

**A NARRATIVE STUDY OF THE RESILIENCE AND COPING OF
UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (UASC)
ARRIVING IN A RURAL LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA)**

By

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Abstract

Building on a small body of research that conceptualises unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people (UASC) as "active survivors" despite their vulnerability, this study aimed to: 1) investigate processes by which UASC develop and maintain resilience within the specific context of a rural county; and 2) develop understanding of the context-dependent nature of resilience, in terms of interactions between UASC coping styles and environmental variables. A narrative approach was adopted to explore UASC experience and meaning making. Three male UASCs aged 17-19 years participated in narrative interviews and completed The Resiliency Scales self-report questionnaires. Transcripts were subject to detailed thematic and structural narrative analysis. Five coping strategies were identified in UASC narratives: appreciating the positive; cultural distancing; suppression of reflection; externalising locus of control; and seeking personal agency (which itself included negotiation, non-compliance, being proactive, perseverance and having ambition). Key environmental influences were: school and relationships (which itself included social support and key adults). Two key findings were the interactions between agency and relationships, and between suppression and coherence. Recruitment and sample issues in research with 'hard to reach' groups are highlighted. Implications for professional practice with UASC based on an increased understanding of dynamics of resilience are discussed.

Dedication

For M, N and N - living in the UK without their families.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context for research

The Home Office definition of an unaccompanied minor is *“a person who, at the time of making the asylum application: is or appears to be under 18 years of age; is applying for asylum in his/her own right; and has no adult relative or guardian to turn to in this country”* (Kralj & Goldberg, 2005; p.202). It is difficult to ascertain exact numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people (UASC) entering the UK each year; published figures are likely to be an underestimate. Some communities 'take care of their own' as if family (Williamson, 1998), whilst other children may enter the UK with a friend or paid agent and subsequently become an unaccompanied minor e.g. when private fostering or adoption plans fail or they are abandoned. Numbers also fluctuate as children continue to arrive and leave the country, while those that turn 18 no longer qualify as minors. Figures presented in Table 1.1 indicate numbers of UACS making applications for asylum and as such are a guide to numbers of UASCs in the UK. Historically, greater numbers of UASCs have tended to be identified and settled in London and Kent (Children's Legal Centre, 2003). In WCC, it is estimated that at any given time there are approximately 100 UASCs in the local authority's care. Being such a minority population nationally and locally, it is not surprising that their needs are often invisible and in danger of being overlooked (Rutter, 1994).

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Number of applications	2990	2965	3450	3645	4285	3174	1717	1277
% change to previous year					+18%	-26%	-50%	-26%

Table 1.1: Asylum applications made by UASCs in the UK 2004-2011. Sources: 2004-2008 EMN Synthesis Report (May 2010) and 2008-2011 The Refugee Council (Feb 2012).

According to statistics published by the Home Office in February 2012, the top five countries of origin for UASCs in the UK are Afghanistan, Iran, Eritrea, Albania and Vietnam (The Refugee Council, 2012). A large proportion of UASCs in the UK are aged 16-17 years old (Children's Legal Centre, 2003; 2009) and in 2011, 82% of UASC applicants were male, a similar proportion to previous years (Refugee Council, 2012).

UASCs arrive in the UK seeking asylum for a range of reasons; most usually displaced by war, political, ethnic or religious persecution in their home country (Rutter, 2001; Williamson, 1998). Some children are sent by parents due to fears for their safety, whilst others are separated from parents during flight (Williamson, 1998). UASCs may have been sent with family members or an agent; however on arrival many are placed in the care of community organisations or abandoned (Rutter, 2001).

The government recognised UASCs as a particularly vulnerable group in need of protection within the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2003) where it was emphasised that UASCs must be treated as children first and asylum seekers second. Since UASCs are by definition under 18 years of age and with no suitable adult to care for them, responsibility for their care lies with social services departments of the Local Authority (LA) in which the young person is identified as unaccompanied (Children's Act 1989; Immigration and Asylum Act 1999). Following initial assessment UASCs may either become formally 'looked after' under the provisions of Section 20

of Children's Act 1989 (i.e. have a named social worker and clear legal entitlements), or they may be supported under provisions of section 17 of the Children's Act 1989 (e.g. provision of accommodation). The Department of Health (DoH) recommends that all UASCs under 16 should become 'looked after' and that decisions regarding 16 and 17 year olds should be at the discretion of the LA (Rutter, 2001). UASCs are most usually accommodated in residential homes whilst others will be in foster care or informal care arrangements e.g. with relatives or family friends (Rutter, 2001). Older UASCs (16-17 years) may have their own housing with support provided by a social worker. Care arrangements and services supporting UASCs vary greatly between and within LAs and this is a cause for concern, especially for older UASCs. Young people often do not receive care they are entitled to (Children's Legal Centre, 2009). Particular issues can arise around age disputes, appropriate legal representation, leaving care support and access to higher education and suitability of home and school placements in terms of contact with their own community (Rutter, 2001).

1.2 Rationale for research

A recent inspection of safeguarding and looked after children's services in WCC found that by KS4 UASC account for a quarter of all Looked After Children (LAC) in the county (Ofsted, 2010). However most UASC are placed 'out of county' (OOC) in a neighbouring LA that is large and more urban (p.26), meaning UASCs in WCC remain a largely invisible group. This trend continues post-16; the percentage of LAC living OOC and receiving After Care services from WCC increased from 28% in the first quarter of 2009/10 to 48% in the first quarter of 2010/11, due to including UASCs placements in this indicator (WCC, 2010). Whilst the LA in which a UASC is identified retains responsibility for that child, LA's routinely place them OOC if there is inadequate

accommodation available (Children's Legal Centre, 2003), or where it is deemed beneficial to UASC to be placed in a more ethnically diverse area which can provide more cultural and social resources than rural authorities (Save the Children, 2008). This practice has the disadvantage of distancing UASCs from social care support and perpetuates the cycle in schools where staff are inexperienced and lack confidence in identifying and meeting UASCs specific needs. A 'scoping' study by Save the Children (2008; p.4) in Wales found:

"Significant differences in awareness of policy and practice relating to separated children between staff in dispersal and non-dispersal areas".

Staff in non-dispersal areas have irregular contact with UASCs and hence limited knowledge of issues associated with their position. Consequently, practitioners reported feeling *"thrown in at the deep end"* (p.6) in the event of receiving UASCs. An Ofsted (2003; p.3) inspection of the education of newly arrived pupils in 37 schools across 11 authorities across the UK also found that schools in dispersal authorities experienced difficulty meeting the learning needs of UASCs, most especially at Key Stages 3 and 4.

I commenced employment as a Trainee educational psychologist (TEP) in WCC in September 2010. Previous to this post, I had worked in 3 urban authorities in the West Midlands, where practice regarding support for newly arrived pupils was relatively well established and high on the agenda within practitioners' awareness. Once at work within WCC, a rural and less ethnically diverse LA, I began to perceive a 'gap' in understanding and practice within this area, which is recognised in literature also (Murakami, 2008).

My proposal for research to explore the needs of UASCs specifically within WCC, was made to the Psychology Steering Group (PSG), which is made up of the Principal EP and 3 Senior EPs. PSG

agreed that UASCs in WCC are a group of 'at-risk' pupils whose needs are at present under-recognised, both within schools and amongst professionals supporting schools, due to low numbers of UASCs and reduced ethnic diversity in the county. The UASC Team (social care) also shared this view when consulted; their experience of communicating with school staff regarding the needs of UASC tended to be characterized by difficulty and misunderstanding. It was the shared belief of both the psychology and social care teams, that in WCC there remains a tendency amongst schools to assume that UASCs (and other newly arrived children) will simply cope, make friends and learn English *in time*. Thus an opportunity existed to collaborate with the social care team in conducting research that was psychological in nature and well positioned to make a contribution towards improving understanding and practice of professionals working with UASCs in WCC.

Two further considerations relating to the wider research body make this study useful and necessary. Firstly, most research exploring the experiences of asylum seekers has taken place within either urban local authorities such as London (Hopkins & Hill, 2010) or other countries (e.g. Ghazinour et al., 2003). Thus there is a 'gap' in relation to understanding the unique experiences of UASC settling in rural areas of the UK. It is important to investigate experiences of UASC in this specific context because here, UASC are more likely to be 'isolated learners' in their school, attending schools where staff have little to no experience of supporting young people with their particular needs and background (Ofsted, 2003; Save the Children, 2008). Secondly, the majority of research exploring the experiences of asylum seekers has come from social work journals and departments of research, presenting a need to strengthen the evidence base with research that is enriched by psychological theories and research methods.

1.3 Structure of the study

The focus of this study was on the resilience and coping of UASCs in the specific context of a large, rural local authority with limited ethnic diversity. For the purposes of this study, resilience is understood as a process (developed in response to experience of adversity) (Anderson, 2004; Egeland et al., 1993; Newman & Blackburn, 2002) and as context-dependent (Elbebour, 1993; Ungar, 2008). Research that focuses on resilience (as opposed to risk or deficit) as a dynamic process and in context, can help to further develop mechanisms that promote positive outcomes (Anderson, 2004; Goodman, 2004). Whilst *"increasing attention has been paid to their (UASC) capacity for resilience, little research has been done on the exact manner in which they cope"* (Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010; p.226). The aim of this research was to build on an existing small body of research and literature which conceptualizes UASCs as *"active survivors"* (Rousseau & Drapeau, 2003) with numerous *"adaptive strengths"* (Anderson, 2004). The research aimed to explore *how* UASC in WCC cope with their experiences of loss, transition and change and what factors they perceived in their environment to have helped or hindered the process of coping.

A further aim of the research was to elicit UASCs own 'voice', as opposed to the views of social workers and teachers that are already well represented in literature (Hodes et al., 2008; Hulusi & Oland, 2010; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Thomas et al., 2004). Yule (1998; p.78) argued that, *"It is not the 'objective' nature of the stressful experience that matters, but how the child subjectively interprets that experience"*. Therefore a narrative approach rooted in social constructionist epistemology was adopted to enable exploration of UASCs experience and meaning making. A mixed-method approach using narrative interviews and Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents self-report questionnaires (Prince-Embury, 2007) enabled a depth of

data collection and analysis, as well as triangulation of information. The analysis of UASCs narratives led to recommendations for the practice of professionals working with UASCs that aim to empower UASCs within the adaptive strengths they have, based on an increased understanding of the dynamics of resilience (Anderson, 2004). Thus the research will benefit UASC themselves, who are ultimately subject to both LA and school policies and practices put in place to support their needs. Research aims and methodology are elaborated on in subsequent chapters. In the next chapter, the policy, literature and research relevant to the resilience and coping of UASCs is reviewed.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review is organised into 2 main sections. The first establishes the 'risk' associated with UASC experience and their presenting needs on arrival in the UK. The second, considers the construct of resilience in relation to UASCs and the research to date on coping strategies utilised by UASCs.

2.1 UASC as an 'at risk' population

Research suggests that asylum-seeking and refugee children are at increased risk of adverse developmental outcomes including academic underachievement¹, externalizing and internalizing social, emotional and behavioural problems (Anderson, 2004; DfES, 2004a). Their vulnerability is largely attributed to experiences of trying to cope with a number of pre-flight, flight and post-flight variables (DfES, 2004a; Coelho, 1998; Hart, 2009), summarised in Table 2.1.

Timeline	Experiences	Identifying authors
Pre-flight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of war or armed conflict; • Victim of physical and/or sexual violence; • Eye witness to violent events including injury/deaths, torture/sexual assault of parents, siblings or friends; • Experience of persecution (due to ethnicity, religion or sexuality), arrest or imprisonment; • Separation from or loss of parents; • Persecution of family (includes family members being killed, disappearing, imprisoned/arrested or deported, usually due to political activity/involvement of family); • Destruction of home, community and support networks; 	<p><i>DfES (2004a)</i> <i>Hodes et al. (2008)</i> <i>Kohli & Mather (2003)</i> <i>Rutter (2001)</i> <i>Sourander (1998)</i> <i>Thomas et al. (2004)</i></p>

¹ Many refugee and asylum-seeking pupils are amongst "high achievers" in schools, however there is growing evidence that UASCs are amongst those groups that still underachieve (along with Turkish Kurdish boys, Somali and Eastern European Roma pupils) (DfES, 2004a).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced recruitment (as child soldiers or domestic/sex slaves) and/or participation in acts of violence; • Trafficking (for prostitution or domestic slavery); • Living in hiding and fear of discovery/arrest; • Economic hardship following conflict; • Shortage of food; • Lack of educational opportunities; • Dangerous families or kinship networks. 	
During flight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation from parents whilst en route (if not already); • Vulnerability (due to being alone) to violence or rape; • Duration of the journey → mean length of 14 months (ranges 2 weeks - 42 months); • Time spent in a refugee camp (if escaping war) → mean length of 15 months (ranges 2 - 36 months); • Uncertainty as to whether and where they will arrive. 	<i>Sourander (1998)</i> <i>Thomas et al. (2004)</i>
Post-flight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustment to new and different society and culture; • Hostility and discrimination from local population; • Cultural isolation with limited opportunities to socialise e.g. being 'ghettoized' by availability of certain work; • Material deprivation or poverty; • Being with people who don't understand or know about the traumatic events they have experienced; • Learning a new language and language barriers; • Change in standard of living or social status; • Poor accommodation; • Restrictions on personal freedoms and constraints on access to education, work, accommodation and social welfare benefits; • Potential for dispersal or mandatory detention; • Fear of deportation, loneliness and isolation; • Ongoing uncertainty re: legal status and leave to remain. 	<i>Bean et al. (2007)</i> <i>Coelho (1998)</i> <i>DfES (2004a)</i> <i>Hart (2009)</i> <i>Hodes et al. (2008)</i> <i>Hopkins & Hill (2010)</i> <i>Raghallaigh & Gilligan (2010)</i> <i>Rutter (2001)</i> <i>Ryan et al. (2008)</i> <i>Sourander (1998)</i> <i>Thomas et al. (2004)</i>

Table 2.1: Pre-, during and post-flight risk factors for UASCs.

For the majority of UASCs a greater number of 'push' versus 'pull' factors will have determined their decision to migrate, making them forced (rather than voluntary) migrants (Coelho, 1998; Ryan et al., 2008). For many UASCs "*vulnerability arises through coming face to face with traumatic events*" (Kohli & Mather, 2003; p.203). Furthermore, it is increasingly acknowledged that experiences post-migration in host countries place UASCs at equal if not greater risk than

pre-flight factors: *“post migration life places enormous demands on asylum seekers”* (Ryan et al., 2008; p.37). Arguably the most significant challenge associated with settling in the UK is the prolonged uncertainty and anxiety associated with the asylum seeking process itself (Bean et al., 2007b; Beiser & Wickrama, 2004; Raghallaigh & Gilliagn, 2010; Ryan et al., 2008; Sourander, 1998; Thomas et al., 2004). In a longitudinal study, Kralj and Goldberg (2005) report that of 3445 UASCs who sought asylum in the UK in 2003, only 4% had been granted indefinite leave to remain by 2005. Ryan et al. (2008) conducted a longitudinal analysis of asylum seekers in Ireland and found a significant relationship between legal status security and psychological distress; the only participants to show a decrease in distress levels between Time 1 and Time 2 were those who had gained secure legal status. Thomas et al., (2004) suggest that uncertainty of asylum status is compounded by fear of deportation and forced return home and this preoccupation affects UASCs ability to settle and integrate. It is abundantly clear that *“one of the most potent stressful demands experienced by asylum seekers is legal status insecurity”* (Ryan et al., 2008; p.44). Taken altogether, research would suggest that UASCs are at risk due to the cumulative nature of stress they experience (Endersby, 2006; Newman & Blackburn, 2002). Whilst single factors may be dealt with, it is the accumulation of difficulties that makes UASCs so vulnerable: *“exposure to multiple stressors greatly decreases a child’s ability to cope successfully”* (Sourander, 1998; p.724).

Furthermore, research consistently suggests that UASCs are the most vulnerable group within the refugee population due to experiencing these risk factors without the emotional and physical support of parents (Hopkins & Hill, 2010; Kohli & Mather, 2003; Rutter, 2001). Lack of parents or primary caregiver is a significant risk factor for heightened experience of stress and anxiety. In a comparison of UASCs with ARCs (accompanied refugee children), Hodes et al. (2008)

found higher levels of post traumatic stress (PTS) symptoms in UASCs. Family plays an important role in providing an “*emotional buffer*” during migration e.g. physical protection and emotional security (Sourander, 1998; p.720). For UASCs there is no familiar adult to protect, guide or interpret events for them (Williamson, 1998) or to provide continuity of roots through the loss, change and adversity (Kohli & Mather, 2003). Thus it is not surprising that children and young people going through the process of migration alone, demonstrate more distress and poorer adjustment: “*unaccompanied refugee minors are in a highly vulnerable situation*” (Sourander, 2008; p.719).

Therefore risk factors for UASCs are more than the sum of their parts. UASCs are at particular risk due to: the combination and accumulation of adverse experiences (see Table 2.1); and experience of adversity without the support of parents and family to “buffer” the effects.

2.2 Understanding the needs of UASC

Whilst it is acknowledged that UASCs are a heterogeneous group, with a range of different backgrounds and experiences, the following section discusses the psychological, social and educational needs of UASCs as identified in literature.

UASC can present with significant psychological needs directly linked to their experiences of trauma, separation and settlement (Kohli & Mather, 2003; Rutter, 2001). However some researchers argue that little is known about the specific mental health needs of UASCs (Bean et al., 2007b; Sourander, 1998) or the psychological impact of asylum seeking (Ryan et al., 2008). Review of the literature revealed consistency of certain themes related to UASCs psychological

vulnerability including: loss and grief, locus of control, depression and confusion, anxiety and stress.

2.2.1 Loss and grief

UASCs will by definition have a common experience of loss. Most have experienced loss of parents, who are their primary source of security, physical and emotional care, continuity and consistency. UASCs are also likely to be grieving loss of siblings, extended family and friends, home, material belongings, familiar surroundings and ways of doing things (Rutter, 2001). Furthermore, sense of identity is threatened by loss of culture (German, 2004) and/or the challenge of settling into a new culture and assimilating its meanings whilst simultaneously seeking to maintain one's own culture and heritage (Williams & Butler, 2003). Loss of a sense of identity and sense of belonging are characteristic of UASC experience (Kohli & Mather, 2003; p. 202):

“Having the comfort of belonging to someone, or somewhere, is known to sustain psychological well-being yet for these children’s circumstances have conspired to peel away layers of connection, leaving them exposed and vulnerable in their new environments”.

2.2.2 Control

UASC report feeling circumstances are overwhelming and out of their control, particularly at the point of arrival and initial settling period (Kohli & Mather, 2003). This may be especially true for young people who do not understand the reasons for being sent away by parents (Williamson,

1998), generating a sense that their wishes or efforts do not make a difference and that they do not have control over their life. Lack of control and feelings of powerlessness can be a risk factor to mental health (Coelho, 1998), leading Kohli and Mather (2003, p.201) to suggest that in order to promote psychosocial wellbeing in UASCs, professionals need to support processes of 'self-recovery' which will involve regenerating a "*sense of belonging and of being in charge of their lives*".

2.2.3 Depression and confusion

Depression is amongst the most common psychological problems experienced by UASCs (Bean et al., 2007b). Factors underlying vulnerability to depression are summarised in Table 2.2. It is suggested that UASCs are susceptible to depression due to the 'cocktail' of emotions they experience and furthermore, these emotions may be intensified by the knowledge their family made sacrifices to get them to a 'better life' and thus they should be grateful (Sourander, 1998; Williamson, 1998). In relation to Beiser and Wickrama's (2004) argument that nostalgia is linked to depression in forced migrants, self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1999) offers an explanation that may be relevant to UASCs. The theory suggests that our self-concept and esteem are based upon perceptions of our 'actual self', 'ideal self' and 'ought self'. Where individuals perceive a gap between their 'actual' and 'ideal' selves and that gap seems unbridgeable, then hopelessness and despondency set in.

Identifying author	Factors related to depression and confusion in UASCs
Beiser & Wickrama (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nostalgia → dwelling on what was and what has been lost → triggers temporal reintegration (processing the past with the present and the future) → increases risk of depression.
Goodman (2004) and Yule (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survivor guilt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ having survived when others did not; ○ guilt about what they should have done to help others and about what they did do to survive.
Gorst-Unsworth & Goldenberg (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor social emotional support.
Hodes et al. (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences of loss and ongoing stress of resettlement in the host country.
Kohli & Mather (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustration of seeking meaning and reason in events; • Paradoxical messages given to UASC e.g. being sent to safety because they are loved yet feeling discarded, or being sent away because it is dangerous to stay yet other family members remain thus leading to worry for their safety.
Williamson (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear that situations at home were their fault; • Anger and/or anxiety that their parents/carers could not protect them; • Being sent away for reasons they do not understand because parents have protected them from danger and the truth; • Disappointment as the 'honeymoon' period ceases and they realise the UK is not the trouble-free safe haven they imagined.

Table 2.2: Sources of depression and/or confusion in UASCs identified in the literature.

2.2.4 Anxiety and PTS

Anxiety and post-traumatic stress (PTS) are also amongst the most common psychological problems experienced by UASCs (Bean et al., 2007b). PTS symptoms are highest for those having experienced traumatic events/war, with low support arrangements, female gender and with increasing age (Bean et al., 2007b; Hodes et al., 2008). The expression of distress appears to vary

with age. Sourander (1998) reports that younger UASCs (6-14 years) exhibited more severe behaviour problems than 15-17 year olds, including: externalizing behaviour, social problems, poor attention and aggressivity. However, older UASCs demonstrated more internalised symptoms of anxiety and depression reflected in more frequent reports of abdominal pain, headaches, insomnia, disrupted circadian rhythm and suicidal thoughts. Literature points to numerous underlying causes for heightened levels of stress and anxiety in UASCs (see Table 2.3), the most prominent being uncertainty regarding asylum applications as previously discussed.

Identifying author	Factors related to anxiety and PTS in UASCs
Bean et al. (2007b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty in relation to asylum process.
Beiser & Wickrama (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolonged period of resettlement; • Uncertainty regarding legal status.
Hodes et al., (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to violent events and maltreatment; • Experience of a high level of adversity.
Hopkins & Hill (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of the asylum system and difficulty understanding how it works.
Kohli & Mather (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiating the care system if a looked after child; • Awareness that family have funded their flight to a 'better life' and therefore expect that the young person will either return the family's investment or repay agent who facilitated journey.
Raghallaigh & Gilligan (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The demands of adjusting to an entirely different cultural context; • Ongoing uncertainties regarding their legal status, future and securing leave to remain.
Ryan et al. (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal status insecurity.
Sourander (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worry about the welfare of loved ones and relatives back at home; • Experience of the asylum system and ongoing uncertainty regarding their legal status and future.
Thomas et al. (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty of asylum status compounded by fear of deportation and forced return home.

Table 2.3: Sources of anxiety and/or PTS in UASCs identified in the literature.

2.2.5 Social support

The social needs of UASCs are enmeshed with their psychological needs and any separation here for the purposes of discussion is somewhat artificial. The critical link between psychological and social needs to be emphasised, is that psychological distress (including anxiety or depression) commonly experienced by UASCs is often compounded by the social isolation they experience on arrival in a new country (Howard & Hodes, 2000).

UASCs by definition will have left family and friends behind in their home country and consequently, no longer have familiar social support networks in place. Poor social support networks can lead to feelings of isolation, fear and grief (Cardenas & Taylor, 1993) as well as confusion, hopelessness, frustration and low self-esteem (James, 1997). Lack of social support has been linked with particular vulnerability of older UASCs i.e. arriving in the UK aged 14-19 years (Rutter, 2001). Gorst-Unsworth and Goldenberg (1998) found that poor social emotional support was a stronger predictor of depression in the long-term for refugees than type or amount of trauma factors experienced. Conversely, Beiser and Wickrama (2004) reported that social resources and relationship stability were protective factors in the mental health of south Asian refugees in Canada 10 years after arriving in the country.

Furthermore, lack of social acceptance is likely to lead to diminished sense of self and belonging (James, 1997). UASCs may be more susceptible to bullying due to looking and sounding 'different', having unusual names, language and cultural traditions. Due to their traumatic experiences they may be unusually withdrawn or prone to outbursts of anger and odd

behaviour. They may also be unpopular with peers due to their positive attitude and ambition to succeed in school due hopes held for a future that education can facilitate. Conversely, some UASCs are vulnerable to falling in with the 'wrong crowd', to accepting the protection and friendship that gangs may seem to offer (Williams & Butler, 2003). Thus it is concluded that UASCs need opportunities to create new social networks and to connect with others: *"children don't need therapy, they need life"* (Hopkins & Hill, 2010; p.404).

2.2.6 Educational provision

Access to education is a *"basic right for every child"* and a *"normalising experience"* for children experiencing change and uncertainty (Hopkins & Hill, 2010). Regular attendance at school is essential to promote social inclusion and emotional wellbeing for UASCs (Children's Legal Centre, 2003). UASCs tend to be highly committed to educational achievement; well aware of it's value in relation to their future aspirations (Hopkins & Hill, 2010; Rutter & Jones, 1998). Thus for UASCs, *"the importance of appropriate and meaningful education opportunities appears difficult to over-state"* (Endersby, 2006; p.3).

However, some UASCs arrive with little to no previous experience of education and require additional time to adjust to UK schools teaching styles, behavioural expectations, assessment processes, rules and routines. For others, despite an eagerness to learn and achieve, their flight experienced have an impact on their learning and progress. Dyregrov (2004) suggests that children who have experienced loss and trauma tend to show more absenteeism from school, increased likelihood of premature 'drop out' as well as deterioration in academic performance. A

number of explanations as to why experience of loss and trauma may negatively affect pupils' ability to learn and/or willingness to attend school are summarised in Table 2.4.

Identifying author	Impact of loss/trauma on learning
Dyregrov (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced capacity to concentrate; • Memory problems; • Loss of motivation; • Intrusive thoughts, memories and cognitive process 'tying up' attentional resources; • Lowering of cognitive 'pace' due to depression; • Problems with sensory perception and interpretation of complex visuospatial stimuli; • Reduced capacity to learn from experience; hyperactive nervous system (sense of continuing threat); • Difficulty distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information due to heightened stress levels; • Self-regulation functions overwhelmed causing problems with behavioural control; • Lack of perceived support from carers, classmates and teachers; • Support that is short-term but not sustained over time.
Kohli & Mather (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties concentrating on schoolwork; • Memory problems in grasping new material and remembering old skills;
Yule (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor concentration possibly linked to hypersensitivity to the environment.

Table 2.4: Impact of loss and trauma on learning for UASCs.

A further barrier for many UASCs is lack of English language proficiency on arrival and the necessity of rapid language acquisition as part of the settling process (Children's Legal Centre, 2003; Coelho, 1998; Rutter, 2001; Ryan et al., 2008). Language acquisition is fundamental to both academic attainment and social inclusion at school and UASCs themselves recognise this (Endersby, 2006; Hopkins & Hill, 2010). EAL support can vary greatly with schools in rural, mainly

white authorities where there are comparatively fewer EAL pupils, being less likely to have clear guidelines for EAL assessment and practice in place (DfES, 2002) and a tendency to assume UASCs will incidentally and simultaneously learn English through learning subject knowledge (Murakami, 2008). Language acquisition for academic communication is affected by: 1) level of competency in first language prior to learning a second language; and 2) time spent in education in first language prior to migration (Cummins, 1989). Schools need to ensure that UASCs language needs are met in accordance with guidance on education of newly arrived isolated learners of English as an additional language (DCSF, 2010).

2.3 UASC as a resilient population

In the first section of this literature review we considered pre- and post-flight experiences particular to UASCs that generate a range of psychological, social and educational needs, which in turn place UASCs at increased risk of poorer mental health and educational attainment outcomes. Whilst UASCs clearly should be recognised as a vulnerable group, there is an emerging body of research that is focused on the resilience of UASCs. Hopkins and Hill (2010; p.407) report that UASC demonstrate *“remarkable coping capacities, a strong commitment to education and a capacity for hard work”*. Kohli and Mather (2003; p.204) observe that UASCs *“capacity to respond robustly to the stresses that surround them”* is under-reported in clinical and research literature in comparison to papers on their vulnerability. Despite their vulnerability, refugee and asylum seeking children are often found to be coping well with adversity and doing well in school (Rutter, 2003). Rousseau and Drapeau (2003; p.78) describe them as *“active survivors”* rather than *“passive victims”*. If we seek to conceptualise UASCs as either resilient or vulnerable we oversimplify their situation; most UASC experiences will be characterised by both

vulnerability and resilience: *“given that coping refers to efforts to manage demands that are appraised as taxing, symptoms of stress and coping strategies inevitably exist side by side”* (Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010; p.227).

The concept of resilience is key to understanding the ability of UASCs to cope with change and adversity. Numerous researchers recommend that professionals need to better understand and build on strengths that UASCs already possess, in addition to considering their needs (Hopkins & Hill 2010; Kohli & Mather, 2003; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007). By adopting a focus on resilience as opposed to risk, we can gain insight into solutions rather than problems; we can identify interactive factors and processes that promote positive outcomes following adversity (Anderson, 2004) rather than focusing on within-child models of psychopathology (Hulusi & Oland, 2010).

2.3.1 What is resilience?

Resilience is usually conceptualized as: a set of characteristics children have when despite risk they grow up successfully; or as an ability to effectively cope and deal with stress; or as the capacity to recover positive functioning following trauma (Anderson, 2004; Ungar, 2008). All three of these subtly different definitions share an appreciation of resilience as occurring in the presence of adversity, therefore resilience may be defined as *“patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant risk or adversity”* (Masten & Powell, 2003; p.4). Luthar et al. (2000; p.5) highlight the importance of each of the two parts of this definition of resilience: *“the presence of threat to a given child’s well-being and evidence of positive adaptation in this child, despite the adversity encountered”*.

2.3.2 Resilience as process

Early research on resilience tended to focus on identification and description of risk and protective factors, both internal (individual) and external (family and community) to the child. More recent research focuses on understanding processes of resilience; an endeavor which links directly to development of intervention and prevention strategies for individuals facing adversity (Luthar et al., 2000).

When discussed as adaptation in the context of adversity, resilience may be understood as *“a dynamic developmental process”* (Luthar et al., 2000; p.5). Egeland et al. (1993; p.518) view resilience in terms of a transactional process and suggest that rather than being a *“childhood given or a function of particular traits, the capacity for resilience develops over time in the context of person-environment interactions”*. Thus frameworks that focus on identifying risk and resilience factors and attempting to eliminate the former and maximize the latter (Rutter, 2001; Werner, 1993) may not in fact be entirely helpful; by doing so we reduce opportunities for children to experience and overcome adversity and thereby develop resilience (Newman & Blackburn, 2002). Furthermore, risk and protective factors will not apply to every person or situation and therefore effective intervention needs to be based on an appreciation of the dynamics of resilience (Anderson, 2004). In order to understand resilience as a process of development resulting from experience of stressful events and challenges, investigation will tend to focus on interactions between individuals and their environment.

2.3.3 Resilience as context-dependent

Resilience is influenced by interactions between individuals and their social world and therefore may be understood as context-dependent (Ungar, 2008). Elbebour (1993) suggests that refugee children's responses to stress will vary depending on interactions between the following dimensions: 1) developmental factors (gender, age etc); 2) factors within family systems (e.g. early attachments); 3) factors within community systems (e.g. extended family, social network); and 4) factors within school systems (e.g. teachers interest and adaptation, curriculum, expectations, school policy, racism). Furthermore, Ungar (2008) highlights the importance of culture as a context for resilience. While some aspects of resilience are likely to be applicable to all populations and cultural groups (e.g. self-efficacy, hopefulness, attachment, participation and ethnic identity) he argues that the *relative* importance of each of these will vary depending on the context and culture in which individuals are located. Thus it is important to appreciate that the particular strengths and resilience demonstrated by individuals will be rooted within their own culture (Goodman, 2004). This is a highly relevant discussion when considering the resilience of UASCs. A definition of resilience which captures the role of the individual, the individual's social ecology, the interaction between the two and is both contextually and culturally relevant is offered by Ungar (2008; p.225):

"In the context of exposure to significant adversity, whether psychological, environmental, or both, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways."

2.3.4 Resilience as a construct for critique

The literature on resilience is vast and ever-growing. However, resilience as a construct is not without its critics and for good reason. Luthar et al. (2000) summarise the main objections to the construct of resilience within four categories.

Firstly, they highlight the lack of consensus in relation to definitions and terminology as fundamentally problematic. Inconsistencies in terminology cause confusion (e.g. between resilience used to mean both a personal trait versus a dynamic process) and undermine the validity of the construct as well as the conclusions drawn from research. Secondly, they cite the variance in risks experienced and competence achieved by individuals labelled "resilient" as problematic. The *"multidimensional nature of resilience"* (p.7) means that individuals can exhibit resilience in some but not all domains of functioning (cognitive, behavioural and emotional), again generating some confusion and undermining the notion of a single construct of resilience. Furthermore, this inconsistency makes it difficult for researchers to specify "optimal" conditions for, or indicators of, resilience. Furthermore, resilience is usually judged relative to the adversity experienced and is therefore not a neatly or consistently defined construct. Thirdly, the validity of the 'evidence base' may be criticised. Studies on resilience frequently involve small samples and findings that are based on the subjective perceptions of risk and resilience by both participants and researchers. Finally, the theoretical underpinnings of the construct of resilience have been critiqued. Studies often focus on identifying correlates of risk and resilience and not on creating theories of the development of resilience itself. Furthermore some critics suggest that resilience is not distinct from the more general concept of 'positive adaptation' and therefore does not warrant a distinct body of research.

Luthar et al. (2000) argue that these criticisms do not invalidate the construct of resilience; that it is a unique and worthwhile field of study. However, they suggest there is a need for enhanced rigour and clarity research in order to improve the validity and utility of resilience as a construct. The “common sense” appeal of a positive concept such as resilience needs to be supported by thorough empirical and theoretical work. Features of this study developed to enhance rigour included: consistent use of term 'resilience' when referring to process (not resiliency); use of a standardised measure (The Resiliency Scales); consolidation of findings with those of other studies; specificity in discussion of outcomes (i.e. not making claims beyond the scope of the study and so remaining *“cognisant of the multidimensional nature of resilience”* p.16); and maintained a focus on theory development (rather than only describing *“correlates of resilience and failure”*).

2.4 UASC coping and resilience

As previously discussed, UASC are a vulnerable group due to: their experiences of loss and adversity pre- and post-flight; the accumulative nature of the risk factors they encounter; and experience of coping without the 'emotional buffer' that parents or family provide. Yet it has been argued that resilience develops *through* experience of adversity, therefore the transition experienced by UASCs may actually result in increased resilience and coping capacity. Newman and Blackburn (2002; p.4) acknowledge this element of unpredictability in relation to the resilience of vulnerable children: *“some stressors may trigger resilient assets in children, others may compound chronic difficulties”*.

Despite an abundance of research in relation to resilience and a smaller body of research specifically relating to UASCs, Maegusuku-Hewett et al., (2007) stress that there is as yet little consensus as to what exact processes promote or result in resilience and successful coping in refugee and asylum seeking children. Raghallaigh and Gilligan (2010; p.226) also observe that: *“increasing attention has been paid to their (UASC) capacity for resilience, (whilst) little research has been done on the exact manner in which they cope”*. We will now consider research that has sought to identify those *“patterns of positive adaptation”* (Masten & Powell, 2003; p.4) and *“remarkable coping capacities”* (Hopkins & Hill, 2010; p.407).

Coping strategies may be understood as cognitive or behavioural efforts to manage situations that are perceived as demanding or exceeding one’s personal resources (Crockett et al., 2007). Maegusuku-Hewett et al. (2007; p.310) claim that *“there is a dearth of UK-specific literature that focuses on a more complex picture of children’s adaptation, coping and resilience in the context of forced migration.”* Key authors who have specifically sought to identify coping strategies utilised by UASCs include Raghallaigh and Gilligan (2010) and Goodman (2004) and their findings are summarised in Table 2.5. Whilst there is some overlap in their findings, there are also differences. This may in part be due to the subjective nature of qualitative research; dependent on the researchers’ analysis and interpretation of interview data. However, it is also likely to be a reflection (and further evidence) of resilience as a context-dependent process.

Study	Sample	Coping strategies identified
Raghallaigh & Gilligan (2010)	32 UASC in Ireland aged 14-19 years old.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining continuity in a changed context; • Adjusting by learning and changing; • Adopting a positive outlook; • Suppressing emotions and seeking distraction; • Acting independently; • Distrusting; • Religion.
Goodman (2004)	14 male Sudanese UASC in the US aged 16-18 years old.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivity and the communal self; • Suppression and distraction; • Making meaning; • Emerging from hopelessness to hope.

Table 2.5: Coping strategies utilised by UASC settling in 'safe' countries.

2.4.1 Continuity

Firstly, Raghallaigh and Gilligan (2010) described how UASC engaged in a strategy of 'maintaining continuity in a changed context'. Young people proactively sought to integrate aspects of their past life with their present in a number of ways, including: through material items such as food from their home country; through activities such as going to shops that sell items from their home country or spending time with people from their own culture; engaging in the customs of their home country; talking about present experiences in relation to their earlier life experiences; or through maintaining their religious faith (Murray, 2002, 2009; Raghallaigh, 2010; Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010; Williamson, 1998). The value of a continuity strategy may therefore be understood as enabling some sense of sameness between the past and present in order to maintain a continuous sense of self (Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010). This may mediate feelings of loss and reduce the sense of threat posed by change previously discussed.

2.4.2 Adaptation

Raghallaigh and Gilligan's second coping strategy appears to be the opposite of the previous one. 'Adjusting by changing and learning' referred to young people's desire to adapt to their new environment, to learn about the practical and cultural aspects of the country and to 'fit in'. This meant changing existing behaviours and learning new ones, for example changing dress style or religious practice, learning to speak English and engaging in activities specific to British youth culture such as dating, football and music. These adaptations are likely to be functional primarily in relation to UASCs social needs, facilitating friendship formation, reducing likelihood of bullying and increasing a sense of belonging. However, Maegusuku-Hewett et al. (2007) noted that whilst some refugee children sought to actively assimilate the host culture as a means of coping, others appeared to engage in resistance to or separation from the host culture; apparently in order to maintain their cultural and personal identity and to defy racism and bullying they encountered.

2.4.3 Optimism and hope

A third coping strategy identified by Raghallaigh and Gilligan (2010) was 'adopting a positive outlook'. This strategy entailed focusing on positive aspects of their present situations (through comparison to past difficulties) which generated a sense of hope, which in turn helped them to cope with difficulties in their present lives: *"in essence they made meaning out of their current difficulties by placing them in the context of past problems and future opportunities"* (p.230). Goodman (2004) also found that 'emerging from hopelessness to hope' was a key theme within Sudanese UASCs narratives. Their accounts of flight experiences were characterised by a sense of hopelessness, powerlessness and an "emptiness of existence". Lack of hope was strongly

linked to lack of control, self-efficacy or value as an individual. Conversely, UASCs accounts of arrival in the US contained hope and with it an increased sense of being people that 'count'. Thus the construct of hope is a strong theme in literature on coping.

The significance of hope in relation to UASC resilience and coping appears to be multifaceted. Firstly, hope is linked to future possibilities (e.g. education and career) and these opportunities represent a means by which UASCs might take control of life again, 'be somebody' and achieve independence (Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010). Secondly, hope is linked to perceptions of self and circumstances which in turn are closely linked to psychological wellbeing (Maegusku-Hewett et al., 2007). For example, characterising themselves as overcoming hardship, confident, determined, hard working and intelligent, or minimising and downplaying negative aspects of their lives such as experience of racism, were both ways in which young people coped with their circumstances. Thirdly, hope is linked to action. UASCs are often noted for their hope, optimism and willingness to make the best of themselves in their new environment (Kohli & Mather, 2003). Based on their hopes for the future, young people may be more willing to be proactive in the present, which may in part explain the functional value of hope in coping with adversity. Finally, maintaining hope is protective to mental health. As previously discussed in relation to UASC's vulnerability to depression (section 2.2.3), where individuals perceive a gap between their 'actual' and 'ideal' selves and furthermore the gap seems unbridgeable, then hopelessness and despondency set in (Higgins, 1999). If depression is linked to perceived or actual powerlessness, then conversely hope and related action are likely to support effective coping.

2.4.4 Suppression and distraction

The fourth strategy identified by Raghallaigh and Gilligan (2010) was ‘suppressing emotions and seeking distraction’. Suppression of emotions and distraction from thoughts are common in literature regarding UASCs (Beiser & Wickrama, 2004; Goodman, 2004; Kohli, 2006). Furthermore, in some cases it is apparent that UASCs conscientiously choose distraction as an effective strategy. Williamson (1998) interviewed UASCs regarding service provision and reported that they wanted plenty of activities to keep their ‘mind off their problems’. Distraction may take the form of keeping busy with school work or being with other people. Through distraction, young people avoid or minimise feelings of loneliness, anxiety or worry. Although suppression and distraction generally come hand in hand, the latter was usually discussed as aiding the former; UASCs engage in distraction in order to achieve suppression.

Suppression, as reflected in the desire not to talk or think about the past, present or in some cases the future, may be explained as functional to UASCs as a means of coping in various ways (see Table 2.6).

Identifying author	Function of suppression or 'silence'
Beiser & Wickrama (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adaptive response to trauma enabling the individual to carry on with daily life.
Goodman (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance of feelings of powerlessness associated with past and present events; • Containment of emotions that young people felt unable to handle; • Indication of different cultural norms about self-disclosure and emotional expression.
Kohli (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three protective functions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. as part of a wider process of becoming autonomous and independent; 2. as part of a healing process, allowing themselves time to “thaw out” before proceeding with ordinary life again; 3. as a means of concealing and managing hurt.
Raghallaigh & Gilligan (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance of potentially upsetting thoughts and feelings.

Table 2.6: Functional value of suppression as a coping strategy exhibited by UASCs.

Whilst suppression and distraction appear functional coping strategies in the short-term, most authors emphasise that they are not sustainable and may have detrimental effects in the long-term (Beiser & Wickrama, 2004; Crockett et al. 2007; Kohli, 2006; Yule, 1998). In a sample of Mexican American students, Crockett et al., (2007) reported that active coping (managing the problem cognitively or through action) was associated with lower depression and moderated the effects of acculturative stress on anxiety, whilst avoidant coping (ignoring or suppressing the problem) was associated with poorer functioning in terms of depressive and anxiety symptoms. Yule (1998) also suggests that suppression cannot be sustained because psychological distress will manifest itself in ways not within the young person's control i.e. through repetitive and intrusive thoughts about traumatic events, or through flashbacks triggered by reminders of events, through sleep disturbances such as waking in the night and recurring nightmares or mood disturbances such as irritability and anger. Specifically in relation to UASCs, Kohli (2006)

suggests that when children choose not to talk about difficult experiences, they may actually forget them, become confused about what happened and lose their capacity to speak coherently about the past. Thus an almost involuntary memory loss and fragmented personal narrative are risks associated with suppression as a coping strategy.

Whilst not wishing to judge the relative effectiveness coping strategies, this debate is important as it highlights the context-dependent nature of resilience. The efficacy of distraction and suppression appears dependent on temporal context. Research indicates distraction and suppression facilitate resilience in the short-term, however over time become ineffective coping strategies, actually increasing the vulnerability of young people. This means that our definition of resilient behaviour in UASCs needs to be flexible depending on the UASCs position in time within the process of settling.

2.4.5 Independence

Linked to suppression and distraction, 'acting independently' was identified as another coping strategy. UASCs interviewed by both Goodman (2004) and Raghallaigh and Gilligan (2010) were clearly concerned with conveying themselves as self-reliant, able to deal with their own difficulties and not dependent on anyone. It is suggested that this coping strategy emerges from experiences of loss, separation and trauma characteristic of UASCs pre-flight experiences so that in their post-flight lives they strive towards autonomy to avoid experiencing helplessness in future. By adopting an independent self-perception, UASCs increase their sense of control over circumstances.

Endersby (2006) observed that UASCs presented as simultaneously independent and yet receptive to support when they had reason to request it i.e. flexibility according to their needs. Social workers in WCC also made this observation; that they are frequently surprised by the fluctuation in dependency and independence demonstrated by UASCs towards them. This again supports a context-dependent understanding of resilience; UASCs using independence and dependence interchangeably depending on their circumstances.

2.4.6 Distrusting

A sixth coping strategy according to Raghallaigh and Gilligan (2010) was a tendency not to trust anyone, or at best a wariness only trusting certain people to a certain extent. This strategy is likely to stem from a belief the world is a dangerous and uncertain place in which to live, based on their experiences pre-, during and post-flight (detailed in Table 2.1). UASCs are likely to respond to authority figures such as policemen, social workers or lawyers with suspicion and mistrust if their pre-flight experiences have involved persecution by the government or other officials. Furthermore, UASCs who do not understand the reasons for their flight and feel confused due to perceived rejection by parents may be reluctant to trust key adults such as foster carers and Children's Home staff. Furthermore, social workers in WCC reported that UASCs who have had their journeys mediated by agents are also coached by them in what to say in order to maximise their chances of acceptance to remain in the UK. UASCs tend to:

“...maintain silence about their past lives, or remain economical with the truth about their flight....these children present as compliant, polite yet troubled individuals who worry about safely talking to others, having been instructed by their families of origin not to reveal facts, feelings and thoughts to those who are caring for them” (Kohli, 2006; p.708).

Therefore, distrusting serves as a protective strategy; minimising risks of further loss and maximising chances of safe arrival and securing leave to remain. However, whilst distrusting may be functional in the short-term, it is likely to create inter- and intrapersonal difficulties in the longer-term. Kohli (2006; p.708) expressed concern about the *“psychological costs to individuals of carrying secrets or maintaining silence as they grow up”*. Furthermore, as observed in relation to other strategies, temporal context seems key to the effectiveness of this strategy; distrusting may both protect and damage UASCs position at different points along their journey of resettlement (Kohli, 2006). Both Kohli (2006) and the Social Care team in WCC report that young people’s full and true stories are often only shared once legal status is secured, thus distrusting appears to be a purposeful rather than preferable strategy for UASCs.

2.4.7 Religion and meaning making

Raghallaigh and Gilligan (2010) drew together their 6 coping strategies and highlighted the role of religious faith (specifically Islam and Christianity) in them all promoting active coping of UASCs, whilst Raghallaigh (2010) elaborated on the role of religion as a coping strategy in its own right (summarised in Table 2.7).

Coping strategy	Underpinning role of religion
Maintaining continuity in a changed context	Maintaining religious faith and practice provided a source of continuity (through access to aspects of their home culture including language, dress, music and people of the similar backgrounds) and thus a continued sense of self.
Adjusting by learning & changing	Religious practices sometimes changed in order to adapt to their new environment.
Adopting a positive outlook	Faith in God provided a source of hope for the present and the future.
Suppressing emotions & seeking distraction	Religious practice was a source of distraction from intrusive thoughts.
Acting independently	Faith in God and God's help meant young people did not feel they needed to rely on others thus facilitating independence.
Distrusting	Trust in God minimised the need to trust in others.
Religion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relationship with God → provided a sense of meaning, comfort and increased sense of control; 2. Prayer → expression of faith in a God who could provide at a time of loss and so UASCs feel they were being active in their situations, thereby regaining some control of life.

Table 2.7: The role of religion in relation to coping strategies reported by UASCs (Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010; Raghallaigh, 2010).

For the majority² of UASCs faith was strengthened through adversity due to belief in a higher 'being' that is in control *despite* circumstances providing them with some comfort and peace (Raghallaigh, 2010). Goodman (2004) called this strategy 'making meaning'. She observed that belief in the power of God's will and control of one's life and circumstances appeared to support UASCs resilience in adversity. Similarly, Endersby (2006; p.3) observed that some UASCs coped by adopting a "*relatively fatalistic approach*" viewing the future as "*already written and beyond their control*". Raghallaigh (2010) suggests that despite the apparent lack of agency and indeed a

² A minority of UASCs described struggling to maintain their faith without the support of parents and due to difference from peers in Ireland who were less interested or involved in religion.

degree of passivity in this approach, *“the fact that they believed fully in God’s capacity to help them, meant that in giving up control to God, they simultaneously and paradoxically gained a sense of control of their situations.”* (p.11). By believing in the will and ability of God, UASCs in both Raghallaigh’s and Goodman’s studies appeared more able to accept their circumstances, which given the drawn out nature of the asylum process and its association with heightened anxiety and depression as previously discussed, is an adaptive response that may protect mental health.

Raghallaigh (2010) discusses the context-dependent nature of religious coping in terms of two variables: whether religion was already an integral part of life prior to the experience of adversity; and whether alternative strategies are readily available or not. Thus UASCs were more likely than other young people to use religious coping due to family support being unavailable and a feeling that other personal and social resources were not adequate to meet the demands of the situations: *“religion is perceived to be more compelling by those who are aware of the limitations of being human”* (p.3).

2.4.8 Collectivity

An additional coping strategy not apparent in Raghallaigh and Gilligan’s cohort but present in Goodman’s (2004), was ‘collectivity and the communal self’. This strategy contrasts with desire for independence, nevertheless Goodman (2004) describes how a group mentality was powerful in enabling Sudanese UASCs to survive their flight experiences. Collectivity refers to the encouragement young people derived from knowing they were not the only one experiencing displacement and difficulty, having responsibility and a sense of obligation to others during flight

and thus being motivated not to give up, and social support they themselves received from fellow refugees during flight. During flight 'collectivity' enabled survival.

Whilst UASCs in Goodman's study pursued independence in their post-flight lives, indicating that collectivity was a time-limited, context-dependent strategy for coping, Maegusuku-Hewett et al. (2007) found that collectivity, or positive social identity, supported refugee children's resilience in their post-flight lives in Wales. A sense of identity within a social group who share cultural resources and distinctiveness may help to reduce feelings of loss and displacement experienced by UASCs, whilst also promoting development of positive ethnic identity, self-concept and self-esteem.

2.5 Summary

This literature review has considered a number of key issues emergent from research relating to the experiences and resilience of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people. UASCs may be understood as vulnerable group at risk of poor outcomes due their experience of a range of pre- and post-flight variables that are accumulative and experienced without the support of family (Coelho, 1998; DfES, 2004a; Hopkins & Hill, 2010; Kohli & Mather, 2003; Rutter, 2001; Ryan et al., 2008; Sourander, 1998). Nevertheless, UASCs are also recognised to be a resilient group of "active survivors" with notable coping capacities (Hopkins & Hill, 201; Kohli & Mather, 2003; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Rousseau & Drapeau, 2003; Rutter, 2003). Their resilience may be understood as context-dependent (Anderson, 2004; Ungar, 2008) and as a process, developing through experience of adversity (Anderson, 2004; Egeland., 1993; Newman & Blackburn, 2002). The ways in which UASC may cope with the challenges of their experiences

include: maintaining continuity; adaptation; optimism and hope; suppression and distraction; independence; distrusting; religion and making meaning; and collectivity (Goodman, 2004; Raghallaigh, 2010; Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010). Choice of coping strategy appears to be influenced by issues of availability, function and context (temporal, personal and social). Firstly, UASCs are likely to select coping strategies that are most available to them and make most sense to them (Raghallaigh, 2010). Secondly, a type of cost-benefit analysis takes place whereby there will usually be both protective functions and limitations of any given coping strategy (Kohli, 2006). Thirdly, choice of strategy is influenced by past and present contextual factors. The research suggests culture and time are particularly influential in coping. UASCs cultural background is likely to affect selection and use of certain strategies, such as religion. Time will affect the appropriateness and relevance of certain coping strategies such as collectivity (during flight) and independence (post-flight). Understanding the influence of temporal context on UASCs coping and resilience is especially important if professionals working with UASCs are to develop meaningful and supportive responses to UASCs needs. Research would suggest that there is 'a time and a place' for each coping strategy; that each is adaptive in some circumstances and we should therefore not assume UASCs need to change their approach, whilst remaining attentive to the potential for some strategies to become maladaptive and detrimental to mental health if maintained in the longer-term.

Key authors (Anderson, 2004; Hopkins & Hill, 2010; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010) are in broad agreement on the following points: 1) much of the existing literature relating to UASC focuses on risk factors and does not acknowledge the strengths, capacities and agency of UASC; 2) there is a gap in research relating to the interplay between environmental factors (post-migratory stressors) and the individual (coping processes); 3) there

is a need to promote a perspective that acknowledges context-specific interactions affecting the resilience of refugee and asylum-seeking children; 4) there is a need to adopt an ecological framework for understanding UASCs resilience; and 5) there is a need for practitioners working with refugee children to take note of and build upon these active strategies of resilience. On the basis of the existing research body as well as these acknowledged gaps and areas for development, the rationale and focus for this study were developed and are outlined in further detail in the next chapter.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research aims

Building on existing research, the aims of this study were two-fold. Firstly, to investigate processes by which UASCs develop and maintain resilience within the specific context of a rural county and in response to their pre- and post-migration experiences of adversity. Secondly, to develop understanding of the context-dependent nature of resilience, in terms of interactions between UASC coping styles and environmental variables of the 'host' country. Both of these aims were to be explored through UASCs own voices and interpretations of experience settling in the UK reflected in personal narratives. These aims were in line with the current direction of travel in research, focusing on understanding resilience as a process (Luthar et al., 2000) and as a more constructive pursuit than focusing on risk and deficit (Anderson, 2004; Goodman, 2004). The specific research questions were:

1. How do UASCs maintain resilience throughout their experiences of loss, transition and adversity?
2. How do UASCs understand the world around them, in terms of both support and barriers to coping?
3. How can the narratives of UASC experience be used to inform practice in supporting this particular 'at risk' group by professionals both within and outside schools?

3.2 Research Design

In order to investigate these research questions a narrative approach stemming from social constructionist epistemology, was adopted. The appropriateness of this epistemological stance and associated methodological approach will now be discussed.

3.2.1 Social constructionist epistemology for narrative research

Narrative approaches are firmly rooted in social constructionist epistemology (Elliot, 2005), which itself sits within the hermeneutic or interpretive paradigm. Social constructionism recognises that knowledge about ourselves and the social world is 'constructed'. Knowledge does not straightforwardly reflect an external reality, but is contingent on convention, human perception and social experience (Elliot, 2005; p.200). Gergen and Gergen (1986) proposed that narratives are social constructions developed in everyday social interaction and as such, represent a shared means of making sense of the world (Murray, 2009). The ontological assumptions associated with social constructionism are that realities are *"socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements can be shared among many individuals)"* (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; p.110). Therefore epistemological assumptions associated with social constructionism are that, the researcher and 'subject' are interactively linked meaning 'findings' are created through the process of research. Participants' *"individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among the investigator and respondents"* (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; p.111).

The social constructionist stance which views reality as personal, subjective and unique therefore stands in direct contrast to positivist epistemology of more traditional, scientific approaches that consider reality as that which is objectively observable and tangible (Cohen & Manion, 1992). Whilst positivism may appeal as a more reliable source of 'truth', it is suggested that research rooted in constructionism has greater value in relation to understanding the social world. Narratives represent how individuals perceive and interpret the world and these very same perceptions inform their actions, thereby enabling the researcher to gain understanding of human behaviours in their social context (Czarniawska, 2004). Narrative approaches are therefore concerned with understanding and interpreting the subjective world of human experience.

Social constructionist epistemology influences both the interview and the interviewer. In relation to the interview, narrative researchers understand narratives as representing both experience and the realities from which they derive i.e. both the story of 'lived life' which can be corroborated and a 'told story' reflecting the meaning of events as made by the narrator. Therefore the interview is viewed as not only a means of collecting data but *"a site for the production of data and an opportunity to explore the meaning of the research topic for the respondent"* (Elliot, 2005; p.22). In relation to the interviewer, narrative researchers acknowledge that the 'told story' will be influenced by the interpersonal context of the interview (Squire, 2008). The content and nature of the stories we give will in part depend on to whom we are speaking and the relationship that exists between narrator and listener (Murray, 2009). Therefore, in the research context, the interviewer is critical to the construction of narrative (Elliot, 2005) and is viewed as an "active agent" in narrative production: *"the interviewer's presence and form of involvement...is integral to a respondent's account."* (Mishler, 1985; p.86).

Notwithstanding the clear social constructionist roots of narrative approaches, Crossley (2000; p.88) argues for a *“middle position”* between traditional realist (positivist) and social constructionist approaches. Crossley suggests that the narratives people give do have some significance and ‘reality’ for them beyond the boundaries of the specific interview context (i.e. their ‘lived life’) and also that narrative is part of their ongoing story which represents their psychological and social worlds (i.e. their ‘told story’). Ricoeur (1987; p.437) give a similar view: *“We learn to become the narrator of our own story without completely becoming the author of our own life”*. Therefore, the epistemology on which this study is based acknowledges that our stories, and indeed ourselves, are neither entirely constructed by the language we use to narrate, nor entirely by ‘real’ events but by an interplay between the two.

3.2.2 Narrative psychology theory

Bruner (1990) proposed that we organise our everyday interpretations of the world through use of narrative stories and in doing so construct and make sense of our reality. Narrative theory therefore is based on belief that: *“narrative lies at the heart of being human [...] We are born into a storied world and we live our lives through the creation and exchange of narratives”* (Murray, 2009; p.111-113). The stories we tell others about ourselves and our experiences and furthermore, how we tell those stories, is the focus of narrative psychology. The function of narrative is two-fold: to make meaning (understanding) and to enable construction (of reality and self).

Firstly, narrative is the means by which we seek to make sense of events in our lives and understand our world (Murray, 2009). We make meaning of events through organising them into a coherent sequence (temporal, causal or logical) and understanding each individual event in relation to the 'whole' narrative (Elliot, 2005). Secondly, we create our reality and our identity through narrative (McAdams, 1993; Murray, 2009). *“Narratives are not just ways of seeing the world; we actively construct the world through narratives...they have ontological status”* (Murray, 2009; p.112). Through narrative, through the stories we tell others, we define ourselves and convey this identity to others. Thus formation of identity through narrative is a dynamic process dependent on changing personal and social context. A wide range of different narrative approaches and analyses exist, however they are all fundamentally concerned with events in people’s lives, the meaning that is made by people of those events and the ways in which people communicate both of these and in doing so construct 'self'.

At the heart of narrative theory is concern for structure (and not just the content) of narratives people give; events within the narrative give it shape and there is a connectedness between the sequence of events from start to finish (Murray, 2009). Various narrative researchers have outlined ways in which narrative may be structured by the narrator and subsequently, understood by listener. Gergen and Gergen (1984), and more recently Murray (2009), propose a three fold classification scheme whereby narrative structure may be understood as progressive (movement is towards a goal), regressive (movement is away from a goal) or stable (little movement or change). These broad categories map onto familiar genres presented in the stories of books, plays and film i.e. romance and comedy (both progressive), tragedy (regressive) and satire (stable). Alternatively, McAdams (1985; 1993), and more recently Crossley (2000), propose that tone is central to interpreting narrative meaning. Narrative tone may be pessimistic or

optimistic, again relating to the traditional comic/romantic or tragedy/satire genres. In addition to tone, McAdams (1993) proposes that narrative is structured with imagery (personalised symbols and objects); themes (recurrent patterns reflecting our intentions/motivations, such as power and love); and ideology (values and beliefs underlying the story).

3.2.3 Narrative psychology research

The use of narrative approaches in social research has gathered momentum over the past 30 years. Mishler (1986) is usually cited as a key researcher who questioned traditional interviewing practice (and the suppressing effect of the researcher's agenda), advocating for researchers to listen to the stories (narratives) people give in the context of research interviews. Subsequently, narrative approaches have been developed and applied across social science research including criminology, sociology of family, relationships and education (Cortazzi, 1991; Conelly & Clandinin, 1999) and within health psychology (Gray et al., 2005; Murray, 2002; Yaskowich & Stam, 2003). Across narrative research studies and domains, five key aspects of narrative research have been identified (Elliot, 2005; p.6):

1. An interest in people's lived experiences and an appreciation of the temporal nature of that experience;
2. A desire to empower research participants and allow them to contribute to determining what are the most salient themes in an area of research;
3. An interest in process and change over time;
4. An interest in the self and representations of the self;
5. An awareness that the researcher him- or herself is also a narrator.

The 'balancing act' between empowering participants 'voice' and maintaining awareness of the researcher's collaboration and 'voice', requires a high level of sensitivity and transparency on the part of the researcher. On the one hand, it is acknowledged that the interviewee has the “*power of knowledge*” as expert on their own life, thus the interviewer does not offer an exchange of views but “*their respectful and interested attention*” (Czarniawska, 2004; p.48). The interviewer must listen, refrain from interrupting, use only occasional questions for clarification and to assist the interviewee in continuing to tell his/her story (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Whilst on the other hand, it is recognised that far from being a passive observer, the researcher will act as co-producer of narrative through their choice and use of questions, their nods and also their silences (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). In particular, the evaluative elements of narrative are likely to involve collaboration between narrator and listener (Elliot, 2005).

3.2.4 Narrative approach to the study of UASC's coping experiences

A narrative approach was adopted to investigate UASC experiences of coping for several reasons: 1) personal narratives enable us to understand the meaning that UASCs make of their experiences, and also themselves in relation to experiences (Murray, 2009; Elliot, 2005); 2) narrative is particularly suited to exploring experiences of change and adversity (Murray, 2009; Squire, 2008); 3) narrative enables study of interactions between individuals and their social context (Murray, 2009); 4) narrative enables study of the general through the particular (Josselson & Lieblich, 1995 most especially with groups who are perceived to have little voice (Squire, 2008); and 5) narrative coherence is linked to psychological wellbeing (Baerger & McAdams, 1999; Crossley, 2000) meaning the method and the purpose of this research are in harmony. For further information on these points see Appendix 1. Whilst constructing narrative

is considered human instinct (Bruner, 1986; 1990), it is a process that becomes all the more relevant and necessary for individuals experiencing particular disruption and consequently their identities 'in crisis' (Gray et al., 2005; McAdams, 1993; Murray, 2002). To make meaning in life at these times involves creating, *"dynamic narratives that render sensible and coherent the seeming chaos of human existence"* (McAdams, 1993; p.166).

3.2.5 Summary

This study was a qualitative, narrative design rooted in social constructionist epistemology. Although the primary method was the use of narrative interviews designed to gather qualitative data, some quantitative data was also gathered using The Resiliency Scales (Prince-Embury, 2007) self-report questionnaires. This approach to research is not uncommon: Groark et al. (2010) administered the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale (SCAS), Child Impact of Events Scale (IES) and Birlson Depression Scale alongside semi-structured interviews with young asylum seekers; and Ghazinour et al. (2003) administered the Beck Depression Inventory alongside interviews with Iranian refugees in Sweden. The purpose of this mixed-method approach was to enable evaluation of the resilience of UASCs from different sources, to triangulate the data and to use the standardised measure as a *"point of reference from which to validate research findings from the interviews"* (Groark et al., 2010).

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 Narrative interviews

Narrative interviews are not structured in the traditional sense with a series of questions; they are designed to enable the interviewee to give a detailed account of a particular experience. Narrative interviews can range from life story interviews (also called life history or biographical approach) in which the interviewee gives an extended narrative about their whole life, to episodic interviews in which the interviewee talks about a particular episode that is significant to them, usually relating to an experience of change or disruption in their lives (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Murray, 2009).

For the purposes of this research, an episodic interview was used as a life history interview would have been inappropriate. Life history interviews would have required UASCs to discuss life pre-migration which may involve recall of traumatic and upsetting events. This would have raised ethical concerns about the research (see 'Application for Ethical Review', Appendix 2). Furthermore, the research questions related to coping with arrival and settling in the UK, meaning there was no need to discuss life pre-migration unless UASCs chose to incorporate past episodes into their present narrative.

The interview format required careful consideration as meaningful analysis depends on the detail and quality of narratives (Josselson & Lieblich, 1995). The interview schedule needed to facilitate production of narratives containing as much detail as possible, without asking questions that were either leading or closed. As previously outlined this study adopted a “middle

ground” in epistemological terms (Crossley, 2000) and therefore incorporated aspects of both the 'what' and the 'how' in the interview design.

3.3.2 Interview design

Czarniawska (2004; p.55) warns against using “recipes” for designing narrative interviews because what is effective in one research interview situation may not work in another. This became clear through my review of literature; a range of approaches for data collection and analysis was apparent. Lack of consensus in the field meant drawing upon multiple sources of inspiration to create a unique interview schedule suitable to this cohort and research aims.

It was important to develop an interview schedule that would not suppress personal narratives (Elliot, 2005; Mishler, 1986) and yet incorporated sufficient cues to activate production of narrative from UASCs who may be: reluctant to speak (Crossley, 2000); have difficulty communicating confidently in English (Hulusi & Oland, 2010); and/or disbelieve the researcher’s genuine desire to hear their story (Murray, 2009). Whilst the aim was to empower interviewees as experts on their own lives (Czarniawska, 2004), it was also expected that individuals may not spontaneously tell stories of their lives to an unfamiliar, unconnected other person.

Some general narrative research principles that helped guide the interview design are detailed in Table 3.1. These measures particularly supported the analysis and interpretation stages of research.

Recommending authors	Considerations for interview design:
Czarniawska (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be accessible and not use jargon;
Elliot (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build rapport and relationship prior to interview;
Josselson & Lieblich (1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask about their thoughts and feelings relating to experiences, not just the experiences themselves;
Murray (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the ownership and power was given to, and remained with, the interviewee throughout; • Guide the interviewee towards talking about their life, rather than the interviewers research interests; • Keep a detailed log of each interview including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ basic demographic details of the participant; ○ when and where the interview occurred; ○ as much detail and commentary about the interview in terms of initial impressions of key issues arising; ○ any conversation or comments made after the tape recorder was switched off.

Table 3.1: Considerations made during the design of the narrative interview.

3.3.2.1 McAdams (1993) personal narrative interview

McAdams (1993) (elaborated by Crossley, 2000) offers a narrative interview schedule that generates a comprehensive personal narrative through asking the interviewee 7 key questions about specific times or episodes in their life (see Table 3.2). A central aim of this study was to elicit UASCs interpretation of their experience, not just an account of it. Therefore McAdams 'Key events' question was extremely useful because in order to answer the questions, interviewees automatically have to engage in some selection and evaluation of the stories they tell. This sort of reflection gives meaning to everything else that is being described and is a crucial dimension of narratives (Elliot, 2005). I used McAdams' protocol as a starting point, making some significant adaptations with consideration to: the experiences of UASCs; and the research aims of this study. Table 3.2 provides a summary of the adapted version compared to McAdams original. Please see Appendix 3 for explanation of adaptations made and Appendix 4

for a copy of the full interview schedule. Adaptations were made in order to elicit narratives of the specific episodes of arrival and settling in the UK and not to gain a full life history narrative as McAdams intended with his schedule.

McAdams (1993) interview schedule	Adapted interview schedule
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life chapters 2. Key events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peak experience (<i>a high point, most wonderful moment in life</i>). • Nadir experience (<i>a low point, worst moment in life</i>). • Turning point (<i>an episode where you underwent a significant change in your understanding of yourself</i>). • Earliest memory (<i>one of your earliest memories – setting, scene, characters, thoughts and feelings</i>). • An important childhood memory (<i>any memory from childhood, positive or negative that stands out</i>). • An important adolescent memory (<i>any memory from teenage years, positive or negative that stands out</i>). • An important adult memory (<i>any memory from age 21 onwards, positive or negative that stands out</i>). • Other important memory (<i>one particular event from either recent or distant past, positive or negative, that stands out</i>). 3. Significant people 4. Future scripts 5. Stresses and problems 6. Personal ideology 7. Life theme 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life chapters 2. Key events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peak experience (<i>a high point, most wonderful moment since arrival in the UK</i>). • Nadir experience (<i>a low point, worst moment since arrival in the UK</i>). • Turning point (<i>an episode where you underwent a significant change in your understanding of yourself</i>). • Earliest memory (<i>one of your earliest memories of life in the UK – setting, scene, characters, thoughts and feelings</i>). • An important memory (<i>one particular event since being in the UK, positive or negative, that stands out</i>). 3. Significant people 4. Future scripts 5. Life theme

Table 3.2: McAdams (1993) personal narrative interview protocol and the adapted interview schedule used in this study.

3.3.2.2 Talking Stones (Wearmouth, 2004)

Talking Stones (Wearmouth, 2004) is an interview technique derived from Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) that is designed to support self-advocacy with individuals whose views may be

difficult to ascertain. Wearmouth (2004) uses the technique with disaffected students as a means of eliciting their views in order to reduce barriers to engagement with learning. More recently, Hulusi and Oland (2010) used Talking Stones with newly arrived pupils as a means of supporting young people to tell their stories and create a coherent narrative. For the purposes of this research, Talking Stones was used as an opening activity with UASCs during interview.

The Talking Stones method was adapted for the purposes of this research, with the specific aim of encouraging UASCs to discuss their experiences of arrival in the UK and coping, by projection onto the stones. Young people were presented with a selection of stones of varying shapes, sizes, colours and textures. They were asked to select a stone that represented him/herself on arrival in the UK and their choice was discussed. Following this young people were asked to select another stone to represent him/herself now and this was discussed in comparison to themselves on first arrival. In particular young people were prompted to talk about the process of change between feeling like the first stone to the second stone. See Appendix 4 for full interview schedule, incorporating Talking Stones.

3.3.3 Self-report questionnaires

The Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents (Prince-Embury, 2007) were administered after the narrative interview. The Resiliency Scales is a self-report questionnaire that is divided into 3 sections each having 20-24 items. Each section relates to 1 of 3 resiliency subscales: Sense of Mastery, Sense of Relatedness and Emotional Reactivity. Thus there is a proportionally greater focus on strengths than difficulties. Each item comprised a statement, for example “I can ask for help when I need to” or “I am good at fixing things” to which respondents indicate their

response on a Likert-type scale of 0 to 4 representing: “never”, “rarely”, “sometimes”, “often” or “almost always”. Participants were told they could complete the questionnaire privately or with the assistance of a translator, trusted adult/friend or the interviewer.

The Resiliency Scales were administered in order to gain information about UASCs coping from another source, which could be triangulated with interview data to help validate and strengthen research findings (Groark et al., 2010). Responses to the Resiliency Scales revealed aspects of the personal attributes of UASCs (e.g. optimism, self-efficacy, sensitivity etc) that could be analysed in relation to the coping strategies emergent from analysis of narrative interviews. Ghazinour et al. (2003) enriched their findings by using the Beck Depression Inventory alongside interviews with Iranian refugees in Sweden. They reported that more resilient refugees were characterized by low harm avoidance, high self-directedness and high cooperativeness scores, which they suggested enabled the refugees to develop effective coping strategies and sufficient social support and thus become more resistant to severe trauma. For details of the reliability and validity of the Resiliency Scales see Appendix 5.

3.4 Data analysis

3.4.1 Narrative analysis

Numerous frameworks for narrative analysis (NA) exist and yet there is as yet little consensus on neither what NA entails nor any agreement on a single analytic approach (Bryman, 2004; Elliot, 2005). The *“necessary linguistic concepts and tools needed for performing systematic analyses are thin on the ground of narrative research”* (Patterson (2008; p.37). In comparison to most

other forms of qualitative analysis, NA lacks a set of agreed procedures (Riessman, 1993). I therefore developed a framework for NA that was in keeping with theoretical and epistemological commitments of narrative research, whilst also being tailored to the specific research aims of this study.

Some specific models for NA do exist in literature. Labov and Waletzky's (1967) linguistic framework for analysis of narrative is still cited as the classic approach to structural narrative analysis (identifying and coding the abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation and coda in narrative episodes). Other more holistic structural analytic approaches seek to analyse narratives for their genre, tone, themes and imagery (e.g. Crossley, 2000; McAdams, 1985; 1993). Murray (2009) proposes a two-phased approach to NA, involving descriptive and interpretive stages. For the purposes of this research, Riessman's (2008) overview of NA was useful in clarifying an approach. She describes four models of narrative analysis: thematic, structural, dialogic/performative and visual analysis, summarised in Table 3.3.

Type of analysis	Focus of analysis	Research interest
Thematic	Narrative content.	'What' is said → the 'told' story.
Structural	Narrative organisation.	'How' what is said is said → the 'telling' of the story.
Dialogic/ performative	Interactive production of narrative between speakers.	'Who' the narrative is spoken to; 'When' (context); and 'Why' (for what purpose).
Visual	Application and interpretation of images alongside spoken or written narrative.	Builds on thematic and dialogic analysis questions.

Table 3.3: Four different types of narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008).

Most narrative researchers are interested in more than one area for analysis (Elliot, 2005). Goodman (2004) analysed narratives of Sudanese UASC for both their content and form with the latter complimenting interpretation of the former. Thus analysis of the way narrative has been put together can be used in conjunction with analysis of content in order to understand what meaning is being made of specific experiences (Elliot, 2005).

In this study a combined thematic and structural narrative analysis was undertaken in order to facilitate understanding of UASCs experiences as reflected in what they said and how they said it. Detailed structural analysis enabled understanding of the meaning UASCs made of their experiences, however was only useful for analysing short sections of narrative (Elliot, 2005). Thematic analysis enabled identification of patterns within and between interviews that would be missed with structural analysis alone. Analysis of both content and structure enabled a more complex interpretation of narratives and furthermore, coherence between structure and content strengthened the interpretation of stories (Goodman, 2004). This holistic approach to analysis reflects an appreciation that the meaning of narratives may be understood through consideration of both the narrative parts and the narrative as a whole: *“a narrative is more than just a succession of chronological events...it is more than the sum of its parts”* (Elliot, 2005; p.48).

3.4.1.1 Transcription

Due to time constraints I did not complete initial transcription of interviews myself. A member of administrative staff skilled in touch-typing transcribed the interviews in full i.e. transcribed all utterances made by interviewer and interviewee exactly as they were said and did not produce a ‘cleaned up’ version (Elliot, 2005). This meant that linguistic devices such as pauses and false

starts were included in the transcription, however due to language issues associated with participants speaking English as an Additional Language (EAL) they were not analysed per se (Goodman, 2004). The more "*striking features of conversation*" such as laughing, crying or particularly long pauses were included in transcripts (Riessman, 1993). We agreed some basic coding as follows: '...' indicated a pause; [laughs] indicated laughter; and *italics* indicated a word said with real emphasis. The finer detail of timing, intonation and body language, as may be included in a conversational analysis for example, were not included for the purposes of this NA (Crossley, 2000).

Following this I spent several days reading, checking and correcting the transcripts in their entirety by listening to the original audio recordings. This process served to correct errors made in the original transcription process (usually due to the accents and pronunciation of UASCs). Checking, and in some cases re-transcribing, enabled me to ensure that the more subtle features in the narrative were included, such as utterances of the interviewer, word repetitions of interviewees and verbal emphasis with italics (Riessman, 1993) some of which the original transcriber had missed. This process also enabled me to thoroughly familiarise myself with the transcripts through reading and re-reading, which is a key step in the analysis process (Crossley, 2000; Goodman, 2004; McAdams, 1985; 1993; Murray, 2009; Riessman, 1993; 2008).

The original transcription format was suitable for the purposes of thematic analysis. However, for structural analysis, selected portions were re-transcribed (see Appendix 12 for example of format). The specific sections of interview selected for structural analysis were those segments that related to the 'key events' (nadir, peak, turning point, early memory or significant memory).

Identification of and re-transcription of these narrative episodes was done by the researcher (Riessman, 1993).

3.4.1.2 Thematic narrative analysis

Thematic narrative analysis is the most common method of NA in applied settings e.g. health studies to uncover and categorize thematically patients' experience of illness (Riessman, 2008). For the purposes of this study thematic analysis was useful in revealing and categorizing thematically UASCs experience of arrival and settling in the UK. The first stage of NA was to analyse the content of all three interviews. Hard copies of the transcripts were printed (see Appendix 11 for a sample) and each section coded for its content (theme) (Murray, 2009). It is important to note that whilst similarities and differences between interviews were subsequently analysed, in the first instance interviews were analysed one at a time (Riessman, 2008). See Appendix 13 for original themes (codes) generated from analysis.

Following initial analysis, all codes were reviewed in relation to all three transcripts. Some codes were renamed to more accurately reflect their content. Other codes were grouped together due to significant overlap between them, whilst others were grouped together as super and subordinate themes that were interrelated. Some codes were discarded at this stage (but contributed to subsequent structural analysis) as they related to how UASCs gave their narrative, as opposed to the content per se. See Appendix 13 for details of themes developed or discarded at this stage.

Through this process of checking back against individual transcripts, as well as comparing similarities and differences across transcripts, the main themes and sub-themes were consolidated and subsequently illustrated in a 'map' (Figure 4.1 in the next chapter). In the analytical discussion all themes were exemplified with extensive use of direct quotations from interview data, illustrating the patterns with particular instances (Riessman, 2008). Prior theory and research were then used as a "resource" for the interpretation of narratives (Murray, 2009; Riessman, 2008). Thus the overall process of thematic NA may appeal to the researcher as *"intuitive and straightforward"* yet in reality was a highly *"methodical and painstaking"* process (Riessman, 2008; p.73).

3.4.1.3 Structural narrative analysis

Structural narrative analysis was undertaken to enrich the findings of thematic analysis (Goodman, 2004; Riessman, 2008) by exploring how UASCs organised their stories in ways that enabled them to: 1) make sense of life and the world; and 2) construct their own identities. Structural analysis enabled the researcher to understand important differences in the meanings of events through how stories were organised, that thematic analysis may overlook or miss entirely. Riessman (2008; p.90) explains that:

"By combining thematic and structural analysis of divorce stories, I was able to describe broad patterns (thematic similarities across samples) but also variations in meanings for individuals. Infidelity was not an objective event, but a phenomenologically different experience".

Thus by combining thematic and structural analysis sensitivity to different experiences and different personal meanings of experiences to UASCs was sought.

Individual episodes within each interview were identified and re-transcribed in a format conducive to structural analysis (see Appendix 12). Each episode was labelled by 'type' (i.e. peak, nadir, turning point, early or other significant memory) and analysed using Baerger and McAdams (1999) model of Life Story Coherence (LSC) (see Appendix 14 for LSC scoring criteria). This was a useful framework as it is a development of the two traditional models of narrative structural analysis: episodic analysis system (Stein & Glenn, 1979) and high-point analysis (Labov & Waletzky, 1967; McAdams, 1993). When combined, these models enable analysis of the key structural elements of narrative as well as evaluative elements, which give insight into the meaning individuals make of their experiences. Furthermore, the LSC model has additional coding criteria for overall coherence of narrative, which Baerger and McAdams (1999) suggest is critically related to psychological well-being.

For each narrative episode I highlighted utterances that related to each of the four domains for analysis: orientation, structure, affect, and integration (see Table 3.4 for explanation of each). I then scored each domain according to the LSC scoring criteria. The sum of these scores gives an overall LSC score for the narrative episode.

Domain	Information
Orientation	Contextual/background information necessary to understand the story: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the main characters; location in time; relevant past events leading to this particular moment.
Structure	Presence (or absence) of the fundamental elements of an episode system (Stein & Glenn, 1979): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an initiating event → an internal response to this event → an attempt to meet a goal which is precipitated by this response → a consequence that results from the attempt.
Affect	Emotional aspects of the story or the affective tone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluative statements made by the narrator → communicating why the story was told (Labov & Waletzky, 1967).
Integration	Links made between the individual episode to a wider context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e.g. links to motivation, aspiration, struggle or general life theme.

Table 3.4: Life Story Coherence (LSC) domains for structural narrative analysis.

Finally, notes from my meeting with UASC social care team (see Appendix 6 for meeting agenda/handout) and subsequent informal discussions with individual social workers via email and telephone, were used to contribute to the analysis and interpretation of interview data (Goodman, 2004).

3.4.1.4 Other considerations

It was also important to consider the broader social narrative within which the personal narratives were created (Murray, 2009). In order to gain such contextual insights, I met with the UASC social care team prior to conducting my interviews in order to discuss the themes summarised in the Literature Review in relation to the particular UASCs with whom they worked. A second meeting and similar discussion were held following the interviews. It was especially

important to check the interpretations of narrative with consideration of wider social discourses given: a) cultural differences between myself and the UASCs; and b) social and political influences on UASCs experiences of arrival and care in this particular LA.

Throughout the process of NA it was also important to remain aware of the potential for interpretations to slip into value judgements, which are themselves based on cultural assumptions. This is particularly a danger within NA where the researcher is attempting to bring some coherence and meaning to the narrators account. Squire (2008; p.46) warns that experience-centred narrative researchers are especially likely to make *“social, psychological and sometimes quasi-clinical value judgements about stories”* due to their emphasis on transformation in narratives. In this research, there was potential to make judgements about better and worse ways of coping exhibited by UASCs, which is another reason why the evaluative elements in structural analysis were so important; to enable fuller exploration of the meaning that UASCs themselves gave to their actions and events around them, rather than assuming to know the meaning as an onlooker (Elliot, 2005).

3.5 Participants

3.5.1 Recruitment

The Social Care team for UASC in WCC partnered with me in the research. We aimed to recruit up to 10 UASCs for participation in the study; both the social workers (SWs) and other researchers in the field (email contact with M. Raghallaigh) believed this would not be a problem

as UASCs are generally a very receptive group to opportunities to talk and have their story heard.

Murray (2009; p.128) suggests that:

“...eagerness to talk after surviving a personal threat is an established phenomenon...public narration is a means of developing a community of support and also of challenging certain repressive societal narratives”.

Appendix 7 provides details of the recruitment process. In brief, the SWs approached individual UASCs to gain initial consent for participation. Following this I met with the young people to explain the research further, gain written consent (see Appendix 9) and set a date for interview (see Appendix 10 for initial meeting checklist). During the data collection period (extended to 6 months) SWs expressed confidence in the likelihood of 8 UASCs engaging, of which 6 gave their consent to be interviewed and three were interviewed. Table 1 in Appendix 7 provides an outline of events that contributed to the difficulty recruiting participants. At both the initial planning stage and once the recruitment problem had become more apparent, numerous strategies were developed to encourage recruitment and participation from this 'hard to reach' group (see Table 2 in Appendix 7). The problems associated with the small sample are discussed in section 4.7.1.

3.5.2 Sample

Three UASCs were interviewed in this study. All were male; two aged 16 and one aged 19. All three were 14-15 years old upon arrival in the UK. Two came from Afghanistan and spoke Pushtu as their first language; the third participant came from Iran and spoke Kurdish as his first language. All three were Muslims and were currently living in independent accommodation with

additional 'leaving care' support. All three had been in Foster Care placements prior to this, and one had also lived in a Children's Home. One had secured indefinite leave to remain and subsequently been granted British citizenship. The other two had leave to remain until 18 years of age at which time their application would be reconsidered.

This sample was representative of the UASC population given that: 1) approximately 75% of UASCs nationally are 16-18 year olds (National Asylum Support Service, 2006; EMN Synthesis Report, 2010); 2) the majority of UASCs are male, with very few female UASCs arriving either locally or nationally (Kohli & Mather, 2003; The Refugee Council, 2012); and 3) since 2009, Afghanistan and Iran have been the top two countries of origin for unaccompanied children arriving in the UK (30% and 14% of applications in 2011 respectively; The Refugee Council, 2012).

Proficiency in spoken English was not a barrier to participation. An interpreter was offered for any young people who did not feel fluent or confident speaking English. This was not requested by any of the participants. P1 and P2 were interviewed together. This was at their request and was agreed to given that in order to encourage participation, UASCs had been reassured that they could have another person present during the interview if this would enable them to feel more comfortable (see 'Application for Ethical Review', Appendix 2). I was initially concerned that a joint interview may threaten the validity of each individual's account (i.e. may affect their willingness to speak openly or honestly with the other person present) and also would make the transcription and analysis of interviews highly problematic. However, on the day of interview both P1 and P2 appeared to respect the situation and remained largely quiet whilst the other was talking. I interviewed P1 first and then P2 so their accounts were easily transcribed and analysed separately. On occasion one young person would volunteer a comment during the

other's interview however this was usually to support each other with translation and understanding of English and therefore benefitted the interview process. Furthermore, it was clear that the young men were very close friends and derived support from each other's presence at the interview. They met at school aged 14 and now lived together aged 16. It appeared very unlikely that either young person was hindered from speaking honestly by the other person's presence and in fact P2 was a more reluctant interviewee and I very much doubt he would have interviewed at all had P1 not been present and supportive.

3.6 Ethical considerations

The recruitment process and narrative interviews themselves were designed with reference to the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Human Participants Guidelines (2009) and Code of Human Research Ethics (2010), as well as the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004). Issues relating to informed consent of UASCs and carers, confidentiality of data, participant withdrawal and feedback were all considered and are detailed in the 'Application for Ethical Review' (see Appendix 2).

Of particular concern was the potential risk to participants; that by discussing their experiences of leaving their home country and arriving in an unfamiliar country without family, they may experience upsetting feelings and/or memories. Several measures were adopted to ensure the risk of psychological distress to participants and researcher were minimised (see Table 3.5).

Measures to reduce risk of psychological distress	
1	Interview questions were open and non-directive enabling interviewees to remain in control regarding the experiences and views they were able and willing to discuss. This was in keeping with the ethical principle of respect, giving due regard to people's rights to privacy and self determination (BPS, 2009);
2	Participants were given the option to have a trusted friend, family member, carer, teacher or other involved professional present during the interview if this would be experienced by the young person as supportive and enabling;
3	The interviewer used professional discretion and active listening skills to remain sensitive to both verbal and non-verbal communication throughout the interview. If distress was detected, no further questions were asked and the interview was drawn to a close;
4	Participants were assured that throughout the interview they did not need to answer questions if they did not wish to (BPS, 2009; paragraph 8.3). To avoid any perception of status which may in turn have lead to UASCs feeling obliged to answer questions, I did not emphasise my profession as an educational psychologist in training, so that the interview relationship was in no way construed as therapist-client, or such like. Instead the purposes of the research and my interest as a researcher were emphasized. First names were used to reduce the potential for me to be perceived as a figure of authority. Rapport building conversation was a necessary part of the interview process. Participants were free to ask their own questions throughout the interview, in order to reduce the formality and potential for a clinical 'Q and A' style interview session to develop;
5	Ensured that no young people who were currently receiving therapy (e.g. with CAMHS) and/or experiencing flashbacks or other symptoms of psychological distress that interfere with daily functioning were interviewed. This was the only exclusion criteria applied i.e. <i>"exclusion on the grounds of psychological vulnerability"</i> (BPS, 2004; paragraph 3.7);
6	If I felt that information shared by the participant was evidence of psychological or physical problems then I had a responsibility to inform the participant of this and if the issue was considered to be serious, to recommend or refer the participant to an appropriate source of professional advice and support (BPS, 2009; paragraphs 10.1 and 10.2);
7	There was potential for the researcher to experience emotional upset if participants chose to discuss distressing experiences during the interviews. Supervision and debriefing with a member of academic staff was arranged (BPS, 2004; paragraph 3.12).

Table 3.5: Measures to reduce risk of psychological harm to participants and researcher.

3.7 Validity

The concept of validity has developed predominantly in relation to evaluating quantitative research positioned within a positivist paradigm and refers to the *"ability of research to reflect*

an external reality or to measure the concepts of interest" (Elliot, 2005; p.22). However, there are problems associated with seeking to evaluate qualitative research using criteria developed in relation to quantitative methods. Yardley (2009; p.236) highlights three criteria *"that are often mistakenly applied to qualitative research: objectivity, reliability and (statistical) generalizability"*. From a realist epistemological stance interview accounts may be viewed as factually not 'true' (intentionally or unintentionally) and so narrative approaches are considered to be weak in their validity or 'truth' generated. However, from a social constructionist stance, seeking to understand how individuals make sense of their experiences, narratives provide an *"ideal medium for researching and understanding individuals' lives in social context"* (Elliot, 2005; p.26). In qualitative research therefore, it is necessary to consider whether 'findings' are: a) trustworthy, as representations of 'reality'; and b) useful, in their scope for application to other people and/or settings. The validity of this study's findings were viewed in terms of trustworthiness and generalisability.

Narrative analysis is not a passive task of observation and description; both thematic and structural narrative analyses are two-way processes in which the analyst "plays" with the narrative (Murray, 2009). The researcher engages in an 'interpretive relationship' with transcripts because the meaning is not simply apparent and available (Crossley, 2000). Given that the researcher was fully engaged in the data interpretation, objectivity or neutrality are not to be claimed (Crossley, 2000) and the 'results' of analysis and subsequent conclusions are both *"tentative and open to further challenge"* (Murray, 2009; p.114). Therefore a number of steps were taken to enhance validity and minimize subjectivity of the data analysis. Measures to strengthen validity in narrative research are numerous and varied (Crossley, 2000; Elliot 2005; Riessman, 2008; Yardley, 2009) and so will be unique to each study.

3.7.1 Trustworthiness

In order to establish trustworthiness data needed to be "*well grounded and supportable*" (Crossley, 2000; p.104). This meant promoting plausibility, credibility, coherence, consistency and accuracy of the data (see Table 3.6). Firstly, acknowledging their lack of fluency in English, structural analysis did not include consideration of the meaning of linguistic devices such as pauses and false starts (which would usually be considered important information in an analysis) as this would not be a reliable or valid interpretation of their utterances (Goodman, 2004). Furthermore combined use of both structural and thematic narrative analysis improved validity where language difficulties could have weakened it i.e. thematic analysis captured the overall themes which closer structural analysis may have missed, whilst structural analysis reinforced and added depth to the relative simplicity of some themes (discussed further in section 3.4.1).

Secondly, it was important to make clear the distinction between the two 'voices' in the analysis i.e. the participant's and the researcher's (Lapsley, 2006; Riessman, 2008). In the introduction to the Results chapter I acknowledged to readers that I was an active agent in the interpretation and construction of 'findings' and as such the 'voice' in the report is the researcher's and not simply the UASC's. Table 3.6 details criteria for trustworthiness and steps taken in the interview and analysis processes to meet these, which include: reference to existing research and literature; use of direct quotations; transparency in reporting; triangulation; narrative interview design; and disconfirming case analysis.

Criteria for validity	Means by which this was established
Plausibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrated consistency of the interpretations of narratives with existing research studies and links to existing psychological theory; 2. Provided verbatim quotations as 'evidence' to support theoretical claims (Riessman, 2008).
Credibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintained transparency of approach through detailed reporting of: how methodological decisions were made; how the methods developed were appropriate in relation to my research questions and epistemology; how interpretations were produced, including discussion where appropriate of the alternatives that were considered (Riessman, 2008); 2. Maintained transparency in the analysis process by using quotations and transcript excerpts thereby enabling the reader to understand what analytic interpretations are based on (Yardley, 2009).
Coherence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Triangulation of 'evidence'. Mixed-methods approach (Resiliency Scales questionnaire as well as narrative interviews) enabled exploration of UASCs perceptions of coping from two sources, giving added depth and coherence to the accounts (Yardley, 2009); 2. Demonstrated coherence between, as well as within, narrative accounts (Riessman, 2008). Following analysis of individual accounts, the 3 sets of analyses were taken together to explore points of convergence and divergence. Points where individual UASC's accounts converged thematically were identified, thereby "<i>creating a community of experience</i>" (p.191). Points on which the UASC's accounts differed (i.e. disconfirming instances) enriched theory development (Yardley, 2009).
Internal consistency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrated that the interpretations of the data are consistent with the data itself by using direct quotations from UASCs narratives as illustrative examples of the developing 'findings' and theory. Extensive use of quotations is a well established practice in narrative research reports in order to build up the arguments and to present the reader with the 'evidence' for them in its original form (Crossley, 2000; see Goodman, 2004 and Groark et al., 2010, for examples); 2. Presented direct quotations inclusive of their context (e.g. in response to a question) rather than presenting them as though the interviewees naturally and spontaneously talk about themselves in this way. A more believable and valid representation of the participants meaning than quotations that are presented lacking context.
Accuracy	<p>Participants are engaged and empowered through narrative interviews → they set the agenda, producing more accurate and meaningful data (Elliot, 2005; Yardley, 2009).</p> <p>Use of a non-directive interview produce more 'truthful' data → open-ended</p>

	questions instead of a standardized set; prompts to support narrative production but no interruptions if UASCs are narrating → UASCs could give as much detail as they liked about a topic and use their own words and organising framework to describe experiences (Mishler, 1986) → not limited by researcher's schedule or assumptions.
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Table 3.6: Measures taken to ensure validity and trustworthiness of narrative analysis.

Finally, it is generally held within interpretative approaches that 'participant feedback' or 'member checks' (i.e. presenting the interpretations and conclusions to participants to check their responses have not been misinterpreted) strengthens validity (Riessman, 2008; Yardley, 2009). However, whilst 'checking back' may be good practice in terms of research ethics, it does not necessarily establish validity in narrative research (Riessman, 2008) and is not always feasible or appropriate (Yardley, 2009). Firstly, social science research is guided by theory and *"our theoretical commitments may or may not be compatible (or even meaningful) to research participants"* (Riessman, 2008; p.197). Qualitative analysis is about more than the expressed views; it highlights contradictions, suppressed meanings and functions in narratives (Yardley, 2009), concepts which may be very difficult and possibly even unhelpful to explain to participants. Secondly, much time may have passed between the interviews and completion of the analysis, therefore issues that were significant for participants then may no longer be so now. Personal narratives are not static, so that memories and meanings of experiences change with time. Thirdly, participants may not agree with the researcher's conclusions but this does not necessarily mean they are invalid. *"Different interpretations can reveal multiple realities and 'truths'"* (Riessman, 2008; p.198) and in so doing represent a kind of 'triangulation' of the evidence. Finally, conclusions based on similarities and differences between several narratives cannot be evaluated by individual participants. In this study it was felt that to return to UASCs and explain my 'findings': a) was problematic in terms of language barriers to explaining the

complexity and subtle nuances of interpretations; and b) had potential to stir up difficult memories and emotions for a second time. We need to consider whether participants will be able to relate to the analysis and whether feedback will be received constructively (Yardley, 2009). In this instance I felt that validity could be strengthened in other ways (as detailed in Table 3.6); to return to the participants would be for my benefit and not necessarily theirs, and as such an unethical endeavor.

3.7.2 Generalisability

Generalisability refers to how far findings relating to a particular sample can be generalized to apply to a broader population (Elliot, 2005). This is a difficult criteria for qualitative research to meet, not least because it is impractical to gather and complete in-depth analysis on data from a large enough sample to be statistically representative (Yardley, 2009). Whilst the approach taken in this study may not meet criteria for statistical generalisability, this was never an intention. Narrative psychological research does not aim to make broad generalisations nor to claim that the sample in the study is typical of the population it represents (Crossley, 2000). By studying particular individuals in particular contexts, narrative research aspires to 'theoretical' or 'logical' generalisability i.e. hope that insights derived in this study would prove useful in other similar contexts (Yardley, 2009).

In order to enhance generalisability of the research, the following issues were addressed: 1) transparent approach to enable a 'common-sense view'; 2) promotion of the usefulness of the findings (or 'catalytic validity'); and 3) recruiting a sample that was representative of the UASC population.

Firstly, I was transparent about the sample represented, the methodological decisions and the interpretive approach in order to enable readers to decide how far the presented 'evidence' in this particular study may be transferred to similar settings or groups; a 'common-sense' view of generalisability (Elliot, 2005). Secondly, it was hoped that the research leads to dialogue and change for participants, researchers and critical social theory i.e. 'catalytic validity' (Lather, 1986). As Yardley (2009; p.250) surmises: *"there is no point in carrying out research unless findings have potential to make a difference...ultimately, the key reason for taking all the steps...to show that your research is valid is so that it can have an impact."* Whilst validity in relation to usefulness is an ongoing goal and cannot be reported as an achieved outcome at this early stage, nevertheless the findings of this study were fed-back to the UASC Social Care team, with the purpose of generating discussion and fostering developing professional practice (see public domain briefing, Appendix 19). Furthermore, as an educational psychologist (EP) well placed within a service and a county with 243 schools (Ofsted, 2010), the information contained in this report will be condensed and disseminated to those professionals for whom it has relevance i.e. those schools where UASC children and young people, or indeed other LAC children are placed. Practical implications that will be useful for practitioners and policy makers emerged from this study (see section 4.5) and so reflect its validity in relation to the 'real world' (Yardley, 2009). Finally, sample size and representativeness in relation to generalisability were discussed in section 3.5.2 and will be further discussed in section 4.7.1.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results and discussion of the narrative analysis are presented together, organised in relation to the three research questions. In the following discussion, I have made extensive use of direct quotations from interview transcripts, whilst also attempting to be reasonably selective. The significant use of quotations is deliberate with the aim of illustrating my interpretations and preserving the 'voice' of UASCs. However, it is important to acknowledge at this stage that narrative research does inevitably involve *"appropriation of other people's experience for our own purposes"* (Lapsley, 2006; p.476). This means that whilst I have tried to keep quotations within their context to preserve the meaning (hence the length of some quotations); nevertheless, the narratives became somewhat fragmented through the analysis process (i.e. looking for emergent themes, structural analysis at the finer detail, comparisons made between transcripts). As a result of this process, Lapsley (2006; p.476) recognizes that the interviewee's experiences become *"instances of a point I am trying to make – a point that has emerged from collectivising their stories."* Thus it is acknowledged that in the following analysis and discussion, the researcher has been an active agent in the interpretation and construction of the 'findings' relating to UASCs experience of settling in the UK. Lapsley (2006) argues, *"this kind of appropriation"* associated with narrative research may be justified on grounds of: *"adding to knowledge, helping people with difficult issues and contributing to the undoing of social oppression"* (p.478). It is crucial however, to recognize and keep distinct the different 'voices' represented in written research. Thus it is acknowledged here that the 'voice' in this report is the researcher's, whilst clearly there could be no voice at all without the UASC's narration.

Throughout this discussion the 3 UASCs are referred to as P1, P2 and P3 to preserve their anonymity.

4.1.1 The Resiliency Scales

Firstly, the Resiliency Scales results are presented as these will be referred to in relation to the narrative analysis during the following discussion. Table 4.1 details the subscale scores and Table 4.2 provides further breakdown of scores for each component of the subscales (see Appendix 15 for related graphs). Resilience is associated with higher scores for Sense of Mastery and Sense of Relatedness and lower scores for Emotional Reactivity. Whilst most of the UASC's scores fell within the average range expected for their age and gender, some outliers were noted. P2 demonstrated below average Sense of Mastery (especially Self-Efficacy and Adaptability) and Sense of Relatedness (particularly Support, Comfort and Tolerance). P3 demonstrated Emotional Reactivity that was nearly outside of the average range, due to elevated Sensitivity and Recovery.

Resiliency Subscale	T-Scores		
	P1	P2	P3
Sense of Mastery	47	34	50
Sense of Relatedness	44	35	44
Emotional Reactivity	51	54	59

Table 4.1: T-scores for the 3 subscales of the Resiliency Scales as reported by UASCs. T-scores of 40-60 are considered to be within the average range.

Subscale	Component	Scaled Scores		
		P1	P2	P3
Sense of Mastery	Optimism	8	8	10
	Self-Efficacy	10	4	9
	Adaptability	10	6	11
Sense of Relatedness	Trust	9	9	9
	Support	9	5	10
	Comfort	9	6	8
	Tolerance	8	5	7
Emotional Reactivity	Sensitivity	10	8	15
	Recovery	9	12	13
	Impairment	11	13	11

Table 4.2: Scaled Scores for the 10 components of the 3 Resiliency subscales. Scaled Scores of 7-13 are considered to be within the average range.

4.1.2 Key findings

UASCs interviewed in this study reported a range of emotions relating to their pre- and post-migratory experiences, that would seem to put them 'at risk' of poor mental health outcomes. Their narratives reflected emotional experiences of anxiety (feeling worried), depression (hopelessness and despondency), fear (feeling scared), confusion ("going crazy") and anger (frustration). The events and experiences to which UASCs attributed their emotions, were numerous and complex (summarised in Appendix 16). Nevertheless, despite these problematic experiences and emotional responses, UASCs in this sample exhibited (for the most part) age-appropriate resilience (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). The narrative analysis aimed to explore UASC narratives in terms of how they perceived themselves to have 'coped' and been supported (or hindered) in their resilience.

Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the main findings of narrative analysis, each aspect of which will be discussed in further detail. The two key 'stories' of this research are: the interplay between seeking personal agency and seeking relationships; and the interplay between suppression and coherence (of emotions, memories and personal narratives) by UASCs. It is suggested that these two tensions were underlying and fundamental to the majority of other coping strategies discussed by UASCs. Furthermore, these two tensions reflect patterns of interaction between individuals' coping capacities and their environment (i.e. prime examples of context-dependent resilience).

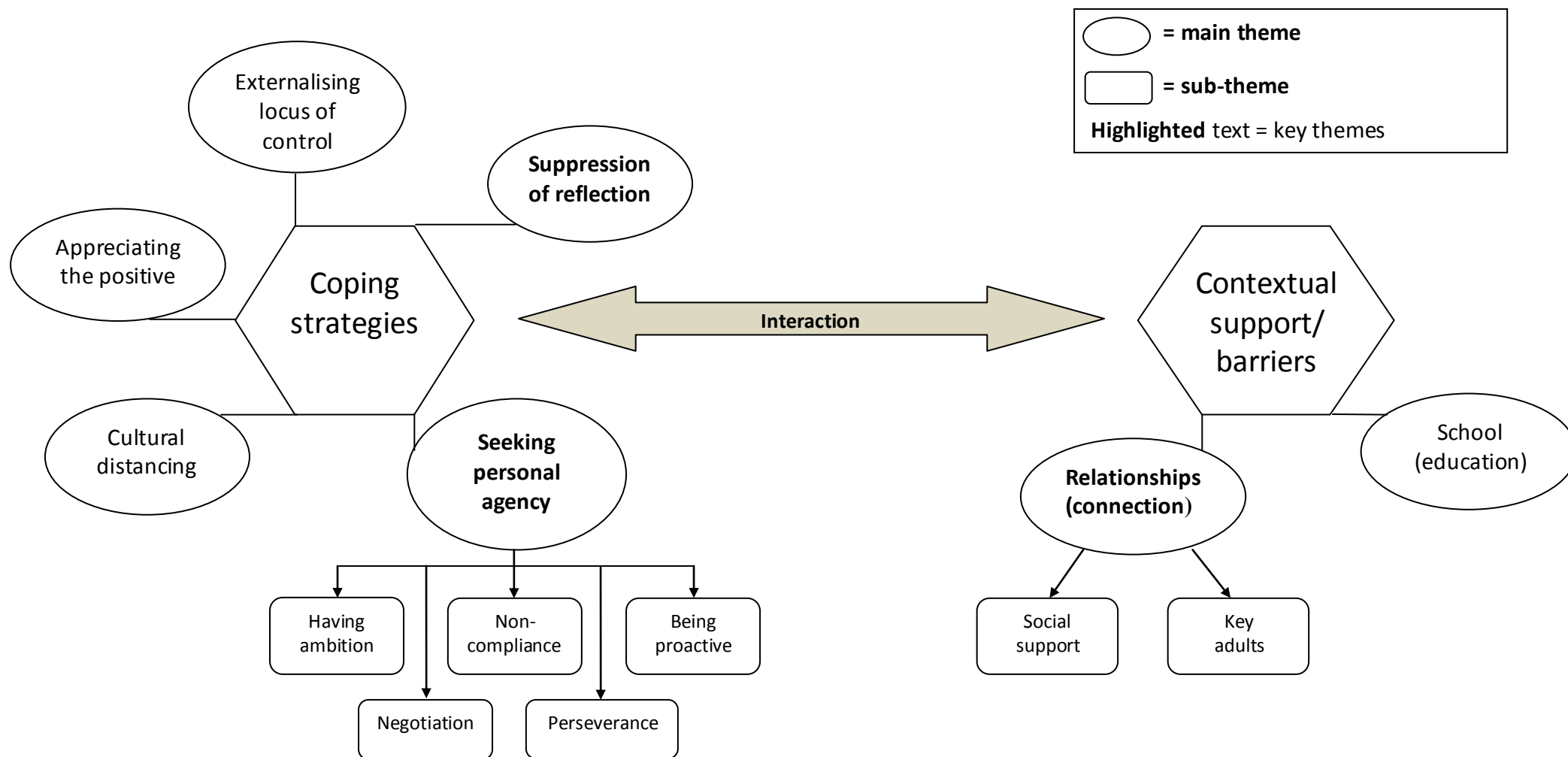


Figure 4.1: Overview of narrative analysis key 'findings' relating to UASC coping strategies and environmental influences on resilience.

In the following chapter, UASC coping strategies will be discussed (Research Question 1), followed by discussion of the environmental influences on resilience and the influence of these on UASC's coping strategies (Research Question 2). The analysis concludes with discussion of how these findings translate into implications for the practice of professionals working with UASCs (Research Question 3).

4.2 How do UASCs maintain resilience throughout their experiences of loss, transition and adversity?

As described in the Literature Review, recent studies have highlighted several coping strategies employed by UASCs arriving in 'safe countries' (Goodman, 2004; Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010; Raghallaigh, 2010). In this analysis, coping strategies are understood as cognitive or behavioural efforts to manage situations that are perceived as demanding or exceeding one's personal resources (Crockett et al., 2007). Five main coping strategies were identified within the narratives of UASCs in WCC, through analysis of both what they said and how they said it (thematic and structural NA). Strategies were: appreciating the positive; cultural distancing; suppression of reflection; externalising locus of control; and seeking personal agency. Whilst seeking personal agency was the most salient strategy to emerge, it will be discussed last in this section due to extended discussion of additional sub-themes within it.

4.2.1 Coping strategy #1: Appreciating the positive

Appreciating the positive in their current circumstances through making comparisons to the alternatives, appeared to be a means by which UASCs maintained a hopeful and resilient frame

of mind. The ability to recognise relative advantages and/or benefits of their circumstances (i.e. viewing the 'glass as half full') appeared a deliberate strategy employed by UASCs and is similar to the strategy 'adopting a positive outlook' identified by Raghallaigh and Gilligan (2010).

P1 spoke positively in relation to education and school experiences, comparing the ease of access, range of opportunities and activities in English schools to the danger, poverty and political complications associated with attending school in Afghanistan (Quotation 1a).

P3 discussed differences between the UK and Iran in relation to politics and social equality. He was open and enthusiastic about how much he values the "fairness" he perceives in the UK, despite the "bad things" he reported happening to him since arrival. P3 described corruption and inequality in relation to upper and lower socio-political classes in his country; privileges enjoyed by the former and threats to life endured by the latter. He compared this to the "fairness" he observes in British society and politics, where regardless of one's status or connections, everyone has equal rights and access, e.g. to a defense in court, to benefits, health care and to resources such as food and petrol (Quotation 1b).

P3 also made positive comparisons between himself and other UASCs appreciating the freedom he enjoys in comparison to the experiences of friends seeking asylum in other European countries (Quotation 1c). Taylor (1983) identified this tendency to make 'downward comparisons' in narratives of cancer patients and suggested that such 'self-enhancing evaluations' enable the person to sustain hopeful belief that he or she is doing better than others in similar situations (McAdams, 1993). Comparative descriptions of freedom and hope for the future were also found in UASC narratives by Groark et al. (2010). Even within the context of

his own experiences, P3 down-played negative aspects of life in the UK, comparing them to perceived benefits; a technique observed by Maegusku-Hewett et al. (2007). P3 was able to appreciate the positives of his situation, in spite of significant difficulties encountered along the way and thereby remain hopeful for the future (Quotation 1d).

Quotation 1a. P1 p14: *"I never been school (in Afghanistan) [.....] English (school) is lots of different because there is girls and boys same class. In Afghanistan, they are different....If you go school in Afghanistan, big problem as well.... Because fighting Taliban, you know? They say don't go to school or something. So in England school is...there is a lot of...erm lots of things, you know.....You have lots of thing yeah to do lessons you know like for example you know....Afghanistan is poor country you know."*

Quotation 1b. P3 p26-31: *"Something not fair yeah. It's about law. We got rubbish law in our country. I really really really want to born here [...] For example in Kurdistan, all this politicians in Kurdistan by Prime Minister, all they get good life. [...] I mean they powerful [...] They got connections. If they kill you, if they go prison, after two hour his father or someone calling prime minister "This is my son. Take out" after two hours, three. You poor you cannot do anything [...] Politicians, got thousands, thousands money or million, million money every week. Is they got houses more than twenty of them. Everywhere, every city they got house more than 20 of them, each person. Poor people don't have food, don't have gas in their house to cook. I mean this is not fair about my country. Bout Asia, about Asia, not just about Iraq, about all Kurdistan, about all I don't know, say Iran. [...] I mean, we don't have right law like in UK [...] I was happy and like said, I wish born in UK, I wish my family here. Seriously because I like the law, I like everything, just everything fair. That's how I like it. Everything treat the same. You not going petrol station wait for two hour after one, Gordon Brown son, go in front of you, if you say where you going, he kill you or someone kill you, security kick you. No one saying what you do to that person. This is not in here."*

Quotation 1c. P3 p38-39: *"...just well good thing about UK, is well better, better than other countries, seriously. Is better than other country in Europe as well. Because I got friend in UK, they refusing in UK, been refused, they went to German. I still talk to them by internet. They said no country good like UK [...] I got friend went to German, they say in German they give you mile (?) address, I don't know how many mile you allowed to go out around your address, I don't know how many mile. But if say you getting few mile, I don't know how many mile. After, this man if you go out and cross this mile, you getting caught, you getting letter by police in German [...] They give you mile to go out, you not allowed go, whatever. Today I wanna go London, I go. Police aren't told me why you go out in Worcester, or why you go out in 50 mile. I can go London,*

I can go Scotland. That is good thing about England, is not in other country. I got another friend in Holland, he is Kurdish. I talk to him by internet [...] So he saying you going to be in hostel, it's like a camp or something. You stay there, they block you in there until you get (?). If you don't have passport, you not allowed out that house. You have to stay there until Home Office decision, in Holland [...] Sometime people been block there for two year, depend on how long they take reply back to you. My friend was there for two years and a half, Home Office didn't reply. Keep saying wait..."

Quotation 1d. P3 p46: *"When I come to UK that is better life after [laugh] after bad bad thing happen, bad thing happen when you come, bad thing happen when you UK, good thing happen when I got passport now [laugh] [...] Long time because you see too much bad thing. People been racism, people beating you, people knock you or whatever, people steal something, and I don't know, you don't speak English, it's not your country, you don't speak much, you don't have no family. It's too hard to go on here. But about law is very good. Is something just about law, it's very very good, is very fair in this country. I like it."*

4.2.2 Coping strategy #2: Cultural distancing

Contrasting with the previous strategy, UASCs also made comparisons favourable to their own country of origin and critical of British culture. It is suggested that these comparisons enabled UASCs to maintain a sense of self through recalling details of their heritage that they are proud of and seek to live by. P1 was quick to point out that not everything was different (or better) in the UK; that he would spend time with friends and play sports in Afghanistan, as he does in the UK. Similarly, P2 observed that he preferred the weather in Afghanistan and P3 that food was tastier in Iran. Within P3's narrative in particular there was considerable discussion of differences between British and Iranian culture in relation to family life. He discussed ideals and practices of his home country in more favourable terms than those of the UK, as though by doing so he was able to maintain a sense of pride in his roots and aspirations. P3 made comparisons in relation to parenting styles, family responsibilities, work ethic, alcohol consumption, relationships and marriage. When describing the ideals of his home country he repeatedly used personal and

possessive pronouns such as "we" and "my", emphasising his connection to and ownership of the described behaviours and values (Quotations 2a and 2b). Maegusuku-Hewett et al. (2007) discussed the importance of collectivity, or positive social identity, in refugee children and suggested that cultural identity supports resilience in stressful circumstances. Maintaining cultural identity helps to reduce feelings of loss, displacement and confusion experienced by UASCs and forms an important part of coping in adversity.

Whilst distancing oneself from the 'host' culture and maintaining a sense of cultural identity was a strategy evident in UASC narratives, there were also apparent contradictions, or 'disconfirming instances' (Yardley, 2009). The pride that P3 took in his cultural roots was somewhat inconsistent with stories he told about his 'lived life' in the UK. Instead of distancing himself from the culture he observed, it seemed that P3 had integrated with British culture. He described no drinking in "my country" yet told stories about his own drinking; similarly he justified the merit of no sex before marriage according to his religion, yet described his own relationship with an English girlfriend (Quotations 2c and 2d). These behaviours seem to reflect the strategy of 'adjusting by changing and learning' (Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010) i.e. changing existing behaviours and learning new ones including those specific to British youth culture such as dating.

P1 and P2 also reflected a desire to integrate rather than separate themselves as a means of settling. P2 was keen to distance himself from other ethnic minority groups in the city and was actively seeking an opportunity to return to the countryside to be around "English people" again. P2 described the former as "different", "no good", "fighting" and "scary" and English people as "nice" and "quiet". Desire to integrate seemed to be closely linked to recognition that he was more able to learn English when surrounded by people whose first language is English, as well as

an increased feeling of safety. Therefore integration (as opposed to distancing) served both emotional and practical purposes for P2.

Quotation 2a. P3 p33: *"We are looking after mum and dad when they get old, we not give them to council or this thing. We look after them until they die and the mum and dad, once they die, sometime one before the other die, this person look after until them die. That is something different, in here different because I see, I'm sorry about that, I'm not saying bad thing, I dunno. Is life so different here."*

Quotation 2b. P3 p35-36: *"In my country [...] just get their life together and trust each other and never swearing. In here, I see too many wife and husband swear bad.[...] Arguing, swearing at each other and not respect. When kids, sitting down, smoking weed, all this thing. I mean, they not listen to basically to husband...."*

Quotation 2c. P3 p19-25: *"I have little bit maybe drinking whatever all the thing here with girlfriend, with outside like but if I be honest, if my religion say, if you drink alcohol, if you die, you never go heaven, you go in hell because you drinking this liquid that has made something bad you, and make you feel bad or make you losing control, make you bad thing to your friend, make you, that's what my religion says. We don't drink in my country."*

Quotation 2d. P3 p31: *"Yeah that's because like I said, I got girlfriend, we be sleep together nearly three year whatever. But if I be honest, I'm not allowed to do this, I have to get married first. So that is mean basically more clean for myself, that is what Koran say we have to be married first."*

A tension existed between desire to distance oneself from the host culture in order to maintain a sense of self, and desire to integrate with the host culture as a source of emotional, social and practical support. This was most evident in P3's narrative where disparity between who he currently is and who he ideally wants to be was clear. As he looked towards his future, to marriage and family life, the values of the host culture that he appeared to have assimilated in his present life, contrast sharply to core values he carried from childhood experiences and education (Quotation 3a). This tension results in a sense of ambivalence and confusion relating to his identity and his aspirations which filters throughout his narrative (Quotation 3b).

Quotation 3a. P3 p32-35: *"So basically I been with my girlfriend for 3 years and I cannot trust her to get married [...] Some people I see, in our culture, we married one time. We die together [...] Since I been with my girlfriend, I'm sorry about that, my girlfriend mum, changed about 4 boyfriend. [pause] I don't understand because I know it's fun. I like have sleep with girl every hour, different different girl, you know, it's better and more thing! I mean something when you get married, it's different to when you single and that is which make me I can't trust my girlfriend one day not leave me. [...] I wanna find girl [...] she is not sleep with too much man and become my culture, how I am Muslim and treat me same and look after kid and promise me forever and ever not be bored with me in 10 year time, 5 year time, I'm changing, this is life. After 2, 3 kids, she is want to another man or whatever, I don't want this thing. One time, I wanna with wanna die with one woman..."*

Quotation 3b. P3 p29-38: *"I definitely wanna be here forever. But something about my culture, sometime make me I go live different part but I am still UK person [...] it just my culture but I never ever want to stay somewhere like this when not fair. But sometime like make you to do because your language and sometime you follow in your culture [...] My passport. That has made me to sit up (settle) here. That is make me who I am here."*

Overall it is suggested that both distancing from, and integration with, the 'host' culture, enabled UASCs to cope with the transition in the short-term. A degree of flexibility to alternate between the two strategies supported coping at different times and in different ways. However, narratives hint that this approach to coping, may in the longer-term generate conflict and ambivalence in relation to the individual's identity and future aspirations.

4.2.3 Coping strategy #3: Suppression of reflection

The third coping strategy evident in UASC narratives was suppression and avoidance of reflection or 'meaning making'. This finding emerged primarily from structural analysis of specific narrative episodes using the framework and criteria outlined by Baerger and McAdams (1999) (see Methodology chapter). Life Story Coherence (LSC) is a construct relating to the form of narrative

and specifically, the extent to which narratives provide adequate orientation, structure, affect and integration (see Table 3.4 for explanation). This was a useful model for structural analysis, due to the established link between narrative coherence and psychological well-being (Baerger & McAdams, 1999). Several narrative episodes were analysed for each participant and mean scores for each domain as well as overall LSC were calculated (see Table 4.3). See Appendix 17 for full breakdown of LSC analysis relating to each narrative episode.

UASC	Orientation (max. 7)	Structure (max. 7)	Affect (max. 7)	Integration (max. 7)	Total LSC (max. 28)
P1	3.0	3.0	4.7	4.3	15.0
P2	3.5	4.8	3.8	3.3	15.3
P3	5.2	5.4	4.8	5.2	20.6

Table 4.3: Mean scores for orientation, structure, affect, integration and overall Life Story Coherence (LSC) of specific narrative episodes as shared by UASCs.

Results of structural analysis indicated that P3 produced narratives with relatively high LSC, whilst P1 and P2's narratives reflected generally lower coherence overall. Whilst differences in narrative detail and subsequent LSC scores may have been partly due to differences in English fluency, it is also (cautiously) suggested that these results reflect different stages of coping. P3 had arrived in the UK aged 14 but was 19 at the time of interview. He had secured indefinite leave to remain in the UK, had gained British citizenship and a passport and therefore, it is suggested, was able to reflect on his experiences from a position of relative stability. P1 and P2 however, were both aged 17 and still positioned in the midst of the legal and emotional challenges faced by UASCs. Whilst P3's ability to reflect upon and integrate his experiences into a coherent life story supports Baerger and McAdams (1999) suggestion that narrative coherence is linked to psychological wellbeing (resilience); P1 and P2's results would suggest that there may be periods of time where ability to avoid reflection is facilitative to coping with adversity,

especially in the short-term. Indeed suppression and avoidance of potentially upsetting thoughts and feelings is a widely reported 'finding' in research relating to UASCs coping (Goodman, 2004; Groark et al., 2010; Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010). P1 and P2 avoided drawing any strong conclusions about themselves (identity) or their lives (themes) based on their experiences.

Furthermore, whilst P3 produced more coherent narratives overall, it was still noticeable that he put considerable effort and detail into narration of events (orientation and structure), building up suspense and empathy with the listener, then concluded his stories simply and factually. P3 avoided extrapolating much meaning about himself from the events he described, so it is suggested that an attitude of acceptance was functional in the interests of preservation of self-esteem and resilience. Even when asked directly how an event made him feel, P3 avoided reflecting on emotions and thoughts. In Quotation 4a P3 had just described a time when he drank too much alcohol in the Children's Home and was hospitalised, yet interpreted my question as referring to his physical body rather than his emotional self. Throughout the interview P3 tended to describe his emotions in terms of physiological sensations, not the thoughts (Quotation 4b). This could be indicative of suppression of thoughts and avoidance of reflection, or perhaps suggests never having developed the ability to make links between thoughts and feelings, to be able to explain them to another. Groark et al. (2010) also noted that UASCs experienced the impact of events physically and emotionally, *"with little divide between 'physical' and 'mental' descriptions of distress"* (p.434).

Avoidance of reflection was also noted at the finer level of episodic analysis within structural analysis. P1 and P2 tended to give details of initiating events (1), their attempts to meet challenges (3) and consequences that resulted from their attempts (4); however both would

frequently skip details of an internal response (2) which ordinarily precipitates the attempt (Stein & Glenn, 1979; episodic analysis system). For example, P2 described his experience of feeling dissatisfied with his college class; his narrative gave no internal response, only event, attempt and consequence (Quotation 4c). Again this pattern would suggest that whilst still in the midst of adversity UASCs avoided discussing, if not thinking, about their own goals, thoughts or feelings and instead focused on the situation, their actions and the outcomes. P3 on the other hand gave extended narratives relating his internal responses and intentions, perhaps with the benefit of hindsight and distance from events.

Conversely in other narrative episodes, structural analysis revealed instances where UASCs gave general affective information (statements of feeling and emotional significance of events) but minimal detail for orientation (contextual information) or structure (sequence of events). It is tentatively suggested that this pattern indicates the emotional memories for certain periods of time were strong, whilst memories of precise details of what happened were suppressed (consciously or unconsciously). To an extent UASCs appeared to be aware of this phenomenon but viewed suppression as involuntary. When asked about his first impressions of England, P1 explained that he had *"lots of problems"* then so cannot remember what he thought. P2 also explained that there were *"too much problems, difficulties"* when he first arrived and so now he cannot think about that period of his life. P3 implied that his memory loss was anxiety induced and not a deliberate choice on his part (Quotation 4d). Kohli (2006) suggests that when children choose not to talk about experiences that have felt unmanageable, they may sometimes actually *"wipe them out of conscious memory"* (p.709). In doing so they become confused about what happened and lose their capacity to speak coherently about the past. This is one possible explanation for poor narrative coherence observed in this study.

Finally, there was a tendency towards telling other people's stories as well as or instead of their own. This affected the coherence of personal narratives but may have served a protective function for the narrator i.e. reducing the interview intensity, distancing themselves from personal memories and avoiding deeper reflection on their own experiences and meaning in relation to self.

Quotation 4a. P3 p25:

CD: *How did that make you feel about yourself?*

P3: *Very bad. Very bad because when I wake up this day [...] I more and more sick and all the thing, the doctor ask if the staff say probably I be fine now because my life not in danger this more. Because I wake up they think I am safe and bit better. But I still drunk. I have to drink too much water, and they look after me, don't fall over whatever on the stairs and stuff. They bring me back to home. I was dizzy for 2, 3 day after this. I swear yeah. I was, I didn't feel good. When I home, sometime laughing to myself still and I just bang into wall, I think it's a door [laugh]. This is a bad thing happen.*

CD: *Did it make you think anything about your life or yourself?*

P3: *I just think how stupid I am this time. Because I nearly kill myself.*

Quotation 4b. P3 p56: *"If I go angry with someone, I don't punch them; I go headache in my head. I keep coming back, coming back, to mind thinking more and more. And that is making me getting headache very bad. I dunno, but I don't do that action. If someone make me angry, I don't go fight with but I think about it, my heart very, very strange, I dunno whatever what is called...feeling bad, heart feeling bad, very bad."*

Quotation 4c. P2 p33-34:

P2: *Yeah, because I pass this exam yeah, in this college...and teacher tell to me, "You do this thing". Tell to me "You no really exam". I say "I pass exam, I had a certificate. Talking exam". Teacher say "No your English is no better, than these other people". I say "No understand these people English, just talking different, different things, fighting". Say "I'm no coming because I pass in school talking exam".*

CD: *Very frustrating. And you can't go to a different class?*

P2: *No.*

CD: *They won't let you?*

P2: *No, is no good college yeah. She say "When you pass exam, you go".*

CD: Right.

P2: I say, "I learning exam" and they say "No, you no talking". I say "Okay, I not talking, I am not coming forever this college".

Quotation 4d. P3 p10:

P3: Yeah September was, when I arrive. In September I was come to UK, I think September was, because sometime I am losing my brain! Like said, I got tablet for this thing. I keep losing thing in my head.

CD: Your memories?

P3: Yeah seriously. I was not like it before.

4.2.4 Coping strategy #4: Externalising locus of control

Evaluative statements in UASCs narratives indicated external locus of control and/or blame in relation to events they described. It is suggested that this strategy helped preserve self-esteem and resilience. P3 told elaborate and detailed stories, frequently concluding with a phrase surmising that bad things happen to him. In some of the scenarios he narrated (see Table 4.4) events did appear to have been outside of his control. However, arguably other situations involved some choice or responsibility on his part for the escalation of events, which he tended not to reflect upon.

Narrative episode	Evaluative statement
1. Clothes stolen from washing machine in Children's Home.	<i>"Because too much problems happen to me in this country." (p.9)</i>
2. Disagreement with foster carer once he asks to leave because of poor food and her gambling.	<i>"I mean bad, too many thing, bad thing happen in my life. Seriously." (p.12)</i>
3. Misunderstanding and fight over food with another young person in care.	<i>"...too much bad thing happened!" (p.14)</i>
4. Staying out late with friends and taken by police back to the Children's Home.	<i>"So too many bad thing happen to me." (p.19)</i>
5. Hospitalisation following drinking too much with other young people at the Children's Home.	<i>"So bad thing happen to me". (p.25)</i>
6. The journey to the UK and experience of agents.	<i>"..that is bad thing happen there as well." (p.44) "..bad thing happen when you come over as well." (p.45)</i>
7. Life in the UK prior to gaining his passport.	<i>"...bad thing happen when you come, bad thing happen when you UK, good thing happen when I got passport now." (p.46)</i>
8. Experience of making friends.	<i>"Because I...bad thing happen. They my head little bit change. Basically I cannot be much, like be what I was before. Well different now." (p.52)</i>
9. Emotions and experience of anger/upset.	<i>"I wasn't like this before, like I said I get too much bad thing happen like err past so I become more difficult in the head, I dunno." (p.54)</i>

Table 4.4: Narrative episodes and evaluative statements reflecting external locus of control by P3.

Similarly, P1 and P2 tended to summarise narrative episodes by evaluating situations (rather than themselves) as being "no good" or "boring", e.g. P2's account of college and P1's account of independent living. Thus contrary to Taylor's (1983) suggestion that as part of cognitive adaptation to threatening events individuals will search for meaning in experience, UASCs narratives did not reflect such an attempt; generally the meaning they made was that 'bad things happen', with a tone of resignation or acceptance of this. Furthermore, UASCs attributed success as well as difficulties, to external sources. P1 attributed settling in the UK to external influences e.g. his SW getting him into school. Likewise P3 attributed experiences that he had enjoyed to Children's Home staff (Quotation 5a). In response to Resiliency Scale items, P3's responses further reflected an external locus of control, interpreting the questions in terms of environmental influences and involvement of other parties, rather than his own internal resources (Quotation 5b).

Quotation 5a. P3 p12: *"It's not coz I am strong whatever, it's about because Children Home make me like this experience."*

Quotation 5b. P3 p49 & 51:

CD: *"Life is fair".*

P3: *If you talk about outside UK or my country, I say no, it's not fair. Never. Because like I explain for you, I'm talking about just England, it's excellent. Life here good. But if you go outside, like Asia country, or like my country or whatever, Iran or Iraq, it's not fair.*

[.....]

CD: *"If I have a problem, I can solve it".*

P3: *Yep, probably because can talk to people. Talk to social worker whatever..."*

It may be expected that by externalising their locus of control, UASCs would be prone to learned helplessness; however passivity was by no means the tone of their narratives, as will now be discussed.

4.2.5 Coping strategy #5: Seeking personal agency

Desire for, and attempts to increase personal agency was a strong coping strategy that emerged through both the content and form of UASC narratives; in what they said and how they said it. Groark et al. (2010) also found that *"attempting to gain control or agency in their lives (through gaining 'status') to maintain belief in themselves so they can make changes in the future"* was a key way in which UASCs coped with adversity. This theme links to Taylor's (1983) theory that as part of cognitive adaptation to threatening circumstances, individuals strive to gain a sense of mastery. Pursuit of an increased sense of agency and control was demonstrated in a number of ways within UASC narratives, through: negotiation, non-compliance, being proactive, perseverance and having ambition (see Figure 4.2). Each of these sub-themes will now be discussed and following this the meaning of agency will be discussed in order to develop understanding of why UASCs sought increased personal agency. It should be noted that there was tension in UASC's narratives between desire for agency, control and choice in situations (possibly to preserve self-esteem and identity and to reduce feelings of anxiety), versus the necessity of 'keeping your head down' and 'staying out of trouble' in order to secure leave to remain (which usually meant passive acceptance of situations and decisions).

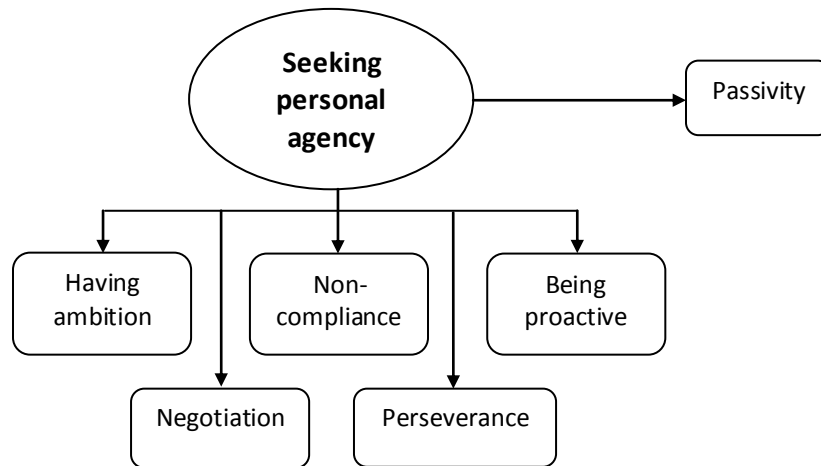


Figure 4.2: Sub-themes (strategies) of main theme 'seeking personal agency' evident within UASC narratives of coping.

4.2.5.1 Seeking personal agency through negotiation

Both P2 and P3 narrated episodes of difficulty they had coped with by giving examples of conversations they had with others in which they portrayed themselves as: a) negotiating rather than accepting constraints; and b) asserting themselves as in control rather than subject to others. When describing his current situation, being unhappy with both his college and the area he lives in, P2 used assertive "I" statements and factual statements to describe his intentions (Quotation 6a). Similarly when describing how he came to be living in the city, P2 described a negotiation process in which he framed himself as assertive, yet ultimately unsuccessful (Quotation 6b). P3 also described numerous incidents in which he positions himself as negotiating with his SW regarding living arrangements and with Children's Centre staff regarding holiday and weekend activities, evening curfews, school placement and his Care Worker.

Quotation 6a. P2 p21: *"Yeah I tell them, my support worker and social worker. I tell them quick move me back to Hereford. I no coming to this college....people in Birmingham, is no good. All the area is dirty."*

Quotation 6b. P2 p36:

P2: I ask in London you know....I ask before, "I am going to London". She say "No chance in London". I say "Why no chance?" She say "No chance". I say "Okay I move to Birmingham". Two years before, she say "No chance. When you school finish you go". I say "Okay". When I come to Birmingham, I say "No this area", I say "Alum Rock, no different"...I say "I'm no going to Alum Rock. I am coming to Birmingham, no Alum Rock". When I come to this house, Alum Rock is 20 minutes, not far away.

CD: Right I see.

P2: Yeah because I say "No coming to dirty area. I coming to Birmingham, nice area". Is just through this house. When I rented this house, very boring.

4.2.5.2 Seeking personal agency through non-compliance

Both P2 and P3 told stories of non-compliance or defiance against other people's directions or guidance. P3 described an ongoing battle between himself and Children's Home staff in relation to his desire for independence and freedom, which conflicted with the duty of care staff were trying to exercise (Quotation 7a). P2 described being unhappy with the college class he was placed in because, he reported, he has passed an exam that his teacher believed he had not. He described negotiating with the teacher rather than accepting the situation, but when this fails to achieve the desired outcome, he refuses to attend at all (Quotation 7b). This 'last resort' approach may be somewhat self-defeating and may not be constructive in relation to life outcomes. Nevertheless, it is suggested that refusal to comply served a purpose to the UASCs; preserving pride in the short-term and enabling expression of views and a sense of control in unhappy circumstances.

Quotation 7a. P3 p17-18: *"But when I was 16, nearly turn 17, I want to stay out more because I speak English a little bit more so I enjoy staying with friend, school friend, college friend whatever. I didn't want to be home at like 8 o'clock, for especially in summer time. 8 o'clock is sun in the sky whatever. They say "least you have to be back by half past 8 whatever or 9". But I wasn't want to. My friend go home about 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock. I want to hang around there [...] Sitting round with school friends, there till 10 o'clock, 9 o'clock. I want to stay there, good company with them! So I didn't want to go home always early time but we have to be there, sometime police come take me home. [...] Children's home ringing my phone, say "come back". I say "I'm not coming back, is too early. I don't wanna come home at this time". Whatever, sometime I go to Birmingham to see friend [...] I don't want to come back at 9 o'clock. So they say "you have to come back", I say "I'm not coming back. I come back 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock". They say "you have to be home at that time". I say "I'm going to get a train and come back". They say "if anything happen to you, we get in trouble". I didn't care, I didn't know what if they look after me they have to look after me for this thing. [...] if I got anything with me they get in trouble. I didn't know this kind of thing, I just keep arguing, "I'm not coming back!", they say "come back" I say "I'm not coming back!". [laughs]"*

Quotation 7b. P2 p33-34

B: Yeah, because I pass this exam yeah, in this college...and teacher tell to me, "You do this thing". Tell to me "You no really exam". I say "I pass exam, I had a certificate. Talking exam". Teacher say "No your English is no better, than these other people". I say "No understand these people English, just talking different, different things, fighting". Say "I'm no coming because I pass in school talking exam.

CD: Very frustrating. And you can't go to a different class?

B: No.

CD: They won't let you?

A: No, is no good college yeah.

B: She say "When you pass exam, you go".

CD: Right.

B: I say, "I learning exam" and they say "No, you no talking". I say "Okay, I not talking, I am not coming forever this college".

4.2.5.3 Seeking personal agency through being proactive

UASCs also narrated occasions when they acted proactively to achieve a goal (e.g. P3 finding a job and negotiating his benefits in order to save money to pay for his citizenship exam and passport) or assertively expressing their likes, dislikes and wishes (e.g. P1 and P2 not wanting to

live in a neighbourhood which they perceived to be dirty and unsafe, or P3 not wishing to change schools when he moved Children's Home because he did not want to make friends again). UASCs were determined in their efforts to have their needs recognised and met. Furthermore, whilst in some episodes reliance on an interpreter was a mediating factor in their success, UASCs did not allow their lack of English to prevent them at least trying to express needs and wishes.

In some scenarios UASCs pro-activity appears appropriate in the circumstances, for example to seek reassurance e.g. P3's attempts to chase his lawyer regarding a response from the Home Office (Quotation 8a). However, in other accounts UASCs confidence seems surprising. P3 described an early memory of living with a foster carer who gave him a very limited range of food for meals. He was unhappy with this, and some other issues, therefore asked his SW if he could move to a different carer (Quotation 8b). Even in situations where UASCs fear the repercussions of their actions for their legal status, their narratives reflected actions that were as resourceful and defensive as they dared e.g. P3 called 999 when feeling threatened and intimidated by another young person in care, but did not want to fight him and risk a criminal record.

Quotation 8a. P3 p5: *"...always I ring my new solicitor, say "You got anything new for me from Home Office?" He keep saying "No, I keep sending letter to Home Office and they not reply back nothing". So that has make me worry."*

Quotation 8b. P3 p10-11: *"This happened to me 2006, they put me in foster family in Worcester [...] the lady was nice to me first but she wasn't cook properly and she wasn't feed me properly, the lady. I wasn't speak English much, like I said, I wasn't speak English and I don't know how to ask her for food so all she was feed me, err make food for me was green beans. [...] She always make me green peas and potato. That all she give me and fish finger. I fed up. Seriously I fed up because I ring translator, I told the lady "Ring translator". When she ring translator, I told translator "Is green peas killing me! Every day green peas, I can't take it. I fed up with it". Told*

the lady "Change food for me" because in my country, and in UK as well, not just my country, I know UK life as well now, it's not every day same food. [...] One day became day time, she go out. Night-time her son just put grey peas in the microwave or potato from market already cooked. Just put in microwave and give to me. Probably they live like this, maybe they like it, but I don't. [...] I mean she didn't take care that good to me, bout food and this kind of thing. I'm not saying she was very bad, she was nice to me, but about food and to look after me wasn't that good. So I told the social worker, I wanna go from here."

4.2.5.4 Seeking personal agency through perseverance

In contrast to strategies of negotiation, non-compliance and being proactive, UASCs also alluded to episodes where they had no choice but to persevere in what they were doing (agency), whilst also allowing for the passage of time (passivity). P1 observed that the longer he was at school the more he got to know his teachers and make friends, the happier he felt (Quotation 9a). For P3, perseverance seemed to be for understanding, and thereby agency in circumstances beyond his control. The level of detail in his stories reflected a sense of striving to understand the world and to be understood by it. He did not accept information he was given at face value and neither did he give up explaining himself when English words appeared to elude him. For example, P3 described an episode in which a lawyer who he did not recognise visited his house to tell him he had secured leave to remain and the conversation they had in which P3 tried to overcome confusion and understand (rather than simply accept) the news (Quotation 9b).

Whilst P3 acknowledged that his situation improved over time, he argued that the prolonged uncertainty of the asylum seeking process was damaging to young people's mental health (Quotation 9c). Therefore whilst perseverance, even endurance, enabled UASCs to cope in the short-term, it seems that it is not without cost emotionally, if required over extended periods of time.

Quotation 9a. P1 p4: *"Well the first day I was scared a little bit. And I was really shy as well [nervous laugh] [.....] Er, it was on the first day, it was look boring. Yeah? Because I was don't know no teacher, no students, and I was really **sad but when I went more then made friends, know the teachers then I was happier.**"*

Quotation 9b. P3 p5: *"Yeah so someone knock my door in outside house. So I was went to downstairs and someone said, is like immigration people, they said "Is you (NAME)?" I said "Yes it is", but I was scared! [...] This was one man and wasn't got police with him, nothing, just said "I am your lawyer". I said "I never see you you lawyer". Is someone from part of the lawyer but I wasn't see this person when I went to office. That has been 2009 when I sent my passport. I see someone different. I know the person still, I know her. But the man come to me and is black man and he say "I'm your lawyer". I say "You're not my lawyer. I never see you before". He say "I got your indefinite leave?" "I say yeah indefinite". I was a little bit, oh great, it's not problem. I say "okay". He say "I bring for you but you have to sign for me because you're not with us anymore" [...] The man said "You have to sign for me because your passport come back to our office". I say "How come passport come back to your office because when I get new solicitor" [....] This has make me crazy because 2 years ago, "I left you, you're not my solicitor no longer but how come Home Office not updated my case and stuff for different solicitor".*

Quotation 9c. P3 p46: *"Bad thing happen when you come, bad thing happen when you UK, good thing happen when I got passport now [laugh]. So I mean you have to I don't know...take long to get now. You getting, I mean...**take too long you set up your life properly.**"*

4.2.5.5 Seeking personal agency through having ambition

UASCs narratives of future plans and aspirations reflected ambition towards achieving short and long-term goals, and were strengthened with elaborated reasoning and justification of their intentions. All 3 UASCs had career plans: nursing, mechanics and translating. For P1 this future ambition was motivating in his immediate schooling (Quotation 10a). Both P1 and P2 were focused on the need to learn English; P2 was unhappy with his college placement because other pupils also spoke EAL and he felt he could not learn from them (Quotation 10b). P1 and P2 discussed their intention to return to the countryside as soon as possible, to learn English

through being with English people, but also with a desire to live in a "nice" clean area. This dual purpose neatly illustrates the complex interplay between plans to secure basic needs (i.e. safety) and plans to secure opportunities for achievement and self-actualisation (Quotation 10c).

P3's future narrative was more elaborate and long-term than P1 and P2's, incorporating a number of possibilities. Having gained his British passport he planned to go "on holiday" to Kurdistan (not Iran) to find a Muslim wife and a job as a translator. If the job was not to be found he would return to England with his wife; if the wife was not to be found he would return to England and marry his English girlfriend. Either way his focus was on marriage, establishing a family and a home (Quotation 10d).

Goodman (2004) and Maegusku-Hewett et al. (2007) both discuss the importance of hope and optimism for UASCs. Hope is related to future possibilities which in themselves represent a means by which UASCs can take control of life and achieve independence (Goodman, 2004). This may partly explain why UASCs in this study preferred to talk about future ambitions than past difficulties. Furthermore, hope and optimism appeared to be directly linked to action, which may explain their functional value in coping with adversity (Maegusku-Hewett et al., 2007).

Quotation 10a. P1 p7:

CD: Ok, were there any, any other times when you first came to English school that were stressful? You know stress, like difficult, or make you feel worried, or...

P1: Er yeah, there was exam yeah. Exam day. I was worried about my exam.

CD: Why were you worried?

P1: Why?

CD: Yeah

P1: Because I want to go more forward.

Quotation 10b. P2 p20: *"Because is no good college, you know....All different people are fighting you know....Yeah no learning English, just talking different language....I say to my teacher "What can I do in here?"...Different music, different talking, fighting...so I say "No coming anymore".*

Quotation 10c. P1 & P2 p34:

P2: *Social worker say, "I think different college". I say "Not going to different college as well. I will move to this....."*

CD: *To Herefordshire?*

P2: *Hereford, I am going to college in Hereford, no in Birmingham.*

CD: *Okay. So why do you think it will be better?*

P2: *Because Hereford all English people. Nice, small town as well. Quiet. Living here, all dirty people. You go out, these people eating and throwing up.*

P1: *The area's little bit strange.*

P2: *All these drugs people you know.*

CD: *All what?*

P2: *Drugs? You know?*

CD: *Drugs, oh yeah.*

P2: *When people drugs, you no understand, everything funny you know [nervous laugh] Scary.*

CD: *So it's a bit scary?*

P1: *Yeah. Very scare.*

Quotation 10d. P3 p35-36: *"I wanna find girl [...] and I wanna have my own kid before I going old, I wanna get my kid, whatever daughter. I wanna get my family, that's my hope, always I think about it. I wish wife 1 year, so to get life with so I don't know. [.....] So good family, big family and I don't know I like have my life, I don't know how I think about it, I don't know. So I like get one woman trust, that what I'm hoping for. [.....] I have to think, if I am on housing benefit house, if I am maybe I know maybe sound like old, old man maybe, but I know what life is because every family in my country, some people get own house when they 15. Seriously. In my country, we work when 12, we work with someone just like small, small thing to carry on with life, save money when you young. When we turn 18, 19, we get our own house. If I think, if I give you example in this country that is what you say what I do. Because what I think because I don't have my own house. I'm am a jobseeker, getting housing benefit for pay my house."*

Quotation 10e. P2 p20:

P2: *I'm happy in England. Yeah.*

CD: *What do you want to do in the future?*

P2: *Mechanic*

CD: *Mechanic? With cars?*

P2: *Yeah*

CD: *Ok, good. So do you have any other dreams and hopes?*

P2: Not really [laugh]

Quotation 10f. P3 p31&38: *"I am really happy in UK and especially now because I got my passport and I have better future here soon. So that is what I am looking for [...] So that mean I feel well better and when I get my passport this is, I don't have no problem, the problem in my head just getting my own house in future and getting my life, my wife or whatever, my kid, that's it."*

Whilst the contrast between P2 and P3's ambitions in terms of detail and aspiration (Quotations 10d and 10e) may have been partly due to differing fluency speaking English, it is also suggested that their ambitions reflect different stages in UASC experience (as was the case for 'suppression of reflection'). Still in the midst of the legal and care systems, P2 was focused on his immediate needs and short to medium-term goals. P3 on the other hand, having secured his passport and citizenship appeared free to plan his long-term future. Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of need is a useful framework by which to understand UASCs ambitions and attempts towards agency. The past and present struggles they described tended to centre on securing their physical and safety needs (food, shelter, safety from threats). Once these had been met - and their language had improved enabling them to experience an increased sense of belonging and inclusion - the future focus was on achievement and fulfillment. Interestingly, it was evident that P1 and P2's transition to independent living had not been as successful as P3's and they were actively seeking to return to the provision and safety that foster care offered. However, P3 was focused on personal goals. With his basic needs largely met (he was safe, had secured leave to remain and British citizenship, had his own council house and access to benefits) P3 was focused on goals that to him constituted achievement and self-actualisation i.e. marriage, children and owning his own property (Quotation 10f).

4.2.5.6 Passivity

Prior to discussing the significance of seeking agency for UASCs, it is important to note that there were again some 'disconfirming instances' (Yardley, 2009). All three UASCs spoke about the necessity of passivity at times; in order to avoid gaining a criminal record and maximise their chances of securing leave to remain. When asked what advice they would give a newly arrived UASC, both P1 and P3 advised staying out of trouble (Quotations 11a and 11b). Furthermore, it was apparent that this advice was as they had received on occasions e.g. P3 advised by his interpreter not to make a fuss (Quotation 11c).

Whilst this may appear good advice in many scenarios, it was clear that pressure to 'keep your head down' was something UASCs struggled with. The consequences of not being able to seek personal agency and feeling forced to accept situations, was clear in P3's narrative. He described experiences of discrimination and the associated feelings of frustration and anger that he dealt with by suppressing his reactions for fear of the consequences. This was an effective coping strategy for him in the short-term (i.e. enabled him to stay out of trouble and have a clear record when applying for leave to remain). However, in both the short and long-term this means of coping led to significant mental health difficulties i.e. depression and self-harm (Quotation 11d). P3 reflected that even now, he can become very upset over small things, that he tends to perceive ambiguous situations negatively and react accordingly, and crucially that he will never react with actions towards others; instead he internalizes, continuing the cycle of depression and self-harm as an outlet for his frustration (Quotation 11e). He repeatedly observed that he was "*not like this before*", attributing his mental state now to his experiences since arrival in the UK.

Such narratives raise questions for discussion as to whether UASCs are as resilient as both literature and anecdote claim; or do UASCs simply do 'whatever it takes' to survive, *"a kind of 'forced coping'"* (Endersby, 2006; p.6). When asked how he coped with the journey to the UK, P3 reflected on his fear and uncertainty with no survival strategies other than to wait and see (Quotation 11f). Thomas et al. (2004) warn that UASCs may well not present with distress until months or years after the initial flight phase, so behaviours that appear as though resilient may be more correctly understood as *"basic human survival in early stages"*.

Quotation 11a. P1 p12: *"Don't make noise [...] Don't make trouble [...] If you make trouble then you become a trouble man."*

Quotation 11b. P3 p42: *"Er...advice, I say stay out with trouble...And drugs and whatever, stealing, thief all these kind of thing. So see least you don't hurt people, least you don't get a big like err case, bad case in UK, recording you fight too much, you steal, I don't know you abusing people for something. [...] definitely if you good person, you got home, you getting your own life, whatever you want, you getting a passport. So whatever you want, you free go work there, go live there. I got my passport now, I go wherever I want, just not my country [...] When you get your passport, you got good life. That is mean if you with outside trouble, you definitely get it. I don't get no trouble, I apply for my citizens, they still straight away accept me. They say I welcome to be UK citizen whatever British because I don't have no record bad thing"*

Quotation 11c. P3 p15: *"Seriously! I ring interpreter [...] Say "I got problem" [...] "The lady take police to this room, talk with them privately and the police going, just ignore me". He say "Leave it because first thing you just come to this country, second thing at moment you have to put your head down, you have no paper, nothing, you cannot fight with English lady like this because she is racism first thing". Second thing maybe I don't know, how to, she say "I can't tell you lots of different things but better just put your head down, leave it". [...] I say "Ok" so I put the phone down to him. I just laid there, why won't they put me with another family?"*

Quotation 11d. P3 p13: *"She (Foster Carer) say "We not look after you, just go back to your country. Why you come over?" All these things has make me let down very bad and if I got power maybe I punch her face but I was young so I was scared. I don't want to push her because maybe I be in trouble with immigration! [...] my uncle say if you be bad when young, you get a record still when older. Exactly the same in UK. When I move in here I was scared, I didn't know what law is here because I wasn't speak English."*

Quotation 11e. P3 p56-57: *"If I go angry with someone, I don't punch them; I go headache in my head. I keep coming back, coming back, to mind thinking more and more. And that is making me getting headache very bad. I dunno, but I don't do that action. If someone make me angry, I don't go fight with but I think about it, my heart very, very strange, I dunno whatever what is called...feeling bad, heart feeling bad, very bad [...] Yeah when I feel bad, I don't wanna hit people but I wanna do stupid things to myself. Don't know. I used to cut myself, all this thing. Just because I don't wanna go fight back to people whatever. Need to do something to myself to push it down. I put blade on me for blood come and after that forget it.[...] I don't know because sometimes I just think I dunno, I'm very upset or depression too much, I don't know. I go angry easy, very easy, I don't know why. I wasn't like this before so."*

Quotation 11f. P3 p45: *"Like I said, you don't know you're going to survive or not [...] I think loads of people losing life. Seriously [...] Scary. Always I scared. Always I was say am I going to get there? So am I going to be alive? I don't know, I was scared."*

4.2.6 Meaning of seeking personal agency

The numerous examples of agency in UASC narratives highlight the significance of control and empowerment to UASCs as a means of coping. It is therefore important to investigate how increasing one's sense of agency and mastery over events supported UASCs resilience and coping. Analysis of narratives indicated that seeking agency was about: being acknowledged as someone; gaining independence and freedom; reaction to feeling powerless and ineffective; advocating for fairness; and managing anxiety (Figure 4.3). Each of these will be explained with examples from narratives.

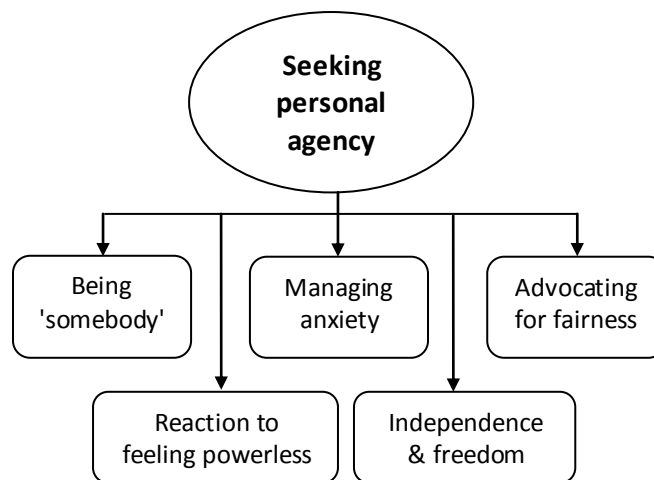


Figure 4.3: Themes relating to the meaning and significance of 'seeking personal agency' as conveyed within UASC narratives of coping.

In some instances UASCs narrative suggested that seeking agency was about simply being 'somebody'; being acknowledged or valued as an individual in their own right. P3 used imagery in his narrative which illustrated this theme. Describing how he felt in the Children's Home when staff consulted other young people but not him about evening and weekend activities, P3 likened himself to a piece of furniture and other inanimate objects (see Table 4.5). He disliked the lack of choice and independence in his situation and was seeking recognition from someone. This was contrasted with feelings of contentment once he was given a voice (via an NSPCC representative outside the Children's Home).

Agency was also strongly linked to desire for independence and freedom. This theme is perhaps a common 'rite of passage' for adolescents, however the issues seemed heightened and complicated by the fact UASCs were in the care of the LA. A striking similarity across all three participants' narratives was their desire to secure independent living arrangements as soon as they turned 16, despite positive experiences and relationships they reported having with foster

carers and Children's Home staff. P3 described how despite enjoying opportunities and activities provided by the Children's Home, he disliked the constraints he perceived and was keen to leave as soon as legally possible (see Table 4.5). Raghallaigh and Gilligan (2010) also found 'acting independently' to be a coping strategy. Goodman (2004) noted that whilst an attitude of 'collectivity and communal self' had enabled resilience and ultimately survival during flight from home countries; once in countries of safety and looking towards the future, UASCs were concerned with achieving independence and self-reliance.

Thirdly, seeking agency appeared to be a reaction to feeling the exact opposite i.e. powerless. UASCs attempts to exercise control and choice appeared to represent efforts to increase feelings of self-efficacy. Groark et al. (2010) also suggested that UASCs attempts to gain control were "*a direct reaction to the experience of lacking control in their lives*" (p.430). P2's responses particularly reflected this dynamic. P2 made use of assertive statements of intent (i.e. "I am" and "I will") in spoken narrative, however his responses to the Resiliency Scale items gave below average scores for Sense of Mastery and a particularly low score for Self-Efficacy (see Table 4.5). This illustrates a key point for professionals working with UASCs; although their construction (and portrayal) of self in speech may project a confident, determined and self-sufficient individual, it is quite possible (and probable) that this is not an accurate reflection of their true self-concept and in fact is a reaction to feeling disempowered and insecure.

There was also a sense that agency was about striving for fairness and to advocate for oneself, perhaps in the absence of others able or willing to do so. UASCs sometimes came across as demanding or unreasonable in their accounts, yet in the context of prolonged uncertainty coupled with loss of primary caregivers, it is unsurprising that UASCs developed the ability to

advocate for themselves. P3 in particular narrated a series of episodes in which it seemed that as soon as one goal was achieved he was striving towards the next. A constant dissatisfaction due to a perception he was treated differently and unfairly appeared to drive his efforts. See Table 4.5 for an example.

Meaning of agency to UASCs	Example quotation:
Being 'somebody'	<p><i>"Sometime they staff ask the young people "What you want to do tonight, where you wanna go? Cinema, swim, anywhere?" The young people choose what they want; staff don't ask me [...] Always I trying to tell them, "I am not piece of cupboard here" [...] like box and stuff [...] So, asking each young person, not asking me. That's something make me bad. Treating to me like, I'm nothing there [...] So I feel more happy when they ask me as well. Because I was younger than them and I was same place as them, I wanna get choice as well [...] I wanna them to ask me. I don't wanna be same as them, I don't wanna follow what they do, always [...] I wanna make decision as well. Some staff never ask me, some staff do, did [...] I say "These staff treat me different. I know I'm not English here maybe, maybe don't speak English, maybe I don't born here, maybe I don't have family or maybe don't have passport at the moment but I have to be like them" [...] Some staff bad, some staff treat me like I'm a piece of cupboard here or piece of paper, sitting on table next to them, because not asking me nothing."</i> (P3 p21-22)</p>
Independence and freedom	<p><i>"When I turned I think 17 or 16, I'm not too sure, 2008, I asked them, "I want to go independent live". I don't wanna be in Children Home anymore because basically I wasn't free [...] because you have to be home at 8 o'clock then no choices. Because I'm under 18 I have to be at home at 8. [...] Now I want council house with all the stuff. I wanna get my proper place [...] So I keep saying I'm not staying in this place anymore. I was arguing every time but I was little bit speak English. So every day I was arguing all this."</i> (P3 p17-19)</p>
Reaction to feeling powerless	<p>Resiliency Scales (P2 p23-24): Item 7: "I am good at figuring things out". Response = "Never". Item 9: "I can adjust when plans change". Response = "Never".</p>

	Item 2: "I can make good things happen". Response = "Rarely".
Advocating for fairness	<p><i>"Every young person what living in Children Home, they got their own care worker [...] Whatever you want to birthday whatever, Christmas, you have to talk to your care worker and he write it down, or she. So err, I was, got, I mean little, one care worker is called R [...] He was not good, he's good, he is funny man but wasn't good for buying stuff and whatever, spend money for me. He didn't want to spend much [laugh] I was not happy, you know kids, I want to go cinema. So I told JS. I said "I don't want this man". He say "Why?" I say "Because not buying me stuff" [...] He say "Ok, we got another staff come in soon. He's coming work here, new staff so maybe I tell him work with you as well. You get 2 care workers, that is good". So when other staff come, it's called MB. Something like this. When M come, he say "I'm going to be your care worker as well and I am new staff here". I say "Ok". So he was good as well, is good man."</i> (P3 p22-23)</p>
Managing anxiety	<p><i>"Yeah. That is all made me become like this in UK. Because I wasn't like this when I came because in Children Home and that like I told you, wait for passport in 2007, that's been about two year. 2005, 2007, I got little document that is wait, this is take you to 18, when you 18. After this we have to give you another decision, maybe we send you back or maybe let you stay. This make you wait for another year, that is mean I was worry say for 6 year basically [...] Because I wasn't got proper passport in 2007 I was worry too much. So 2007 they give me travel document, leave to remain in UK until you 18. Then in 2009 I was still 50% worried [laugh] When come 2009, I sent back my travel document and hoped to get another one quickly. I was waiting 2009 to 2011, another two year so basically all my life in here worry, worry..."</i> (P3 p7-8)</p>

Table 4.5: The meaning (significance) of seeking agency as reflected through the narratives of UASCs.

Finally, seeking agency appeared to be a means by which UASCs managed their anxiety; amidst the uncertainties of the asylum process and care system, striving to assert at least some control *somewhere* in life was apparent. The sources of anxiety were numerous and complex (see Table 4.6). In particular P3 made a direct link between the prolonged and drawn out nature of the asylum seeking process and his mental health difficulties. He described feeling depressed and

stressed for 6 years, the whole time he has been in the UK due to ongoing uncertainty regarding his legal status. Anxiety and depression were attributed to experiences since arrival in the UK, not the traumatic events that lead to migration or indeed the journey itself (see quotation in Table 4.5). It is interesting to note that P3 used the words "scared" and "crazy" as frequently as "worry" to describe his emotional state. This creates an image of a young person in a fairly constant state of 'fight or flight' survival mode. For example, when lawyers came to visit P3 to inform him that he had indefinite leave to remain, he described being afraid that they had come to deport him so he tried to run away before they could talk to him. Thus it is suggested that the persistence with which UASCs seek agency may be a coping response arising directly from their experience of anxiety and fear; an ongoing struggle to resolve uncomfortable feelings that they live with daily.

Sources of anxiety in UASC narratives:

- awaiting the outcome of asylum seeking process;
 - uncertainty and confusion regarding legal representation and status of application;
 - prolonged nature of asylum seeking process;
 - initial period of time when they could neither understand English spoken to them nor communicate their needs/wishes adequately;
 - difficulty learning at school/college with poor English;
 - lack of family and associated loneliness and insecurities (e.g. financial support);
 - experience of racism or discrimination and perceived powerlessness to respond due to the need to 'stay out of trouble' in order to secure leave to remain;
 - fears for physical safety (in independent living and foster care);
 - worries about practical aspects of life (e.g. school, benefits, housing) that are ordinarily parents' responsibilities to manage; and
 - sense of location and geography (or lack thereof).
-

Table 4.6: Sources of anxiety and confusion for UASCs interviewed in this study.

4.3 How do UASCs understand the world around them, in terms of both support and barriers to coping?

The environmental influences that UASCs perceived to either support or hinder their coping efforts will be discussed next. Whilst UASCs alluded to numerous environmental influences, the two strongest were: school (accessing education) and relationships (or connections) with others. The theme of relationships was particularly strong and was separated into two sub-themes of social support and key adults.

4.3.1 School (education)

School was cited as a source of anxiety initially, due to not knowing teachers and having no friends. P1 and P2 both reported that they had never been to school in Afghanistan, so attending English school was challenging in terms of routines and expectations as well as language barrier and social aspects. However, after the initial fear was overcome, both P1 and P2 reported school as being a highly positive experience; a means of learning English, making friends and gaining qualifications needed to pursue nursing and mechanics respectively (Quotation 12a).

Factors within the school environment that facilitated P1 and P2's positive experience included: 1) a reduced curriculum of only Maths, Science, English and PE; 2) the presence of other UASCs in the same school (P1 and P2 met at school and remained friends since); 3) a member of staff who took responsibility not only for teaching them English but who also helped them understand the rules and routines of school life (discussed further in section 4.3.2.2 'Key adults').

However, P1 and P2's experiences before and after school were less positive. P1 discussed the period of time before starting school (immediately after arrival in the UK) as very difficult (a nadir memory) because he did not understand or speak English yet and was bored at home. In this respect the delay in securing a school place for him was a barrier to his settling and wellbeing (Quotation 12b). P2 reported unhappiness after leaving school, with his subsequent college placement. He believed he was in the wrong ability class and furthermore that his classmates were not interested in learning; they chat, listen to music and even fight. He also disliked attending college in a city where the student population is ethnically diverse and so his models of English language are much reduced, which contrasts with his experience of school in the countryside (Quotation 12c). P3 reported a wholly negative view of school, concluding quite simply that it was a *"waste of time"* and that he felt *"down"* the whole time he was there due to his lack of English to adequately understand and engage with either the curriculum or peers (Quotation 12d).

Quotation 12a. P1 p2: *"Because I go to school, yeah. I went to school, one year and I learn lots of things. I went to college, I learn in college lots of things, I make some friends, I happy here now [...] Yeah, I learning, I learn English as well."*

Quotation 12b. P1 p8:

CD: *And can you think of any stories of times when it was difficult?*

P1: *Yeah, when I come England, yeah, because I don't understand English, I wasn't understand English. I was a sit down, nothing to do. There was no school as well (be)cause full school, so I was 6 months just stay at home. So no English."*

Quotation 12c. P2 p20-21: *"This college I don't like...3 weeks I no go been [...] Because is no good college, you know. All different people are fighting you know. Yeah no learning English, just talking different language. I say to my teacher, "What can I do in here?" Different music, different talking, fighting...so I say "no coming anymore!"*

Quotation 12d. P3 p3: *"So I went to school I think for one years and a half. I think it just waste my time because I wasn't speak English and I didn't learn much. All those people*

*talking to me, I don't know if they swearing at me. I don't know if they saying good thing. That is something like feeling down because I wasn't speak English. I wasn't understand what people say, what friends say at school? So that is basically I was feeling down always. For one year and halves I wasn't speaking English. So after that it is too late because I left school and then I little bit start speak English. **So that is mean I waste my time for one years and half because I wasn't speak English and I didn't learn much in writing.***

4.3.2 Relationships

Desire for, and value of, relationships (connections with others) was a strong theme that emerged through the content and form of UASC narratives; much like, yet contrasting with, desire for personal agency. The importance of relationship was demonstrated through accounts of social support and key adults. However, as was the case for seeking agency and cultural distancing, there was tension within narratives of relationship; conflict existed between seeking and appreciating connections (with family, friends and key adults), versus desire for independence and establishing one's own life. The meaning of relationships will be discussed in terms of how relationships facilitated UASCs coping efforts.

4.3.2.1 Social support

Social support relates to the people (and settings) that surrounded UASCs, including: teachers at school; peers (in care, at school and at clubs e.g. BUMP); adults with a duty of care including SWs, Children's Home staff and foster carers; and the religious community at the Mosque. Groark et al. (2010) also identified 'utilizing support systems to avoid isolation and establish positive trusting relationships' as a means of coping; support networks included friends and professionals. Goodman (2004) identified 'collectivity and the communal self' as a coping

strategy by which she observed that UASCs resilience was boosted by knowing they were not the only one experiencing displacement and difficulty. For UASCs in this study, establishing a social network was beneficial for numerous reasons (see Table 4.7).

Benefit of social support	Examples:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling happier and more settled; • Engaging in enjoyable activities, such as days out; • Opportunity to talk and be encouraged; • Company and distraction from anxious thoughts; • Source of advice to navigate the care system; • Source of learning and knowledge specific to UK; • Source of practical and financial help. 	<p>P1 with his foster carer (see Quotation 13c) and P3 with his friends.</p> <p>P1 and P2 with their foster carers and P3 with Children's Home staff.</p> <p>P1 with the Mosque community (Quotation 13a) and P2 with his social worker.</p> <p>P2 with his foster family and P3 with his girlfriend.</p> <p>P2 and P3 both report discussing their future options with UASC peers.</p> <p>P3 and 'Bump' group (see Quotation 13b).</p> <p>P3's friends e.g. sleeping at their houses whilst waiting for his council house and borrowing money to pay for his citizenship exam and passport.</p>

Table 4.7: Benefits of accessing social support as reported by UASCs.

P1 and P2's narratives reflected an appreciation of foster carers filling the gap created by loss of their families. They valued foster carers in terms of practical and emotional support e.g. meals, encouragement in education, company and distraction, someone to talk to, access to activities and days out (Quotation 13c). However, P3 had a very different experience of foster care. He struggled to have his basic needs met, had difficulty expressing himself and feeling understood and eventually perceived treatment which he believed reflected racism. Even when placed with a second foster family, P3 disliked feeling different and thereby reminded that they are not his 'real' family (Quotation 13d). P3 was much happier in the Children's Home where he felt his

needs were met and his experience and identity was normalised. He did not appear to seek a replacement for his family in the same way P1 and P2 described.

Quotation 13a. P1 p13:

*P1: Yeah yeah there (people at the Mosque) help me. Their talking help.
[.....]*

CD: Okay. Is there anything else....so it's the prayer that is the most important thing?

P1: No, when in some the prayer and lots of people come, most important yeah.

CD: So it's the lots of people as well?

P1: Yeah and they are just the men, that's nothing...so lots of people make big....

CD: Meeting?

P1: Meeting yeah like and then good. Good for me, good for them as well.

Quotation 13b. P3 p6: *"....when I come to UK I make friends, in hostel, in like I was in BUMP [....] Is young people er group in Birmingham city centre. Is a group working for young people [...] Activities, for, to many different things, you helping different people. Because I wish to go for activities with BUMP – going to Drayton Manor, going to Man United, for play football. Is not just me, about more than 40 people sometimes [...] I think every week we used to get meeting there, we go for eating, is too many different country, I mean like a group, be there together and they teach us for how to get a life, how to know more about England, all this thing. I think it's good thing, I used to learn lots from that as well."*

Quotation 13c. P1 p8 & 35: *"That was good I was live with parents. She was really nice. She helped me lots. And I was happy with her [pause] erm that was happy [.....] She helped me lots, she was always like "Just go school". She do everything for me. Make food for me...and do lots of things. I was just in school, go school, come back home. She do eating food and we go somewhere, park, you know. [....] Own house no good....Because when you was with foster carer, you talk to them like parent you know? And if you need something, they can help you as well. If you stay here, it's boring. Nothing, just go college, come back home...With foster carer, watch TV, talking, is much better."*

Quotation 13d. P3 p17: *"Other family in Redditch was okay but they didn't look after me like their child, something that sometime make me feel bad. So I was went to other Children Home, they okay because other children there..."*

4.3.2.2 Key adults

Key adults refers to individuals who UASCs specifically cited as significant, usually in terms of support given, but occasionally as a source of anxiety and confusion. For P1 and P2, key adults included a specific teacher at school and their foster carers. For P3 key adults included the Children's Home Manager and a care worker. Key adults were valued in terms of practical support they offered and activities they facilitated but more than this, it seemed that the way key adults treated the young people was central to their significance. When asked about significant people in his life, P1 chose his English teacher, whom he described primarily in terms of her demeanour towards him and needed prompting to elaborate on what she did for him, suggesting that the abiding memory is how she treated him (Quotation 14a). Conversely when asked about an unhappy time (nadir memory) P1 reported that leaving school, and specifically leaving that teacher, was a low point (Quotation 14b). The Children's Home Manager (JS) was highly regarded by P3 due to provision of reassurance, being a listening ear and responding proactively to P3's voiced concerns, and facilitating rather than suppressing P3's expression of needs. It was clear from P3's narrative that he valued feeling respected and listened to by JS, as well as the fairness (or absence of discrimination) that he perceived in JS's actions (Quotation 14c). UASCs valued being looked after and listened to, reflecting a desire and (to a degree) acceptance of dependence and relationship.

Both P1 and P2 clearly valued foster carers as providing a family-like environment (i.e. company, conversation and activity), given that they discussed their plan to return from independent living which they disliked. At the very least they were hoping to return to spend Christmas with their previous carers. SWs were also discussed as being sources of both practical and emotional

support in relation to: accessing education, going out to places and as someone to talk to. Both P1 and P2 cited their SWs as being significant people who helped them to settle to life in England (Quotation 14d). However, P3 recounted some highly negative experiences of foster care and SWs, which serves to highlight that those variables with capacity to support UASCs also have potential to do great harm. Despite this, P3 described a good relationship with one care worker who was proactive, offering P3 opportunities he had not asked for (as a parent might do), which P3 valued and remembered as good times (Quotations 14e and 14f).

Quotation 14a. P1 p5:

- P1: My teacher was really really nice woman. She was really kind, yeah she was really really nice. I love English teachers [laughs]*
- CD: Ah that's good. What did she do that was kind? Can you give me an example?*
- P1: Yeah, she did, she did lots of help with me and him...and lots and lots of help..and er she did good English..yeah..that was really kind.*
- CD: She helped you with your English? Okay.*
- P1: Showed lots of things...you know...about school rules, and things like that... Yeah because I never been school before, you know, when I come to England..."*

Quotation 14b. P1 p6: *"Yeah when I school, when I left school. That was really sad. That was really, really sad....Because the teacher was nice, yeah and we no go anymore school innit, that's why we sad, yeah."*

Quotation 14c. P3 p19: *"...one staff, one day be horrible to me and that staff from Worcester. He been horrible to me so he say he's joking with me, just take joke but I take serious because I say "I don't like this kind of joke". So I talk to JS, say "I am complain, I told Social Services everything". I say "I don't like the staff because of racism all the thing". JS said "You are allowed to do anything, I give you permission, everything, you allowed to complain everything. Is staff I know, but I listen to him as well and I listen to you more because help people. You young person here because if you can't, if he been horrible to you, if I am not right to you, I get in big trouble, I don't wanna because I have to be fair with everyone in this place". JS is good person like I said...He is very good. I know, any problem and I talk to him. Trust me, he's look after me like other young people. There's no other people there like outside UK. All English [...] I was the person from outside UK in this place."*

Quotation 14d. P1 p11: *"Social workers...they help me [...] When I come to England yeah? So, I was with social worker yeah? And when I met social worker, so I went to school, they say you go school. And they took me outside to park or you know...to places [pause] Yeah, that's just it."*

Quotation 14e. P3 p23: *"When MB come, he say 'I'm going to be your care worker as well and I am new staff here'. I say 'Ok'. So he was good as well, is good man. Trust me when he come around there, after one week, he take me to coffee shop. Whenever I was my bedroom, because I wasn't speak English...."*

Quotation 14f. P3 p30-31: *"That care worker, I say, when he come to me after new care worker he was take me to Beyonce concert [...] So he take me to Beyonce concert which I never forgot, I still remember so is good thing. Another load of time, he take me to DJ championship...because I was DJ in Worcester for one year and half probably or 2 years. I was good there as well. So he know I do DJ, so he say 'DJ Championship happening in UK, in London.'" [...] That has been 2008, I went to there, so it was very, very good...that's why I never forgot I went to there, was good time. So I had good time here seriously but something like I said, the time bad just I was worry about passport and stuff. This is all make me feel down always but for other thing, like how they look after me and take me out, very good. I was happy..."*

In summary, it is noteworthy that key adults were the exception, not the norm. Both P1 and P2 talked about one specific teacher, not teachers in general. P3 singled out specific Children's Home staff and specific SWs, not all of them. Thus relationship and support, both practical and emotional, that was appreciated and remembered by UASCs is something more intuitive than job descriptions alone would require. UASCs responded to perceived kindness and fairness, to having time and attention given personally, to being listened to and heard, to having needs acknowledged and appropriately met.

4.3.3 Meaning of relationships (connection)

Relationships (like agency) was a major theme across UASC narratives. Analysis suggested the following themes underpinned the significance of relationships to UASCs coping: provision and safety; access to activities and opportunities; distraction; trust; and managing depression.

As previously described, P1 and P2 valued relationships that met their basic needs (Maslow's hierarchy) in terms of provision (e.g. of food) and safety in a homely environment. This appeared to be a key reason behind requesting to return to foster care from independent living (Table 4.8).

Key adults and social networks were also valued as providing access to activities and opportunities. P1 and P2 both valued foster carers and SWs providing access to activities and days out and indeed another reason underlying their desire to return to foster care appeared to be boredom (Table 4.8). P3 also described the access that key members of staff at the Children's Home gave him to opportunities he could not otherwise have experienced. He especially appreciated that many English people have not seen or done things that he has (e.g. made comparisons between himself and his girlfriend; Table 4.8).

Relationships were also valued in terms of distraction from difficult thoughts and feelings. UASCs seemed consciously aware of and grateful for this, even when not wholly successful (Table 4.8). Groark et al. (2010) also reported that UASCs spent time with friends as a means of distraction, enabling them to live in the 'here and now'.

Trust was another significant underlying theme to relationships, especially within P3's narrative, whose desire for relationship was complex. It was clear that P3 was uncomfortable with the risks associated with dependence: *"I can't trust my girlfriend one day not leave me"* (p.34), and hoped that a trusting relationship could be achieved from within his own cultural and religious circles. He was wary of European women and fearful of the likelihood of divorce or adultery if he was to marry his English girlfriend. The issue of trust therefore, was closely linked to cultural beliefs, both of which appeared to cause confusion in P3's narrative. P3 also described loss of trust in key adults through experience of racism, being closely related to his coping and mental health. P3 described one of his SW's as being "two-faced" which confused and ultimately depressed him. Feeling ignored, invisible and not trusted by, or able to trust others, had a damaging effect on P3 which he described in clear and vivid terms (Table 4.8). Trust was also a key issue for UASCs interviewed by Groark et al. (2010); some reported not having friends and remaining isolated due to fears of being deceived by others and even those who had friends reported not being able to trust them "100%."

Finally, whilst relationships could be a source of anxiety, they were more frequently cited as supporting UASCs to manage their depression. P1 described himself as feeling "no good" when he first arrived, but later reports his teacher as being a significant person in helping him to settle. P2 reported that when feeling down his SW helped him to feel better by talking with him (Table 4.8). P3 used imagery to illustrate his experience of loneliness without his family and the depressing effect this had on him, like being in darkness (Table 4.8). Conversely, when discussing things that had helped him settle it was clear friendships had been key in alleviating at least some of those depressed feelings (Table 4.8).

Meaning of relationships to UASCs	Example quotation:
Provision and safety	<p>P2: <i>When people drugs, you no understand, everything funny you know [nervous laugh] Scary.</i></p> <p>CD: <i>So it's a bit scary?</i></p> <p>P1: <i>Yeah. Very scare</i></p> <p>CD: <i>So you don't like your area?</i></p> <p>P1: <i>No</i></p> <p>CD: <i>I see. So you both want to move?</i></p> <p>P1 & P2: <i>Yeah.</i></p> <p>CD: <i>You both want to move back to Hereford?</i></p> <p>P1: <i>Yeah Hereford. Carer.</i></p> <p>CD: <i>Back to the carer?</i></p> <p>P1: <i>Yeah</i></p> <p>CD: <i>So is just the area or you want to be with people as well?</i></p> <p><i>What do you think of living on your own here?</i></p> <p><i>[nervous laugh]</i></p> <p>P2: <i>I don't like it.</i> (P1 and P2 p34-35)</p>
Access to activities and opportunities	<p><i>"Own house no good [...] If you stay here, it's boring. Nothing, just go college, come back home...With foster carer, watch TV, talking, is much better." (P1 p35)</i></p> <p><i>"I have lots experience [...] I visit lot of place. My girlfriend never been London, I been two three time. My girlfriend never been Alton Tower, I been two or three time [...] I say "I been to much experience more than you!" It's not coz I am strong whatever, it's about because Children Home make me like this experience. They take me to about more than 7, 8 time to holiday in UK by airplane! [...] To Newquay, we went to Cornwall or Newquay I think. So I told them "I wanna go in big ship", so they take me. It's not how I was strong make me, how I been loads of place, is about my Children Home, they take me to much experience." (P3 p12)</i></p>
Distraction	<p><i>"I really, really love my girlfriend as well but if I don't see her for one week, I don't know, probably I'm mad, I swearing everything [...] When I see her, I don't think much, don't worry much." (P3 p34)</i></p> <p>CD: <i>Was there anything else that helped you to feel better?</i></p> <p>P2: <i>No really [laugh] I think [pause] I think sometimes is English family talking and laughing at each other.</i></p> <p>CD: <i>Laughing at each other?</i></p> <p>P2: <i>Nicely like you know...watching some movie....something my family say "Don't think hard", you know, "Just forget family". And is say "I, I can't forget family" [nervous laugh]. (P2 p18)</i></p>
Trust	<i>"I don't know because sometimes I just think I dunno, I'm very upset</i>

	<p>or depression too much, I don't know. I go angry easy, very easy, I don't know why. I wasn't like this before so [...] I think this make me become like this because I used to get one social worker, she was racism to me as well [...] She wished UK send me back to Iran. Seriously [...] Whenever I ask her to get me, she never. She always say "Yeah yeah" but when she go to manager, she say don't get me. I mean she behind, do thing behind. She nice to me when she see but she wasn't [...] She was two face. She lying too many time, she promised me lots of things. And she lied whenever we go in meeting, review and stuff, she say she never had. So that is make me, 100% what she is saying but she saying different thing in the review. This is make me like err think about life strange, very bad. Sometime I say if I don't wanna push foot to her face because she lying, put spit in her face. I just want to go trouble sometime, but all the thing become bad thinking in my mind you know, that is make damage in my brain I think probably. I was thinking about it, her, about say, 2 years she was my social worker, for 2 year I was thinking about all of this. She make me crazy." (P3 p57)</p>
Managing depression	<p>"Because sometimes I'm sad, he's talk to me...take somewhere me, go to park, yeah...talking nicely. Help hmm." (P2 p21)</p> <p>"I mean you feel very, very lonely, always. You always shut down like no light in a room. Seriously. And that is 6 years I was lonely, no family, nothing around me." (P3 p8)</p> <p>"Yeah and I think I got loads of friend here so that which make me I don't feel alone same as when I came in 2005. I feel better because I got more time to spend with friend or with like I don't know, like friendship and family like. For example, my girlfriend, I go to her house sometimes. So she coming with me, she coming to me sorry every week and whatever she want or I want, if I'm not busy. So that mean I feel well better" (P3 p38)</p>

Table 4.8: The meaning (significance) of relationships as reflected through the narratives of UASCs.

4.4 Key themes: agency and relationship

Two major themes, seeking personal agency and drawing upon relationships, were central to UASCs coping experiences. Thus the findings of this study link quite clearly to narrative psychologists' understanding of human motivations: striving for agency (or desire for independence) and relationships (or desire for connection and dependence), as reflected in

recurring themes of power and love in human narratives (McAdams, 1993). Agency and relationship emerged strongly within narratives of UASCs, as fundamental to both their lived experiences and subsequent construction of self and coping. Seeking personal agency and drawing upon relationships underpinned several other coping strategies discussed by UASCs.

Furthermore, seeking personal agency and drawing upon relationships were not strategies that existed in isolation or even in parallel to one another. The interaction between desire for agency (independence) and desire for relationship (dependence) was an overarching dilemma for UASCs, woven throughout the narratives and reflected in numerous stories that contained contradictory and/or unresolved elements (e.g. choices in living arrangements, future aspirations and ambitions, relationships with peers, relationships with key adults). McAdams (1993; p.72) suggests that this tension is caused by the following dynamic:

"While our desires for power and achievement may motivate us to assert ourselves in effective and influential ways and to control, even master, our environments, our longings for close and warm relationships with other human beings pull us in a different direction..."

For example, a major goal that dominated all 3 UASCs past narratives, was to secure their own independent living arrangements. P1 and P2 clearly valued their foster carers in terms of both practical and emotional support, yet as soon as both were 16 they requested independent accommodation i.e. despite apparently appreciating the relationships and dependence they had with foster carers, they were striving for independence. However at the time of interview, both P1 and P2 were unhappy with their situation; they told me they wanted to return to foster care for the remaining year that they are entitled to it (until 18 years old). Their struggle with

conflicting desires for independence and dependence had taken them full circle. The reality of independence appeared to have a depressing effect on all three UASCs. P1 and P2's narratives reflected a depressed tone in relation to life without foster carers. They found it difficult to get up and get going in the mornings and in general reported feeling "bored" and "no good" (Quotations 15a and 15b). P3 described stress relating to personal organisation required when living on his own (Quotation 15c). Clearly UASCs desired independence, yet were not enjoying it as much as perhaps they expected and so continued to experience anxiety and depression. Furthermore, UASCs future narratives appeared largely fixed on securing relationships and a sense of home. P1 and P2 were primarily focused on seeking parental relationships, whilst P3 was preoccupied with maintaining connections with peers and ultimately finding a wife.

Quotation 15a. P2 p19: *"Is difficult in morning [laugh]. Go to school...6 o'clock up, have cold shower. Eating breakfast is difficult...5 day go through shower, 6 o'clock up...is difficult, very hard."*

Quotation 15b. P1 p35: *"If you stay here, it's boring. Nothing, just go college, come back home [...] With foster carer, watch TV, talking, is much better. Good life. Here no good life, just watch TV."*

Quotation 15c. P3 p36: *"When I move to this house 14th October, my new house, it's in Warndon, council house [...] it's a flat. Soon as I move to in this house, every morning I get 2, 3 letter. One from council, one from housing benefit, one from jobcentre. Seriously, it make me crazy [...] Because annoying is sometime. Ask you, we not pay your bill, they pay your bill you have to find job."*

Finally, whilst it may be argued that desire for agency and relationship are fundamental human needs (not unique to UASCs), the interplay between the themes was particularly central to UASC narratives of resilience in adversity. Firstly, the human need for agency and relationship becomes most especially apparent during times of disruption when we are experiencing our

identities 'in crisis' (Murray, 2009), as are UASCs amidst transition and loss. The ways in which UASCs construct and make meaning of their experiences and themselves has purpose for establishing their identities and maintaining resilience amidst challenges to both. Secondly, as previously noted UASC narratives around agency and relationships appeared to be intensified by complications associated with being in the public care. The care system appeared to offer more choice and confusion for young people grappling with conflicting desires for independence and dependence. Finally, other researchers have also identified contradictions in UASCs coping strategies and note that this may in fact be purposeful and functional to their survival and resilience. Endersby (2006) reported amongst UASCs from Albania, Iraq and Afghanistan a striving for independence, and yet desire to receive support and assistance was apparent. P3 appeared especially content to make use of others and accept a degree of dependence when it served his overall goal to achieve independence. Endersby concluded that: *"young people expressed this balance as a fluid and dynamic process, rather than as fixed or absolute"* (p.2). Thus flexibility between the key motivations for agency and relationship, depending on context and needs, appears to be central to UASC coping and resilience.

4.5 How can the narratives of UASC experience be used to inform practice in supporting this particular 'at risk' group by professionals both within and outside schools?

Narrative analysis was a more useful approach than many other qualitative research methods for exploring implications for practice, as it facilitated understanding of the meaning that individuals make of their experiences, and not only a description of those experiences. Understanding the meaning of experience enables discussion of the most appropriate support based on UASCs

expressed needs, rather our assumptions of their needs. Implications of the analysis for professionals working with UASCs will be discussed in terms of 'good practice' in education and social care as well as the additional involvement of psychologists.

4.5.1 Implications for 'good practice'

Firstly, narrative psychologists suggest that human motivations towards agency and relationships become most especially apparent during times when we experience disruption (Murray, 2009; McAdams, 1993). This dynamic was observed within narratives given by UASCs in this study. Efforts to seek and/or maintain either agency or relationship were underlying to several coping strategies (positive and negative). In light of these strong themes, it is suggested that support for UASCs during their experience of loss, transition and change should be developed around assisting these two motivations:

1. To ensure that meaningful relationships are offered whereby UASC can trust a significant other to: listen (and be responsive) to their views and expressed needs; be proactive (not just reactive) in support and opportunities offered; keep their word; provide for the young person's basic physical needs as well as facilitate a sense of belonging and access to achievement and self-actualisation. Ultimately, it is most important that UASCs feel valued and respected as an individual, treated fairly and with unconditional positive regard (as a parent might);
2. To ensure that agency is facilitated and not suppressed. Key to this is acknowledgement that UASCs are positioned in prolonged and anxiety-provoking situations of uncertainty (awaiting an outcome of application for asylum). Therefore where possible empowerment and self-

efficacy should be raised through: involvement in decision-making; offering choice; encouraging participation in activities where UASCs experience success and mastery of a skill; ensuring that language is not a barrier to agency by giving time and resources (e.g. translator) to meaningful conversations.

Secondly, whilst the pursuit of agency and relationships often exist in tension with one another, it is suggested that optimum support for UASCs is that which facilitates a progression from relative dependence to independence i.e. provision of relationships that are both sensitive and robust enough to facilitate development towards increasing personal agency. It was clear from narratives of UASCs interviewed here that the nature of their needs and aspirations evolved over time; the support offered will naturally need to evolve with them. In the first instance key adults are primarily needed to ensure basic needs of food, shelter and safety are met. Over the course of time, it will become more important to give greater amounts of responsibility and independence to UASCs as belonging, achievement and self-actualisation become the greater focus. Groark et al. (2010) noted that UASCs valued support from trusted adults who would help them problem-solve rather than share deep emotional distress (in a counselling style dynamic). This observation fits with a model whereby UASCs use relationships and connections with others positively and constructively to help themselves develop greater independence and agency.

Thirdly, a notable inconsistency emerged between how UASCs spoke about themselves (portraying assertive and confident selves to the listener) and their underlying (or 'true') beliefs around resilience (and in particular self-efficacy). Agency was a strong theme and has been discussed in great detail due to UASCs narratives around coping by means of negotiation, non-compliance, being proactive, persevering and having ambition. However, UASC's Resiliency

Scales scores (Tables 4.1 and 4.2) suggest that in some cases UASCs felt reduced Sense of Mastery (which is itself made up of Optimism, Self-efficacy and Adaptability). Therefore as discussed, UASCs desire for agency may represent efforts to increase feelings of self-efficacy and mastery, rather than a reflection of their pre-existence. Thus for professionals working with UASCs, it will be critical to both anticipate and understand that whilst UASCs narrative construction of self may project a confident and self-sufficient individual, it is quite possible (and probable) that this is not an accurate reflection of their true self-concept and furthermore, a reaction to feeling the exact opposite (disempowered and insecure). Therefore, within the constraints of the legal and care systems, professionals need to afford UASCs a voice that is heard and, where possible, greater control and choice in order to raise self-efficacy, mastery and resilience (and to avoid frustration, suppression, depression and self-harm).

Fourthly, it was clear from UASCs narratives that the initial period was the hardest for them due to: loss and separation from family and friends; lack of fluency in English making it difficult to engage in friendships and learning; poor knowledge of their geographical surroundings; poor knowledge of the education system and expectations; uncertainty regarding their future and leave to remain; and finally, the pressure to 'keep their heads down' and stay out of trouble. Subsequently much of UASCs coping narrative related to key adults role in advocacy. The importance of giving UASCs a 'voice' that is meaningful, listened to and responded to, is difficult to overstate. When there was no outlet for expression of needs, or when expression was ignored, UASCs internalised the difficulties they were experiencing, putting themselves at increased risk of mental health difficulties. For example, whilst this study involved only three UASCs still clear differences in experience and preference emerged. Whilst P1 and P2's narratives reflected an appreciation of foster carers in terms of family like functions and 'gap'

filled; P3 was much happier in the Children's Home where he felt: a) his needs were better met; and b) his experience and identity as a looked after child (LAC) was normalised. Thus, flexibility is needed in shaping care plans that meet individual UASC's needs.

Finally, Groark et al. (2010) reported that for UASCs in their study, *“education and gaining knowledge was seen as the primary way of gaining control in their lives”* (p.431). The school environment is well placed to be the means by which UASCs regain a sense of personal agency (when staff collaborate with them to achieve this), contrasting with other circumstances that cannot be so controlled (i.e. their asylum application). In relation to school and education, a number of facilitators and barriers to coping emerged from UASCs narratives. These are offered as suggestions for supportive practice in schools (see Table 4.9). The government has also provided a range of guidelines and training materials for good practice in relation to: asylum-seeking and refugee children (DfES, 2004a; Ofsted, 2003); unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (DoH, 1995); children who are Looked After (DfEE, 1994; DoH, 2000); ethnic minority pupils (DfES, 2004b) and isolated learners of English as an additional language (EAL) (DfEE, 2000; DCSF, 2010), all of which are applicable to provision for UASCs.

Recommendation	Source
1 Minimise the length of time UASCs wait for a school place. As LAC, UASCs must be prioritised for school admission under the Education Act 2005 & have priority when placed on a waiting list for over-subscribed schools (DCSF, 2009).	P1 & P2 described the months spent in UK before starting school as most difficult time → with school placement came opportunities to learn English & establish friendships.
2 Offer UASCs a significantly reduced curriculum of core subjects (i.e. Maths, Science, English & PE) if/when the young person's English speaking &/or comprehension abilities are low.	P1 & P2 were keen to learn & had career aspirations but their lack of English made a full timetable unfeasible.
3 Target support for UASCs learning English as an additional language. Language mediates UASCs ability to engage with learning as well as the social environment → other expectations & demands should be secondary to the process of language acquisition.	P3 considered school a “waste of time” because he could not understand or speak English. All 3 UASCs reported that learning English was key to feeling happier & more settled in UK.
4 Ensure that support for learning English is both direct & incidental. Whilst benefitting from direct & targeted teaching, UASCs also need access to exposure & modelling of language from peers (i.e. not to be isolated in EAL-only intervention groups/classes).	P1 & P2 reported learning English best when surrounded by English peers & adults. P2 felt he was learning very little in a college class of entirely EAL students.
5 Encourage connections between UASCs attending the same school (if applicable) → friendships may not develop due to cultural or language differences <i>but</i> likely to gain social & emotional support from others ‘in same boat’.	P1 & P2 met at school → two years later they are still friends, act like family (e.g. spend Christmas together) & now live together.
6 Implement a Key Adult model of practice as part of the standard induction process & ongoing pastoral support. Key members of staff are required not only to teach but to mentor UASC students in relation to the school environment, rules & expectations. Do not assume that UASCs have attended school previously or that their previous experience of education is similar & transferable to UK schools.	P1 & P2 spoke at length about a key member of staff whose support they had clearly valued. She taught them English but also helped them understand the school environment & culture. Neither had attended school in Afghanistan.
7 Ensure UASCs remain engaged with education post-16 by offering flexibility & choice wherever possible in relation to their options.	After a positive school experience, P2 is refusing to attend college following disagreement with staff.

Table 4.9: Recommendations for good practice for schools receiving UASCs.

4.5.2 Implications for the practice of educational psychologists (EPs)

Whilst many UASCs demonstrate significant coping despite adversity, it must be acknowledged that they are a group 'at risk' of mental health difficulties due to their pre- and post-migration experiences (see Literature Review). For a minority of UASCs exhibiting symptoms of severe anxiety or depression, a referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) may be necessary. UASCs in this study, along with those in Groark et al.'s (2010) study, tended to express distress in terms of somatic complaints, rather than articulated thoughts or emotional feelings. Therefore educational psychologists (EPs) can support school staff working with UASC through training to raise awareness of the significance of physical complaints in order to ensure that needs are not overlooked and appropriate referrals are made. For the majority of UASC arriving in schools it is quite possible, even advisable that the input of the school's EP will be valuable in terms of offering additional support to consolidate and build upon their existing coping capacities.

Where EPs are engaged in supporting UASCs, three key recommendations are outlined based on UASCs narratives. Firstly, it is suggested that the role of psychologists in providing early intervention and preventative work will relate more to UASCs suppression of reflection strategy than the agency and relationship themes. In section 4.2.3 it was suggested that avoidance of reflection and suppression of meaning making apparent in UASCs narratives, may have been serving a protective function i.e. protecting self-concept and esteem whilst still in the midst of challenging and anxious circumstances. However numerous authors highlight a direct link between narrative coherence and psychological wellbeing: *"mental well-being is related to, if not*

the result of, a well integrated and coherent life story" (Baerger & McAdams', 1999; p.69). This would suggest that for UASCs, reflection and narrative integration will at some point be beneficial to promote their resilience in the longer-term. Baerger and McAdams (1999; p.89) observed that *"happier and more satisfied individuals"* did not necessarily have more positive life events happen to them. Instead happier people differed from more distressed individuals in terms of: a) organization of autobiographical memories (happier individuals recall more varied and complex experiences); and b) construction and interpretation of experiences (distressed individuals interpret events as having more negative significance or with an overall depressive tone). Furthermore, Beiser and Wickrama (2004) suggest that whilst suppression and time splitting (i.e. suppressing the past and dissociating it from the present and future) may be effective short-term coping strategies, the process of temporal reintegration (i.e. cognitive recapture of the past and reconnecting it with present and future) is inevitable and necessary in the long-term. Kohli and Mather (2003) also suggest that in order to promote psychosocial wellbeing of UASCs we need to support the processes of self-recovery, whilst Williamson (1998; p.59) reported that UASCs themselves said they wanted adults around them to *"Look underneath a coping exterior and help children understand why they are here"*.

Therefore, it is suggested that narrative approaches that encourage coherence in personal narratives may be beneficial to UASCs, helping them make sense of their experiences, re-establish a sense of identity and regain a sense of control. The timing of this work is critical; UASCs should not be encouraged to evaluate their experiences in relation to themselves or their wider life story, until they are ready and willing to do so, and the psychologist is confident that such an endeavour will not reduce the defenses that serve a function at that time. Beiser and Wickrama (2004) suggest the best time for engaging in reflection of the past, is when the person

is experiencing relationship stability or social support and occupational or work success. This lends further weight to arguments made earlier for the importance of key adults and access to education in UASCs coping endeavours:

“...a sense of stability and of present-day successes probably helps individuals reconcile memories of what they have been, and hopes for what they might have been with the people that, despite and because of adversity, they have become.” (p.909)

Secondly, this study along with some others, have identified various cognitive and behavioural strategies that UASC use spontaneously to cope with adversity e.g. positive self-talk and distraction. Therefore, it is suggested that preventative, universal approaches that aim to raise resilience through developing cognitive-behavioural techniques (e.g. FRIENDS programme; Barrett, 2005) may be useful to support UASC coping with feelings of anxiety, depression or anger. This is in line with the recommendation of several researchers, for practitioners working with refugee children to take note of and build upon their active strategies of resilience (Anderson, 2004; Hopkins & Hill, 2010; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010). UASCs are likely to benefit from the psycho-educational aspects of such programmes (e.g. learning to recognise the physiological signs of emotions), as well as from the skill development (e.g. learning to recognise negative automatic thoughts and convert them into positive thinking or coping self-talk, relaxation techniques, mood monitoring and behavioural activation). Given that UASCs narratives indicated it was the prolonged nature of the asylum seeking process that was most detrimental to their emotional wellbeing, it is suggested that cognitive-behavioural work has great potential for supporting UASCs to continue coping over extended periods of uncertainty and anxiety.

Overall, different types of additional and preventative support will be useful, and indeed more or less appropriate, at different stages in the UASC's process of settling in the UK. Initially a cognitive-behavioural programme or solution-focused approach is likely to be most supportive to UASCs by raising self-awareness and building on existing coping strategies. Subsequently, once a degree of stability has been achieved, narrative approaches are likely to be beneficial by encouraging reflection and integration of a coherent personal narrative, through which the young person is able to make sense of their experiences and themselves, dealing perhaps with deeper issues of loss and trauma, but ultimately promoting psychological wellbeing.

Finally, whilst the theory on which the Resiliency Scales is based acknowledges the importance of agency (Sense of Mastery subscale) and relationships (Sense of Relatedness subscale) in resilience, it is recommended that EPs will do well to assess narrative coherence as an additional and critical dimension of resilience. The ability to 'make meaning' of oneself and one's experiences is highlighted as fundamental to resilience (Beiser & Wickrama, 2004; Goodman, 2004); psychological wellbeing (Baerger & McAdams, 1999); and cognitive adaptation (Taylor, 1983).

4.6 Rural context of research

A large part of the rationale for this study was the specific context in which the UASC were placed and the lack of research and understanding of UASCs needs within a rural local authority (see section 1.2). However, issues associated with their rural location (either positive or negative) did not emerge strongly within the UASCs narratives and thus do not feature as a discrete theme or 'finding' in this study's results and discussion. A key aim of this study was to

elicit the young people's voice and narratives of experience arriving in the UK; therefore whilst as professionals we may be concerned about their minority status and being a somewhat 'invisible' group in LA, the young people themselves did not make direct links between their coping efforts and their rural context. Nevertheless, some context specific issues were reflected upon and should be noted as follows.

P1 and P2 were originally placed in a rural local authority neighbouring WCC and subsequently moved to a large urban LA also neighbouring WCC. This move was requested by the young people themselves and presumably thought to be beneficial in terms of proximity to members of their ethnic and religious community e.g. access to Mosques. However, contrary to what may be expected P1 and P2 did not like the city with its ethnically diverse population and reported it to be "dirty" and "scary". They preferred the rural LA which they perceived as "quiet", "clean" and with "nice" English people whom they could learn English from. P3 was placed in foster care and then a children's home within WCC, the rural LA. Whilst appearing content with his placement in WCC, he spoke of frequent trips to a large city in a neighbouring LA to access the social support of young people from various ethnic backgrounds (BUMP youth group), which presumably was not available in WCC. P3 commented on being the only non-English person in his children's home and feeling this was a disadvantage (a barrier to coping) because of the language barrier and assumptions made by staff. However, similarly to P1 and P2, P3 was keen to remain in the rural LA long-term. He told stories of his determined efforts to secure housing and jobs in WCC post-18 and also of spending most of his time with friends in towns within WCC and not in the large city he used to go to.

These aspects of the UASCs narratives have implications for professionals working with UASCs in a rural LA, in terms of: listening to their views (and preferences) about care and educational placements; reducing language barriers and ensuring translators are readily available to avoid misunderstandings or marginalization; and facilitating young people's access to members of their religious and ethnic communities so far as is possible (whilst not assuming this is what they want).

4.7 Limitations of the research

4.7.1 Sample

Generalisability refers to how far findings relating to a particular sample can be generalised to apply to a broader population (Elliot, 2005). The generalisability of narrative research specifically, is a *"difficult issue...that has, as yet, received very little discussion in the literature on qualitative research"* (p.28). Three key issues relating to the sample in this study existed with potential to 'threaten' the validity and generalisability of the findings, and consequently to reduce the potential for theory development. Firstly, the sample were not randomly selected, therefore possibly not representative of the UASC population in WCC. Social workers (SWs) did a degree of 'filtering' i.e. they did not ask all UASCs on their caseload to participate in the research, excluding those whom they felt would not engage. Whilst it is important to credit SWs with good knowledge of the young people in their care, assumptions made by SWs may have led some potential candidates being 'missed' and a bias towards more compliant individuals in the sample. Furthermore, of those UASCs that were approached by SWs, only 6 gave their consent and 3 followed through to interview. Based on SWs feedback regarding reasons for non-

participation (see Appendix 18), it seemed the sample contained UASCs who were experiencing a *relatively* calm period in their lives at the time of interview. Those who did not participate were those whose present circumstances were such that the additional demand of an interview was not a priority.

Secondly, the UASCs interviewed were all male. Whilst I suggested in the Methodology chapter that this is representative of the larger proportion of male to female UASCs both nationally and locally (Kohli & Mather, 2003), nevertheless it must be acknowledged that the findings of this study may not be applied to female UASCs. Further research is required to explore the coping experiences of female UASCs, especially as they represent a minority group within a minority group.

Thirdly, the sample size was small; despite considerable efforts put into the recruitment process (see Appendix 7), only 3 UASCs were interviewed during the 7 month data collection period. Whilst this issue is clearly a reflection of the 'hard to reach' nature of this participant group (see Appendix 18 for further discussion), it may be suggested that with a small sample, the findings are specific to the individuals studied and not applicable to the wider population of UASCs (Robson, 1997). Whilst a larger sample was sought and would have strengthened the validity of findings, other measures were undertaken to strengthen the trustworthiness and generalisability of the findings (see Table 3.6).

With the small sample size in mind, the researcher put considerable effort into 'making a case' by outlining the ways in which the group studied in this research shared certain characteristics and experiences with other samples of UASCs reported in other studies (Robson, 1997). Within

the field of UASC research, small sample sizes are not uncommon possibly reflecting their low numbers in any given geographical area as well as the 'hard to reach' nature of the group e.g. Groark et al. (2010) interviewed 6 UASCs and Meagusuku-Hewett et al. (2007) engaged 8 UASCs in narrative interviews. Taken together these small sample studies can demonstrate common patterns in UASC coping capacities (as I did throughout the Results and Discussion) as well as highlight differences, which may be attributed to variance in contextual variables as well as differences in research design. Within the field of case-study research, the conclusions from any individual study such as this one, will be subject to the scrutiny of the research community in terms of compatibility with the whole "*network of prevailing beliefs*" (Riessman, 2008; p.195).

Furthermore, narrative psychological research does not claim generalisability in the traditional sense, or that the sample studied is typical of the population it represents (Cohen et al., 2001; Crossley, 2000; Yardley, 2009). Instead narrative case-study research offers a depth of context-dependent knowledge that is useful and relevant to others in similar contexts (Riessman, 2008; Yardley, 2009), generalisable to particular people, situations and settings (Cohen et al., 2001) and furthermore is essential for the development of knowledge, a field or a discipline (Flyvbjerg, 2004). We can develop our understanding of individual's capacity to cope in specific contexts through studying particular and individual cases in depth (e.g. Gray et al., 2005 and Hulusi & Oland, 2010). The 'trade-off' between depth and breadth prioritizes detailed descriptions and contextualised data over large samples of cases which are traditionally held to produce more generalisable results (Elliot, 2005). A critical advantage of the depth of analysis provided in this study is that the researcher gains more than a description of events experienced by UASCs; insight into the meaning individuals make of their experiences as well as insight into the complexities of the interactions between individuals and their social contexts are also developed

(Crossley, 2000; Elliot, 2005). These "revelations" make the findings of research generalisable, relevant and useful to others who share similar experiences and social worlds. Thus it is suggested that notwithstanding the small sample size in this study, the findings are still generalisable to others in similar social and cultural contexts i.e. Muslim teenage male UASCs arriving in a rural, white English county.

In the present study the small sample size was a concern and alternative samples were considered e.g. to interview Social Workers as well as UASCs with a view to triangulating the interview data. However, one of the original aims of this study (see section 1.3) was to elicit UASCs own 'voice', as opposed to the views of social workers and teachers that are already well represented in literature (Hodes et al., 2008; Hulusi & Oland, 2010; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Thomas et al., 2004). Therefore the decision was made to analyse the UASCs narratives in greater depth (i.e. thematic and structural analysis as previously described) thereby prioritising and maximizing the rich detail and depth of study that can be gained through narrative analysis, over the breadth of analysis based on having numerous participants.

In future studies, a larger sample may be secured by seeking to work in a children's home or youth club which UASC attend, in order to build rapport prior to making a request for participation in a research interview (e.g. Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010). Alternatively, research could adopt a group interview or focus group design in order to encourage the participation of those young people who may have been put off by the 'associated meaning' of an individual interview. However this design would require careful planning as it is likely that groups would need to be matched in terms of ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds and ideally be

composed of young people who already know each other and feel comfortable talking about personal experiences and memories together.

4.7.2 Language and culture

All 3 participants spoke English as an Additional Language (EAL) which had implications for the validity of the findings. Firstly, one might query whether UASCs fully understood the interview questions and assuming they did, were they able to fully and adequately express their responses. Various measures were adopted to reduce the language barrier (see Methodology chapter), nevertheless issues relating to the linguistic and cultural differences were apparent at both data collection and analysis stages.

During the interviews, it was apparent that the detail of narrative that one might expect from a native English speaker was not to be achieved with this group. P3 persevered with explanations until I understood (occasionally his pronunciation, or word order in a sentence, required my clarification and a pause in the narrative whilst he explained). P1 and P2 appeared more cautious and preferred not to provide elaboration. P2 even commented that he could think of stories but could not say them in English. Naturally this was frustrating, especially as an interpreter had been offered for the interviews; nevertheless the UASC's refusal to use an interpreter perhaps demonstrates something of their desire for independence and agency. Whilst in this case it was important not to disempower and patronize the UASCs by providing an interpreter once they had already stated their desire not to have one present; it is suggested that in future research it may be good practice to have a translator available and present as part of the standard interview procedure, rather than giving the option to interviewees. In this way if the interpreter is not

required they can sit out of the interview (e.g. in another room), however if they are needed they are readily available. Interviewing participants who speak English as an Additional Language will always be problematic for researchers in terms of managing threats to validity. O'Callaghan et al. (2012) acknowledged that by using a translator in narrative interviews with Ugandan former child soldiers some things were 'lost in translation' between interviewer and interviewee i.e. the translator may unintentionally simplify or elaborate the child's words to reflect their own understanding of what the child means: *"the interpreter may have subconsciously nuanced the children's feedback to conform to her understanding of the situation"* (p.95). Thus at least in this study the narratives that were collected and analysed were the young person's own words.

In conjunction with the issue of language, was that of cultural differences in narrative styles. It was apparent during interviews and subsequent analysis that large sections of UASCs narratives did not fit the standard story form proposed by Labov and upon which the framework for structural analysis were based. Instead of topic-centred, temporally ordered narrative episodes, UASCs produced stories that were long and rambling, with numerous tangents, skipping forwards and backwards in time, and crucially (in terms of coherence) left the listener wondering what the point of narrative had been. Thus applying the structural analytical frameworks to these non-typical narratives was challenging. Returning to the literature I discovered that my experience was not unique and may be explained by cultural differences in narrative style between myself and the UASCs. Michaels and Cazden (1984) report finding significant differences between white American and African American children's participation in 'show-and-tell' circle time. Generally speaking (exceptions were acknowledged) white American children produced stories that were temporally ordered and organised around a single topic; African American children tended to produce narratives consisting of several episodes that were linked

according to themes (i.e. not necessarily events), meaning that stories were often associative, with time shifts across episodes and lacking a clear statement of the overall point. Their White American teachers judged them as less competent story-tellers, whilst the children themselves reported feelings of annoyance with the teacher for always “interrupting” them (Riessman, 2008). The issues raised here have significant implications for narrative research with young people from other cultures. The narratives produced by children in Michaels and Cazden's study and by UASCs in mine, should not be judged as deficient but represent different cultural norms based on differences in the way children have storytelling and social interaction modelled to them (Heath, 1983; Riessman, 2008). This would suggest that frameworks for assessing narrative coherence (including Baerger & McAdams' criteria) are culturally specific to white European/American culture and therefore should be applied cautiously, if at all, to the narratives of individuals from other countries and cultural origins.

In this study, the combined approach of structural and thematic narrative analysis helped, in part, to overcome issues of language barrier and cultural differences in narrative style. By analysing both narrative content and form, the validity of the interpretation of narratives was strengthened. This is because thematic analysis addressed the breadth of content in the interviews and so ensured that the themes in UASCs narratives that fell outside the neat 'episodes' for structural analysis were not missed. Conversely, structural analysis enabled depth of study and exploration of the meaning that young people made of the events described, and not just the content of what they described, thereby minimising potential for false assumptions of meaning based on culture. Furthermore, I developed a flexible approach to structural analysis, taking lengthy segments of text (rather than concise chunks), in order to allow for UASCs associative (rather than episodic style) of narration. Furthermore, the criteria for Life Story

Coherence (Baerger & McAdams, 1999) enabled more than 'just' structural analysis of the elements in the episode system. Their framework enabled analysis of orientation, affect and integration in addition to structure, and so notwithstanding cultural differences in narrative style and structure, the criteria remained a useful system for analysis in relation to the research questions.

4.7.3 Interview design

The narrative interview schedule was deliberately designed to avoid asking questions about the young people's past; their countries of origin or reasons for coming to the UK. This was done in order to avoid generating unpleasant and distressing memories (see Appendix 2 'Application for Ethical Approval' and Appendix 3 explanatory notes on interview design). However, it is acknowledged that in this attempt to avoid distressing participants, the interview situation may have been over sensitive and unintentionally suppressed UASCs accounts which they were willing and keen to share. Thus in future narrative research such as this study, a more explicit discussion should be held giving participants the opportunity to talk about the past if they wish, whilst maintaining a stance of no pressure or expectation to do so. The visual aid of a contents page used to support the metaphor of viewing your life as a book that was presented at the start of the interview, asked the UASC to label the chapters of their life so far. I was keen to direct them to the chapters since arrival in the UK in order to avoid distress; however more could be made of discussing chapters prior to migration, if the young people expressed a desire to do so.

4.7.4 Trustworthiness (validity)

To conclude this discussion of limitations in the research design, some particular strengths are highlighted. Various steps were taken to strengthen validity, or trustworthiness, of the analysis (see Table 3.6). A particularly useful measure was the process of strengthening the interpretations of narratives by demonstrating their consistency with existing research studies and links to existing psychological theory i.e. establishing plausibility and correspondence (Riessman, 2008). In the first instance I undertook careful and thorough reading of existing research relating to UASCs and coping. Then once data collection and analysis was complete, I returned to this literature and drew support for my findings from the existing research base. From this cumulative evidence an interpretive account of findings was constructed. Furthermore, Crossley (2000) suggests that the validity of the interpretations of data is strengthened where they are theoretically sophisticated which requires more than just relating them to the findings of other similar studies. I established my findings as well founded within, and linked to, existing narrative psychological theory (i.e. Baerger & McAdams' model of Life Story Coherence and McAdams' (1993) theory of narrative theme and human motivations), as well as psychological theory outside the field of narrative psychology (i.e. Taylor's (1983) theory of cognitive adaptation to threatening events and Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs). By relating interpretations of data in meaningful ways to findings of existing research and theory, a momentum towards recommendations for action was generated (Crossley, 2000). Implications for practice of professionals in education and social care as well as psychologists, were generated directly from interpretations of the narratives of UASCs interviewed in this study, which further supports their validity.

A second useful technique utilized in this study was the process of identifying divergence (as well as convergence) between UASCs accounts. Once themes and patterns had been identified, the 'disconfirming instances' were also sought (Yardley, 2009). 'Disconfirming case analysis' served multiple purposes. Firstly, by identifying and including data that did not fit emerging themes or patterns, the reader can be reassured that all the data were taken into account and I did not simply leave out data that did not fit with my views (Yardley, 2009). Secondly, disconfirming cases enriched theory development by providing contrasting elements within similar experiences and/or strategies reported by UASCs e.g. 'being proactive' (P2 and P3) vs. 'perseverance' (P1) were both included within 'seeking agency'. Thirdly, disconfirming cases provided an indication of the generalisability of the analysis e.g. different experiences of foster care as reported by UASCs and in particular the associated motivation of seeking parent figures (or not as the case may be), led directly to consideration of the need for flexibility in making care arrangements for UASCs as one size will not 'fit all'. Finally, disconfirming cases helped generate valuable 'next steps' for research e.g. to explore circumstances in which UASCs do or do not have a positive experience of foster care.

Finally, a key strength was the overall goodness of fit and progression between the theoretical approach adopted and the research questions, the methodology and the analysis for interpretation of data. Validity was strengthened by this level of coherence in the study as a whole (Yardley, 2009). In this study, principles of narrative psychology and social constructionist epistemology consistently guided methodological and analytical decisions, which were made clear throughout the written report. Furthermore, by providing sufficient details for the reader to understand what was done and why, transparency which is key to validity, was maintained (Yardley, 2009).

4.7.5 Future research

On the basis of this research study and in particular building on its acknowledged limitations, further research is necessary. It is suggested that useful studies may include: 1) a larger sample using the same narrative approach in order to corroborate and strengthen the validity of these findings; 2) research using the same narrative approach but with female UASCs in a rural local authority in order to explore any similarities or differences between genders in coping experiences and ensure that a truly minority group (female UASCs) are given a voice in any subsequent recommendations for practice; 3) studies that make use of a range of different analysis techniques (IPA or grounded theory) in order to overcome some of the linguistic and cultural difficulties associated with using NA; and finally, 4) longitudinal studies that analyse the long-term outcomes for UACS in order to gain insight into whether the 'coping' observed in this and other studies, is a reflection of resilience or "*basic human survival in early stages*" (Thomas et al., 2004). Longitudinal studies are important as resilience is a dynamic developmental construct and therefore needs study over time to understand the patterns of relative stability (Luthar et al., 2000). The conclusions of this debate will have important implications for longer-term support offered to UASCs entering adulthood.

4.8 Conclusions

This study aimed to explore UASC's narratives of experience coping with transition and arrival in the UK without family. The two main 'findings' of this research were: 1) the interplay between seeking agency and using relationship; and 2) the interplay between suppression of reflection

and coherence of narrative. It is suggested that these two tensions were fundamental to the majority of coping strategies (both positive and negative) discussed by UASCs and furthermore are reflective of the interaction between individual coping capacities and environmental variables i.e. context-dependent resilience (see Figure 4.1 for overview).

UASCs desire for both personal agency and relationship with others may be understood as a natural reaction to their experiences of prolonged uncertainty and anxiety, coupled with loss of loved ones and all that is associated with 'home'. Efforts to gain increased agency whilst also maintaining relationships may often conflict with one another but can, when carefully managed, exist in parallel as complimentary to one another. Furthermore, it is recommended that optimum support for UASCs will be that which facilitates a progression from relative dependence to independence through relationships that are sensitive and robust enough to enable young people's development towards increasing personal agency.

Suppression of reflection and coherence of narrative on the other hand are unlikely to exist in a combined harmony. It is suggested on the basis of the analysis in this study that these dimensions represent different stages in the process of coping. Suppression (including avoidance of reflection and externalising locus of control to avoid feelings of failure or blame) was functional as a short-term coping strategy but over time (and only when ready) UASCs will need support to develop coherent personal narratives, in which they make sense of themselves in relation to their experiences in order to sustain psychological wellbeing.

The unique contribution of this research therefore is as follows. Firstly, I have sought not only to identify coping strategies employed by UASCs but to begin to unravel the inter-relationships and

tensions *between* various strategies. This kind of exploration is in keeping with a theoretical understanding of resilience as a dynamic process rather than a checklist of traits or skills (Anderson, 2004; Egeland et al., 1993; Newman & Blackburn, 2002). Secondly, whilst narrative psychologists argue that agency and relationships are fundamental human ‘motivations’ (McAdams, 1993), this study has sought to develop this theory further by linking it with resilience specifically and furthermore, by demonstrating that where these human motivations are denied or rejected by others, individuals experiencing adversity (such as UASCs) are at risk of developing maladaptive or negative coping strategies (such as suppression and self-harm). Thirdly, as discussed in the Literature Review, numerous authors agree that there is a gap in research relating to the interplay between environmental factors (post-migratory stressors) and the individual (coping processes); and consequently, there is a need to promote a perspective that acknowledges context-specific interactions affecting the resilience of refugee and asylum-seeking children (Anderson, 2004; Hopkins & Hill, 2010; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010). For this reason, this research study sought to explore the interaction between environmental factors and the individual. Through the analysis it was evident that for UASCs interviewed here, the environmental variables of key adults, social support, school, racism, geographical location and the asylum seeking process, interacted with their individual coping strategies. A primary example of this was the influence of key adults (be they foster carers, teachers, Children’s Home staff or SWs) in either the promotion or hindrance of resilience. Key adults that were responsive to UASCs expressed needs facilitated agency and positive coping strategies such as activity, distraction, talking and learning English. However, key adults whom UASCs perceived to ignore or actively antagonize them were linked to reduced agency (passivity) and the associated negative coping strategies of suppression and self-harm. These findings based on a small sample subject to detailed analysis, may be combined with those

of other researchers in the field (Endersby, 2006; Goodman, 2004; Groark et al., 2010; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010) to enrich a small but growing body of research that is informing practice to promote the resilience and wellbeing of UASCs in the UK.

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APPENDIX 1: FURTHER INFORMATION RE: THE SUITABILITY OF A NARRATIVE APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF UASC EXPERIENCES.

A narrative approach was adopted to investigate UASC experiences of coping for several reasons: 1) personal narratives enable us to understand the meaning that UASCs make of their experiences, and also themselves in relation to experiences (Murray, 2009; Elliot, 2005); 2) narrative is particularly suited to exploring experiences of change and adversity (Murray, 2009; Squire, 2008); 3) narrative enables study of interactions between individuals and their social context (Murray, 2009); 4) narrative enables study of the general through the particular (Josselson & Lieblich, 1995; Squire, 2008); and 5) narrative coherence is linked to psychological wellbeing (Baerger & McAdams, 1999; Crossley, 2000) meaning the method and the purpose of this research are in harmony.

Firstly, personal narratives give insight into UASCs 'lived lives' (the events) and their 'told story' (their interpretation of events), both of which are critical to understanding their coping efforts. UASCs pre- and post-flight experiences are likely to have been highly disjointed and disordered, which is likely to lead to "*particularly pronounced*" efforts to share narrative and in doing so make sense of life (Murray, 2009; p.114). The evaluative elements in narratives were of particular interest because it is through evaluation within narrative that the listener gains insight into the meaning that the narrator is making of the events and experiences they are relaying (Elliot, 2005).

Secondly, there is a precedent for using narrative specifically to explore experiences of change and adversity e.g. Murray's (2002) study with women diagnosed with breast cancer, and similarly Gray et al.'s (2005) study of black men diagnosed with prostate cancer. Thus it was appropriate to use narrative to investigate how UASCs cope with disruption to their lives as a consequence of separation from family and migration to another country. A small number of studies with UASCs and newly arrived pupils have used narrative approaches for this reason (Goodman, 2004; Hulusi & Oland 2010; Meagusuku-Hewett et al., 2007). Whilst constructing narrative is considered human instinct (Bruner, 1986; 1990), it is a process that becomes all the more relevant and necessary for individuals experiencing particular disruption and consequently their identities 'in crisis' (Gray et al., 2005; McAdams, 1993; Murray, 2002). To make meaning in life at these times involves creating, "*dynamic narratives that render sensible and coherent the seeming chaos of human existence*" (McAdams, 1993; p.166).

Thirdly, narrative enables study of the interaction between individuals and their social context (Murray, 2009). This feature of narrative approaches was critical in order to investigate not only UASCs coping styles, but their interaction with environmental factors that influence them. This was an important dimension for study given that resilience is understood as a context-dependent (Elbebour, 1993; Ungar, 2008).

Fourthly, narrative enables us to study the general through the particular: "*A major contribution of narrative analysis is the study of general social phenomena through a focus on their embodiment in specific life stories*" (Josselson & Lieblich, 1995; p.2). A narrative approach enabled us to develop understanding of the social phenomena of UASCs and their resilience despite experience of adversity and multiple 'risk' factors, through the stories of individual UASCs. Personal stories are a practical and effective means of researching particular issues,

especially with groups who are perceived to have little voice (Squire, 2008). UASCs placed in a rural, largely white-British county, are one such minority group.

Finally, as previously noted narratives help us to construct our identities, as well as meaning in our experiences: *“(narrative) provides structure to our very sense of selfhood.....provides us with a sense of localised coherence and stability. At times of instability, we can make connections to other aspects of our narrative identities”* (Murray, 2009; p.115). The concept of coherence is important within narrative psychology, not least due to the significant relationship between life story coherence and psychological well-being (Baerger & McAdams, 1999). Conversely, “narrative wreckage” or insufficient narrative can have a detrimental effect on our sense of coherence, continuity and meaning (Crossley, 2000). For UASCs who have faced upheaval and loss of most external markers of identity (i.e. family, friends, language, food, religion), developing a sense of identity and coherence will be all the more important to support mental health.

APPENDIX 3: EXPLANATORY NOTES REGARDING THE NARRATIVE INTERVIEW DESIGN

McAdams (1993) narrative interview schedule

- Question 5 'Stresses and problems' and Question 6 'Personal ideology' were omitted due to intention not to ask questions that may raise upsetting memories for UASCs relating to pre-migration experiences.
- Remaining 5 questions of McAdams' protocol were adapted to elicit narratives of specific episodes of arrival and settling in the UK (and not to gain a full life history narrative).
- To start the interview, McAdams asks the interviewee to: *"Think of your life as if it were a book. Each part of your life makes up a chapter in the book. The book is unfinished at this point; nevertheless it still contains some interesting chapters. Please create a general table of contents for your book with as many (or few) chapters as you like and give each chapter a name and a brief description of the contents of each chapter."* In my interview schedule, I designed that once the UASC had given each chapter a name, the interviewer would select those chapter titles that referred in some way to life post-migration/arrival in UK and point to these as the focus for the rest of the interview, thereby enabling a focus on this specific episode, whilst also having gained an overview of their life as a whole.
- Question 2 'Key events'. McAdams asks interviewees to describe 8 key events in their lives and facilitates their responses by requesting specifically that they give descriptions of a peak experience, nadir experience, a turning point, one of their earliest memories, an important childhood memory, an important adolescent memory, an important adult memory and another important memory. People are most articulate and insightful when talking about particular, concrete episodes in their lives (Crossley, 2000) therefore by asking UASCs about specific 'Key events' (instead of broad questions about life in the UK) it was hoped they would give detailed narratives, that would lead to stronger analysis. I decided not to ask for all 8 of these events given the episodic rather than life story focus of the interview. I asked UASCs for a peak experience, nadir experience, turning point, earliest memory and another important memory all in relation to their lives since arrival in the UK, not their whole life.
- It was important to anticipate and be sensitive to any difficulties the UASCs may experience in narrating, as indicated by gaps, silences and contradictions (Josselson & Lieblich, 1995). To this end prompts that could be used to encourage the interviewee to fill gaps or to elaborate or clarify points made, were designed within the schedule and used in instances where the interviewee needed assistance telling their stories. Indeed Bryman (2004) suggests that the interviewer needs to keep asking follow-up questions in order to stimulate the flow of details and impressions.

Taking Stones (Wearmouth, 2004)

- Whilst Talking Stones takes a PCP approach, the activity was not intended to be therapeutic in nature and neither was I aiming to 'unpick' UASCs core constructs. Rather the tool was used as a concrete and visual aid to conversation in order to build rapport and facilitate communication in a situation where young people may feel nervous and/or struggle with English language. These considerations were also made by Hulusi and Oland (2010; p.246): *"approaches that use objects are considered to be effective with participants who are either reticent or struggle to communicate verbally"*.

- Furthermore, it was felt that an activity such as Talking Stones would reinforce the message to UASCs that the research interview was in no way linked to the more formal interviews they may have had with social workers and legal representatives as part of their asylum seeking and care arrangements.

APPENDIX 4: NARRATIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Blue type = suggested script for the interviewer.

- ⇒ **Introduce** myself again and establish names of young person and any third party present as requested by the young person.
- ⇒ Recap of **ethical issues**:
 - The interview will last about 1 hour.
 - I will ask you some questions to get the conversation started; however there are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your experiences and your story.
 - During the interview if you feel like you want to stop and do not want to take part in the research any more, that is fine and you can just tell me.
 - If there are any questions you don't understand, just say, I'll ask something else!
 - If there are any questions you don't want to answer/things you don't want to talk about please just tell me.
 - After the interview I will give you a questionnaire to complete.
 - After the interview your recording will be stored for 7 days, during which time if you feel unhappy with your data being used you can ask to withdraw it from the study (just contact me using the telephone number or email address I've given you).
 - After those 7 days your recording will be given a unique ID number and your name taken off it. This is to make sure your information is truly anonymous and confidential. However, it also means that at this point it will no longer be possible for you to withdraw your information.
 - All the information I hear from yourself and other young people will be written up in a report that other people will read. Your name will not be put in the report so what you have said will not be linked to you in any way.
 - I will not talk to anyone else about what you tell me about your experiences. However, if you share any information during the session that makes me seriously concerned about yours or somebody else's health and safety, I have a responsibility to tell one of the adults you work with and trust so that we can decide what we should do in order to support you. If this happens I will discuss it fully with you first.
- ⇒ **Thank** the young person for agreeing to taking part and for their time.

Rapport building

- ⇒ Conversation around neutral topics of interest to the young person i.e. nothing relating to their experiences as a UASC.

Talking stones (Wearmouth, 2004)

- ⇒ Present YP with a spread of stones of varying shapes, sizes, colours and textures.
- ⇒ Ask the YP to select a stone from the pile that represents him/herself on arrival in UK. Discuss his/her choice. For example:
 - Can you choose a stone that looks like how you felt when you first came to England?
 - Which stone reminds you of your first day in school?
- ⇒ Select another stone to represent him/herself now (compared to first arrival) and if time/appropriate, how they feel in school vs. out of school. Discuss each in turn (why they have been selected, then place on rectangular piece of cloth/sugar paper). For example:

- Can you choose another stone that shows how you feel now/today?
- ⇒ Ask about the process of change, feeling like one stone then to a different stone now. How did this happen/did they change/develop from one to the other? *May be more appropriate to come back to this at the end of the interview.* For example:
 - Can you tell me a little bit about what's changed for you?
 - What means that you've gone from this stone to this one?
 - What's helped?
 - What's not helped?

Narrative interview (McAdams 1993; Crossley 2000)
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⇒ **Life chapters.**

Begin by thinking of your life as if it were a book. Each part of your life makes up a chapter in the book. The book is unfinished at this point; nevertheless it still contains some interesting chapters. First of all I'd like you to create a table of contents for your book with as many (or few) chapters as you would like (advice min 2 – max 8). Give each chapter a name.

Present visual aid - A4 sheet with template of a contents page from a book to illustrate the metaphor and if helpful, to write on. Once YP has given each chapter a name, ask YP:

Please can you describe the overall contents of this/these chapters?

Select chapter titles that refer in some way to life post-migration/arrival in UK i.e. do not ask for a description of all chapters unless YP really wants to. If possible discuss briefly what makes for a transition from one chapter to the next. YP won't and can't tell the whole story but need to get a 'sense' of the outline – the major chapters in their life.

⇒ **Key events.**

I am now going to ask you about key events that happened during this/these chapter(s), since you arrived in the UK. A key event is a specific happening, a critical incident, a significant episode in your past. It could be a specific moment that stands out for some reason e.g. a particular conversation with someone or a particular decision you made.

- Peak experience – Can you tell me about a high point, a most wonderful moment since arrival in the UK?
- Nadir experience – Can you tell me about a low point, a worst moment since arrival in the UK? This question may require further explanation e.g. We all have times of stress, problems, conflict or challenge. Can you describe a time you have felt this and how you dealt with it?
- Turning point – Can you tell me about a time when you underwent a significant change in your understanding of yourself?
- Earliest memory – Can you tell me about one of your earliest memories of life in the UK? (Prompt for setting, scene, characters, thoughts and feelings).
- An important memory – Can you tell me about a particular event since being in the UK, positive or negative, that stands out?

Key events occur in a particular time and place, with particular characters, actions, thoughts and feelings, therefore possible prompts include (**but** prompts are only to be used in cases where narrative is not being given spontaneously by YP - **do not interrupt** story telling if YP is happy talking):

- What happened? Where were you? Who was involved? What did you do? What were you thinking and feeling in the event?
- What impact did the event have on your life story?
- What does the event say about who you are or were as a person?
- Did this event change you in any way? If so, how?

⇒ **Significant people.**

Everybody's life has a few significant people who have a big impact on the story, for example, parents, siblings, spouses, friends, teachers, religious leaders, work colleagues etc. Please can you describe 4 of the most important people in your life story?

Prompt for relationship to that person and specific way in which impacted on their life.

⇒ **Future script.**

We have talked about the past and the present; what about the future? Do you have a plan/dream for what might happen in the next few chapters of your story/life? Can you describe this to me?

Prompt for goals, interests, hopes, aspirations and wishes.

⇒ **Life theme.**

Looking back over your story so far, with your life as a book with chapters, episodes and characters, can you identify a central theme, message or idea that runs through the 'text' (story)? What is the major theme of your life?

Concluding question to wrap up the interview (Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010):

Do you have any advice for other unaccompanied minors thinking of coming to England or who have recently arrived?

Finally:

⇒ Thank the young person for taking part in this study and explain where they can use their 'thank you' voucher.

Additional questions if the above format is too complex for UASCs language skills (Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010; Czarniawska, 2004):

- Do you think that you have adjusted to life in England? What has helped you to do this?
- Can you tell me about times that have been good for you and times that have not whilst settling here?
- Can you describe (in detail) a typical day when you first arrived in UK vs. a typical day now X months/years later?

NB. Throughout the interview:

- ✓ Ask about events marked by the speaker but not expanded upon (Squire, 2004):
Can you give me an example? Tell me more about when....?
- ✓ Give nods and remarks to encourage ongoing narrative but refrain from overt commentary as this may disturb narrative (Murray, 2009).
- ✓ Keep asking follow-up questions to gain all details if not forthcoming (Bryman, 2004):
Tell me what happened? And then what happened?
What happened that made you remember that particular moment?

APPENDIX 5: RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE RESILIENCY SCALES FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Information provided in the Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents Manual (Prince-Embury 2007; PsychCorp: Harcourt Assessment). Reliability and validity data is presented in the manual according to age groups 9-11 years, 12-14 years and 15-18 years. I report here the data for 15-18 year olds as this is relevant to the participants in this research. Clinical samples are also reported in the manual but not discussed here as they are not of direct relevance to the sample

Adolescent standardisation sample characteristics:

- 200 young people aged 15-18 years in the US;
- 100 male and 100 female;
- Ethnic diversity: 132 White, 31 African American, 30 Hispanic, 5 Asian and 2 'other'.

Reliability

Internal consistency is important to assure that the items within each scale and subscale are indeed assessing the same constructs. The internal consistency of the Resiliency Scales and subscales was "*excellent*" for 15-18 year olds (p.87).

- Reliability coefficients for the 3 scales ranged from .94 (Emotional Reactivity) to .95 (Mastery and Relatedness).
- Alpha coefficients for Sense of Mastery subscales ranged from .82 to .91.
- Alpha coefficients for Sense of Relatedness subscales ranged from .85 to .90.
- Alpha coefficients for Emotional Reactivity subscales ranged from .86 to .92.

Test-retest reliability coefficients were high for the adolescent sample based on a sub-sample of 65 individuals (35 female and 30 male) who completed the Resiliency Scales on two separate occasions (interval of 3-23 days; mean interval was 8 days):

- Test-retest coefficients for the 3 scales ranged from .86 (Mastery and Relatedness) to .88 (Emotional Reactivity).
- Some gender differences noted. Females generally demonstrated more stability over time than males, except for the Emotional Reactivity Scale and Recovery subscale for which males demonstrated more stability.

The authors concluded that "*In summary, test-retest reliability of the Resiliency scale scores over time are moderate to excellent for all age groups. Stability increases with the age of the child, is higher for the three scales and Index scores, and tends to be generally more stable for girls than boys.*" (p.94).

Validity

Confirmatory Factor Analysis confirmed that a three-factor model (Factor 1 = Sense of Relatedness; Factor 2 = Sense of Mastery; and Factor 3 = Emotional Reactivity) fits best compared to one factor (all subscales on a general factor) or two factor model (Factor 1 = Sense of Relatedness and Sense of Mastery; and Factor 2 = Emotional Reactivity). This was consistent across age and gender groups.

Convergent and divergent validity was assessed by making correlations with scores on other

assessment instruments. Correlations with the Reynolds Bully Victimization Scale (BVS) for Children are reported in the manual but not discussed here as only relevant to 9-14 year olds. The sample of 200 adolescents aged 15-18 years were administered the Beck Youth Inventory (BYI-II) and the Resiliency Scales. Findings as follows:

- Strong positive correlation between self-reported Emotional Reactivity and all BYI-II scores of negative affect and behaviour (depression, anxiety, anger and disruptive behaviour subscales).
- High positive correlations between Emotional Reactivity score and scores on all BYI-II subscales: anxiety (.65), disruptive behaviour (.74), depression (.74) and anger (.76).
- High negative correlations between Sense of Mastery and all BYI-II scores of negative affect and behaviour (-.51 to -.61).
- High negative correlations between Sense of Relatedness and all BYI-II scores of negative affect and behaviour (-.45 to -.57).
- Sense of Relatedness score correlated with BYI-II Self Concept score (.70).
- Age differences suggest that the buffering effect of resiliency against symptom severity is more visible with increased age.

"...the constructs underlying the Resiliency Scales are believed to become more formed or differentiated with age. For this reason, reliability and validity evidence is expected to change in the direction of greater internal consistency and stronger ability to differentiate criterion groups with increased age." (p.85).

APPENDIX 6: UASC SOCIAL CARE TEAM MEETING HANDOUT

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Research

Working title: Investigation of the experiences and related resiliency coping strategies utilized by unaccompanied asylum seeking children/young people (UASC) arriving in a rural Local Authority (LA).



What is the context for this research?

The educational psychology training route changed in 2006 from a 1 year Masters qualification to a 3 year doctorate. In Years 2 and 3 of the training programme, Trainee EPs are employed by an LA with some time allocated for university and study time. I commenced employment with **Worcestershire LA in September 2010 and work within the South team, with an allocated 'patch' of schools in the Evesham area.**

As part of the training, Trainee EPs are required to undertake **'a substantial piece of original research at doctoral level' within their LA.** The following is an outline of what I propose for this piece of research within Worcestershire LA, for which I am in partnership with the UASC team.



What are we investigating?

Research suggests that UASCs **are a particularly 'at-risk' group for poor outcomes** due a number of pre, during and post-migration risk factors (DfES, 2004; Coelho, 1998; Hart, 2009). However, despite their vulnerability refugee and asylum seeking children are often found to be highly resilient, coping well with adversity and doing well in school (Rutter, 2003). They are often found **to be "active survivors" rather than "passive victims" (Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010).** Thus, recent research has sought to explore resilience as a process and not purely a trait (e.g. Anderson, 2004; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007)

The purpose of this piece of research is to investigate how it is that UASC develop resilience within the specific context of schools located in the largely rural county of Worcestershire. The research questions to be explored are:

- ⇒ What specific coping strategies and capacities for resilience to UASC draw upon during their arrival and transition to school in the UK?
- ⇒ What mechanisms in the school context do UASC perceive to have facilitated and/or hindered their ability to cope with the transition?
- ⇒ How can the views and experiences of UASC be used to inform practice in supporting this particular 'at risk' group by education professionals both within and outside schools?



Why are we interested in this?

- ✓ Necessary and useful research → majority of research within the field of resilience and asylum seekers has taken place within either urban local authorities such as London (Hopkins & Hill, 2010) or other countries (e.g. Ghazinour et al., 2003) → this research will contribute to filling a gap by exploring the experiences of UASC settling specifically in the context of: a) the UK; and b) a rural county.
- ✓ It is important to investigate the experiences and resilience of UASC in this specific context because here → UASC are more likely to be **'isolated learners'** in their school → and also more likely to be attending schools where staff may have little to no experience of supporting YP with their particular needs and background.
- ✓ Findings of this research → may be used to directly inform developing practice in the schools of Worcestershire. This is necessary given that even in Birmingham (**England's largest urban LA**) school staff expressed concern to their educational psychologists (EPs) regarding how to support their new arrivals (Hulusi & Oland, 2010). This research will aim to make evidence-based recommendations regarding effective practice in schools that empowers UASC within the adaptive strengths and capacities they have, based on an increased understanding of the dynamics of resilience (Anderson, 2004).



How will this be investigated?

- ⇒ Most existing research re: UASC needs and resilience involves the views of adults (teachers, practitioners, service providers etc) around the YP → much less published regarding the views of UASC themselves and a real lack of participation and voice of YP within the research body (Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Hulusi & Oland, 2010).
- ⇒ This research will **seek to elicit the YP's** views and perceptions regarding their own coping **strategies and experience of the 'host' environment** during a time of huge transition and change.

Semi-structured interviews:

- Narrative approach **in order to elicit YP's stories.**
- Recorded using a Dictaphone → transcribed, coded and analyzed for emerging themes relating to strategies and processes facilitating resilience as well as interactions between the **individual and the 'host' environment** (Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007).
- Informed consent will be sought from the YP and their carers.
- Confidentiality of data will be ensured. Important data such as gender, ethnicity, home language and religion will be collected; however information will not be stored against **participants' names** or attached to individual data.

Questionnaires:

- The Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents.
- Published by Harcourt Assessment (2007) → a standardized tool, widely used by both educational and clinical psychologists.

- A self-report questionnaire which the YP may complete privately if they wish or with the assistance of a translator or trusted adult/friend should they request this support (to assist with understanding of language rather than discussion of answers per se).
- 3 sections each having 20-24 items. Each item comprises a statement, e.g. **"I can ask for help when I need to"** or **"I am good at fixing things"** to which the respondent must indicate their response by circling 1 out of 5 possible responses on a scale where: 1 = **"never"**, 2 = **"rarely"**, 3 = **"sometimes"**, 4 = **"often"** or 5 = **"almost always"**.
- Section 1 = Sense of Mastery
- Section 2 = Sense of Relatedness
- Section 3 = Emotional Reactivity
- There is a proportionally greater focus on strengths than difficulties for individuals completing this questionnaire → a deliberate choice!



Gathering participants!

- ⇒ Aim to interview approx. 10 young people, aged 14-19 years old, male and female.
- ⇒ No exclusion criteria except → **"exclusion on the grounds of psychological vulnerability"** (BPS, 2004, paragraph 3.7) i.e. participants who are currently receiving any kind of therapy or experiencing flash backs/psychological distress that is currently interfering with their daily life and functioning, will not be accepted for participation in the research.
- ⇒ Interpreter may be arranged if a YP wishes to be interviewed but does not feel sufficiently competent in the English language.
- ⇒ UASC team to approach individual YP with whom they work to discuss whether they would be interested in taking part in interviews regarding their experiences arriving in the UK and Worcestershire LA/school.
- ⇒ Subject to their agreement, **YP's contact** details will then be passed to Caroline who will then make contact with the YP to answer any questions, explain the format for research and seek to gain informed consent.
- ⇒ A cover letter, Information Sheet and consent forms will be sent to the YP and their carer/guardian → explaining the objectives and process of the research in order that **participants have all the "necessary information to complete their understanding of the nature of the research"** (BPS, 2009, paragraph 5.1) → able to give their informed and written consent.
- ⇒ Signed consent forms will be returned to Caroline → set dates for interviews.
- ⇒ Informed consent from the carers/guardians of YP will be a standard requirement for all participants whatever their age, although it is required for participants under 18 years of age (BPS, 2004, paragraph 3.10; UN Convention, 1989). If consent is not gained from the carer/guardian then the YP will not be involved in the research.



Proposed timescale:

March 2011	- Sought the involvement of UASC team with research. Meeting between Gary Henn, Julian Radcliffe (Senior EP) and Caroline Doggett to discuss further details of research proposal.
April – June 2011	- Consent forms and interview schedule designed. - Application for ethical approval for the research made to the University of Birmingham.
June – Aug 2011	- Meet with whole UASC team. - Identification of appropriate cases (participants) to take part in research. - Gain consent of participants and other involved parties (e.g. parents/carers). - Piloting of interview materials.
Sept – Oct 2011	Conduct interviews with YP (i.e. data collection) and administration of questionnaires to YP.
Nov – Dec 2011	Data analysis
Jan – Feb 2012	Report writing
March 2012	Submission of draft thesis to university
April 2012	Feedback to UASC team & any other interested parties re: outcomes of research.



So what now?

- ⇒ Request that UASC team members consider their caseload and any YP (aged 14-19 yrs and not currently in therapy), who may be willing to participate in an interview.
- ⇒ UASC team to approach and discuss the possibility of participation in research with these YP.
- ⇒ If YP express interest in taking part, then UASC team to pass contact details to Caroline who will then get in touch with YP and their carer/guardian with further information and consent forms.
- ⇒ Once consent forms are returned, dates will be set for interview (in Sept/Oct) and arrangements for translators made as required.

Thank you for listening! Any questions?

Please get in touch anytime with any questions and/or suggestions!

My contact details: Caroline Doggett, Educational Psychologist in Training



Early Intervention and Targeted Support
Children's Services – Education Psychology
West Wing, First Floor
Wildwood
County Hall Campus
Worcester
WR5 2NP

APPENDIX 7: RECRUITMENT

I attended the UASC Social Care team meeting in April 2011 to explain the nature and purpose of research (Appendix 6 for handout). Social Workers then approached individual UASCs on their caseload to discuss the possibility of participation in the research. Had I, as the researcher, approached the young people directly there was potential for them to feel pressurised to take part due to the researcher's perceived position of authority (BPS, 2009, paragraph 3.6). Furthermore, confidentiality would have been breached if the UASC team had given me the contact details of young people prior to their consultation and consent. Once agreed, I then made direct contact with the young people to explain more fully the purpose and format of research and seek their informed consent (see Appendix 10 for initial meeting checklist). In one case this was via telephone and in 3 cases via a joint visit with the social worker to speak face to face. At this point young people signed a consent form (see Appendix 9). Letters and consent forms for carers were also prepared but in the event not required as all participating UASCs were 16+ years of age. Contact details for the researcher (myself) were included on the Information Sheet (see Appendix 8) which was discussed with UASCs so that if desired they could contact me at any point before or after the interview. See 'Application for Ethical Review' (Appendix 2) for further details of the considerations given to the process of recruitment and informed consent.

During the data collection period (extended to 6 months) social workers expressed confidence in the likelihood of 8 UASCs engaging, of which 6 gave their consent to be interviewed and 3 were actually interviewed. Table 1 provides an outline of the events that contributed to the difficulty recruiting participants. The problems associated with this small sample size are discussed in section 4.6.1.

UASC	Account of events
1&2 (N&N)	2 x YP give consent during joint home visit by CD with SW. YP agreed they would like the interview to take place at their house, with each other (housemates) present. No one is at home on the agreed date. Several unsuccessful attempts made to establish phone contact but phone switched off. Eventually telephone contact is made and rearranged interviews go ahead on second attempt.
3 (M)	YP gives consent to SW and date and time is arranged. YP would like interview to take place at the Connexions office. Half an hour prior to the interview SW texts CD to say YP has been in touch to say he cannot make it and is reluctant to rearrange another date. 2 weeks later SW emails CD to say YP has now decided he would like to meet with me. New date and time agreed and interview goes ahead on second attempt.
4 (Y)	YP gives consent during joint home visit by CD and SW. Date is agreed between all 3 of us. SW cancels the interview (on the day) due to receiving an emergency call (she was SW 'on duty' that day). SW never rearranges the interview despite numerous emails and phone calls from CD to encourage this.
5&6 (E&A)	2 x YP give consent to SW who calls me on the morning they are free to ask if I can come. This is the same day I have agreed to meet UASC 3 (who subsequently doesn't show) so I cannot attend. An alternative date is agreed but SW is unable to contact the boys to confirm or rearrange: "not answering their phones". Subsequently both boys have their Leave to Remain refused and they decide they are unwilling to meet with me anymore.
7	YP willing to talk but aged 17½ years old, he was contesting the refusal of his claim for

	Further Leave to remain. It is a “turbulent time” with “too much going on to commit to this”.
8	YP unwilling to talk about the past given he feels so settled in UK now. Furthermore, Foster Carers unwilling for him to talk to me.

Table 1: Account of events leading to successful interview or attrition from the sample of UASCs (YP = young person, SW = social worker, CD = Caroline Doggett, the researcher).

At both the initial planning stage and once the recruitment problem had become more apparent, numerous strategies were developed to encourage recruitment and participation from this 'hard to reach' group (see Table 2).

Pre-recruitment measures	Adapted responses to recruitment problem
1. Detailed pre-interview information provided in written form and discussed verbally with UASCs to highlight that in no way was I or the interview linked to their legal status or application for leave to remain.	1. Offer of an 'incentive' of a £20 high street store voucher to say 'thank you' for their time.
2. Initial meetings between the UASC, myself and their social worker to meet 'face to face' (rather than receiving an impersonal letter or phone call), to explain the research and give opportunity for questions/discussion prior to gaining consent.	2. Rearranged interviews and maintained flexibility with diary when UASCs cancelled last minute or did not 'show' on the first occasion.
3. Offer to interview at whatever location they choose and with anyone else present that they choose (friend, social worker, foster carer etc).	3. Extended the timeframe in which willing to conduct interviews to allow for set-backs i.e. original plan was to complete interviews in October 2011, however I remained proactive and available for interviews until March 2012.
4. Offer for a translator to be present and so reduce the language demands of the interview.	4. Discussion of alternative approaches e.g. for some UASCs the prospect of an individual interview with a stranger may have 'attached meaning' (i.e. association with formal meetings with SWs and lawyers) → proposed a 'focus group' instead. However, SWs felt the emotional privacy of individual's stories meant they were unlikely to talk in groups with other YP and also, that groups would need to be matched for ethnicity, religion, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Table 2: Measures taken both prior to and during the recruitment process to raise a sample of UASCs.

APPENDIX 8: INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Dear

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project about the experiences of young people arriving in the UK from other countries and without their parents, families or relatives. Other young people aged 14-19 will also be invited to take part in this project. I am interested in finding out about how you coped with this time of change and about the things that you think helped you (and also perhaps things that didn't help you) to settle into your new life and new school in the UK.

As well as making sure that you are happy to take part in this project, I will also need to ask your carers for their permission. I am sending them a letter like this one.

If you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to fill in a questionnaire. You can do this on your own in private or have someone you trust to help you read and fill in the questionnaire.

You will also meet with me to talk about your experiences arriving in the UK and settling into school here. Here are some things you should know about this meeting:

- ⇒ The session will last approximately 1 hour.
- ⇒ It will take place in October or November 2011 at your school or home, whichever you tell me you would prefer.
- ⇒ I will ask you some questions to get the conversation started; however there are no right or wrong answers.
- ⇒ You can bring along a friend or adult whom you trust to sit with us during the session if you think this will help you feel relaxed.
- ⇒ We can arrange to have a translator with us during the session if you feel that you would like help speaking or understanding English.
- ⇒ The session will be recorded on tape so that I have a good record of what was said.
- ⇒ The audio recording will be listened to and typed into a written transcription by one member of the administration team who works for the educational psychology service in Worcestershire.
- ⇒ Myself and my supervisor (Julia Howe) will have access to your interview data. No one else will listen to the recording or read the transcription.
- ⇒ At any time before or during the interview if you feel like you want to stop and do not want to take part in the research any more, that is fine and you can just tell me.
- ⇒ After the interview your recording will be stored for 7 days, during which time if you feel unhappy with your data being used you can ask to withdraw it from the study (just contact me using the telephone number or email address at the end of this letter).
- ⇒ After those 7 days your recording will be given a unique ID number and your name taken off it. This is to make sure your information is anonymous and confidential. However, it also means that at this point it will no longer be possible for you to withdraw your information.
- ⇒ Finally, to say thank you for taking part in this study we will give you a £10 voucher of your choice (e.g. i-tunes, Top Shop, mobile phone top-up)! If you do withdraw your data because you feel unhappy you can still keep this voucher.

All the information I get from the questionnaires and interviews with yourself and other young people will be written up in a report that other people will read. Your name will not be put in the report so what you have said will not be linked to you in any way. I will not talk to anyone else about what you tell me about your experiences. However, if you share any information during the session that makes me seriously concerned about yours or somebody else's health and safety, I have a responsibility to tell one of the adults you work with and trust so that we can decide what we can do in order to support you. It is unlikely that this will happen but if it does I will discuss it fully with you first.

Taking part in this project is your choice. It is ok if you do not want to take part or if you change your mind later and want to stop half way through the session. You can choose to stop taking part at anytime and you won't need to give me a reason why.

Finally, it is important to say that taking part in this project (or choosing not to) does not affect your asylum seeking status at all. I am a researcher based at The University of Birmingham and not linked to the Home Office in any way whatsoever. The information that we discuss will not be discussed with anyone else.

Please keep this Information Sheet in a safe place in case you want to read it again in the future.

If you would like to ask me or my supervisor (Dr Julia Howe) any questions you have about the project now or at anytime during the project, then these are our contact details:



[Redacted contact information]



[Redacted contact information]

Thank you for taking the time to read this information!

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Doggett
Educational Psychologist in Training
South Team

APPENDIX 9: YOUNG PERSON'S CONSENT FORM

Dear

Please read the Information Sheet before filling in this form. Please read the statements below and tick the boxes if you agree with them. If you sign your name at the bottom of the page, then this means that you agree to take part in this research project.



I have read the Information Sheet about this project.

☐

I have had time to think about the information.

☐

I confirm that I am choosing to be involved in the project and have not been pressured or instructed to take part.

☐

I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason. If I do so my interview recording will be destroyed.

☐

I understand that I do not have to answer any questions during the session that I do not want to or feel able to.

☐

I understand that the things I talk about in this project will be written in a report. My name will not be used so no one will know who said what. Extracts from the recording may be used as quotes in order to illustrate certain points in the report however no one will be named.

☐

I understand that the session will be audio taped so that there is a good record of what was said.

☐



I understand that the recording may be heard by the researcher (Caroline Doggett) and her supervisor (Julia Howe) and by one member of admin staff who will type a written transcription. The transcripts and questionnaires will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office.

☐

I agree to take part in this project about how young people cope when they arrive in the UK without their parents, family or relatives.

☐

(Please print you full name)

(Please sign your name)

(Date)

Thank you for your time in reading and completing this form. Please return it to the following address:

Caroline Doggett, Educational Psychologist in Training
Early Intervention and Targeted Support
Children's Services – Education Psychology
West Wing, First Floor
Wildwood
County Hall Campus
Worcester
WR5 2NP

Many thanks,

Caroline Doggett
Educational Psychologist in Training

APPENDIX 10: INITIAL MEETING CHECKLIST

Personal info

Name:

Date of arrival in UK:

Country of origin:

Ethnicity/religion:

Languages spoken:

Age:

Gender:

Accommodation:

School:

Carer (name):

Research info

Information sheet discussed?	Y	N
------------------------------	---	---

Consent?	Y	N
----------	---	---

Voucher type?

Date for interview:

Location of interview:

Others to be present?

Translator required?

If yes, what language?

Any further questions?

APPENDIX 11: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT FROM INTERVIEW WITH P3

At this point in the interview P3 was undertaking the Talking Stones activity. The whole transcript is 58 pages long so cannot be included in its entirety as an Appendix.

Please note that the transcription includes:

- Word repetitions by both interviewer and interviewee;
- Interviewer utterances;
- Grammatical incorrect sentences/word order;
- Italics to indicate emphasis;
- '...' to indicate pauses;
- Non-words vocalisations e.g. 'errr'
- Descriptions in brackets of relevant information e.g. (laughs) and (points to a stone).

CD: So this is just an activity with, I've got lots of stones and I'd like you to choose a stone that you think shows how you felt when you first came to England.

P3: That is mean how I was feel down?

CD: How you were feeling inside.

P3: That biggest one is good innit? This one does mean no good?

CD: It's up to you.

P3: I don't know! [laughs]

CD: You can explain. So, if you choose a stone and then *you* can explain to *me* why does that, *how* does that show you when you first came to England?

P3: Okay. That's been better if I explain like how I feel now, how I feel when I come. So okay, when I come, if I be honest, probably like this? [picks stone]

CD: Yep.

P3: I think smallest in here? When I come it wasn't speak English. That's my first thing.

CD: Yep.

P3: I wasn't understand what people say. So I went to school I think for one years and a half. I think it just waste my time because I wasn't speak English and I didn't learn much.

CD: OK.

P3: All those people talking to me, I don't know if they swearing at me. I don't know if they saying good thing. That is something like feeling down because I wasn't speak English.

CD: Yeah.

P3: I wasn't understand what people say, what friends say at school?

CD: Yeah.

P3: So that is basically I was feeling down always. For one year and halves I wasn't speaking English.

CD: Right.

P3: So after that it is too late because I left school and then I little bit start speak English. So that is mean I waste my time for one years and half because I wasn't speak English and I didn't learn much in writing.

CD: OK.

P3: And this is one thing. Second thing, when I come a little bit better and I was waiting for Home Office decision as well? Home Office?

CD: Home Office? Yeah....

P3: Because I was applying for like..I don't know how to explain..for asylum seekers you know?

CD: Yep.

P3: I was applying for to stay in this country but from 2005 until 2007 I didn't hear anything from them...

CD: Uh huh

P3: So that is make me feel down. I was scared and I was like they send me back home.

CD: OK. Scared they would send you back?

P3: Yeah I was feeling very scary because I run away from my country and if England sent me back, probably have been killed or maybe I go into jail for I don't know how long. You know what I mean? I am scared because I know what happening to people in my country.

CD: Mmhmm.

P3: You know what I mean? And this is what make me feel down but in 2007, the Home Office sent me travel document. It wasn't travel document but er the thing...er, it's like a travel document but I wasn't booked to go holiday. It's just something like an ID card, it show you you allowed to work all United Kingdom, first thing second thing this is until you 18. And this is make me more happier so maybe jump to say I don't know which one,

probably here? (pointing to stone)

CD: OK.

P3: Because when I was feeling like this, after I jump to here (pointing to stone) when I get something from Home Office, until 18 so I was little bit happier. Okay, so I got another 3 years, after this maybe I get a decision. So in 2009 that was decision finished, so I was 18, in 2009 so I sent back to Home Office apply for a new one.

CD: Mmhmm.

P3: Say what happen to my life in UK? I say ok, when I apply for new one so 2009, I was sent back to them so after few weeks they just sent me letter to my house. They just say, we got your paper, you have to wait, to answer from us. I was waiting 2009 I think November finish my passport but I think sent back in October. Not October, is September I think it was because 2 months before my decision finish, I have to send back is what law says. Law says you have to send back two months before finishing.

CD: Mmmhmm.

P3: So I was waiting from 2009 September until, I don't know, is last year..or this year. No, is this year. I'm not too sure which month...I think in err April?

CD: OK.

P3: I was waiting from 2009 to April. I was in Birmingham then as well, I'm not sure which month was but I know definitely this year. I was waiting for nearly 2 year that is make me more worry. This is make me scared, you know what I mean?

CD: Yeah....

P3: But I think in April it was, I'm not too sure without looking at my passport cause it's at home now...

CD: That's fine.

P3: Yeah so someone knock my door in outside house. So I was went to downstairs and someone said, is like immigration people, they said is you [NAME]? I said yes it is, but I was scared! I tried to jump you know, somewhere outside, try escape situation, because I was scared, because I didn't get a decision or anything! This was one man and wasn't got police with him, nothing, just said I am your lawyer. I said I never see you you lawyer. Is someone from part of the lawyer but I wasn't see this person when I went to office. That has been 2009 when I sent my passport.

CD: Right.

P3: I see someone different. I know the person still, I know her. But the man come to me and

is black man and he say I'm your lawyer. I say You're not my lawyer. I never see you before.

CD: Mmmhmm.

P3: He say I got your indefinite leave? I say yeah indefinite? I was a little bit, oh great it's not problem. I say okay. He say I bring for you but you have to sign for me because you're not with us anymore. It's true because after 2009, after one I think, a few months after when I send my travel document back to Home Office, I think the lawyer been cutting out money by Home Office.

CD: Mmmhmm.

P3: I think all lawyer sign about 50% off. The lawyer I think finish. I think they say we Home Office not spend money for us anymore, we cannot work for some people like you because we not charge you. That is something I think they do for Home office and Home Office buy them. I think Home office seen as what law change... I think they cut off money. I think social services lost jobs by Home office I think. That guy told me, said we have to charge for your case to another lawyer.

CD: Mmmhmm.

P3: Because we not working for young people or whatever any longer anymore.

CD: Right.

P3: So I say okay that's why I didn't get relationship with them much. So I not see this man anyway. The man said you have to sign for me because your passport come back to our office. I say how come passport come back to your office because when I get new solicitor, with my solicitor, I just 3, 4 months ago, before man come to my house. Because months ago, I was sent another letter to Home Office to reply back to me. They not reply back anything. I said they should be now who's my new solicitor, how come they send to you? It was make me confused because always I ring my new solicitor, say you got anything new for me from Home Office? He keep saying no, I keep sending letter to Home Office and they not reply back nothing. So that has make me worry.

CD: Yeah.

P3: One man come to me say you indefinite leave. This has make me crazy because 2 years ago, I left you, you're not my solicitor no longer but how come Home Office not updated my case and stuff for different solicitor. So basically was good thing happen, didn't lost my passport because lots of people lost and stuff like this.

APPENDIX 12: SAMPLES OF LSC STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS (P2 AND P3)

P2: A significant memory p20 & 33-34

CD: Ok, good. So do you have any other dreams and hopes?	
P2: Not really [laugh]	
CD: Okay. How is college at the moment?	
P2: This college I don't like...3 weeks I no go been.	A: statement of feeling S: his attempt, though events are unclear as yet
CD: 3 weeks, you've not gone?	
P2: No.	
CD: Right. Why? Why not?	
P2: Because is no good college, you know.	A: evaluative comments – even when prompted does not tell story
CD: Ok	
P2: All different people are fighting you know.	
CD: Ahhh okay. They're all fighting	S: initiating events O: unique circumstances leading to events
P2: Yeah no learning English, just talking different language.	
CD: Ahhh okay.	
P2: I say to my teacher "what can I do in here?"	S: attempt
CD: Yeah	
P2: Different music, different talking, fighting...so I say "no coming anymore"	S: repeats event and attempt information
CD: Okay. So you've not gone for 3 weeks?	
P2: No [nervous laugh]	
CD: That's difficult though...if you're not learning English. Okay.	
P2: Yeah I tell them my support worker and social worker. I tell them "quick move me back to Hereford. I no coming to this college.....people in Birmingham, is no good. All the area is dirty".	S: attempt, consequence unknown?
CD: Yeah. So you prefer to be with English people? To learn English?	
P2: Yeah	

<p>CD: And not with people from other countries?</p> <p>P2: In Birmingham, different, different kinds of people, you know.</p> <p>[.....]</p> <p>P2: Yeah before 3 day. Now no coming.</p> <p>CD: Now, not at all. Do you...so you don't go together?</p> <p>P2: No, he is different class.</p> <p>CD: Different class?</p> <p>P1: Yeah different class.</p> <p>CD: But same college?</p> <p>P1 & P2: Same college.</p> <p>CD: And you like your class?</p> <p>P1: My class? Yeah is nice, normal.</p> <p>CD: So there's not the fighting and...?</p> <p>P1: No, no.</p> <p>P2: My class...no understand English like you know? And his class is better than me.</p> <p>P1: People no understand English, no understand, very slow you know.</p> <p>CD: In his class?</p> <p>P1: Yeah. My one is better and he understands English like me.</p> <p>CD: I see. Okay. And that's why you don't like your class?</p> <p>P2: Yeah, because I pass this exam yeah, in this college...and teacher tell to me, "you do this thing". Tell to me "you no really exam". I say "I pass exam, I had a certificate. Talking exam". Teacher say "no your English is no better, than these other people". I say "no understand these people English, just talking different, different things, fighting". Say "I'm no coming because I pass in school talking exam".</p> <p>CD: Yeah, that's very annoying.</p> <p>P2: Yeah</p>	<p>O: adds contextual info as goes along to validate his story?</p> <p>O: previous events and current situation</p> <p>I: revealing something of his personal beliefs, identity and aspirations</p> <p>S: event, attempt, consequence, attempt, consequence, attempt</p> <p>A: scaffolded emotional significance</p>
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CD: Very frustrating. And you can't go to a different class?	
P2: No	
CD: They won't let you?	
P1: No, is no good college yeah.	
P2: She say "when you pass exam, you go".	S: consequence
CD: Right	
P2: I say, "I learning exam" and they say "no, you no talking". I say okay, "I not talking, I am not coming forever this college".	S: attempt, consequence, attempt
CD: And what does your social worker say? Does he have any ideas?	
P2: Social worker say, I think different college. I say "not going to different college as well. I will move to this..."	S: event, response, attempt
CD: To Herefordshire?	
P2: Hereford I am going to college in Hereford, no in Birmingham.	I: aspiration and motivation. Evaluative comments re: the topic – no meaning made to himself. Narrative is opened up rather than synthesised – spilling into new topic.
CD: Okay. So why do you think it will be better?	
P2: Because Hereford all English people. Nice, small town as well. Quiet. Living here, all dirty people. You go out, these people eating and throwing up.	

3/7 Orientation gives unique circumstances leading to events and adds contextual info as story progresses in order to validate his story/convince the listener of his situation. Information is given for clarity in response to interviewer prompts i.e. narrative not comprehensible or meaningful without this. Details previous events and current situation in simple, factual terms. No location and minimal temporal and character details.

4/7 Structure elements provided but out of order/repeated so is comprehensible overall but disjointed at times. Tends to cycle between event, attempt and consequence. Internal response never given (no reflection of meaning to him, or his goals). Builds tension and conflict but outcome ultimately unknown (as is an ongoing present situation)

3/7 Affect makes concise statements of feeling and evaluative comments re: the situation before he has told the story - even when prompted does not tell story behind his statements. Emotional significance and meaning to him is minimal and heavily scaffolded by interviewer. Assumes the listener will just know what the events described mean to him?

3/7 Integration story reveals something of his personal beliefs, identity, aspirations and motivations (personal pride and determination). Brings story into the present and concludes with what he wants to do/where he wants to be instead of the events described. Evaluative comments relate to the situation and draws no meaning in relation to himself or his life themes. Narrative is opened up rather than synthesised at the end – spilling into new topic.

Total LSC: 13/28

P3: A low point (nadir) memory p14-15

<p>P3: In my country, if they put you in jail, they don't put you. If you young, for example maybe they let you free, sometime. Depend what you do. If you kill someone, they record definitely! but you don't kill someone when you 12 or 14 I don't think so! Maybe by accident I think. So this is different, maybe they put in record. but for little thing like stealing or like punching someone, they no record you on internet. but I know steal is bad, maybe they still have, that's why I wasn't push her, I wasn't do anything to her. Soon as I in UK. I never punch anyone because I don't know what law is. I was scared, I'm scared about, I don't wanna get in a record, in internet. So I know I was feel very bad, I want to hit that lady, I want to put water in her face or something but I don't want a record so I was scared. I almost when I could feel very bad, is just like someone squeezing my heart, like smash thing but I was scared, I didn't want to be bad with police. I now she racism. If I smash something, maybe she twice make bad my case with police. but I don't speak English to explain why this lady doing this to me. So one night I eat one other young person food, then person come back know my door, kick my door. I was scared though inside, he tried to hit me. He is called Stu, Stu is in university and the person work in Iceland cause I know him still. I walk in town and sometime see him. He tried to hit me because I eat his food by mistake.</p>	<p>O: Social, personal and cultural context</p> <p>O: personal and temporal context A: evaluative comments about the topic and himself, explicit statements of feeling, explaining what the described events meant to him, using drama and explaining significance of his dilemma O: main character (been discussed previously), explanation of circumstances leading to moment S: initiating event and response (thought and feeling) O: introduces main character O: circumstances that led up to particular moment (<u>not sequential, skipping around to clarify self and then proceed with story</u>)</p>
<p>CD: In the children's home or in college?</p>	<p>O: location and time unclear until prompted for clarification.</p>
<p>P3: In foster family. I'm talking about foster family, too much bad thing happened!</p>	<p>I: relates this story to bigger picture of his life story and experience.</p>
<p>CD: Right ok.</p>	
<p>P3: So he kicking the door, he say "why don't come out?". I say "I don't speak English much", so I don't know how to explain for him my mistake or something. I just keep saying "no, no, no, I don't know". So yeah and I just because I don't lock the door, that young person I think about 19, 20 he was, Stu. So he knocking my door, kicking, everything, I was scared something be broken and he hit me.</p>	<p>S: attempt (first)</p> <p>S: consequence (first) A: statement of feeling and reason behind his action described above</p>
<p>CD: Was he the lady's son?</p>	
<p>P3: He wasn't lady's son. That lady look after another 2 person.</p>	<p>O: contextual and character info (given in response to prompt for clarity not spontaneously)</p>
<p>CD: Oh I see!</p>	
<p>P3: Not just me. There was another two young people there, actually 3. Seriously. Is one called [NAME] I</p>	

<p>think, he was 17 and another boy Dan, he was 18. So another boy called Stu, he was I think 20 or 21 because I think he was with this lady, live with this lady about 4 or 5 year, this time when I was there. He was very young when he come to this family, so he was English, all English. So just Stu kicking my door not other people. but the lady's son there as well. So I just called 999.</p>	
<p>CD: Yeah?</p>	<p>S: attempt (second)</p>
<p>P3: Yeah. I wasn't speak English but I just talk to police. I don't know, I think some lady answer the phone. The lady keep saying "can I help you?", all the thing, "what is your problem?" I don't know but I just say "87 Bath Road", because I know it was 87 still.</p>	<p>Suspense and tension.</p>
<p>CD: Yeah, just said your address.</p>	
<p>P3: Yeah I just said 87 Bath Road. Maybe wasn't good like now, my accent, but they understand because these young people there, I think [NAME] and Dan, I think they thief. The police always come around. When I say 87, after one minute I see them. The police there! How could they come quick?! By then, when police come, the police come knock door, I was in my room still but policeman outside door. So when police come inside, I was hear them. So the lady come back because the son called lady. Lady come and all was busy. The lady take police into dining room, um TV room to talk to them private, setting up for me. When the police come to me, I wasn't speaking English. They didn't put interpreter nothing for me so I didn't answer because I didn't know what to say.</p>	<p>O: contextual info A: use of tension and drama to build story and empathy S: consequence (second)</p> <p>S: a second cycle with new problem - initiating event and response (thought, feeling)</p>
<p>CD: So there was no interpreter for you?</p>	
<p>P3: No! One police come to me, I open the door, was girl, one girl one man, they just say "you alright sir?" I wasn't speak English, to say yeah I'm fine and all those things or talk to her about what happen, why this happened. because I eat this by mistake. So, she take the police to office, after 5 or ten minutes she talking to police, the police didn't come to me, just go out! Didn't take anything serious, didn't come to me say you're alright or scared or all the thing. I know the lady set up again for me. Seriously! I ring interpreter come, interpreter phone number, I prank him because I haven't got credit much anything. I prank him say "interpreter ring me back", he say "I don't have to talk to you private, because sometime maybe I get trouble. Maybe they think I'm teaching you for something. Anything I said, if you told them maybe making trouble. I can't talk to you like this".</p>	<p>S: response (wants to make attempt to explain himself but can't)</p> <p>S: event and response (thought)</p> <p>A: statement seeking belief S: attempt</p>

APPENDIX 13: THEME DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THEMATIC NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

1. All codes generated from the initial thematic analysis of all 3 transcripts:

Code	Theme	Code	Theme
F	Family	App	Appreciating the positive
G	Geography	Sup	Suppression/memory
U	Uncertainty	D	Distraction
E	Education	C	Curiosity/confidence
Fr	Friendships/Social support	F	Focus/single-mindedness
L	Language	PO	Personal organisation
P	Control/agency/passivity	De	Denial/avoidance
A	Autobiographical information	H	Honesty
P/T	Patience/time	Hu	Humour
Ac	Activity	An	Anxiety/fear
T	Talking	Ind	Independence
KA	Key adults	Dp	Depression
Amb	Ambition	Ra	Racism
R	Religion	Tr	Trust
H	Heritage/identity	Em	Empathy
Obs	Observation		

2. Theme development:

Following the initial thematic analysis, all the themes were reviewed in relation to all 3 interview transcripts.

a) Some themes were renamed to more accurately reflect their content:

Original theme	Renamed theme (1)	Renamed theme (2)
Heritage/identity	Integration/separation	Cultural distancing
Patience/time	Perseverance	
Suppression/memory	Suppression/coherence	Suppression of reflection

b) Some themes were grouped together as connected super and sub-ordinate themes due to their interrelatedness:

Original themes	Super-ordinate theme	Sub-ordinate themes
Control/agency/passivity Denial/avoidance Independence Ambition Focus/single-mindedness	Agency	Negotiation Non-compliance Being proactive Having ambition Perseverance Passivity
Friendships/social support Family Religion Key adults	Relationships	Social support Key adults

- c) Some themes were grouped together due to significant overlap between them:

Original themes	Collective final theme
Friendships/social support Family Religion	Social support
Education Language	Education

- d) Distinctions were made between some themes in terms of being related to coping strategies OR relating to the meaning/function of those strategies, both of which were then discussed as such in the relevant sections of the report:

Theme	Function/meaning
Social support Key adults	Activity Talking Distraction Trust Observation

- e) Some themes were discarded at this stage of the analysis for two reasons:
- Some of the themes related to the *how* the UASCs gave their narrative (not the content) and were relevant to the subsequent structural analysis instead:
 - Curiosity/confidence
 - Humour
 - Honesty
 - Empathy
 - Some themes related to the emotions UASCs described (not their coping per se) and furthermore the sources of these emotions. These themes were therefore not directly relevant to the research questions or key findings of the study but provided important context for the findings and were therefore referred to briefly in the main report and detailed in an appendix.

Emotions	Related factors
Anxiety/fear Depression	Uncertainty Racism Personal organisation Geography

- One code was discarded due to being surplus content and more 'information giving' than narrative of experiences coping with adversity:
 - Autobiographical information
- f) Some new themes were created as a result of the alterations and refining of others making some material not longer relevant to the old theme
- Externalising locus of control emerged from refining of agency super- and sub-ordinate themes
- g) One theme remained unaltered between initial and final stages of the analysis:
- Appreciating the positive

APPENDIX 14: LIFE STORY COHERENCE (LSC) SCORING CRITERIA (BAERGER & MCADAMS, 1999)

Score each of the 4 indices on a 1-7 Likert scale: 1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = somewhat low, 4 = neutral, 5 = somewhat high, 6 = high, 7 = very high).

Index	Definition	High scoring	Low scoring
Orientation	The extent to which the narrative provides the audience with the context/background necessary to understand the story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the audience with the necessary info to understand the narrative; Introduces the main characters, as well as locating the story in a specific temporal, social and personal context; Communicates unique context of that particular life event e.g. describing relevant past events which led to this particular moment; Describes the habitual circumstances that serve as the parameters for the action of the story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolates the narrative from the unique temporal and social parameters that both frame and influence it; Neglects to inform audience about issues, characters, history or timelines necessary to understand the narrative.
Structure	The extent to which the narrative contains the structural elements of an episode system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays at least one of each of the following: <u>an initiating event</u>; <u>an internal response</u> to this event (e.g. a goal, plan, thought, feeling); <u>an attempt</u> to meet a goal which is precipitated by this response (e.g. to reach a goal, carry out a plan, remedy a crisis, resolve a state of emotional equilibrium); <u>a consequence</u> that results from the attempt; Elements all follow on from one another in a logical manner i.e. temporal or sequential ordering (i.e. linear, chronological, logical or causal structure); Narrative may contain multiple episodes and these need to be well-ordered also, temporally or sequentially; Resolution: the outcome of the plot. 	
Affect	The extent to which the narrative makes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conveys an evaluative or reportable point, or a series of such points, in such a way so as to give the story emotional significance; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks affective or evaluative continuity (despite potential temporal or logical congruity);

	an evaluative point, either about the event or about the narrator.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes an evaluative point about the central topic or about him/herself in order to communicate to the listener what about the story is particularly significant, relevant or interesting i.e. why the story was told; • Reveals something about the narrator or what the event described meant to him; • Uses emotions in order to make evaluative point, employing explicit statements of feeling in order to create an affective tone or signify emotional meaning; • Use of tension, drama, humour or pathos to communicate and empathise the evaluative point; • Evaluation: where the narrator steps back from the action to comment on meaning and communicate emotions – the "soul" of the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to communicate the emotional significance of the events described; • Leaves the listener wondering why of all the stories a person could tell they chose to tell that particular one.
Integration	The extent to which the narrative communicates information in an integrated manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imparts information in an integrated manner, ultimately communicating the meaning of experiences described within the context of the larger life story; • Provides an individual with identity (McAdams, 1993); • Is congruent with what is already known about the narrator's history, motivations, aspirations, struggles, central conflicts and life themes; • Resolves narrative discrepancies, contradictions and inconsistencies (may have used complexity or ambiguity to indicate suspense or conflict but ultimately reconciles these disparate story elements); • Synthesises narrative elements into a unified life story i.e. relating details of individual account to larger life themes (motivations, aspirations, conflicts etc); • Coda: ending the story and bringing action back into the present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglects to resolve or reconcile inherent contradictions or ambiguities; • Never relates to larger life context that surrounds individual account.

APPENDIX 15: THE RESILIENCY SCALES RESULTS IN GRAPHS

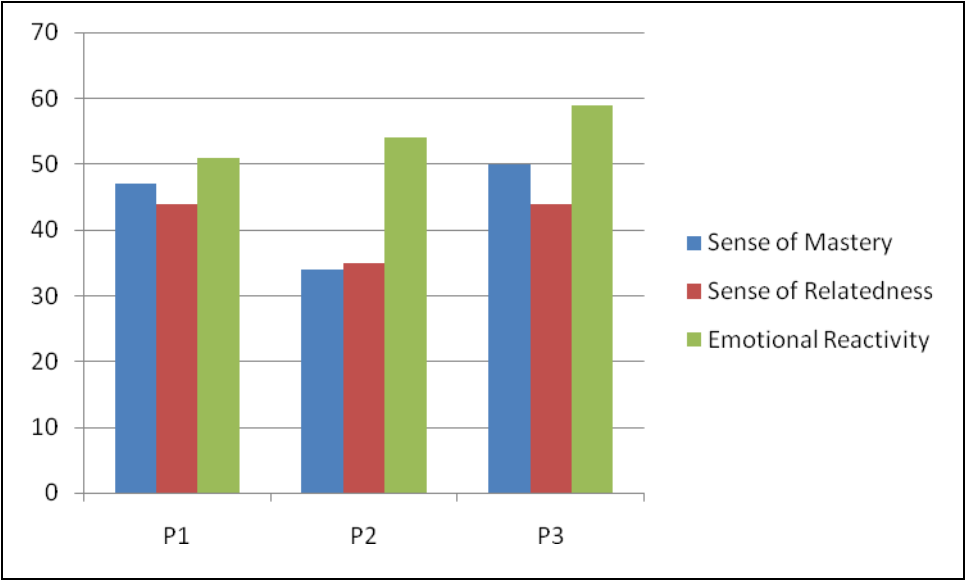


Figure 1: T-scores for the 3 subscales of the Resiliency Scales as reported by UASCs. T-scores of 40-60 are considered to be within the average range.

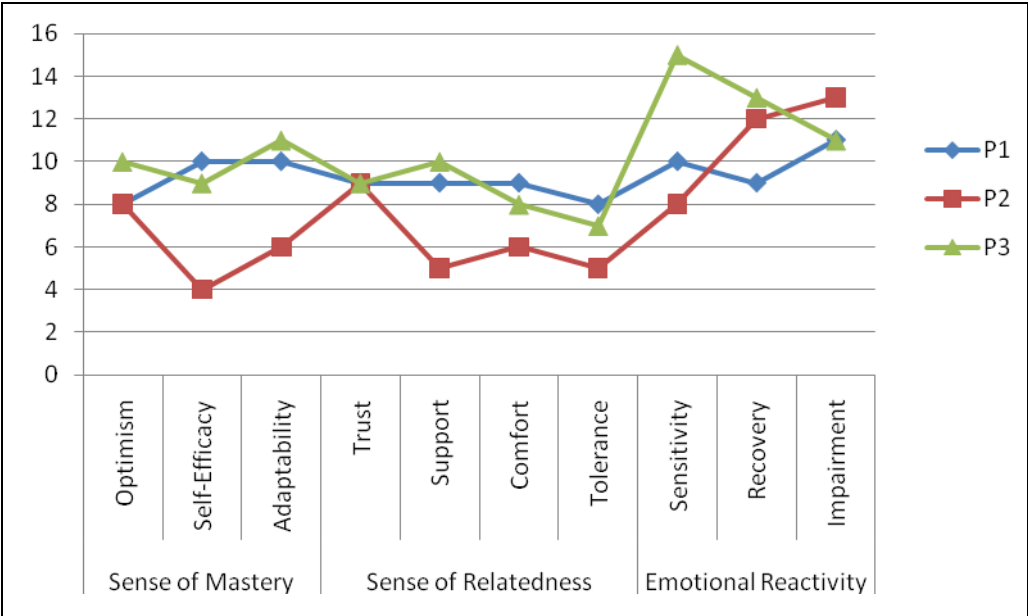


Figure 2: Scaled Scores for the 10 components of the 3 Resiliency subscales. Scaled Scores of 7-13 are considered to be within the average range.

APPENDIX 16: UASC NARRATIVES OF EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Emotion	Environmental factors	Example quotes
Anxiety Fear Confusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting the outcome of asylum seeking process; • Uncertainty and confusion re: legal representation and status of application; • Prolonged nature of asylum seeking process; • Inability to understand or express self in English (at first); • Difficulty learning at school/college with poor English; • Lack of family and associated loneliness and insecurities e.g. where to live, financial support; • Experience of racism or discrimination and perceived powerlessness to react/respond due to need to stay out of trouble in order to secure leave to remain; • Fears for physical safety (in independent living and foster care); • Worries about practical aspects of life – school, benefits, housing (things that ordinarily parents would shoulder some or all of the worry); • Lack of sense of location and geography. 	<p><i>I was scared and I was like they send me back home [...] I was feeling very scary because I run away from my country and if England sent me back, probably have been killed or maybe I go into jail for I don't know how long. (P3 p4)</i></p> <p><i>It was make me confused because always I ring my new solicitor, say "you got anything new for me from Home Office?" He keep saying "No, I keep sending letter to Home Office and they not reply back nothing". So that has make me worry. One man come to me say "You indefinite leave". This has make me crazy because 2 years ago, "I left you, you're not my solicitor no longer but how come Home Office not updated my case and stuff for different solicitor. (P3 p5)</i></p> <p><i>Because I wasn't like this when I came because in Children Home and that like I told you, wait for passport in 2007, that's been about two year. 2005, 2007, I got little document that is wait, this is take you to 18, when you 18. After this we have to give you another decision, maybe we send you back or maybe let you stay. This make you wait for another 2 year, that is mean I was worry say for 6 year basically. (P3 p7)</i></p> <p><i>...so basically all my life in here worry, worry about how is about benefit, about college, about life, about like we don't have no proper family here. (P3 p9)</i></p> <p><i>B: I show them something, somewhere you know, town this way...</i> <i>CD: Show them around? So they know where they are?</i> <i>B: [laugh] Yeah</i> <i>CD: Because when you first arrive you don't know where you are?</i> <i>B: Yeah, 5, 6 month in home, no go out, no school. (P2 p19)</i></p>
Depression Confusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to understand or express self in English (at first); • Difficulty engaging in friendships due to 	<p><i>All those people talking to me, I don't know if they swearing at me. I don't know if they saying good thing. That is something like feeling down because I wasn't speak English. I wasn't understand what people say, what friends say at school? So that is basically I was</i></p>

	<p>poor English;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of family and associated relationships and place; • Asylum seeking process; • Complications securing leave to remain (asylum seeking process); • Difficulties securing housing once 18; • Independent living and associated loneliness and/or personal organisation demands; • Inactivity and boredom; • Experience of racism and discrimination. 	<p><i>feeling down always. For one year and halves I wasn't speaking English. (P3 p4)</i></p> <p><i>I mean huh but it is much difficult because maybe you not in this situation, maybe you don't know how I feel but I know how I feel because when you don't have no proper family here or cousin, whatever you, someone who is from your blood, I mean you feel very, lonely, always. You always shut down like no light in a room. Seriously. And that is 6 years I was lonely, no family, nothing around me. I got lots of friend, English friend. I got girlfriend, she is English and I have been with her nearly 3 years maybe more. Yeah so but it's not big help. (P3 p8)</i></p> <p><i>Is difficult in morning [laugh]. Go to school...6 o'clock up, have cold shower. Eating breakfast is difficult....5 day go through shower, 6 o'clock up...is difficult, very hard. (P2 p19)</i></p> <p><i>If you stay here, it's boring. Nothing, just go college, come back home [...] With foster carer, watch TV, talking, is much better. Good life. Here no good life, just watch TV. (P1 p35)</i></p> <p><i>When I move to this house 14th October, my new house, it's in Warndon, council house [...] it's a flat. Soon as I move to in this house, every morning I get 2, 3 letter. One from council, one from housing benefit, one from jobcentre. Seriously, it make me crazy [...] Because annoying is sometime. Ask you, we not pay your bill, they pay your bill you have to find job. (P3 p36)</i></p> <p><i>So this is something make young people feel very bad, make it like become too much stretch (stress) [...] Feel worried too much, too much every day and you can be more and more but every day. And things become more and more OCD [...] I want to come back here so they put me in homeless in Birmingham because I was 19 or whatever, they say you have to go to your own property, own property like a council house. So I was homeless, I come back to Worcester, sleep around different, different people, so I couldn't get contact to my doctor in Birmingham to get my tablets. I get tablet for depressed and all the thing as well [...] That is all made me become like this in UK. (P3 p7)</i></p>
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		<p><i>I'm very upset or depression too much [...] I think this make me become like this because I used to get one social worker, she was racism to me as well [...] She wished UK send me back to Iran. Seriously [...] She was two face. She lying too many time, she promised me lots of things. And she lied whenever we go in meeting, review and stuff, she say she never had. So that is make me, 100% what she is saying but she saying different thing in the review. This is make me like err think about life strange, very bad. Sometime I say if I don't wanna push foot to her face because she lying, put spit in her face. I just want to go trouble sometime, but all the thing become bad thinking in my mind you know, that is make damage in my brain I think probably. I was thinking about it, her, about say, 2 years she was my social worker, for 2 year I was thinking about all of this. She make me crazy. (P3 p57)</i></p> <p><i>I like little bit pain whatever, err you know I seen too much, like err depression stuff, so probably I don't know, say rarely probably, I don't know [...] Because I...bad thing happen. They my head little bit change. Basically I cannot be much, like be what I was before. Well different now. (P3 p)</i></p>
Anger Frustration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of racism or injustice; • Feeling trapped and powerless either due to language or need to stay out of trouble. 	<p><i>The young people choose what they want, staff don't ask me [...] Always I trying to tell them, I am not piece of cupboard here [...] like box and stuff. But I wasn't explain to them properly but I was angry, always I just put face bad, I go to my bedroom. But I couldn't speak to them [...] So, asking each young person, not asking me. That's something make me bad. Treating to me like, I'm nothing there. (P3 p21)</i></p> <p><i>So I know I was feel very bad, I want to hit that lady, I want to put water in her face or something but I don't want a record so I was scared. I almost when I could feel very bad, is just like someone squeezing my heart, like smash thing but I was scared, I didn't want to be bad with police. I now she racism. If I smash something, maybe she twice make bad my case with police. But I don't speak English to explain why this lady doing this to me. So one night I eat one other young person food, then person come back know my door, kick my door. I was scared though inside, he tried to hit me [...] He tried to hit me because I eat his food by mistake [...] So he kicking the door, he say "Why don't come out?". I say "I don't speak English much", so I don't know how to explain for him my mistake or something. (P3 p14-15)</i></p>

APPENDIX 17: RESULTS OF LIFE STORY COHERENCE (LSC) STRUCTURAL NARRATIVE ANALYSIS FOR EPISODES SHARED BY UASCS (P1, P2 AND P3)

Narrative episode	Orientation	Structure	Affect	Integration	Total LSC
Early & Nadir	4	4	5	3	16
Peak & Turning point	3	3	5	5	16
Other significant	2	2	4	5	13
<i>Mean score</i>	3.0	3.0	4.7	4.3	15

Table 3: LSC analysis scores for 3 episodes narrated by P1.

Narrative episode	Orientation	Structure	Affect	Integration	Total LSC
Nadir	3	4	3	3	13
Turning point	4	5	3	3	15
Other significant	3	5	4	4	16
Other significant	4	5	5	3	17
<i>Mean score</i>	3.5	4.8	3.8	3.3	15.3

Table 4: LSC analysis scores for 4 episodes narrated by P2.

Narrative episode	Orientation	Structure	Affect	Integration	Total LSC
Early	6	5	6	4	21
Nadir	5	7	4	4	20
Peak	5	3	6	7	21
Turning point	6	6	6	6	24
Other significant	4	6	2	5	17
<i>Mean score</i>	5.2	5.4	4.8	5.2	20.6

Table 5: LSC analysis scores for 5 episodes narrated by P3.

APPENDIX 18: FACTORS UNDERLYING RECRUITMENT AND SAMPLE SIZE DIFFICULTIES

UASC specific factors:

- **An unwillingness to either reveal aspects of their pasts or to stir up upsetting thoughts and feelings associated with the past.** SWs observed that most UASCs were focused on moving forward with their lives and therefore uninterested in reflecting on their 'journey' so far.
- **A lack of trust and/or unwillingness to talk to a stranger** about personal events. It is remarkable that as researchers we expect people will simply talk to us, with no reciprocation of sharing personal information and a *"rapid and often startling establishing of an intimacy unlike that which arises naturally in ordinary social interactions"* (Lapsley, 2006; p.476).
- **Timing was a key issue** for a proportion of potential participants. A large proportion of the UASCs in WCC are aged 17-17 ½ years old and as such tend to be highly preoccupied with making their claims for extension on their asylum status (post-18): *"this becomes an overriding focus and it can be difficult for young people to find 'head space' for anything else"* (SW email 2.11.11).
- **Poor personal organisation and/or the independence** of some UASCs could have been a contributing factor. SWs reflected that UASCs often miss meetings with them and were therefore even less likely to keep arrangements made with a stranger for no statutory purpose. For example, the SW working with P1 and P2 appeared unsurprised by their initial 'no show' for interview, explaining that they had most likely forgotten, gone shopping with friends or were asleep, concluding that *"nothing is straightforward"* (email 19.10.11).
- SWs felt that **UASCs did not perceive any benefit to themselves of taking part in the research** and were therefore unwilling to give their time. For this reason the 'incentive' voucher value was increased from £10 to £20, nevertheless the manager of the SW team expressed his surprise at the "mercenary" attitude of UASCs. He described UASCs in another county in which he had previously worked, as being far more enthusiastic to tell their stories and "be heard". It is suggested that UASCs non-engagement tells us something about their resilience and the mentality they develop in order to 'survive'.

Social Work team specific factors:

- **'Filtering' of the sample by SWs** i.e. did not ask UASCs who they believed would not engage. Whilst it is important to credit SWs with a good knowledge of YP in their care, assumptions made by SWs may have led to at least a few potential candidates being 'missed'.
- **Researcher dependence on SWs to explain to UASCs the research parameters** before I could make contact myself. Despite my efforts to explain the research, SWs still felt that UASCs were reluctant based on the belief that the interview would focus on the past, thus a difficulty around the barriers of language, interpretation and perception was apparent.
- **SWs acted as 'gate-keepers' to the sample;** I was hugely reliant on them for the initial contact and consent. Whilst I believe (on the basis of our team meeting and subsequent email contact) that the research interested them, it was clearly not a priority for a small and pressured team with numerous statutory duties to undertake.
- **A lack of time and commitment** of SWs to securing interviews with UASCs who had given consent was a problem. It is noteworthy that for the 3 interviews that took place, I made contact with the YP to arrange/rearrange interviews where SWs had made initial contact and gained consent (and were happy for me to proceed independently). The interviews that did not go ahead were those where the UASC gave consent but the SW insisted she needed to arrange the date and be present. I was happy for this to be the case, however for various

reasons interviews never happened, not for lack of phone calls and emails on my part! SW apologised for delays due to illness, training or annual leave but a **fundamental issue of access (and *not* consent)** remained. The possibility of accessing UASCs via schools was explored, however the majority of UASC in WCC are 16-18 meaning they're not school age.

APPENDIX 19: PUBLIC DOMAIN BRIEFING

A narrative study of the resilience and coping of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children and young people (UASC) arriving in a rural local authority (LA)

Context for research

- ⇒ As part of my training as an educational psychologist, I am required to undertake "a substantial piece of original research at doctoral level" within the LA in which I work.
- ⇒ I attended your July 2011 Team Meeting to share a proposal for research with UASC – which I will today feedback!

Research questions

- ✱ Investigating resilience as a process (not trait) and as context-dependent.
 - ✱ Interested in the UASC's own 'voice' → already research published re: the views of practitioners, teachers, social workers and other service providers.
 - ✱ Interested in UASC's coping in the specific context of a rural county in the UK → already research published from urban authorities and/or other countries.
1. How do UASC maintain resilience throughout their experiences of loss, transition and adversity?
 2. How do UASC understand the world around them, in terms of both the support and the barriers to coping?
 3. How can the narratives of UASC experience be used to inform practice in supporting this particular 'at risk' group by professionals both within and outside schools?

The study

- Some quite significant recruitment and participation issues → reasons for which we discussed along the way (and would be nice to discuss further but time limits of this meeting do not allow!)
- 3 UASC interviewed → 17-19 years of age, all male, from Iran and Afghanistan.
- Mixed method approach → narrative interviews and Resiliency Scales questionnaires.
- Detailed thematic and structural narrative analysis of interview transcripts.

Results and implications for practice

STUDY	SAMPLE	COPING STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED
RAGHALLAIGH & GILLIGAN (2010)	32 UASC IN IRELAND AGED 14-19 YEARS OLD.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAINTAINING CONTINUITY IN A CHANGED CONTEXT; • ADJUSTING BY LEARNING AND CHANGING; • ADOPTING A POSITIVE OUTLOOK; • SUPPRESSING EMOTIONS AND SEEKING DISTRACTION; • ACTING INDEPENDENTLY; • DISTRUSTING; • RELIGION;
GOODMAN (2004)	14 MALE SUDANESE UASC IN THE US AGED 16-18 YEARS OLD.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COLLECTIVITY AND THE COMMUNAL SELF; • SUPPRESSION AND DISTRACTION; • MAKING MEANING; • EMERGING FROM HOPELESSNESS TO HOPE.

1. How do UASCs maintain resilience throughout their experiences of loss, transition and adversity?

Five coping strategies identified in UASC narratives:

1. **Appreciating the positive** in their current circumstances through making comparisons to the alternatives (or recognising the relative advantages/benefits) → maintained a hopeful and resilient frame of mind.
2. **Cultural distancing** → making comparisons favourable to their own country of origin and critical of British culture → maintained a sense of self, pride in their heritage (and aspirations) and cultural identity → helps to reduce feelings of loss, displacement and confusion.
3. **Suppression of reflection** → avoidance of reflection or 'meaning making' (in relation to experiences and self) → possibly involuntary (?) → protects self-esteem and resilience.
4. **Externalising locus of control** → evaluating experiences and events as happening to them (and acceptance of this) → preserves self-esteem and resilience.
5. **Seeking personal agency** → desire for increased sense of control, choice and/or mastery.
How? 1) negotiation; 2) non-compliance; 3) being proactive; 4) perseverance; and 5) having ambition.
Why? 1) being acknowledged as someone; 2) gaining independence and freedom; 3) reaction to feeling powerless; 4) advocating for fairness; and 5) managing anxiety.
Tension = agency vs. passivity → desire for control vs. awareness of 'keeping your head down' and 'staying out of trouble' in order to secure leave to remain.

2. How do UASCs understand the world around them, in terms of both the support and the barriers to coping?

Two key environmental influences identified in UASC narratives:

1. School → a means of learning English, making friends and gaining qualifications. NB. cited as a source of anxiety initially.
2. Relationships → desire for, and value of, relationships (connections with others).
How? 1) social support and 2) key adults.
Why? 1) provision and safety; 2) access to activities and opportunities; 3) distraction; 4) trust; and 5) managing depression.
Tension = seeking and appreciating connections vs. desire for independence.

3. How can the narratives of UASC experience be used to inform practice in supporting this particular 'at risk' group by professionals both within and outside schools?

Desire for both personal agency and relationships (connections) are most especially apparent during times when we experience disruption (Murray, 2009; McAdams, 1993).

Recommendations relevant to **all professionals** working with UASC as follows:

- UASC value meaningful relationships in which a significant other can be trusted to:
 - listen (and be responsive) to their views and expressed needs;
 - be proactive (not just reactive) in support and opportunities offered;
 - keep their word;
 - provide for the young person's basic physical needs as well as facilitate a sense of belonging and access to achievement and self-actualisation;
 - feel valued and respected as an individual, treated fairly and with unconditional positive regard (as a parent might).

- UASC will benefit from support that increases self-efficacy (facilitating not suppressing agency) through:
 - involvement in decision-making;
 - offering choice;
 - encouraging participation in activities where UASCs experience success and mastery of a skill;
 - ensuring that language is not a barrier to agency by giving time and resources (e.g. translator) to meaningful conversations.
- Support that facilitates a progression from relative dependence to independence → relationships both sensitive and robust enough to facilitate development towards increasing personal agency.
- Understanding that whilst UASC narrative construction of self may project a confident and self-sufficient individual → quite probable this is not an accurate reflection of their self-concept → a reaction to feeling the exact opposite (disempowered and insecure).
- Having a meaningful 'voice' or advocate → with no outlet for expression of needs, or when expression was ignored → UASC internalised difficulties → increased risk of mental health difficulties.
- **School** environment is well placed to be the means by which UASCs regain a sense of personal agency → see **Table 1** suggestions for supportive practice in schools.
- Implications for involvement of **educational psychologists (EPs)**:
 1. Training staff re: physiological symptoms of psychological distress;
 2. Additional input to consolidate existing (and develop new) coping strategies → different types of work will be useful/appropriate at different stages in UASC process of settling;
 3. Cognitive-behavioural approaches (preventative to raise resilience) → especially useful for UASC coping anxiety, depression or anger over extended periods of uncertainty:
 - psycho-education (e.g. learning to recognise the physiological signs of emotions);
 - skill development (e.g. learning to recognise negative automatic thoughts and convert them into positive thinking or coping self-talk, relaxation techniques, mood monitoring and behavioural activation);
 4. Narrative Therapy and/or Life Story Coherence (LSC) work → facilitate reflection and meaning making (organisation, construction and interpretation of experiences) → promote psychological wellbeing in long-term → help UASC re-establish a sense of identity and regain a sense of control;
 5. The timing of any work is critical → not to reduce strategies that are serving a protective function in the short-term → best time for reflection is once relationship stability or social support and occupational or work success are achieved;
 6. Assessment processes → Resiliency Scales measure agency (Sense of Mastery subscale) and relationship (Sense of Relatedness subscale) aspects of resilience → EPs will do well to assess narrative coherence as an additional and critical dimension of resilience.

Conclusions

Future research directions:

- ✓ Larger samples using the same narrative approach in order to corroborate and strengthen the validity of these findings;
- ✓ Narrative approach but with female UASC in a rural local authority → to explore similarities/differences in coping experiences → ensure that a truly minority group (female UASC) are represented in recommendations for practice;
- ✓ Longitudinal studies → analyse long-term outcomes for UACS → investigate whether 'coping' observed in this and other studies, is a reflection of resilience or "basic human survival in early stages" (Thomas et al., 2004) → implications for long-term support to UASC entering adulthood.

Key messages:

- ✓ Desire for both personal agency and relationship are fundamental human 'motivations' → become stronger when individuals experience disruption and identities in 'crisis' → for UASC these strategies were a natural reaction to experiences of prolonged uncertainty and anxiety, coupled with loss of loved ones and all that is associated with 'home';
- ✓ If the ability to seek personal agency and relationships is ignored, denied or rejected by others → individuals experiencing adversity (such as UASC) are at risk of developing maladaptive or negative coping strategies (such as suppression and self-harm);
- ✓ Optimal support for UASC = that which facilitates a progression from relative dependence to independence through relationships sensitive and robust enough to enable young people's development towards increasing personal agency;
- ✓ Suppression of reflection and coherence of narrative represent different stages in the process of coping → suppression (inc. avoidance of reflection and externalising locus of control to avoid feelings of failure or blame) was functional as a short-term coping strategy but over time (only when ready) UASC will need support to develop coherent personal narratives → make sense of themselves in relation to their experiences in order to sustain psychological wellbeing;
- ✓ Research demonstrates interactions between individual young person's coping strategies and environmental factors → i.e. key adults, social support, school, racism, geographical location and the asylum seeking process, interacted with the individual.
- ✓ Key adults were the exception, not the norm → support, both practical and emotional, that was appreciated by UASC → they most valued perceived kindness and fairness, to having time and attention given personally, to being listened to and heard, to having needs acknowledged and appropriately met.

Contact

If you would like to discuss the research in more detail or have any questions following today's feedback please do not hesitate to contact me:

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