell when some man's feeling a certain way you know what I'm saying. And he's always feeling a certain way even when he's laughing and that you can tell bruv you get me. When they drift away in their own fucking world and that after taking two tokes off a zoot bruv I know what man's thinking about.</p> <p>I: How do you support him?</p> <p>P1: You can't. You know one of them ones. You're a man bruv you get me. You don't mention things unless the person mentions it. I could say yo what's wrong and man ain't gonna tell me unless my man comes to me and be's like yo I'm feeling this way then I could you get me chat to him about it. Try and get if off his head try and advise him on certain things and that you get me. Man were like that with me you get me. You don't really talk about your issues like that as much you get me.</p>	<p><b>Noone to talk to, and not many people around that can relate to experiences</b></p> <p><b>Don't want to disclose info to others due to trust issues</b></p> <p><b>Never received specialist support</b></p> <p><b>Professionals money orientated – <u>A sense of professional not caring, won't understand participants plight</u></b></p> <p>Never considered seeking outside support – keep things to self</p> <p>Describes peer who was seriously affected by events. <i>Describes him as 'crazy, nuts' – <u>Consequences of keeping things bottled?</u></i></p> <p><b>Participant able to pick up on cues his peer is not feeling well mentally and is lost in own thoughts – smoking weed to cope</b></p> <p><b>Can't support peers who struggle with mental; / emotional health and wellbeing.</b></p>
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<p>Can only try to help if peer initiates the conversation</p> <p>Not common to talk about personal issues to each other</p> <p>Families key to supporting YP on road</p> <p>Barriers to ask BAME families for help due to lack of understanding / lack of approval / fear of consequences</p> <p>Seeking support not deemed a weakness due to an individual's respect on road and others' fear of them</p>	<p>I: Have there been instances where people have reached out like that and raised their issues with you?</p> <p>P1: It's rare still.</p> <p>I: So how do you think you could support someone living that way?</p> <p>P1: You know what it is bruv they're families need to speak to them. You know what it is I feel like you know in certain communities and families can't speak to their kids properly you know one of them ones. Asian families and that and other families, black families, they can't really speak to their families openly about certain things because they know they'll get into trouble or they're not gonna approve or they're not gonna help them out and their advice is gonna be shit and that, it ain't gonna mean nothing to you. I don't know bruv (laughs) I don't know.</p> <p>I: Is asking for help deemed a weakness?</p> <p>P1: It's not even that bruv you get me. You know if you do certain things, like areas are small you know what I'm saying. Like the whole of Birmingham's small you know what I'm saying bruv. You do something in one area next man's gonna hear it in next area. So, if word goes around your like this you're like that, blud you can cry and that in front of man, if man know that your about certain things, they're not gonna say nothing you get me. They'll keep their head down. They won't even fucking mention it again. You get me it's just about that. You're not really scared; people be scared of you; you know what I'm saying.</p>	<p><u>You're a man – Maybe one must cope by self / remain stoic and this is the participant's perspective of being a man / adult.</u></p> <p><b>Could prompt conversation to take his mind off things / help but they won't talk unless they prompt conversation / are ready to talk</b></p> <p><b>Not common to talk about issues with others</b></p> <p><b>Families are key to supporting the individual</b></p> <p><b>Individuals find it hard to approach / speak to families of certain communities (BAME)</b></p> <p><b>Can't hold conversation with family, lack of understanding, fear of consequences all barriers to talking with families</b></p> <p><b>Will not gain families' approval of actions / things they are going through on road</b></p> <p><b>Seeking support not deemed a weakness because of respect</b></p> <p><b>Word spreads about people and their traits – people are too scared to say anything</b></p>
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<p>Life would be different if Participant hadn't entered road</p> <p>Nothing to look forward to in future</p> <p>No hope for future</p> <p>Regretful of missed experiences in youth</p> <p>Anxiety now when doing daily things in life</p> <p>Lack of comfort in social gatherings</p> <p>Awareness of anger so avoids situations that may evoke trigger</p>	<p>I: How do you compare life from pre and post 16?</p> <p>P1: I feel like if I never went through all of that shit, I would have been different now (laughs). I'd have been a different person. I probably would have been closer to my family, had a job, everything you get me. Now it's just, I'm just going day by day. I don't really do shit. I just chill you get me. Try and fucking make the day go by and that. Go sleep start another day. That's what it is. Not really looking forward to anything. I'm not really fucking planning anything you know one of them ones.</p> <p>I: Why is that?</p> <p>P1: I don't know I feel like when, you know what it is, a lot of people my age you get me they've been on holiday, they've done a lot of things you get me. They've been uni, they've been clubbing. Bruv I've never had a chance to do none of that you know one of them ones. Now when times come where I can do things like that, I don't feel comfortable. Because I never went past my comfort zone back when I was a kid. Because all the people when they're 16 like yeah I wanna go club whatever whatever fake IDs all this bullshit bruv, when they come to that club and they go inside getting all gassed and dadada with a group of people and that but their nervous you know one of them ones. They're still nervous blud you don't know what it's going to be like and that you know one of them ones fam. And your young bruv going into that, well that's what I thought anyways. I don't know about anyone else but that's just me you get me. So, fucking I never got to do that bruv. Now I'm able to do that bruv I'm not feeling comfortable so I won't do it, and I know I'm gonna get pissed off</p>	<p><b>Could cry in front of people and they won't ever mention it because of fear</b></p> <p><b>Life would be different / would be different experience if hadn't entered road</b></p> <p><b>Would be closer to family, had job</b></p> <p><b>Now take it a day at time, nothing to look forward to / be excited about, almost mundane existence now / no enjoyment in life currently</b></p> <p><u>Not hopeful of present / future</u></p> <p><b>Regretful of missed experiences in youth</b></p> <p><b>Now don't feel comfortable to do certain things like go clubbing because out of comfort zone / anxiety</b></p> <p><b>Anxiety that should have been processed in youth now present now for such experiences</b></p> <p><b>Not comfortable to do things now</b></p>
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<p>Sense of comfort knowing family would be protected by peers</p> <p>Gangs different today</p> <p>Olders influence he youth / bad role models</p> <p>Olders exploit poverty of YP</p> <p>Olders selling drugs – knew of this but learnt after school</p> <p>Current YP learning from olders / road from an earlier age</p>	<p>if someone bumps into me or whatever whatever or someone tries to act sick I don't have people act sick with me like that you know one of them ones. Because I know if people are in the club and they're drunk they're gonna act in certain ways and that it's gonna result in a kick off so I avoid it.</p> <p>P1: During all we've talked about what were there any positive elements to it?</p> <p>I: The positive thing was I knew if anything happened to me and my family needed help or something, I knew there were certain people out there that would help them you know one of them ones. In a sense where if my little brother or my older brother, or someone try and rob my house, or they got into a kick off or whatever whatever, I know that certain people out there that, even if I'm not around, even if I'm dead you get me they'd still have their back and I knew that from, I could put my fucking life on that shit you get me. Even till this day I know certain man still have my families back and that which is good you get me as soon as heard that didn't give a fuck what happened you get me. Now it's different though bruv. Now all these little kids growing up now it's all different. Now it's changed. Because I know bare little yutes you get me I knew growing up and that, and you know what it is, I'm not saying it's my fault or whatever whatever but certain people you get me certain people I know and that it's their fault the youngers are the way the youngers are you get me. In different areas you get me. Because you always get someone bad in your area you know one of them ones that's whatever whatever doing what they're doing and that, and they put this in the kids mind from young like here you should... we</p>	<p><b>Self-awareness of anger – difficulties with self-regulation during conflict / dealing with drunks or show-offs so avoids situations that may cause this</b></p> <p><b>Benefit of on road – protection for family even in the absence of participant</b></p> <p><b>Gangs today different</b></p> <p><b>Moves self away from blame as a role model for how current generation presents</b></p> <p><b>Olders bad role models for current youth</b></p> <p><b>Bad individuals in community will exploit plight of poverty of young people – from a younger age then participant entered / learned of road</b></p>
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<p>Olders supplying YP with drugs to sell</p> <p>Current Yp show lack of respect / disregard any code of conduct</p> <p>YP don't listen to advice from others – even olders with the lived experience</p> <p>YP conditioned to make illicit money from early age – hard to break this</p> <p>Materialism driving need to make quick money</p> <p>Poverty</p> <p>Poverty / materialism means</p>	<p>learnt it when we were a little older after we left school you know what I'm saying. We already knew about the olders shotting or whatever whatever making money, but we never learnt it when we was young. These little kids in primary school and secondary they're learning it early you know what I'm saying. So now when they're hitting the strip, they're hitting the road early cuz these olders are supplying them with certain things making them money and they're getting gassed. Now they don't have no respect, they don't follow no rules and that you know one of them ones these kids just fuck around, they do anything. Now stabbings have gone worse everything.</p> <p>I: With this starting so early do you think it will be harder to help them?</p> <p>P1: Yeah. You know what it is, they won't listen. Now they won't listen. You could have the, you could get could olders to go chat to them, like someone that they will look up to like yeah yeah I wanna be like my man, you could have them go chat to them they ain't gonna change they ain't gonna listen. From young man, you know what it is, if I was a kid now and I was planted religion religion religion in my head bruv I'd be thinking about religion as I grew up, or maths maths maths I'd be sick at maths you know what I'm saying. But if your young bruv and you're on the strip and your broke and your just walking around chilling in the park and that and some olders come to you like yeah yeah yeah you wanna make money likkle man dadada they see them with a big gold chain, nice watch, nice care whatever bruv that shits getting planted in their head you get me and their mind and that. They're thinking yeah, I wanna be like him bruv I don't</p>	<p><b>Didn't have proper knowledge of road until after school – however knew of olders selling drugs and making money</b></p> <p><b>Now YP learning at an earlier age – from school – primary and secondary</b></p> <p><b>Olders supplying them with drugs to sell and this excites youth</b></p> <p><b>Current youth show lack of respect / no code of ethics or morals that would be adhered to during participant's time on road</b></p> <p><b>YP don't listen to advice – even from olders</b></p> <p><b>Seeds of road and illicit money making planted at an earlier age – conditioning hard to break</b></p> <p><b>If the importance of education was implanted early would lead to different life outcomes</b></p> <p><b>Materialism – YP in poverty see nice things the olders possess and want them</b></p>
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<p>YP don't listen to advice</p> <p>Family upbringing key to proote positive outcomes for YP</p> <p>Poverty – disheartening seeing others with nice things when you don't have them</p> <p>Another group where attention seeking drives road behaviour not poverty</p> <p>Road not for everyone – not everyone can handle it</p>	<p>wanna go college I don't wanna go uni blud I don't wanna do no course you know one of them ones I don't wanna get no job bruv this is my job and that. You're on the ends bruv you get me your rah broke and that you know one of them ones. So obviously your gonna grow up with that in your mind you're not gonna listen to nobody after that. Your bought up with that shit in your head you get me that's what you know and that.</p> <p>I: What do you think is the difference between children that would say yes / no to olders in that situation?</p> <p>P1: You know what it is your bought up in different places you know one of them ones. Your family and home life's different, your ends are different you know one of them ones. It's how you were bought up. If you're going school and that and your bredrin's got the freshest garms, nice shoes, nice phone, and you're coming into school with some fucked up Nikes, ripped up and that, a jack that stinks, smelly clothes whatever you were bought up different. So if man offers you money or any way to make money and any way to live better you're going to take it. Kids that don't need to do this are dumb, they're stupid. They just want people to recognise them. That's another thing. You get man that are serious and keep their shit quiet and that bruv, they don't talk about certain things and that, and how they made their money or what they're doing or whatever you get me. But then you get some man talk every single thing they do. Man busts a fart and he goes around and tells the whole strip yo I just bust a fart in my car you know one of them ones. Nowadays clout drives it. Everyone wants to be a somebody. Blud not everyone's a somebody you get me. Back in my day there was no internet</p>	<p><b>See road as their job – no interest in pursuing education / job</b></p> <p><b>Poverty – materialism – quick money</b></p> <p><b>This leads to YP not listening</b></p> <p><b>Family and upbringing key in outcomes for YP</b></p> <p><b>Poverty – seeing peers with nice things can be disheartening if you don't have them</b></p> <p><b>Offers for road / quick money accepted for this reason by YP</b></p> <p><b>YP that don't come from poverty and enter road labelled stupid – just after recognition and social status amongst peers</b></p> <p><b>Two groups – those that keep their affairs quiet (<u>serious about road / making money and escaping trap?</u>) and those who don't to show off</b></p> <p><b>Clout (attention) big driver currently</b></p>
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<p>Those who are serious keep activities quiet</p> <p>Reputation gained for activities on road</p> <p>Cyclic nature of olders</p> <p>Current YP wont respect / listen to him even though he is now older</p> <p>Respect / code of conduct now lacking</p>	<p>bullshit you get me you won't put your problems on social media and go about it you get me. You just see each other and dealt with it. Now it is. Now your making, just bullshit man your posting bullshit you robbing each other's chain and your telling man you robbed his chain. Fuck that, that's just between you two you know one of them ones. Keep it between you two.</p> <p>I: You mentioned olders earlier. Can you talk to me about that and how much influence they have?</p> <p>P1: I don't know man an older comes...if you're on the strip and that and you're doing what you're doing and that, obviously you gain a reputation and that. People know you; you know what I'm saying. As you grow old, last olders are gone now you get me. Now they're not doing nothing like I'm just chilling now you know what I'm saying. So, I'm not about like that. Man will still have certain respect for me. But these little kids that are growing up they won't listen to me. They don't know me they just heard certain certain stories and think you know what my man's old now, fuck he's washed up, they don't understand bruv you get me. Back then you respected each other. Everyone respected each other. The amount of beef we had between my people and their people bruv, and we still had the respect and that not to do anything by each other's houses bruv that's a big thing you know what I'm saying fam. Especially when people are dying that's a big fucking thing you know one of them ones. And errm, now it's just mad bruv. People are stabbing each other's uncles and dads and fucking you hear it all the time 42 year old man stabbed to death by a fucking 16 year old, and that geezer had a problem with my man's fucking kid that's why he got stabbed you know</p>	<p><b>Not everyone is cut out for on road</b></p> <p><b>Emphasises keeping business quiet – not the case anymore due to social media – gets other's involved into conflict unnecessarily</b></p> <p><b>Dry snitching on self by revealing all actions – hinting almost that this is not the correct way to behave on road however this group more concerned with attention</b></p> <p><b>Reputation gained on road for engaging in activities</b></p> <p><b>Cyclic change of olders – participant now classed as an older but no longer involved in that life</b></p> <p><b>Current youth won't respect participant even though they may be aware of his reputation</b></p> <p><b>Respect – code of conduct important back in participant's on road days despite the gravity of the conflict particularly as lives were being lost</b></p>
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<p>Olders have big influence on activities</p>	<p>one of them ones. That's bullshit. That's not nice. That's not good.</p>	<p><b>No longer this way – no code of conduct on road – people being attacked / killed who are loosely related to the individuals on road e.g. family members – participant dismissive of this way of doing things when settling conflict</b></p>
<p>Olders have big influence on how disputes handled</p>	<p>I: The elders had a big say in your story at one point.</p> <p>P1: When we come, we was about that thing too. Obviously, they wanted to stab me that day you get me when I got there. Obviously, they pulled out their knives and they launched at me and that. Certain people come in between and stopped it you know one of them ones.</p>	<p><b>Olders had big impact on how things were done / conflicts handled</b></p>
<p>Disputes ongoing despite intervention from olders</p>	<p>I: Do you think if that happened today you wouldn't have been so lucky because the respect isn't there?</p> <p>P1: You know what it is, if everyone's there, the olders are there, everyone that knows each other's there, and they could make it a kick off. The kick off would happen. They probably would scrap it out but straight away later it's not dead you get me. They're not gonna squash it. If someone gets battered their gonna think yo I got humiliated, you think I'm a dickhead and then come after you get me. And their gonna try and do something way worse than that.</p>	<p><b>Olders had big impact on how things were done / conflicts handled</b></p>
<p>Retaliation to violation always worse</p>	<p>I: Is there anything else you would like to add that we have not discussed?</p>	<p><b>Word of olders could be upheld but doesn't necessarily settled disputes</b></p>
<p>Not many ways to support those on road – not hopeful</p>	<p>I: Is there anything else you would like to add that we have not discussed?</p>	<p><b>Disputes can be ongoing / tit for tat</b></p> <p><b>No one willing to look weak / back down – retaliation will be worse</b></p>
<p>YP won't tell others how they feel</p>	<p>P1: I don't know. There's not many ways you can support it because not a lot of people are gonna exactly tell you how they feel and that you know one of them ones. Not every persons gonna tell you how they feel and that. It's just a ... I don't know bruv. Just,</p>	<p><b>Not many ways to support those on road</b></p> <p><b>YP won't tell you how they are feeling / tell the truth on how they feel</b></p>

<p>If unprocessed anxiety will catch up with YP in older age</p> <p>Important to grow out of road</p> <p>Individual differences in how people handle emotional distress</p> <p>Participant hints that despite presentation no one knows how he truly feels</p> <p>Relief of sharing experiences</p>	<p>them people are gonna, all that paranoia that stress is gonna get to them one day you know one of them ones and when they're old they're just gonna sit there and regret it. That's what it is. It's just a cycle and that. Everyone that's been in the same position as me or whatever same position, when they grow older and when they grow out of it their gonna regret it, but some people don't grow out of it. Some people be 40, 30 still on the same shit they were doing when they were 18. For all you know I'm suffering you get me. Everyone's different bruv. Some people sleep, some people don't. But I'm happy bruv I don't give a shit right now bruv. I've never spoke about this before so thought might as well get it done today.</p>	<p><b>Paranoid / stress / anxiety will catch up with those involved</b></p> <p><b>Regret in older age after behaviour on road as a youth</b></p> <p>Some people don't grow out of road – participant almost dismissive of this <u>earlier mentioned cycle that you must grow out of</u></p> <p><b>Everyone different in how they handle the emotional distress associated with road – some able to have peace of mind others don't</b></p> <p><b>Participant presents as positive but hints that no one will be aware of how he really feels – linked to idea of those involved will never truly feel comfortable expressing feeling honestly to others?</b></p> <p>First time participant has spoken about journey <i>Expressed optimistically –</i></p> <p><i>almost a sense of relief that he was able to talk through and process events</i></p>
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**Participant 2**

Key:

**Descriptive comments;** *Linguistic comments;* Conceptual comments

**I:** Interviewer

**P2:** Participant 2

Emergent Themes	Transcript	Exploratory Comments
Limited expression / secrecy / low rapport	<p>I: What do you understand by the term ‘on road’?</p> <p>P2: So when you like do on road or like a road person.</p> <p>I: Is there anything more you can say on that?</p>	<p><b>Succinct answer. Doesn’t delve into details</b></p>
Limited expression / secrecy / low rapport	<p>P2: Errm, I don’t know you just do like on road stuff.</p> <p>I: What do you understand by the term emotional wellbeing?</p>	<p><u>Succinct answer again – maybe sign of a lack of trust / rapport with researcher</u></p>
Wellbeing keeping himself safe	<p>P2: Errm emotional wellbeing I’m sure that’s like errm it’s just about yourself innit and obviously like tryna keep yourself safe or suttin like that innit.</p> <p>I: What do you understand by the term street gang?</p>	<p><b>Wellbeing understood as keeping oneself safe</b></p>
Limited expression / secrecy / low rapport	<p>P2: Basically a gang on the street.</p> <p>I: Thinking about your story then, at what point did you enter on road?</p>	<p><b>Succinct answer. Doesn’t delve into details / secrecy / lack of rapport?</b></p>

<p>Behavioural needs from youth form foundation for criminal behaviour</p> <p>On road from youth – secondary age</p>	<p>P2: Errm, I don't even know you know like obviously I just started doing just, started doing like little stuff from when I was young then, like getting into trouble and that and then obviously just built up innit.</p> <p>I: Was that from primary school age?</p> <p>P2: Errm ... when I was like 14.</p> <p>I: Ok so that's when you started getting involved in things like that?</p> <p>P2: Yeah.</p> <p>I: How was life up until that point?</p> <p>P2: Calm still.</p> <p>I: There were no major life events up until that point?</p> <p>P2: Nah.</p>	<p><b>Small incidents of delinquency / misbehaviour from youth formed foundations of later criminal behaviour</b></p> <p><b>Journey on road started around age of 14 / secondary school</b></p>
<p>Influence of bad role models leading to criminal behaviour</p>	<p>I: So can you tell me about how you became involved then initially?</p> <p>P2: I would just hang around with like wrong people innit and obviously, I done a little robbery then boom it just built up from there then yeah.</p> <p>I: And these were people you went to school with?</p> <p>P2: Yeah yeah yeah</p>	<p><b>No major life events / incidents to note before this age</b></p> <p><b>Socialising with bad role models led to criminal behaviour – initially with a robbery</b></p>



Crime – robbery	<p>I: So you said a robbery?</p> <p>P2: Yeah it was just a street robbery you know.</p>	<b>Street robbery – first committing such an act</b>
Difficulty recalling information	<p>I: And was that the first time you had done something like that?</p> <p>P2: Yeah yeah yeah</p>	<b>Difficulty remembering incident – <u>excuse to maintain secrecy?</u></b>
Crime influenced by peer	<p>I: What was it like going through something like that?</p> <p>P2: Rah can't remember too tough you know but there was like 2 of us and obviously my bredrins like yo my man got dis dat, so yeah.</p>	<b>Another peer knew details of possessions victim had and initiated this crime – both committed the crime</b>
No excessive thinking before or after crime	<p>I: So it wasn't planned?</p> <p>P2: Nah nah</p> <p>I: After that what goes through your mind?</p> <p>P2: I rah didn't think about it too tough innit cah man was young and that. Man's made a little dough and that. Man wasn't really thinking too tough still.</p>	<b>Young and made money– didn't process / think about the gravity of committing a crime.</b>
Youth	<p>I: What happened after that?</p>	<b>This led to more incidents of crime – 2 more robberies</b>
Crime – robberies	<p>P2: I don't know I just started ... continuing you get me. Obviously, I just done other stuff then it just built up built up built up. Man done what, obviously like 2 more robberies after that then yeah</p>	

<p>Crime influenced by peer</p>	<p>I: Was it similar to the first robbery?</p> <p>P2: Yeah yeah yeah. It was just one of them ones where like it just happened at the moment. Like mans like yo obviously I said to my bredrin like yo my mans patterned still, then yeah man's just on one of them ones innit.</p>	<p><b>Happened similar to first one – peer had information on victim, and both went out to commit crime</b></p>
<p>Working with one peer committing robberies</p>	<p>I: You said it was just the two of you at the time?</p> <p>P2: Yeah just the two of us.</p>	<p><b>Committing crimes with just one other person</b></p>
<p>Drug use – weed</p> <p>Selling drugs</p>	<p>I: What happened after the robberies?</p> <p>P2: Errm, like obviously I started smoking weed innit. Then when I started smoking weed, I sold it as well innit. So boom, started selling weed now. Then when I was 15 ... yeah when I was 15 I got convicted for selling class A drugs innit. So yeah yeah.</p>	<p><b>Started smoking weed recreationally – this led to dealing weed at 15 – ultimately escalated into conviction of selling of class A drugs</b></p>
<p>Police involvement in school</p> <p>Selling drugs – conviction</p>	<p>I: So, was that the first time you were involved with police?</p> <p>P2: No, cah obviously the first robbery the police was involved innit. Then obviously I just had like numerous stuff from there building up like criminal damage in school, all that stuff there innit. Cah obviously my first proper proper conviction was class A drugs when I was like 15.</p>	<p><b>Police involvement from young – incidents in school – property damage</b></p> <p><b>Class A conviction first major experience with police / justice system</b></p>
<p>Drug use – weed</p>	<p>I: So, you said you started smoking and selling weed initially?</p>	<p><b>Smoking weed recreationally led to selling higher level drugs</b></p>

<p>Money as motivation to sell drugs</p>	<p>P2: Yeah like I tried it I didn't really smoke it like that I just dabble dabbled and obviously man got weed, sold weed, then yeah, next thing you know I sold crack and heroin.</p>	<p><b>Money motivating reason to sell drugs</b></p>
<p>Robbery and drug dealing</p>	<p>I: What made you decide to sell weed from initially dabbling in it?</p>	<p><b>Robbed drugs from someone and sold them</b></p>
<p>Awareness of drug dealing from young age</p>	<p>P2: Errm I was making money off it and obviously I said yo dadada and then yeah.</p>	<p><b>Hints that he had an awareness of how to sell drugs at that age</b></p>
<p>Experience with police – raid</p>	<p>I: And how do these opportunities come about to sell?</p>	<p><b>Police raid on house participant staying in – county?</b></p>
<p>Serving time in YOI</p>	<p>P2: Basically I musta robbed one yute, and obviously my man had the stuff. And obviously I already knew what to do anyway then boom yeah just started from there.</p>	<p><b>Court process</b></p> <p><b>1 year served in YOI</b></p>
	<p>I: So it was opportunistic and wasn't planned?</p>	<p><b>Experience of police arrest</b></p>
	<p>P2: Yeah. So then I got done with intent to supply class A crack and heroin innit. Obviously now boom I got sentenced. These lot raided my, the house where I was staying innit. Obviously not my home like someone else's home then obviously now, took me court, remanded me. I was on trial for 3 months innit boom sentenced man I got 18 do 9 but cah I was on trial for 3 months then they took that off my sentence innit so basically, I did a year altogether if you think about it. Then boom, yeah.</p>	<p><b>First instinct to remove incriminating evidence from phone</b></p>
	<p>I: How does going through something like that have an impact on you?</p>	

Survival in the moment – practical	P2: The way they got me, I went to go link someone and I've got past the neighbour's house, and I've saw the undie dog unit car innit. Before I could turn around, he's already jumped on me innit. And that's when all the police vans came dadada innit. So yeah man. But at the time, my first instincts was get everything off the phone innit. Boom, then obviously now I'm like yo fam why you stopping me for dadada innit. This that now. Boom. Yeah took me in, strip searched man and found the parcel.	
Adrenaline – fight or flight	I: So, you first instinct was the evidence on the phone. How do you feel in a moment like that?	<b>Adrenaline – fight or flight response</b>
Focus on removing evidence – practical	P2: At that time, it's the adrenaline innit. So obviously boom, your just like yo, you're not panicking but your just like yo ima need to try and get rid of something innit, then obviously now, man didn't get rid of nothing that quickly innit, and yeah.	<b>Not panicking / stressing in the moment – just focussed on practicalities of situation / survival – in this case removing evidence</b>
No time to stress / process emotional distress	I: What about when the adrenaline wears off?	<b>Unable to remove evidence quick enough</b>
Acceptance of consequences / stoic	P2: Yeah then obviously I'm just calm from there I said oh fam fuck it now. Like I already knew that they're gonna find it anyway, so man didn't really, man wasn't really thinking about it too tough innit. Then yeah. Cah either way you jump in one of them games you just prepare yourself. You can't be shocked if you go jail innit.	<b>After adrenaline wears off – acceptance of situation – not thinking too much about situation</b>
Acceptance built up over time	I: Was that your mindset from early?	<b>Acceptance of outcomes of the road – no surprises when faced with the consequences</b>
	P2: nah you know like boom it just built up built innit. Like obviously small little things built up and then obviously yeah.	<b>Not born with this mentality – built up over time as criminal behaviour escalated</b>
		<b>Quick escalation of criminal behaviour – within space of a year</b>

<p>Quick escalation of crime / impulsive?</p> <p>Several incident in youth leading to YOT involvement</p> <p>Specialist setting for SEMH</p> <p>ADHD diagnosis</p> <p>Impulsive</p> <p>Quick to engage in physical conflict if offended</p>	<p>I: So, from the first robbery to that was all within one year?</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p> <p>I: So, what was it like going through court?</p> <p>P2: I was on YOT innit. YOT for quite a while. And every time I'd get close to finishing my order, I'd have like a criminal damage offence in school or errm like someone's called police for me fighting, stuff like that innit. So obviously it just built up from there innit.</p> <p>I: Ok so as that process is going on your getting into trouble in school?</p> <p>P2: Yeah yeah yeah</p> <p>I: was it a PRU that you went to or mainstream?</p> <p>P2: PRU</p> <p>I: Would you always get into fights or do you think they were being triggered by things going on with the court case?</p> <p>P2: I've got ADHD innit. So obviously now I get fast quick innit. And obviously my first instincts like yo if anyone violates man, man's gonna crack them there and then. So obviously I was just fighting.</p>	<p><b>YOT involvement – several incidents in school related to criminal damage and fighting – foundation / escalation of delinquent behaviours from this</b></p> <p><b>Attended specialist setting for behavioural needs</b></p> <p><b>ADHD diagnosis – gets impulsive quickly</b></p> <p><b>Impulsive especially when violated by someone – quick to attack them and fight</b></p>
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<p>ADHD assessment process – prompted to hurry</p> <p>Medication taken to unburden stress on mother</p> <p>Listening to mother</p>	<p>I: Do you remember when you got diagnosed?</p> <p>P2: Errm, basically now, these lot was doing my tests for time innit. Then obviously first I properly got diagnosed and they gave me my meds last year October innit when I was inside innit. I told them yo fam these man need to hurry up innit cuz when I go out and I'm out, what am I gonna do innit. These lot sped up the process and that, started doing up my meds. Then yeah.</p> <p>I: Do you think if that process had been quicker things would not have escalated to where they did?</p> <p>P2: Nah you know cah these lot been tryna talk about meds innit. I'm like yo fam I'm not taking meds fam, I ain't taking meds. So, I refused it innit. Then obviously one of the reasons why is cah my mum innit I don't wanna put bare stress on my mum innit. My mum was like yo try it out and see how it goes innit dadada innit. So, when I was in there I said say no more innit. Then after that I started doing meds, meds working and that. Then came out, got up-dosed, and yeah.</p>	<p><b>ADHD assessment ongoing for some time – diagnosis and medication given when serving time in YOI</b></p> <p><b>Participant prompted professionals to hurry with assessment process due to fear of potential behaviours when released – awareness of needs and potential consequences of this</b></p> <p><b>Against medication for a long time</b></p> <p><b>Considerate of mother – not stressing / burdening her with problems</b></p> <p><b>Took medication due to mother's advice</b></p> <p><b>Dose of medicine increased when released from YOI</b></p>
<p>Black outs during incidents – anger</p> <p>Anger blackouts</p>	<p>I: Can you tell more me more about how your feeling during this time?</p> <p>P2: I don't got errm, them situations there, my teachers and that are saying yo fam, I think I black out innit, but like, so, I can't remember nothing like you can just ask me what happened like a hour later and I'll go huh? What you on about fam? No I never. So obviously, at that time I think when I get angry, I black out innit and I can't remember nothing innit. So yeah.</p>	<p><b>Black outs during incidents – unable to recall actions when asked by staff afterwards</b></p> <p><b>Blackouts after anger</b></p>

<p>Not caring about sentence / negative outcome</p> <p>Doesn't have victim mentality</p> <p>Knowing peers in YOI helps alleviate stress / difficult situation</p> <p>Some issues in YOI</p>	<p>I: When you are told about the time you will be serving how was that moment?</p> <p>P2: You know like at the time yeah, I rah like fam ... at the time ... not gonna lie, rah didn't really care to be honest. Cah when I was in Werri and that, now cah they remanded me to Werri now, after that I was in remand for 3 months innit. Then obviously now, doing my court and that, going through trial and that, dadada, then obviously, like I could have got longer innit, but because of my age man only got a little ting innit, but like yo, man didn't really, didn't really bother me to be honest cah like, if it bothered me like, the only reason it would bother me if I couldn't handle Werrington and I was getting bullied dadada. But Werrington's calm innit. Then obviously now, man had a couple in there, man know a couple people in there anyway so boom, it was basically like a, not walk in the park but like a walk in the park. I had my little issues and that don't get it twisted, but apart from that yeah.</p> <p>I: Were you active with these people inside on road?</p> <p>P2: Nah you know.</p> <p>I: So how old when you then?</p> <p>P2: 15 and turned 16 in there innit. I left December 22<sup>nd</sup>.</p> <p>I: So you've been out for a year basically?</p>	<p><b>Didn't care about sentence</b></p> <p><b>Court process</b></p> <p><b>Shorter sentence due to age</b></p> <p><b>Didn't care because he does not see himself as a victim – can handle YOI</b></p> <p><b>Would be more of an issue if he felt he couldn't handle it in YOI environment</b></p> <p><b>Knew people in YOI which helped</b></p> <p><b>Some issues in YOI but overall an easy stint there</b></p> <p><b>15 when serving time at YOI – turned 16 in YOI</b></p> <p><b>Arrested again within year of release</b></p>
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<p>Arrested again within year of release</p> <p>Volatile environment in YOI</p> <p>Knowledge of peers helped relieve any emotional distress</p> <p>Realisation of prison in the morning</p> <p>Desensitised to prison over time</p> <p>Fights in prison – honest / no bravado</p>	<p>P2: yeah yeah ... no I ain't been out for a year cah I got arrested again this year.</p> <p>I: Ok so what's that first day like when you enter Werri?</p> <p>P2: Like obviously now, you come through reception now, you go into C wing innit which is induction. Obviously but you have to walk past A wing innit and B wing so the main wings innit so you walk past them innit. You got people shouting. Then obviously when I got into reception the officers came up to and said ah do you know such and such innit and I went ah yeah yeah why? Like ah yeah, my man's on dadada wing and he said he knows ya and he said wagwan innit. And I said ah yeah. From there like that kinda gave me a little relief innit cah yeah, I thought my man would be somewhere else innit. So, when I got there, he's like yo dadada shouted man I said yo wagwan, he's like yo come this way I said ima try it. Boom went C wing. It's a bit weird in the morning innit cah you wake up and you realise like yo your rah in jail innit. Then after a while ... you just get used to it there innit.</p> <p>I: And were there incidents in that year?</p> <p>P2: Yeah yeah obviously I had my fights, had my problems. Not gonna say like yo I went there and never had no problems. Had my fights, had my problems, got it over and done with innit.</p> <p>I: What would trigger the fights?</p>	<p><b>Process / experience of first day in YOI</b></p> <p><b>Volatile environment - shouting</b></p> <p><b>Made aware were friends were – relieved after knowing this</b></p> <p><b>Met friend and felt better / relief</b></p> <p><b>Realisation / penny drops that you are in prison when you wake up</b></p> <p><b>Get used to it over time</b></p> <p><b>Fights in YOI – very matter of fact – dealt with the situations</b></p> <p><i>Honest – not showing bravado – reveals he had problems there</i></p> <p><b>Verbal violations can trigger fights – people know what to say to offend you</b></p>
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<p>Verbal altercations lead to physical violence</p> <p>Respect for mother not father</p> <p>Following unwritten rules to avoid problems / conflict</p>	<p>P2: One of them ones I react or didn't like the way someone spoke yeah yeah. You can't get violated cah obviously your gonna become a target innit. Obviously in there like, say if like boom, on the road if you say yo suck your mum on the roads no one really gives a fuck innit. But in there, cah the majority of people in there have more like respect for their moms then their dads. So if you say yo suck your mum, man will go yo fam show me a my bag if not then I can get it crackin. Man don't show you a my bag then man get it crackin but say someone suck your dad, man will laugh it off innit, they don't really care innit, cah obviously some people don't have respect for their dad innit or their dads not there innit. The only time it's a violation is if your dads dead innit, so you can't really say nuttin innit. So you can't say suck your dad cah your gonna get a problem. You can't really say suck your mom cah your gonna get a problem. So man will say yo fam suck your girlfriend, suck yourself dadada innit.</p> <p>I: So that's common they know what to say to trigger you?</p> <p>P2: yeah yeah yeah</p> <p>I: Have you got brothers or sisters?</p> <p>P2: Yeah yeah yeah. Brothers you know, younger.</p> <p>I: Ok and was dad around?</p> <p>P2: Tot really.</p>	<p><b>Respect for mothers due to YP being raised in one parent homes – major disrespect if mother mentioned in derogatory way</b></p> <p><b>No respect for fathers – ok to disrespect them unless he is deceased</b></p> <p><b>Unwritten rules of conduct</b></p> <p><b>Knows how to avoid problems there</b></p> <p><b>Has younger siblings</b></p> <p><b>Up and down relationship with mother</b></p>
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<p>Turbulent relationship with mother</p> <p>Considerate of mother – not wanting to burden her unnecessarily</p> <p>Desensitised to serving time</p> <p>Didn't care about serving time – easy – socialising with friends</p> <p>Not stressed but becomes tedious / can't be bothered</p> <p>Accept situation quickly and take it day by day</p>	<p>I: How's your relationship with your mum been affected over that period?</p> <p>P2: It's been up and down innit. Like obviously stress and that dadada and that man just brining unnecessary drama to her house and that, unnecessary problems and that. So obviously she's like, obviously, she's going to be pissed off innit. But, after a while she came around and that then yeah, we just worked it out from there innit.</p> <p>I: How else were the events going on that we've discussed impacting you?</p> <p>P2: After I got sentenced, because I already been there for three months, I basically just got used to it basically. I didn't really give a fuck. So obviously now, I'm just chilling with the mandem, and yeah.</p> <p>I: Ok. But were the first 3 months different?</p> <p>P2: First month, because you're still processing that yo, cah I had court nearly every day innit cah I was on trial. So obviously, for the first month it's just like yo fam your like, not even stressed but, thinking like yo fucking hell fam like, yo this is long innit. Then obviously now, after the court and after a month or so, you get used to it and you just get used to it. Then after that you don't really care to be honest. It's just another day.</p> <p>I: Towards the end of your time when you're coming out, what's that like?</p>	<p><b>Aware he is bringing unnecessary problems / stress upon her. Mother initially angry with P2 but embraces? of situation over time and worked out differences</b></p> <p><b>Used to YOI – almost desensitised to serving time</b></p> <p><b>Didn't care about serving time - socialising with friends in YOI / not a bad time</b></p> <p><b>Initially not stressed but comes to the realisation of the consequence of actions – serving time – long and not really ideal</b></p> <p><b>Get used to it relatively quickly – within a month – don't care then and take each day at a time</b></p> <p><b>Excited and happy when close to release</b></p>
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<p>Happy when release is near</p>	<p>P2: Errm, you get still your rah like, yo you're getting out in a couple days. Mad still, happy dadada. Then obviously, just one of them ones still.</p>	<p><b>Quick acclimatisation coming back home</b></p>
<p>Quick to acclimatise back home</p>	<p>I: What was it like the day you came back home?</p>	<p><b>slight changes but life relatively the same as before</b></p>
<p>Relationship with mother improving</p>	<p>P2: Errm, not weird but like, it's just like little bit, little things change innit. Then obviously like little things change but not that much. But then obviously yeah.</p>	<p><b>Relationship with mother improved after jail</b></p>
<p>Staying out of trouble by keeping to self</p>	<p>I: What things changed?</p>	<p><b>Stayed out of trouble by keeping to self</b></p>
<p>Mother's support looked at favourably</p>	<p>P2: My relationship with my mum got better innit. Then obviously now, my relationship with my mum got better. Stayed out of trouble for a bit. Boom. Just, just really staying in and that like, kept myself to myself and that still.</p>	<p><b>Mother realised he can cope with jail</b></p>
<p>Need family support</p>	<p>I: Why do you think your relationship with your mum changed?</p>	<p><b>Mother only one aside from friends who would provide support whilst in jail</b></p>
	<p>P2: Errm, cah, err I think she realised like yo, errm, I think she realised like ... I can do jail innit, but obviously, cah she's the only one who I phoned, apart from my friends innit. But she's the only one who like, basically like sent me stuff, sent me money, sent me clothes. Like, I relied on her more innit, and obviously I realised like yo fam pshh, you can't do nothing without your people's help innit. And if you ain't got the relationship then you're fucked basically. Yeah yeah yeah.</p>	<p><b>Realisation that life can be hard without the support of family and so building relationship with them is important</b></p> <p><b>Caught with a weapon</b></p> <p><b>Breached license</b></p>

<p>Weapon possession</p> <p>License breach</p> <p>Avoiding jail – going on run</p> <p>Serving time again</p> <p>On tag when released</p>	<p>I: So you were out of trouble for a bit but you said you went back to prison after a while?</p> <p>P2: Something happened where I got caught with a kosh innit. And obviously them times there I was thinking yo, man don't wanna breach, like man don't wanna, I was on license innit and obviously I didn't really wanna breach my licence. I'm thinking yo, I've breached my license, I'm going back in. So, with stuff like, with me if something little happens, I will just like, it will just turn into a big thing innit. Like I won't like I just think fuck it now fam, I've done this so I may as well just fucking continue innit. So obviously I must of went on the run now. Escaped from local custody, went on the run and that. Boom. Done the same thing what I got arrested for when I was 15 and that. But obviously, these lot didn't find nothing innit, but I was on, the found it but they didn't find it on me innit. So, I was still in investigation. But obviously now, errm they charged me for escaping local custody, errm having a kosh, breaching YOT, and what else ... I think that's it you know. And obviously these lot gave me 6 do 4 months innit. So obviously, 4 months, do like 6 months do 4 innit then 2 months on tag. Then Obviously, done that now. And yeah.</p>	<p><b>Small incidents can escalate quickly to bigger situations – goes all in if one mistake made</b></p> <p><b>Didn't want to go back to jail so wen ton run – escaped custody</b></p> <p><b>4 months in YOI and 2 months on tag</b></p>
<p>Easy time in YOI</p>	<p>I: And was that served at the same place?</p> <p>P2: Yeah yeah yeah.</p> <p>I: Had anything changed at all the second time you went back in?</p> <p>P2: Some people had gone but mainly the same people innit. But cah I been there the first time, cah I been there the first time now,</p>	<p><b>Second sentence easy – no problems second time around – time flew</b></p>

<p>Experience of first sentence allows problem free time</p>	<p>man didn't really have more problems when I went there a second time. So that time just flew.</p>	
<p>On the run to avoid prison</p>	<p>I: You said you ran away?</p> <p>P2: Yeah escape from local custody.</p> <p>I: What made you do that?</p> <p>P2: cah obviously at that time I was thinking fucking hell I breached I got caught with a kosh innit. Then obviously, I'm on license, and when people you're on license now, I think yo, sometimes you can get recalled innit. I was thinking ahh fucking hell. I ain't going back to fucking, I ain't getting recalled innit. So, I was thinking yo fam fuck it. Went on the run.</p>	<p><b>Went on the run because didn't want to go back to prison</b></p> <p><b>Didn't mind going in YOI but again long – tedious / doesn't interest him / can't be bothered</b> <u>implies it stops him from doing things for an extended period of time he would rather do – though it relatively easy to serve time for him he would still rather not be there</u></p>
<p>Avoiding prison – easy to serve time but tedious</p>	<p>I: So even when it wasn't bad when you were in there you still didn't want to go back?</p> <p>P2: Nah. I didn't really mind going back yeah. But thinking like yo fam it's just all long fam.</p> <p>I: How does it impact you when you're on the run? How long was that period?</p>	<p><b>Got caught by police inadvertently</b></p> <p><b>Staying in house in different house – County? Trap house?</b></p>
<p>County lines house raid</p>	<p>P2: Errm, I could have stayed on the run longer innit but like the place where I was at, feds came innit. But like, they didn't come for me innit. They came for someone else. But obviously I was just in the house this time innit. Then obviously now, these lot thought I was dodgy innit cah I'm in a different area, I'm in</p>	<p><b>Staying with someone of different race – red flags raised for police</b></p>
<p>Arrest</p>		<p><b>Found drugs on participant</b></p>

<p>Caught with drugs</p>	<p>someone else's house, who's not the same colour as man, who does not, like who looks old dadada innit. So obviously these lot have, like these lot had their instincts now. Then obviously these lot done a couple searches in the house and that. Cah they were looking for someone else. Then they found something. Then the arrested them and said yo what's your name cah I gave them like three different names innit, then obviously now, said yo what's your name I'm thinking, I was like yo fucking hell, when they found the bag innit I'm thinking yo fam, told them my name. Then yeah.</p>	<p><b>Older guy staying with also arrested</b></p> <p><b>Older a smoker (of weed?)</b></p> <p><b>Under investigation for this incident</b></p> <p><b>Left shoes there – excuse?</b></p>
<p>Police raid raise red flags – county trap house</p>	<p>I: You mentioned another guy that was older?</p> <p>P2: He got arrested as well innit. Then obviously now, boom, but obviously that Donnie, he's a smoker innit. So obviously, boom, man was just in his house chilling. But my mans a smoker and the police already know my mans a smoker innit, so they basically just tried to put two and two together innit. But I'm not convicted for that charge I'm only under investigation innit. So obviously they can't prove that I was, like I had nuttin to do with cah I was only there to pick up my shoes innit cah I left my shoes there. And obviously boom, yeah.</p> <p>I: When did you get released recently?</p> <p>P2: August the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>I: And what has it been like being back in the community? What's happened since then?</p>	<p><u>This incident may refer to a county line operation – staying in trap house to sell drugs and police raid – very scarce on details</u></p> <p><b>Again out of trouble for first month or so before obtaining more charges related to mopeds</b></p> <p><b>Future court date – may serve time again for third time in same YOI</b></p>

<p>Back in trouble quickly after release into community</p> <p>Possible third sentence in future</p> <p>Needs not met properly. YOI not efficient intervention</p> <p>Doesn't think about consequences of actions</p> <p>Fast money a positive</p> <p>Social status on road</p>	<p>P2: Errm, first month or so calm still. Then I got a couple moped charges, then errm, I breached my CB order innit. So obviously now I'm on court for that, I'm on tag. So obviously I got court January 17<sup>th</sup> innit, so obviously I could go back to Werri innit. But obviously it's just one of them ones.</p> <p>I: When you're in the community do your orders play on your mind?</p> <p>P2: Nah you know I rah don't even think you know like I rah don't like, it's one of them ones like yo at the time, ah fucking hell man, what have you done ah shit, you get me dadada innit. But obviously, it's just one of them ones.</p> <p>I: Can you talk about any positives to life on road?</p> <p>P2: Like it's fast money innit. So yeah. You feel like your, like you feel like you're the man innit cah your just making fast money dadada innit so yeah.</p> <p>I: So, when you were doing this by yourself did you clash with other bigger groups?</p> <p>P2: I got county lines innit. They're my two charges innit.</p> <p>I: Ok so you went out to a trap house?</p> <p>P2: Basically.</p> <p>I: So that's when you mentioned the weed and class A?</p>	<p><u>YOI does not seem to be an effective intervention for this YP. Could also be his needs (ADHD) are not being sufficiently met during this time</u></p> <p><b>When in community doesn't think about breaching orders – comes to realisation to late – acts before he thinks</b></p> <p><b>Fast money a positive on road</b></p> <p><b>Feel like the man – a sense of social status amongst peers</b></p> <p><b>Two county lines charges</b></p> <p><b>Trap house</b></p> <p><b>Sold weed in home city before moving elsewhere in UK (on run) to sell Class A drugs</b></p>
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<p>Selling drugs and going on the run (county)</p> <p>Working independently</p> <p>Inexperience going county / selling drugs</p> <p>Honest</p> <p>Focussed on Learning and</p>	<p>P2: Basically I was doing that in wolves innit, then stared going county lines.</p> <p>I: But the people that sent you out were from here?</p> <p>P2: Nah. That's what I'm saying I done my own little lick. Then the lick what I done I took it up there innit.</p> <p>I: Oh right and you were in control to make the decision, no one sent you out?</p> <p>P2: Yeah.</p> <p>I: and you didn't have no one working for you?</p> <p>P2: No no no.</p> <p>I: Is there anything more you can say on that?</p> <p>P2: Errm, like obviously, when you do it yeah, you don't know what you're doing, so you fuck up a little innit. Obviously, I'm not gonna say yeah pshh, went there smashed it dadada. Like I knew what I was doing but I had to earn while you're up there innit. So, while you're doing it your learning, each day you're doing it innit. So, boom, you learn new things, you learn how to move correct, and more dadada innit. So, boom for like a week or so, I just been learning, then boom even when I knew what I was doing, I was still learning innit. So, like obviously to like improve and that, then yeah.</p>	<p><b>Working by himself – after committing robbery of drugs he then sold them independently</b></p> <p><b>Going county – initially inexperienced so learning as you go along – make mistakes</b></p> <p><b>Honest – not going to say I did amazing</b></p> <p><b>Learn and improve every day</b></p> <p><b>Learn how to conduct self / almost good practice on the roads doing this type of crime</b></p> <p><b>Researched online where to go to sell drugs</b></p>
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<p>improving within drug dealing</p> <p>Online research to locate drug dealing location</p> <p>Working with group to sell drugs?</p>	<p>I: How did you decide where to go?</p> <p>P2: Errm, just like yo, just research you know. But obviously, you research like a area, then go there, then yeah. Lie obviously boo went there by myself there. Met people up there innit. Met little whities up there innit. Then obviously, started buying weed off them. Started being my bredrins. Then obviously, I just phoned one of them like yo what you on, nothing, oh come link man, chilled with him, boom, had my man doing a little couple stuff and that then yeah.</p> <p>I: Were there any incidents that went badly up there?</p> <p>P2: Yeah but obviously it wasn't fully incidents like that but like just minor stuff innit.</p> <p>I: And how long would you be away from home?</p> <p>P2: I was on the run innit. So obviously I was on the run for like 3 months, 2.5 to 3 months suttin like that.</p> <p>I: You were on the run because of the robbery?</p> <p>P2: yeah yeah yeah.</p> <p>I: So, you didn't have any contact with your family?</p> <p>P2: Nah I did innit I spoke to my mum and that dadada innit.</p>	<p><b>Met a group of people there to sell weed</b></p> <p><b>Liaised with them to sell the drugs he had</b></p> <p><u>Seems he is working together here with people here – who seem like strangers</u></p> <p><b>On run for 3 months</b></p> <p><b>Spoke to mother on the phone – to him life was 'normal' but just on the run</b></p>
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<p>Distance to family – speaking to mother on phone</p> <p>On the run seen as normal life</p> <p>Very practical Focus on minimising losses</p> <p>Difficulties expressing or withholding info?</p> <p>Sense of providing for self – independence</p> <p>Family support important</p>	<p>I: On the phone?</p> <p>P2: Yeah yeah yeah. Basically, I just lived a normal life, just on the run.</p> <p>I: And how long was the period you were on county?</p> <p>P2: The 3 months I was on the run was the 3 months I was on that.</p> <p>I: What impact did county have on you looking back?</p> <p>P2: erm, obviously took a couple losses and that dadada apart from that yeah.</p> <p>I: Was there any violence?</p> <p>P2: Nah you know.</p> <p>I: Were there any other upsides?</p> <p>P2: Nah you just feel like you can provide for yourself and that. Obviously, you realise like yo you can't just be a one-man army you need your family and dadada innit.</p> <p>I: What about any negatives?</p> <p>P2: When you fuck up innit. Like when you take a couple losses, then boom you just yeah.</p> <p>I: Are these losses in your control?</p>	<p><b>3 months on the run doing county</b></p> <p><b>Very matter of fact and practical – big on losses and mistakes not so much on emotional impact</b> <u>Was there no emotional impact or is he unable to / doesn't want to express this?</u></p> <p><b>Feel good knowing you can provide for yourself – independence in self-care / preservation</b></p> <p><b>Considerate that you can't do things by yourself – need family</b></p> <p><b>More hard on self is he was at fault for a loss / something going wrong</b></p>
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<p>Hard on self for losses</p> <p>Quick to recover from inconveniences – focus shifts to minimising impact of loss</p> <p>Mothers support financially helped</p> <p>Reflective of those who are unfortunate not to have family support</p>	<p>P2: Both</p> <p>I: Does it impact you more if the loss was in your hands?</p> <p>P2: Basically yeah.</p> <p>I: How long do you stay that way or is it quick to get out of that funk?</p> <p>P2: Nah it's quick still but obviously you just gotta put the effort in. You just have to minimise to think what you took the loss for. So say like if you spend money and you took a loss, you have to minimise spending money. So yeah.</p> <p>I: Did you see other people's struggles during this period?</p> <p>P2: I don't really, like I don't need to do what I needed to do cah my mum always gave me money even when I asked she always got me stuff. So boom, when I went to Warri you got some people whose mom don't care about them and they don't have nothing like that no nuttin, no clothes so obviously people in Warri like, there's certain like, there's different types of people in Warri innit, there like people whose got a good family life, or there's people who got a bad family life and they ain't got as much as I do or the next person does innit so it's just varied still. Yeah yeah.</p> <p>I: And during the time did you ever feel like you needed support in anyway?</p>	<p><b>Quick to recover / bounce back mentally from a mistake – but again very matter of fact and practical –accommodate for it via minimisation of spending / financial adaptation</b></p> <p><b>He didn't struggle as much as others around him due to mothers support financially</b></p> <p><b>In YOI realise some YP don't have caring parents who do that for them</b></p> <p><b>Can see who is from a good family and who isn't / can see those who aren't as fortunate as him <u>Almost appreciative / reflective that he has a good foundation of support from mother</u></b></p> <p><b>Can't do things independently – need support from friends but better to do it by yourself</b></p>
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<p>Importance of family support</p>	<p>P2: Yeah obviously. Boom. You can't just do it by yourself you need your friends dadada this that innit. But obviously ... it's better to do it on your ones but better to have help as well still.</p>	<p><b>Solo – earn more money and take responsibility for mistakes and losses</b></p>
<p>Soo working means more profit and more responsibility</p>	<p>I: What are the pros and cons to working by yourself vs with others?</p>	<p><b>Working with friends – half profit – if they lose you lose together</b></p>
<p>Working with others – half profit and sharing responsibility</p>	<p>P2: Say if you work by yourself, you earn more money. Boom, you can't really blame no one else for your losses. Errm, it's easier to control. But say if you're working with your bredrins, you have to half your profit, don't really mind. Boom. But if they take a loss, you have to take that loss as well. So yeah it just depends innit.</p>	<p><b>Didn't mind sharing a loss but wold prefer not to make losses /mistakes</b></p>
<p>Prefer not to make losses</p>	<p>I: Did you not like taking the losses with them?</p>	<p><b>Wouldn't seek support during difficult ties</b></p>
<p></p>	<p>P2: Nah it's not like I didn't like taking the losses with them, it's just that yo, like just ... you rather don't wanna take no losses overall. Yeah.</p>	<p><b>Recognises support from professionals but didn't listen – did what he wanted to do</b></p>
<p></p>	<p>I: What that escalate to more problems?</p>	<p><b>Stubborn – once mind is set will do what he wants despite advice from others</b></p>
<p></p>	<p>P2: Nah you know.</p>	<p></p>
<p></p>	<p>I: Were other people struggling in that sense?</p>	<p></p>

<p>Not seeking support during difficult times</p> <p>Recognises professionals there for support but stubborn</p> <p>Stubborn – not listening to support</p> <p>Listening to advice would have helped slightly</p>	<p>P2: Errm, I had bare support around me innit. Obviously, I didn't listen to none of their support. I just done what I wanted. Like say if my mind's set to do something, I will do it and if I don't do it like, pshh, I'm gonna be pissed innit. So obviously, the supports tryna like yo don't do, try and find something else dadada this that innit but once my mind's set I'm going to do it and I will complete it.</p> <p>I: And who made this support you referred to?</p> <p>P2: Errm like my social workers, YOT, boom, obviously (organisation) dadada innit. People like that. But obviously, I still did what I done innit.</p> <p>I: What things have they done that really helped?</p> <p>P2: Like now, like thinking about like I should have just listened and took their advice cah, I probably would be in the same predicament but wouldn't probably be in it as much. So it all depends still.</p> <p>I: What advice would you give people that are going through what you went through?</p> <p>P2: If you don't have to do it don't do it. Like if you got a family who supports you dadada innit don't do it cah you don't need to. But like, I'm not saying do it if you don't have a family who don't support you, but obviously, if you got everything you need to do, and everything what you want by your family, you don't need to</p>	<p><b>Aware of professional support around him but still demonstrated stubbornness and did what he wanted to – didn't listen</b></p> <p><b>Reflects that he should have listened to their advice – states that he would still be in a similar predicament but maybe not as intense as things ended up</b></p> <p><b>Advises others not to enter road if they don't have to – if you have a supportive family</b></p> <p><b>If you don't have that find support and help first from professionals</b></p> <p><b>Does states that if all else fails then enter the road as a final attempt to support yourself</b></p>
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<p>Warns against entering road if you don't have to – if family support is there</p> <p>Seek support before considering option</p>	<p>do nothing. You get me. Obviously go legit dadada and that, but obviously if people who don't really have that, boom, find support or try and get help first. Then obviously, if it don't work then, pshh, you know what to do innit.</p> <p>I: And is there any support where you feel like you didn't have access to but might have been useful?</p> <p>P2: Nah I think I had the support I needed.</p> <p>I: And just finishing up was everything before the story calm like primary etc?</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p> <p>I: And when did you start the PRU?</p> <p>P2: It was like year 9 / year 10.</p> <p>I: How did transition into PRU impact you?</p> <p>P2: Nah you know it's just like a normal school basically.</p> <p>I: Is there anything else you would like to share that we haven't covered?</p> <p>P2: Nah you know.</p>	<p><b>Felt he had support there – nothing he wished he could have had</b></p> <p><b>Was in PRU – from year 9 / 10 (13-15 years old)</b></p>
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**Participant 3**

Key:

**Descriptive comments;** *Linguistic comments;* Conceptual comments

**I:** Interviewer

**P3:** Participant 3

Emergent Themes	Transcript	Exploratory Comments
<p>Turn to the roads out of difficulties in life</p> <p>Road fulfilling needs such as friendship, protection, and belonging</p> <p>Money</p> <p>Gangs come with negative aspects such as violence</p>	<p>I: What do you understand by the term 'on road'?</p> <p>P3: In my eyes it's like ... if a young boy was on road, from young, in my eyes it would be like ... from a young age they've been erm put in a predicament or put in a mindset where they've got nowhere else to go but out on road with their people to do ... whether it's legal things, illegal things, anything to get by and feel welcomed, or feel some sort of ... I don't know what the word is but some sort of friendship or some sort of ... like support around them you know what I mean.</p> <p>I: Is there anything else one might get from on road?</p> <p>P3: probably protection. Then it becomes them being in a gang from being on road because I suppose you can be in a gang and be on road or you can just be on road and not be in a gang. Whereas if your just on road I suppose that your just in it for the money and the love I suppose whereas if you're on road and in a gang then you're in it for all the other negative reasons as well as just being on road.</p> <p>I: It's good you touched on that because I was going to ask you what you understand by the term street gang?</p>	<p><b>Predicament – nowhere else to go so turn to the roads and crime</b></p> <p><b>Roads make people feel welcomed / friendship / support</b></p> <p><b>Sense of belonging</b></p> <p><b>Road fulfilling a need</b></p> <p><b>Road provides protection</b></p> <p><b>Road linked to need for money</b></p> <p><b>Those in gangs seek negative aspects of the road as well as money</b></p>

<p>Doesn't believe in gang life anymore</p> <p>Gangs trigger postcode conflict</p> <p>Trivial conflicts</p> <p>Gangs associated with violence</p> <p>Loyalty to friends in conflict must be shown</p> <p>No independent decision making in group – gang code means one problem is everyone's problem</p>	<p>P3: Street gang, in my eyes I don't, I don't believe in them things there. I don't really agree with them myself which is like ... different postcodes going to was over minor minor problems in my eyes. Post code wars, it may be to do with money or a family problem or It could be ... nowadays it literally can be anything. I've seen things happen over females or over a bottle. Things like that.</p> <p>I: Between two groups?</p> <p>P3: Yeah between two different groups.</p> <p>I: You touched on the differences between gang and on road</p> <p>P3: Yeah I'd say the gang is much more negative than just being on road I suppose in violence because, I suppose if you're in a gang, errm and if your just say one of your friends get for example jumped, then if you're in a gang the whole gangs gonna wanna ride back, whereas if you're on road errm, and one of your friends have been touched but it's not a friend too close to you, you don't have to worry about being pressured into going to do some negative stuff do you, you can just make your own decision of alright, that's happened they got to have done something to cause that so I'm just gonna leave it there and do my own thing I suppose.</p> <p>I: But in gang it's like you're not in control?</p>	<p><b>Doesn't believe in gangs anymore</b></p> <p><b>Gangs lead to postcode conflicts of minor things</b></p> <p><b>Conflicts over anything trivial</b></p> <p><b>Gangs negative due to violence associated with them</b></p> <p><b>Must back friends in conflict</b></p> <p><b>Can't make own decisions in gang – tied to the code of protecting each other during conflict – even if it doesn't directly involve you</b></p>
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<p>Hierarchy in gang – leads to pressures – someone higher to answer to</p>	<p>P3: Yeah, it's pressure, there's always someone higher than you I suppose.</p>	<p><b>Gangs come with pressure due to hierarchy / commands from 'higher ups'</b></p>
<p>Definitions of EW</p>	<p>I: And what do you understand by the term emotional wellbeing?</p>	
	<p>P3: Emotional wellbeing ... like how someone's thoughts and their mind process these like, for example if my emotional wellbeing's, I could be one minute I could be, I don't know, that's actually a tricky one. Errm, I suppose emotional wellbeing someone could feel lonely and feel neglected so their gonna just go do road or gonna go do some things that are gonna just take their mind off what they're going through I suppose in my eyes I think.</p>	<p><b>Emotional wellbeing how one processes thoughts</b></p> <p><b>Loneliness and neglect</b></p> <p><b>Seems to have decent idea of EW</b></p>
<p>Entered roads at early age</p>	<p>I: So bringing about to you I'm really interested in your story. At what age did you enter on road?</p>	
<p>Lack of father figure / male role model growing up</p>	<p>P3: Errm, I'd say about 13 years old, just after my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. I think that was just mainly down to me wanting to be out more because I was growing up. I suppose me not having a, like a father figure or a male figure in my life growing up I suppose as well. I didn't meet my dad until I was 12, I suppose. And when I did meet my dad when I was 12 it was still only on and off. SO then, that was still messing with my head anyway so then when I turned 13, I thought I suppose forget it man I just wanna do my thing.</p>	<p><b>Entered roads at 13 – wanted to go out more</b></p> <p><b>Lack of father / male role model growing up</b></p> <p><b>Inconsistent contact with father</b></p>
<p>Inconsistent contact with father</p>	<p>I: Ok and you said at 13 you were growing up and wanted to be out more</p>	<p><b>Gave up on relationship with father at age of 13</b></p>

<p>Gave up on relationship with father</p> <p>Disobedience towards mother</p> <p>Not listening to advice</p> <p>More violent as growing older</p> <p>No one to control behaviour – mother unable to correct him</p> <p>Lack of father / male role model to correct him</p> <p>Lack of attention / belonging as older sibling</p> <p>Domestic violence</p> <p>Witnessing DV</p>	<p>P3: Yeah just growing up, wanting to be out more, and I suppose getting less like obedient with my mum and just being a bit erm unruly with a lot of people I suppose. And then I suppose, the long that goes on and the longer you don't listen to them the worse situations you get into which is the perfect example right now like, when I was 13 I suppose I got into a what everything like I said. And then coming up to my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday that's when I suppose I started the more violent tone of things instead of just being out on road. Around my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday that's when I started to get more violent. And I think that was mainly down from me becoming unruly towards my mum and having no one there to correct me and say no that's wrong. So, I suppose whatever was wrong I thought was right in my eyes cuz I didn't know different.</p> <p>I: Thank you for sharing that. So, thinking about pre-13, what was life like then?</p> <p>P3: Life was good man I suppose. But then because I'm, erm, the oldest of 4 siblings on my mother's side and 4 on my dad's, so lite, it's like I suppose the older you are in the family tree, it's like the harder, sometimes life can be a bit harder for ya, especially when your growing up in a family of 5, like with 2 brothers, 2 sisters, and there's only your mother in the picture, and her ex-partner was a vi, violent, like abusive. I suppose your mind, your mind does start to get like, As you start to grow your mind starts to get, starts to mature your start to understand what is actually happening and that's where, I think that's probably where the anger comes from</p>	<p><b>Showing less obedience to mother</b></p> <p><b>Being unruly towards others</b></p> <p><b>Don't listen to advice in addition to behaviour leads to worse situations</b></p> <p><b>Becoming more violent at 14 years old</b></p> <p><b>Violence stemming from unruliness towards mother and having no father figure / role model to correct behaviour</b></p> <p><b>Thus, couldn't understand behaviours at the time were wrong</b></p> <p><b>Can be hard being the older sibling of 5 – <u>Maybe lacks a sense of belonging – not given as much attention and love as younger siblings?</u></b></p> <p><b>Mother's violent partner</b></p> <p><b>Witnessing domestic violence</b></p> <p><b>Looking back with age he attributes anger to the witnessing of DV</b></p>
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<p>Adult actions have big impact on children</p>	<p>sometimes in kids where, from what they see growing up. Errm, where adults might not see that they're, the children are seeing it and how the children are seeing it because they might just think oh he's not gonna understand yet, but trust me children can understand anything from any age really it depends just how much on their mind is I suppose.</p>	<p><b>Adults don't realise the gravity of their actions and the impact they have on children</b></p>
<p>Witnessing DV</p>	<p>I: In your life where there any significant life events that happened during that time?</p>	<p><b>Children very sensitive to actions and words from those around them</b></p>
<p>Not easy to experience DV</p>	<p>P3: Life events is like when I used to see my mum get errm what is it domestic violence with her ex-partner and just things like that really it just feels like when my family found out he was beating my mum and that then they done him over and I witnessed that in front of my own eyes. It wasn't a nice sight. It wasn't a nice sight, but I suppose when I thought of it then I though oh no this is just a whole mess but as growing up now, in a way I'm glad that happened but it could have happened in a better way. It didn't have to happen in that way. But I suppose it's life you go through things and learn from things.</p>	<p><b>Witnessing DV as a child</b></p> <p><b>Not easy to watch DV as a child</b></p>
<p>Reflections on better ways to handle conflict – (parents)</p>	<p>I: And you're young during this time. How were you feeling and processing this?</p>	<p><b>Laments the way things happened in childhood – DV wasn't necessary – situation could have been handled better – adults bad role models from an early age</b></p>
<p>Emphasis on growth and learning from mistakes</p>	<p>P3: I've been numb I remember I got hit a couple times by her partner, But I suppose that's where the anger comes from, the anger started to come from as a kid is because when you're a child and you've got a grown man hitting on ya, you can't, you actually can't do nothing can you because you're a</p>	<p><b>Positive – learn from experience and grow</b></p>
<p>Experiencing DV</p>	<p>I: And you're young during this time. How were you feeling and processing this?</p>	<p><b>Experienced DV first-hand by mother's partner</b></p> <p><b>Helpless as a child – couldn't do anything back</b></p>
<p>Helplessness as child</p>	<p>P3: I've been numb I remember I got hit a couple times by her partner, But I suppose that's where the anger comes from, the anger started to come from as a kid is because when you're a child and you've got a grown man hitting on ya, you can't, you actually can't do nothing can you because you're a</p>	<p><b>Experienced DV first-hand by mother's partner</b></p> <p><b>Helpless as a child – couldn't do anything back</b></p>

<p>Powerless</p> <p>Bottling emotions up</p>	<p>child. A child's got no power over a man, over a grown man have they so I suppose you just start holding things in and then it gets to like a certain amount of time there's only so much pressure a bottle can take before it bursts.</p>	<p><b>So hold things in due to being powerless</b></p> <p><b>Bottle things up – only so long before one explodes</b></p>
	<p>I: So, you said up to the age of 13 you weren't outwardly expressing the aggression but around 13 / 14 it started to escalate?</p>	
<p>Arrests in youth for smaller incidents</p>	<p>P3: So, 13/14 I got locked up for the first time when I was 14. But bear in mind beforehand I'd been arrested a couple of times.</p>	<p><b>Arrested a couple of times before first sentence</b></p>
	<p>I: Ok so 13 was your first entry on road?</p>	
<p>Entered road young – secondary age</p>	<p>P3: Yeah 13 was my first official year.</p>	<p><b>13 when entered road</b></p>
	<p>I: Can you talk to me about what that was like?</p>	
<p>First incident with police</p>	<p>P3: I can tell you exactly what that was like. I turned 13 on March 8<sup>th</sup>, and then I got arrested I think it was March 11<sup>th</sup> or March 10<sup>th</sup> and that was just errm I think it was something to do with a public errm just for being loud in public or something like that. But what it was I was in town, in Wolverhampton town, and I was just with a couple of mates. Apparently there was a fight arranged in town that day and then police had tried to escort everyone out of town but I wasn't doing it right and I've always been the kid where if I don't think somethings right I'll stick my ground and not go against it. So, I'm in town just chilling and then the police are coming saying I've got to go out of town and that and I'm just saying I don't have to</p>	<p><b>Incident in town socialising with friends</b></p> <p><b>Fight arranged in town – police tried to move people</b></p>
<p>Standing ground against injustice important</p>		<p><b>Stands ground from young age – especially against injustice</b></p> <p><b>Defies police instruction</b></p>

<p>Anger and frustration during incident with police</p> <p>Excessive use of force by police</p> <p>Marked by police</p> <p>Negative experience with police/ professionals</p> <p>Excessive force – not treated like child – treated like adult</p> <p>Shattered image of police as those who help</p> <p>No empathy form police re age</p>	<p>move I'm not doing nothing wrong I'm just chilling with my mates and what not. It's got to the point where I've started to get a bit annoyed and started walking. And then errm there's a van. They've opened the door to the van and they're opening the door to the van like keep it moving keep it moving keep it moving and I get frustrated. I'm copying them now and that's getting them frustrated so then they've all jumped out the van and apparently what they said to my mum was there was gonna escort me home. But they actually didn't try and escort me home they all jumped on me and then I got back, like there were 3 officers on me I got, I managed to get back on my feet. Two more officers got back out of the car, out of the van and they were both on top of me and then I got took to the police station and then whilst in the process from taking me from town to the police station I did get like marked on my...I've got pictures on my phone but haven't got data at the moment, of where they've marked my face and marked like my cheeks and what not from pushing me against the wall and grazing me and what not. So anyway, that was my first time being arrested. That was just for a public disorder so for them to treat me like that just for being loud that was my first eyes of the police like being against me in that situation. I was angry in that situation I didn't think ... as a kid I though police were either supposed to help ya or deal with you in an ideal way. Like and bear in mind I'm only 13 and I didn't think it was necessary for 5 officers to be on top of me. They were treating me like an older person.</p> <p>I: How did your story continue from then?</p>	<p><b>Anger / frustration building</b></p> <p><b>Imitating police</b></p> <p><b>Police arrest him – perception of excessive force used to deal with situation</b></p> <p><b>Marks on face from excessive force</b></p> <p><b>Negative experience with police – jeopardised trust in them</b></p> <p><b>Excessive reaction by police for public disorder</b></p> <p><b>Shatters image he had of police from a young age</b></p> <p><b>Treated him like an adult / no empathy or consideration for his age</b></p>
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<p>Negative incident with teaching staff</p> <p>Altercation – physical with teaching staff in self-defence</p> <p>TA lies</p> <p>Negative experience with professionals</p> <p>No professionals on his side</p> <p>Good student but unstructured times difficult</p> <p>Multiple exclusions for behaviour – self-defence</p>	<p>P3: I suppose that happened and then I think I got like a charge from school for pushing a teacher away from me for trying to take my jumper off my head and I just got a fine but what it is there, it was like, in that situation I pushed one teacher and I admitted to pushing one teacher but there was another lady involved and because I witnessed what I witnessed growing up as a kid I wouldn't put my hands on a woman like ... like ... so then errm ... this lady called Ms Fraser she said that I pushed her as well. Anyway, they pressed charges, got me fined in court and everything. But like I thought from that situation for the court just to believe the lady straight away like when they've not even looked into it any further, not looked at cameras or nothing, and for them to charge me like this ... it's like ... who's really on my side? When I've not done much, I've literally protected myself. The teacher tried to grab my jumper off my head you're not supposed to come in my personal space. And then that got out of the way. Then I did start to fix up a bit like behaviour in school. Like I've always been good in school I suppose but it's just the break times where I'd find a way to get myself in a bit of trouble or something. But, in school I'd always been good in lessons but like I said the break times is the bit where I'd found a way to get into trouble. So, I have been kicked out a couple of schools in my time. That was just for fighting or in my eyes protecting myself from racism or protecting myself from verbal abuse.</p> <p>I: So, what happened next?</p> <p>P3: Leading up to my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday now like I'm still behaving in school in my lessons and I'm in a pupil referral unit at the time</p>	<p><b>Incident in school for physical altercation with teacher – charged for this <u>Percieves many threats in environment – always acts in self-defence</u></b></p> <p><b>Wouldn't put hands on woman – respect for woman due to early childhood experiences with DV</b></p> <p><b>TA lies about being pushed</b></p> <p><b>No proper investigation into incident – just went off the word of teachers</b></p> <p><b>Acted in self-defence to teacher's actions</b></p> <p><b>Feel like no professional on his side – further lack of trust in professionals</b></p> <p><b>Improved behaviour after this</b></p> <p><b>Good student but found unstructured times difficult</b></p> <p><b>Excluded from multiple schools – for fighting out of self-defence – unable to deal with conflict without physical altercation – <u>mirror of childhood experiences of DV?</u></b></p>
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<p>PRU</p> <p>Behaviour improving</p> <p>Incident led to stabbing</p> <p>Very quick altercation / quick escalation</p> <p>Laments his life</p> <p>Laments hectic nature of life – shouldn't be like this at such a young age</p> <p>Focused on self-growth and</p>	<p>and then what it is I'm in year 10 now at Midpoint and they was planning on getting me back into a mainstream school because my behaviour in school was being good and I'd been showing them that I'm willing to learn. And it's the weekend now and then I've went to meet a couple of my friends in Sedgley. It's a place erm near Dudley on a Sunday it was the 9<sup>th</sup> October. And then I went to meet my friends and then what happened was erm, there ended up being like a argument err a scuffle, and I ended up being involved in a stabbing incident and ended up stabbing someone. At that time, it was all like ... it was a very fast situation and I can't talk on it too much, but I've already been charged for it. But erm, I ended up stabbing the person and then erm I ended up going to getting arrested for this in the same night and everything and I got remanded for 2 months and then, through all that process there that's when life started hitting me like what, what's going on. This shouldn't be like, this shouldn't be how life should be, life should be much I suppose much calmer and like constructed in a much better way than this and I'm only 14 and I'm saying to myself I'm already looking at 6 years in jail because that's why my sister was saying. Looking at 6 years in jail because it's an attempted murder because at the time my charge was an attempted murder but then because I pled guilty got my charge and I served my remand time erm actually and my solicitor was fighting my case, I got it dropped to a section 18. So that's 2 months on remand in that 2 months on remand I think I started to think like ... how I can make things better now like I know like I ain't gonna be able to change nothing but now it was like how am I going to better it now. I'm in this situation</p>	<p><b>PRU – specialist setting for behaviour</b></p> <p><b>Was planned to return to mainstream due to improving behaviour</b></p> <p><b>Incident out of school with group of friends – altercation led to stabbing</b></p> <p><b>Very quick altercation / escalation of events</b></p> <p><b>Stabbed another peer</b></p> <p><b>Arrested the same night</b></p> <p><b>2 months remand</b></p> <p><b>Starts to hit him / process events – what has life come to – life shouldn't be like this – regret</b></p> <p><b>Life to hectic – shouldn't be like this at 14</b></p> <p><b>Initially though sentence would be heavy but pled guilty and got sentence reduced</b></p> <p><b>Thinking of how to improve self / growth</b></p>
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<p>improvement after negative incident</p> <p>Secure Children's unit</p> <p>Anger when entering setting</p> <p>Unsettled initially because away from family</p> <p>Incentive levels helped relax and motivate him</p> <p>Incentives mean more trust from adult</p>	<p>so how am I going to better it. I can't make it stay like this. If it gets any worse, it's gonna be worse for me so the only thing I can do is make it better. So I suppose when I went to a place called Clayfield House, which is a children's secure unit, and then, I was in there for a good 2 weeks before I settled and before I could start to control my behaviour and that because don't get me wrong, the first 2 weeks I went in there I was an angry child because I think I just got took away from my family just like that and I was kind of angry. So, when it come to people saying things to me because I'm the new boy around, I wouldn't be the happiest about it. I wouldn't react in the best way. But come 2 weeks I thought you know what it's time to crack down now and I just relaxed and ... do me now. So, then I'm just chilling now. What it is in there there's incentive levels. Do you know like, so there's bronze, silver, gold, platinum and graduate. And what it is each one of the incentive levels gets you different privileges. So, bronze you're not even allowed out in the yard, the big yard to play football or something you're just allowed in a small yard which is fresh air. Silver you'll be allowed your television in your bedroom. Gold you'll be allowed your PlayStation, television, you can listen to music and what not. You're allowed to a couple other places in the centre. Platinum you're allowed you're PlayStation remote where you're allowed to play FIFA and what not in your bedroom. And then there's the graduate where you're basically more allowed to do ... you get treated like a trusted child in the centre. So erm, over the period of time beyond remand I got myself to gold and then I started to think this place ain't actually that bad. So then, erm it come to my court date which was the 2<sup>nd</sup></p>	<p><b>Acceptance of situation but looking to improve for the future</b></p> <p><b>Secure children's unit</b></p> <p><b>Took 2 weeks to settle into centre</b></p> <p><b>Angry upon entering</b></p> <p><b>Anger from being away from family</b></p> <p><b>Wouldn't react well to comments from others initially</b></p> <p><b>More relaxed two weeks into sentence</b></p> <p><b>Incentive levels served as good motivator to behave well</b></p> <p><b>Describing incentive levels</b></p> <p><b>High incentive level equates to more trust from adults</b></p> <p><b>Realisation that centre not so bad</b></p>
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<p>Good memory for dates and events</p> <p>Positive of court outcome – positive reframing of situation</p> <p>First Christmas away from home</p> <p>Unplanned incident led to stabbing</p> <p>Carrying knives</p>	<p>December which was my mum’s birthday as well at the time. And I was praying and praying and praying that day and I thought ... something feels good about this day I’m not gonna get a whole 6 years. And then I ended up getting my charge dropped to a section 18 and I only got 3 years do 18 months. And even though that’s still quite a long time, I thought to myself thank god because I could have been looking at 6 years do 3 years instead of 3 years do 18. So then, even though my mum and everyone was distraught in the courtroom, I thought I can’t I can’t I can’t ask for anything more than this really. If I appeal, they’re gonna give me more time so just take the time and do it. So, I did the time. I was still 14 at the time. And then It’s first Christmas. So, it was the first Christmas I was at out of my home because I got arrested on the 9<sup>th</sup> October and I got sentenced the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2016.</p> <p>I: So, 9<sup>th</sup> October was the Sedgley incident and in-between that time you were in the secure unit?</p> <p>P3: yeah</p> <p>I: Thanks for sharing that. So, if we jump back slightly, that 1<sup>st</sup> incident in Sedgley wasn’t planned?</p> <p>P3: It wasn’t planned it was just wrong place at the wrong time.</p> <p>I: Did you carry a knife during that time?</p> <p>P3: That day, no that day I didn’t have a knife it was actually his own knife because what it is he ended up, how he pulled the</p>	<p><b>Good memory for dates</b></p> <p><b>Mother’s birthday – felt positive about court outcome</b></p> <p><b>Happy with sentence – acknowledges it’s long but could be worse – positive cognitive reframing</b></p> <p><b>Positive about outcome though family distraught</b></p> <p><b>First Christmas away from home</b></p> <p><b>Unplanned incident – wrong place wrong time</b></p> <p><b>Didn’t have knife that day but implies he did carry knives during this period</b></p>
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<p>Violent altercation</p> <p>Self-defence / self-preservation – taking knife away from victim</p> <p>Quick incident</p> <p>Groups of people watching</p> <p>Accepting responsibility for handling problem solo not in group</p> <p>Individuals moving in groups to deal with conflict</p>	<p>knife out one me, he put it away, put it in his pouch and his pouch opened and he offered to fight me. But it was a locked knife, he didn't flip the knife away and he didn't zip his pouch he just put his knife in the pouch and left the pouch open. Bearing in mind I was quite a forward child back then, so I, if I seen something that wasn't right, I'd know it wasn't right. So I got him in a clinch and took the knife away from him because I thought if we have a fight now He's still got a pouch and a knife still out and his pooch is still open and all it takes is one movement and then I'll be the person whose stabbed. And then I took the knife off him in the clinch and then everything from there went like a blur and really fast and then ... ended up getting stabbed but like that incident there I think it was mainly because like, the anger that was built up in me and for someone to disrespect me and like ...</p> <p>I: Was it just you two there or were there a few people there?</p> <p>P3: People were watching. All of my friends were watching and a couple of ... I think his misses was with him. But I said to everyone no one come with me I want to like; I need to approach him on my own because it's a problem that I have with him no one else. I don't believe in like, if I've got a problem then I want all 6 of my friends to ride with me to go and do something. Well like now, now these days I'm not into nothing like that I don't agree with violence. I don't agree with nothing like that because it's wrong, the morals man there's no need to do that in this day and age anyway. There's always a better way to get by then the worse way you was gonna do.</p>	<p><b>Describes altercation – knife was convenient to grab from victims pouch</b></p> <p><b>Self-defence – saw knife – aware of knife position – didn't want to get stabbed - self-preservation</b></p> <p><b>Quick incident – blur</b></p> <p><b>Incident result of built up anger – unable to have someone disrespect him</b></p> <p><b>Group of people there watching</b></p> <p><b>Didn't want friends coming with him to altercation – accepted responsibility to deal with problem himself</b></p> <p><b>Implies others move in groups when dealing with conflicts</b></p> <p><b>Doesn't agree with violence now – wrong morally</b></p>
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<p>Doesn't agree with violence – morally</p> <p>Better ways to handle conflict</p> <p>Focussed on growth and bettering self</p> <p>Incentives as motivators for good behaviour</p> <p>Realisation of how to make time easier</p> <p>laments what life has become</p> <p>Physiological impacts of negative incidents – no appetite</p> <p>Focus on growth / learning</p>	<p>I: Did he survive the incident?</p> <p>P3: Yeah, he survived that. He was in hospital for a week or whatnot and that's why it was an attempted murder at the start. Errm his injury was quite severe, and he recovered from the injury and then errm let's say we was on my court date now and I've been sentenced. I went back to the place, and then I went to my bredrin and I spent the night in my room. And at night I just spent thinking about how I'm gonna better myself. Like the first day I got sentenced like and I knew how long I was gonna be spending in there, I thought to myself ok boom, let's work on us now let's work on me. So from that day I started to work on my incentive levels cuz as it is the higher incentives you get on the easier your times gonna be and the faster your times gonna go by.</p> <p>I: Thanks for sharing this. Just to get back to the incident, how did you feel immediately after the (stabbing) incident?</p> <p>P3: I'm thinking oh my god, obviously what's happened? What's life come to basically that's exactly what I was thinking. I'm so young and I'm in a place like this. I wasn't expecting it like I had a knot feeling in my tummy honestly. That day it felt like, I didn't eat or nothing I just felt, I felt like I wasn't me but in a way, I was me because I was still thinking of how to better myself on that first day serving my sentence. I got arrested on the 9<sup>th</sup> October and it was the weekend so the 11<sup>th</sup> October I got sent to the secure unit. So, then errm that first day in the secure unit I wasn't really thinking how to better myself like for the long run I was just thinking about now. Like How am I</p>	<p><b>Realises of better ways to deal with conflict with others</b></p> <p><b>Victim survived stabbing</b></p> <p><b>Immediately after incident thinking of how to better self</b></p> <p><b>During sentence focussed on improving self and working on self</b></p> <p><b>Focussed on centre incentives – realised this would make time easier</b></p> <p><b>What has life come to. Shock after stabbing</b></p> <p><b>Knots in stomach – feeling sick</b></p> <p><b>Didn't eat – negative physiological impact</b></p> <p><b>Focus on growth</b></p> <p><b>Focused on bettering self in short term and long term</b></p>
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<p>Focus on growth / learning</p> <p>Re-evaluating social circle</p> <p>Focus on growth / learning</p> <p>Family history of prison</p> <p>Unsettled upon entering Unit</p> <p>Positive cognitive reframing</p> <p>Anxieties eased by calm environment</p>	<p>going to better myself now. Like if I got out on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December how's life gonna change. For example, how am I going to be chilling with, or who am I going to be rolling with, or what school...just things like that. And then once I got sentenced that was when I started to think about how am I going to better myself in the long run for example when I get out of here.</p> <p>I: Where did that mentality come from?</p> <p>P3: It was just within me cuz like I always thought of myself growing up because there been like male's around me like my uncle and cousins that have been to jail and that, but I never thought I was gonna take their path. But I suppose you never know until like life gets to that stage I suppose.</p> <p>I: And when you went to the secure unit for the first day what was that like?</p> <p>P3: It's an overwhelming feeling really but not a nice overwhelming. It's like, I could be here for the next however long I don't yet. And bear in mind there's only 6 people on a unit. There was 3 units. So it wasn't, I could have been in a worse place if I'm honest. So, I stepped in the place and I wasn't thinking oh god this is gonna be easy. I thought ok, I could be in worse places. I can tell this from sound and my hearing and, like just the look of the place it was smart. It wasn't too big and the sound it was quiet it wasn't like, for example like if you got sent to Rainsbrook or somewhere like that you'd hear the noise straight away as soon as you step in.</p>	<p><b>Re-evaluating social circle when released</b></p> <p><b>Focus on growth and betterment of self when released</b></p> <p><b>Uncle's and cousin have been to jail – did see this happening for himself</b></p> <p><b>Overwhelming feeling when entering secure unit</b></p> <p><b>Initially negative but used positive reframing – could be worse</b></p> <p><b>Presentation of centre helped ease anxieties</b></p> <p><b>Grateful not like a YOI environment – noise</b></p>
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<p>Distance from family unsettling / impacting behaviour</p> <p>Away from family during holiday period unsettling / impacting behaviour</p> <p>Missing people in life</p> <p>Unsettled – rude to staff during holiday period</p>	<p>So, I though from there I thought ok so It's not gonna be as hard but it's still gonna be hard because I'm away from my family. So then from there I like, as everyday went by I started to feel a little better and a little bit more, not at home, but where I'm gonna be for the next like 3 years.</p> <p>I: And how did it impact on your emotional wellbeing?</p> <p>P3: At first my mind wasn't right because I was thinking like I'm missing my family now because it was coming up for Christmas as well. So I was thinking I'm missing my family now and that's when I started to get unsettled at the start of 2017 because I fixed up my behaviour from when I first got put in remand until my sentence time. And then I went back on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December and thought about fixing up a bit then and did it for a week or so. Then it come to like close to Christmas before 2017 was gonna start and that's when I think it started to hit me like, cuz as a kid you don't think of like the people you're gonna miss you think of all the <i>things</i> you're gonna miss like parties, or a meal, and then you think of the people you're gonna miss after that. And I was just thinking about them things that I was gonna miss that was gonna make my time a bit, make my life a bit more fun but I suppose That's when I started to get a bit unsettled and I started to get a bit rude to staff in the secure unit.</p> <p>I: And when you find out exactly how much time you will be serving what impact does that have on you?</p>	<p><u>YOI probably would evoke defences for those who enter immediately / constantly aware / anxious of threat?</u></p> <p><b>Mentally unsettled due to missing family and Christmas period</b></p> <p><b>Christmas intensified missing family – that's when it hit him – started to change behaviour for better but Christmas and family distance mean his behaviours reverted negatively / unsettled</b></p> <p><b>Don't realise the people you will miss when young, only materialistic things</b></p> <p><b>Unsettled and rude to staff during Christmas period</b></p>
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<p>Acceptance of sentence</p> <p>Trust issues with unfamiliar people</p> <p>Acceptance of sentence / unit</p> <p>More settled / calm with time</p> <p>Talking about issues with staff helping ease stress and tensions</p> <p>Positive reframing</p> <p>Approachable staff due to dress</p> <p>Approachable / down to earth staff</p>	<p>P3: Errm I think I was calm and just started to treat it as home. The most daunting part of it was on remand when I didn't know how long I was gonna be there for, I didn't know who I was around too well. But then I suppose when I come off remand, and from the 2<sup>nd</sup> December and I knew my sentence. Maybe on the first day I got my sentence on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, it was a bit soft. But after the first week of me being sentenced it started to set in my head now how long I'm gonna be here for and I did start to see it as home. And as the days went by, I did start to get calmer and more free and like I suppose more open with people because you would have a key worker and a co-worker in there and what not. And I did start talking to staff about my problems and my troubles. And then as soon as I started to talk to people and staff, I started to feel like, a bit more relieved of a bit of stress. Like my shoulder, my head and everything just felt less pressure and I felt like every day I woke up I didn't feel as angry or as upset that I'm not home I started to think ok, I'm not there but I could be in a worse place.</p> <p>I: What approach were the staff using?</p> <p>P3: So, first of all I didn't go in there and see loads of adults in G4S uniforms it was like, for example like youth workers and dress. The staff are really like, you feel like you can approach them...</p> <p>I: Like down to earth?</p> <p>P3: Yeah, they're really down to earth. You might get the odd one or two that might look down on you and think you're a</p>	<p><b>Acceptance of sentence – treating secure unit like home</b></p> <p><b>Didn't who he could trust</b></p> <p><b>Acceptance – seeing secure unit as home</b></p> <p><b>Calmer as time went by</b></p> <p><b>Talking about problems with staff helped relieve stress / tension in body</b></p> <p><b>Talking to staff relieved anger</b></p> <p><b>Positive reframing – could be worse</b></p> <p><b>Not dressed as professionals – approachable in the way they dress</b></p> <p><b>Most staff down to earth and approachable</b></p>
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<p>Staff accessible / willing to listen</p> <p>Staff honest / helped to build rapport</p> <p>Staff approachable and accessible</p> <p>Took time to build rapport and trust with staff before opening up</p> <p>Varying needs of YP in unit</p> <p>Treated differently by staff due to nature of sentence compared to other YP – sensitive to this</p>	<p>naughty child but 98% of the staff in the place they'll be willing to listen to what your problems are. They'll tell you exactly what you said like don't tell me if you've not been charged for nothing don't tell me cuz I don't wanna hear it. Like only tell me what your open and willing to tell me about yourself. Like I said 98% of the staff were like that so as you could imagine it's quite easy to talk to someone. Like you don't have to go looking around bushes for a member of staff to talk to you can just open your door and you'll see a member of staff that you'll get to know. Don't get me wrong you'll probably have to take like a good couple of weeks to get to know that one particular member of staff but in Clayfields I think I was really close to like 4 members of staff, maybe 5. And there was 2 females and 3 males. And it's like because...in my eyes Clayfields, because it's not a jail it's a secure unit, there is some children that go in for the welfare, like you said emotional wellbeing like for example if there running off from their care home or if there self-harming, they'll be put in there for their own good. So, the time I got put into Clayfields there wasn't many section 91 children which are children that have been sentenced. It's mostly welfare children in there. So for me stepping into a place like that and being like the only people that are on a sentence charge and are actually on a criminal charge in there, it was quite, like, a bit daunting when you'd hear staff talking about the other kids and then you'd hear them talking to you because it's like, oh wait, she's talking to him like this but me in a different way. And I think that was only because I didn't...I thought everyone in that place was there for criminal charges. I didn't know that some kids where in there for welfare and some kids were in there</p>	<p><b>Staff willing to listen to problems</b></p> <p><b>Honest with participant – make him feel at ease to share what he feels comfortable sharing – makes link back to my briefing before interview</b></p> <p><b>Staff approachable and accessible</b></p> <p><b>Took a few weeks to build rapport and feel comfortable / build trust with staff members</b></p> <p><b>Varying needs of young people in unit</b></p> <p><b>Many peers there for support with their emotional wellbeing</b></p> <p><b>Not many YP there with sentences</b></p> <p><b>Daunting hearing staff treat others differently to you based on your charges / reasons for being in centre</b></p> <p><b>Didn't know YP were there for different reasons</b></p>
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<p>Happy with staff at unit</p> <p>Give and take</p> <p>Incentives as motivators</p> <p>Enjoyed cooking with key worker / incentives</p> <p>Clothing allowance / incentives</p> <p>Appreciation of smaller things in life</p> <p>Positive reframing</p>	<p>for charges and what not. But in my eyes the staff at Clayfields were good.</p> <p>I: You said they were down to earth, accessible, is there anything else they did that helped?</p> <p>P3: Keep in mind as long as you give you get back. As long as you give a good behaviour to get your incentive level your bound to get back because just imagine this, if you're on gold, every weekend you can have a takeaway. If you're on gold, every weekend you can cook whatever you can tell your key worker what you wanna cook. For example, I used to cook lots of chicken and rice in the kitchen. Every Saturday with my key worker we'd cook chicken and rice with a bit of seasoning. And because I was on gold, I'd be allowed to do that. Whereas silver you're not allowed to do none of that your just allowed to go in the kitchen. So, it's like as long as you work your way up to the top incentive level which I ended up doing in the end, which was graduate, your nice really, you've got nothing to worry about. Your clothing wise, you get a clothing allowance a week which is only small but it's still money you probably wouldn't be getting if you was on the outside anyway. So, it does make you start appreciating after a while of being there I suppose it does make you start appreciating the fact that you are being done a favour. Even though your locked away you're being done a big favour because you could have been put in a place where it was like 23 hours be locked up a day.</p>	<p><b>Happy with staff at unit</b></p> <p><b>Aware that you give what you get – aware of own behaviours needing to be reasonable to build trust with staff</b></p> <p><b>Incentives helped to build trust with staff</b></p> <p><b>Enjoyed cooking with key worker</b></p> <p><b>Clothing allowance motivator</b></p> <p><b>Start to instil appreciation of small things in centre – being done a favour by staff / charge as could have been worse</b></p> <p><b>Positive cognitive reframing</b></p>
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<p>Incentives helped maintain behaviour</p> <p>Early release due to good behaviour</p> <p>Altercation with peer – unresolved leads to violent assault</p> <p>Physical violence</p> <p>Quick to realise mistake</p> <p>Act before thinking</p> <p>Focus on growth / learning</p> <p>Miss staff at unit</p>	<p>I: Do you think without the incentives and the context you were in it would have been different?</p> <p>P3: Yeah, I think I would have probably ended up getting in a bit more trouble. Don't get me wrong I was supposed to get out on I think it was the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018 but what it is it was an early release date for my good behaviour. But two days before the 27<sup>th</sup> I was playing football. It was an evening activity. I got badly tackled but it was by a guy I had an altercation with in the day time like an argument with, and then what happened was I ended up punching him in his face and because I know what my consequence is as soon as I've done something I don't think about it before, well I never used to think about it before, but I just do it. So I just punched him. And I thought to myself as soon as I done that, I thought oh my god I've just lost my early release. So, I walked away, sat down and put my head in my hands and I just thought to myself this is what I mean about you Leon you need to start thinking before you do things. I ended up losing my early release that day anyway and from that day I never done anything without double thinking it or maybe triple thinking it. It's not worth doing anything without thinking in my eyes and like now.</p> <p>I: What's the first day like out of the centre?</p> <p>P3: That day there, I come out of the gates ... because when people leave Clayfields they're supposed to cry and that (laughs) that's what they say in the place, and the staff were telling me watch when you leave the door you're going to tear</p>	<p><b>Incentives helped stay out of trouble</b></p> <p><b>Set for early release due to good behaviour</b></p> <p><b>Altercation during the day led to build up tension – lashed out during football in the evening – harbouring emotions from an earlier conflict</b></p> <p><b>Punched peer during incident in football</b></p> <p><b>Realises mistake made immediately</b></p> <p><b>Acts before thinking</b></p> <p><b>Lost early release</b></p> <p><b>Learnt to think before acting – immediately focussed on how to learn and grow from incident</b></p> <p><b>Staff warned release would emotional</b></p> <p><b>Would miss staff but happy to leave</b></p>
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<p>Happy to leave unit</p> <p>Happy to see normality – go to the shop</p> <p>Socialising with friends upon release</p> <p>Happy to be free</p> <p>Focus on growth / learning</p>	<p>up and I said to them don't get it twisted I am gonna miss you all because you've all done a lot for me but I ain't gonna cry because I'm gonna be back home with my family and I'm gonna be a free man again. And so anyway it come to the day of me leaving, all the staff were expecting me to cry and that, I said I told you I'm not gonna cry because I'm not emotional to leave. Like I'm a bit upset to see some of your faces for the last time but I ain't gonna cry because I'm leaving the secure unit. Whatever child does cry because they're leaving a secure unit ... I don't know what's going on with them really, but I left errm my mum, my cousin Cassidy and my friend at the time Joe had come to pick me up. Errm, I remember coming out of the gates, I went to the shop for the first time. I hadn't been to the shop in ages so got a drink and that and pop and everything, drove back home and then I had to go to the youth offending team because I was on license for 18 months as well after that. And then errm, come home, signed my license, went back, got changed and that, and then I went to my mates up in Woodcross, and then I was chilling at my friends for a bit, went to see one of my female friends (laughs) for about 30 minutes. And then when it went to the night I went around to my cousins and then I just got a bit drunk that night (laughs) never get drunk like that again. And then after that I suppose I just I appreciated life a bit more and when you see you're freedom and when you see wow I'm not locked behind four walls everyday now, so it's like boom, I'm not gonna try and let that happen again I'm gonna try my most and that not to make it happen, like go back to jail. I suppose like when you see your family or when you see like a friend that you haven't seen for so long it makes it hit you like wow</p>	<p><b>Appreciative of staff support during time in centre</b></p> <p><b>Upset to see leave staff but happy to leave overall</b></p> <p><b>Mum and friend picked him up</b></p> <p><b>Happy to go to shop and buy drink – sense of normality for the first time in a while</b></p> <p><b>Went to YOT as on license for 18 months after release</b></p> <p><b>Went to see friends and socialise with them</b></p> <p><b>Got drunk with friends to celebrate</b></p> <p><b>Happy to be free and not locked up</b></p> <p><b>Growth – hoping to learn from mistake and not go back</b></p>
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<p>Dislikes distance from friends and family</p> <p>Responsibility as a father</p> <p>Relapsed into crime</p> <p>Under investigation currently</p> <p>Case looking positive</p> <p>Distances self from negative influences</p>	<p>I can't spend this much time away from you again and plus I'm a father now as well so ... me thinking of things like makes me think wow like talking about my story nowadays makes me shake cuz I couldn't imagine doing anything like that now because I've got my child, I've got my son there now.</p> <p>I: Where there any negative incidents after you were released?</p> <p>P3: After I come off license, I completed that license and everything fine. But during my time on license I'd ... I can't get too much into this cuz I'm actually currently on tag, but erm because I found myself in a couple of predicaments and what not, me and my mates ended up doing a couple of things, well it wasn't me and my mates because on the charge it's just me but erm, I ended up getting myself in a predicament where I'm in a court case now. I'm on a case on the moment but I've been to court once for it, need more time for it so they put me on tag. At the moment the case is looking positive for my side but to everyone man after this like, since I first got put on this court case I don't associate myself with no one but my misses and my son. I said to everyone as soon as I'm off this case you're saying bye to me man I don't wanna associate.</p> <p>I: And at this time, you'd had your son?</p> <p>P3: No, I hadn't had my son. When we were supposed to have been doing the things, my son wasn't born. My son was born on the 16<sup>th</sup> September and then I got arrested ... I think it ... Think it was some time in October. Anyway I went to the police station and you know that day I got arrested I felt so</p>	<p><b>Reflects that he hasn't seen some people in a while – distance from friends and family / son is something he doesn't want again</b></p> <p><b>Couldn't imagine being locked away from son</b></p> <p><b>Initially completed license upon release but back into crime after release</b></p> <p><b>Under investigation for these crimes</b></p> <p><b>Case looking positive</b></p> <p><b>Doesn't no longer associate with certain people / bad role models</b></p> <p><b>Once case is beat will distance self from certain people / bad role modes</b></p> <p><b>Son not born during second wave of crime</b></p>
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<p>Disheartened when police involved again</p> <p>Historic incidents catching up to him</p> <p>Not as bad as first incident</p> <p>Never turning to crime once current case is beaten</p> <p>Focus on growth / learning</p> <p>Drugs charges and money laundering</p> <p>Case looking favourable</p> <p>Kicked out of home by mother</p>	<p>like dishearted man I felt like I failed my son because I'm not gonna lie honestly forgot about the things that I did ... not the things that I did but the things that had went on, so it all hit me as a shock to be honest so then, erm ...</p> <p>I: How would you compare it to the first time was it worse?</p> <p>P3: Nowhere near. This is why I think it looks so positive and erm ... in my favour at the moment. BU like I said as soon as January...I got court on January the 7<sup>th</sup> like, as soon as this court case is over I'm saying bye to that life man cuz it's not worth it man I've got a son to feed, I've got a son to look after and raise and I've got my life to live as well.</p> <p>I: Don't say if you don't want to but you seemed to have a very positive outlook and then this incident happened, was it unplanned or...</p> <p>P3: It's just one of those ones where like I can tell you what it's for, it's a drugs charge basically erm county lines conspiracy to supply and money laundering charge. But like, what it is, because I'm the only person on this charge at the moment it's working in my favour but I think them things there they've only manage to caught me out in things like that because after I wait... middle of last year my mum kicked me out just after my misses found out she was pregnant, and I was living at my aunties and I was living at my nans and then I ended up going to do my little bits and bobs anyway and then erm, I forgot about that and I've left and I've actually after them things happened there I just thought to myself alright man don't</p>	<p><b>Disheartened when in police station for crimes – felt like he failed son</b></p> <p><b>Historic incidents caught up with him so shocked / surprise when police involved</b></p> <p><b>Not as bad as first crime</b></p> <p><b>Once court case fought looking to never turn to crime again</b></p> <p><b>Growth / learning / good intentions</b></p> <p><b>Emphasises importance to raise son and live life well</b></p> <p><b>Drugs charge – county lines and money laundering</b></p> <p><b>Case looking favourable – positive about it</b></p> <p><b>Kicked out of house by mother after girlfriend pregnant</b></p> <p><b>Forgot about crimes committed</b></p>
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<p>Forgot about crimes under investigation for</p> <p>Only associates with wife and son</p> <p>Around those involved in criminal activity since a young age</p> <p>Violent crimes in youth</p> <p>Drug related crimes in older age</p> <p>Working towards trade / education</p>	<p>need to do none of this no more and honest to god since that day I don't think I've stepped a single toe in any one of them circles there. Like I've associated with me and my misses and my son (laughs) that's it I don't associate myself with anyone.</p> <p>I: You know those circles, were you around those when you were 14?</p> <p>P3: I've been around like things like that I've been around since I was probably like 11 but I never touched like ... I never entered the circle I seen the circle since I was like 11 but I never actually entered the ring until I was like 13 like I said.</p> <p>I: Was that drugs related too?</p> <p>P3: Errm it wasn't too much drugs related stuff it was more the violent stuff because the older I got the more it was the drugs charge but like, for example my latest charge is the drugs charge and it's because of quite weird things to be honest but errm yeah like so it's nowhere near like the first crime. Like all I can say is I'd much rather it be this then something closer to my last crime because I know if it was something closer to my last crime I'd have no chance with it at all. But because I've never been done for a drugs charge and I've never been done for anything like that, it's gonna be a bit different in my favour this time. And also, because I'm also studying to get my CSCS card at the moment and me and my misses have been offered a new house and what not. For me to go to court on the 7<sup>th</sup> and for them just to put me away, they wouldn't just be putting me away it'd be destroying like 2, like 3 lives in a way</p>	<p><b>Pact with self to not step in criminal circles again</b></p> <p><b>Only associates with wife and son</b></p> <p><b>Around drug / crime circles since 11</b></p> <p><b>Not involved in drug related crime in earlier ages – more violence</b></p> <p><b>Moved into drug dealing as he grew older</b></p> <p><b>Current crime nowhere near the severity of first</b></p> <p><b>First drugs charge – may be favourable on outcome</b></p> <p><b>Working on CSCS construction card</b></p> <p><b>Offered new house to relocate in city</b></p>
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<p>Consequences of court outcomes on family</p>	<p>because it'd be destroying mine, my son's, and my misses' cuz without me my misses can't get the house, and without me I'm not gonna have a job and then it's just gonna be my misses' income and my son. So, they've got to take all of that into account as well they can't just think alright, he's done that let me take his time form him.</p>	<p><b>Negative court outcome would affect not only participant but partner and son – bigger consequences</b></p> <p><b>Hopes court will take this into account</b></p>
<p>Gang with group of friends in youth</p> <p>Gang as a family</p>	<p>I: During this story, were you ever moving in a group? During the on-road stuff? Would you ever label any of it as a gang or...?</p> <p>P3: As a kid I suppose, just before I done the stabbing and what not, I think I was kinda in a gang but I'd see it more as a family because it was 4 people, it was me and my four friends, we went to school together and then like, one of us was always like one step ahead of the other. Like, it was Omari first, and then if Omari got himself into something it would be me, then Toyon, then Demarni, then Mark. Mark's the oldest, but he was always the last one to get himself into trouble. Whereas like, Omari was the second oldest, and I was the third oldest in the group. I was always the second to get myself into the rubbish. Because Mark is the oldest, you'd think he'd be teaching us not to do things like that, but Mark's mind is quite slowed back. Like so I suppose we had a bit of a say over mark back then. So I suppose we was in a gang but we wasn't the type of gang to go out and rob old ladies or robbing things like that we'd just be a gang rolling around and if there was a problem then either one of us would deal with it.</p>	<p><b>Considered younger days as being in gang</b></p> <p><b>Gang more like family – not criminal</b></p> <p><b>In gang with 4 close friends</b></p> <p><b>Order of who would get into trouble</b></p>
<p>Peers being exploited</p> <p>Not criminal gang but standing ground against others</p>		<p><b>One friend easy to exploit.</b></p> <p><b>Not criminal – would stand ground if there was a problem with others</b></p>

<p>Distance from childhood friends</p>	<p>I: So, if you were violated you would step up but otherwise you wouldn't initiate things?</p> <p>P3: Yeah. Like now believe it or not now none of us talk. Omari's been to jail now. Errm Toyon's took a different path from the crime. Demarni he's a baller, and Marky, Marky's just doing the best for himself so just chilling.</p>	<p><b>Would stand ground if violated – physically or verbally abused / attacked / embarrassed</b></p> <p><b>Friendship group / gang from childhood no longer talk / not as close</b></p> <p><b>Everyone living their own lives</b></p>
<p>Primary school friendships</p>	<p>I: And these weren't the people involved in this latest incident / charge?</p>	<p><b>Within this friendship group / gang from primary school</b></p>
<p>Constant relocation</p>	<p>P3: No. None of them people no.</p>	<p><b>Moved houses often during childhood</b></p>
<p>Distance from friends during sentence</p>	<p>I: So, were the 4 of you moving as a group for a long period of time?</p>	<p><b>Lost connection with friends when locked away</b></p>
<p>Disheartened to grow distant with friends</p>	<p>P3: Errm, I suppose it was just before I went to jail I suppose so from when we were kids I say from about Year 5, year 6 up until I was 14. But just before I turned 14 that was just like...because I moved different areas because my mum liked to move houses quite a bit. But before I got locked up that's when I started to lose my connection with the boys that I grew up with which was a bit disheartening man because growing up I never went out looking for friend it was these 4 or nobody I'd rather have no friends if it wasn't these 4. So just before I got locked up I think I started to lose connection with them because Omari got locked up, and then Toyon went to do his rubbish and then Marky went on his path so everyone takes their own path in life sometimes if you grow up together and go through school together and go through college together,</p>	<p><b>Disheartening to grow distant from childhood friend – <u>Saw them as a family so similarities to being unsettled being away from family in unit</u></b></p>

<p>People taking their own paths / living own life</p> <p>No longer in contact with childhood friends</p> <p>Appreciation for life and responsibilities</p> <p>Happy to check in on occasion with friends</p> <p>Distance from friends</p> <p>Sole responsibility to look after self</p>	<p>by the end of college you're all going to go different down paths, different University I suppose. But anyway, a lots happened so it's coming up to the time I got arrested I suppose it was probably to do with me losing friends and me feeling like I can't trust many people around me like the first time around. The second time, cuz since I got arrested, I haven't really contacted them 4 too much because they don't wanna contact me like so in my eyes so for them not to contact me when I've been away for quite a bit like ... I'm not like non longer important to them they've got their own life to deal with which I appreciate that cuz I've got my own to deal with. If they was on to me every day I'd have to be on to them every day and I ain't got time to do that. So I'd much rather we say safe to each other when we see each other or come check up on each other or go for a meal here and there but there's no need to be chilling on the corner every day is there you've got a family at home I've got a family at home.</p> <p>I: Do you think the first incident (stabbing) wouldn't have escalated to what if was if you weren't in a group?</p> <p>P3: You know when I done the stabbing, I wasn't with anyone there. I was with my friend Joe you know the guy who picked me up from jail with my mum. But what it is, erm like I said before I got arrested for the stabbing and that was when I started to lose contact with those four friends I had around me since a young kid, so I suppose ... it probably still would have happened I suppose but if I was, had the mindset I had now that there ain't nobody got you like yourself, then it definitely wouldn't of happened because now I don't feel like</p>	<p><b>Reflections on people taking their own paths / trying to rationalise and come to terms with situation</b></p> <p><b>Arrest and sentence led to distancing from childhood friends</b></p> <p><b>NO longer in touch – they don't initiate contact, so he doesn't</b></p> <p><b>Appreciates he is older and has his own life – so wouldn't appreciate being on the street corners anymore – older / grown out of that now and have family</b></p> <p><b>Happy to socialise with them now and then</b></p> <p><b>Started losing touch around stabbing incident</b></p> <p><b>No one can look out for you like yourself</b></p>
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<p>Negative incidents due to being in a group / supporting peers in conflict</p> <p>Personality traits – leader / commanding</p> <p>Need to support peers in conflict</p> <p>Working on better future / growth</p> <p>Working in a group distracting / leads to trouble</p> <p>Negative aspects of gang</p>	<p>I have to go out there if somethings happened to my bredrin I don't feel like I have to do anything about it.</p> <p>I: Did that happen where you had to get involved if something happened to one of the others?</p> <p>P3: Errm when I was 14 the stabbing that was kinda to do with that still because I've got involved with something due to my bredrin but me being the person ... with me being the, not the ring leader but as a kid I was always the one that (laughs) sounds weird but would give the orders like for where we was gonna go and what we was gonna do so back then it would be like, if one of my mates had been like touched or violated for example, it would be a bit weird for me to just sit there and watch or listen about it, I'd feel like I'd have to do something about it. Even though we're the same age I've put you under my wing to chill with me and just do our thing together and so I have to do something back. Now I'm on my singular lane and I'm on my route only to a better future, I feel no one can't stop me now really but other than me because the less distractions you have around you the less distractions can stop you I suppose.</p> <p>I: And just touching on being in a group, what would you say were the pros and cons?</p> <p>P3: Sometimes you might not see eye to eye with each other, sometimes one might get jealous of the other, these are the cons. You might have a little scuffle with each other, or you might have...as a Kid I've seen enough of them arguments</p>	<p><b>If had this mindset then he wouldn't got himself into trouble by having to do something to support peer / gang code</b></p> <p><b>Ended up stabbing someone due to supporting peer in gang / backing the conflict</b></p> <p><b>Would command others from a young age</b></p> <p><b>Felt wrong not to support peers given his personality / leadership traits</b></p> <p><b>Felt the need to support peers in conflict as they were together as a group</b></p> <p><b>No longer moving in a group – works on his own</b></p> <p><b>Working on better future</b></p> <p><b>Working with others provides more distractions / avenues to get into trouble</b></p> <p><b>Conflicts within the group / jealousy / physical fights</b></p>
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<p>Positive aspects of gang</p>	<p>with my friends and that over silly little things. As a kid you don't really know what life's about so you just argue over the smallest things so, errm I suppose, pros I mean like I suppose you get your family you feel like you've got a nice little strong family around you, you feel like you've got somewhere you belong I suppose. Errm I suppose yeah you feel like you've got a brotherhood around you like. Other than that, there's not really, there's much more cons in being in a group hashtag gang then there is pros I suppose I know that for sure.</p>	<p><b>Arguments over trivial things</b></p> <p><b>Feel like a family – strong unit</b></p> <p><b>Sense of belonging</b></p> <p><b>Brotherhood</b></p> <p><b>More cons to being in a gang than pros</b></p>
<p>Gangs starting to fade out</p>	<p>I: And with the first incident where they in a group? What is a known thing or rivalry between you two?</p>	<p><b>During time of stabbing group of friends starting to distance</b></p> <p><b>Gangs starting to die out</b></p>
<p>People working solo to avoid problem</p>	<p>P3: When I done the stabbing errm it was just that everyone went in their own lane. This was at a time where everyone was falling out. Even though the gang thing was still about, in Wolverhampton it's like, it's started to die out again now like the gang thing is dying out a bit. Everyone's jumping in their singular routes now so whether they're doing road and that on their own or jumping on the singular legal route because of the headaches. Like say for example someone's on road in a group, and the groups got some responsibility to one thing, everyone's gonna hear that headache. Whereas if there's only one person and there's no group, and he's got some responsibility, only he's gonna hear that headache no one else is so like that's the decisions people have to make whether if they wanna be in a gang or do their own thing, whether you want the headache or whether you don't want the headache.</p>	<p><b>More people working solo due to less difficulties a group / gang can bring</b></p> <p><b>Shared responsibility in gang – one's problem everyone's problem – not ideal</b></p> <p><b>Decision as to whether people want group problems or work solo with less problems</b></p>

<p>Many issues working as a group / gang</p>	<p>I: And I suppose you've experienced the headaches that come with being in a group?</p>	<p><b>Experienced many headaches in group / gang</b></p>
	<p>P3: (laughs) I've dealt with most of the headaches it brings I suppose.</p>	
<p>Withholding feelings / thoughts to safeguard reputation</p>	<p>I: And what are downs like? Are you able to talk to each other if you feel low about something or do you keep it to yourself?</p>	<p><b>Wouldn't talk about things that could jeopardise street cred / image</b></p>
<p>Worried about what others think of you</p>	<p>P3: It depends what it is still. If it's something you feel like people are gonna find a way to ... I suppose its street credit in a way innit like if you find a way where ... if you think someone's gonna try and destruct your street credit then you ain't gonna tell them nothing are you. Whereas if you think it's going to boost your street credit or you think that it's just gonna leave it the same then tell them whereas as a kid you think about either your street cred or what people think of you. You don't think of like ... you think of what other people are looking at you don't think of what your looking at and what you're doing.</p>	<p><b>Wouldn't share things others can use against you to jeopardise street cred</b></p> <p><b>Street cred important as a youth and what others think of you</b></p>
<p>Family support best</p>	<p>I: So, if someone is going through it, how can someone support them?</p>	<p><b>Led by what others want as opposed to listening to own needs in youth</b></p>
<p>Influence of bad role models</p>	<p>P3: Speak to someone in their family in my eyes is the best thing to do. Speak to someone who's been through something similar because you can't lie most families where there's a child that's doing road or their mind's swaying off to do road, they've got to have got that inspiration from somewhere whether it's from an older person from the area or whether</p>	<p><b>Family support is best for on road youth</b></p>
		<p><b>Olders / peers can influence minds to sway to the roads / bad role models</b></p>

<p>Family with lived experience</p> <p>Family won't harm reputation</p>           <p>Youth workers with lived experience as support</p>           <p>Lived experience more important than qualifications</p>	<p>it's from someone the same age ... so like speak to someone in their family whose been through something similar or seen through something similar because their family isn't gonna get their street credit dropped is it it's just gonna ... if they speak to their family member the family members gonna wanna help their not just gonna sit there and laugh at them and then go tell everyone.</p> <p>I: Do you think you can do that?</p> <p>P3: It depends on what family member you choose to speak to I suppose. If not I know there's youth workers these days where they've been through quite a lot ... for example (organisation) is a perfect thing because most of the youth workers have been through something similar whereas I know there's youth workers out here nowadays where they've got youth workers that have not been through nothing. Nothing to do with the system or nothing to do with the road or they're just putting workers that have been through college and university, got their degree and there just putting them in there. Where in my eyes if they started to put more youth workers that have experience and errm like have some sort of knowledge about the system and the road where they can tell a story for example, like when I'm not saying I'd be a perfect example but like when I'm like 30 years old or like 30 plus, I'm gonna tell my story to my son if I think he's heads gonna sway. Ima tell him where life can lead him if you take the wrong path. Like I think there needs to be more youth workers that can tell you where life can lead you and where life has led them for taking the wrong path. There's too many</p>	<p><b>Speak to family members who can relate</b></p> <p><b>Family won't use information against you / jeopardise street cred</b></p>           <p><b>Depends on family member – lived experience</b></p> <p><b>Could also turn to youth workers with lived experience</b></p>           <p><b>Lived experience important</b></p> <p><b>Many current youth workers with academic qualifications and no lived experience</b></p> <p><b>Current youth workers don't have a story to tell – on road youth can't relate to them</b></p> <p><b>Hope to share experiences with son and others swayed to the roads</b></p> <p><b>Can't relate to youth workers that haven't lived the life</b></p>
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	<p>out there that have just been on a good path all their life and they're just tryna teach you what the other side looks like when they've never seen it in my eyes.</p>	<p><b>Focused more on what will happen vs empathy and links to previous experiences</b></p>
<p>Lived experience more important than qualifications</p>	<p>I: So lived experience is important</p> <p>P3: Yeah</p> <p>I: So even if there was a qualified professional who 'gets it' you still feel you wouldn't process what they say as well as someone with lived experience?</p> <p>P3: Yeah like someone going through Uni and going through college getting their degree and then tryna become a youth worker for young kids that are turning to the roads compared to someone who has grown up on the road, been to jail, come out of jail, and then learnt through their process and jumped on a course and still got their experience through the road, in my eyes the person whose been through jail and been through it all will always be able to tell it better because they've been through it themselves. There's no one better to tell a story then the person whose been through it in my eyes.</p>	<p><b>Academic qualifications not enough – lived experience extremely important to reach on road youth</b></p>
<p>Professionals in suits not approachable</p>	<p>I: And you think that's the most important form of support for someone going through this?</p> <p>P3: Yeah because it's also, when you're comfortable with someone cah ... when you're kids you don't really wanna sit with a man in a suit I suppose ... you dress cool you get me like I can tell you my little brother because, my little brother</p>	<p><b>Professionals must be approachable in dress – suits not approachable</b></p>

<p>Traits of approachable staff</p> <p>Lived experience important for supporting on road youth</p>	<p>has been going through a bit. I can tell you my little brother would gladly come down and sit with you because you're not dressed in a suit you're not here with a pen and pad and that your cool and your calm about yourself you get me whereas I know kids these days will happily sit down with like if we said like someone's whose been to jail and been through the road and what not whereas not, not being judgemental but a man in a suit, if he come to sit around them and do a bit of youth work, they're not gonna feel comfortable they're not gonna wanna speak to him. Whereas if there's a man that can tell them their story first and let them see an insight of their stories been like, then as for the young person's story it's always gonna be better because if you put erm a youth worker that's been through college and university and got the degrees but not been through nothing in life, and the kid asks him what's your story, then it's gonna be in no way relatable to the child's story because he's gonna be like he's not been to jail he's not been involved with the police, he's never been arrested and what not. Nowadays the kids wanna hear more than like, more of what's happened then what's gonna happen I suppose because if I told my brother if you go to jail now you're not gonna go to nowhere nice because they've already put me somewhere nice their not gonna treat my brother the same their gonna treat him worse because I know, even though I'm quite young I still know the system quite well because my cousin Benjamin he studies the system well and I learn from him when it comes to the system. So, it's like, yeah in my eyes experience is key, experience and the storyline is the key but I don't think someone who doesn't have a story should tell the story.</p>	<p><b>Cool and calm demeanour from professionals valued by youth</b></p> <p><b>Professionals in suits seen as judgemental</b></p> <p><b>Lived experience key to be relateable</b></p> <p><b>Cousin educates P1 about system (courts / police)</b></p>
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<p>Younger sibling on road</p> <p>Brother in care</p> <p>Bad role model for brother</p> <p>Male role models with lived experience important to support youth</p>	<p>I: You touched on your younger brother – is he delving into this as well?</p> <p>P3: Basically he did and then, instead of putting him in a secure unit they put him in a care home just to give him one chance to tell him you don't wanna be in this stuff because this is where it just gets you away from the family. I think they just wanna give him that taste like you'll be away from your family for a long time if you keep up the way you're going on. But my brother he got caught up in the county lines thing as well but then because it's only early stages for him they've taken him out and put him into the care home and what not whereas, so now he's in a care home in Birmingham so he's on his own. He's allowed to come down every weekend but with my brother it's more that errm, like even though I know like, even though he probably followed a bit of my footsteps but I don't, I'm not the type of brother that will see him following my footsteps and still let him continue following them I'd tell him no stop yo go another path. For example, even when I've been doing my bad things in the past, I said to him I don't want you following me man do yourself proud, do god I school. And that's what it is about my brother as well he done good in school as well same as me but it's just like the outside distractions I think it is and Tyriq he didn't have no one to talk to, all the social workers and this is my main thing of getting on to them about to get him home is because Tyriq, all his social workers and youth workers have all been females and if it's been a male it's been a male with no experience. And I keep telling them you can't keep giving my little brother youth</p>	<p><b>Brother turned to roads</b></p> <p><b>Put in care</b></p> <p><b>Brother involved in drugs / county lines</b></p> <p><b>Allowed to visit family on weekends</b></p> <p><b>Acknowledges bad role model for brother inadvertently but not by choice</b></p> <p><b>Told brother to focus and stay in school</b></p> <p><b>Not happy brother has female youth workers and those with no lived experience</b></p>
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<p>Lived experience important</p>	<p>workers that have no experience because they can't tell him nothing he can learn from whereas if you put someone in there that's told him they've been to jail for a certain amount of time and such and such as happened to them in jail and such and such has happened to them on road. They've been through certain things and they've seen certain things and lost a certain amount of breadrins through the road, then I know Tyriq will listen and take something from that. Whereas if you put someone in the room where they just tell him ah ok if you keep doing this your gonna go to jail, if you keep doing this you can die, they're not telling you about the friends he's lost in the past, he's not telling him about his time in jail, he's not telling him about how the system works, he's just telling him what's going to happen, he's not telling him what has happened you know where I'm coming from.</p>	<p><b>Lived experience important to talk YP through experiences – past and future</b></p>
<p>Training qualification to help others</p> <p>Criminal investigation barrier to future aspirations</p>	<p>I: Do you have contact with him at the moment? Can you be that person to give that lived experience?</p> <p>P3: Do you know when I was locked up, I done err behind the blade facilitators program and I done a managing anger plan program where I can facilitate the both of them. You know because when I was on license I couldn't really do much with that not long ago and because I'm on this case now I still can't do much but as soon as this case I will make my change cah it seems to be the right way to go man lie, even if like out of 100 kids even if I'm only changing one child it's still something you've still changed one child.</p> <p>I: What's it like being on tag and how has that impacted you?</p>	<p><b>Done training to become facilitator on courses for on road youth</b></p> <p><b>Can't do it because of current investigations</b></p> <p><b>Would like to help on road youth in future</b></p>



<p>Enjoy family time with son</p> <p>Growth – moving away from crime</p> <p>Growth / self-improvement</p> <p>Quick money</p> <p>No group when police involved – on your own</p> <p>No group when police involved – on your own</p> <p>Friends distant in difficult times</p>	<p>P3: I've never found like conditions hard; I've never found them hard; they've always been easy for me cah they don't do much anyway I just chill out especially being at home with my child as well. Like me being on tag it doesn't really affect me man. But like I said it's the last time the system's seeing because I haven't been out a lot. I've been in the system for my last, from Christmas 2016 to this Christmas I've been in the system so basically my aim is to not be in the system and nowhere near the police or nothing man.</p> <p>I: Anything more you can say on county lines experiences?</p> <p>P3: Ups is that you'll just see the money real quick, downs is that no one's there when you need them and when the police get ya, no one's there literally man it's just you on your own no one else.</p> <p>I: Because earlier you mentioned when it's one person's problem it's everyone's problem</p> <p>P3: But when it comes to the jail place it's you on your own no one's there for ya. You know when I got locked up in 2016, like I, none of my friends tried to contact my mum and ask how I was or nothing, I had to try and get my mum to find numbers so I could get them added on to my list and what not. Like, they only friend I can say done something for me was my friend Joe and that's because he come seen me, helped me out when, cuz when I went in I was wearing a pair of slider with no socks and the police tracksuit. He bought my</p>	<p><b>Court conditions don't negatively impact life</b></p> <p><b>Enjoy being at home with son</b></p> <p><b>Adamant never to return to crime and be in such a predicament again</b></p> <p><b>Growth / aiming for improvement</b></p> <p><b>Quick money from county a positive</b></p> <p><b>NO gang / group when police involved</b></p> <p><b>No group / gang with police involvement</b></p> <p><b>No friends reached out to mother / ask about P1</b></p> <p><b>Only one friend looked out for P1</b></p>
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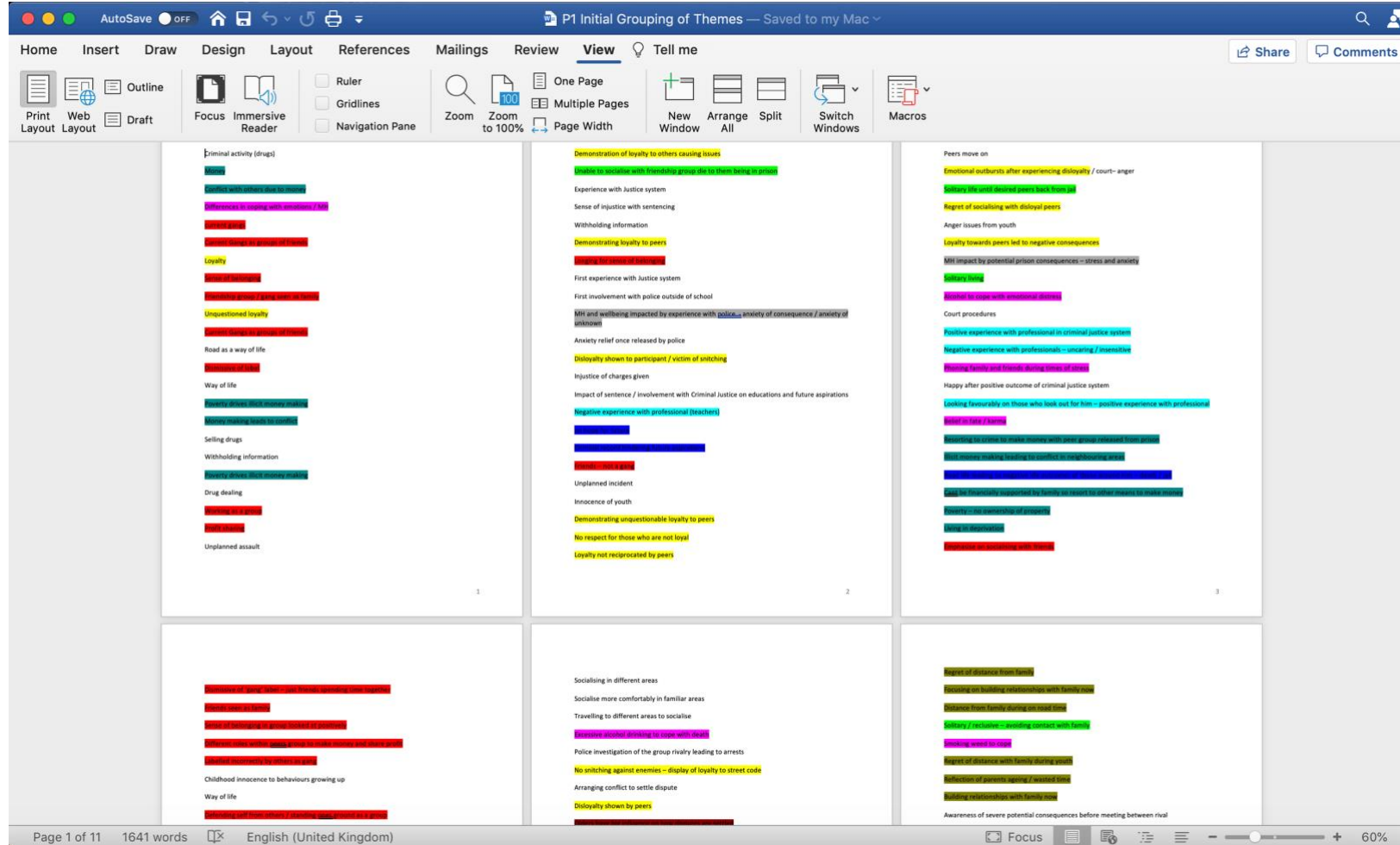
<p>Peers who provide support during difficult times</p>	<p>first tracksuit and pair of trainers, socks, and boxers when I was in there and that's what you can actually call a friend, someone that's there for you when you need them not just there for you when they need you. Like, Joe was there for me at my lowest point becah when I first went int thingy I had nothing really, I went in there with nothing because the police took my clothes, and plus they confiscated all my wardrobe as well because I had an investigation, lie so for Joe to do that for me was a big thing for me still and made me look like, deep it like I got a friend here. It's a friend I'm never gonna lose.</p>	<p><b>Bought clothes for P1 when in unit</b></p> <p><b>Remembers those there for him during low periods</b></p> <p><b>Had nothing when entered unit</b></p> <p><b>Remembers those there for him during low periods – great appreciation for this / friend for life</b></p>
<p>Peers who provide support during difficult times</p>	<p>I: But when you get to that point, does it almost question the code of gang?</p>	
<p>No snitching / loyalty to code important</p>	<p>P3: In my eyes when it comes to getting locked up there ain't no gang it's just you man becah you can get put on charge with like a 100, well not a 100 people but 5 people and I guarantee that if you're the first person to get caught, you're gonna be the only person to go to jail unless you snitch on the others. And nowadays people don't snitch becah the repercussions and the street cred in my eyes but like, if, whereas like for example with me like because I took the singular route, more or less all my life, and becah do you know in 2016 when I got locked up I still got locked up on my own and I pled guilty like, because I pled guilty it's keeping everyone out, everyone else out of the equation like just as this time as well no one else is involved because I'm on a singular route so then I don't have to deal with the pressure of snitching or street, well I don't care about street cred anymore</p>	<p><b>No gang when caught because of no snitching code</b></p> <p><b>Snitching would harm street cred and other consequences – maybe for snitch upon release and family?</b></p> <p><b>When working solo no pressure of snitching</b></p> <p><b>No longer cares about street cred in older age</b></p> <p><u>Realises loyalty to rep no worth it? As others quick to leave in difficult time?</u></p>
<p>Snitching harms reputation</p>		
<p>Working solo removes pressures of snitching</p>		
<p>Reputation on street no longer important in older age</p>		

<p>Girls as bad influences to behaviour</p>	<p>I: Did it go down well for you that you did that?</p> <p>P3: Yeah because I pled guilty, I got loads of time knocked off and that. But erm, yeah, my street cred. Because when I come out it's just more girls but that the only thing, girls are no good for you as well. Obviously now I've got my misses and that I've found the right one in my eyes but, like when you're younger and you just want girls and that, the girls are the ones that'll get you into trouble because most of the things you're doing, you're doing to impress the girls and it ain't worth it man.</p>	<p><b>Pleading guilty helped sentence</b></p> <p><b>Girls bad influence – can cause problems</b></p> <p><b>Chase girls in younger age – behaviours dictated by need to impress girls</b></p> <p><b>Realises impressing girls isn't worth it</b>  <u>Maturity / reflection as ageing / reflecting on mistakes and acknowledges things that were bad influences</u></p>
<p>Bounty on head</p>	<p>I: Just going back quickly did you face any negative repercussions on the street after you come out of jail?</p> <p>P3: When I got locked up, I had a bounty on my head for two grand, and then that got dealt with about 2 months after I was locked up. And then after that I didn't hear nothing.</p>	<p><b>Bounty when serving sentence but dealt with quickly</b></p>
<p>No gang when caught / police involved</p> <p>Crime no longer pays – harder to get away with it</p>	<p>I: Anything we haven't discussed that you wanna finish on?</p> <p>P3: I just want people to know that there's nothing such thing as a gang when the systems involved. In my eyes that wrong path isn't worth it anymore. Like when I was a kid, like when I was 4 and 5, even though I didn't know much then but I'm looking back from now, I know when I was 4 to 5 the older people like the 20s and 25s, crime could have been worth it for them then because police as forward and life wasn't as hard but now, the police know everything. There's nothing involved with crime that police don't know you get me. So that's about it in my eyes.</p>	<p><b>No gang when system involved</b></p> <p><b>On road not worth it</b></p> <p><b>Crime could pay in past but not anymore – can't hide from police</b></p> <p><b>Police tech improved over time – hard to stay under their radar</b></p>

<p>Turbulent relationship with mother</p> <p>Bond with mother strong</p> <p>Only Family support during difficult times</p>	<p>I: And through all of this journey how was the relationship with your mum and family affected?</p> <p>P3: My relationship with my mum has always been up and down still but when I was locked up, I built a good strong bond with my mum becah of where I was, and I wasn't around her every day. So, I built a good strong relationship with my mum and since I come out of Clayfields she kicked me out once and I went and done my bits and bobs, and done what I had to do, but now me and my mum are tight man since my son's been born. There ain't no one there for you more than yourself or your mom. Whether your mums being 11 with you all the time when the shit hits the fan she will be there for you.</p>	<p><b>Turbulent relationship with mother growing up</b></p> <p><b>Strong bond with mother due to distance - worked on relationship upon release</b></p> <p><b>Kicked out but now very close with mother</b></p> <p><b>No one will care for you / support you like family / mother during difficult times</b></p>
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# Appendix 6: Insight into step 5 (searching for connections across emergent themes) for each participant

## Developing emergent themes for Participant 1



## Developing emergent themes for Participant 2

The screenshot displays a Microsoft Word document titled "P2 Initial Grouping of Themes". The interface shows the standard Word ribbon with tabs for Home, Insert, Draw, Design, Layout, References, Mailings, Review, View, and Tell me. The font is set to Calibri (Bo...), size 12. The document content is organized into five vertical columns, each representing a page of text. The text is heavily annotated with colored highlights: green, yellow, pink, and red. These highlights appear to be identifying specific words or phrases that are being grouped into emergent themes. The status bar at the bottom indicates that the current page is page 3 of 5, containing 623 words, and the language is set to English (United Kingdom). The zoom level is 40%.

# Developing emergent themes for Participant 3

The screenshot displays a Microsoft Word document titled "P3 Initial Grouping of Themes" with the following content:

- Page 1:** Lists various themes such as "Turn to the road out of difficulties in life", "Read fulfilling needs such as friendship, protection, and belonging", "Money", "Gang come with negative aspects such as violence", "Gang trigger postcode conflict", "Trust conflicts", "Gang associated with violence", "Loyalty to friends in conflict must be shown", "Hierarchy in gang - leads to pressures - someone higher to answer to", "Definitions of DV", "Entered road at early age", and "Lack of attention / being an older sibling".
- Page 2:** Lists themes like "Alteration - physical with teaching staff in self-defence".
- Page 3:** Lists themes such as "TA les", "Good student but unstructured times difficult", "Multiple excuses for behaviour - self-defence", "Behaviour improving", "Very quiet attention / quick escalation", "Bottling emotions up", "Arrests in youth for smaller incidents", "Standing ground against injustice important", "Incarceration means more trust from adult", "Good memory for dates and events", "First Christmas away from home", "Unpleasant incident led to stabilising", "Carrying knives", "Violent altercation", and "Self-defence / self-preservation - taking knife away from victim".
- Page 4:** Lists themes like "Quick incident", "Accepting responsibility for handling problem also not in group", "Individuals moving in groups to deal with conflict", "Don't agree with violence - morally", "Behaviour improving", "No evaluating social circle", "Family history of prison", "Unsettled upon entering unit", "Anxieties caused by calm environment", "Distance from family unsettling / impacting behaviour", "Away from family during holiday period unsettling / impacting behaviour", "Missing people in life", "Unsettled - rude to staff during holiday period", and "Acceptance of sentence".
- Page 5:** Lists themes such as "Trust issues with unfamiliar people", "Acceptance of sentence / unit", "More settled / calm with time", "Talking about issues with staff helping ease stress and tensions", "Took time to build rapport and trust with staff before opening up", "Helping needs of IP in unit", "Treated differently by staff due to nature of sentence compared to other IP - sensitive to this", "Happy with staff at unit", "Use and take", "Incarceration as motivation", "Stripped cooking with key worker / incentives", "Clothing allowance / incentives", "Appreciation of smaller things in life", "Incarceration helped maintain behaviour", "Early release due to good behaviour", and "Allegation with gear - unrespected leads to violent assault".
- Page 6:** Lists themes like "Physical violence", "Quick to realise mistake", "Act before thinking", "Miss staff at unit", "Happy to leave unit", "Happy to see normally - go to the shop", "Socialising with friends upon release", "Happy to be free", "Distances from friends and family", "Responsibility as a father", "Clear looking posture", "Distances self from negative influences", "Drugs charges and money handling", "Clear looking favourite", and "Kicked out of home by mother".
- Page 7:** Lists themes such as "Only associates with wife and son", "Around those involved in criminal activity since a young age", "Peer's being exploited", "Not criminal gang but standing ground against others", "Distance from childhood friends", "Primary school friendships", "Current reputation", "Appreciation for life and responsibilities", "Happy to check in an occasion with friends", "Solo responsibility to look after self", "Respectful towards staff to being in a group / supporting peers in conflict", and "Personality traits - leader / commanding".
- Page 8:** Lists themes like "Wanted to support peers in conflict", "Working in a group distracting friends to trouble", "Negative aspects of gang", "Positive aspects of gang", "Being training to take jail", "Family support best", "Influence of bad role models", "Family with (bad) experience", "Family with (good) experience", "Bad role model for brother", and "Bad role models with bad experience important to support youth".
- Page 9:** Lists themes such as "Good experience important", "Central investigation barrier to future applications", "Spoke family time with son", "Quick money", "Friends distant in difficult times", "Peers who provide support during difficult times", "Working who remove pressure of working", "Girls as bad influencing behaviour", "Bounty on head", "Turbulent relationship with mother", "Bond with mother strong", and "Only family support during difficult times".

Notes made during step 4 of IPA process to help develop emergent themes:

Participant 1:

Conflict (money related)

Violence

Loyalty

Way of life

Working as a group

friends / family not gang (label)

Sense of belonging

Alcohol / drugs to cope

Guns to cope

family / friends support / something to work

Regret

family distance

missed opportunities in youth

Socialising

Solitude

Anxiety / PTSD / trauma

Criminal justice system / police

Professional (trauma + -ve experiences)

Influence of others

Code of ethics on street

Importance of respect

low trust

rumination over past events

public transport / foot

Geography -

Something in drift areas

close proximity to peers.

Themes:

+ve's inputs

-ve's inputs

Coping



Participant 2:

Family support - mother (PI)

don't want to stress mom

intimate relationship

Family impact - others don't have this

crime - drugs (PI)

robbery

county lines

on the way

break order

weapons

bad role models

- SEMFI needs <sup>from youth</sup> + ADHD / impulsivity
- ADHD assessment process

- Anger / humiliations (PI mixed)

- serving times / criminal justice / police (PI)

- Solidarity with father peers labels (PI)

- Solo vs group

- v. practical / problem solve vs. others

- Part care about consequences / acceptance / stoic

- Fast money (PI)

- Social factors (PI)

- no victim mentality (PI)

- withhold info / lack of rapport / keep long

- Avoiding prison - long + endless.

- in trouble quickly after 901 release

- Brothers - don't listen to support - no long term thinking

- focus on losses + missing home / thinking of consequences

- experience / learning from mistakes by peers.

- Fight or flight

- conflict if violated / lack of emergency (PI)

## Participant 3:

### - DV

- Growth / Self-improvement / better handle of conflict
- use exp with professionals (police / courts)
- the cognitive reframing
- Gangs + Violence
- Acceptance
- Appropriate professionals
- incentives as motivators
- what has life become?
- distance from family - unsettled } triggers do the EW
- missing holidays - connection
- quick escalation of conflict / not thinking
- Trivial conflicts
- police / courts / system
- problems working on a group
- Solo working
- Anger from DV
- lack of father / male role model
- lack of belonging in family
- sense of being in gang - family
- weapons / violence
- Trust issue with computer outlets / laptop and the
- calm and ease anxiety

- talking issues with group work
- treated differently to others.
- Responsibility on father
- current motivation
- growing dist. to friends
- no gang when system involved / stability
- Street work
- Live down pay

- Group vs Solo
- family
- peer del
- professionals
- emo's (anger / love)
- Coping strategies
- loyalty
- needs met? in school
- self-improvement
- early childhood input DV
- Reproduction

**Appendix 7: Master table of themes demonstrating steps 5 (searching for connections across emergent themes) and 7 (looking for patterns across cases) of IPA analysis**

<b>Superordinate themes</b>	<b>Subordinate themes</b>
Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug dealing via county lines</li> <li>• Assault</li> <li>• Robbery</li> </ul>
Positive aspects of 'on road' / gang involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gang as a family</li> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> <li>• Social status</li> <li>• Attention</li> <li>• Alleviating the plight of poverty with quick money</li> <li>• Protection for self and family</li> <li>• Girls</li> <li>• Label</li> <li>• Reflections on current gangs</li> </ul>
Difficulties associated with loyalty to the gang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take on other's problems which leads to negative personal consequences</li> <li>• Preference to engage 'on road' independently to avoid hassle of group loyalty</li> </ul>
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support from family</li> <li>• Distance from Family</li> <li>• Regrets</li> <li>• Worry for siblings</li> <li>• Absence of father figure</li> <li>• Responsibility as a father</li> </ul>
Influence of elders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of respect</li> <li>• Bad role models</li> <li>• Exploitation</li> </ul>
Negative Early childhood experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic violence</li> </ul>
Importance of lived experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many can't relate to the life you're living</li> <li>• Professional with lived experience important to support 'on road' YP</li> </ul>
Coping mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol and drugs</li> <li>• Writing lyrics</li> <li>• Family</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptance</li> <li>• Individual differences in impact of events and ability to cope</li> <li>• Positive reframing</li> <li>• Socialising with others</li> <li>• Lack of victim mentality</li> <li>• Withholding info</li> <li>• Not being able to help others unless they initiate the convo</li> <li>• Stubborn to advice</li> <li>• Street cred / rep</li> </ul>
Street credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputation when seeking support / discussing difficulties</li> </ul>
Experience of conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence as a victim</li> <li>• Perpetration of violence</li> <li>• Conflict over trivial things / violations</li> <li>• Quick escalation</li> <li>• On foot / pub transport increases vulnerability</li> <li>• VIOLENCE IN PRISON</li> </ul>
Peer relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loyalty</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Distance from friends / friendship breakdowns</li> <li>• Support</li> </ul>
SEMH needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anger</li> <li>• Impulsivity</li> </ul>
Negative psychological impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PTSD / Paranoia / anxiety</li> <li>• Difficulties sleeping</li> <li>• Observations of negative psychological impact on others – stabbing others</li> <li>• Fight or flight</li> <li>• Desensitisation to violence</li> </ul>
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-improvement</li> <li>• Growing out of road</li> </ul>
Experience with professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive experiences</li> <li>• Negative experiences</li> <li>• Trust / rapport over time</li> <li>• Not listening to advice</li> <li>• Unapproachable / dress</li> </ul>

Experience with police / criminal justice system	•
No hope for future	•

## **Appendix 8: Excerpts from reflexive journal**

### 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019: Application for Ethical Approval submitted

Have just submitted the AER form for the research. Thought it would be a good time to write a reflexive journal entry given the need for an initial scope of the literature to help provide a rationale for the proposed research, and obviously the need to remain reflexive and bracket any information I have already come across to limit as much as possible any bias to the findings of my research.

A few of the research design / philosophy assignments from my first year on the doctorate have really provided useful in this regard as I remember writing about reflexivity in a few of those essays. As such right from the beginning of my thesis proposal and idea to carry out a qualitative study, reflexivity has been on the forefront of my mind and is good I did not come across it once many things had already been done.

I remember reading Ahern (1999) and it really helped resonate that any sort of insight indicates a potential area of bias that signals the need to bracket knowledge in that area. I have done so when approaching the literature review for my ethical proposal, that is bracketing any insights into life 'on road' and its potential mental health impacts based on knowledge of people in my personal life. However, from this point I am well aware of this and making a constant effort to remain self-aware and reflective of anything I may have come across in literature that may enhance my knowledge around the topic to bracket this all aside as I approach data collection in the future.

### 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019: Interview with P1 completed

Periphery person contacted me at short notice and stated the participant was happy to engage with the research. He emphasised that the interview however needed to be conducted today within the next hour if possible.

I feel this was good as it allowed no time to be nervous for the interview.

I think the interview went really well. I think being vouched for by the periphery person and them being present during the interview helped to build rapport and trust of the participant relatively quickly.

The interview was smooth. I referred to the interview schedule where necessary to prompt discussion although this was relatively minimal.

I feel as though I have definitely attained really good, rich data. The impact of his experiences on his emotional wellbeing definitely came through in the interview. I don't think the interview could have gone any better, although I do however feel a sense of greediness of wanting more explicit and spoon-fed examples. For instance, 'that made me feel anxious, I was depressed / low during that moment' etc. This is a good reminder that this is how the **participant** describes the impact on **his** emotional wellbeing, and this does not need to meet my expectation of how it should be expressed.

Similarly, the participant veered away from labels of 'on road' and 'gang' more towards seeing his time 'on road' as being with friends, almost as a surrogate family. Again, this is how he saw it.

Important to reflect that the real world and participant experiences particularly 'on road' is very nuanced and messy. It will be very unlikely to be neat and fit nicely into research questions.

Though as mentioned, I have good data. I am looking forward to revisiting the data by listening to the audio and transcribing. I think that will make themes a lot clearer, and there are already some that come to mind e.g., PTSD traits, family relationships, loyalty.

Also looking forward to doing more interviews. Definitely feel confident in my ability to build rapport and engage the CYP at (organisation) should any CYP there agree to take part in the study.

### 30<sup>th</sup> December 2019: Interview with P2 and P3 completed

Has been a whirlwind of a morning but so productive. After sitting so long on one interview and it looking seemingly unlikely I would get any more participants, (organisation name) have come though with two participants. I was only scheduled for one participant but while I was there they were able to get another CYP who they were in liaison with the study into the office. The key workers there really did a lot to help me – with one going to pick a participant up from home to be at the office with me. I will be forever grateful for all they have done for this study and believing in the research.

I think both interviews went really well. Doing one interview prior to today really helped ease any nerves and I felt like I was in a flow state in both interviews. P2 was definitely the embodiment of the more reserved and almost secretive participant many warned of. Having said this he still gave incredible insights into his lived experience, with his experience with county lines, going on the run, his experiences in a Youth Offenders Institute, his feelings and thoughts during police encounters, impact of ADHD and his relationships with his mother. So there's definitely a lot there, although he was seemingly reserved.

P3 was very talkative and similar to P1. Again incredible insights into his lived experiences, including the impact of witnessing DV and how this impacted his conflict resolution skills, stabbing someone during a conflict, spending time in a secure children's unit, impacts on interpersonal relationships. So again great data. He asked to have the interview in the car. As I had already done this with P1 this was fine by me and created no awkwardness.

Bracketing my own biases and thoughts were much easier this time around – I had a little wobble after P1 thinking the data didn't match my expectations on first impression immediately after the interview.

I think this may be it for data collection now as the organisation stated there were no more potential participants they had and everywhere else being unresponsive. I feel really eager to start listening to the audio of these interviews today and start



transcribing data. I feel very lucky today. There were some great insights today. Also feel relieved that the stress of participant recruitment can come to an end.

April 5<sup>th</sup> 2020: writing findings and discussion section

Have written the first draft of the findings and discussion section but as reflected during supervision, it is a bit too descriptive. I feel with the double hermeneutic in mind I have embraced a very empathetic stance but at the same time I need to be more critical and probe for more meaning in the data in way that the participants didn't do or were unwilling / unable to do.

Otherwise during this process I have definitely felt adept and trying to minimise as much bias as I possibly can with bracketing and self-awareness or any of my own insights into the area. I feel maybe in a way in being so committed to this that the data has become a bit too descriptive. As such I need to remind myself that this is IPA and at some point my interpretations of the data will need to be presented.