



Critical Incidents and School Communities: Exploring
experiences of senior school staff and the support of an
Educational Psychology Service in Wales.

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Part One: Major Literature Review

Part Two: Empirical Paper

Part Three: Major Research Reflective Account

DECLARATION

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Abstract

Critical Incidents (CIs) that affect members of school communities can take many forms, ranging from natural disasters to human-generated events including acts of violence, suicide, and terrorism. Increased awareness of the impact that major traumatic incidents can have on children and adults has highlighted the need for a timely and informed response from services. The role of the Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) in providing support to school communities regarding a CI is a well-established aspect of service delivery, documented in the professional literature since the mid-1990s, with the most contemporary research published in 2016. However, there appears to be a scarcity of research exploring perceptions of the CI support offered by the EPSs from school staff themselves. Furthermore, despite the impact of CIs on children and young people having been researched extensively, there appears to be a lack of research regarding the impact a CI may have on school staff. This study sought to develop an understanding of the experiences of school staff responding to a CI, as well as gaining their perceptions of a model of preparation for and response to a CI implemented by a Local Authority (LA) EPS in Wales. Seven members of senior school staff, from different schools, across the LA, took part in semi-structured interviews that were analysed using thematic analysis. Key themes pertaining to participant's experiences of a CI were identified including the Event, Initial Impact, Pressures, Psychological Impact, School System, and Post Impact. Key themes regarding participant's perceptions of the model of preparation and response offered by the locality EPS were Preparedness, Educational Psychologist Presence, Educational Psychologist Approach, Approach to Direct Support, Screening and Monitoring, Crisis Intervention, Written Procedures and Protocols, Multi-Agency Working, Pre and Post Coping and Lessons Learnt. The experience of senior school staff responding to a CI and their perceptions of an EPS model of CI support are discussed and their implications for EP practice.

Summary

This thesis is in three parts: a major literature review, an empirical study, and a major research reflective account.

Part One, the literature review, provides amplification of the title and a rationale for the research study. Key theoretical and research literature is presented and critically reviewed, leading to the identification of a research gap regarding senior school staff experiences of a CI and perceptions of the support offered by an EPS. A rationale for the empirical study and research questions are provided.

Part Two, the empirical study, provides a brief overview of the literature discussed in Part One in order to provide a succinct background to the research study. It describes the methodology used to investigate senior staff experiences of a CI in school and their perceptions of the support offered by an LA Educational Psychology Service (EPS). Qualitative data was gathered via semi-structured interviews with seven senior staff. Data were analysed through a process of thematic analysis; key themes, subthemes, and supporting quotes are provided. Key findings are summarised and discussed in relation to existing literature. Strengths and limitations of the study, along with suggestions for further research are also provided.

Part Three, the major research reflective account provides critical reflections on several different elements of the research. It is structured into four sections; Section one, the literature review, provides amplification of the title and a rationale for the research study. Section two provides a critical account of the methodology, including the research paradigm, ethical issues, data collection, and data analysis. Section three focuses on the distinct contribution to knowledge, originality of the research, and future research directions. Finally, section four provides a brief personal reflection on the research process and how this has impacted on the professional development of the researcher.

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List of abbreviations

CASP	Critical Appraisal Skills Programme
CI	Critical Incident
CTG	Childhood Traumatic Grief
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
ESPCT	European School Psychology Centre for Training
ISPA	International School Psychology Association
LA	Local Authority
NOVA	National Organisation for Victims Assistance
PEP	Principal Educational Psychologist
PFA	Psychological First Aid
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
PTG	Post Traumatic Growth
UK	United Kingdom

Part One: Introduction and Literature Review

Word Count: 16617.

Part 1a

1.1 Introduction

This section will introduce the thesis with an amplification of the title. It will then consider both the theoretical significance of the research and its relevance to educational psychology and the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP). This introduction will conclude with an overview of the remainder of the thesis.

1.2 Amplification of the title

The thesis explores the experiences of senior school staff when responding to a CI impacting a school community. Further, considering the staff perceptions of the model of preparation and response offered by one LA EPS in Wales. This study is interested in the impact of a CI on school staff with senior management responsibilities and their perceptions of the effectiveness of Educational Psychologists (EPs) input.

1.3 Aims and Structure of the Literature Review

A narrative literature review was conducted to allow for a broad search of the literature (Green, Johnson, & Adams, 2006). Green, Johnson, and Adams (2006) suggest that the purpose of a literature review is to explore the available literature in order to survey, integrate, and critically review the research available and to identify any gaps in the current knowledge base. The focus of this literature review was to explore research regarding CIs, including impact on school staff and EPS response. Although issues such as researcher bias can arise from conducting a narrative approach, this type of approach was best suited to the

review in order to provide a broad perspective of the literature, when considering the plethora of literature available regarding CIs, potential impact and support offered. The thoroughness of the literature review was strengthened through ensuring continual consideration of objectivity and criticality throughout the conducting and exploration of the literature.

The literature considered was primarily academic journal studies, doctoral theses, and published books relating to the topic. Selecting research was based on a review of the titles and abstracts and, accordingly, selecting appropriate journals to read in full. The search parameters went beyond the research conducted in the United Kingdom (UK) and relevant journals were selected from other countries. Moreover, qualitative, quantitative, systematic reviews and cohort studies were incorporated in the literature review if consistent with the inclusion criteria.

This chapter thus aims to provide critical analysis of literature relevant to the current research regarding CIs, including impact on school staff and EPS response. The review begins by offering definitions of a CI as informed by research. The literature then explores the history of CIs in the literature, focussing on CIs which involved children, young people and schools. A consideration of the development of the role of the EP in response to CIs is provided alongside the historical exploration of CIs involving children, young people and schools.

The chapter proceeds to explore the impact of CIs on children, young people and schools. Areas of exploration include that of trauma symptoms, post-traumatic stress disorder, resiliency, and post-traumatic growth. An overview of the stages of grief, bereavement, and loss and psychological response is also provided. The review then focusses specifically on the body of research regarding the impact of traumatic events on school staff.

The literature related to current EP practice and CI support is discussed specifically considering EPSs responses in the UK. Leading to a specific focus on an overview of the model of preparation and response offered to schools in one large LA EPS in Wales.

The chapter concludes with the amplification of the research questions developed as a result of this literature review.

1.4 Key Sources

To gather relevant literature pertinent to this research a comprehensive literature search was undertaken between July 2019 and December 2019 using the databases PSYCH Info, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. Additional sources were utilised such as past theses concerning CIs, books, World Wide Web, and Google Scholar. Unpublished theses in the area were examined for appropriate references.

The literature search included the following keywords: *critical incident, traumatic event, crisis, trauma, response to critical incidents, post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, resilience, post-traumatic growth, crisis intervention, schools, children, adolescents, young people, teachers, school staff, senior school staff, school psychologist, educational psychologist.*

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Literature was selected if the primary language was English. The focus of the search literature was concerning CIs and their impact on schools. To be included the literature had to meet the following criteria

- Involve traumatic events and/or critical incidents/ crises
- Involve children, young people and schools

These criteria meant that much of the literature identified during the search was excluded, for example

- Developmental or psychiatric crises
- Studies focussing on adults rather than educational professions.

The review took a narrative approach, all search results meeting the criteria were considered and the principle of most relevant and best evidence was employed. Due to the nature of CIs worldwide studies were considered.

1.5 Relevance to EP Practice and the role of the EP

CIs such as human-generated incidents or natural disasters can have profound effects on children, young people, and the adults who work with and care for them. Increased awareness of the severe and long-lasting effects that major traumatic incidents can have on children and adults has highlighted the need for a quick response from services, including Educational Psychology Services (EPSs), to minimise these effects (Aucott & Soni, 2016; Carroll et al., 1997). The significance of the role of the EP in CI support is noted in the national review published by the Department for Education and Skills (Farrell, Woods, Lewis, Rooney, Squires & O'Connor, 2006). CI support should, therefore, aim for both maximum efficacy and efficiency. In order to ensure efficacy and efficiency explorative work of EPS approaches to preparing for and responding to CIs in schools would, therefore, seem a necessity to inform practice. Furthermore, school staff members are often highlighted as supporters for children and young people following their exposure to a CI. Therefore, it could be suggested that gaining a fuller understanding of staff experience of responding to a CI in schools is imperative; in order to inform the role of the EP acting as a supporter of staff both pre and post CI support to schools.

Part 1b: Major Literature Review

2 Definitions of a Critical Incident (CI)

There is a plethora of possible definitions of a CI, events that are discussed in the literature are often termed as 'crisis', 'traumatic events', and 'critical incidents'. With regard to school,

a comprehensive approach to these types of incidents has been advocated and driven by crisis theory. Crisis theory defines a crisis as a time-limited state, triggered by an event that causes individuals to experience great emotional disorganisation, upset and inability to cope using previous adequate coping tools (Caplan, 1964).

Within the school-based literature, there appears to be an absence of a clear definition of a critical incident. There are instead descriptive examples, to provide context for the reader regarding the subject area. Definitions that were found (Beeke, 2013; Carroll et al., 1997; McCaffrey, 2004) generally contained:

- Information about the nature of the event or situation (e.g. sudden and unexpected).
- The event is often considered outside the range of normal human experience.
- Information about the resulting state of crises (e.g. shock and distress).
- Examples of types of events (e.g. death of a pupil or member of staff, deliberate acts of violence, for example, use of a knife or firearm, and transport-related accidents involving pupils or staff).

Following a review of policy and literature within the area a comprehensive definition of a CI, as applied in a school setting, was provided by Beeke (2013).

“A sudden and unexpected event that has the potential to overwhelm the coping mechanisms of a whole school or members of the school’s community. A serious and significant event, it is likely to be outside the range of normal human experience and would be markedly distressing to anyone in or directly involved with the school community. It may be the result of an accident, criminal act, illness, or natural disaster that affects members of the school community, school property, or both. An act of suicide or attempted suicide by a member of the school community may also constitute a critical incident” (Beeke, 2013, p. 13).

An aspect of this research specifically focuses upon the model of response and support offered to schools by an EPS of a LA in Wales. The EPS distributes an overview brochure (2017) detailing the CI response to all schools. The content of Chapter 1 of the brochure includes:

- Aims of the document
- What is a critical incident?
- Examples of critical incidents
- Critical incidents within schools
- Critical incidents out of school which may impact on the school community

The EPS defines a CI as *being an event or events which occur suddenly and are outside the range of common human experience. Such events can cause considerable personal distress and have the potential to overwhelm our usual coping responses. Whatever the scale of the incident, the effect on the individuals can be devastating, mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. In addition, there are likely to be significant organisational consequences.*

A more in-depth discussion of the brochure will be included later in the literature review in the relevant section. The following section discusses the historical developments in the CI literature with particular reference to CIs impacting individuals who are likely to be members of a school community.

2.1 CIs throughout the decades

This review will now go on to outline a historical overview of the literature in relation to CIs which involve children and young people. Reference is made to the role of the EP and school psychologist throughout this section. This literature is considered pertinent to the review as it highlights the evolution over the decades of EP's involvement in response to CIs.

Prior to the 1970s literature regarding CIs in line with the criteria for inclusion in this review are scarce. Studies undertaken in the 1960s adopted a predominantly medical rather than psychological standpoint (Hindley, 2015).

Natural disasters reported in the academic literature of this decade include earthquakes and cyclones (Blaufarb & Levine, 1972; Milne, 1977; Moric-Petrovic, Jojic-Milenkovic, & Marinkov, 1972). Literature concerning CIs such as the Aberfan mining disaster in Wales is documented (Lacey, 1972). Intentionally inflicted CIs such as acts of violence and terrorism are noted in the literature whereby school children were witness to a murder (Dallas, 1978). The impact of terrorist bombings in Northern Ireland was studied and reported (Lyons, 1974). Incidents such as the kidnap of 26 children in Chowchilla, America, was also reported in the literature (Terr, 1979).

In this decade the support for children and young people following CIs remains primarily within the responsibility of mental health professionals. This is highlighted in the literature regarding a school bus accident in New York with support being largely provided by professionals within the mental health sector (Tuckman, 1973). Much of the literature at this time suggests that the EP role was primarily concerned with the assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN) (Ashton & Roberts, 2006).

During the 1980s studies concerning large scale, natural disasters such as earthquakes and fires are largely documented. CIs impacting school-age individuals reported in this decade include school bus accidents (Klingman, 1988) and the witnessing of the Challenger space shuttle explosion by thousands of schoolchildren (Blume et al., 1986). Multi-agency team response to CIs saw mention of EP involvement in this period. CIs such as school shootings and suicides are cited in the literature. A study describing the work of three counsellors, a nurse, and a school psychologist following a school shooting suggested that schools need to develop a plan for this type of incident (Collison et al., 1987; Weinberg, 1989). Sorensen

(1989) reported an intervention crisis team whose members included counsellors, school psychologists, and administrators. It was suggested that this type of team should begin with an assessment or intervention meeting.

A review of EP practice in Australia, China, Israel, Lebanon, Canada, and West Germany identified that Israel was the only country where CI intervention was noted as an important role for EPs (Saigh, 1989).

Literature noting the potential impact on individuals indirectly exposed to a CI was initially highlighted in the 1990s. Specific incidents such as children being taken hostage in their school are used to cite the need for intervention for those exposed indirectly to the CI (Vila, Porche, & Mouren-Simeoni, 1999).

An expansion in the literature with reference to the role of the potential support offered by an EP appears in the 1990s. EPs in Israel continued to be actively involved in CI support during this time. Literature describing Israeli EPs influencing crisis work at both local and national levels emerged. Literature detailed the international work of Israeli psychologists supporting communities and schools following the bombing of a Jewish community centre. The organisation of school psychology services in Israel and how they were centrally organised within the Ministry of Education was noted. A framework was provided detailing how multi-agency response is initiated following a CI (Stein, 1997). School intervention teams discussed in the literature saw the EP as providing key input in post CI involvement (Purvis, Porter, Authement, & Boren, 1991). This decade also saw the development of practical handbooks for school psychologists (Pitcher & Poland, 1992).

Alongside these developments, there was an emergence of literature noting that school psychologists lacked training in crisis intervention despite the increase and severity of crisis situations occurring in schools (Poland, 1994). Poland (1994) suggested that the occurrence

of crises in schools provided an opportunity for school psychologists to take leadership and advance their role in the response.

Sandoval and Brock (1996) reported that school psychologist's work in relation to pupil suicide, which has been noted as a critical event, took place on three levels these being primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention referred to activities such as educating and screening pupils for suicidal ideation, secondary prevention included working with groups who may be at risk, and tertiary intervention referred to providing direct treatment and further referrals (Sandoval & Brock, 1996). Further literature suggested that for the school psychologist's role to develop in CI support, the role needed to progress to include crisis planning and interventions for crises to support staff and pupils (Young, 1996).

In the mid-1990s EPSs within the UK began publishing articles detailing their involvement and response to CIs (Cameron, Gersch, M'Gadzah, & Moyse, 1995; Cornish, 1995; Mallon & Best, 1995; O'Hara, Taylor, & Simpson, 1994). A review of EPSs across the UK found that 65% of services offered CI support (Houghton, 1996).

A plethora of literature has studied the major disasters of the 21st century. These have included the September 11th, 2001 terror attack in New York (Lengua, Long, Smith, & Meltzoff, 2005) and the 2004 tsunami in South East Asia (Nastasi, Jayasena, Summerville, & Borja, 2011). Unintentional CIs have included fires such as the café fire in Volendam, Netherlands, causing the death of 14 young people. Intentionally inflicted CIs have included the Gothenburg discotheque fire caused by an arson attack in Sweden where 63 people were killed and 200 injured casualties aged from 12-25 years (Broberg, Dyregrov, & Lilled, 2005) as well as the murder of 22 people by a suicide bomber at the Ariana Grande concert in Manchester 2017 (Allen, 2018).

Alongside these major disasters, literature highlighted practical resources such as guidebooks in the development of school crisis response teams. It was suggested that the decision as to

whether such teams would intervene at a regional, community, district, or school level would need to be considered. Recommendations included the team having a leader, counselling/intervention specialist such as a school psychologist, medical team representative, media representative, parent, and teacher representatives (Brock, Sandoval, & Lewis, 2001).

As well as CI response within schools, schools have also increasingly been identified as contexts for preventative work related to CIs. For example, Anderson (2007) suggested in his work that school is an ideal place to provide prevention programmes for suicide and it was suggested that such intervention programmes may be implemented by school psychologists.

Posada (2006) noted that EP involvement in CI support to schools is a well-established part of service delivery both in the UK and US. During the government review of EP practice in 2000 CI support was recognised as a well-established part of service delivery across the UK. Kelly and Gray (2000) found that 80% of UK EPSs provided CI support. This result was duplicated internationally, research presented by Rees and Seaton (2011) identified that almost 80% of EPs across 17 countries provided support to school communities following a CI.

This section has provided a brief outline of the identification of CIs within research literature, as they relate to school communities, from the 1970s to the present day. The literature provides examples of CIs varying from natural disasters to deliberate acts of violence and terrorism.

In terms of the support identified for children and young people following exposure to CIs early literature tended to have a medical focus with support offered mainly by mental health professionals. The 1980s saw the emergence of the EP being associated with CI response, predominately in studies undertaken by Israeli school psychologists.

The 1990s saw an expansion in the research, related to EP responses to CIs, particularly in the UK. Several EPs in the UK began to document their response to CIs. Literature conducted nationally also highlighted EPS responses to CI as a typical part of the role of the EP (Rees & Seaton, 2011).

The following section will go on to explore the potential impacts of CIs on individuals including children, young people and school staff. Further, offering a brief exploration of applicable theoretical models of grief, loss and bereavement, and psychological responses.

2.2 Exploring the impact of CIs on children and young people

In exploring the impact of CIs on individuals a focus will be given to trauma symptoms and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), considering the presentation of symptoms in children, adolescents, and adults. These presentations will also be applied to a review of the literature on the impact of CIs on children and young people.

Consideration will then be given to the potential impact of CIs on school staff as informed by the literature. A brief overview of crisis intervention within the EP literature will be provided. Finally, an emerging body of literature pertaining to the possible positive psychological consequences of exposure to traumatic events, termed Post Traumatic Growth (PTG), will be introduced.

2.3 Trauma Symptoms

Literature has categorized trauma symptoms into affective, behavioural, cognitive, and physical domains. Fear, depression, anger, and frequent mood changes are common affective symptoms with behavioural symptoms centring on the avoidance of reminders of the traumatic experience. Cognitive symptoms usually involve distorted cognitions; the child may have about themselves, others, the event, or the real world. Irrational beliefs may manifest. Physical symptoms are believed to be related to chronic stress and can include

elevated pulse rates and blood pressure as well as increased muscle tension (Little, Akin-Little, & Somerville, 2011).

Typical patterns of human response to trauma have been noted in the literature, involving both physical and very closely associated psychological responses including both cognitive, and emotional reactions. Shock, lasting for a few minutes to weeks, is usually followed by turmoil of emotions, emerging over time, including anger, fear, confusion, frustration, self-blame, and grief. Research indicates that trauma responses to a CI are often intense but usually decline gradually over time (Posada, 2006). Where negative responses persist or occur beyond the first month and reach clinically significant levels, with symptoms related to stress and functional impairment, PTSD may be identified (Trickey & Black, 2000).

2.4 PTSD

Children's and young people's reactions to exposure to traumatic events may vary, but the most frequently studied reactions are those associated with PTSD and related symptoms.

PTSD appears in much of the literature in relation to CIs and EPS response to CIs. As previously noted, literature has emphasised the detrimental impact and long-lasting effects which children, young people, and adults can experience following exposure to a traumatic incident. Therefore, the assessment of PTSD symptoms, some of which may not be observable and/or may have a delayed onset, is arguably an important consideration during both initial and longer-term support to school communities following a CI.

Studies in the area have indicated a need for greater awareness that children and young people also experience PTSD. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, which is widely used by clinicians and researchers to diagnose and classify mental disorders, including PTSD identifies that can occur at any age, including childhood, and includes criteria such as the experience of a traumatic event, persistent re-experiencing of the event,

and avoidance of associated stimuli, increased arousal and impairment of social or occupational abilities. In DSM-V (2013), the diagnostic criteria for PTSD are the stressor, intrusion symptoms, avoidance, negative alterations in cognition and mood, alterations in arousal and reactivity, duration, functional significance, and exclusion.

Literature has noted that although childhood PTSD may be less obvious it can be just as complex and harmful as adult PTSD (Randall & Parker, 1997). It is questionable as to whether the difficulties with recognising PTSD symptoms in children may relate to the potential focus on impaired occupational abilities. It could be suggested that this focus on the impact of symptoms on functioning, may suggest that children and young people's occupations, for example, play, school work, etc. aren't as valued or obvious as an adult's occupation.

2.4.1 Onset and duration of PTSD symptoms in children and young people following a CI

Evidence suggests that symptoms of PTSD appear very quickly. In the Oklahoma City bombings, 76% of those who developed PTSD displayed symptoms on the first day, 94% within the first week, and 98% within the first month (North et al., 1999).

A number of studies identify symptoms persisting beyond 3 months, termed chronic PTSD. A study examining post-traumatic stress symptoms in children following exposure to Hurricane Andrew indicated that symptoms appeared to reduce between 3-7 months, however, diagnostic symptoms of PTSD were still identified in children 13 months following on from exposure (La Greca, Silverman, Vernberg, & Prinstein, 1996). Further research identified a 'multiplier effect' which detailed that stress caused by the initial event made children more vulnerable to succeeding stressors thereby maintaining symptoms (La Greca, Silverman, Lai, & Jaccard, 2010).

Researchers found highest levels of fear and anxiety following initial exposure to the disaster which then gradually lessened over time; in contrast, depression in the sixth month was significantly higher than at the 4 months (Uemoto, Asakawa, Takamiya, Asakawa, & Inui, 2012). Factors influencing the duration of PTSD, including a history of difficult social relationships, depression, and illness were noted in the literature (Udwin, Boyle, Yule, Bolton, & O'Ryan, 2000). This may suggest that such predisposing experiences may need to be interpreted as potential risk factors for consideration by EPs when responding to CIs.

Longitudinal studies indicate that a minority of children and young people may experience symptoms lasting for years, frequently resulting in long term mental health issues. A 20 year follow up study of adults who had experienced an earthquake as children, found that 4 out of 19 child survivors of the 1988 American earthquake continued to present with symptoms into adulthood (Najarian, Sunday, Labruna, & Barry, 2011). Research regarding the aftermath of the Aberfan mining disaster in Wales found that 12 % of the survivors of the disaster met the criteria for PTSD in 2003, a diagnosis which was not available to them at the time of the disaster (Morgan, Scourfield, Williams, Jasper, & Lewis, 2003).

2.4.2 Supportive research for the development of PTSD symptoms in children and young people following a CI

Studies exploring the impact of CIs were examined using the appropriate Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) criteria and tools (CASP, 2020). The CASP criteria are a tool for appraising research papers to assess their validity by evaluating their methodological quality, significance, and the usefulness of their results. The CASP includes critical appraisal tools, which are designed to be used when reading research, these include tools for Systematic Reviews, Randomised Controlled Trials, Cohort Studies, Case-Control Studies, Diagnostic Studies, and Qualitative studies. The CASP checklists are based on questions to assist the reader in appraising the research and to consider the issues regarding the research

systematically (CASP, 2020). A large amount of the literature identified were cohort studies, which evaluated the frequency or degree of symptoms in a group exposed to a risk factor, in relevance to this review the risk factor being a CI. Appendix 6a gives the CASP criteria for assessing cohort studies.

There is a considerable body of research informing understanding of the impact of CIs on children. The considerable numbers and representative cross-section of populations involved in large scale natural disasters mean that there is a great amount of quantitative research available, for example, Pane et al. (2008) studied the impact of hurricanes on more than 196,000 students in Louisiana. However, caution must be exercised in generalising results from such studies. Firstly, the CASP criteria regarding cohort studies emphasises the need to consider confounding variables and their potential impact on results. Large scale natural disasters often involve secondary consequences, which may exacerbate and prolong impact, for example, with child victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, hurricane-related stressors were exacerbated by the victims' subsequent dispersal across 43 American states (Madrid et al., 2008). Secondly, CASP criteria question whether results can be generalised to other populations, therefore, in this case considering whether such results may be applicable to a UK population, which becomes questionable due to the variation in scale and nature of the CIs between countries. Furthermore, as Natasi et al. (2008) emphasise inadequate consideration for cross-cultural differences may compromise findings if researchers apply Western-based knowledge to disasters in the developing world.

The search also identified meta-analyses relevant to this section. These were evaluated using the CASP criteria for reviews (CASP, 2020). Appendix 6b provides the CASP criteria for review studies. Norris, Friedman, Watson, Byrne, Diaz, and Kaniasty (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of quantitative studies across 160 distinct samples of disaster victims. This research met most of the CASP criteria for reviews, although, the precision with which the

results were reported was compromised as it did not provide confidence intervals.

Additionally, the extent to which it met CASP review criteria regarding the inclusion of all important, relevant studies could be argued due to the exclusion of non-English language studies. Trickey, Siddaway, Meiser-Stedman, Serpell, and Field (2012) reported on a meta-analysis of potential risk factors for PTSD across 64 studies which provides increased precision, although, once again non-English language studies were excluded.

The relation between PTSD symptoms and exposure to trauma has been well documented in the literature (Kazak et al., 2004; La Greca et al., 2010; Landolt, Vollrath, Ribi, Gnehm, & Sennhauser, 2003; Osofsky, Osofsky, Kronenberg, Brennan, & Hansel, 2009; Reijneveld, Crone, Verhulst, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2003; Silverman & La Greca, 2002; Terr, 1979; Uemoto et al., 2012; Yule et al., 2000). This section will go on to describe a further range of studies examining the impact of CIs on children and young people.

In order to examine the robustness of these studies, CASP criteria will continue to be considered. Appendix 6a, 6b, and 6c provide further details of the criteria.

Literature highlighting exposure to natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes was consistently related to increases in the severity of PTSD symptoms. Self-reported data collected approximately 3 months after Hurricane Hugo in the US suggested that children who experienced more severe exposure to the incident had significantly higher scores of anxiety and PTSD symptoms (Lonigan, Shannon, Taylor, Finch Jr, & Sallee, 1994). However, caution must be exercised when interpreting results, CASP criteria advocates for consideration of whether results have been accurately measured, reliance on self-reported measures alone may be questionable.

More recent research regarding the impact of Hurricane Katrina in the US on pupil's mental health emphasises the detrimental impact of exposure to traumatic events resulting in symptoms associated with PTSD. In a survey of 665 randomly selected residents, conducted

6 months after Hurricane Karina, caregivers reported that 44% of children were displaying new mental health problems such as depression and anxiety (Kronenberg et al., 2010).

Although, on consideration of CASP criteria the study is not without limitations. As with many longitudinal studies of disaster outcomes an incomplete history causes concern that is other factors may have caused the symptoms. The generalisability of the results to a UK population is not possible given the location of the sample and the homogenous parish with multi-generational family involvement. Additionally, CASP criteria also query whether outcomes are accurately measured, within this study the assessment tool was not standardised, therefore caution must be exercised when considered results. Nevertheless, the results of the study are consistent with others in the field which highlights the association of exposure to trauma and the resulting symptoms of PTSD.

Literature notes that youths exposed to natural disasters frequently perceive their lives and the lives of those close to them to be threatened. Both perceived and actual threat to life during the disaster has been shown to be a powerful risk factor for poor mental health outcomes in children and young people (Hamada, Kameoka, Yanagida, & Chemtob, 2003; La Greca, Silverman, Vernberg, & Prinstein, 1996). A study that aimed to identify children with high levels of trauma 2 years post-incident of Hurricane Iniki, in Kauai, conducted a community-wide school-based screening of disaster exposed public elementary school children. Results reported that 6-12-year-old children who were exposed were more likely to report post-traumatic symptoms if they felt that their lives or the lives of others were threatened at the time of the hurricane (Hamada et al., 2003; La Greca et al., 1996). However, again CASP criteria and whether outcomes have been appropriately measured must be considered. The method of data collection relied solely on the use of questionnaire data subject and therefore results are subject to the shortcomings of data obtained via a single modality.

Uemoto, Asakawa, Takamiya, Asakawa, and Inui (2012) assessed 8,800 school children in the wake of the Kobe earthquake in Japan in 1995. Uemoto et al. (2012) used a self-report questionnaire administered by class teachers at 4th, 6th, 12th, and 24th-month post-disaster and compared results with 1,886 control subjects in schools in minimally affected areas. Results displayed a significant elevation in fear, anxiety, and depression in affected areas that correlated with the severity of earthquake experience (e.g. damage to homes; injury of self or others). However, whilst Uemoto et al.'s (2012) study fulfils the majority of CASP criteria caution much be exercised in applying results to a local UK population due to cross-cultural differences, as well as, the significant difference in the scale and nature in comparison to CIs experienced by UK school communities.

However, Yule, Udwin, and Murdoch (1990) conducted a study that had similar findings where results could be applied to a UK population, as identified by CASP criteria. Yule et al. (1990) used a comparable methodology (self-report at 10 days and 5 months post-disaster) in a smaller scale study following the sinking of the cruise ship Jupiter in 1988. Yule et al. (1990) recorded an increase in fear, anxiety, and depression in the 24 survivors compared to a control group from a comparable London school.

Whilst there is an abundance of quantitative evidence for the impact of CIs, there are comparatively few qualitative studies. Tuicomepee and Romano (2008), exploring the impact of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, conducted one of the few mixed methods studies and emphasise that qualitative data produced important information not captured by quantitative methods. Tuicomepee and Romano (2008) collected objective (e.g. Tsunami-Related Experiences Index) and subjective data (e.g. School Connectedness Scale) from 400 participants. Participants representing both low impact and high impact tsunami experience, and later took part in semi-structured interviews. Despite cross-cultural differences, Tuicomepee and Romano's (2008) findings are consistent with the previous studies that are

the quantitative results showed a strong correlation between the severity of objective experience and subsequent behaviour and emotional difficulties.

Due to the unforeseen nature of CIs studies rarely include any pre-CI baseline measure. However, following a fatal fire in a youth café, researchers were able to analyse pre-disaster mental health ratings with post-fire mental health ratings as many of the adolescents had previously participated in an empirical study. The findings indicated an increase in self-reported anxiety and increased alcohol use (but not drug use) in those subjects from the school that had experienced the CI. The researchers highlighted the need for professionals to consider disorders such as depression, anxiety, aggression, alcohol abuse, and PTSD manifesting following young people's exposure to traumatic events (Reijneveld et al., 2003).

Although, the study is not without limitations. Consideration must be given to confounding variables which may have impacted results such as a selective loss of information due to the follow-up nature of the research. Further variables such as participants providing imprecise information and the effects of post-disaster intervention may have affected findings. Further, CASP criteria highlight that consideration must be given to whether outcomes are accurately measured, thus highlighting that imprecision of self-reported measures may have affected findings. However, researchers noted this as unlikely due to answers being confidential and anonymous, which has been shown to lead to valid self-reported information (Reijneveld et al., 2003).

The literature identifies the negative impact of trauma and loss on memory, concentration, and educational engagement and attainment. The aftermath of the Goteborg discothèque fire in Sweden where 63 adolescents were killed was analysed utilising the Impact of Events Scales (IEPS) and Clinician-Administered Post-Traumatic Stress Scales (CAPS) along with interviews concerning background factors. Questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to explore the impact of the fire on survivors. Results indicated that 25% of the

survivors met the DSM- IV criteria for PTSD 18 months after the incident. The impact upon academic engagement was also noted with 23% of the participants reported having dropped out of school or repeated a class due to the fire (Broberg et al., 2005).

However, again this study is not without limitations. Many of the victims were of immigrant descent, with a history of stressful or traumatic life events, therefore it is impossible to tease out the specific effects of the fire on their current adjustment with the design used in this study. This factor emphasises the impact of confounding variables on results, as noted by CASP criteria. Furthermore, CASP criteria highlight that consideration must be given to whether outcomes are accurately measured; the measure of school adjustment relied on self-reports, which limits the conclusions that can be drawn from the results.

Nevertheless, results were consistent with previous studies, indicating a negative impact on concentration, school engagement and a decline in academic attainment (Dyregrov, 2004)

La Greca et al. (2010) explored the experiences and responses of 384 children at 9 months and 21 months after exposure to a hurricane in the US. Like much post-disaster research, this study was potentially compromised by over-reliance on self-report measures without including the views of family or teachers. However, La Greca et al.'s (2010) findings were consistent with other studies recording poor concentration and sustained hyperarousal that persisted over two years after a CI.

The different estimates of PTSD symptoms across studies reflect methodological differences regarding events, studies, the method used, data collection variations, country of study, time of assessment as well as various other factors. Regardless of such variations, the estimates show that many children and young people suffer from PTSD resulting from varying levels of exposure to an array of different traumatic events (Dyregrov and Yule 2006).

Throughout the literature, regarding the area of CIs and PTSD, the impact of grief and bereavement frequently emerges. It is therefore deemed appropriate and necessary to provide a discussion regarding the literature surrounding grief, bereavement, and loss.

2.5 Theories enable an understanding of people's reactions to traumatic experiences. The following section will provide a brief overview of the main theoretical perspectives presented for understanding trauma.

Theories of Post-Traumatic Stress

Biological Perspective

When a person experiences an event that is dangerous there are characteristics of a survival mode or functioning. There are three types of responses: flight, fight or freeze. The biological perspective is that PTSD is caused by the biological responses that are activated during trauma, which are adaptive during the trauma but fail to switch off following the event. Thus, a person remains in survival mode. Thus, a person who displays symptoms of post-traumatic stress has been biologically primed to respond to danger when none exists (Regel & Joseph, 2017).

From an evolutionary perspective reactions such as flight, fight or freeze are likely adaptive, as they enable a person to respond to a dangerous situation, thus increasing one's chance of survival. However, the persistence of reactions, where no danger exists, and that interfere with everyday functioning are problematic (Regel & Joseph, 2017).

Emotional Processing Theory

Stanley Rachman, prior to the term PTSD being introduced, presented the concept of 'emotional processing' in the 1980s. The theory suggests that individuals need to absorb emotional reactions, so following exposure to a traumatic event, there may be confusion and distress; however, most people are able to process these emotional reactions over time.

Although this is not the case for all individuals and that is when symptoms of PTSD may be observed. He identified various factors that can give rise to emotional processing difficulties, which include anxious personalities, emotional states such as fatigued, situational factors such as life stressors, and the nature of events that are sudden, dangerous, uncontrollable, and unpredictable. Such factors are said to be more difficult to absorb emotionally (Regel & Joseph, 2017).

Rachman's theory views individuals as being intrinsically motivated to process powerful emotional information and that the processing itself could be promoted or impeded by various events, personality, and emotional states.

Information processing theory

Horowitz (1976) approach is based on the idea that individuals have mental models, or beliefs, about themselves and the world around them, which they use to interpret experience. People are said to possess an inherent drive to make their mental models intelligible with current information, which he termed 'completion principle'. This approach is similar to Rachman in that Horowitz suggests that people have an innate need to work through or process emotional experience (Regel & Joseph, 2017).

The theory posits that certain states' characteristics of post traumatic reactions such as intrusive and avoidant states are to be expected following exposure to a traumatic event, as a person emotionally processes experience. However, some people will be stuck and will not be able to successfully work through the experience. If emotional processing is inadequate then persistent memories represent the failure of emotional processing. Horowitz posited that the completion tendency maintains information regarding the event as active memory, causing it to intrude into consciousness where a person experiences flashbacks, nightmares, and unwanted thoughts as a person attempts to process to merge the new information with

pre-existing models and beliefs about the self and the world. The completion principle is said to be the driver for emotional processing to take place (Regel & Joseph, 2017).

Social- cognitive approach

Janoff- Bulman's approach suggests that victims who have experienced a wide range of traumatic events share a common psychological experience. The approach suggests that post-traumatic stress following exposure is largely due to the disruption of three core assumptions about the world, the self, and others. These being an individual assuming the world as benevolent, the world as meaningful and the self as worthy (Regel & Joseph, 2017).

Coping with traumatic exposure involves the person accepting these shattered assumptions and re-establishing a conceptual system that allows for effective functioning. Distinctions are drawn between automatic processes and intentional efforts to restructure what is described as our assumptive world (Regel & Joseph, 2017).

Dual representation theory

Emotional processing involves both 'verbally accessible memories' (VAMs) and situationally accessible memories (SAM's). VAMs are retrievable via our store of visual experiences; however, SAMs contain information that cannot be deliberately accessed by an individual. Thus, SAMs are accessed only when aspects such as sight or sound of the original traumatic event cue their activation. These are represented within a personal context and contain information concerning personal meanings regarding the traumatic experience.

Brewin et al (1996) suggest that VAM and SAM representations are programmed in parallel at the time of trauma and, between them, they account for the range of PTSD symptoms (Regel & Joseph, 2017).

Cognitive Model of PTSD

Ehlers and Clark (2000) developed a cognitive model of PTSD. It is suggested that persistent PTSD only develops if an individual processes a trauma in a way that current ongoing threat is experienced. This threat might result from reliving symptoms, the impact that the trauma has on an individual's views of the world, negative judgement of the self during trauma, or negative appraisals of the self-post trauma. The model suggests that current ongoing threat can be seen as external, such as seeing the world as a dangerous place (fear) or internal such as viewing one's self as a less capable human being. Such judgements can generate strong emotions that can act as internal current threats, which can in turn maintain an individual's PTSD symptoms (Regel & Joseph, 2017).

Psychosocial approach

Joseph, William, and Yule (1997) presented a psychosocial framework, which posits that individuals who experience a traumatic event are presented with information that, as perceived at the time, can result in extreme emotional arousal. Depictions of the event stimuli are held in memory because of their personal salience and the difficulty they present for immediate emotional processing. These event cognitions will uniquely reflect the individual's personality, environment, and social context (Regel & Joseph, 2017).

Event cognitions can then form the subject of further cognitive activity termed appraisals. How an individual appraises an event will be influenced by personality, emotional state, and coping. Any stimulus is capable of being perceived in a variety of ways. Appraisal processes then lead to various emotional states such as fear, panic, grief, and shame. The occurrence of these event appraisals and emotional states will all create attempts at coping (Regel & Joseph, 2017).

2.6 Grief, Bereavement and Loss

Many CIs can result in death and, as noted, there is frequent mention of bereavement and loss in the literature. Therefore, a consideration of loss and bereavement and the psychological responses appears necessary and appropriate. A brief overview of bereavement, loss, and the stages of grief as theorised will be offered in this section.

Several grief theorists conceptualised grief as proceeding along a series of predictable stages, phases, and tasks. Perhaps the best-known model is that suggested by Kübler-Ross this model included five stages of grief: shock and denial; anger; resentment and guilt; bargaining; depression; and acceptance (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). The model implied that failure to complete any of these stages would result in complications (Prigerson & Maciejewski, 2008). Although capturing the imagination of both lay and professional communities, it is not without criticism. Literature has suggested that stage theories of grief may bring a conceptual order to a complex process. However, it is suggested that they are incapable of capturing the complexity, diversity, and idiosyncratic quality of the grieving experience. Stage models are said to not address the multiplicity of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs experienced by bereaved people, their families, and networks (Hall, 2014).

Moore and Carr (2000) consider children's grief processes following bereavement and identified components such as Yearning and Searching, Sadness, Anger, Bargaining, and Acceptance as distinct components. Further, behavioural expressions of children's grief have been connected to adjustment problems which may require specialist professional services (Moore & Carr, 2000).

As noted, some of the earlier theories of grief have been deemed as too rigid. However, there are models that have been said to succeed in identifying definite patterns and relations in the complex and idiosyncratic grief experience. Literature suggests that phasal conceptualisations have become enormously influential (Hall, 2014).

Two of the most comprehensive and influential grief theories have been suggested as the Dual process Model of Stroebe and Schut (1999) and the Task-Based Model developed by Worden (2008).

The Dual Process Model of grief, developed from a cognitive stress perspective, described grief as a process of alternation between two conflicting modes of functioning. In the 'loss orientation', the griever engages in emotion-focused coping, exploring and expressing the range of emotional responses associated with the loss. At other times, in the 'restoration orientation', the griever engages with problem-focused coping and is required to focus on the many external adjustments required by the loss, including diversion from it and attention to ongoing life demands. The model suggested that the focus of coping may differ from one time to another, from one individual to another, and from one cultural group to another (Stroebe & Schut, 2010).

Moreover, Worden (2008) suggests that grieving should be considered as an active process that involves engagement with four tasks: to accept the reality of the loss; to process the pain of grief; to adjust to a world without the deceased (including both internal, external and spiritual adjustments); and to find an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life.

Worden also identifies seven determining factors that are critical to appreciating in order to understand an individual's experience. These include: who the person who died was; the nature of the attachment to the deceased; how the person died; historical antecedents; personality variables; social mediators; and concurrent stressors. These aspects include many of the risk and protective factors identified by the research literature and provide an important context for the personal nature of the grief experience.

Issues such as the strength and nature of the attachment to the deceased, the survivor's attachment style, and the degree of conflict and ambivalence with the deceased are important

considerations. Death related factors, such as physical proximity, levels of violence or trauma, or death where a body is not recovered all can pose significant challenges for the bereaved (Hall, 2014).

Literature suggests that a stigmatising death such as that of suicide can disenfranchise the griever and complicate the bereavement experience. The concept of disenfranchised grief recognises that societies have sets of norms that have been termed as 'grieving rules' that attempt to specify who, when, where, how, how long, and for whom people should grieve. Disenfranchised grief can be the result of the circumstances of death, but can also extend to the relationship not being socially recognised, the griever being excluded, such as a child, or the way the individual expresses the grief, particularly with regard to the level of emotional distress which is publicly displayed.

What is clear from the research is that there is no single set of stages or tasks in adapting to loss, but instead qualitatively distinct paths through bereavement, which requires a greater understanding of both patterns of complication and resilience. Those who support bereaved people must recognise the unique reactions, needs, and challenges as individuals and communities cope with loss.

Furthermore, the impact of loss is not straightforward or predictable, nor is it always recognised by others. There may well be an economic impact on the family, for example, the breadwinner may have died and a reduction in income may lead to events such as a house move or a decline in material standards. The initial loss may potentially lead to further losses such as friends, homes, schools, communities, self-esteem, and stability. Far more children are now affected by parental separation, which once was an uncommon event. The effects may be as far-ranging as the impact of loss in terms of lifestyle and a significant number of children will lose contact with a parent. In this case, children may in effect be suffering bereavement, as they have lost contact with a parent and a previous lifestyle (Holland, 2008).

It could be suggested that greater awareness amongst those who support children and young people regarding the alternative forms of loss may help to ensure that the needs of bereaved individuals are best met.

Although different types of childhood trauma including loss and bereavement have many common characteristics, traumatic loss in children and young people has a number of distinctive features. Most importantly, youth who experience a traumatic loss may develop childhood traumatic grief (CTG). Traumatic grief is conceptualised as a condition in which a person loses a close loved one in a traumatic manner, and ensuing trauma-related symptoms disrupt the typical grieving process (Salloum, Bjoerke, & Johnco, 2019). CTG is different from uncomplicated grief in several ways. First, the nature of the death is qualitatively different in the cases of CTG, with these deaths typically being from sudden, unexpected, tragic, and/or violent causes such as suicide, murder, accident, war, terrorism, and disasters (Mannarino & Cohen, 2011).

An in-depth exploration of CTG is beyond the scope of this literature review, although, it is important to be mindful of this possible outcome when considering individuals responses to a CI as a traumatic event often resulting in death from the causal factors included for the identification of CTG.

Bereavement within the school population is common, In the UK alone it is estimated that 78% of 11-16-year-olds have experienced the death of a close relative or friend (Scott, Wallace, Audsley, & Chary, 2019). Therefore literature has suggested that educational staff need to be aware of the unique reactions, needs, and challenges of pupils in response to bereavement and loss; in order to support better coping in bereaved children and young people. The following section will consider the literature regarding school staff experiences of CIs impacting a school community.

2.7 School Staff as supporters

CIs that affect school communities can take many forms, ranging from natural disasters to intentionally inflicted events such as acts of violence, suicide, and terrorism. A brief overview from a historical perspective of CIs affecting members of school communities was provided earlier in the review. As highlighted, the impact of such incidents on children and young people has been researched extensively; however, there appears to be a lack of research regarding the impact a CI may have on school staff. This section will now go on to present and discuss the literature regarding the potential impact that exposure to trauma may have on school staff.

Support for students following a peer's death is said to be an important role of a classroom teacher (Balk, Zaengle, & Corr, 2011). The bolstering of social support through interactions with school staff and peers is noted as a well-established protective factor (Donnelly & Rowling, 2007; La Greca et al., 1996; Pina et al., 2008; Vernberg, La Greca, Silverman, & Prinstein, 1996). One might then consider the impact of the assumed role of teachers as supporters upon the teachers themselves in the aftermath of a crisis. Literature has noted that few teachers receive crisis response training; however, the majority are expected to perform crisis intervention at varying levels of involvement following a CI (Hart & Garza, 2013).

A study conducted by Rowling (1995) examined the experiences of approximately 50 teachers via interviews in a school community where traumatic incidents such as the death and murder of students had occurred. The experiences of a number of teachers highlighted how traumatic incidents impact on them and how their view of themselves as teachers is influenced by their professional and personal grief experience. Results suggested that the expectation of them in their professional role as being supportive, emotionally unattached adults, in turn, creates tension with their beliefs, expectations, and experiences in that role and in their personal lives. This tension is said to centre on issues of control, control of grief reactions and organisation, and predictability in the school context. It has been suggested that

teacher's grief can be hidden and disenfranchised. It has been suggested that this may be due to their relationship with a student not being recognised by themselves or others. There is said to be a loss experienced when a teacher may feel they have not fulfilled their 'duty of care'. Additionally, teachers are said to disenfranchise themselves by their beliefs about their professional role. Teachers who believe that they have to maintain professional composure and not display their feelings may be particularly vulnerable to disenfranchised grief (Rowling, 1995).

Although this literature offers insight into a scarce area of research caution must be exercised when construing results. Firstly, although many of the CASP criteria regarding qualitative studies (Appendix 6c) are met, criteria concerning recruitment strategy and its appropriateness to the aims of the research are questionable. The study provides little clarity of its aims and the recruitment strategy is poorly outlined. However, despite limitations, this study highlights concerns such as psychological support being offered for students following a CI but this does not appear so for teachers.

Literature concerning student death and the teacher in the classroom as a supporter of student's grief highlights that equivalent support for teachers appears to be lacking. A study conducted by Hart and Garza (2013) explored the lived experience of teachers who had experienced the unexpected death of a student. The results of the study reinforce the need for training for school teachers to help them better cope with the death of a student. Particularly, school professionals are called upon to be proactive in creating a model to have in place to actively support teachers dealing with the grief and loss of a student (Hart & Garza, 2013).

Further literature has identified the teacher's lack of training concerning grief education and response. A comparative study investigating plans to manage traumatic incidents and to identify practice and programmes related to grief education and suicide prevention in Australia and England identified 94% of an Australian sample of 145 schools had plans in

place compared with just 15% of an English sample of 200 schools. Differing policy contexts for grief, the lack of teacher training, and minimal education about grief in England were discussed as possible mediators underpinning the variation. The results of the study also revealed that teachers expressed concern about student suicide and intervention and reported feeling unable to manage it (Holland, 2000).

A study by Balk et al (2011) offered suggestions for strengthening grief support within the school system. The study highlighted that school communities will often rely on well-trained crisis teams and teaching staff to offer support following adolescent death; conclusions of the study were offered in two broad categories which included parent involvement and school involvement. The researchers highlighted that, similar to students, staff may feel guilt, fear, sadness, anger, and confusion. Thus the need for support to be offered to staff, as well as children and young people, and for them to be informed and given the opportunity to process their feelings is emphasised (Balk et al., 2011).

Contemporary research in the area has provided further focus regarding how schools cope psychologically with a CI, with reference to decision making regarding outside support from the LA Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT). Eleven schools partook in the research and decision-makers, most of whom were headteachers, were interviewed. The research suggested that schools coped psychologically through a pastoral response, available for staff, young people and families, leading to reduced stress and whole school normalisation. Moreover, schools that requested external support through CIRT experienced useful outcomes, particularly a strengthened staff and an enhanced sense of preparedness. The research highlights the decision maker's reference to systemic limitations and pressure (Atwell, 2016).

When considering the different levels within which EPs undertake work; for example, working with an individual level (for example, assessment and intervention with an

individual); an organisation (for example, in a school providing training for teachers); and system (for example, in an LA developing innovatory projects and informing policy development) (Cameron, 2006). Arguably, with this in mind EPs may be best placed to offer support to staff when responding to a CI. Therefore, awareness of this potential staff experience is of vital importance for EPs, when providing CI support to school communities.

Leek-Openshaw (2011) warns that any adult offering support following a CI may develop secondary traumatic stress and proposes that supervision should be offered. This is also a consideration of EP's coping following on from being a supporter of schools following a CI. A further study highlighting the need for psychologists to be aware of and manage their own stress reaction when providing CI support advocates for supervision and self-care due to CIs vicarious impacts. (Hayes & Fredrickson, 2008).

The literature discussed emphasises the potential detrimental impact of providing support for those bereaved on the supporter. The consideration of serious reactions to trauma which may result in PTSD forms a significant background to the range of possible effects of a CI.

However, despite this background being explored extensively in regard to children and young people; the literature suggests that such exploration in relation to school staff is extremely scarce. The following section will explore the range of possible interventions to support school communities following a CI.

2.8 CI intervention

Over the past two decades, various interventions have been developed in an attempt to mitigate the effects of trauma and prevent the onset of PTSD. This section offers a summary of interventions used to support individuals after trauma, with a particular focus on interventions informing EPS responses to CIs. Psychological Debriefing (PD), with particular focus given to Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD), and Psychological First Aid (PFA) is prevalent in the literature pertaining to EP practice and the CI literature.

2.8.1 CIRD

CIRD was developed by Mitchell in 1983 and has since been adopted by emergency services. CIRD is described as a structured process for a homogenous group of people following exposure to a traumatic event. The aim of CIRD is to reduce initial distress and to prevent the development of more severe psychological responses, including PTSD. It aims to do this by promoting emotional processing by allowing individuals to express reactions, preparing individuals for possible experiences following the event, and identifying individuals who may require further intensive intervention. It is a psycho-educational approach that explores the cognitive and affective domains of experience. There are seven structured phases to CIRD; introduction, facts, thoughts, reactions, symptoms, teaching, and re-entry. These phases are then concluded with a follow up (Aucott & Soni, 2016).

The appropriateness of employing psychological intervention following a traumatic event has been a debate within the field in regard to early intervention. Bisson et al (1997) found that at a 13 month follow up assessment, PTSD rates were significantly higher in the group that had been debriefed using a protocol based on Mitchell's CIRD model (though it was not strictly adherent to the CIRD protocol) compared to control. Bisson and colleagues concluded that debriefing should be discontinued immediately. However, in a review that focussed on evaluating the available interventions for the early management of post-traumatic stress in emergency response organisations, just two studies showed that group debriefing had had an adverse effect on symptom severity but in these cases, the protocol of debriefing was ambiguously defined (Richins et al., 2019).

Further, within this debate, CIRD can be placed within the overarching term of PD. PD which tends to refer to a short single session intervention involving victims of a traumatic event talking about their experience and being informed of expected and normal responses.

Literature produced by Beeke (2013) found that in a sample of 50 EPs, around half reported that they had carried out PD with members of the school community when responding to CIs. Other studies that have provided descriptive and reflective accounts of the role of the EP in supporting schools following CIs have highlighted the use of CISD (Carroll et al., 1997; O'Hara et al., 1994).

The literature review of the effectiveness of CISD with children and young people in a school community context is limited (Wei, Szumilas, & Kutcher, 2010). Therefore it has been suggested that an intervention that was developed for emergency services has been applied to schools with a minimal evaluation of its effectiveness or appropriateness in a school context (Aucott & Soni, 2016). Critique of CISD has highlighted concerns with a number of elements such as the assumption of a homogenous group, avoidance as an adaptive strategy, and an underestimation of resilience (Aucott & Soni, 2016).

2.8.2 PFA

An alternative approach that is highly valued in the bereavement literature is that of PFA. PFA is described as providing non-intrusive, supportive, and practical assistance to people who have been exposed to traumatic events. It aims to provide a calm, caring, and supportive environment aimed at reducing any initial distress and promoting short term and long term adaptive functioning (Aucott & Soni, 2016).

PFA is informed by the risk and resilience evidence related to exposure to trauma and thus emphasises the role of resilience in response. The PFA approach recognises that individuals who experience a traumatic event are likely to experience a range of initial reactions, which may be physical, psychological, behavioural or spiritual. Whilst some of these reactions may result in distress and impairment of adaptive coping, others may not (Brymer et al., 2006).

When distress does occur, it is proposed that the negative outcomes can be lowered by reducing arousal, distress, and disconnection and enhancing coping, and control.

PFA is a flexible approach and is tailored to the needs of the individuals for whom it is intended (Vernberg et al., 2008). Therefore, rather than detailing a step by step approach, authors have tended to offer a list of skills needed to provide effective PFA. Brymer et al (2006) produced a model outlining eight elements of PFA and their goals. The eight elements included: contact and engagement; safety and comfort; stabilisation; information gather of current needs and concerns; practical assistance; connection with social supports; information on coping and linking with collaborative services.

Literature has identified the lack of empirical study of PFA and thus the lack of direct evidence for its effectiveness. However, indirect evidence regarding the benefits of promoting calm and connectedness following a traumatic event has been suggested as providing support for the elements of PFA. PFA practice is described as evidence consistent rather than evidence-based, as it is informed by research on risk and protective factors associated with post-trauma recovery. Therefore despite the lack of direct evidence, PFA is considered to be an acceptable response to be used with people who have experienced a traumatic incident (Fox et al., 2012; Shultz & Forbes, 2014).

Although it is beyond the scope of this review to discuss this topic in more depth. Notable outcomes were included in a review that focussed on evaluating the available interventions for the early management of post-traumatic stress in emergency response organisations. A further aim of the review was to identify common features as well as differences between intervention models and assess their usefulness on a range of measures including psychological, social, and organisational benefits. The review found that CISM models were more effective than non-specific debriefing and brief early interventions such as PFA (Richins et al., 2019). Thus, the current evidence base for CI intervention appears ambiguous.

Consequently, when considering effective interventions for victims of a CI, it may be necessary to look beyond the presented research and explore further factors such as

adherence to the main components of an intervention model, providing ample support for victims requires understanding distinct organisational cultures and the timescale of the delivery being within the initial windows of opportunity.

The literature considered thus far has focussed on the negative consequences of exposure to traumatic incidents, associated responses, and possible intervention. This body of literature can be considered as reflective of the general discourse surrounding CIs. However, the focus will now turn to a growing body of literature which highlights the possible positive outcomes and responses to such incidents.

2.9 Resilience

Resilience in coping with traumatic events has been multiply defined; for example as the ability to return to an individual's original functioning following exposure to a stressful or traumatic event, successful adaptation under challenging circumstances, and a trait of character or personality that enables positive adaptation to adversity and the timely attainment of psychological milestones (Tummala-Narra, 2007).

A prospective study of spousal bereavement identified the most common trajectories of adjustment to loss and made the compelling finding that resilience is the most common pattern and that delayed grief reactions are rare. Five distinct trajectories covered the outcome patterns of most participants. These being common grief or recovery, stable low distress or resilience, depression followed by improvement, chronic grief, and chronic depression (Bonanno et al., 2002; Mancini & Bonanno, 2006).

Such definitions emphasise the importance of the individual's innate or learned capacity to overcome the adverse effects of traumatic exposure but fail to consider the interdependence of individual capacities, salient attributes of family and community, and/ or larger cultural belief systems. Further, research has suggested that risk and resilience cannot be understood

apart from context. It is also noted that resilience is not a static trait but an unfolding process in which new vulnerabilities and strengths emerge during developmental, societal and cultural transitions through one's life and during periods of stress and trauma (Harvey, 2007; Hobfoll, Jackson, Hobfoll, Pierce, & Young, 2002).

Literature has highlighted both individual and systemic factors that can aid resilience. However, the concept of resilience has received little attention in the literature concerning EPs' involvement with CIs and school communities.

2.10 Post traumatic growth

While the negative consequences of crises and trauma are well documented, recent emerging literature points to the potential for trauma to be an experience that is, for some individuals, transformative in ways that are positive and valued. PTG has been defined as entailing "positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances". It is also noted that PTG is not simply a return to normal functioning after experiencing trauma but is an experience of improvement that for some is deeply profound (Pat Horenczyk & Brom, 2007; Sheikh, 2008; Tominaga et al., 2019; Westphal & Bonanno, 2007).

Positive change has been noted in the literature by various authors and has been referred to in diverse terms such as benefit finding, stress-related growth, adversarial growth, flourishing, and thriving. The common factor underlying these terms is that significant personal value can arise from significant personal trauma (Cryder, Kilmer, Tedeschi, & Calhoun, 2006; Little et al., 2011; Salloum et al., 2019; Sheikh, 2008; Wong, Cavanaugh, MacLeamy, Sojourner-Nelson, & Koopman, 2009).

Calhoun and Tedeschi (2006) identify five domains of PTG; personal strength, new possibilities, relating to others, appreciation of life, and spiritual change. Personal strength

refers to the awareness that people have that they may be stronger than they thought. New possibilities are described as developing new interests, sometimes related to the trauma they have experienced. Relating to others is defined as a greater connection to other people and increased compassion for others who may be suffering. Particularly when death or injury is part of the traumatic experience, individuals may develop a new appreciation of life and a reconsideration of priorities. Some individuals also report deeper spiritual and existential meaning in their lives (Little et al., 2011).

In a study examining the long term effects of parental cancer in children through retrospective interviews with adults, 44% of participants reported PTG when asked to describe how their parent's illnesses had affected their childhood (Wong et al., 2009). Of the five areas of PTG, three domains were reported by the participants; increased appreciation for life, stronger personal relationships, and the possibility of taking new paths in life. Notable is that findings indicated that PTG was reported by participants irrespective of parental survival rates, indicating that the threat of parental death alone brought about PTG.

Salter and Stallard (2004) studied PTG among children and young people (aged 7-18 years) who had been involved in a road traffic accident. Results highlighted that 42% of respondents reported some evidence of PTG following the accident, however, 37% were also identified as experiencing PTSD. Interestingly the majority of reports of PTG came from the older children in the study.

Additional research has explored the relationship between post-traumatic stress reactions, PTG, and quality of life. From a sample consisting of 1770 primary school children, results suggested that posttraumatic stress reactions and PTG were positively correlated; supporting previous research that the two constructs can co-exist. Children who had been exposed to trauma reported significantly increased posttraumatic stress reactions, higher levels of PTG,

and a lower quality of life when compared to those that had not been exposed to a traumatic event (Alisic, Van der Schoot, van Ginkel, & Kleber, 2008).

Literature exploring more ethnically and culturally diverse groups than those of previous studies was offered by Tang (2007). The study explored the prevalence and predictors of PTG among Thai adult survivors of the 2004 Southeast Asian earthquake Tsunami. Results indicated that 88% of the participants experienced varying levels of PTG and that PTG and PTSD were not mutually exclusive. Factors such as disaster-related cognitive-emotional states perceived emotional familial support and being married predicted both inter and intrapersonal PTG (Tang, 2007).

Literature has suggested criticism regarding PTG particularly for children and young people. A need for rigorous child-focussed measures to be used when exploring PTG is advocated. It is suggested that future research should actively seek to develop interventions to encourage resilience and positive outcomes. Despite the criticism, the researchers advocate that interventions with children and young people following exposure to trauma should consider a focus on positive changes (Clay, Knibbs, & Joseph, 2009).

The body of literature in PTG focusses on positive outcomes arising from exposure to trauma. The evolving recognition of PTG, although an emerging area of research, allows for a more comprehensive appraisal of the full spectrum of posttraumatic outcomes. Possibly a focus on PTG in parallel with the conventional approach of recognising the negative impact of PTSD is the way forward. This literature appears worthy of consideration by professionals involved with supporting individuals following exposure to traumatic events (Little et al., 2011; Sheikh, 2008). It could be suggested that the psychological construct of resilience and theoretical perspectives such as positive psychology regularly employed by EPs (Cameron, 2006; Waters, 2011) appears a 'good fit' with the emerging PTG literature and could be incorporated into EPS CI responses.

This overview of the literature regarding the negative as well as positive consequences of exposure to a CI, specifically in relation to members of a school community; will now be followed by a more specific consideration of EPs, schools and CIs.

3 Educational Psychologists and CIs

A historical perspective of the development of the EP role with regards to CI support in schools was considered earlier in this review. The following section will discuss the literature that has emerged regarding EPS response to CIs in the UK.

3.1 Educational Psychologist Services response in the UK

Increased awareness of the severe and long-lasting effects that major traumatic incidents can have on children and adults has highlighted the need for a quick response from services including EPSs to minimise these effects. The role of EPSs in supporting schools when CIs have occurred is well established and the structures and procedures have been documented in the professional literature since the mid-1990s. Additionally, the Government review of the function of and contribution of EPs highlight that CI support has become a well-established part of service delivery for many EPSs in the UK (Farrell et al., 2006).

One of the earlier papers written by O'Hara, Taylor, and Simpson (1994) describes how Salford EPS offered support to a school following a tragedy. The support offered by the EPS included counselling for families and school staff as well as group counselling using Mitchell's CISM approach. O'Hara et al (1994) noted that the first session and following phases of CISM involved strategies such as encouraging expression of feelings concerning the incident, discussions around the signs and symptoms of stress, aiding children to activate their own resources and normalise their feelings. Additional sessions were also offered by the EPS to parents where possible ways of them supporting their children were discussed. Although EPs within the service had previously offered support to children regarding

bereavement it was the first instance where the EPS had dealt with a large number of children and staff exposed to trauma. A discussion regarding whether EPs should embark on this type of work was initiated and the Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) of the service highlighted that EPs possess the knowledge and skills to both support school communities and also to develop materials. Following the CI work, the school EP reported feelings of enhanced workload and increases in the perceived value of the EPS by members of the school community.

Mallon and Best (1995) report a situation where the PEP was contacted by the LA Advisor of Special Needs, following a traumatic incident in a secondary school in Birmingham. At this time the EPS did not have procedures and protocols in place.

Cameron et al (1995) outlined the effects of traumatic events on children, their parents, and their teachers. Types of support that could be offered by EPs were outlined. A framework for intervention by EPs is offered that involves: identifying people to whom priority should be given; discussing how to mobilise and develop within-school support systems; helping adults and children to use therapeutic concepts and techniques from psychology and capitalising on therapeutic opportunities that arise naturally during classroom activities. The authors describe how services in Surrey, Kent, and Waltham Forest have attempted to make contingency plans for traumatic events and identify areas of current good practice in post-trauma stress management. Such support is reflective of EPs working at different levels such as an individual, organisational, and systems level.

Cornish (1995) provided examples of how systemic consultation was utilised as opposed to individual counselling in the management of two CIs. There was a focus on group interactions rather than solely on individual experience.

The first major study that sought to look broadly at EP's responses to CIs is reported by Houghton (1996). The sample included LA EPSs and Emergency Planning Officers of 120

LAs in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The results reported provided a point of reference regarding EP practice in relation to CIs. The reported findings from the study highlighted that 65% of EPSs were involved in responding to CIs, of those that were involved 91% had responded in the last year, 73% in the last 6 months, and 32% in the last 4 weeks. Incidents such as road traffic accidents, child murders, suicides of parents and teachers, sudden death, and arson attacks were all reported as requiring a response. Requests for EPS involvement were initiated by schools in 59% of cases and LA in 20% of cases. 80% of EPSs responded within 72 hours. General advice and counselling were the most frequently mentioned interventions, with 6 EPSs specifically mentioning intervention involving debriefing. 10% of EPSs had a planned response in place for CIs; however, it was notable that approximately half of the EPSs had draft plans or were in the process of creating drafts. Of the participating EPSs, 60% with a plan had been given some specific training and only half of those with a plan reported that support for psychologists was specified in the document.

Hertfordshire EPS produced an article outlining the development of the service's Crisis Intervention Service. The article identified five principles which underpinned service delivery including immediate contact should be made with the school; involvement with victims should be by invitation only; psychologists should co-work ideally in teams of three with one psychologist acting as an observer, as recommended by O'Hara et al (1994); supervision from a colleague off-site should be available for all EPs working directly with the CI, support offered by the EPS should be short term. The service at the time reportedly comprised four aspects. Schools were offered advice and support in preparation for a traumatic incident and in the event of incident support was offered immediately after its occurrence. Further aspects involved the use of CISD and signposting schools to services that could offer longer-term counselling intervention (Carroll, Frew, Smith, Fitcher, Ladkin, Morey & Price, 1997).

McCaffrey (2004) reports how Kent EPS developed a model of consultancy as a result of a request for both practical and emotional support following a CI. The paper suggests that the EPS was in a good position to offer psychological support due to existing relationships with schools and EPs' understanding of school systems. Research conducted with headteachers in Kent highlighted that they wanted advice immediately on the same day of incidence or within 24 hours following the incident. The sudden onset of publicity in response to the event and the support for those directly and indirectly affected as well as staff support were aspects they felt they needed assistance with. The paper acknowledged that although initial contact was with senior staff, in order to develop a plan, support was then offered via a staff meeting. The author noted that the crucial role for the EP was to identify vulnerable pupils and work with school staff to plan how these pupils could be supported. The EPS is said to have supported 45 incidents throughout that year with approximately 11 hours of support being offered for each incident, only at times was it necessary for the EPs to carry out PFA.

Greenway (2007) in an attempt to make sense of EP involvement in CI support identified three metaphors informed by psychoanalytical thinking; which reportedly enabled the objectification of the emotional reactions that tend to overwhelm schools' human resources at a time of a traumatic event. It was noted that EPs, in their role as external professionals to the school organisation, are able to act as an impartial set of ears and eyes. Greenway (2004) noted three ways in which the EP work took place including as a facilitator of groups, a systems analyst assessing the health and needs of the system over time with senior management, and a referrer for individuals seeking outside therapeutic support.

Hayes and Fredrickson (2008) examined a key aspect of the EP role in relation to responding to CIs, focusing on the impact on the EPs themselves. This study reviewed the literature on secondary stress and examined in detail supervisory practice as it relates to EP work in CI

response. A model that could be used to inform both supervision and the professional practice of EPs is presented and considered.

Literature produced by Posada (2006) detailed the work of two EPs involved in a multi-agency project to produce LA guidelines on support following a CI or disaster. The article highlighted the advantages of different agencies working together with each agency bringing a different range of skills and experiences to the situation. The importance of multi-agency working and joint planning when considering CIs and the necessity for all professionals working together to have an understanding of different roles and perspectives was emphasised. The guidelines produced as a result of the project make two key recommendations for developing LA responses. Firstly, it is suggested that a multi-agency group be established to develop the LA response. It is noted that joint planning is crucial if there is to be an emphasis on coordinated, seamless service provision focussed on the needs of both individuals and wider communities. The second recommendation is for multi-agency training to be established to ensure that services have information about each other's roles and responsibilities, a collective awareness of trauma, the needs of those affected, and how best to support them.

Contemporary research in the area has provided further focus on multi-agency working when responding to CIs with specific detail to the development of Critical Incident Response Teams to support those affected. EPs have and continue to contribute to the development of such teams (Lockhart & Woods, 2017). The study sought to develop an understanding of the inception, development, and maintenance of such teams. Sixteen team members, 14 of whom were EPs, across seven CIRTs were interviewed. Having an existing relationship with the school, understanding of the school system along with the practice of hypothesising and joint problem solving is suggested as benefits of involving psychologists within the CIRT.

The study offered insight into the development of CIRTs in LA's and the role of EPs within that. A pre model was developed to be used as a tool to guide decision making on key

questions for those involved with CIRT development and maintenance (Lockhart & Woods, 2017).

Wider literature regarding schools requesting support from outside services such as Hull EPS is documented. The paper reported the findings from a study of schools' responses to child bereavement in Hull, Yorkshire, and Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland. In order to gain insight and compare how schools in both geographical areas respond to and manage bereavement. Schools rated child bereavement and parental separation highly in terms of their priorities. However, there was a lack in the number of schools in both areas that had a formal procedure or policy in place around the management and response to death and loss. Although, there is evidence that many staff had attended training in loss and bereavement. Schools in Derry/Londonderry and Hull reported that they had sought help from other services such as local Bereavements Teams and the Hull EPS when a traumatic event occurred. The paper highlights that schools require help and support in order to develop policies and procedures to inform the response to child bereavement. The importance of staff being offered training to develop the knowledge and skills they require to respond with confidence to a child who experiences a loss was emphasised (Tracey & Holland, 2008).

Although in the UK there was an expansion in the literature published in the 1990s regarding EPs and CI response, with few publications appearing in the 2000s, contemporary literature in the area continues to appear limited (Lockhart & Woods, 2017; McCaffrey, 2004; Posada, 2006).

Nonetheless, literature has emphasised that EPSs within a LA context have the potential to offer CI support both pre and post-incident. However, models of service delivery vary between LAs. This review will now discuss the psychology service of one large authority in Wales and the support offered by the EPS for schools to prepare and manage CIs.

4 One Local Authority Educational Psychology Service in Wales

The approach informing the development of the EPS model stemmed from the European School Psychology Centre for training (ESPCT) who is affiliated with the International School Psychology Association (ISPA). The purpose of ESPCT is:

- the promotion of ‘school psychology’ via training programmes for crisis management in Europe;
- promotion of the networking of school psychologists;
- improvement of crisis management in schools;
- promoting supportive help in schools following disastrous events;
- And also, to promote preparedness and preventative activities in schools.

The International Crisis Response Network (ICRN) of the ISPA has facilitated communication amongst international colleagues related to school crisis preparedness and intervention and has sponsored a series of workshops and training to encourage the exchange of ideas, information, and knowledge regarding crisis theory, research training and practice.

The model of preparation and response as implemented by the EPS is an integrated model which includes multiple preparation and intervention frameworks; namely the National Organisation for Victim Assistance (NOVA) model (Hatzichristiou, Issari, Lykitsakou, Lampropoulou, & Dimitropoulou, 2011), PFA (Jimerson, Brock, & Pletcher, 2005), the BASIC Ph model (Rosenfeld, Caye, Lahad, & Gurwitch, 2005) and the PREPaRE model (Jimerson & Furlong 2006).

Similarities can be drawn from existing literature regarding EPs and CI support in school and the locality model of the response being discussed here. Aspects such as the production of written guidelines, multi-agency collaboration, and identification of vulnerable individuals are commonalities present amongst EPS response in the UK.

However, the model of preparation and response discussed appears to surpass existing models in the UK due to aspects which include its utilisation of the BASIC Ph. model and PFA. Such factors allow for the consideration of resilience and varying human responses to

trauma and coping. Additionally, the models use of a framework such as the NOVA model has been suggested as being valuable in planning and implementing crisis response (Jimerson, Brock, & Pletcher, 2005).

While there is minimal empirical research addressing specific strategies of crisis preparedness and response as related to crisis events in the schools, it has been suggested that these frameworks have the support of professionals engaging in this work (Crepeau-Hobson, Sievering, Armstrong, & Stonis, 2012; Hatzichristiou, Issari, Lykitsakou, Lampropoulou, & Dimitropoulou, 2011). Therefore, further research is necessary, and such an empirical study could be utilised to further refine and advance such integrated models.

An overview of the theoretical underpinnings of the models and frameworks will now be provided and suggested interventions discussed.

The NOVA model of crisis intervention

The NOVA model of crisis intervention has as the main objective the providing of immediate emergency consultation crisis intervention services with additional follow up during a limited period of time. It emphasises a short-term role in crisis management based mainly on four goals these being national advocacy, direct service to victims, assistance to professional colleagues, and membership activities and services. It also suggests four phases of crisis management that include physical care and safety, crisis intervention, post-traumatic counselling, and growth and survival after the crisis event.

The NOVA approach to crisis intervention is founded upon Maslow's theoretical model of human behaviour and more specifically Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. According to the NOVA model, in a crisis situation, it is essential to cater to the basic needs of the individual, namely physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs (Hatzichristiou et al., 2011).

A brief overview of the key components identified by NOVA regarding school crisis intervention at the different phases of a crisis will be provided below:

Pre-Impact (the period before the crisis)

This phase includes aspects regarding crisis preparedness such as crisis education, crisis drills, and crisis planning. Further detail is provided regarding the elements needed for crisis planning such as the establishment of an interagency task force, a school crisis response team, establishment of guidelines for identifying high-risk populations, specifying response facilities, establishing a communication system, designing materials and developing an information decision system as well as developing a plan for dealing with deaths.

Impact (the period during the crisis)

Intervention at this phase would involve immediate prevention such as protecting those present from harm and danger.

Recoil (Immediately after the crisis)

Intervention would involve minimising crisis exposure and ensuring actual and perceived safety. The identification and uniting of support systems are advocated as well as the utilisation of psychological intervention such as PFA. The providing of psychological education and performing risk screening is also identified at this phase.

Post Impact (days to weeks after the crisis)

Ensuring the treatment of pre-existing conditions, reuniting victims with friends and teachers, and returning to school is identified within this phase. PFA and group crisis intervention is noted. The continuation of individual screening as well as school-wide screening with appropriate referrals is recommended. Additionally, the development of memorials and ritual participation is suggested.

Recovery and Reconstruction (months or years after the crisis).

Within this phase following a crisis intervention targeting anniversary preparedness, anniversary reaction support, individual screening, and continuation of ritual participation and memorial implementation is noted.

PFA entails the reestablishment of the three basic human needs according to Maslow: cognitive functioning, love and belongingness, and intellectual and spiritual growth. NOVA emphasises that post-traumatic counselling attempts to restore functioning in these areas in three steps. First, functioning is restored through education on topics involving the trauma, working through the experiences of the trauma, and restoring energy through a healthy lifestyle. Second, post-trauma counselling seeks to restore functioning through the exploration of what the crisis entailed reassurance through the support of family, school, community, and crisis responders, and referrals to additional agencies. The third goal in post-traumatic counselling is activism, advocacy, and actualisation. These three provide opportunities for survivors to grow intellectually and spiritually as well as providing meaning to the traumatic event (Jimerson, Brock, & Pletcher, 2005).

The BASIC Ph. Model

The BASIC Ph. coping model constitutes a multi-modal approach developed by Lahad (1993). The model suggests that people possess six modalities that facilitate coping and resiliency: beliefs, affect, social, functioning, imagination, cognition, and physiology. These characteristics help people deal effectively with stressful situations and reduce the risk of psychopathology after exposure to a traumatic event. Each modality has an essential role in the process of coping; however, it is suggested that individuals usually utilise more than one, and they gradually develop unique coping mechanisms over time.

The proposed model emphasises the importance of the language an individual uses to tell their story. Six different psycholinguistic protocols have been developed namely self-value, emotions, role-organisation, intuition-humour, reality-knowledge, action-practical. These

protocols help a specialist understand a person's coping style and adjust the therapy to suit individual needs. A school and community crisis prevention programme has been developed including several activities relevant to the six coping modes based on this model (Leykin et al., 2012; Rosenfeld, Caye, Lahad, & Gurwitch, 2005).

The PREPaRE model

The PREPaRE model for school-based crisis prevention and intervention has been developed by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and is designed to help schools meet the needs of students, staff, and families following a crisis event. A primary goal of the model is to build crisis management capacity at the local level. School response to crisis determines the short term and long-term effects of a crisis in a school community. PREPaRE includes comprehensive evidence-based crisis prevention and intervention curriculum that describes crisis team activities as occurring during the four stages of a crisis: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery (Hatzichristiou et al., 2011).

Specifically, the model emphasises that members of school crisis teams must apply the following specific hierarchical and sequential procedure: Prevent and Prepare for psychological trauma, Reaffirm physical health and perceptions of security and safety, Evaluate psychological trauma risk, Provide interventions and respond to psychological needs and examine the effectiveness of crisis intervention and prevention. Training and preparedness are critical to effective response and recovery. Therefore the model provides specialised training to mental health and other educational professionals in developing a school preparedness plan and in building school crisis teams with specific roles and responsibilities with an emphasis on crisis intervention and recovery (Hatzichristiou et al., 2011; Jimerson et al., 2005; Jimerson & Furlong, 2006).

A brief overview of some of the psychological interventions, as informed by the above models and frameworks, which the focus EPS utilises to enable effective crisis intervention is described and detailed below.

Circles of Vulnerability

Research suggests that when a CI occurs typically:

- 10% of people will breakdown and be unable to help themselves, displaying very poor coping strategies. Literature suggests that these people will require the greatest support;
- 20% of people will cope well and be able to do whatever is needed. Literature suggests that these people can be used to help others; and
- 70% will be temporarily bewildered and helpless. These people usually tend to be willing to listen, cooperate, and follow instructions.

Therefore, it is necessary to identify which members of the school community, staff, or pupils fall into which category. This will ensure that those who are vulnerable can be offered appropriate support and those who are capable can be used to support others (Hatzichristiou et al., 2011).

EPs from the EPS are identified as able to work alongside schools in identifying the more vulnerable individuals requiring support. A meeting is held and is said to be most effective where staff members who know the pupils/staff are involved and are part of the meeting. It is recommended that the school's counsellor, the pastoral team, and any other professional who support the school with pupil and staff wellbeing are included. The completion of the meeting results in a document the EPS terms as the 'circles of vulnerability'. This enables staff from the EPS to group pupils or staff members who have similar experiences; subsequently offering Group Crisis intervention (GCI).

GCI

GCI is said to be a useful strategy to help students and staff understand the trauma they are experiencing, express thoughts and feelings, and identify and/or learn coping strategies.

Generally, GCI is a single session with a group of individuals lasting approximately 1 to 3

hours. Variations of GCI have been used by many professionals, literature highlights that it is essential that the process is tailored to the developmental level of the participants. GCI has six steps: introduction, providing the facts and dispelling rumours, sharing stories, sharing reactions, empowerment, and closing. It is also important to establish post GCI support services for those who may require additional support following on from the GCI (Hatzichristiou et al., 2011).

Multi-Agency Collaboration

The EPS advocates for multi-agency working and as such are currently working in collaboration with the counselling service within the locality. The input expected from the counselling service is provided in the procedure and protocol and includes elements such as the counselling service identifying a response team on contact from the school with the team's arrival being imminent. It is highlighted that the counsellors will require an accurate briefing from a senior member of staff before they commence any support. Further input such as counsellors setting up a support area, attending briefing assemblies, and liaising with school staff is outlined.

The involvement of both the lead counsellor and school counsellor in the circles of vulnerability meeting is noted whilst other counsellors continue to support the school community. In addition to working with pupils who 'self-refer,' the counselling service are able to work with individuals who may not benefit or want to attend GCI; but who have been identified as vulnerable via the circles of vulnerability meet.

The EPS, utilising the above models and frameworks, advocates for schools to prepare and plan a CI response in advance of its occurrence. Such action would, therefore, seem essential when considering a central function of schools is to protect the safety of children and staff.

The EPS produced protocols and procedures in order to support schools in their preparation and planning for such incidents. The aims of the guidelines being to provide schools with information that will help them manage a CI in an effective way; to provide a clear and accessible procedure to follow in the event of a CI; to provide information on how to identify those in need; to detail ways in which support may be offered to those involved, both in the short and longer-term and to also provide guidance on further sources of information and help. Signposting to relevant resources and documents is also offered by the EPS.

As well as the production of guidelines and offering of training to support schools in their preparation and planning in the event of a CI, EPs also offer direct support and guidance to staff, pupils and parents in schools following the occurrence of a CI.

Moreover, it is clear that professionals in different parts of the world utilise various strategies in CI response in schools and each provides unique contributions. It has been suggested that by using these strategies and working to generate an integrated model of crisis preparedness and intervention, those who provide support in schools and communities will be better equipped to manage crisis conditions (Jimerson, Brock, & Pletcher, 2005). The locality integrated model of preparation and response could, therefore, be viewed as offering such a response ensuring that EPs providing crisis support to schools are suitably equipped to manage the task.

5 Future Focus

Literature regarding a national review of the role of EPs in England and Wales highlighted the important role of EPs in CI response in many LAs. Furthermore, a government review of the function and contribution of the work of the EP highlighted CI support as a legitimate part of service delivery (Fallon, Woods, & Rooney, 2010; Farrell et al., 2006). In addition, surveys display overwhelming support for maintaining the EP role in CI response from school staff and from EPs themselves (Hayes & Fredrickson, 2008).

Despite the body of literature highlighting the key role that EPSs and EPs can have in CI work the professional literature is scarce. More specifically, research regarding the experience of those affected by a CI, and the experience of the input offered by the EPS is extremely sparse. This study will aim to address the gap in the literature by offering an exploration of senior school staff experience of a CI. Further exploring staff perceptions of the support offered and provided by the LA EPS.

6 Summary and conclusion of the literature review

The literature review began by providing a definition of a CI. It presented a historical overview of CIs affecting children, young people, and members of a school community. The review then explored the literature regarding the impact of CIs on children and young people, including trauma symptoms and PTSD. Further consideration of literature identifying the potential impact that CIs can have on the school staff was provided. A brief overview was given concerning a theoretical model of grief and bereavement. The review then moved on to consider a growing body of literature emphasising the possible positive outcomes following exposure to a CI with a specific focus on resilience and PTG. Furthermore, a brief overview of CI intervention was provided again with a specific focus regarding the EP literature. The review then turned to the role of the EP and UK EPSs in CIs, examining existing practices. Finally, the review provided an overview of a specific model of preparation and response by one large LA in Wales. The theoretical models and frameworks which underpin the EPS approach were discussed and a brief overview of the psychological interventions offered was highlighted.

Following the literature review, the following conclusions are drawn.

- CIs have the potential to have a significant negative impact on school communities.
- The impact of CIs on children and young people has been researched extensively, however, there appears to be a lack of research regarding the impact a CI may have on

school staff. During the literature review, a single unpublished thesis considering how schools cope psychologically with a critical incident was discovered within the UK based literature regarding EPs and CIs.

- EPs are ideally placed to contribute to this area of work, not only due to existing relationships with schools and knowledge of school systems. Additionally, EPs also possess a fundamental understanding of the psychosocial processes involved and are familiar with multi-agency collaboration.
- EPSs within a LA context has the potential to offer CI support at both pre and post-incident phases. However, models of service delivery vary between LAs.
- There appears to be a lack of explorative literature regarding the perceived effectiveness of specific EPS approaches to CI work from school staff perceptions.

7 Current Study

The current study, therefore, aims to address this gap in the literature by providing an in-depth exploration of senior school staff experiences of CIs and the support provided by a LA EPS in Wales. It is hoped that the findings can inform the possible ways in which an EPS can provide future support.

As well as contributing to existing research within the profession regarding the EP role and response to CIs. It is also hoped that this research will contribute to the scarce literature regarding the experiences of school staff when involved in a CI and, in particular, the experience of the support offered from the LA EPS.

8 Research Questions

In order to meet this aim the research questions to be addressed in the remainder of this study are as follows:

- *What are the experiences of senior members of a school staff team of critical incidents in schools?*
- *What are the perceptions of senior members of a school staff team of the critical incident model of preparation and response implemented by an EPS in Wales?*

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Part Two: Empirical Paper

Word Count: 9017.



1 Abstract

Critical Incidents (CIs) that affect members of school communities can take many forms, ranging from natural disasters to human-generated events including acts of violence, suicide, and terrorism. Increased awareness of the impact that major traumatic incidents can have on children and adults has highlighted the need for a timely and informed response from services. The role of the Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) in providing support to school communities regarding a CI is a well-established aspect of service delivery, documented in the professional literature since the mid-1990s, with the most contemporary research published in 2016. However, there appears to be a scarcity of research exploring perceptions of the CI support offered by the EPSs from school staff themselves. Furthermore, despite the impact of CIs on children and young people having been researched extensively, there appears to be a lack of research regarding the impact a CI may have on school staff. This study sought to develop an understanding of the experiences of school staff of responding to a CI. As well as their perceptions of a model of preparation for and response to a CI implemented by a Local Authority (LA) EPS in Wales. Seven members of senior school staff, from different schools, across the LA, took part in semi-structured interviews that were analysed using thematic analysis. Key themes pertaining to participant's experiences of a CI were identified including the Event, Initial Impact, Pressures, Psychological Impact, School System, and Post Impact. Key themes regarding participant's perceptions of the model of preparation and response offered by the locality EPS were Preparedness, Educational Psychologist Presence, Educational Psychologist Approach, Approach to Direct Support, Screening and Monitoring, Crisis Intervention, Written Procedures and Protocols, Multi-Agency Working, Pre and Post Coping and Lessons Learnt. The experience of senior school staff responding to a CI and their perceptions of an EPS model of CI support are discussed and their implications for EP practice.

2 Introduction

CIs, including those that are human-generated and natural disasters, can have profound effects on children, young people, and upon the adults who work with and care for them. Increased awareness of the severe and long-lasting effects that major traumatic incidents can have on children and young people has highlighted the need for a timely and effective response from services, including EPSs to minimise these effects (Aucott & Soni, 2016; Carroll et al., 1997).

A comprehensive definition of a CI, as applied in a school setting, was provided by Beeke (2013) following a review of policy and literature within the area:

“A sudden and unexpected event that has the potential to overwhelm the coping mechanisms of a whole school or members of the schools community. A serious and significant event, it is likely to be outside the range of normal human experience and would be markedly distressing to anyone in or directly involved with the school community. It may be the result of an accident, criminal act, illness, or natural disaster that affects members of the school community, school property, or both. An act of suicide or attempted suicide by a member of the school community may also constitute a critical incident” (Beeke, 2013, p.13).

Impact of CIs on children and young people

A plethora of world-wide studies have examined the impact of CIs on children and young people; both quantitative and qualitative studies have emphasised the detrimental impact of such incidents on those affected. Studies focussing on the adjustment of children in the wake of incidents including earthquakes and the sinking of a cruise ship found an increase in reported fear, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Uemoto et al., 2012; Yule & Williams, 1990). The literature highlights difficulties such as behaviour problems, underlying emotional difficulties, sleep disturbance, as well as increases in alcohol

use following exposure to a CI. Additionally, research has emphasised the negative impact of trauma and loss on memory, concentration, educational engagement, and attainment with effects lasting for up to two years following the incident (Broberg et al., 2005; Brown, Mellman, Alfano, & Weems, 2011; Dyregrov, 2004; La Greca et al., 2010; Tuicomepee & Romano, 2008). Numerous literature within the area of CIs and exposure to trauma highlight that many children and young people suffer from PTSD as a result of experiencing an array of different traumatic events (Dyregrov and Yule 2006).

As evidenced, the impact of CIs on children and young people is well documented. Children and young people can be considered as central within school communities which, more widely, include the school staff. Therefore, CIs on the school community including staff members is a key aspect of consideration.

Impact of CIs on school staff

The impact of CIs on children and young people has been researched extensively, however, there appears to be a lack of research regarding the impact a CI may have on school staff. Literature identifying the experiences of teachers when acting as supporters for students experiencing grief has emphasised the detrimental impact this can have on teachers themselves. Research has suggested that teacher's grief can often be hidden and disenfranchised (Rowling, 1995). There is emerging research on the impact of expressing empathy leading to compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress that may also be relevant when considering the impact on school staff (Leek Openshaw, 2011).

A study focussing on the strengthening of grief support within a school system highlighted that school communities will often rely on well-trained crisis teams and teaching staff to offer support following adolescent death. The conclusions of the study were offered in two broad categories which included parent involvement and school involvement. The researchers highlighted that, similar to students, staff may feel guilt, fear, sadness, anger, and confusion.

Thus, the need for support to be offered to staff, as well as children and young people, and for them to be informed and given the opportunity to process their feelings is emphasised (Balk et al., 2011).

Contemporary research in the area has provided further focus regarding how schools cope psychologically with a CI, with reference to decision making regarding outside support from the LA Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT). The research suggested that schools coped psychologically through a pastoral response, available for staff, young people and families, leading to reduced stress and whole school normalisation. Further, schools that requested external support through CIRT experienced useful outcomes, particularly a strengthened staff and an enhanced sense of preparedness. The research emphasised the decision maker's reference to systemic limitations and pressures (Atwell, 2016).

Traumatic events are not uncommon and, though not widely explored, are likely to have detrimental effects on members of the wider school community including school staff. Literature has suggested that the training and skills of an Educational Psychologist (EP) mean that they are uniquely qualified to deliver CI support to school communities. Support for this notion is further emphasised when considering the role of the EP as operating at both organisational and systems levels which often involves the support of school staff through supervision (Aucott & Soni, 2016; Beeke, 2013; Cameron, 2006; Hindley, 2015; Posada, 2006).

Many CIs can result in death with this being frequently mentioned in the CI literature. Thus a brief exploration of the theoretical models of grief, bereavement, and loss requires consideration.

Grief, Bereavement, and Loss

Several grief theorists conceptualised grief as proceeding along a series of predictable stages, phases, and tasks. Perhaps the best-known model is that suggested by Kübler-Ross. This model included five stages of grief: shock and denial; anger; resentment and guilt; bargaining; depression; and acceptance (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). The model implied that failure to complete any of these stages would result in complications (Prigerson & Maciejewski, 2008).

Literature has suggested that stage theories of grief may bring a conceptual order to a complex process. However, they are incapable of capturing the complexity, diversity, and idiosyncratic quality of the grieving experience. Stage models are said to not address the multiplicity of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs experienced by bereaved people, their families, and networks (Hall, 2014).

However, there are models that have been said to succeed in identifying definite patterns and relations in the complex and idiosyncratic grief experience. Phasal conceptualisations have become enormously influential (Hall, 2014). The Task-Based Model of grief developed by Worden (2008) has been suggested as prominent.

Worden (2008) suggests that grieving should be considered as an active process that involves engagement with four tasks: to accept the reality of the loss; to process the pain of grief; to adjust to a world without the deceased (including both internal, external and spiritual adjustments); and to find an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life.

Worden (2008) also identifies seven determining factors that are critical to appreciate in order to understand an individual's experience. These include: who the person who died was; the nature of the attachment to the deceased; how the person died; historical antecedents; personality variables; social mediators; and concurrent stressors. These determinants include

many of the risk and protective factors identified by the research literature and provide an important context for the personal nature of the grief experience (Hall, 2014).

A stigmatising death such as that of suicide can disenfranchise the griever and complicate the bereavement experience. The concept of disenfranchised grief recognises that societies have sets of norms that have been termed as 'grieving rules' that attempt to specify who, when, where, how, how long, and for whom people should grieve. Disenfranchised grief can be the result of the circumstances of death, but can also extend to the relationship not being socially recognised, the griever being excluded (such as a child), or the way the individual expresses the grief, particularly with regard to the level of emotional distress which is publicly displayed.

Furthermore, the impact of loss is not straightforward or predictable, nor is it always recognised by others. There may well be an economic impact on the family as the breadwinner may have died and a reduction in income may lead to events such as a house move or a decline in material standards. The initial loss may potentially lead to further losses such as friends, homes, schools, communities, self-esteem, and stability. In some cases, children may in effect be suffering bereavement due to other losses endured (Holland, 2008).

What is apparent from the research is that there is no clear characterisation of what is considered loss nor is there a single set of stages or tasks in adapting to loss, but instead qualitatively distinct paths through bereavement, which calls for a greater understanding of both patterns of complication and resilience. Those who support bereaved people must recognise the unique reactions, needs, and challenges as individuals and their communities cope with loss.

The literature considered thus far has focussed on the negative consequences of exposure to traumatic incidents. However, the focus will not turn to a growing body of literature which highlights the possible positive outcomes and responses to such incidents.

Resilience

Resilience in coping with traumatic events has been multiply defined; for example as the ability to return to an individual's original functioning following exposure to a stressful or traumatic event, successful adaptation under challenging circumstances, and a trait of character or personality that enables positive adaptation to adversity and the timely attainment of psychological milestones (Tummala-Narra, 2007).

A prospective study of spousal bereavement identified the most common trajectories of adjustment to loss and made the compelling finding that resilience is the most common pattern and that delayed grief reactions are rare. Five distinct trajectories covered the outcome patterns of most participants. These being common grief or recovery, stable low distress or resilience, depression followed by improvement, chronic grief, and chronic depression (Bonanno et al., 2002; Mancini & Bonanno, 2006). Although this research is focused on bereavement rather than a response to a CI, there are useful findings to reflect on the potential underestimation of resilience in the literature.

Further literature has highlighted the need to consider the interdependence of individual capacities, salient attributes of family and community, and/ or larger cultural belief systems. (Harvey, 2007; Hobfoll, Jackson, Hobfoll, Pierce, & Young, 2002). Literature has highlighted both individual and systemic factors that can aid resilience. However, the concept of resilience has received little attention in the literature concerning EPs' involvement with CIs and school communities.

Post Traumatic Growth

While the negative consequences of crises and trauma are well documented, recent emerging literature points to the potential for trauma to be an experience that is, for some individuals, transformative in ways that are positive and valued. Post-traumatic Growth (PTG) has been

defined as entailing “positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances” (Little et al., 2011; Sheikh, 2008).

Calhoun and Tedeschi (2006) identify five domains of PTG; personal strength, new possibilities, relating to others, appreciation of life, and spiritual change. Personal strength refers to the awareness that people have that they may be stronger than they thought. New possibilities are described as developing new interests, sometimes related to the trauma they have experienced. Relating to others is defined as a greater connection to other people and increased compassion for others who may be suffering. Particularly when death or injury is part of the traumatic experience, individuals may develop a new appreciation of life and a reconsideration of priorities. Some individuals also report deeper spiritual and existential meaning in their lives (Little et al., 2011).

The body of literature in PTG focusses on positive outcomes arising from exposure to trauma. The evolving recognition of PTG, although an emerging area of research, may allow for a more comprehensive appraisal of the full spectrum of posttraumatic outcomes.

Educational Psychologist Practice in CI support

The significance of the role of the EP in supporting schools in relation to a CI is highlighted in the national review published by the Department for Education and Skills (Farrell et al., 2006). Further, the role of the EPS in providing support to schools regarding a CI is a well-established aspect of service delivery, with structures for response being documented in the professional literature since the mid-1990s (Carroll et al., 1997; Hayes & Frederickson, 2008; Houghton, 1996; Mallon & Best, 1995; O'Hara et al., 1994) this documentation has been supplemented by studies describing CI practice in the 21st century such as Kent EPSs consultation (McCaffrey, 2004) model and a CI simulation exercise in Stockport (Posada, 2006).

A related focus within this literature has been on the emotional impact on the EP as a result of this aspect of service delivery (Greenway, 2005; Hayes & Frederickson, 2008; Tracey & Holland, 2008). Descriptions of protocols and practice were identified in the EP literature such as initiating support, the rapidness of the first contact, initial response, co-working, multi-agency response as well as EPs offering both training and supervision (Hindley, 2015; Rees & Seaton, 2011).

Most recently research in the area has focused on multi-agency working when responding to CIs, specifically to the development of CI Response Teams (CIRTs) to support school communities. The study offered insight into the development of CIRTs in LAs and the role of EPs. A pre-model was developed and its use as a tool to guide decision making for those involved with CIRT development and maintenance was advocated (Lockhart & Woods, 2017).

Similar ways of working have also been developed by psychologists in other parts of the world (Allen et al., 2002; Nickerson & Zhe, 2004).

Literature also identifies pressures caused by repeated demands on the EP role, with demands increasing in the current period of rapid change and uncertainty. In such a climate CI support along with other areas of EP activity should aim for both maximum efficacy and efficiency (Gersch, 2009). Research regarding EPS response to CIs is arguably essential in promoting maximum efficacy and efficiency of EPS support to school communities related to CIs.

CI support for school communities, delivered by a Local Authority EPS in Wales

The psychology service of one large LA and the support offered by the EPS for schools to prepare and manage such incidents will be discussed here.

The approach informing the development of the EPS model stemmed from the European School Psychology Centre for training (ESPCT) who is affiliated with the International School Psychology Association (ISPA).

The model of preparation and response implemented by the EPS integrates multiple preparation and intervention models and frameworks, namely, the National Organisation for Victim Assistance (NOVA) model, Psychological First Aid (PFA), the BASIC Ph. model and the PREPaRE model (Brymer et al., 2006; Fox et al., 2012; Leykin et al., 2012; Shultz & Forbes, 2014).

The EPS advocates that schools prepare and plan a CI response in advance of its occurrence. Arguably, such preparation would be considered an essential element of schools protecting and promoting the safety of its children and staff. Such incidents are unpredictable and consequently cause staff and pupils to face challenging and distressing situations without warning. To support in their planning for such incidents, the EPS produced protocols and procedures. The aims of the guidelines being to provide schools with information to help them manage a CI in an effective way, to provide a clear and accessible procedure to follow in the event of a CI, to provide information on how to identify those in need, to detail ways in which support may be offered to those involved, both in the short and longer-term and to also provide guidance on further sources of information and help. The production of such guidelines is consistent with suggestions in the literature in regards to ensuring an efficient and effective response (Hindley, 2015; Houghton, 1996; Mallon & Best, 1995).

As well as the production of guidelines to support schools in their preparation and planning in the event of a CI, EPs also offer direct support and guidance to school communities following the occurrence of a CI.

Despite government review of the function and contribution of the work of the EP which highlighted CI support as a legitimate part of service delivery, the EP professional journal literature is sparse (Fallon et al., 2010; Farrell et al., 2006). More specifically, research regarding the experience of school staff affected by a CI, and the experience of the support offered by the EPS is extremely sparse.

3 Rationale for current Research

The research will aim to address the gap in the literature by providing an in-depth exploration of the experiences of senior school staff of CIs. Furthermore, exploration will be focused on gaining the participant's perceptions of support offered and provided by the LA EPS to inform EP practice.

As well as contributing to existing research within the profession regarding the EP role and response to CIs. It is also hoped that this research will contribute to the scarce literature regarding the experiences of school staff when involved in a CI and in particular the experience of the support offered to school from the LA EPS. Consequentially, highlighting effective ways in which an EPS can provide future support locally and informing the profession more generally about the needs of school staff following an experience of a CI.

4 Research questions

The research questions that this study aims to investigate in order to contribute and enhance literature in the area are:

- *What are the experiences of senior members of a school staff team of critical incidents in schools?*
- *What are the perceptions of senior members of a school staff team of the critical incident model of preparation and response implemented by an EPS in Wales?*

5 Methodology

5.1 Research Paradigm

A critical realist epistemology was adopted, an approach that seeks an objective reality whilst acknowledging the perspectives of participants and contextual factors impacting the research (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Qualitative methods were the sole means of gathering data and

addressing Research Questions 1 and 2 and involved thematic analysis (TA) of semi-structured interviews conducted with senior school staff. Semi-structured interviews were selected due to their flexibility in facilitating the exploration of underlying motives and beliefs (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Critical realism asserts that these motives and beliefs are real entities that can be used in context-specific, as is the case with CIs, explanations of individual and social phenomena.

5.2 Context and Aims

This study was conducted in a Welsh Borough (UK) where a LA EPS had developed and implemented a model of CI preparation and response for schools. Permission was granted from the LA EPS and ethical approval for the study was granted by Cardiff University. Informed consent was gained from each participant prior to participation.

5.3 Participants (number, inclusion and exclusion criteria)

A LA EPS in Wales recruited participants by emailing head teachers of all primary and secondary schools that had experienced a CI. Headteachers were provided with a gatekeeper letter (Appendix 2), invitation letter (Appendix 3), and consent form (Appendix 4). The headteachers of seven secondary schools agreed for their schools to be involved in the research. The sample was selected in order to gain an insight into the experiences of the senior school staff. Inclusion criteria required participants to be a school staff member with senior responsibilities; where a CI had occurred in the school and input from the LA EPS had been accepted and undertaken. Seven participants from seven secondary schools in the locality took part in semi-structured interviews.

5.4 Procedure

Pilot

The semi-structured interview schedules were piloted to ensure that they were appropriate for the target population and that the questions would elicit rich information relating to the research topic. These were initially discussed with an independent research colleague and subsequently piloted on a headteacher of a secondary provision. Following the piloting minor amendments were made through changing the wording to improve clarity. As no major amendments were made to the questions and the pilot participant met the inclusion criteria it was decided that it would be appropriate to include the data in the analysis.

Data Collection

The method of data collection was through audio recordings of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they provide an element of structure, enabling participants to focus on material related to the research question and any pre-identified issues, but with the flexibility to share in detail their unique lived experience (Hayes, 2000; Smith, 2015; Wadman et al., 2017). A series of questions were used as prompts and were in line with the literature on effective interview guides, which stressed that the questioning should allow interviewers to access the ways in which participants view their world and ensure that there is flexibility in the way the interview is conducted. The semi-structured interviews were designed to gain an awareness of senior school staff experience of a CI and their perception of the support provided by the LA EPS. The interview schedule was developed to reflect these aims.

Examples of questions within the semi-structured interview are:

- What is your experience with a CI?
- How did you feel at the time?
- What support was offered by the LA EPS prior to and following the CI? Were there any aspects of the response that you found helpful or unhelpful?

- If a CI was to occur again how would they want the support to look?
- What has been the feeling since the incident amongst the school community? How are you feeling now?

The researcher initiated each interview with a short introduction. The introduction addressed the anonymity of the participants. The interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes. Upon completion, the researcher invited final comments and thanked participants for partaking. As noted, the interviews were audio-recorded. Audio recordings were stored, confidentially, on a secure computer. Participant's responses were transcribed 2 weeks following each interview. In line with the ethical requirements for this project, participants were informed that the anonymised data may be retained indefinitely.

5.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) was identified as a suitable process to analyse the qualitative data, fitting with the critical realist framework. TA seeks to analyse the ways participants are constructing meaning of their experiences, recognising the ways in which the social context impinges on those meanings yet retaining focus on reality, including mental entities. The aim is to both reflect reality and to unpick the concepts, events, and processes involved (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

The researcher identified commonalities amongst the participant's views in order to assert some understanding of the shared experiences and opinions of the population. An inductive approach was used to identify themes strongly linked to the data, rather than a pre-existing coding frame. Braun and Clarke (2006) distinguish between coding at a semantic or latent level. This study used latent level analysis and looked for underlying assumptions, ideas, and conceptualisations that may inform semantic content.

The interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed by the researcher. Each interview was analysed using the thematic analysis guidance described by Braun and Clarke (2013). The process consisted of six stages which were familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This process was completed for each transcript. Repeated reading allowed time for familiarisation with the data and basic segments of meaning were identified as initial codes. All data extracts demonstrating the same code were grouped together checked and reviewed. Repeated patterns of meaning formed themes. Themes were reviewed and defined, and a thematic table developed.

A reflective diary and supervision were utilised in reviewing coding and the development of themes. The research diary provided the opportunity for critical self-awareness, to allow recognition and awareness of personal values, experiences attitudes, and beliefs whilst analysing the data (Oxley, 2016; Smith, 2011, 2015).

5.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was sought and granted from the Cardiff University School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. Invitation letters and consent forms were provided for the senior school staff (see Appendices 3 & 4). The invitation letters included an explanation of what participation involved. The invitation letters (Appendix 3) included contact details of the researcher, the researcher's university supervisor, and the Cardiff University School of Ethics Committee Secretary, should any participant require further information or clarification.

The researcher also offered to visit schools that were interested in participating in the research to provide an information session to the staff who met the inclusion criteria. During the visit, the researcher went through the invitation letter (Appendix 3) and was available to answer any questions that participants had about the study. Following on from the invitation, a total of seven schools were visited. The consent form (Appendix 4) was collected by the

researcher, or potential participants were given the option to send consent forms electronically or in the post to the researcher. Participants were not asked to provide any identifying information other than their job title as per inclusion criteria. The lack of personal data requested was deliberate, as an attempt to offer the participant complete confidentiality, as it was felt that this would negate possible participant bias and encourage the sharing of honest responses.

Participants were informed of their right to withdraw, partially or fully, from the research prior to the anonymisation of the data. This was made explicit and was noted within their information and consent letter.

School staff participating in the study were given debriefing forms (see Appendix 5) which reminded them of the aims of the study. In addition to these procedures, participants were reminded verbally and within the debriefing forms that it was their right to withdraw from the study prior to the anonymisation of the data if they wished to do so. The debriefing form also informed participants that the researcher would provide general feedback regarding the pooled data after the study but would not be able to comment on the information provided by individuals.

It was considered that due to the topic of this research there was the potential that discussion may cause distress or negative emotions amongst participants. The effects of participants having to acknowledge feelings of negative emotion were also considered, and participants were invited to discuss these privately with the researcher if they felt it would be of benefit – the researcher explicitly offered this support within the debrief. Participants were also signposted to relevant organisations such as the EPS to obtain support if needed. Such measures were put in place in order to assure adherence to the British Psychological Society's (BPS's) Code of Human Research Ethics. However, no participant expressed this need.

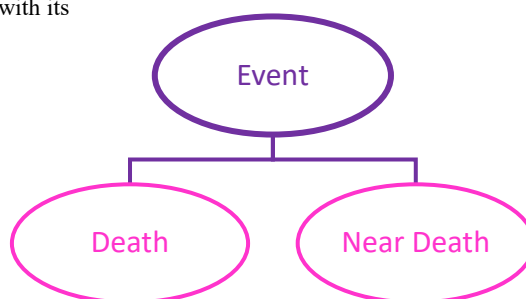
6 Results

6.1 Research Question 1: What are the experiences of senior members of a school staff team of critical incidents in schools?

The participants within this study were able to identify numerous experiences of CIs.

This section presents the Overarching themes and Subthemes that emerged and provides supporting quotes. The full data set and supporting quotes can be found in Appendix 7. The overall thematic maps for Research questions 1 and 2 can be found in Appendix 14 and 15.

Figure 1: Overarching Theme Event with its accompanying subthemes



6.2 Table 1

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Event	Death or near death experience	<p>a boy got run over by a tr- ... or got hit on a ... the train came and hit him and killed him. P6.</p> <p>The incident was that a young lady, had taken an overdose ... or alcohol, combination of the two ... and had been found dead. P7</p> <p>– I can't remember the exact date, I should remember the date, I was head teacher of the P school, and one of our pupils committed suicide P5</p>

Overarching Theme: Event.

Death or near death experience: All participants involved in the study described the CI as involving a death or near death experience of a member of the school community.

Figure 1.1: Overarching Theme Initial Impact with its accompanying subthemes

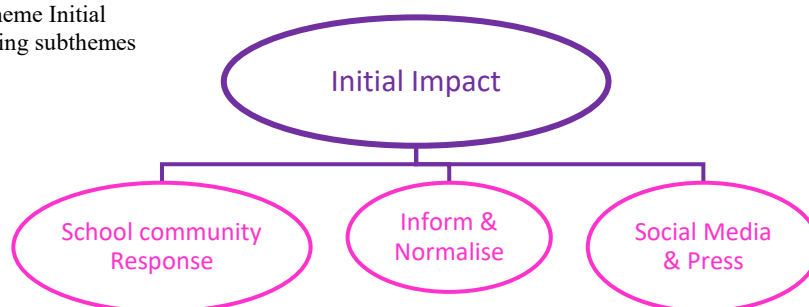


Table 1.1

Overarching theme	Subtheme	Supporting Quotes
Initial Impact	School Community Response	<p><i>Urgh devastated...Yea yea which you enter a period of numbness I think ah and then it starts to leak out P1</i></p> <p><i>Well a couple of things happened – number 1, there’s the shock and horror of it. And then you start to immediately ask yourself you know did we miss something. Because he ... he walked out of school, you know, he took the overdose in school time essentially. So you start to ask yourself those questions.P5</i></p> <p><i>a real kind of mob mentality, you know very difficult to control, we had the police on site - they couldn’t control the kids. And that took a couple of hours to get that under control. P5</i></p> <p><i>And then it’s like you know it’s the pebble in the pond, because you get the people who were closest to him who were generally generally upset and grief stricken, but then what we find in school ... and you’ve probably found this in your research ... is that other kids latch onto it and claim an emotional investment that actually they’ve got no right to. P5</i></p>
	Inform & Normalise	<p><i>Our strategy internally was to create I suppose almost like an exclusion zone around the situation, so we could say to the staff ‘You teach, teach the other kids, get them to the exams, get the coursework, do what you would normally do on a typical morning, try to get your day as normalised as you possibly could. P5</i></p>
	Social Media & Press	<p><i>It was then significantly exacerbated by a lot of activity on social social media campaign sprung up over night, We had press at the gates, we had press on the phone...P5</i></p>

Overarching Theme: Initial Impact

School Community Response: Specific details were shared by participants regarding the initial response of staff and pupils within the school community to the CI. Descriptions of these responses included emotions such as shock, horror, upset, and anger. Whilst there was also mention of pupils unexpectedly experiencing upset whom had no obvious link to the victim.

Inform & Normalise: All participants shared the attempts they had made to inform the school community of the event. A further aspect also involved them attempting to ensure a sense of normality in the school community.

Social Media & Press: Participants shared experiences of CIs being featured on both social media and the press. The dialogue when participants shared this information indicated a negative perception of social media and press involvement.

Figure 1.2: Overarching Theme Pressures with its accompanying subthemes

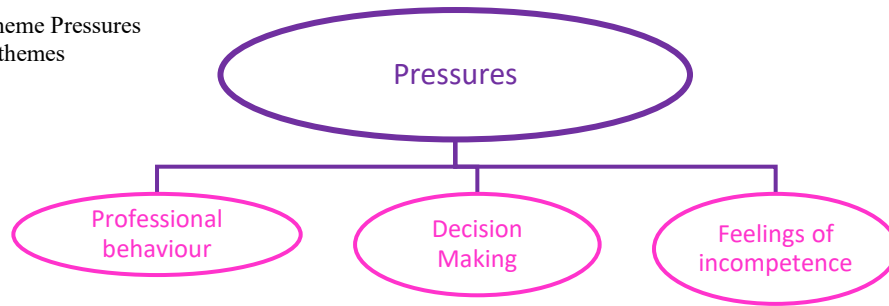


Table 1.2

Overarching theme	Subtheme	Supporting Quotes
Pressures	Professional behaviour	<p><i>You know it does take its toll and you know we went through a few days after she died it was a you know a mass said in the parish the funeral we then had separate events in school uh you know and each of them is upsetting and you know it's like your waiting for the pressure belt to pop on you P1</i></p> <p><i>because um you also get to the point of me ah it was about a month later I think it hit me before because you're a lead in somewhere it's not a good look to be sobbing in your office at that point P1</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, but I think we'd kind of bottled and bottled as much as you have your own you know personal, in the house or whatever, private cry – you come in to school and you have to be this professional. I think that's always at the back of your mind as well that you've got to be professional and your own feelings can't come into this. P4</i></p> <p><i>And then you just try to maintain the professionalism as far as you possibly can, the sympathy as far as you possibly can – and the two don't always match.P5</i></p>
	Decision Making	<p><i>we had a some decisions to make and by the time we were clear umm we'd had rumours by break by the time wed been notified officially it was lunchtime umm the decision to make about we did ahh in terms of notifying children, notifying friendship groups umm we chose to not make an announcement in the day P1.</i></p> <p><i>we had enough decisions to make back at the ranch, and to be told that actually you don't need to make decisions now, you need to work with us following the protocols - was great by me. Because I didn't need to be making any more decisions than I already was P5</i></p>
	Feelings of incompetence	<p><i>because you often do when you're talking to children about things, and you think 'Am I saying something that isn't right?' you know. Because we're not educational psychologists, you use your common sense don't you? But in that kind of situation then okay ... have to deal with a lot of bereavement, but you still don't know what the best things to say are P3</i></p> <p><i>And we very significantly felt that had it happened during school time that that would have been another event that we would probably have significantly struggled to manage... who can help us manage it, because this is uncharted territory for us, there's no map, we haven't got a map for this But you're hoping somebody has...P5</i></p> <p><i>So there was all of that all wrapped up in a scenario that you're not trained for, you can't anticipate, nobody could actually quite see what was going to happen...and it felt ... yeah it felt as if we'd lost control of the situation and couldn't see how to regain control of the situation...I suppose what I felt was I suddenly felt that ... I suddenly felt that I was on a tightrope and there was no safety net P5</i></p>

Overarching Theme: Pressures

Professional Behaviour: Participants described having to maintain a professional composure and behaviour whilst attempting to manage the CI within the school community. The impact on staff due to them attempting to behave in such ways was also shared, with conflicts arising from behaving in a way which may not have been in line with feelings.

Decision Making: The need for senior staff to make decisions and feelings around having to make such decisions was shared by participants.

Feeling of incompetence: Participants frequently described feeling untrained and unskilled in the area with reports being associated with an element of feeling unsure of how to offer support to pupils.

Figure 1.3: Overarching Theme Psychological Impact with its accompanying subthemes

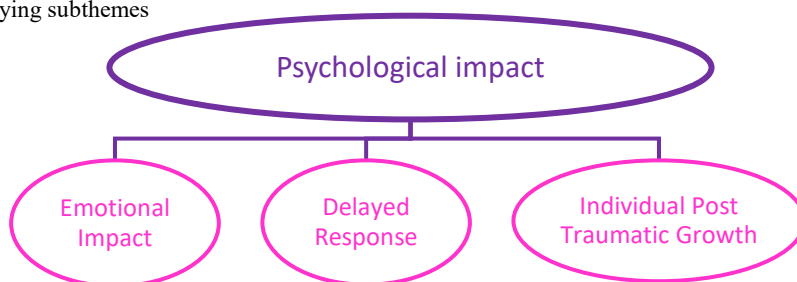


Table 1.3

Overarching theme	Subtheme	Supporting Quotes
Psychological Impact	<i>Emotional impact</i>	<p><i>It was really hard, because...the assemblies that we were having, and you know we lit some candles – you're almost dealing with it as if you were grieving for your own children. But also you're trying to deal with your own emotions and you're taking on the emotions of everybody else as well P4</i></p> <p><i>No I don't think certainly during that fortnight that there was a single minute where ... Yeah I don't know how I slept or if slept. Yeah and it gets into every nook and cranny of your life. P5</i></p> <p><i>Yeah adversity does bring people together, and I think that there was an element of that, but there was also an element of people feeling bruised and battered...They'd become very fragile.P5</i></p> <p><i>Although I would say that there may well have been a degree of ... yeah it's had an impact, it's had an impact other than that, it's had a negative impact as well, yeah it dented my faith in education. Which I don't think ... which may not have fully recovered. P5</i></p>
	<i>Delayed Response</i>	<p><i>you know make a note in their calendar a month down the road to give the head teacher a ring because at that point he's dealt with pupils he dealt with his the staff and then then it goes quiet and then you you have your own trauma I would put it as strongly as that as it's something you think wow it's just hit me and ah for me it was just about reading an article about something similar in the paper and ah you now I found it hugely upsetting not obviously particularly what had happened to the family in the newspaper I was reading about but generally just because I transposed all of that to the girl I knew that wasn't there anymore and the hole that had had through her friends her family and especially her mum her dad and her brother P1</i></p> <p><i>So that kind of brings it flooding back sometimes a little bit, and that can have a detrimental impact. Yeah it took a lot out of me. It took a lot out of me and ... Yeah. And maybe you know at the risk of sounding dramatic, but I think it's probably fair to say it probably means that I'd retire a year earlier than I would have otherwise because it drained so much of my energy and took so long for me to get back to a position where I felt pretty resilient. And by that I would mean 18 months maybe two years – and getting back to that place was hard. Yeah so it's changed, it's changed me, and changed A and it changed K, and it changed L.P5</i></p>
	<i>Individual Post Traumatic Growth</i>	<p><i>Well after the bruising I think it probably made me stronger. It certainly gave me a degree of perspective on things that perhaps I wouldn't otherwise have had...it's certainly really important for me to be able to I suppose embrace the fact that I had that experience and to try to make it something that would be beneficial to the way that I do my job now...Yeah it's taking something from it. ...Something that may make a difference to the kids I work with now, the staff I work with now. So I think that's important.... So it's given me that ability I suppose to distance myself and be a little bit more objective..P5</i></p>

Overarching Theme: Psychological Impact

Emotional Impact: Participants described the emotional impact of a CI and the difficulties associated with supporting pupils at this time. Variations in emotional experiences tended to be associated with nature of event and the aftermath of response from pupils and media. For example, participant 5 experienced a CI which involved a pupil suicide, which was later reported by social media and press.

Delayed Response: Participants shared experiences which indicated a delay in their emotional reaction to the CI. This was also evidenced during an interview where a CI had occurred approximately 3 years previously, however, the participant became visibly upset on a number of occasions during the interview.

Individual Post Traumatic Growth: One participant shared experiences of an increase in personal strength following the event.

Figure 1.4: Overarching Theme School system with its accompanying subthemes

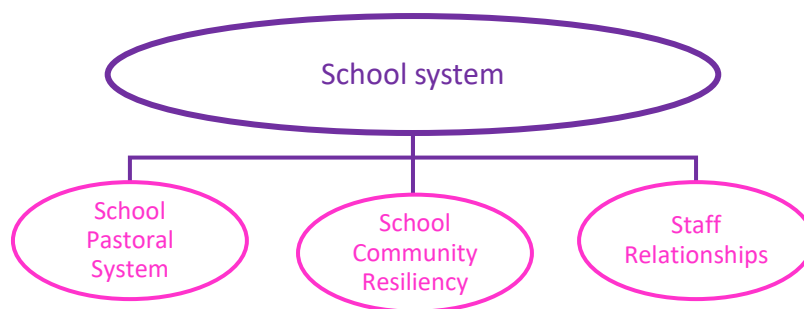


Table 1.4

Overarching theme	Subtheme	Supporting Quotes
School system	School Pastoral System	<p><i>Yeah I think the structure of the school ... and I've got that structure today, so if that ... God forbid it does, but if anything like that happened ... and it does happen up to a certain level all the time, different ... little crisis here you know - the people are on the ground, I know straight away to say that's ...P7</i></p> <p><i>But they know that through the pastoral team and us doing support centre there was somebody to go to if they needed to and when they needed to. So I think knowing that some of them did, you know some of them spent some time in our student support centre ... but they pretty much got on with it. I think for a lot of our pupils knowing that there's somebody there if they need to is enough to get them by. P4</i></p>
	School Community Resiliency	<p><i>And as much as it was really tough it did bring us together as a year group. . It does bring you together as a staff, but for the pupils as well, they were amazing throughout it P4</i></p>
	Staff Relationships	<p><i>Yeah I think so, I think it was a close-knit staff, I think there was a good sense of camaraderie on the staff anyway. I think that that helped us get through it. The school was in a strong place, you know we'd ... you know we a couple of years previous, and we even did a spectrum report. The outgoing head retired, I'd taken over, and it was a fairly seamless transition because were very much of a type, myself and S, so whole thing was the school was in a strong position anyway. P3</i></p>

Overarching Theme: School system

School Pastoral System: Participants described the school pastoral system which was in place in school as being a positive form of support for pupils following a CI. The school pastoral system for many appeared to provide an already established area for pupils to seek support.

School Community Resiliency: Participants frequently discussed elements of resiliency in the school community. This included both staff and pupil resiliency.

Staff Relationships: Existing staff relationship, as well as, staff relationship going forward appeared to provide an element of support for participants following a CI.

Figure 1.5: Overarching Theme Post Impact with its accompanying subthemes

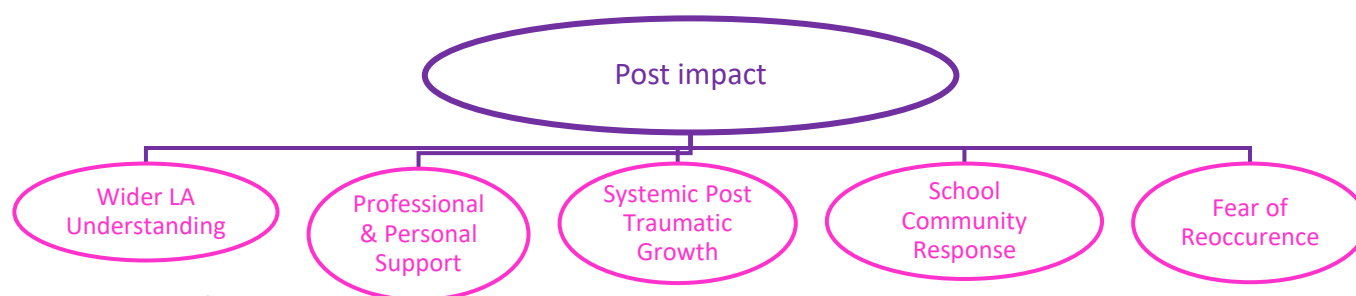


Table 1.5

Overarching theme	Subtheme	Supporting Quotes
Post Impact	Wider LA understanding	<i>I think the greatest support that's required with that is not from the Educational Psychology Service but from the whole sort of community if you like, education community, is that ... cos you're just expected ... like so for example I'd be very surprised if anybody in the local authority even remembered that we've had one death – apart from H by the way and M – but beyond the Education Psychology who've been very involved with it ... that remember we've one let alone three deaths in the last 10 months - and you're expected to get on with your business, and it affects the business of the school...And so greater support you want is empathy and understanding that it is going to affect teachers, it is going to affect senior leaders. We are getting on with our lives and business to make sure that the children are okay in the school, but there needs to be a bit more understanding that these kind of events have a huge impact on people who work in the school P 6.</i>
	Professional & Personal Support	<i>I was in a situation, I was in a relationship, even though we were still living separately I spent a lot of time with my partner, she was a teacher herself, so that was tremendously helpful, and the family around you and that's helpful as well ...P5</i> <i>when it happens to colleagues with the critical incident very recently in MA that made the national news the first thing I did was ah to ring the head and just say you know I understand and these are my pearls of wisdom for what they are worth that again I said look after yourself and it probably won't hit you for a while but it probably will hit you and you know if you want to ring at any point you know ring so I suppose it's when that comes up or you come across a photograph she the girl was a talented sports person and a talented musician so you come across photographs like everyone else has of events Christmas concerts and sports teams and all of that and you see her and you take a gulp or a deep breath...P1</i> <i>And that the tremendously hard work that was being done by particularly the pastoral team kind of (inaudible 19:22) So there was a real bitterness amongst the staff – but a togetherness as well in adversity....and the staff, the staff were tremendously supportive, fantastically supportive...Of each other you know ... to the extent to which the SLT would say things like 'Right you do what you need to do today M, we'll run the school' - and that's what I needed to hear. ..what's happening here - you do what you need to do. And the rest of the staff, the rest of the staff were absolutely fantastic...P5</i>
	Systemic Post Traumatic Growth	<i>I think they appreciated that looking back actually – I just did what was instinctive to be honest with you, because that's the kind of school we are, you know. If anything happens we do ... we do speak to the parents straight away – and they've appreciated that because the bond between the school and them since then is amazing really you know. Oh, she's on our board of governors now. because R was such a high flyer obviously ... well you know you remember some more than others don't you? No, what's happened then is that they ... they'd set up a charity in his name ****, and they've raised so far £50,000 in 3 years...And they want most of it to come back to the school. That's right, that's right. And her main aim is to get a 4G pitch for L that's what she's raising the money for. And we've had lots of things already that they've built in the first term...It's a huge relationship between us now</i>

		<p><i>you know, she's joined the board of governors. She's given up teaching because of the effect it's had on her you know, we're very close with them really, and I think that's helped everybody. ...P3</i></p>
School Community Response		<p><i>and then everyone came back in for the Monday in case there was anything which I don't think there was anything at all but what came out was the delayed shock which were still experiencing now really to some of the people in her year group um some of her friendship groups groups are still undergoing counselling or other charity I know two that are still going to CAMHS as a result of what happened P1</i></p> <p><i>Yeah some of them kind of fell off the wagon and turned to drugs and really struggled. Two of her closest friends really struggled with regards to – withdrew themselves from school and the likes of ... every Friday there would be like a vigil at the graveside... P4</i></p> <p><i>Um, probably not quite as well as we'd expected them to. And that was probably all of them. Yeah the recollection of results day of going down through the results, looking at results, and then those names jumping out at me and looking across and thinking that's not quite where they would have been ... Certainly several pupils in that inner circle fell short of their academic targets...P5</i></p> <p><i>Yeah you know the guy who was my deputy head that day was also by coincidence my deputy head here last year. ...And he moved on not long after and before he was ready to move on – I think that was a direct result of that...It was directly linked to what had happened ... and now is no longer a deputy head teacher. He was a deputy head teacher at the biggest school in Wales and he's gone back to English teaching, he's teaching English in a cathedral school. And you know when we'd have conversations about his unhappiness in the job and his desire to go back into English teaching and desire to go out of the state sector, it often came back to that. P5</i></p> <p><i>Yeah. And maybe you know at the risk of sounding dramatic, but I think it's probably fair to say it probably means that I'd retire a year earlier than I would have otherwise P5</i></p> <p><i>Huge. So his birthday ... that's another thing ... oh that's right they opened the summerhouse on his birthday, because he would have been 17 in the January, and his birthday's is usually one of the first days back in January, so we had balloons and things there you know – and lots of the children came to that. It was a Sunday afternoon, lots of the children came in for that. But I suppose it will ... oh he's got poetry written about him, cos the Welsh department wrote a series of poems, and that's on the wall with his picture. Because mum brought a picture that she wanted it up, you know. So that's in the middle of the school for everyone to see. P3</i></p>
Fear of a reoccurrence		<p><i>You know in fact it's something you dread, that. Every time you see things on the news and you see things over the weekend – now we always look at what's on the ... you know and you go on the BBC online and you see something come up round here, think 'Oh' you know ... honestly, that'll happen to me this weekend. You know I know that – it happens to me every night ... so you live with that really, you live with that... P7</i></p> <p><i>And it's also made me realise that actually how quickly things can spiral out of control. And that's a bit of a scary problem, sometimes I know that I will see something emerge in the school that would bring it all flooding back...And I'll think wow we're going to be there again. You know it may not be as bad as that, it can't be as bad as that, but actually they could be similar. ..Despair. Yeah. And vulnerable and alone. And yeah I do get a knot in my stomach when something reoccurs with it..P5.</i></p>

Overarching Theme: Post Impact

Wider LA understanding: Two participants discussed the need for wider LA understanding the regarding the impact of CIs on school staff. Expectations of educational services in the wider LA for the functioning of school returning to normal following a CI appeared to be an area which caused disgruntlement.

Professional & Personal Support: Participants shared experiences of the benefits of support being offered by wider social networks as well as the staff within the school community.

Systemic Post Traumatic Growth: Two participants shared experiences of increased and effective relationships with wider systems. For example, Participant 3 discussed a relationship which developed with parents of a victim following a CI. Participant 6 discussed an effective relationship being established with public transport services following a CI.

School Community Response: Participants shared the longer term impact of the school community response following a CI. This involved aspects such as pupil behaviour and academic attainment. Longer term impact on staff was discussed, as well as, school communities engaging in memorial events.

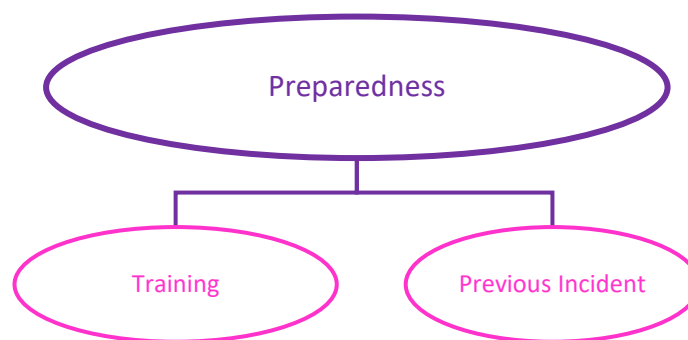
Fear of a reoccurrence: Participants expressed emotions such as dread and despair when experiencing what could be a potential CI.

6.3 Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of senior members of a school staff team of the critical incident model of preparation and response implemented by an EPS in Wales?

The participants within this study shared numerous perceptions of their experience of a model of preparation and response for schools.

This section presents the Overarching themes and Subthemes that emerged and provides supporting quotes. The full data set and supporting quotes can be found in Appendix 8.

Figure 2: Overarching Theme Preparedness with its accompanying subthemes



6.4 Table 2

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Preparedness	Training	<i>I think it was the training the initial training setting you up for what to expect, umm because then I kind of knew then what I was going to get Yea so id say the training would be the most relevant part of it all because then that that gives you insight into knowing if this was to happen knowing then this is the kind of support that we would be getting and as I say that puts your mind at rest...so yea id say the training at the very beginning P2</i>
	Previous Incident	<i>Certainly helped me, yeah... sort of built some resilience perhaps...And not just the resilience, I think it's the confidence that you are saying the right things for the pupils, you're doing the right thing for the pupils. And the more experience that you've had of these awful things ... But you do think right okay I know now this this and this. And it's like anything, you've got to experience it sometimes to know right what went right, what didn't go right. P4</i>

Overarching Theme: Preparedness

Training: Two participants shared the beneficial aspects of attending the CI training offered by the LA EPS when responding to a CI.

Previous Incident: Staff who had experienced a previous CI within a school shared this as a possible positive factor, due to the event equipping them with expectations of what was to come.

Figure 2.1: Overarching Theme EP Presence with its accompanying subthemes

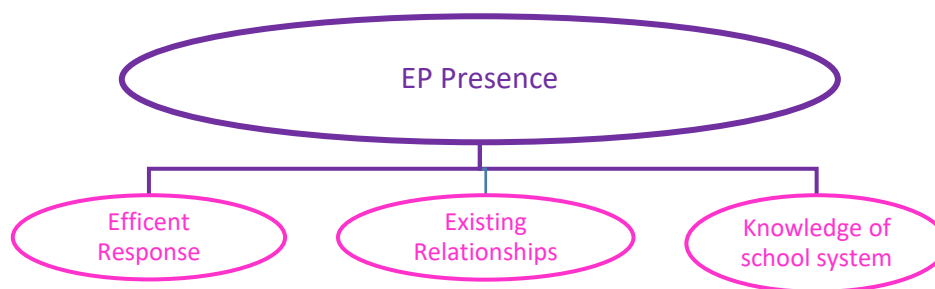


Table 2.1

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
EP Presence	<i>Efficient Response</i>	<i>Yeah, and it was very strategic you know really, because obviously it was something that you're used to doing ... unfortunately. And there was a clear plan, you know there was no 'Shall we do this, shall we do that?' you know – which you don't need at that time, you need people who know exactly what they're doing...P3</i>
	<i>Existing Relationship</i>	<i>I think because our EP, obviously she's been with us so knows the school, and I think because we've got a really open door policy and got a really good relationship with the EP service, you know with H as well we've had contacts through training that she's delivered to us. ...So they're not strangers to us, so I think that helps. So they come in, they've sat in here, you know they met with different people and different pupils, and sat ... so yeah, it was good...Yeah, because they know what our strengths are, they know where our weaknesses are, so where they can guide us or help us, and it just ... I think the working relationship helps. So I think if you're coming in to something cold it's harder to have that kind of working relationship. P4</i>
	<i>Knowledge of school system</i>	<i>And that line I suppose between support and you know stay strong and ... you know. I think the ECP can see both sides can't they because they understand school ... well H did definitely from the school side of it. They understand the school structures, they understand ... you know I don't know well she knew our school, I don't think she did before then probably, but I'm sure ... you know of the school, you understand, don't you you know. But also she knew obviously what needed to be done from ...P3</i>

Overarching Theme: EP Presence

Efficient response: Participants shared experiences of the response provided by the LA EPS.

This included aspects such as the EPS prioritising involvement, providing a quick response with a clear plan in place. The description of EPs providing increased “man power” was made.

Existing relationships: Participants shared the existing relationship that they had with both the EPS and the EP as a beneficial aspect to the EPS response.

Knowledge of school system: The EP being aware of the school structures was viewed as a beneficial aspect in EPS response by participants, again EPs having existing relationships with school staff was viewed as impacting their knowledge of the school system.

Figure 2.2: Overarching Theme EP Approach with its accompanying subthemes

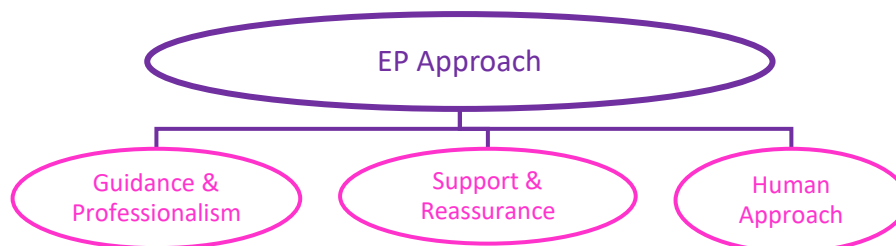


Table 2.2

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
EP Approach	Guidance & Professionalism	<p><i>So it was great to have them here ... because also a document's great, but they were able to give me guidance or advice or confirmation based on the context of a) the school, b) what had happened ... which was invaluable I reckon. P 6.</i></p> <p><i>I think from my perspective I was always clear in my mind that should I need ... should I have felt the need for it I could pick up the phone to H, I could pick up the phone to, and they'd have got somebody to... And that was worth its weight in gold P5.</i></p> <p><i>So the sheer professionalism and the calmness that they brought and the kindness that they brought made a massive difference to me personally and professionally, and to the school. P5</i></p> <p><i>So I think ... you know I met with them, just to say where do I go with this, you know ... because we'd experienced tragedies of pupils dying in the past – we'd had another one who lost his life up in the reservoir. And I know on that occasion the ed psychs had come and they'd actually done like two days in for the older pupils – this was a Year 11 boy – and they were in speaking to the pupils, and that was more hands-on. So I think they very much tailor it to the needs of what we want as a school, which I think is quite good P4</i></p>
	Support & Reassurance	<p><i>But the ... I suppose what I felt was I suddenly felt that ... I suddenly felt that I was on a tightrope and there was no safety net - and then they came in and put a safety net there. So at that point in time I had been nearly a quarter of a century in education. I had been 8 years in senior management, and I didn't recognise the landscape, and I didn't have a map. But what happened was the critical incident team came down and said 'Oh there is a map' (tapping table) So this is where we go – this is where we go and that's how we're going to get out of it - and that changed everything for me, because I was sitting in my office thinking I do not know what to do with this. P5</i></p>
	Human Approach	<p><i>Yeah and ... no they were excellent. Because H being firm as well as being cwtchy looking after us you know, because with the police you know quite firm to say right well you need to do this, you need to do that – that was helpful P3</i></p> <p><i>But I would say that what made it not impossible was that. You know that the level of support and kindness and sympathy that we had then, and common sense got us through really. And I've said to H several times that you know if it wasn't for her and her team I don't know how we'd have managed.P5</i></p>

Overarching Theme: EP Approach

Guidance & Professionalism: All participants shared perceptions of the EP approach being professional, as well as, the EP offering guidance in support of the schools response to a CI. Feelings of relieving pressure appeared to be valued.

Support & Reassurance: Experiences of feeling supported and reassured due to EP Approach and support following a CI was shared by participants.

Human Approach: The nature of the EP approach as incorporating caring behaviour displays were noted as positive experiences by participants.

Figure 2.3: Overarching Theme Approach to direct support with its accompanying subthemes

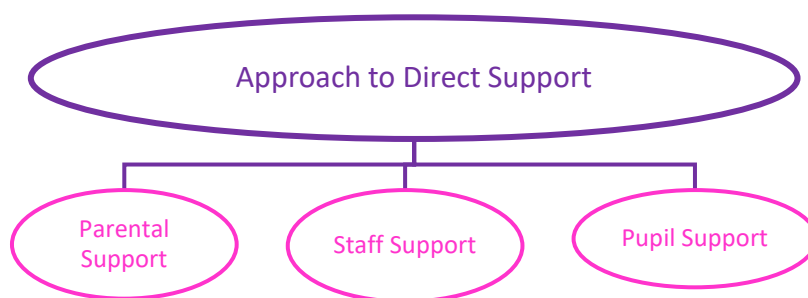


Table 2.3

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Approach to direct support	<i>Parental Support</i>	<i>well um and they stayed to speak to parents after school as well one day after school and the grandparents of the children that had been there...And said if they wanted help on a conversation on supporting children at home and they did they led a parent group as well which was really useful P2</i>
	<i>Staff Support</i>	<i>The ed psych support for the staff was tremendously beneficial. P5</i>
	<i>Pupil Support</i>	<i>yea yea they came in in the morning and helped us do the circles at the beginning um and then because there was such a large group of children who uh didn't come into school had actually gone back to the site of the drowning two of our senior staff were alerted to them being there so ...We brought them back into school um so they did some group therapy work with them that day..So they came back in the following day um and they took they worked in pairs and they took groups and done some specific work they said there had been research done in Scandinavia I think I can't remember the name of the therapy H led it um but it was specific to getting children to talk immediately after an incident so it helped the process of them being able to manage it really and process it going forward So they done that work following day they also came back in later in the week to meet with two children who weren't there on that day to speak with them them P2</i>

Overarching Theme: Approach to direct support

Parental Support: Participants shared experiences of EPs offering and providing direct support not just for immediate members of a school community, but for parents in the form of consultation group support etc.

Staff Support: Participants feelings of being supported by EPS staff were shared. This appeared to involve EPs working directly with staff members on an individual basis, being

supported by an EP during attendance at meetings was shared by one participant. A feeling of knowing that the EP was there to also support staff was reported.

Pupil Support: Both the EPs providing immediate and ongoing pupil support, delivered via individual work or group sessions, was reported by staff.

Figure 2.4: Overarching Theme Screening & Monitoring with its accompanying subthemes

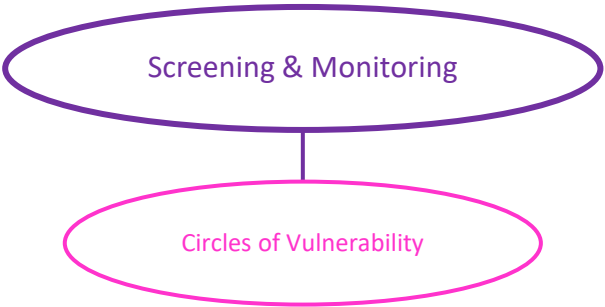


Table 2.4

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Screening and Monitoring	Circles of Vulnerability	<i>Yeah cos it wasn't until that relationship circle had been done that we realised the impact on all of the different pupils. Cos so and so was related to them and this was related – so that was really helpful for us in helping us to identify where the needs were and where the support was needed...we just found that whole relationship thing and them tying it all together – I think that for us was probably the most valuable thing. ..And it was very much a broader picture than that...Yeah, really useful. Because we knew who we were keeping an eye on as well P4</i>

Overarching Theme: Screening and monitoring

Circles of Vulnerability: All participants expressed the usefulness of the circles of vulnerability tool in terms of identifying and monitoring vulnerable pupils and staff.

Research has highlighted the response of individuals to a CI and thus the necessity to identify which members of the school community, staff or pupils fall into potential risk categories. In a CI event, EPs work alongside school staff, in order to identify the potentially vulnerable members of a school community who may require support. The result of the meeting is a document termed the Circles of Vulnerability.

Figure 2.5: Overarching Theme Crisis Intervention with its accompanying subthemes

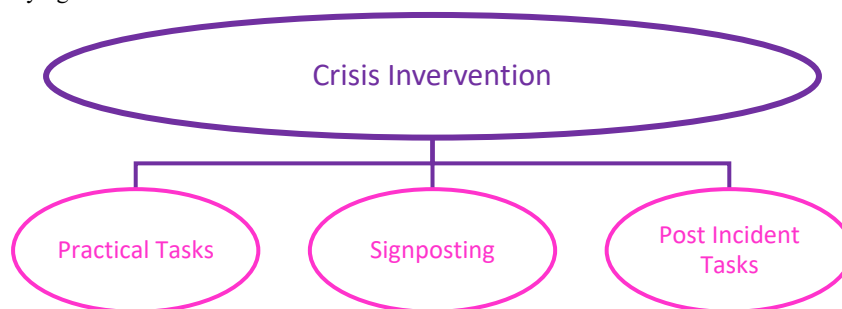


Table 2.5

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Crisis Intervention	Practical Tasks	<p>So we liaised with EPS we had a meeting straight after school and put together what we were going to do the next day..And it was agreed that we umm would hold a series of assemblies umm for the other year groups and different parts of the school to make the announcement and we would tell them about the expectations about how they should be behaving and how they should umm do things with social media P1.</p> <p>So we had a few different areas then, a few different rooms set up ... I'm sure that must have been on H's advice, you know. So we used the 6th Form lobby which is a nice place with sofas and things, you know. So we had groups going on there then, so some of them were seen by J, some were seen by H and her team. P3</p> <p>you know a classroom for his friends to go in. Some art work, some writing, design some cards – there was that kind of thing you know, a kind of memorial book was set up. And so those kind of things that that team was used to putting in place in a school which had lost a pupil. So all of that was happening, it was happening really strongly and powerfully from the start.P5</p>
	Signposting	<p>it must have been the ECPS who gave us all of the links to charity , and all of those ...Yeah, and having all of that stuff given, which I hadn't heard of them before that either you know. P3</p>
	Post Incident Tasks	<p>when we did the leavers book we had a page designated for C, and we brought her up in the leavers assembly – so it was something that we remembered year on year, it wasn't a case of right well she's her, now she's not, and we move on. So we had like the anniversary, so we did a memorial garden and we had a bench designated for her. I think some of those ideas had come from you know our EP, But just because it was something that the pupils were struggling to deal with and to cope with, so they almost still wanted her part of us as a school P4</p>

Overarching Theme: Crisis Intervention

Practical Tasks: Participants shared tasks that they engaged in during the CI such as organising assemblies and rooms for pupils to access, constructing letters providing information for parents etc.

Signposting: Participants shared aspects of response provided by the EPS such as the signposting to relevant services.

Post Incident Tasks: Memorials and remembrance activities were shared by participants as being undertaken by staff and pupils

Figure 2.6: Overarching Theme Written Procedure & Protocol with its accompanying subthemes

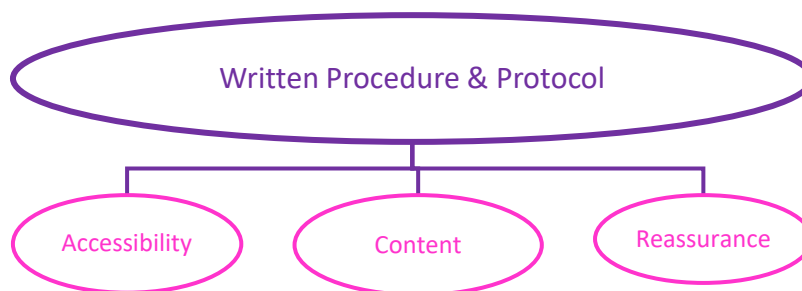


Table 2.6

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Written procedures and protocols	<i>Accessibility</i>	<i>To have it written down in one place who you call what you do umm was absolutely essential umm as I say I didn't have any experience of it and you'd hope to go through your whole career without having to do anything like this umm but I don't think anyone does so when it does happen umm its essential that you've got it written down in one place what you do P1</i>
	<i>Content</i>	<i>so what is in the protocol is whose available to help and advised umm protocol about getting a meeting together rapidly um a conference call if you can't ways of engaging with the media...What I didn't think of and what the protocol was very useful for is vulnerable pupils who are unconnected and would see this as a trigger so um that I wouldn't of thought of and you know that was very very useful to establish a list and put in proactive support for those wider pupils and they remained on a list for some months afterwards P1</i>
	<i>Reassurance</i>	<i>It definitely focused what you needed to do when you come in um there was less of a sort of ah panic...(laugh)... response around it then because obviously it's a massive shock then within the school community P2</i> <i>Because what became apparent to me from working with them was that these things happen and there is a protocol ... and that was the key thing for me, the thing that made the difference for me was knowing that there was a protocol, so knowing that right okay this is what we do next, then we do that, then we do this. And when we're doing that this person is going to be doing this, and this person is going to be doing that and this person is doing ... and then we meet again in 4 days' time...P5</i>

Overarching Theme: Written procedures & protocols

Accessibility: Participants shared having access to written procedures and protocols produced by the EPS was a beneficial aspect of the model of preparation and response.

Content: Details of the contents of the procedures and protocol document were shared by participants.

Reassurance: Participants shared that having access to written procedures and protocols provided focus for response and less panic amongst school staff.

Figure 2.7: Overarching Theme Multi agency working with its accompanying subthemes

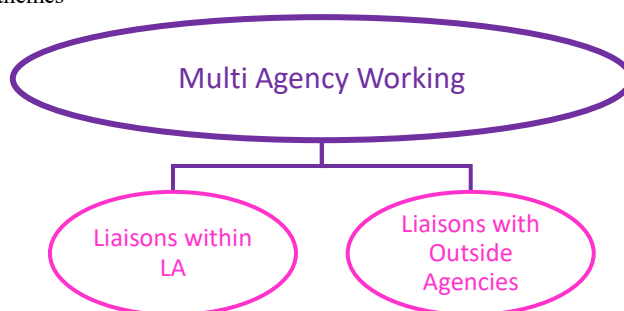


Table 2.7

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Multi-agency working	<i>Liaisons within the LA</i>	<p>about a third of our children come in from C so we had to liaise with C ed psych service as well um but that was done via R ed Psych service...To ensure they they just, C didn't come in, but R EPS ensured that they had all the information and They liaised wit supporting the children in C um through this period P1.</p> <p>So you know health were there, mental health were there, the police were there, the local authority representative, the ed psych service representative, we were there as education, social services were there, P5</p>
	<i>Liaisons with outside Agencies</i>	<p>The children bereavement charity and action for children as well who did some work with the children on an ongoing basis so all that was identified P1</p> <p>And just the support put in place with regards to first of all speaking to the pupils, so counselling, so bringing E in and making sure that there was the links there with them, and just for us to monitor the situation really. P4</p>

Overarching Theme: Multi Agency Working

Liaisons within the LA: Participants discussed the EPS liaising with schools and support services available in the LA as a means of providing support to schools following a CI.

Liaisons with outside agencies: One participant shared experiences where the EPS liaised with agencies outside of the EPS, such as other LA EPSs, in order to ensure a joined up approach to manage the CI which may have impacted on individuals in a school in another locality.

Figure 2.8: Overarching Theme Pre & Post Coping with its accompanying subthemes

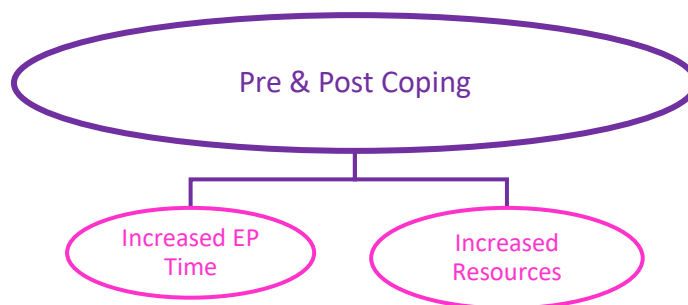


Table 2.8

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Pre & Post coping	<i>Increased EP time</i>	<i>Yes, I'll say one thing – I intend this in support of my educational psychology colleagues - and I know if somebody's going to say there's not - we need more of it, we need more time, we need more educational psychologist time. I mean I'm talking about the wider sense now, not just critical incidents P6.</i>
	<i>Increased Resources</i>	<i>I don't think so other than resources other than seeing people early and there needs to be more child psychologists there needs to be more people in the ed psych service there needs to be more counsellors ah schools are inundated they've got parents now they're gone now a kid screaming in the car who is school phobic and won't come in and you've literally got a 12 year old curled up in a ball in the footwall of his car screaming and crying um we are waiting it's going to be he stared the first of September it's going to be the middle of October before he's seen and that behaviour will be more entrenched P1</i>

Overarching Theme: Pre & Post Coping

Increased EP time: Participants shared feelings that schools having increased EP time would be beneficial in terms of wider support for schools not just for CIs.

Increased resources: An increase in resources and early intervention available for children young people was described by one participant as being necessary to both prevent and support the occurrence of a CI.

Figure 2.9: Overarching Theme Lessons Learnt with its accompanying subthemes

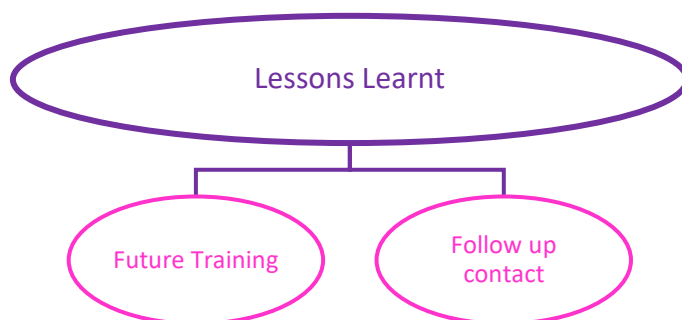


Table 2.9

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Lessons Learnt	<i>Future Training</i>	<p><i>Yes, the main thing I would say ... and I think this is a crucial bit of training that head teachers should have ... is how to deal with the phone call that comes to inform you usually in my experience from the deceased's partner to tell you that they passed away. So it's a big ask and I think heads would benefit from training on that. But again it's something that's very personal because different people react in different ways, and shock can affect people in different ways. P,6.</i></p> <p><i>And ah that was it um so a lesson I would take away from it is even if they don't speak to you let them know very quickly that they can.. and that you that you just some sort of contact with parents that um would be the one thing that I would take away that we didn't get right um I don't think that you can I think that varies from people to people P1</i></p>
	<i>Follow up contact</i>	<p><i>you know make a note in their calendar a month down the road to give the head teacher a ring because at that point he's dealt with pupils he dealt with his the staff and then then it goes quiet and then you you have your own trauma I would put it as strongly as that as it's something you think wow it's just hit me and ah for me it was just about reading an article about something similar in the paper and ah you now I found it hugely upsetting not obviously particularly what had happened to the family in the newspaper I was reading about but generally just because I transposed all of that to the girl I knew that wasn't there anymore and the hole that had had through her friends her family and especially her mum her dad and her brother P1</i></p> <p><i>I wonder there might be some mileage in building into the critical incident ... and perhaps there is now protocols ... a kind of standard follow up, so 6 months down the line there's a phone call, a year down the line or something like that. That may be something that could be added in... Although you know I mean in my experience it might be ... that was happening anyway because the lines of communication were open...In a sense I suppose so that the likes of myself, K, L, A, stay on somebody's radar.P5</i></p>

Overarching Theme: Lessons Learnt

Future Training: Participants shared that they felt training for school staff regarding responding to grief and bereavement may be beneficial. One participant shared perceptions that it would be beneficial for training to be delivered in regard to contact with a victim's family following bereavement. This appeared to be very specific to individual response to a CI in terms of contact with victim's family. For example, the participant that had shared this feeling had shared that in hindsight contact with the victims' families is a task that he would do differently in the future. Additional mention of training was made in regard to CI training being offered to the wider education service as well as schools.

Follow up contact: Two participants shared perceptions that there may be scope for development in EPS model of preparation and response in terms of longer term follow up contact with senior staff. A participant shared that due to a delay in emotional reaction follow up contact over a longer period of time may be beneficial.

6.5 The four criteria outlined for establishing rigour in qualitative research were adhered to in order to ensure trustworthiness of analysis, including: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Table 3

Trustworthiness of Analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)	
Credibility	Credibility refers to the believability and accuracy of the methodology and findings. The six stages for a good thematic analysis as outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006) was adhered to improve credibility.
Transferability	Transferability provides evidence that the study's findings could be applicable to other contexts, times and populations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability is enhanced through a clear outline of the methodology and research design to help the reader understand the study's relevance. Therefore, participant details, the research context and the research design, methodology and measures are clearly defined in the study to aid transferability.
Dependability	Dependability is the extent to which the research could be repeated to yield similar findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability can be further improved by noting any changes to the methodology that may explain the findings. Dependability was aided by clearly defining the methodology and noting changes that took place throughout the research process (outlined in the results section).
Confirmability	Confirmability is the extent to which the findings are supported by the data set when examined by others (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The themes generated from the data were discussed and reviewed with the research supervisor and this provides evidence that the TA conducted reflects the data set accurately and aids confirmability.

7 Discussion

Following a review of the literature within the area of CIs and impact on members of school communities it became apparent that although the impact on children and young people had been researched extensively, there was a dearth in the literature regarding school staff experience of a CI. Alongside this finding, there was also a scarcity of research concerning perceptions of support provided by EPSs in response to a CI. Therefore this study aimed to provide an in-depth exploration of senior school staff experiences of CIs. Furthermore, exploration focused on gaining the perceptions of support offered and provided by the LA EPS.

Discussion will now focus on how the findings from this study link to the research questions and will be interpreted in the context of existing literature regarding the impact of trauma on school staff and CI support. It is beyond the scope of this paper to return to every overarching and sub-theme, but they will be weaved into the discussion where relevant.

What are the experiences of senior members of a school staff team of critical incidents in schools?

The overarching theme of Initial Impact included subthemes which provided an overall insight into the response of a school community to a CI. Details that were shared by participants included reports of emotional responses such as shock, horror, upset, and anger. Such experiences are consistent with the literature in the field of grief and bereavement and human response to trauma. Literature has highlighted human responses such as psychological responses including both cognitive and emotional reactions. Shock, lasting for a few minutes to weeks, is usually followed by turmoil of emotions, emerging over time, including anger, fear, confusion, frustration, self-blame, and grief. Research indicates that trauma responses to a CI are often intense but usually decline gradually over time (Posada, 2006).

Interestingly, participants reported experience where pupils unexpectedly displayed responses associated with grief and trauma such as upset. This appeared to be an area of confusion on participant's part with them sharing these pupils had no obvious link to the victim and thus the pupil response appeared unsupported. This appears to be consistent with the concept of disenfranchised grief which is recognised in the bereavement literature. This concept recognises that societies have sets of norms that have been termed as 'grieving rules' that attempt to specify who, when, where, how, how long, and for whom people should grieve. Disenfranchised grief can be the result of the circumstances of death, but can also extend to the relationship not being socially recognised (Hall, 2014). The literature highlights the potential experience of disenfranchised grief appeared in relation to staff response, whilst the current research indicates this form of grief may also be experienced by pupils.

Within the overarching theme termed Pressures, participants shared experiences of a CI and resulting pressures which appeared to stem from an expectation of themselves to maintain professional composure when responding to the incident. Participants shared reports of their attempts to manage their own responses as well as the general response from the school community. Such experiences appear to be consistent with the literature regarding teacher's experiences of dealing with traumatic incidents in school. The literature highlighted how traumatic incidents impact on teachers and how their view of themselves as teachers is influenced by their professional and personal grief experience. Results suggested that the expectation of them in their professional role as being supportive, emotionally unattached adults, in turn, creates tension with their beliefs, expectations, and experiences in that role. This tension is said to centre on issues of control, control of grief reactions and organisation, and predictability in the school context. Again, this is emphasised in participant's reports of attempts to maintain a sense of normality in the school community during CIs. Additionally, teachers are said to disenfranchise themselves by their beliefs about their professional role. Teachers who believe that they have to maintain professional composure and not display their

feelings may be particularly vulnerable to disenfranchised grief (Rowling, 1995). Therefore, findings indicate that following a CI the experience of disenfranchised grief may be widespread and experienced by both staff and pupils. The awareness of this potential experience is of vital importance for professionals such as EPs when attempting to offer direct support to school communities when responding to a CI.

A further subtheme encompassed within the overarching theme of Pressure detailed participants reporting feelings of potential incompetence. All participants involved in the study described feelings of being untrained and unskilled when dealing with such incidents, along with reports of uncertainty surrounding offering supports to others who are grieving. Such findings may be considered in support of further literature which has also identified teacher's lack of training concerning grief education and response. A comparative study identified a lack of policy and training regarding grief education in UK schools compared to Australia. Differing policy contexts for grief, the lack of teacher training, and minimal education about grief in England were discussed as possible mediators underpinning the variation (Holland, 2000).

With findings from this study, alongside literature identifying that few teachers receive crisis response training but are expected to perform crisis intervention at varying levels of involvement following a CI (Hart & Garza, 2013). It is arguable that professionals offering support to school communities regarding CIs, consider the need for the development and delivery of grief and bereavement training alongside CI training.

The bolstering of social support through interactions with school staff and peers is noted as a well-established protective factor (Donnelly & Rowling, 2007). Therefore it could be suggested that effective support for staff and pupils offered by professionals following a CI must be informed and guided by the experiences of those impacted.

Participants shared experiences that appeared to relate to the overall psychological impact of a CI. Subthemes within this overarching theme involved discussion concerned with emotional responses. Participants described feelings of sadness, anger, and confusion. This is again consistent with other literature. A study by Balk et al (2011) highlighted that, similar to students, staff may feel guilt, fear, sadness, anger, and confusion. Thus the need for support to be offered to staff, as well as children and young people, and for them to be informed and given the opportunity to process their feelings is emphasised.

Further, participants shared experiences that indicated a delay in their emotional response to the CI. Existing literature highlights that where negative responses persist or occur beyond the first month and reach clinically significant levels, with symptoms related to stress and functional impairment, PTSD may be identified (Trickey & Black, 2000). Therefore, the assessment of PTSD symptoms, some of which may not be observable and/or may have a delayed onset, is arguably an important consideration during both initial and longer-term support to school communities following a CI.

Additional concerns of symptomology associated with PTSD emerged in the overarching Post Impact theme. Participants expressed emotions such as dread and despair when experiencing what could be another potential CI. Such fear of a reoccurrence is noted within the literature regarding PTSD indicators. Factors such as the potential psychological response by staff to a CI is of great relevance for EPs offering CI support to school communities and highlights the need for structures providing supervision for staff to be evident and included in models of response.

Moreover, in contrast to the negative aftermath of experiencing a CI, interestingly, one participant shared experiences of an increase in personal strength following the event. This subtheme was termed individual PTG and again is consistent with existing literature in the area. Five domains of PTG have been identified in the literature: personal strength, new

possibilities, relating to others, appreciation of life, and spiritual change (Little et al., 2011).

Personal strength refers to the awareness that people have that they may be stronger than they thought, which fits with reports from the participant in this study.

Furthermore, evidence of a possible systemic PTG, with enhanced relationships with others being reported by participants emerged in the research. Two participants shared experiences of new and enhanced relationships with family and wider services following a CI. Again this is consistent with the PTG literature which highlights domains for growth including relationships with others. Relating to others is defined as a greater connection to other people (Little et al., 2011).

The body of literature in PTG focusses on positive outcomes arising from exposure to trauma. The evolving recognition of PTG, although an emerging area of research, allows for a more comprehensive appraisal of the full spectrum of posttraumatic outcomes. Possibly a focus on PTG in parallel with the conventional approach of recognising the negative impact of PTSD is the way forward. This literature appears worthy of consideration by professionals involved with supporting individuals following exposure to a CI, such as EPs.

Additionally, participants frequently discussed factors such as resiliency in the school community, this included both staff and pupil resiliency. Subthemes such as school community resiliency were encompassed with an overarching theme of the School System. Participants discussed resiliency as both a protective factor against the impact of CI as well as a post-development following a CI.

Literature in the area of resiliency has highlighted both individual and systemic factors that can aid resilience. Further, research has posited that resilience cannot be understood apart from context. It is also noted that resilience is not a static trait but an unfolding process in which new vulnerabilities and strengths emerge during developmental, societal and cultural

transitions through one's life and during periods of stress and trauma (Harvey, 2007; Hobfoll et al., 2002; Tummala-Narra, 2007).

Although results from the study highlight factors such as the potential positive outcome following exposure to a CI, it is certainly not without its reports of detrimental aftermath. Within the overarching theme Post Impact, the school community response emphasised the negative consequences of exposure. Participants shared their experiences of the longer-term impact on members of the school community. This involved factors such as behavioural concerns and pupils falling short of their potential academic attainments. Frequent reports of similar difficulties such as behaviour problems, underlying emotional difficulties, sleep disturbance, as well as increases in alcohol use following exposure to a CI, have been noted in the literature. Additionally, research emphasised the negative impact of trauma and loss on memory, concentration, educational engagement and attainment with effects lasting for up to two years following the incident (Broberg et al., 2005; Brown et al., 2011; Dyregrov, 2004; La Greca et al., 2010; Tuicomepee & Romano, 2008). Thus, the findings from this study could be considered as consistent with the wider literature. Such disturbing aftermath, therefore, calls for an informed and effective response from support services, such as EPSs.

Notable, on consideration of the possible psychological responses to a CI, arguably cautiousness must be exercised for any adult offering support due to the potential development of secondary traumatic stress cited in the literature (Leek Openshaw, 2011). Therefore, arguably a consideration for EPs when acting as a supporter of schools following a CI. A further study highlighting the need for psychologists to be aware of and manage their own stress reaction when providing CI support advocates for supervision and self-care due to a CIs vicarious impacts (Hayes & Fredrickson, 2008).

This discussion will now turn to the findings from this study and how this links to staff perceptions of a model of preparation and response implemented by an EPS in Wales. Again, findings will be interpreted in the context of existing literature.

What are the perceptions of senior members of a school staff team of the critical incident model of preparation and response implemented by an EPS in Wales?

The overarching theme of Preparedness encompassed subthemes such as participants sharing experiences of accessing the CI training offered by the LA EPS, as well as staff having previously experienced a CI. Those participants that had accessed the training reported this as being a beneficial experience in terms of preparing staff with expectations of the support offered by the EPS and predictability in regard to response.

This offer of the CI training by the EPS demonstrates the model's use of the underpinning theoretical frameworks and models to inform practice. The model integrates multiple preparation and intervention models and frameworks, such as the NOVA and PREPaRE model. A key component identified by NOVA regarding school crisis intervention at the different phases of a crisis is that of Pre-Impact, this being the period before the crisis. This phase includes aspects regarding crisis preparedness such as crisis education. The model posits that training and preparedness are critical to effective response and recovery.

Therefore, the findings from this study could be interpreted as evidence that the EPS response is grounded in and guided by the underpinning models, with such responses being valued by participants.

Further participant reports of beneficial aspects of the EPS model of response were evident in the overarching theme of EP Presence. Subthemes such as efficient response included descriptions of the EPS prioritising involvement and providing a professional, speedy, and the tailored response was reported as being appreciated by participants. Such reports are consistent with existing literature which has highlighted that schools report requiring input

immediately the same day of incidence or within 24 hours following the incident (McCaffrey, 2004).

Additionally, encompassed within the overarching theme of EP Presence was the subtheme existing relationships and knowledge of school systems. Participants reported feeling that such pre-existing relationships with the EPS Service and EPs were valued and beneficial during the crisis. Further, an EP possessing knowledge of school structures, strengths, and weaknesses was also reported as beneficial. This is consistent with both existing and recent literature which posits that factors such as the EP having an existing relationship with the school and an understanding of the school system as benefits of involving psychologists within the CI response (Lockhart & Woods, 2017; McCaffrey, 2004).

The overarching theme of the EP Approach included participants referring to a human element of the EP approach that incorporated caring behaviour displays. Participants reported feeling that such an approach was invaluable to supporting staff to respond effectively to a CI. Participants also reported feelings of being supported and reassured, which constituted the subtheme of Support and Reassurance.

It could be suggested that EPs adopting this approach are influenced by the underpinning frameworks and models which inform the response. For example, the NOVA approach to crisis intervention is founded upon Maslow's theoretical model of human behaviour and more specifically Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. A potential way of catering for such needs is identified during the recoil phase, immediately after the crisis, where the utilisation of psychological intervention such as PFA is advocated (Hatzichristiou et al., 2011).

PFA entails the reestablishment of the three basic human needs according to Maslow: cognitive functioning, love and belongingness, and intellectual and spiritual growth. Existing literature describes PFA as providing non-intrusive, supportive, and practical assistance to people who have been exposed to trauma. It aims to provide a calm, caring, and supportive

environment that helps to reduce any initial distress and promote short term and long term adaptive functioning (Aucott & Soni, 2016). The participant's reports in this study are suggestive of PFA as supportive and are consistent with the existing literature. Arguably, PFA could, therefore, be viewed as a supportive approach for EPs to use in their response to CIs in school.

In addition, PFA recognises that individuals who have experienced a traumatic event experience a broad range of initial reactions, which may be physical, psychological, or spiritual. Whilst some of these reactions may result in distress that interferes with adaptive coping, others may not (Brymer et al, 2006). Such awareness allows for recognition that resilience, and one maintaining a relatively stable trajectory of healthy functioning, may play a part in response (Aucott & Soni, 2016).

Reports from participants when describing their experiences of coping following a CI included the mention of resiliency. Therefore, arguably, recognition by the EPs providing support, of the possibility of resilience in response may have impacted participant's feelings of reassurance and support as highlighted within the research.

Moreover, within the overarching theme of Approach to direct work, participants described the support that was provided for members of the immediate school community, as well as, wider members such as parents and grandparents. Again, this is consistent with literature which suggests a framework for intervention that posits that EPs are involved with helping adults and children to use therapeutic concepts and techniques from psychology (Cameron et al, 1995).

Additionally, such actions could be viewed as evidence that the EPS response is again guided by the underpinning model NOVA, which advocates that during Post Impact, this being days to weeks after the crisis, elements such as the continued use of PFA and group crisis intervention is noted (Hatzichristiou et al., 2011). Participants frequently mentioned the EPs conducting group work with pupils and sometimes their family members such as parents.

Participants reported aspects of the response such as the identification of vulnerable individuals as an extremely valued activity, this concept was encompassed in the Screening and Monitoring overarching theme. Both the underpinning models NOVA and PREPaRE recommend EP's engaging in work which evaluates psychological trauma risk. The NOVA model specifies this should occur during the recoil phase of CI response, where support staff performing risk screening of vulnerable individuals is seen as a vital component of the intervention. Further, such evidence of screening is consistent with existing literature, whereby a framework for intervention in CIs by EPs is suggested where EP input should involve the identification of people to whom priority should be given (Cameron et al, 1995).

Participants shared their experiences and perceptions of the type of crisis intervention support offered by the EPS. Participant's reports tended to refer to EPs providing guidance regarding practical tasks such as the conducting of assemblies and setting up rooms; signposting to existing services as well as post-incident tasks such as memorials and remembrance. Such crisis intervention appears to be guided by the models underpinning theoretical frameworks and models. For example, the NOVA model identifies the development of memorials and rituals both weeks as well as months and years after the crisis. Such elements of support are consistent within the literature which outlines the types of support that could be offered by EPs involving discussions on how to mobilise and develop within-school support systems and helping adults and children to use therapeutic concepts and techniques from psychology (Cameron et al, 1995).

Participants shared having access to written procedures and protocols produced by the EPS was a beneficial aspect of the model of preparation and response. This is again consistent with literature which suggests that EPs possess the knowledge and skills to both support school communities and also to develop materials. The development of written guidelines

and procedures for schools can form part of an effective and efficient response (O'Hara et al, 2004; Hindley, 2015).

A positive aspect of EPS support was described in regard to the EP liaisons with services both within and outside the LA. This was constructed as an overarching theme of Multi-Agency working. The involvement of EPs in multi-agency working is not a new development, EPs involvement in multi-disciplinary teams has been an area of much research. EPs' familiarity with multi-agency collaboration has been listed as one of the many benefits of their involvement in CI response work (Lockhart & Woods, 2017).

Posada (2006) recommends that when developing an LA EPS response to CIs, multi-agency training needs to be arranged to ensure that all services have an awareness of each other's roles and responsibilities, a collective awareness of trauma, the needs of those affected and how best to support them. The findings from this study are suggestive that the model of EPS response explored has established such recommended working practices and this is demonstrated in participants' reports of the EPS engaging in collaborative multi-agency working.

Furthermore, encompassed within the overarching theme of Lessons Learnt was the subtheme of training. Participants shared feelings which emphasised a training need for school staff in regard to responding to grief and bereavement. Participants reported support services, such as EPSs, may develop and deliver such material. Such calls for school support services, including EPs, to offer grief and bereavement training for schools is echoed in the existing literature. Further literature has identified the teacher's lack of training concerning grief education and response (Holland, 2000).

Interestingly, participants shared perceptions that there may be scope for development in the EPS model of preparation and response in terms of long term follow up contact with senior staff. Due to a potential delay in emotional response, it was suggested that follow up contact

may be beneficial. The immediate direct support to people exposed to a CI is emphasised both by existing literature and the underpinning theoretical frameworks and models which have informed the EPS response. However, the duration for the continuation of direct support is imprecise. This is most likely due to the individuality of need following exposure to trauma as recognised in PFA, which is utilised as an approach by the EPS of exploration.

Arguably, when considering the individual, organisational, and systems levels within which EPs undertake work (Cameron, 2006); it could be suggested that EPs may be best placed to offer support to staff when responding to a CI. Therefore, awareness of this potential delay in emotional response is of vital importance for EPs. EPs may be recognised as providing supervision to school staff and this may be considered as a necessary ongoing element of response for those affected who require it.

Cameron (2006) proposes five distinctive factors that make the EPs perspective different from that of other professional groups. Two of these factors appear to apply particularly to CI work, these being: EPs using research and theory in psychology to recommend evidence-based strategies for change and promoting innovations informed by psychological research and theory, which can enable clients to identify opportunities for positive change. It could be suggested that overall participant's reports regarding their perceptions of a model of preparation and response implemented by an EPS Wales are demonstrative of EPs providing this distinctive contribution.

7.1 Limitations

This study is not without limitations. Qualitative research is typically associated with smaller sample sizes, as is the case with this research. Seven participants from seven secondary schools in the LA were recruited and compromised the final sample. Therefore the generalisability of the findings could be considered to be limited. However, it could be

argued the sample size was satisfactory given the exploratory nature of the research (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Further, the semi-structured interview schedules were designed by ‘myself’ and were created for specific use and are therefore not comparable with other research. An additional factor for consideration is that the questions included in the interview schedules may very much have influenced the data obtained (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Although, despite these limitations, the questions were developed and finalised through emersion in the literature surrounding CIs. Therefore, it could be argued that such tasks resulted in an informed and neutral interview schedule being developed and utilised.

Furthermore, the study’s reliance on a single method of data collection may have also biased or distorted the findings. Triangulation methods commonly used in psychological research utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods would allow for greater generalisability and validity in the research findings. In addition, collecting information from different sources such as the children and young people as well as EPs may also allow for greater generalisability in the findings.

7.2 Implications for EP Practice

The findings from this study are relevant both in the field of educational psychology and in the wider educational context. Implications for practice have been considered and will now be suggested. This research has highlighted experiences of a CI from an underrepresented population, this exploration of experiences may provide insight into the way in which support future support may be offered by EPSs for school communities in the wider profession. The participants in this study highlighted the need for training opportunities regarding managing grief and bereavement in schools. Particularly, school professionals such as EPs may be proactive in creating a model to have in place to actively support teachers dealing with the grief and loss beyond CIs. Further, aspects of the training were highlighted in terms of CI training not only being offered to schools but to the wider educational services within a LA,

in order to increase understanding and empathy for school communities at times of CIs. Additionally, as well as the importance of EPSs providing training for preparation and response to a CI for school communities, EPs producing and making available for schools written procedures and protocols for CI support would also seem crucial to promote efficient and effective response. As a final point, the EPs role within the ongoing supervision for school staff following their exposure to a CI is also posited for consideration both locally and in the wider profession.

8 Conclusions

The present research offers a unique insight into the experiences of senior school staff when a CI has occurred impacting a school community and the potential roles of EPs within that. The research also highlights the importance of LA EPSs ensuring an informed and effective response to meet the needs of individuals when responding to a CI. The research findings emphasise aspects that appear integral to effective EPS response both pre and post CI. The research also includes the recognition of healthy functioning and growth, in this case, resilience and PTG following exposure to a CI. The research also provides insight into additional factors of ongoing response for future EP support locally. Findings from this research may inform practice at a whole professional level, in terms of the impact of CIs on school staff and how to support them going forward, as well as, what factors of EPS support are recognised as efficient, effective, and valued by those supported.

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Part Three: Major Research Reflective Account

Word Count: 7163.



1 Introduction

This reflective account will present a reflective and reflexive account of the research journey undertaken: analysing both the contribution to knowledge and practice that this research offers and the self as a research practitioner. This reflective account will be written in the first person and will provide reflections on the decisions made throughout the research development. An acknowledgment will be given to how my own values, beliefs, experiences, and position may have influenced the research. Conversely, I will reflect on how this research may impact my professional practice as well as that of the wider profession.

2 Research Development

2.1 Inception of research idea

The inception of critical incidents (CIs) as a possible focal point for my doctoral research occurred following my attendance at a mini-conference held for Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) at Cardiff University regarding CIs and the possible role of the Educational Psychology Service (EPS). The aim of the presentations at the mini-conference was to provide TEPs with an enhanced understanding of the nature of CIs, protocols for a response following a CI in a school. One model, presented by an LA in Wales, was well-grounded in psychological theory and a framework that was accessible. Further, the role of the EP in offering direct support to school communities in the immediate aftermath of a CI included aspects of a therapeutic based approach to EP work, and this instantly resonated with me; I feel this may have been largely due to my previous Master's studies in therapeutic play. I began to wonder if there was research regarding such EPS models of response to CIs in schools and the perceived effectiveness of response from school communities.

2.2 Development of research idea: exploration of the existing literature

The aim of the literature review was to provide a theoretical background to the role of the EP in CI support and its effectiveness. I initially envisaged that this would be a systematic process whereby there would be strict inclusion and exclusion criteria. However, following an initial search, I quickly discovered that there was a plethora of literature with many avenues to explore. Narrative literature reviews collate a vast amount of information to give a general overview of a topic, whilst allowing the researcher to refine, develop and generate hypotheses from the literature (Green, Johnson, & Adams, 2006). Therefore a more narrative approach to the literature review was considered most appropriate and was conducted to ensure the literature reviewed provided a broad perspective of the literature. (O'Leary, 2017). However, issues can arise from using a narrative approach. Consequentially I felt it was important to be aware of potential researcher bias when writing my review (Hutchison, 1993) and to ensure that I had remained critical and objective of the research throughout.

The literature review began by providing a definition of a CI, this immediately highlighted that there was a lack of a clear definition in the literature. Most definitions provided a somewhat descriptive account of an event that involved certain aspects such as type and onset of the event. This increased my awareness again of the complex nature of such events and thus the lack of a clear definition. The review then presented a historical overview of CIs affecting children, young people, and school communities. There was a clear lack of EP involvement in CI support until the 1990s with support services being perceived as sitting within the mental health discipline. Findings from the historic overview are arguably in line with literature regarding the historical role of the EP being predominantly concerned with Special Educational Needs (SEN) (Ashton & Roberts, 2006).

On exploration of the literature regarding the impact of CIs on children, including trauma symptoms and PTSD it became apparent that although there was extensive research regarding

this segment of the school community, there was a clear dearth of literature identifying the potential impact that CIs have on school staff.

During the literature review, the most appropriate method for assessing the quality of research was considered. Various strategies have been developed for assessing research quality (CASP, 2020; Yardley, 2000). The Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) appeared to provide a useful framework for assessing research quality. A component of the programme includes the production of assessment tools that are designed to enable readers to assess the quality of published research (Wright, Foster, Amir, Elliott, & Wilson, 2010). Due to the variance in research including both quantitative and qualitative studies, it was felt that the CASP criteria provided accessibility, rigour, and structure which provided the best fit to assess the literature.

During the review, a single unpublished thesis considering how schools cope psychologically with a CI was discovered within the UK based literature regarding EPs and CIs (Atwell, 2016). I felt that the possible identification of school staff as supporters may possibly have negated the consideration for research in this area. This then served to extend my interest and the possibility of exploring school staff experiences of such traumatic events.

During the reading, a contemporary growing body of literature emphasising the possible positive outcomes following exposure to a CI, with a specific focus on resilience and Post Traumatic Growth (PTG), was discovered. However, the potential consequence of PTG following exposure to CIs lacked mention or consideration in the EP professional literature.

The role of the EPS in providing support to schools regarding a CI appeared to be a well-established part of service delivery. However, the EP professional literature was sparse and as such did not seem to be in keeping with professional practice. Structures for response appeared to be documented in the professional literature from the mid-1990s (Cameron et al., 1995; Carroll et al., 1997; Cornish, 1995; Houghton, 1996; O'Hara et al., 1994).

Subsequently, this information was supplemented by studies and unpublished theses describing CI practice in the 21st century (Atwell, 2016; Greenway, 2005; Hayes & Frederickson, 2008; Hindley, 2015; McCaffrey, 2004; Posada, 2006); with the most recent research in the area providing a focus on multi-agency working when responding to CIs (Lockhart & Woods, 2017). Although publications regarding structure for response were documented in the EP literature there appeared to be a scarcity of literature regarding the perceived effectiveness of specific EPS approaches to CI work from the perspective of the school staff.

2.3 Gaps in the Literature

The current study, therefore, aimed to address the gaps identified in the literature. The research aimed to provide an in-depth exploration of senior school staff experiences of CIs. Further exploration was focused on gaining the perceptions of school staff regarding a model for preparation and response to CIs provided by the LA EPS to inform EP practice.

As well as contributing to existing research within the profession regarding the EP role and response to CIs. It was hoped that the research would contribute to the scarce literature regarding the experiences of school staff when involved in a CI and in particular the experience of the support offered to school from the LA EPS. Consequentially, highlighting effective ways in which an EPS can provide future support locally and informing the profession more generally about the needs of school staff following the experience of a CI.

2.4 Research Questions

Following on from the literature review the inception of potential research questions was developed. The final questions were influenced by a discussion with my research supervisor and refinement of ideas and aims of the research were considered. The questions aimed to capture what was pertinent but potentially missing in the professional literature. On

reflection, supervision, and discussion regarding research questions at this time were key to the direction of the research development. During times of deliberation regarding research questions, I often felt that what may appear as simplistic explorations would not be deemed as ‘intellectual enough’ for this level of study. However, following discussion with my research supervisor the purpose and intricacies of research were again appreciated and realised. Such discussions resulted in increased feelings of comfortableness on my part regarding the exploratory nature of the research, which was reflective of the dearth of research regarding school staff experiences of CIs as well as perceptions of an EPS model of preparation and response to CIs. The final research questions were:

- *What are the experiences of senior school staff of critical incidents in schools?*
- *What are the perceptions of senior school staff of the critical incident model of preparation and response implemented by an EPS in Wales?*

2.5 Writing or ‘Writing Up’

Progressing through this crucial stage of the doctoral cycle, the writing up of the research emerged as a challenge I had to attempt to overcome. Issues of confidence were clearly impacting my behaviour when it came to writing up my qualitative data and at times resulted in the avoidance of the activity. For me writing about qualitative data was more than a matter of technical ability and my attitudes and feelings about my abilities played a significant part.

I felt difficulties with approaching writing were magnified when coupled with the analysis of qualitative data. This activity for me had its own complexities and difficulties, as the interplay of writing and analysis required the bringing together of rigorous data analysis and the nuanced and rhetorical use of language. Literature has provided evidence for the claim that the writing up of qualitative data is a threshold concept in this form of doctoral research, and that achieving this is challenging for most doctoral researchers. Such readings provided

food for thought during my reflections on the thesis process, in particular the writing up, and led to feelings of potential aloneness with such difficulties being upheaved (Humphrey & Simpson, 2012).

The anxieties provoked when trying to engage with this aspect of the research process were likely exacerbated by my thinking, at the time, that writing should start on ‘day one’ of a thesis. Literature has suggested that this conflation of ‘writing’ with ‘writing up’ can mask some important distinctions between the mechanics of writing (literature reviews, accounts of methodology, contextualisation, etc.), reflexive and reflective writing (in the form of diaries and fieldwork logs) and ‘writing up’ (the final synthesis of information and experience in the form of a thesis). It is noted that all of these stages of writing are important, and particularly so for qualitative researchers, who typically produce words that describe words, rather than words that describe numbers (Humphrey & Simpson, 2012). Tasks such as exploring literature in this area, alongside utilising the reflective diary, enabled opportunities for reflection as well as gaining a clearer understanding of how the variants of writing relate to each other. Such elements will certainly inform my practice going forward.

This experience and reading around the issue have enhanced my awareness that many doctoral candidates are also working towards confidence as a researcher, and a narrative of the ‘self’ as a researcher. For me, this awareness, on reflection, has again highlighted aspects such as increased access to supervision.

3 Methodological considerations

3.1 Research Paradigm

Research paradigms can be characterised through their:

- Ontology- What is reality?
- Epistemology- How do you know something?

- Methodology- How do you go about finding it out?

A research paradigm may be constructed through a researcher's ontological and epistemological beliefs, which in turn inform the methodology of a study. It is felt that a constructivist paradigm influenced the development and conducting of this research.

A critical realist ontology was adopted, in line with the qualitative method used to gather data. Therefore, it is acknowledged that my own presence as a researcher influences what I was attempting to explore.

I judged that a subjectivist epistemology was most appropriate, that is we cannot separate ourselves from what we know. I, as a researcher, being linked to the object of investigation and how I understand the world is a central part of how I understand myself, others, and the world. Research suggests that perceptions held by participants will be influenced by the cultural and social context in which they occur. Therefore it is assumed that the experiences shared by the participants will be influenced by their experience of engaging in a semi-structured interview and that my interpretation will be influenced by the experiences shared by participants. This epistemological position allows for the possibility that participants' experiences may change over time and context and emphasises that no experience is objective (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Thematic analysis (TA) was identified as a suitable method to analyse the qualitative data, fitting with the critical realist framework, and acknowledging the subjectivist epistemology. TA seeks to analyse the ways participants are constructing meaning from their experiences, recognising the ways in which the social context impinges on those meanings yet retaining focus on reality, including mental entities. The aim is to both reflect reality and to unpick the concepts, events, and processes involved. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they provide an element of structure, enabling participants to focus on material related to the

research question and any pre-identified issues, but with the flexibility to share in detail their unique lived experience (Hayes, 2000; Smith, 2015; Wadman et al., 2017).

3.2 Qualitative Methodology

The qualitative nature of the research could be suggested as affecting the accuracy and reliability of findings. Braun and Clarke (2013) indicate that, although qualitative research cannot be subjected to the same criteria as quantitative research, analysis can be rigorously applied. Such methods include ensuring that the data is credible and appropriate and relates to the research questions and literature review. Attempts were made to analyse the data accurately by applying a method of rigorous analysis as outlined by the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2013). However, it is acknowledged that despite these measures when analysing the data and establishing themes from the content this process was open to researcher bias and interpretations (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Robson & McCartan, 2016). That is, the possibility of subjectivity within the qualitative findings is acknowledged.

3.3 Data collection method: semi-structured interviews

The method of data collection was through audio recordings of semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview was chosen as I felt this provided an element of structure, enabling participants to focus on material related to the research question and any pre-identified issues, but with the flexibility to share in detail the unique aspect of their own lived experience (Hayes, 2000; Smith, 2015; Wadman et al., 2017). This type of interview also allowed me the flexibility to address topics in relation to the research questions but also the freedom to allow the participant to expand on views. A series of questions were used as prompts and were in line with the literature on effective interview guides, which stressed that the questioning should allow interviewers to access the ways in which participants view their world and ensure that there is flexibility in the way the interview is conducted (O'Leary, 2017; Robson & McCartan, 2016). The aim of the interview approach was to gain an awareness of senior

school staff experience of a CI and their perception of the support provided by the LA EPS. The interview schedule was developed to reflect this and capture any complexities or additional factors within the process.

The semi-structured interview schedules were designed by myself and were created for specific use and are therefore not comparable with other research. An additional factor for consideration is that the questions included in the interview schedules may very much have influenced the data obtained (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Although, despite these limitations, the questions were developed and finalised through emersion in the literature surrounding CIs as well as experiences in my role as a TEP and awareness of schools systems. Therefore, it could be argued that such tasks resulted in an informed and neutral interview schedule being developed and utilised.

The researcher acknowledges that the study's reliance on a single method of data collection may have also biased or distorted the findings. Triangulation methods commonly used in psychological research utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods would allow for greater generalisability and validity in the research findings. Furthermore, collecting information from different sources such as the children and young people as well as EPs may also allow for greater generalisability in the findings.

3.4 Impact of TEP role

The impact of my identity as a TEP may need to be considered as a possible limitation of the study. I had previously completed a placement in the LA where the research was conducted, although, I did not know any of the participants. However, at times it was felt that due to my role as a TEP and previous affiliations with the EPS, I may have been seen as a representative of the EPS. This may have impacted data gathered particularly in relation to research question two which explored the experience of the support provided by the EPS. Although the TEP role was clarified by me and anonymity of participants was assured, it could be

implied that participants may have associated myself with the EPS and as such may have given socially desirable responses. This refers to the tendency for people to give responses that reflect themselves in the best light, which can deviate from the truthful answer (King & Bruner, 2000).

3.5 Participants

Qualitative research is typically associated with smaller sample sizes than those often reported with quantitative research. It is noted that between six and ten participants are considered a sufficient number when conducting interviews using Thematic Analysis (TA), as a method of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Seven participants from seven secondary schools in the Local Authority were recruited and **comprised** the final sample. It is noted that the sample size was relatively small. Therefore the generalisability of the findings could be considered to be limited. However, it could be argued the sample size was satisfactory given the exploratory nature of the research. The sample size was also consistent with the qualitative method of data analysis employed, as suggested by Braun & Clarke (2013). Further, the diversity e.g. ethnicity of the sample could be considered as impacting upon the generalisability of the findings. The sample consisted of White British males and females which is reflective of the demography within the Local Authority (LA) according to information provided by the administration office in the LA. Given the finding that cultural values and beliefs impact thoughts and feelings regarding coping, grief, and loss; actively seeking ethnic diversity within the sample would potentially have increased generalisability (Tang, 2007).

The inclusion criteria initially stipulated that participants had to have been in a senior management position and had experienced a CI in school in the previous 24 months. The inclusion criteria were initially developed due to the proposed initial method of data analysis being Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which requires a homogenous

sample. However, during data collection, the decision was made to analyse data using TA, with this decision enabling the inclusion of all data gathered. The time since the occurrence of a CI was discarded as a stipulation to partake in the research instead the occurrence of a CI during the participant's educational career was noted as the inclusion criteria. These methodological adjustments will be discussed in more depth in the later data analysis section.

3.6 Participant's earlier experiences

Variance in participant's experience of CIs during their school careers could have potentially impacted data gathered. For example, participants within the research had experienced differing numbers of CI occurrences, three participants had experienced one occurrence during their school career whereas four participants had experienced up to three occurrences of CIs. Further the length of time between their experience(s) and the research varied considerably: three out of the seven participants had experienced a CI some years ago whereas others had experienced a CI within the last 6 months. Additionally, two of the participants within the study had accessed the preparation and response for CI training delivered by the EPS offered to schools. Therefore, these participants may have felt more able and equipped to deal with such events as opposed to those who had not accessed the training. Thus, in relation to the first research question, regarding participant's experience of a CI in school, data concerning emotional and psychological response will have inevitably been influenced by both increased experience of a CI and experience of training in the area. The original inclusion criteria, of experiencing a CI within the past 24 months, were required to achieve a homogeneous sample needed for the original data analysis method of IPA. Moreover, it is recognised that the homogeneity of the sample may have been achieved by stipulating additional inclusion criteria such as a participant would have had to have attended the CI training delivered by the EPS in order to partake in the research. Such stipulations may have provided more valid data. However, this would have most certainly affected response

rate and sample size and may have provided less genuine data on the potential impact of a CI on school staff. As it could be fair to assume that an individual who is prepared for an event may experience such an event very differently to an individual who is not. I felt that given the sensitivity of the subject area flexibility and compromise in regard to research methodology was crucial and formed an integral part of me developing as a researcher. Such issues are discussed further in the following method of the data analysis section.

3.7 Method of data analysis: Thematic Analysis

Although at the proposal stage the design consisted of IPA as an approach to data analysis, as previously discussed, the approach adopted for analysing the data was TA. TA is defined as a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data. In being free from theoretical commitments it offered a flexible method that can be applied to varying paradigms rather than being embedded to a particular theoretical framework. It was felt that this approach fitted with the research which was explorative in nature due to the dearth of previous research in this area. Therefore, after deliberation, as well as overcoming the sampling constraints that made IPA ‘not as useable’, TA was considered a ‘good fit’ with the nature of the research and was chosen as a method of data analysis. TA offers a systematic procedure for generating themes from the data collected through the application of Braun and Clarke’s six-step procedure. The process broadly consisted of six stages which were familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013).

Alternate methods of data analysis were also considered, initially IPA and Grounded Theory (GT). Initially, IPA was to be used to address the aims of the research. It was viewed as an appropriate choice as it allowed the rigorous explanation of idiographic subjective experiences and social cognitions and sees the meaning an individual ascribes to events as the

central concern (Oxley, 2016). It was felt that such an approach would, therefore, support the exploration of how participants made sense of their experiences. The aim of IPA is to comprehensively elicit the perceptions and understandings of a specific group through recruiting a homogenous sample, rather than making more generalised claims. It also recognises the role of the researcher in interpreting the participants making sense of their experience (Oxley, 2016; Smith, 2011, 2015; Smith & Shinebourne, 2012).

However, during three out of the seven interviews participants shared that their experience of a CI had occurred more than 24 months previously. Therefore, the homogeneity of the sample was deemed insufficient and the data analysis method required reconsideration. Participant interviews and ethical issues were considered when making the decision as to whether to discard the interviews that were outside of the inclusion criteria and proceed to data analysis using IPA with the remaining four interviews. This number of responses would be deemed as enough in IPA research.

The following factors regarding conducting qualitative sensitive research influenced the nature and order of questions that were developed and asked during the interview. The literature suggested that qualitative researchers must initiate a rapport-building process from their first encounters with the participant's in order to build a research relationship that will allow the researcher access to the participants story (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2007; Robson & McCartan, 2016). Further, research regarding sensitive topics suggested that participants experienced mild levels of distress when they were questioned regarding specific details of the trauma (Jaffe, DiLillo, Hoffman, Haikalis, & Dykstra, 2015). Therefore, as a researcher, it did not feel ethical or consistent with the development of rapport for me to again enquire about the length of time since the occurrence of a CI as this had already been noted in the written invitation. As such, the length of time since the occurrence of a CI emerged freely during the interview. Therefore when considering the sensitive nature of the subject area and the personal accounts that were shared by participants I did not feel at

this point in the interview it would be fair or ethical to discard the data and alternate analysis methods was considered (British Psychological Society, 2009; Health and Care Professions Council, 2016).

GT seeks to provide a means of inductively generating theories from research, respecting the messiness of real data, and grounding the theory within such data, whilst simultaneously affording the researcher a robust and trustworthy process within which to conduct the analysis (Sutcliffe, 2016). Whilst GT can usefully be applied to areas where there is currently little known (Timonen, Foley, & Conlon, 2018), it was acknowledged that the intended outcome of the research was not to create a theory or a new framework within which to conceptualise the research questions but rather to offer an explorative account of participants experiences and perceptions of support, as such GT was not adopted.

As previously mentioned, following deliberation TA was identified as an alternate suitable process to analyse the qualitative data. An inductive approach was used to identify themes strongly linked to the data, rather than a pre-existing coding frame. Braun and Clarke (2006) distinguish between coding at a semantic or latent level. This study used latent level analysis and looked for underlying assumptions, ideas, and conceptualisations that may inform semantic content. Therefore, it was felt that the interpretation of data was not lost due to the different data analysis methods used.

In support of TA, the literature emphasised a credible rationale for the use of TA in qualitative research which further consolidated my decision. Beneficial aspects of TA highlighted in the literature included flexibility, that it is a relatively easy and quick method to undertake as well as being accessible to researchers with little experience. TA can be useful to summarise key features of large amounts of data and offer a rich description whilst highlighting similarities and differences across the data set. Further, it can enable the generating of unanticipated insights, allowing for social as well as psychological

interpretation of data and usefulness in terms of producing qualitative analyses suited to informing policy development (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

However, TA is not without its limitations, the analysis process was vulnerable to the researchers' influences and interpretations (Hayes, 2000). How I construed narrative offered by participants and how I developed themes from the data is highly interpretive and potentially unreliable, data may have been analysed differently at a different time and in a different context. In an attempt to encourage reliability, themes were checked and reviewed on several occasions and it could be argued that the analysis of the findings fits the data provided by the participants and that their accounts appear, plausible and credible. It is also felt that the completion of the research diary and discussions regarding themes with my research supervisor provided opportunities for the confirmability of the data to be somewhat established.

3.8 Data analysis: Manual or Computerised

I found the analysis of my data not only the most time-consuming element within the research process but also the most challenging. Through reflection, I felt this challenge lay in the complexity given the variation in experiences among participants and the sensitive nature of the data. During the analysis, I contemplated how the vast range of themes and subthemes could be condensed so that it could be adequately presented to the reader.

A central requirement in qualitative analysis is clear thinking on the part of the analyst. When considering the deficiencies and biases of the human acting as an analyst, for example, literature outlines issues such as data overload, early input making a large impression so that following revision is resisted, positive instances where there is a tendency to ignore information conflicting with hypotheses already held and to emphasise information that confirms them, revision of hypotheses and the overreacting or under reacting to new information as well as co-occurrence which can then be interpreted as strong evidence for

correlation (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Therefore, I decided I would attempt to analyse my data using a specialist computerised data qualitative analysis package, NVivo.

It was felt that use of this computerised package would be advantageous in that it would provide a categorical content analysis process, an organised single location storage system for all stored material, give quick and easy access to coded material and helping the development of consistent coding (Basil, 2003; Robson & McCartan, 2016). However, I found that developing proficiency in using the NVivo package was extremely time-consuming. Further, I began to become concerned that simply because I had used a specialist package that this would result in a more worthwhile analysis, although, contrarily feeling that this focus on coding and technical aspects of managing the data was giving less emphasis to interpretation. Researchers have suggested that “there is no mechanistic substitute for those complex processes of reading and interpretation” (Basil, 2003; Davis & Meyer, 2009). Therefore following reflection, I made the decision to return to manual data analysis techniques in an attempt to ensure that my analysis was conducted at a latent level as I had intended.

3.9 Sensitive topics and their impact on researchers

Research highlights the importance of understanding emotion as a crucial part of the research experience and highlights how research teams need to develop strategies to manage the emotions of researchers for the duration of the project (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2009). The need for such importance attributed to this suggestion has become increasingly clear to me as I have progressed through doctoral study. The fact that fieldwork can involve emotional experiences on the part of the participants is now fairly well understood and those of us who carry out research involving in-depth interviews are well aware of the issues that are raised when we explore areas that are emotionally sensitive for the participant. That is, we are conscious of the ethical issues that are concerned with the participant's experience. Less well understood is that the researcher is also involved in the

interview and is not immune to emotional responses in the field (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007, 2009; Hubbard, Backett-Milburn, & Kemmer, 2001).

During the research process, including both the conducting of interviews and the write-up, I became aware of the emotional impact the interviews had on me. Negative feelings tended to range from feelings of despair, frustration, and unfairness along with overwhelming feelings of sadness which required time for reflection and composure. During these times I sometimes sought clinical supervision from those available but at other times, due to work commitments and time constraints, I did not. It could be suggested, as highlighted by the literature in the area, that as I felt detached from the situations I may have felt naively confident when initially approaching the interviews that I could 'handle' the situation and aftermath appropriately (Hubbard et al., 2001), therefore the need for increased access to supervision was not considered on my part at the outset. However, on reflection, I feel I would have benefitted from increased access to supervision to explore and consider my own emotional reactions and how to manage these going forward in the process.

Literature has suggested that researchers who undertaking qualitative research on sensitive topics need to be able to make an assessment of the impact of the research on both the participants and themselves (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007, 2009; Hubbard et al., 2001; Jaffe et al., 2015).

3.10 Ethical concerns

It was considered that due to the topic of this research there was the potential that discussion may cause distress or negative emotions amongst participants. Therefore, a robust ethics proposal was submitted to Cardiff University Ethics Panel detailing the current research and methods that would be put in place to ensure that the research was both ethical and safe. In addition, full adherence to the British Psychological Society's (BPS's) Code of Human Research Ethics was ensured. In order to ensure participant well-being all participants were

invited to discuss any distress and/or negative emotions privately with the researcher if they felt it would be of benefit. This support was offered explicitly prior to each interview taking place and was detailed within the debriefing form. Participants were also signposted to relevant organisations such as the EPS to obtain support if needed. However, no participant expressed this need, and it was felt that the measures put into place were sufficient and appropriate.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

With the assurance of complete anonymity and confidentiality by me as the researcher, senior school staff participated voluntarily in the study and gave informed consent for their anonymised data to be included in any subsequent publications. The lack of personal data requested was deliberate, as an attempt to offer the participant complete confidentiality, and at the time it was felt that this would negate possible participant bias and encourage the sharing of honest responses. However, as noted previously, my identity as a TEP may have impacted on participants' willingness to provide such responses. In line with the ethical requirements for this project, participants were informed that the anonymised data may be retained indefinitely.

Right to withdraw: Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research prior to the anonymisation of the data. This was noted within their information and consent letter and participants were reminded of this prior to participating by the researcher at data collection. Participants were also reminded of their right to withdraw from the project without giving a reason without impact on them in any way.

4 Contribution to the literature

As well as contributing to existing research within the profession regarding the EP role and response to CIs. It is also hoped that this research has contributed to the scarce literature

regarding the experiences of school staff when involved in a CI. Further, it is felt that this study provides an explorative insight of crucial research into this already well-established part of the role of the EP. Consequentially, highlighting effective ways in which an EPS can provide future support locally and informing the profession more generally about the needs of school staff following the experience of a CI.

4.1 Contribution to professional practice

Findings from this research highlight the detrimental impacts that a CI in schools can have upon senior school staff. Further, the research offers insight into the staff perceptions of preparation and response offered to schools from an EPS. Overall, the findings suggest that the current model of preparation and response designed and delivered by a large LA in Wales is robust and supportive, meeting the needs of staff, pupils, and parents during a time of need.

More generally the findings emphasised that there appears to be a lack of understanding and feelings of incompetence regarding the grief and bereavement amongst school staff. This is in line with previous researchers in the area with literature identifying teacher's lack of training concerning grief education and response in England (Holland, 2000). Therefore, it could be suggested that part of the training offered by EPSs to schools may include grief and bereavement training, promoting understanding of stages, best support, and aftermath for school communities during events.

The findings suggested that schools having access to written procedures and protocols regarding the occurrence of a CI was extremely beneficial. This would, therefore, suggest that EPS's across the UK may consider ensuring that such written guidance is developed and circulated with locality schools consistent with recommendations by other literature in the field (Hindley, 2015; Posada, 2006).

As outlined in the literature review extensive research has highlighted the detrimental impact of such incidents on children and young people; with EPs often being called upon to support this population at such times. However, there appears to be a lack of research regarding the impact a CI may have on school staff. It could be suggested that the current research emphasises the need for EPs to have an increased awareness of the potentially detrimental impact of a CI on school staff and the requirement for direct work with staff and follow up supervision. EPs may be considered best placed to deliver such support due to the role already involving work at varying levels, which includes the organisation and the system (Cameron, 2006).

During the process of this research, I became aware of the impact that working with emotional topic areas can have on researchers; this then served to increase my awareness of the potential trauma experienced by EPs when offering direct support immediately following a traumatic event. It could be suggested that all too often those seen as supporters almost 'opt themselves out' of receiving support and naively assume the role of supporters negates being supported themselves. Additional literature emphasised the importance of considering the response of EPs when offering post-CI support. The literature provided focus on secondary stress and examined in detail supervisory practice as it relates to EP work in CI response (Hayes & Frederickson, 2008). It could be suggested that EPSs, along with a model of support for schools, develop a model that could be used to inform both supervision and the professional practice of EPs when involved in such work.

Wider systemic implications emerged from the data; for example, EPs' understanding of organisations and ability to work at systemic levels may suggest that they are ideally placed to ensure that there is wider LA understanding and empathy for school communities' following a CI. This may mean that the EPSs offer training not only to schools but the wider

LA Education sector, at a leadership level, regarding the impact of CIs on school communities, potentially increasing empathy and wider support for schools at such times.

In conjecture, the literature review that was undertaken also highlighted the pressures caused by repeated demands on the EP role, CI support should, therefore, aim for both maximum efficacy and efficiency. In order to ensure efficacy and efficiency explorative work of EPS approaches to supporting CIs in schools would, therefore, seem a necessity to inform future workings. EPSs offering this support may consider commissioning research regarding the model of response in use, offering the opportunity for informing and refining future practice.

4.2 Contribution to future research

In light of the findings discussed within both the literature review and the empirical paper of this study, I feel there is scope for further research.

Further research in order to extend and replicate these findings may be considered. Interviews could be conducted with pupils and parents to triangulate the views of school staff with those of the wider population within the school community who may have also received input from the EPs. Additionally, the sample of this study included senior school staff from secondary schools only and an interesting aspect may be to replicate this study in primary schools offering a comparison of experience and the potential difference between primary and secondary educational provision. Future research may also consider providing a more in-depth exploration into the sometimes positive outcomes of exposure to trauma such as resilience and PTG; as there appears to be a dearth of mention or consideration of these potential outcomes in the EP professional literature regarding CIs.

4.3 Developing as an applied psychologist and its impact on research

During placements, I quickly gained an increased awareness of the EP role and the enormity of work that centred on children and young people's mental health and well-being. This

coupled with an awareness of the range of occurrences that could detrimentally impact the mental health of all members of a school community including CIs such as suicide, death, accidents or acts of terrorism served to emphasise my feeling that CI preparation and response is both an essential and appropriate part of the EP role. Recent involvement with supporting a school community following a CI has served to bolster my view of this aspect of the EP role even further. As a result of such experiences, it was felt that EPSs having a robust model for preparation and response embedded in theory and evidence is a necessity in the current climate where unfortunately incidents such as CIs appear to be ever-increasing. As both a researcher and a TEP I am aware and mindful that my values and constructions of the EP role along with my biases may have influenced data obtained.

4.4 Personal reflections on research and practice

I began this journey as a novice and lacked confidence in my abilities as a researcher; I feel the entire process has been a learning curve and both an enjoyable and challenging journey. Although I had completed research projects during other avenues of higher education study, this level of doctorate study and research at times felt like an expectation I was going to struggle to meet. That is to say that the feelings of imposter syndrome (Kolligian & Sternberg, 1991) continued to linger on in regard to my abilities to act as a researcher.

I feel over the course of this journey from the development of the research idea through to the conducting of interviews and writing up of the data; each part of the process has developed many aspects of both professional and personal competencies. For example, numerous opportunities for reflection have been presented, my interviewer skills such as encouraging exploration of experiences, beliefs, and outcomes as well as my understanding of the stages of writing up, have all developed during this time. In terms of confidence levels in interpretation and analysis, I believe I am at an early stage of developing my researcher

abilities however I am certainly now more informed than I have been previously. I feel I now have an increased understanding of the process of investigation and exploration.

Through the realisation of the limitations within this study; I feel if I were to approach the study again there are adjustments that I would certainly make. For example, checking and confirming theme consistency across the data set with participants.

In conclusion, I feel I am continuing to develop my identity as both a doctoral candidate and an academic researcher. Further, I feel that within this discipline which often employs qualitative methodologies, the moment when I, as a doctoral candidate, began to analyse and write up my data; became a defining one in the move from novice to ‘almost’ independent social researcher.

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Appendix 1 – Gatekeeper Information Letter (Principal Educational Psychologist)

Address



Date

Dear (Insert Name),

My name is Kirsty Morgan and I am a second year trainee enrolled on the Doctorate in Educational Psychology course in the School of Psychology, Cardiff University. As part of my training, I am completing a thesis. My university research supervisor is Dr Simon Claridge. The thesis I intend to carry out, I feel is pertinent within the Local Authority at present, as it considers school Senior Management staff's experience of critical incident support offered by the Educational Psychology Service.

The aim of the project is to explore Senior Management staff's experience of a critical incident and the critical incident support provided by the Educational Psychology Service. It is hoped that participants will partake in a semi structured interview lasting approximately 45 minutes where participants experiences will be explored. The interview schedule will be developed to reflect this and capture and complexities or additional factors within the process.

I would be grateful if you could provide consent for the thesis to be conducted in relation to the Educational Psychology Service.

Findings or references to the study will be reported in a research paper which will be submitted to the University for Examination. The study may also be used in a publication or presentation but will be entirely anonymised so that participants' views cannot be traced back to them. A summary of the findings can be made available to participants and the school if requested.

It is hoped that the research will offer information to the Educational Psychology Service which may inform its future practice in line with findings.

Many thanks in advance for your consideration of this project. Please let me know if you require further information.

Kindest Regards,

Kirsty Morgan

Dr Simon Claridge

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Secretary of the Ethics Committee
School of Psychology
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Park Place
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CF10 3AT

Tel: 029 2087 0360

Email: psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix 2 – Gatekeeper Information Letter (Head teachers)

Address



Date

Dear (Insert Name),

My name is Kirsty Morgan and I am a second year trainee enrolled on the Doctorate in Educational Psychology course in the School of Psychology, Cardiff University. As part of my training, I am completing a thesis. My university research supervisor is Dr Simon Claridge. The thesis I intend to carry out, I feel is pertinent within the Local Authority at present, as it considers school Senior Management staff's experience of critical incident support provided by the Educational Psychology Service.

The aim of the project is to explore Senior Management staff's experience of a critical incident and the support provided by the Educational Psychology Service. It is hoped that participants will partake in a semi structured interview lasting approximately 45 minutes where participant's experiences will be explored. The interview schedule will be developed to reflect this and capture and complexities or additional factors within the process.

Please find below a definition of a critical incident as defined by the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service.

A critical incident can be defined as an event or events which occur suddenly and are outside the range of common human experience. Such events can cause considerable personal distress and have the potential to overwhelm our usual coping responses. Whatever the scale of the incident, the effect on the individuals can be devastating, mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. In addition, there are likely to be significant organisational consequences

I would be grateful if you could pass on the Information Letter and Consent form (provided with this letter) to Senior Management staff within your school and gather any interest. I will then arrange to come into school at a later date to offer an information session on the research and collect consent forms.

Consent forms will be stored confidentially in a locked device that only I will have access to. Findings or references to the study will be reported in a research paper available to all participants on completion, information / results may also be used in a publication or presentation but will be entirely anonymised so that participants' views cannot be traced back to them.

It is hoped that the research will offer information to the Educational Psychology Service which may inform its future practice in line with findings.

Many thanks in advance for your consideration of this project. Please let me know if you require further information.

Kindest Regards,

Kirsty Morgan

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Appendix 3 – Invitation Letter

(School Senior Management Team)



Address

Date

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Kirsty Morgan and I am a second year trainee enrolled on the Doctorate in Educational Psychology course in the School of Psychology, Cardiff University. As part of my training, I am completing a thesis. My university research supervisor is Dr Simon Claridge.

I am writing to invite you to take part in this research study. Please read this information sheet before you decide if you want to take part.

What is the aim of the study?

This study aims to explore school Senior Managements staff's experience of a critical incident and the support provided by the Educational Psychology Service.

Your involvement in this research may play a helpful role in contributing to information which the Educational Psychology Service can use to inform its future practice.

Why have I been chosen?

Your school has been chosen as it is one of the schools within the Local Authority. The research study wishes to recruit members of Senior Management staff from your school whom have been involved in a critical incident in the last 12/24 months and have experienced support from the Educational Psychology Service. Please find below a definition of a critical incident as defined by the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service.

A critical incident can be defined as an event or events which occur suddenly and are outside the range of common human experience. Such events can cause considerable personal distress and have the potential to overwhelm our usual coping responses. Whatever the scale of the incident, the effect on the individuals can be devastating, mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. In addition, there are likely to be significant organisational consequences

What does this study involve?

Taking part in this study would involve you partaking in a semi structured interview. It is estimated that the discussion will last approximately 45 minutes. It is intended that interviews will be carried out in a school setting, at a time which is most convenient for you.

What if I don't want to take part or if I change my mind?

Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary and if you decide not to participate, then this will not affect you in anyway.

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw from this study at any time and will not be asked to provide a reason for this. You will not be asked to do anything that may provoke unease or cause harm.

What will happen to the information?

The semi structured interview will be recorded, using a digital audio recorder, to assist analysis of the data. Audio recordings will be stored, confidentially, on a secure device. Participant's responses will be transcribed 2 weeks following on from the semi structured interview.

The results of the study will be written up anonymously in a thesis which will form part of the assessment for my doctorate. Information / results may also be used in a publication or presentation but will be entirely anonymous. It is hoped that the research will offer information regarding school staffs experience of a critical incident and the support offered by the Educational Psychology Service.

On completion of the study, you will have the opportunity to receive feedback on the outcomes of the research.

Questions and further information:

If you have any questions you are more than welcome to contact me via the details provided below.

I am also hoping to arrange with the head teacher a time to come into the school to provide an information session to staff about this research and will be available to answer any questions that you may have.

This research has received ethical approval by Cardiff University Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints these can be addressed to: psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and considering taking part in my research.

Kindest Regards,

Kirsty Morgan
Trainee Educational Psychologist
School of Psychology
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Park Place
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Dr Simon Claridge
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Appendix 4 - Consent form

I agree to take part in this research and agree to the following:

- I understand that my participation in this project is entirely voluntary and will involve me partaking in a semi structured interview lasting approximately 45 minutes.
- I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time and may withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that I do not have to answer any questions that I do not wish to.
- I understand that the information provided by me will be held safely. Audio recordings will be stored, confidentially, on a secure device and will be transcribed 2 weeks following the interview. The anonymised data may be retained indefinitely.
- I understand that the information provided by me will be held totally anonymously, so that it is impossible to trace this information back to me individually.
- I understand that this research is being conducted through Cardiff University, and that it may be published.
- I also understand that at the end of the study I will be provided with additional information and feedback about the purpose of the study.

I, _____ consent to participate in the study conducted by Kirsty Morgan, School of Psychology, Cardiff University under the supervision of Dr Simon Claridge.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 5 - Debrief Form

Thank you for participating in this study which is exploring school Senior Management staff's experience of a critical incident and the support offered by the Educational Psychology Service.

All participants are reminded that information offered to the researcher as part of the study is completely anonymous and will be stored securely. The anonymised data may be retained indefinitely. It should be noted that the researcher may be able to provide general feedback regarding pooled data but will not be able to comment on the information provided by individuals due to anonymity. Following participation in the interview, it will not be possible for those reading information, including the researchers and participants, to know who took part in the study.

Participants are reminded that if any negative emotions are experienced due to partaking in this study this can be discussed with the researcher if needed. Alternatively participants requiring support can contact the Educational Psychology Service.

What will happen now?

The information provided by staff members will be used as part of a doctoral thesis in Educational Psychology for Cardiff University. The research findings may be published wider than this, but they will always be in an anonymous form. It is hoped that the research will offer information on the effectiveness of group consultation. A summary of the findings from the research project will be available to all those involved in the research when it is completed.

If you would like to ask any more questions about this research, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor using the email addresses below. I will endeavour to answer any questions to the best of my ability. Thank you for taking the time to take part in this study.

Kirsty Morgan
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Any complaints regarding this study can be directed to the School of Psychology Ethics Committee at the address below:

Secretary of the Ethics Committee
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Tel: 029 2087 0360

Email: psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix 6 CASP Criteria

Appendix 6a: CASP Criteria: Cohort studies

CASP Criteria: Cohort studies	
1	Did the study address a clearly focused issue?
2	Was the cohort recruited in an acceptable way?
3	Was exposure accurately measured to minimise bias?
4	Was outcome accurately measured to minimise bias?
5	Have the authors identified all important confounding factors?
6	Was follow up complete and long enough?
7	What are the results?
8	How precise are the results?
9	Do you believe the results?
10	Can results be applied to your population?
11	Do the results fit with other available evidence?
12	What are the implications of this study for practice?

Appendix 6b: CASP Criteria: Review

CASP Criteria: Review	
1	Did the review address a clearly focused issue?
2	Did the authors look at the right type of papers?
3	Do you think all the important, relevant studies were included?
4	Did the review's authors do enough to assess quality of the included studies?
5	If results have been combined was it reasonable to do so?
6	What are the overall results of the review?
7	How precise are the results?
8	Can results be applied to your population?
9	Were all important outcomes considered
10	Are the benefits worth the harms and costs?

Appendix 6c: CASP Criteria: Qualitative studies

CASP Criteria: Qualitative Studies	
1	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?
2	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?
3	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?
4	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?
5	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?
6	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?
7	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?
8	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?
9	Is there a clear statement of findings?
10	How valuable is the research?

Appendix 7: Example of literature searches.

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#	Searches	Results	Type	Actions	Annotations
1	(houghton k a or houghton karen or houghton kat or houghton katherine or houghton keith a or houghton kelly or houghton kenneth j or houghton kristin or houghton kristin m).au.	14	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
2	find similar to Critical incidents involving schoolchildren research update: The response from school psychological services.	2017	Basic	Display Results More ▼	
3	exp schools/	69468	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
4	school*.ti,ab,id.	403933	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
5	3 or 4	419689	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
6	((critical or traumatic) adj3 (incident* or event*)).ti,ab,id.	16087	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
7	((disaster* or suicide* or shooting* or crisis or crises or trauma*).ti,ab,id.	202715	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
8	6 or 7	206493	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
9	educational psychologists/ or school psychologists/	4859	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
10	crisis intervention/ or "debriefing (psychological)"/	3810	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
11	((educational or crisis) adj3 (psycholog* or intervention* or debrief*)).ti,ab,id.	36800	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
12	school psychologist*.ti,ab,id.	6878	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
13	9 or 10 or 11 or 12	45273	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
14	5 and 8 and 13	1098	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	

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#	Searches	Results	Type	Actions	Annotations
29	27 or 28	419689	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
30	((critical or traumatic) adj3 (incident* or event*)).ti,ab,id.	16087	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
31	((disaster* or suicide* or shooting* or crisis or crises or trauma*).ti,ab,id.	202715	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
32	30 or 31	206493	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
33	educational psychologists/ or school psychologists/	4859	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
34	crisis intervention/ or "debriefing (psychological)"/	3810	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
35	((educational or crisis) adj3 (psycholog* or intervention* or debrief*)).ti,ab,id.	36800	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
36	school psychologist*.ti,ab,id.	6878	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
37	33 or 34 or 35 or 36	45273	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
38	29 and 32 and 37	1098	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
39	(educational psychology and trauma school).mp. [mp=title, abstract, heading word, table of contents, key concepts, original title, tests & measures, mesh]	0	Advanced	Save More ▼	
40	Educational Psychology/	8952	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
41	Crisis Intervention/ or "Debriefing (Psychological)"/ or Crises/	8929	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
42	Crisis Intervention/	3595	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
43	40 and 42	4	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	

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# ▲	Searches	Results	Type	Actions	Annotations
62	school*.ti.ab.id.	403933	Advanced	Display Results More	
63	61 or 62	419689	Advanced	Display Results More	
64	((critical or traumatic) adj3 (incident* or event*)).ti.ab.id.	16087	Advanced	Display Results More	
65	(disaster* or suicide* or shooting*).ti.ab.id.	66219	Advanced	Display Results More	
66	64 or 65	80785	Advanced	Display Results More	
67	educational psychologists/ or school psychologists/	4859	Advanced	Display Results More	
68	crisis intervention/ or "debriefing (psychological)"/	3810	Advanced	Display Results More	
69	((educational or crisis) adj3 (psycholog* or intervention* or debrief*)).ti.ab.id.	36800	Advanced	Display Results More	
70	school psychologist*.ti.ab.id.	6878	Advanced	Display Results More	
71	67 or 68 or 69 or 70	45273	Advanced	Display Results More	
72	63 and 66 and 71	431	Advanced	Display Results More	
73	post traumatic stress disorder.ti.ab.id.	10549	Advanced	Display Results More	
74	(traumatic adj1 (incident or experience or event)).ti.ab.id.	6147	Advanced	Display Results More	
75	64 or 65 or 73 or 74	90676	Advanced	Display Results More	
76	63 and 71 and 75	437	Advanced	Display Results More	

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# ▲	Searches	Results	Type	Actions	Annotations
78	school*.ti.ab.id.	403933	Advanced	Display Results More	
79	77 or 78	419689	Advanced	Display Results More	
80	((critical or traumatic) adj3 (incident* or event*)).ti.ab.id.	16087	Advanced	Display Results More	
81	disaster.ti.ab.id.	9267	Advanced	Display Results More	
82	80 or 81	24671	Advanced	Display Results More	
83	educational psychologists/ or school psychologists/	4859	Advanced	Display Results More	
84	crisis intervention/ or "debriefing (psychological)"/	3810	Advanced	Display Results More	
85	((educational or crisis) adj3 (psycholog* or intervention* or debrief*)).ti.ab.id.	36800	Advanced	Display Results More	
86	school psychologist*.ti.ab.id.	6878	Advanced	Display Results More	
87	83 or 84 or 85 or 86	45273	Advanced	Display Results More	
88	79 and 82 and 87	153	Advanced	Display Results More	
89	post traumatic stress disorder.ti.ab.id.	10549	Advanced	Display Results More	
90	(traumatic adj1 (incident or experience or event)).ti.ab.id.	6147	Advanced	Display Results More	
91	80 or 81 or 89 or 90	35046	Advanced	Display Results More	
92	79 and 87 and 91	160	Advanced	Display Results More	

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Appendix 8: Semi Structured Interview Schedule

Before Interview:

- Introduce myself more fully and explain why I am doing the research. Informs participants that I am interested in them and their experience. There is no right or wrong answer.
- Provide participants with the opportunity to re-read the information sheet and consent form and explain confidentiality to the participant.
- Give the participant the opportunity to ask any questions they may have.
- Again reassure participants that I am interested in their experience and perceptions of support from the EPS and there is no right or wrong answer.
- Explain the purpose of recording the interview and inform participants that I may record notes during the interview regarding subjects I may return to.
- Inform participants that they may take a break at any time during the interview, and they may stop the interview and withdraw from the research at any point without giving a reason up prior to the transcribing of the data. The audio recording will be transcribed within 14 days of the interview.

Interview Questions:

- What is your experience of a CI?
- How did you feel at the time?
- What support was offered by the LA EPS prior to and following the CI? Were there any aspects of the response that you found helpful or unhelpful?
- If a CI was to occur again how would they want the support to look?
- What has been the feeling since the incident amongst the school community? How are you feeling now?

Possible prompts:

Questions can be: Descriptive, narrative, structural comparative, contrast, evaluative, circular. Use more descriptive and narrative to begin with. Move to affective and specific as the interview continues i.e., particular experiences and associated thoughts and feelings.

Focus on the wording used by the participants. Listen to what the participants have to say.

Expose the obvious.

Prompts and probes will be used to follow up on senior staff answers to gain further insight and clarification. These prompts and probes will be dependent on the answers given by the staff, but may include:

- Could you tell me more about...?
- What was that like?
- What makes you say...?
- Does that impact how you think/ feel/ behave?
- Can you go into more detail?
- How did it feel?
- What did that mean to you?
- Can you tell me more about this?
- Can you tell me what you thought and felt at that time?
- What do you mean by...?

Record observation during the interview.

Ending the interview:

- Ask the participant if there is anything else they would like to share.
- Thank the participant for their time and participation in the research.
- Ask the participant if they have any questions.
- Discuss and provide participant with the debriefing form.

Appendix 9: Thematic Analysis process

Phase 1: Familiarise yourself with the data: transcribe the data, read and re read the data and note initial ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At point of data collection, reflexive journal used to take notes surrounding initial thoughts and feelings generated throughout each interview. • Data was transcribed from each interview, anonymising all data. Again, initial thoughts relating to the data were noted. • Transcripts were read and re-read five times with initial noticing's within the data documented on the transcript.
Phase 2: Generating initial codes: the researcher identifies interesting features of the data, collating data relevant to each code.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each transcription was looked at individually with interesting features of the data coded on the transcript document. At this stage, coding captured all salient aspects of the data across the data set. • All instances of individual codes across the data set were extracted and recorded on individual documents. • Transcriptions were re-read to ensure all instances of codes were captured and that initial codes were represented.
Phase 3: Searching for themes: the codes are collated into a potential theme; all relevant data are gathered for each potential theme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All data was reviewed to identify any salient, common or significant themes. Themes were organised into Overarching themes and Subthemes. • Segments of extract relating to each theme were grouped together in a new document. • Manual thematic maps created to diagram connections throughout the process.
Phase 4: Reviewing themes: collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All themes were rechecked against the evidence collected to ensure they pertained to each participant's views in each data item. • Throughout the process, smaller themes were let go of (Braun & Clarke, 2013) if they did not fit with within the overall analysis relevant to the research questions and larger overarching themes were collapsed to better represent the data. • Electronic thematic maps were created representing themes generated for each research question.
Phase 5: Defining and naming themes: the themes are refined and defined, along with potential subthemes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All theme titles reviewed, refined and defined to ensure that they best represented the data, capturing something meaningful about the data. • All subthemes were reviewed, refined and defined to ensure best representation of the data.
Phase 6: Producing the report: the researcher uses extract examples that relate to the themes, research question and literature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Themes and evidence were discussed in relation to the research questions posed and the extant literature. • Data extracts selected to provide evidence of themes and subthemes generated.

Source: Tesch, Inc. 4

I Yeah yeah, having that familiar sort of person that perhaps ...

R Yeah, so the outcome probably would have been exactly the same, it's just you are able to be a bit more familiar with them and you don't have to ... not put on a front, but if you want to have a cry you can have a cry. Whereas if it's somebody that you're not sure about or you've not before, you're less likely to do that.

I Yeah yeah. That's probably quite an important part of it isn't it, feeling comfortable and ...

R Yeah feeling comfortable and ...

I ... in a situation that is really uncomfortable isn't it?

R Yeah difficult.

I Yeah. How are you feeling about it all now?

R Fine.

I Sort of after, further down the line.

R Yeah I'm fine. As I said, he's back with us on a reduced and stuff ... you just bounce back, like I say we've had quite a few incidents as a school, and you remember them but you've got carry on I suppose.

I Yeah and do you think that sort of ... unfortunate as it is, having those experiences of it beforehand is almost ...

R Certainly helped me, yeah.

I ... sort of built some resilience perhaps with ...

R And not just the resilience, I think it's the confidence that you are saying the right things for the pupils, you're doing the right thing for the pupils. And the more experience that you've had of these awful things ...

I Yeah, as much as you don't want those experiences.

R No. But you do think right okay I know now this and this. And it's like anything, you've got to experience it sometimes to know right what went right, what didn't go right.

I Yeah. What could we perhaps do differently next time - there wasn't anything that sort of jumped out at you, you needed to do this differently next time?

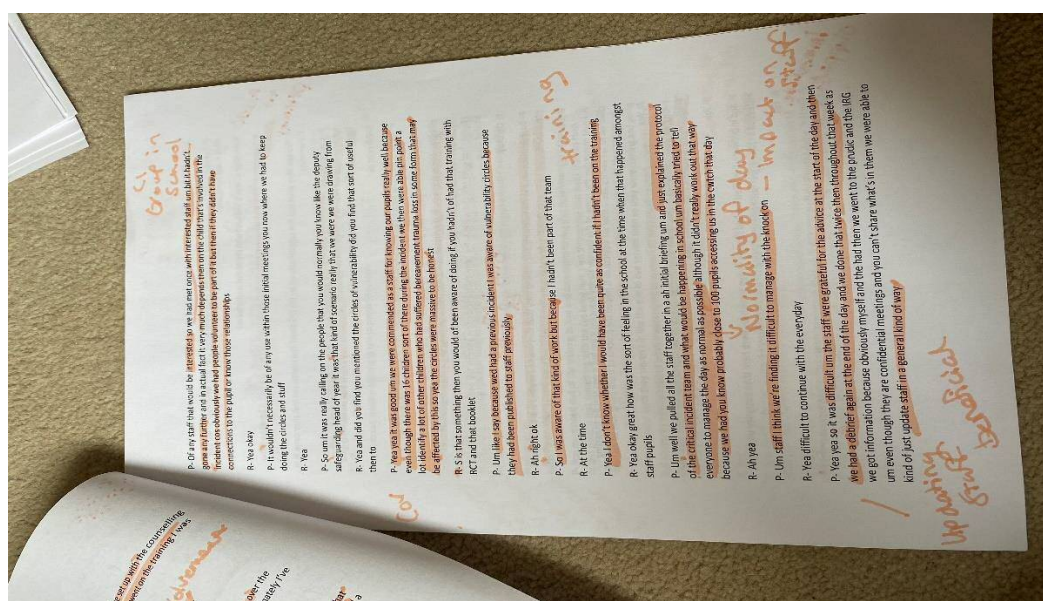
R No not really.

I Great okay.

R I think again it was all based on the timing of this one though.

I Yeah.

13



File name: Thesis_int_5

I Yeah. Almost seems like that seems ... and it's been something that has come out perhaps in quite a lot of the interviews, that having somebody to almost help, say 'Right do this, let's do this' – because it seems a situation where perhaps ... there's not a lot of control.

R No there's not, and you really are ... it's ... I've got a really bad sense of direction, I've got a terrible sense of direction, I get lost. I get lost a lot.

I Okay right, I know what you mean. I look for the landmarks, the Tesco's (laughs)

R In my car, if I go cycling. I got lost jogging once. How did I get here? How do I get home? Yeah it was just ... towards (inaudible 54:57) just totally lost.

I (laughs) Oh I (inaudible) (laughs) - I don't venture far.

R No no. So you know ... and that's what it was at the time that I'd had ... I don't know when would this have been? – 2014. So at that point in time I had been nearly a quarter of a century in education. I had been 8 years in senior management, and I didn't recognise the landscape, and I didn't have a map. But what happened was the critical incident team came down and said 'Oh there is a map' (tapping table)

I So the EPS did yeah.

R And that's the map.

I Yeah, this is where we go.

R So this is where we go – this is where we go and that's how we're going to get out of it - and that changed everything for me, because I was sitting in my office thinking I do not know what to do with this.

I Yeah it's the unknown isn't it?

R Yeah, you don't get trained. You know there has been some training now, which is good, but you know the qualification of headship NPQH doesn't include critical incident training because it's such a rare event.

I Yeah, that's what I was going to say – it's not something that happens once a month is it, thank God.

R (inaudible 56:16)

I Yeah and don't have to deal with it, yeah

File name: int_7

FILE NAME: int_7

I: interviewer, R: respondent

I ... and then just leave it, okay ... just make sure the volume's up. Yeah, there we go. So I can ask – what was the experience of the critical incident you had here?

R The incident was that a young lady, Year 10 ... Year 10 child had taken an overdose ... or alcohol, combination of the two ... and had been found dead in a park.

I Yeah okay.

R That was something that we found out on Sunday afternoon as it happened. It was just something that came through, phone calls and ... I don't quite know how we all found out, but we find these things ... and then the child is one of yours. And so actually it was conversations on the Sunday night to clarify that, but first thing on the Monday morning ... in all fairness there were people here from the local authority, and then dealing with the incident went from there.

I Yeah right okay. In terms of the support from the Educational Psychology Service then, had the school had any training beforehand, or was this sort of ...

R Um I don't ... you know I've been in education for over 30 years, a head for 12 years – that's the only ... fortunately that's the only time that I've ever come across that – in those circumstances, I mean we've unfortunately had children passing away, but not in those circumstances. So no, it wasn't so much that we'd ... I don't think it we'd had a great deal of training, not that that's a criticism of anybody – I think it was just something that you think about how to best deal with it, knowing the person and knowing who the likely peer group are, and how best to communicate that to the whole school and the staff and the children as well.

I Yeah of course. Did you make contact then with the Education Psychology Service?

R If I'm absolutely honest I can't remember whether I phoned or not first thing in the morning, but I know that there was communication very quickly and reassurance about what would be done. And then it was a case of working out with my senior colleagues how that information was going to be passed on as effectively as possible and sensitively to the rest of the school. And we made decisions about how that would be done, and in the meantime there was clearly a group of children who were more affected than others. And then there's the family of the child as well that we had to work on that. But we have a structure in school ... yeah, all schools I'm sure are the same, but we've got a strong wellbeing structure, and we had key people within that structure, you know who are still here non-teaching staff. So it wasn't

School pastoral response

Appendix 11: Example of transcript extract with initial noticings and codes

Thesis int 4		Noting	Codes
I - Interviewer R-Respondent			
R	All of that was put in place.	CI document provided by the EPS	Use of written guidelines and protocol by the EPS
I	All of that was used was it?		
R	Yeah so we all had a copy. Heads of year had a copy, the form tutor, teachers were actually taught, so we met as a staff then just to cascade that information.		
I	Out to the wider ...	Circles of vulnerability	Identification of vulnerable pupils/ staff
R	Yeah cos it wasn't until that relationship circle had been done that we realised the impact on all of the different pupils. Cos so and so was related to them and this was related – so that was really helpful for us in helping us to identify where the needs were and where the support was needed.		
I	Yeah, they needed to target really.		
R	Yeah.	Circles of vulnerability	Identification of vulnerable pupils/ staff
I	Did you find that useful having ... say for example if you just had the document, the proforma on its own, and the educational psychologist hadn't come in in person to do those sort of vulnerability circles ...		
R	I found it very valuable, I've not seen that before. And for us I think myself and my colleague both thought because it was there for us to see and to look at it was fantastic. Because rather than just have a piece of paper, the way in which it would be mapped out, it was great for us to be able to make the connections that might not have necessarily made had it been just on a piece of paper with names and stuff.		
I	Yeah.		
R	So the way in which it had been delivered to us and cascaded was really good.		

I	Oh great okay. What was kind of the ... how many educational psychologists come in then?		
R	Two.		
I	Two. And how was their approach and things?		
R	I think because our EP, obviously she's been with us so knows the school, and I think because we've got a really open door policy and got a really good relationship with the EP service, you know with H as well we've had contacts through training that she's delivered to us.	School EP & relationship with EPS	Already established relationship
I	Ah right okay yeah.		
R	So they're not strangers to us, so I think that helps. So they come in, they've sat in here, you know they met with different people and different pupils, and sat ... so yeah, it was good.	Familiarity with supporting EP	Established relationships and benefits
I	Oh great. Do you think those relationships you had with them beforehand ...	Previous relationship with Educational Psychologist	
R	Definitely helped.		
I	... helped on the day then when actually they come in to support.		
R	Yeah, because they know what our strengths are, they know where our weaknesses are, so where they can guide us or help us, and it just ... I think the working relationship helps. So I think if you're coming in to something cold it's harder to have that kind of working relationship.	School and EP existing relationship	EP knowing the school system.
I	Yeah, knowing somebody beforehand perhaps.		
R	As much as you're all professionals and you're doing the job that you can, I just think it does help.		

Thesis int 5	Noting	Codes
I Yeah, how did it feel in terms of you had this awful sort of news about you know one of your pupils had committed suicide, so that was		

R	you know the impact of that – how did that feel initially? Well a couple of things happened – number 1, there's the shock and horror of it. And then you start to immediately ask yourself you know did we miss something... So you start to ask yourself those questions. You then go into ... well I did, certainly my colleagues on the SLT did – you go into that kind of management mode and you think right we've got this situation then, how do we manage it, who can help us manage it, because this is uncharted territory for us, there's no map, we haven't got a map for this.	Initial feelings and emotions.	Emotional and psychological impact
I	Yeah, what do we do sort of thing.		
R	But you're hoping somebody has.	Managing/ professional role	Professional composure
I	Yeah yeah.		
R	And then you just try to maintain the professionalism as far as you possibly can, the sympathy as far as you possibly can – and the two don't always match.	Role and remaining professional whilst experiencing grief and loss	Professional composure and its constraints
R	You mentioned about sort of the approach of the EPS and the EPs really in terms of that kind of having a protocol but also being kind and supportive – was that sort of something that you valued then having somebody come in who ...		
R	Yeah massively. ... and the staff, the staff were tremendously supportive, fantastically supportive.	Staff Support	School system and relationships
I	Of each other, yeah.		
R	Of each other you know ... to the extent to which the SLT would say things like 'Right you do what you need to do today, we'll run the school' - and that's what I needed to hear. what's happening here - you do what you need to do. And the rest of the staff, the rest of the staff were absolutely fantastic. But yeah the ed psychs were there ... yeah I can't emphasise how much of a difference it made to me.	Educational Psychologist support	EP being present
I	Yeah. And in terms of you were mentioning about the staff kind of, how fantastic they were you know		

	and supportive at that time. Was that something that was not new but more-so since the incident going forward? Or was already those relationships in place before?		
R	Yeah I think so, I think it was a close-knit staff, I think there was a good sense of camaraderie on the staff anyway. I think that that helped us get through it. The school was in a strong place, you know we'd ... you know we a couple of years previous, and we even did a report. The outgoing head retired, I'd taken over, and it was a fairly seamless transition because were very much of a type, myself and S, so whole thing was the school was in a strong position anyway.	Staff relationships	School system
I	Strong position, and operating really well by the sounds of it.		
R	Operating really well. And that allowed us to be resilient when the situation occurred.	School operating well prior to CI	Existing school system and resiliency
...			
R	No there's not, and you really are ... it's ... I've got a really bad sense of direction, I've got a terrible sense of direction, I get lost, I get lost a lot.		
I	Okay right, I know what you mean. I look for the landmarks, the Tesco's (laughs)		
R	In my car, if I go cycling. I got lost jogging once. How did I get here? How do I get home? Yeah it was just ... towards just totally lost.		
I	(laughs) Oh I (laughs) - I don't venture far.		
R	No no. So you know ... and that's what it was at the time that I'd had ... I don't know when would this have been?. So at that point in time I had been nearly a quarter of a century in education. I had been 8 years in senior management, and I didn't recognise the landscape, and I didn't have a map. But what happened was the critical incident team came down and said 'Oh there is a map' (tapping table)	Experience and unfamiliarity with situation	Unprecedented situation
I	So the EPS did yeah.		
R	And that's the map.		

<p>I R</p>	<p>Yeah, this is where we go. So this is where we go – this is where we go and that’s how we’re going to get out of it - and that changed everything for me, because I was sitting in my office thinking I do not know what to do with this.</p>	<p>Description of way in which EPS offered support</p>	<p>EPS support & protocol</p>
<p>I R</p>	<p>Yeah it’s the unknown isn’t it? Yeah, you don’t get trained. You know there has been some training now, which is good, but you know the qualification of headship doesn’t include critical incident training because it’s such a rare event.</p>	<p>No training</p>	<p>Feelings of being untrained /Incompetence?</p>

Appendix 12 : Supporting quotes for Overarching themes and subthemes for Research Question 1.

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Event	Death or near death experience	<p><i>a boy got run over by a tr- ... or got hit on a ... he was on a train platform somewhere waiting on a train he was leaning over looking the wrong way and the train came and hit him and killed him. P6.</i></p> <p><i>in the last year we've had three members of staff pass away in service, which is unusual, P.6.</i></p> <p><i>We had a child that was umm found dead by the parents hanging P 1.</i></p> <p><i>we had a critical incident before the end of summer term just gone, the beginning of July um there was a large group of them playing um just probably less than a quarter of a mile from the school in some open water... Um and uh one of the boys drowned P 2</i></p> <p><i>Whereas our previous one which was a suicide he was on his own so even though there were children impacted it wasn't actually any witnesses to it so P2</i></p> <p><i>The incident was that a young lady, had taken an overdose ... or alcohol, combination of the two ... and had been found dead in a park. P7</i></p> <p><i>we had a pupil who was then in Year 7, now in Year 8, had a very nasty car accident. There were a group of them out playing and a car had mounted the curb and had knocked the young lad over - was rushed to intensive care. And because of the pupils that were involved who were out playing with him, they'd witnessed this had happened. P4</i></p> <p><i>So she passed away, she had an accident on a motorbike, and that was quite intense P4</i></p> <p><i>as it happens a fantastic group, really really able group that year group happen to be – well behaved, you know your ideal children all of them, okay, including C's son. So he's crossing and the motorcycle hit him. That was it basically. P3</i></p> <p><i>– I can't remember the exact date, I should remember the date, I was head teacher of the P school, and one of our pupils committed suicide. P5</i></p>

Overarching theme	Subtheme	Supporting Quotes
Initial Impact	<i>School Community Response</i>	<p>Shock on all three, because they were out of the blue. yeah. So ... and they were young as you say you know staff. So yeah, shock, upset ... and it just takes some time, and you've got to ... you know we've got to manage it all very carefully because you know things like ... you've got to make sure ... which is what the vulnerability profile is there for is to make sure that you're catching everybody isn't it, and doing the right thing, you know that ... and this is what H's been very good at advising on is ... and this is my modus operandi anyway is to try and carry on as normal whilst not you know appearing to not care about the. P6.</p> <p><i>I would say the hysteria did break out more then, because ... but I don't mean that in a critical way again because a lot of children witnessed it which was ... P, 6.</i></p> <p><i>because obviously it's a massive shock then within the school community P2</i></p> <p><i>But yeah, the head of year, L, was quite shaken by it, and L who's the assistant, because it was their year group to begin with. P4</i></p> <p><i>deeply traumatic as you can imagine. But what we did find as well ... which hasn't happened in these recent incidents is ... and I was very aware of this because I remember it was that um ... it sounds harsh to say this but I'm going to say it anyway because it's anonymous ... but a lot of children jumped on the bandwagon. So when we were making you know educational psychologists and health professionals available to them, people were coming out of lessons left, right and centre as an excuse almost – one group - just to get out of the lesson, another group because they enjoyed getting hysterical I suppose. And we saw that, there were children ... and you can't ... it's harsh to say it, but yeah we did – it was quite hysterical. It was sad because it was a terrible thing to happen, and I'll never forget that for all my days. It destabilised the school more than these recent events. And I think one was because of the nature of it possibly, but also I think we managed it better this time round. P 6.</i></p> <p><i>Urgh devastated...Yea yea which you enter a period of numbness I think ah and then it starts to leak out P1</i></p> <p><i>I can remember standing and telling the staff this – cos it was really really difficult, because they hadn't pronounced him, or wouldn't ... the police wouldn't tell me he was dead... So that was really stressful. P3</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, cos they said 'He's not dead'. Yeah? So then what the hell do you tell 500 or 600 children you know who knew, because they'd heard on social media, and the closest friends had actually had the message from mum and dad, you know. So I had some children who knew that quickly he was gone, the rest of them who knew there'd been a terrible accident you know – it was horrendous P3</i></p> <p><i>The experience with the police was difficult – I didn't feel that they ... they were doing a job weren't they, they couldn't see the personal side of it, they couldn't see how upsetting it was you know, and couldn't see how difficult a position we were in you know. P3</i></p> <p><i>Well a couple of things happened – number 1, there's the shock and horror of it. And then you start to immediately ask yourself you know did we miss something. So you start to ask yourself those questions.P5</i></p> <p><i>It was, it was. One of H's team ... might have been H herself ... said to me on the Friday after S died said that the team had never seen a head go through what I'd had to go through. ..And of course it wasn't just me going through it, it was the deputy heads, the assistant heads, the child protection officer, K - she was very very heavily involved as head of year. L was very heavily involved in it. But yeah it was, it was ... and you know words can't do it justice really. P5</i></p> <p><i>Yea definitely it was a little bit difficult in the beginning if I'm honest because you've got children who are grieving and children who are in shock and very upset and then you're</i></p>

		<p>expecting them to speak to complete stranger's so obviously they were coming down they were recognising staff and they wanted to speak to them P2</p> <p>The reality is for most of the children it was sad but it wasn't a massive event for them, you know, in a school – 900, 1000 people – it wasn't necessarily somebody that they would have known or been familiar with – and that's the reality of it. But it was something which obviously had a big impact on a number of children P7</p> <p>But of course they come to school don't they, you know most of them come to school because they actually want to see their friends, you know. , they don't want to be off, they want ... yeah. So that's ... by 11 o'clock that morning you know pretty much the school was running with a sub-group of children, you know with a group of staff, both ours and local authority's P7</p> <p>And one of the other things was that ... it was on the Monday obviously when we came in, but by the Wednesday there was conversations about 'Right these children now need to get on with it now'. P7</p> <p>Yeah yeah yeah, and are they ... I remember there was the thought of 'This is going on a bit too long' – and there were other people joining in with it. I know it sounds terrible, but ... you know they were literally thinking 'Well how are you here?' P7</p> <p>Yeah I know it has because I've talked to colleagues – that you've got to manage that groups to seem to be affected, and those who all of a sudden seem to be affected. ..You know selectively. P7</p> <p>But there was one time, I mean I can't remember when it was, but it could have been by the Wednesday where we were saying ... children left right and centre saying 'I need to come out of class to go up to this room' you know, and you're thinking well there's only so much of this we can manage P7</p> <p>The boys who had been there, they didn't come in straight away. You know it was liaising through the families to begin with really, so with our family liaison officer, just liaising in with them to make sure that if there was anything they needed from us. P4</p> <p>and I know it had a massive impact on the year group – they were Year 8 at the time. because a lot of them were in denial, they were in Year 8 – a lot of them had witnessed what had happened - P4</p> <p>Now you had that trauma, but obviously you had ... I can't remember how many of them there were – 6, 7, 8 of them maybe, the friends had seen it, his best friends, and some of them since primary, and all of them since Year 7 at L. P3</p> <p>Oh she's been incredibly brave P3</p> <p>They were absolutely fantastic in the hall P3</p> <p>So that was the first wave that hit us really was the fact that we then had a critical incident in the school where we had a pupil who was at the time in Year ... he was Year 9, Year 10 ... who had killed himself, and obviously there were friends and acquaintances that – it upset them – who were dealing with that P5</p> <p>there were several hundred pupils who had been ... threatening teachers, threatening me – because I then went out – a real kind of mob mentality, you know very difficult to control, we had the police on site - they couldn't control the kids. And that took a couple of hours to get that under control. P5</p> <p>And of course at the same time we had genuinely grieving pupils, we had pupils who felt genuinely guilty – not because they'd been bullying him, because there was no evidence to suggest that he had been. He'd had some unpleasant experiences – kids do, but there was no evidence of a targeted programme of bullying from individuals. But his friends felt guilty because they were saying things like 'Well why didn't he tell us?' P5</p>
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		<p><i>And then it's like you know it's the pebble in the pond, because you get the people who were closest to him who were generally generally upset and grief stricken, but then what we find in school ... and you've probably found this in your research ... is that other kids latch onto it and claim an emotional investment that actually they've got no right to. P5</i></p> <p><i>Yeah they're grief stricken over somebody that they ignored in the corridor for the last 3 years. P5</i></p> <p><i>Refusing to go into class, talking, banging on windows, and banging on doors, opening doors... Tremendously aggressive P5</i></p> <p><i>I mean we did what we could to try to kind of support the kids who were his friends – some of them were genuinely genuinely devastated by it...P5</i></p>
	Inform and normalise	<p><i>um well we pulled all the staff together in a ah initial briefing um and just explained the protocol of the critical incident team and what would be happening in school um basically tried to tell everyone to manage the day as normal as possible although it didn't really work out that way because we had you know probably close to 100 pupils accessing us in the cwtch that day...Um staff I think we're finding it difficult to manage with the knock on P2</i></p> <p><i>And I think the advice generally is ... and I think it's quite right ... is for the rest of people to carry on. P7</i></p> <p><i>but also for today we're just carrying on, you know. P7</i></p> <p><i>Because you've got ... you know you've got to be well fair, sensitive to the children. I think it was managed well you know in the end – the situation sort of normalised itself. P7</i></p> <p><i>Well you keep them up to date with things really you know, but again I think it's more a case of making sure the school is just running as it is. And you know a lot of the staff wouldn't have ... to some extent never taught this child. P7</i></p> <p><i>Yea yea so it was difficult um the staff were grateful for the advice at the start of the day and then we had a debrief again at the end of the day and we done that twice then throughout that week as we got information because obviously myself and the had then we went to the prudic and the IRG um even though they are confidential meetings and you can't share what's in them we were able to kind of just update staff in a general kind of way P2</i></p> <p><i>yeah I had to go and do ... I wanted to tell the kids, so went in the hall you know ... and I got some kind of senses in my head to say 'He's very very ill, very very poorly' I can't remember if I'd said something about life support 'They're doing everything they can, but it is really really serious and we need to prepare for the worst' etc. P3</i></p> <p><i>but that we were going to try and carry on as best we could for normality for the children for the rest of the term, but we opened ... we invited anybody who wanted to come into school to have help from EPS and from Mrs C here. P3</i></p> <p><i>we just sent all the kids in class – no change of lessons, the kids you've got in front of you, you have them for the rest of the day.P5</i></p> <p><i>Our strategy internally was to create I suppose almost like an exclusion zone around the situation, so we could say to the staff 'You teach, teach the other kids, get them to the exams, get the coursework, do what you would normally do on a typical morning, try to get your day as normalised as you possibly could. P5</i></p>
	Social Media & Press	<p><i>We had ... well there was a huge social media campaign sprung up over night..P5</i></p> <p><i>And so the press got hold of it, the press exaggerated it..P5</i></p> <p><i>Umm it was that wed done everything we could which was good but um that we'd managed the situation well we had no social media or media um you know we spoke to</i></p>

		<p>everybody I wrote a letter that went you know without referring to the girl we said you know that there'd been a bereavement in the school and we asked everybody not to talk to the media or to discuss it on social media and ah it didn't there was a total silence on it P1</p> <p>both on social media and in the media the only time it hit the media was um the disgraceful article really that was in ah the mail online where they had taken the inquest and had um publicised it for whatever reason but in the period where the the parents didn't need to have any of that or family and friends p1</p>
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Overarching theme	Subtheme	Supporting Quotes
Pressure	Professional Behaviour	<p>Because it was about 10 o'clock and I'd been really going through the mill all weekend – by Sunday afternoon and I hadn't had any contact I just decided to do my own thing, so (inaudible 25:47) so I didn't need it. Because I was shattered and I knew I was going to have to come to school on the Monday morning and front up in front of all my staff – tell some people who hadn't heard, support staff who were very close to her, and I needed to be on my mettle. P6.</p> <p>And as I've already mentioned, heads are human beings. And when you hear that a member of staff you've known for 20 years has died that day and you've got to kick into professional mode immediately to be able to deal with a seriously grieving partner who's also in a huge amount of shock, it's a tough ask. P, 6.</p> <p>Disgruntled and frustrated and resentful you become, and that wouldn't be healthy. But the need to respond quickly and appropriately takes some doing when you're in shock and you're upset as well, because a person you know really well has just passed away. P,6.</p> <p>You know it does take its toll and you know we went through a few days after she died it was a you know a mass said in the parish the funeral we then had separate events in school uh you know and each of them is upsetting and you know it's like your waiting for the pressure belt to pop on you P1</p> <p>because um you also get to the point of me ah it was about a month later I think it hit me before because you're a lead in somewhere it's not a good look to be sobbing in your office at that point P1</p> <p>To some extent it's also a management thing of how do you sort this out now, what do we do P7</p> <p>It was quite a lot to have on your shoulders, and I remember standing in the front of the year group taking the assembly the following morning thinking what am I going to say you know. P4</p> <p>So it was almost like 'I really could cry for you' you know, but I can't because I need to put on the brave face for the pupils. But on the one day we were in a different office to this one, it was a small office, and there was quite a few of us and we just all had a cry together – and I thought that was ... well actually they can see we're only human as well. P4</p> <p>Yeah, but I think we'd kind of bottled and bottled as much as you have your own you know personal, in the house or whatever, private cry – you come in to school and you have to be this professional. I think that's always at the back of your mind as well that you've got to be professional and your own feelings can't come into this. P4</p>

		<p><i>Cos my role then was to make sure everybody else was all right as well, wasn't it you know. P3</i></p> <p><i>You then go into ... well I did, certainly my colleagues on the SLT did – you go into that kind of management mode and you think right we've got this situation then, how do we manage it...P5</i></p> <p><i>And then you just try to maintain the professionalism as far as you possibly can, the sympathy as far as you possibly can – and the two don't always match.P5</i></p> <p><i>On the day we shut down the school buzzers, the school – we just sent all the kids in class – no change of lessons, the kids you've got in front of you, you have them for the rest of the day. And then we'll manage that, so you've got a kind of shutdown procedure in place, because you've got to protect those kids ... P5</i></p> <p><i>ready for exams because the exam season happens weeks after Easter. And so you know we had Year 11s, 12s, 13s all going into examinations then, some of our Year 10s. So just maintaining a level of business as usual for the rest of the school was really really difficult P5</i></p> <p><i>You know it's been quite a lonely office, even though the phone goes all the time...Leadership is lonely, you know that's one of the things about it. P5</i></p> <p><i>Yeah the governors after it were they were fantastically supportive. The governors after that right said look you know there are certain people here who this has taken over their lives – I, K the safeguarding officer, other members of the SLT, certain of S's teachers, me – and very kindly they suggested that I offer all those people a day off, you know at some point and everybody took it apart from me. And that's not because I'm some kind of martyr or hero, it's because I couldn't bring myself to. Because I ... I couldn't do it... I don't know. I think it's to do with what you were saying there about that need of 'Look I'm still in charge, I've got to take a degree of responsibility that goes above and beyond what other people have to take'. Which you know is a kind of ... almost like a definition of leadership really. That's partly what it is, you have to do it. And looking back on it now it was silly, I should have given myself a long weekend – no one would have noticed. P5</i></p> <p><i>and certainly other members of SLT and even S who'd been on the training with me um they were looking to me for the guidance P2</i></p> <p><i>Because it's not just them being able to provide the support, but it's the support that we can provide for them as well. P4</i></p> <p><i>Trying to manage what's an awful situation anyway, and feeling that human sympathy towards them. and their friends in school. You know he had a form tutor who saw him every morning, and a year tutor who looked out for him, he had teachers who got on really well with him. So it's um ... P5</i></p>
	Decision Making	<p><i>we had a some decisions to make and by the time we were clear umm wed had rumours by break by the time wed been notified officially it was lunchtime umm the decision to make about we did ahh in terms of notifying children, notifying friendship groups umm we chose to not make an announcement in the day P1.</i></p> <p><i>But obviously this time around I was leading on it so it was um very different P2</i></p> <p><i>And then it was a case of working out with my senior colleagues how that information was going to be passed on as effectively as possible and sensitively to the rest of the school. And we made decisions about how that would be done, and in the meantime there was clearly a group of children who were more affected than others. And then there's the family of the child as well that we had to work on that. P7</i></p> <p><i>And that was probably more what I was there to do, you know but to make sure that everything was in place. P7</i></p>

		<p><i>We had stepbrothers, you know the friends that were involved, and the family, because the family, there was a split family and there was animosity with the family. And it was dealing ... trying to appease everybody really - so it was quite tough. P4</i></p> <p><i>So I had some children who knew that quickly he was gone, the rest of them who knew there'd been a terrible accident you know – it was horrendous P3</i></p> <p><i>Having to deal with this individual who ... you know as we walked towards him said to pupils 'The teachers are coming, but it's okay because we've got stones and bottles' ... P5</i></p>
	Feelings of incompetence	<p><i>But we are not trained really in that you know we just ended up listening to them more than anything um P2</i></p> <p><i>but I was happy that we put that out there...we did as much as we could As a school and the EP service were happy to lead it as well so because you do feel really out of your depth with stuff like this you know we're not we're teachers at the end of the day you know we do a lot of safeguarding training but it's just not the same thingP2</i></p> <p><i>You know we want her on the phone at 7:30 infact we don't want want her on the phone we want her to come straight away P2</i></p> <p><i>because you often do when you're talking to children about things, and you think 'Am I saying something that isn't right?' you know. Because we're not educational psychologists, you use your common sense don't you? But in that kind of situation then okay ... have to deal with a lot of bereavement, but you still don't know what the best things to say are P3</i></p> <p><i>We had wonderful support at the beginning when we didn't know what the heck we were doing, just using our common sense as it were, you know. P3</i></p> <p><i>And we very significantly felt that had it happened during school time that that would have been another event that we would probably have significantly struggled to manage. P5</i></p> <p><i>, who can help us manage it, because this is uncharted territory for us, there's no map, we haven't got a map for this But you're hoping somebody has...P5</i></p> <p><i>So there was all of that all wrapped up in a scenario that you're not trained for, you can't anticipate, nobody could actually quite see what was going to happen.P5</i></p> <p><i>and it felt ... yeah it felt as if we'd lost control of the situation and couldn't see how to regain control of the situation...P5</i></p> <p><i>Yeah and it was that sense of you know what to ... which was in a sense, because most of the staff were in with their pupils in the classes, there were maybe 15, 20 of us out there and maybe 250 kids. But when you've got numbers like that you begin to realise how fragile the whole thing is...P5</i></p> <p><i>I suppose what I felt was I suddenly felt that ... I suddenly felt that I was on a tightrope and there was no safety net P5</i></p> <p><i>So at that point in time I had been nearly a quarter of a century in education. I had been 8 years in senior management, and I didn't recognise the landscape, and I didn't have a map. But what happened was the critical incident team came down and said 'Oh there is a map' (tapping table) So this is where we go – this is where we go and that's how we're going to get out of it - and that changed everything for me, because I was sitting in my office thinking I do not know what to do with this. P5</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, you don't get trained. You know there has been some training now, which is good, but you know the qualification of headship NPQH doesn't include critical incident training because it's such a rare event. P5</i></p>

		<i>You just accept and embrace the fact that I am now in territory that I don't recognise, and I need somebody to help. P5</i>
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Overarching theme	Subtheme	Supporting Quotes
Psychological Impact	<i>Emotional impact</i>	<p><i>but you know when something happens at the start of the summer holidays, you know, there wasn't much response to the email I sent out, and so on and so forth. When it happened on the Friday with the first one I didn't hear anything from anybody until about 10 o'clock on the Sunday night – so I had the whole weekend trying to untangle all of this in my head. And bearing in mind as well I suppose as a head if people forget ... I'm also a human being who also has personal relationships with these people in terms of ... you know the fellow's been teaching here for 20 years, I've been here for 22 years, I've known the man for half his life ... not even half his life – most of his life ... no about half his life sorry ... so that isn't really taken into account. So sometimes I feel you know ... we're trained teachers, heads – that's what we're trained to do. I know there's training for critical incidents and serious incidents and all the rest of it, but where the reality bites and somebody that you know very well passes away and you've got to deal with it as a professional business person, yeah it's quite isolating and sad yeah, P6.</i></p> <p><i>then it was two weeks before I visited them in their home um and that was very painful and raw P1.</i></p> <p><i>I took the form teacher with me and he had to leave the conversation and made the excuse to go to the toilet and cried in the toilet P1</i></p> <p><i>And that's true then for weeks and weeks and weeks, specially in the case of the last one that happened in the first Sunday of the summer holidays, you know we then had ... I had to manage ... you know social media is rife as you know, so people find out, so I wanted to get to staff with a correct message before that. I wanted to make sure that the message that I was giving to staff was acceptable to the family, so I was having to phone the family and intrude really on their grief very early in the process to make sure they were happy for me to respond and they were happy with what I was saying, which is why that first 30 seconds is so important so that they trust you. So there was that. Then we had a funeral during the summer holidays and the management of that. Then you had the fact that he wasn't going to be here to teach in the first day of the new term and you had to almost clear him away from the school and arrange with his parents and his wife to come and collect his personal effects, manage his form class who turn up on the first day and he's not there. P,6.</i></p>

		<p><i>Well again I think amongst the staff who knew the young girl, you know there was a strong sense of you know sadness and obviously you know feeling for the situation and for the family and everything. P7</i></p> <p><i>It was really hard, because...the assemblies that we were having, and you know we lit some candles – you're almost dealing with it as if you were grieving for your own children. But also you're trying to deal with your own emotions and you're taking on the emotions of everybody else as well P4</i></p> <p><i>You don't get the supervision do you yourself, you know. P3</i></p> <p><i>And dealing with all this kind of ... this hatred that was coming through from social media and coming through from the kids – the kids really turned against us. You know parents driving in to school to take their kids away because it was no longer safe, individuals from various organisations emailing the school demanding what we were going to do to fix it ...So yeah dealing with all of that, which was incredibly difficult. So it was that kind of level that we were operating on. The thing that did go in our favour was that the term ended – the spring term ended, and the funeral and memorial service was the following week.</i></p> <p><i>And deal with the real kind of human element of it as well which is that you know you're speaking to mainly his mother who's lost a son, but who is actually quite hostile to you....Very tricky, very tricky to manage ... but only hostile to you on social media and when you're not in the room. So you're trying to deal with that, that the sheer humanity of the emotion, the horror ... P5</i></p> <p><i>Hostile. So we got the kids who were out there, we got them into the hall, and the deputy head spoke to them. But he said... he said on the day 'When I was looking in the kids' eyes and I was just seeing hatred coming back to me' ...P5</i></p> <p><i>Well it felt like a betrayal, because we thought then ... and I still think now in retrospect that actually it was a very caring school that worked really hard to try to deal with these things...P5</i></p> <p><i>Well it felt awful, because all I was trying to do was my job. And looking at it right...And sometimes you make mistakes, but that wasn't the case in this instance. Yeah and the irony was that I was being bullied...And my colleagues have been bullied. P5</i></p> <p><i>And that's exactly what happened. And you know I would say for maybe 2, 3 weeks, maybe a month afterwards ... my son would come round, and the nights he would come round I'd be looking outside, double checking, make sure everything was okay. And of course my kids were reading stuff on social media. P5</i></p> <p><i>It is, yeah it is, those ripples in the pond go out a long way. And imagine all of that and then dealing with this hostility which you genuinely genuinely feel is unfair. And we did, we looked really hard, we looked at everything, we thought did we miss something here – was there a pattern over time that if we joined the dots up we'd have seen something we actually weren't seeing. And there was nothing. P5</i></p> <p><i>No I don't think certainly during that fortnight that there was a single minute where ... Yeah I don't know how I slept or if slept. Yeah and it gets into every nook and cranny of your life. P5</i></p> <p><i>seeing – and that's one of the reasons I think that A despite my advice didn't take counselling, because I don't think he could see the immediate benefit of it. Even though I was saying look I had half an hour of it and I felt better after half an hour, and that's why I'm going back next week....It did, and it allowed me to put a little bit of distance between myself personally and being considered more broadly. P5</i></p> <p><i>Yes, it is, because you allow a vacuum and that gets filled with all sorts of nonsense and you can't put anything into that, like you can't put any filter on it, you cannot respond in any way shape or form other than to put some kind of bland statement out that says you know the school investigates all ... you school has a strong</i></p>
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		<p>antibullying policy, blah blah blah. But other than that you know you can't, you can't engage ... and that then begins to look suspicious...P5</p> <p>Yeah adversity does bring people together, and I think that there was an element of that, but there was also an element of people feeling bruised and battered...They'd become very fragile.p5</p> <p>Although I would say that there may well have been a degree of ... yeah it's had an impact, it's had an impact other than that, it's had a negative impact as well, yeah it dented my faith in education. Which I don't think ... which may not have fully recovered. P5</p>
	Delayed response	<p>you know make a note in their calendar a month down the road to give the head teacher a ring because at that point he's dealt with pupils he dealt with his the staff and then then it goes quiet and then you you have your own trauma I would put it as strongly as that as it's something you think wow it's just hit me and ah for me it was just about reading an article about something similar in the paper and ah you now I found it hugely upsetting not obviously particularly what had happened to the family in the newspaper I was reading about but generally just because I transposed all of that to the girl I knew that wasn't there anymore and the hole that had had through her friends her family and especially her mum her dad and her brother P1</p> <p>How am I feeling about it now um its still um raw in you know it's not something that I like to think about um P1.</p> <p>It was horrendous, it was horrendous for staff. And really what was a very nice school with its challenges became for a period of time a challenging school it tipped the balance. And also you know for a while afterwards it took the wind out of people, you know that kind of enthusiasm, drive and love of the job – it really undercut a lot. And you know several people took time out, who might have done anyway, but who said to me that's tipped me over the edge...Yeah as in I don't particularly want to be in this profession. P5</p> <p>Well he's now years later and he's decided not to be a deputy head anymore. And I know for a fact that he had the resilience and the time to go on to become a headteacher, and never quite ... but actually got to a point where he hated being a deputy head teacher. And you know in unguarded moments with just the two of us in the room and we'd go back to that time, and I'd say 'It's that isn't it?' and he'd say 'Well yeah that did bring about change'. To the extent to which ... he's a Christian and he very nearly lost his faith. P5</p> <p>I'm thinking about there was two heads of year, two heads of year that within two years had given up the pastoral job. I think it was linked – there would have been other factors, but I think when it came down to it I think they looked at the impact it had on L, and thought you know that could be any one of us. L herself went through a very difficult period...his Head of year, yeah...Several occasions she came to me with her resignation, and several occasions I pushed it back across the desk to her and said 'I'm not accepting that, go away on the weekend and think about it ...P5</p> <p>So that kind of brings it flooding back sometimes a little bit, and that can have a detrimental impact. Yeah it took a lot out of me. It took a lot out of me and ... Yeah. And maybe you know at the risk of sounding dramatic, but I think it's probably fair to say it probably means that I'd retire a year earlier than I would have otherwise because it drained so much of my energy and took so long for me to get back to a position where I felt pretty resilient. And by that I would mean 18 months maybe two years – and getting back to that place was hard. Yeah so it's changed, it's changed me, and changed A and it changed K, and it changed L.P5</p>
	Individual Post Traumatic Growth	<p>Well after the bruising I think it probably made me stronger. It certainly gave me a degree of perspective on things that perhaps I wouldn't otherwise have had. P5</p> <p>I've become much better at doing that, I've become much better at thinking do you know what, this can wait until tomorrow. Because I know what urgent looks like. P5</p>

		<p><i>And I know what a real problem looks like. And so you do get an element of perspective on things ... which perhaps I hadn't in the past P5</i></p> <p><i>and perhaps that again is something that I've learnt as well, maybe to listen to myself a bit more carefully...P5</i></p> <p><i>it's certainly really important for me to be able to I suppose embrace the fact that I had that experience and to try to make it something that would be beneficial to the way that I do my job now...Yeah it's taking something from it. ..Something that may make a difference to the kids I work with now, the staff I work with now. So I think that's important.P5</i></p> <p><i>So it's given me that ability I suppose to distance myself and be a little bit more objective..P5</i></p>
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Overarching theme	Subtheme	Supporting Quotes
School system	School Pastoral System	<p><i>But we have a structure in school ... yeah, all schools I'm sure are the same, but we've got a strong wellbeing structure, and we had key people within that structure, you know who are still here non teaching staff. So it wasn't like who can we cover and who's going to find the time to do this, you know we've got a designated area within the ... you mentioned the word 'hub', but we've got rooms where these people are located. It was easy to identify where people could go for extra support. P7</i></p> <p><i>And I think that's where the key thing is to have the right staff ... you know I think as a school we've always discussed a lot about the roles that we need in school, and I'll digress slightly away from that, but you know whether that's a teacher of this or a support worker of that – whatever it is, you've got to identify the roles you need to support the children in the school that you have. P7</i></p> <p><i>Yeah I think the structure of the school ... and I've got that structure today, so if that ... God forbid it does, but if anything like that happened ... and it does happen up to a certain level all the time, different ... little crisis here you know - the people are on the ground, I know straight away to say that's ...P7</i></p> <p><i>We've got our student support centre, we've got our family liaison officer, so all of that is already in situ. So it was just a matter of you know using the facilities that we've got in school for that to happen. P4</i></p>
		<p><i>And then once you've identified that you need a role to work with this group or a larger group or whatever it is, then you go out and find that person to do it. And when I became a head I was very clear in my own mind that once we'd got quite a few things sorted out ... so it didn't happen overnight – probably within 3 or 4 years ... that we needed a non teaching group of people who would manage a lot of the things which went on, and not teachers who were being paid to teach or had classes of children – couldn't come out to deal with one or two things all the time and leave 20 odd people behind who were never causing any problem. You know so we'd already set that up ... P7</i></p> <p><i>Yeah in saying that we needed this one person in school... who could coordinate all these things you know, and knew the local authority well, knew the people that they needed work with. And so from the point of view of managing ... cos this child fell into that bracket anyway of somebody who had X number of people working with them, you know, and it was important that you had somebody who could coordinate</i></p>

		<p>that without everyone duplicating all that out. So in a sense we had that structure already in the school P7</p> <p>So I didn't have to worry about that really, thinking who's going to sort all this out – it was clearly this group in that area – this is exactly where it would work. And to some extent therefore the rest of the school population didn't ... and I don't mean this in a negative, but ... but didn't see that work then going on P7</p> <p>And I've always ... I've always tried to have ... I think the kernel of the idea is that within the school you know you've got all sorts of people with all sorts of needs and you know in a school like this we're not a leafy suburb – we're going to have all the time a large group of children – it's not one or two ... and there's no point in denying that to yourself thinking we're going to be some school with whatever, you know because that's never going to happen. P7</p> <p>It's like coming back probably to my answer originally is that you need to have the right people around you, because you can't sort it out yourself. In fact that's probably the thing to learn from it is that you need to know you've got all these people to help you do it. P7</p> <p>But we've got our student support team in school as well, so there'd been lots of work done around resilience that I know has been delivered through ELSA that way. P4</p> <p>Because it was at the end of the summer for a lot of the staff, not meaning to sound unsympathetic, they go off on their 6 week holiday and for many of them it was carry on life as normal you know - whereas for the head of year and the pastoral team that were involved in that, we kept the connections going over the summer. P4</p> <p>And we've got a really strong pastoral staff here, and the support that we give one another is invaluable. Because as much as you may have had a bad day you can come in here and vent it off or have a cry you know, and they know okay tomorrow's another day. But we've got a really hard working staff – pastoral, more pastorally closeness because of I think P4</p> <p>But they know that through the pastoral team and us doing support centre there was somebody to go to if they needed to and when they needed to. So I think knowing that some of them did, you know some of them spent some time in our student support centre ... but they pretty much got on with it. I think for a lot of our pupils knowing that there's somebody there if they need to is enough to get them by. P4</p> <p>we've got our own wellbeing officer in school who is highly qualified, we've invested in that many many years ago – the second one actually – not just somebody who's at the level of a teaching assistant who has an interest in that. This is somebody who's worked outside school, outside education, counsellor etc you know ... and that's been invaluable at L for years, and on that day obviously it was hugely important, you know. P3</p> <p>I can't remember what we did with the ones that weren't actually that close, cos obviously I'd spoken to them in assembly. Oh the form tutors then, we used the pastoral side of the school then, for them to know ... and carried that one you know because obviously it's not something that goes away after two days is it, you know. P3</p>
	School Community Resiliency	<p>Umm it was that we'd done everything we could which was good but um that we'd managed the situation well we had no social media or media um you know we spoke to everybody I wrote a letter that went you know without referring to the girl we said you know that there'd been a bereavement in the school and we asked everybody not to talk to the media or to discuss it on social media and ah it didn't there was a total silence on it P1.</p> <p>It took a while obviously for people to get over it but children are resilient of it and yeah no it was ... life goes on sadly doesn't it, and people did get over it.p 6.</p>

	<p><i>Yeah supported, knowing you know where we could turn to if we needed to. Like I said I know the form tutor, I think the form tutor was spoken to, I know Luke the head of year was spoken to. Because it's not just them being able to provide the support, but it's the support that we can provide for them as well...But they're quite resilient. P4</i></p> <p><i>Yeah no no no, absolutely. It reflected on well on ... the way in which it was dealt with reflected well on the local authority and us I think P7</i></p> <p><i>And as much as it was really tough it did bring us together as a year group. . It does bring you together as a staff, but for the pupils as well, they were amazing throughout it P4</i></p> <p><i>You know you've got draw positives out of these things, and those are the positives. P 6.</i></p> <p><i>Cos the 6th Formers were so protective of C (sibling of victim) in the first year afterwards you know, incredible you know. And then some of them then who are still just a couple of years older than her, so she's been supported yeah. P3</i></p> <p><i>It was very emotional with the staff. Some of them couldn't come to the funeral for example. And then some of them want to do things quietly and they were happy you know their ... I'll say drama teacher because she was C's form tutor ... in the service we did she made some jokey things up as well. Cos he was ... you couldn't miss him (inaudible) in his time. So some nice jolly things as well, you know. But what I remember up in the hall ... cos it's a huge horrible hall, and the acoustics are horrendous there ... and one of the governors I think who was a friend as well had come and she said I couldn't believe how quiet it was, because you had 500 kids in there and you could have heard a pin drop, and it was a long ... cos so many of the children wanted to do something, it as a long ceremony, it was over about an hour – and it was deathly silent there, you know deathly silent...it was respect P3</i></p> <p><i>And that the tremendously hard work that was being done by particularly the pastoral team kind of (inaudible 19:22) So there was a real bitterness amongst the staff – but a togetherness as well in adversity...P5</i></p> <p><i>Operating really well. And that allowed us to be resilient when the situation occurred.p5</i></p>
<i>Staff Relationships</i>	<p><i>But we very much ... this office is very much the hub of the pastoral team, you know I think that helps as well. You know at the end of the day we're all in here and we're all feeding off one another, so I think that helps really, knowing that there's somebody there supporting you. P4</i></p> <p><i>We're just very positive as a staff. You know we've had quite a few things happen with pupils in the past, and I think having had the support of knowing that there's somebody there to speak to if we needed to you know certainly helps. We're quite resilient as a staff as well, and I think that came through. P4</i></p> <p><i>No no. Because I've got such a ... I've got a brilliant team, we're a very very small team, I didn't feel I had to do that on my own at all, not at all. We don't do things like that here, you know. I knew exactly who would be able to help me, who would do what. P3</i></p> <p><i>Yeah I think so, I think it was a close-knit staff, I think there was a good sense of camaraderie on the staff anyway. I think that that helped us get through it. The school was in a strong place, you know we'd ... you know we a couple of years previous, and we even did a spectrum report. The outgoing head retired, I'd taken over, and it was a fairly seamless transition because were very much of a type, myself and S, so whole thing was the school was in a strong position anyway. P</i></p>

Overarching theme	Subtheme	Supporting Quotes
Post Impact	Wider LA understanding	<p><i>I think the greatest support that's required with that is not from the Educational Psychology Service but from the whole sort of community if you like, education community, is that ... cos you're just expected ... like so for example I'd be very surprised if anybody in the local authority even remembered that we've had one death – apart from H by the way and M – but beyond the Education Psychology who've been very involved with it ... that remember we've one let alone three deaths in the last 10 months - and you're expected to get on with your business, and it affects the business of the school. P 6.</i></p> <p><i>And so greater support you want is empathy and understanding that it is going to affect teachers, it is going to affect senior leaders. We are getting on with our lives and business to make sure that the children are okay in the school, but there needs to be a bit more understanding that these kind of events have a huge impact on people who work in the school P 6.</i></p> <p><i>Yeah so I mean ... but that's what I mean when I said earlier that there needs to be a level of empathy and understanding from others in the education community – but the normal business of the school is anything but normal during these periods. P 6.</i></p> <p><i>Yeah could look normal, but it takes a huge amount of work to get it to look normal and a huge amount of emotional strength and support for everyone around you, because it's a tough ask. And some of the people are very close to these people, you know some of the staff, they're very good friends P 6.</i></p> <p><i>What I think needs to ... and this probably is the case, but what I think needs to be laboured perhaps is the long term impact. And I think there's an understanding or awareness of that. Because with the best will in the world you know people move on, don't they? When an emergency rescue team go to a landslide and they did do the job there, well they just go to the next emergency. .And I wonder whether there's enough kind of understanding in the system or the structures of what the long impact might be. P5</i></p>
	Professional & Personal Support	<p><i>I was in a situation, I was in a relationship, even though we were still living separately I spent a lot of time with my partner, she was a teacher herself, so that was tremendously helpful, and the family around you and that's helpful as well ...P5</i></p> <p><i>and a head teacher through the catholic system who suffered a death in school and I was able to contact him and say look get all these people on board get the protocol out make sure your local authority is ah ah and two things I said to him is um make contact early with the parents however however an unpleasant a thought that would be And to look after yourself as well P1</i></p> <p><i>when it happens to colleagues with the critical incident very recently in mountain ash that made the national news the first thing I did was ah to ring the head and just say you know I understand and these are my pearls of wisdom for what they are worth that again I said look after yourself and it probably won't hit you for a while but it probably will hit you and you know if you want to ring at any point you know ring so I suppose it's when that comes up or you come across a photograph she the girl was a talented sports person and a talented musician so you come across photographs like</i></p>

		<p>everyone else has of events Christmas concerts and sports teams and all of that and you see her and you take a gulp or a deep breath</p> <p>And I think that as heads we're aware because you know there's been quite a few deaths in schools, not necessarily XXX but where my children went to school teachers had died. You know my daughter's been to two funerals (inaudible 58:08) and I phoned them up ... I shared a letter for example with (inaudible) lost a child then a couple of years ago, so I said to (inaudible) 'Do you want my letter, I've got a letter, all you've got to do is change the details a little bit'. So he said 'Oh yeah thank you' – little things like that help you know. And somebody in West Wales I remember phoning them up and you know ... it's just ... and we have a network like that I suppose of head teachers don't we. ...And whatever happens, specially maybe as Welsh schools perhaps we do it more. If anything happens in one school you know ... I know I can phone a head down there to say 'Oh God this has happened, what did you do about it?' kind of thing you know. P3</p> <p>....and the staff, the staff were tremendously supportive, fantastically supportive...Of each other you know ... to the extent to which the SLT would say things like 'Right you do what you need to do today M, we'll run the school' - and that's what I needed to hear. ...what's happening here - you do what you need to do. And the rest of the staff, the rest of the staff were absolutely fantastic...P5</p>
	Systemic Post Traumatic Growth	<p>So a lot of our children catch a train to and from school. So we annually at some point when we think the time is appropriate we got all of the children that travel by train into the hall to give them a safety talk if you like. Because I never want that to happen again ... and usually the B Transport Police ... uh, sorry A Trains and/or usually the B Transport Police will come in with us to the assembly if you like. And I use Js' name as an example ...lives very very very clearly in all of our minds who were here ... so we use that. But also I suppose you know A Trains have improved safety on the platform. P 6.</p> <p>Which is good as well, and we've got a great relationship with British Transport Police and Arriva Trains as a result I suppose of it. P 6.</p> <p>I think the thing is the provision has evolved in truth because we've got an SEBD provision in the school now which we didn't have then...So yeah no, the structure has evolved, but it's firmly embedded into the school alongside everything else we do now. P7</p> <p>I think they appreciated that looking back actually – I just did what was instinctive to be honest with you, because that's the kind of school we are, you know. If anything happens we do ... we do speak to the parents straight away – and they've appreciated that because the bond between the school and them since then is amazing really you know. Oh, she's on our board of governors now. P3</p> <p>, because R was such a high flyer obviously ... well you know you remember some more than others don't you? No, what's happened then is that they ... they'd set up a charity in his name ****, and they've raised so far £50,000 in 3 years...And they want most of it to come back to the school. That's right, that's right. And her main aim is to get a 4G pitch for L that's what she's raising the money for. And we've had lots of things already that they've built in the first term P3</p> <p>It's a huge relationship between us now you know, she's joined the board of governors. She's given up teaching because of the effect it's had on her you know, we're very close with them really, and I think that's helped everybody.</p> <p>And the 6th Formers then, February after, they arranged a ball ... this is where most of the money ... because they were as I said an exceptional year ... so the children, the young people as they were then, they arranged a Valentine's ball... you know invited parents – this is where all the money's come from, cos J then and the girls, the children from here, have worked so hard to raise money. So they've had companies, they've had all sorts doing it, you know, it's fantastic... And then last February they did ... they left it for a year, then last February they did another ball that raised another £20,000 or whatever you know. P3</p>

		<p><i>Myself and the deputy and a couple of the members of staff had an invitation to her 50th birthday P3</i></p> <p><i>And dad refereed because he plays for B, C and her friends played, they were here ... must have been the beginning ... was it Year 8 then? I can't remember ... yes it must have been when they were in Year 8. So the 6th Formers were still here, R's group ... C's friends played, so it was kids against the staff – which was lovely you know. P3</i></p> <p><i>And another thing the whole school community has taken to doing is they (inaudible) wherever they go they put the ribbons. So there was a trip to Iceland very soon after he went, and he went to Iceland with us when he was in Year 7 I remember. So these little blue ribbons are everywhere. If there's a school trip the ski trip every year ... I think the ski trip in one of the years, the first year I think it was, had blue hoodies with XXXX on it as well, because there were a lot in the same crowd you know. And they go and then staff do it as well when they're ... oh that's what they did, they ran the ... I think it must have been the Cardiff 12K – one of these long runs you know. I think that might have been the first summer after, a couple of members of staff did that, and his granddad walked it lovely... with the family you know. It's the family and the school together usually when we do that kind of thing. P3</i></p>
	School Community Response	<p><i>and then everyone came back in for the Monday in case there was anything which I don't think there was anything at all but what came out was the delayed shock which were still experiencing now really to some of the people in her year group um some of her friendship groups groups are still undergoing counselling or other charity I know two that are still going to CAMHS as a result of what happened P1</i></p> <p><i>And uh a lot of what happens isn't about school so you know with the individuals who were connected to her they still present in school perfectly normally they still you now she was part of a group of academically able you know bright girls so they still present like that in school but what we get s what home are telling us what they are like at home P1</i></p> <p><i>So I sought of um had to reacquaint myself with it all before Tuesday so I knew exactly yea what we needed to do the problem was because there were 16 other children as witnesses there it had a massive roll out affect really P2</i></p> <p><i>Yeah some of them kind of fell off the wagon and turned to drugs and really struggled. Two of her closest friends really struggled with regards to – withdrew themselves from school and the likes of ... every Friday there would be like a vigil at the graveside. And I was trying to say to them ... and encourage them as much as 'I know she's not here, but she wouldn't want you doing this'. And almost would move on with life ... and felt bad about laughing and joking and enjoying their life because she wasn't here. And I know one of them would visit the mother regularly, and the mother almost had a shrine in the back room of the house. Because when we visited mum a couple of times mum found it difficult to let go, and I think that was feeding through on some of the friends, almost mum was wanting them to be like it as well. P4</i></p> <p><i>Yea yea things in school on the surface returned to normal...Um but I think there's still a residual of it the parents very quickly wanted to cut the school out um we attempted we wanted to do some things to remember her ah they didn't want that P1</i></p> <p><i>It's the aftermath and it's finding um the support for children before they get into a position that they may do something to harm themselves or harm others it's that that's the problem, not the critical incident P1</i></p> <p><i>We're now picking up some behaviour issues from him. P4</i></p> <p><i>Yeah yeah, cos we're three years down the line now and we knew who had been affected and we were worried as to what would happen in the future you know – one of them was really interesting, one of his closest friends from D as it happened. He was meant to leave, he'd decided he was leaving L and going to college, something to do with rugby for the 6th Form – because this was the summer that they were due to come back obviously, and in the summer holidays I think I was speaking to his mother</i></p>

		<p>who said 'He can't go to college, he needs to come back to L he wants to come back to L because of everything'. So there you know ... yeah. P3</p> <p>And then C then, the effect on her, she's like him – smiley, really really smiley child – positive, positive ... but myself I don't think she has grieved properly.P3</p> <p>It has affected some of the children definitely, the young people as they are now, they're in ... I think in university now – they've started their second year in university you know. But it did, it affected that year group massively. Not academically, they were very clever as it happened anyway, and I think the ones that they decided to come back to school really appreciated that that's what they'd done, they stayed for the two years then P3</p> <p>C really didn't want to open up, I remember her mum talking to me about the memory box that they'd done. I know they did that much of it, but she's ... she's strong in one sense you know she won't make a fuss about anything. P3</p> <p>oh it must have been something in assembly, something to do with it. And I've sort of alluded to it, and you can see then the children ... you could read (inaudible 51:05) I can't remember what it was now, it had been ... one of these special days, you know like Mental Health Day today, something like that maybe I can't remember, or talking about RR81 maybe, I'm not sure. So a lot of them still feel it. P3</p> <p>They were very academic as I've said, so they've done brilliantly most of them academically. A couple of them have really struggled P3</p> <p>One of the boys in particular had a hard time, we provided ... I can't remember what we did, but I remember talking to the mother and ... probably it was J might have offered further help or whatever for him, and I think he benefitted from that. And then the other one who wanted to come back ... because the one who was finding it really difficult ... they were both in primary with him, that's the difference P3</p> <p>R and R were the ones who were suffering most with it. Yeah, I can't remember, something happened fairly recently about R that we'd found out ... had he dropped out of college or something? I can't remember but there was something linked to it P3</p> <p>But you know there's been a large impact on the school. You know it took certainly half a generation of kids to go through before you felt as if ... you know I left the school in 2017 and the lowest pupils of his year group were then Year 13, or coming to the end of Year 13, because 13 ... and you just felt then that you had a school population where nobody could remember it. I'd like to put that more kindly, but I can't think of another way of putting it. And that that kind of sense ... a residual sense of distrust that had built between some of the pupils and the staff began to go. P5</p> <p>and you know there were times after that, because as often happens with these sort of things there are copycats – we did have a spate of attempted suicides. We did have a spate of kids saying 'I've been bullied' when actually they hadn't been bullied.P5</p> <p>Um, probably not quite as well as we'd expected them to. And that was probably all of them. Yeah the recollection of results day of going down through the results, looking at results, and then those names jumping out at me and looking across and thinking that's not quite where they would have been ... Certainly several pupils in that inner circle fell short of their academic targets P5</p> <p>Yeah because she was a lovely lovely girl ... and not if they're not, but you know I think was involved in so much in school – drama, choir, you know and was an absolute character, and it really affected staff. You know when we went to the funeral as well I think it was – the head had allowed quite a few staff to go to the funeral, and the funeral was just horrific, it was horrific.</p> <p>Forgive me now... certainly would have been my head boy had he lived P3</p>
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		<p><i>I think they massively appreciated, but it also helped us I think you know because ... because obviously the funeral was difficult, very difficult ... you can imagine what it's like with a child dies young you know ... and she wanted us to speak and that – me and the head from D you know. It's the hardest thing I've ever done, yeah P3</i></p> <p><i>Yeah and I think that there were certain things that happened in the fortnight between him dying and the funeral that I took advantage of, namely some counselling, which he didn't despite my recommendation that he do – and never did. And I don't think he managed to ... I don't think he managed to flush it out of his system at all... Because I was dealing with the critical incident team, he was very much out in the school on the corridors dealing with the kids... And he would say to me that he saw that thing in their eyes he'd never seen before that changed him. P5</i></p> <p><i>Well it was, it was. And you know losing a child from the school community was always going to be incredibly difficult. But the aftermath made it ... impossible - it wasn't impossible, but oh ... You know because we'd have been dealing with grief...But what came very quickly was you're dealing with grief and anger. P5</i></p> <p><i>Huge. So his birthday ... that's another thing ... oh that's right they opened the summerhouse on his birthday, because he would have been 17 in the January, and his birthday's is usually one of the first days back in January, so we had balloons and things there you know – and lots of the children came to that. It was a Sunday afternoon, lots of the children came in for that. But I suppose it will ... oh he's got poetry written about him, cos the Welsh department wrote a series of poems, and that's on the wall with his picture. Because mum brought a picture that she wanted it up, you know. So that's in the middle of the school for everyone to see. P3</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, and they would be the ones who'd come to me and say 'Oh it's the anniversary, can we do something?' And we did you know for two years after on the anniversary of his death, we did something. Nothing major, but certainly something that would allow his friends to have the chance to stop and pause and reflect.P5</i></p>
	<i>Fear of a reoccurrence</i>	<p><i>You know in fact it's something you dread, that. Every time you see things on the news and you see things over the weekend – now we always look at what's on the ... you know and you go on the BBC online and you see something come up round here, think 'Oh' you know ... honestly, that'll happen to me this weekend. You know I know that – it happens to me every night ... so you live with that really, you live with that. But I think it's just one of those things like it is if you're running a school – every day something happens. P7</i></p> <p><i>summer I was worried that something similar was going to happen because we had a child again in Year 11 actually who had a terrible accident in Italy on his summer holidays...P3</i></p> <p><i>And it's also made me realise that actually how quickly things can spiral out of control. And that's a bit of a scary problem, sometimes I know that I will see something emerge in the school that would bring it all flooding back...And I'll think wow we're going to be there again. You know it may not be as bad as that, it can't be as bad as that, but actually they could be similar. ..Despair. Yeah. And vulnerable and alone.P5</i></p> <p><i>And yeah I do get a knot in my stomach when something reoccurs with it..P5.</i></p>

Appendix 13: Supporting quotes for Overarching themes and subthemes for Research Question 2.

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Preparedness	Training	<p><i>Yea about a week before we had the critical incident protocol sent out and talked to us at a meeting... And as luck would have it it was still on the pile on my desk at the very top aah and I had had I've been a headteacher for 9 years here and id had no need for anything like that prior to that. So although I was very experienced I hadn't done anything like that and I hope not to have to do anything like that again. But umm yea it just so happened that that the protocol had been updated and wed had some basic training on what to do with it P 1.</i></p> <p><i>because myself and Mrs E the headteacher had done the critical incident training a year previously um and there was a booklet...From the EPS service yea so um I knew then that I needed to set up counselling rooms I needed to set up a break out room for children to access...Um we needed to make staff aware of the protocols P2</i></p> <p><i>Yea so I was really glad that we done the training even though you need to go back over the booklet and you need to P2</i></p> <p><i>Yea I don't know whether I would have been quite as confident if I hadn't been on the training P2.</i></p> <p><i>I think it was the training the initial training setting you up for what to expect, umm because then I kind of knew then what I was going to get Yea so id say the training would be the most relevant part of it all because then that that gives you insight into knowing if this was to happen knowing then this is the kind of support that we would be getting and as I say that puts your mind at rest...so yea id say the training at the very beginning P2</i></p>
	Previous Incident	<p><i>Yea yea um we've had a critical incident here previous to that it was about probably 6 years ago I wasn't in the same position then that I'm in now so So I wasn't sough of first hand dealing with it But I had an awareness of things like vulnerability circles um and the set up with the counselling service and stuff coming in so I had some experience of this so when I went on the training I was aware of the kind of meetings and things that took place P2</i></p> <p><i>Um like I say because wed had a previous incident I was aware of vulnerability circles because they had been published to staff previously P2</i></p> <p><i>Certainly helped me, yeah... sort of built some resilience perhaps...And not just the resilience, I think it's the confidence that you are saying the right things for the pupils, you're doing the right thing for the pupils. And the more experience that you've had of these awful things ... But you do think right okay I know now this this and this. And it's like anything, you've got to experience it sometimes to know right what went right, what didn't go right. P4</i></p> <p><i>and I suppose you know hopefully it doesn't happen again, but if anything like that happened again it would be slightly easier for us, a lot easier – we'd know a bit more about what to do wouldn't we, you know. P3</i></p>

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
EP Presence	Efficient Response	<p><i>I think if that hadn't been there it would have been ten times more difficult, because a) the manpower, b) the experience of it, you know of knowing what to do. And that line I suppose between support and you know stay strong and ... you know. P3</i></p> <p><i>So I think their expertise was certainly appreciated as well as the manpower, you know. P3</i></p> <p><i>They're just straight on it... there's no time loss with them. P4</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, and it was very strategic you know really, because obviously it was something that you're used to doing ... unfortunately. And there was a clear plan, you know there was no 'Shall we do this, shall we do that?' you know – which you don't need at that time, you need people who know exactly what they're doing...P3</i></p> <p><i>Quite a few of them came in, it really was kind of ... that sense of right okay find us a room, find us a space, find us somewhere we can work – and put all the things in place that ... P5</i></p> <p><i>Yea I think anybody with the relevant training was brought I think everything was cancelled, counselling did the same they cancelled everything and brought here and we've we've had that happen to us where the EP or counsellor has had to ring to say there's a critical incident in X school we won't be there today P 1</i></p> <p><i>Will happen yea, as a team they are taking off anything that they are meant to be doing and you know sent here P2</i></p> <p><i>... I think it was H's line manager at the time saying 'Everything else that happens in RCT this week is now on hold, you are our priority' – that was a big deal as well, being told that. P5</i></p> <p><i>um and EP service then were in by 8:30 that morning P2</i></p> <p><i>They did in all fairness we did have two Eps here by 9 o'clock so we couldn't have asked for better than that really and it was it run like the training ran we sat down and worked on the circles and from there P2</i></p> <p><i>That was something that we found out on Sunday afternoon as it happened. It was just something that came through, phone calls and ... I don't quite know how we all found out, but we find these things ... and then the child is one of yours. And so actually it was conversations on the Sunday night to clarify that, but first thing on the Monday morning ... in all fairness there were people here from the local authority EPS, and then dealing with the incident went from there P7</i></p> <p><i>If I'm absolutely honest I can't remember whether I phoned or not first thing in the morning, but I know that there was communication very quickly and reassurance about what would be done P7</i></p> <p><i>I know then somewhere just as soon then that the H had arranged, or whoever had arrange then, for the team to come in from R. P3</i></p> <p><i>I've thought about meeting today, and I can only say that I thought it was all done very very well. P7</i></p> <p><i>I hope it never happens again to anybody. Unfortunately it will happen at some point, but I'd be confident if I was informing any other colleague that ... if that was the case then they can rest assured that they wouldn't feel alone P7</i></p> <p><i>No no, I can't elaborate more now really other than to say it was all very very well done. P7</i></p>

		<p><i>but it was a very well managed process. And I'm not saying that for myself about the way in which everybody ... in fact it wasn't down to me really, you know it was down to the team that came in and my own team that resolved that. P 7</i></p> <p><i>So I don't think as EPS they can do much more, other than make it available to us and part of training for you, because I think it might not ever happen that you need it ... or it could happen ... p3</i></p> <p><i>But no, in broad and specific terms I couldn't have asked for more support. P5</i></p> <p><i>If a critical incident happened again here I'm in a different authority now, I'm in C, but if the response from C was as good as the response from R I'd be satisfied. P5</i></p>
	Existing Relationship	<p><i>Yea so I was really glad that we done the training even though you need to go back over the booklet and you need to Yea and I didn't have it at home I kept it in the office but fortunately I've got a good relationship with the EP so she emailed it to me Monday evening P2</i></p> <p><i>what they give us we need to have support on, that support has always been there for us to P4</i></p> <p><i>I think because our EP, obviously she's been with us so knows the school, and I think because we've got a really open door policy and got a really good relationship with the EP service, you know with H as well we've had contacts through training that she's delivered to us. ...So they're not strangers to us, so I think that helps. So they come in, they've sat in here, you know they met with different people and different pupils, and sat ... so yeah, it was good. P4</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, because they know what our strengths are, they know where our weaknesses are, so where they can guide us or help us, and it just ... I think the working relationship helps. So I think if you're coming in to something cold it's harder to have that kind of working relationship. P4</i></p> <p><i>I think all our needs as a school were met you know. If there'd have been something that you think 'Oh well we could have done with that' we probably would have picked up the phone and said 'Well what about this?' – cos that's the type of relationship that we've got. P4</i></p> <p><i>I just think that sometimes that familiar face or that person – at a time when you feel a little bit vulnerable yourself helps. P4</i></p> <p><i>it's just you are able to be a bit more familiar with them and you don't have to ... not put on a front, but if you want to have a cry you can have a cry. Whereas if it's somebody that you're not sure about or you've not before, you're less likely to do that. P4</i></p>
	Knowledge of school system	<p><i>And that line I suppose between support and you know stay strong and ... you know. I think the ECP can see both sides can't they because they understand school ... well H did definitely from the school side of it. They understand the school structures, they understand ... you know I don't know well she knew our school, I don't think she did before then probably, but I'm sure ... you know of the school, you understand, don't you you know. But also she knew obviously what needed to be done from ...P3</i></p>

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
EP Approach	Guidance and Professionalism	<p><i>So it was great to have them here ... because also a document's great, but they were able to give me guidance or advice or confirmation based on the context of a) the school, b) what had happened ... which was invaluable I reckon. P 6.</i></p> <p><i>Yea it was useful for us as a staff I think because you do feel quite vulnerable as a staff I think whether you're saying the right thing managing it the right way so I was grateful for them being here just to have that professional conversation with them and just checking in with them as a lead member of staff am I doing the right thing so yea yea I was glad of the support and I was glad of them being in P2</i></p> <p><i>but there was enough of them, and it was done very very well – I can't say any different to that. And from what I know, from colleagues in other schools they've had exactly the same experience – the support has been very very good right at the time you need it, and very informative and helpful, and guidance whatever you need. And I think out of that has come quite a bit of work in terms of critical incidents, or policies or procedures. P7</i></p> <p><i>Yeah just takes the pressure off you a bit. we know that they would be in straight away – just to give you the confidence as well to know that you're doing and saying the right thing P4</i></p> <p><i>And H did advise me, because she was in the school with the team P3</i></p> <p><i>I think if that hadn't been there it would have been ten times more difficult, because a) the manpower, b) the experience of it, you know of knowing what to do. P3</i></p> <p><i>I think they were spot on. Definitely. It didn't take the pressure off, it didn't go away did it, but it just helped you move things around. P3</i></p> <p><i>But in that kind of situation then okay ... have to deal with a lot of bereavement, but you still don't know what the best things to say are ... to the extent that somebody who's trained in it would know there you know. So I think their expertise was certainly appreciated as well as the manpower, you know. P3</i></p> <p><i>HJ's brilliant to be fair, she's always at the end of an email or a phone P6</i></p> <p><i>But you know I remember H when she sat, she said 'If there's anything you need, you can just ring us straight away' – and we would have done if we needed to you know. P4</i></p> <p><i>Yeah yeah, having the ed psychs physically there, knowing that there was H's number and her mobile. Knowing that I could pick up the phone, that if I couldn't get somebody down to the school straight away I'd have somebody who could listen to me, somebody who could say yeah 'What you need to do M now is this' - I'd be 'Thank you' because I don't want to make a decision. P5</i></p> <p><i>I think from my perspective I was always clear in my mind that should I need ... should I have felt the need for it I could pick up the phone to H, I could pick up the phone to, and they'd have got somebody to... And that was worth its weight in gold P5.</i></p> <p><i>Yea yea I think just being able to have that professional dialogue they weren't in they come and done the group work they weren't in like the e to e service then so they were coming and going but ah H whose head of service was ringing in to speak to me as well to check what was going on um if there were any developments or anything and also we had K who was kind of leading the team here on the ground P2</i></p>

		<p><i>Yea its very hard and you worry that your saying the right things are you managing it the right way...so yea I really appreciated you know the services you know being around certainly for the first couple of weeks P2</i></p> <p><i>Yea the calmness and removedness from knowing the individuals um it allowed them to ask all the questions you know as I said what springs to mind is what are you doing with the vulnerable learners and the um you know was a question we would of even considered ah there was a number of things that they just asked because they had been through similar incidents again and it was that calmness and that awareness of what could happen and some things we discussed the media response and things like that P1</i></p> <p><i>So the sheer professionalism and the calmness that they brought and the kindness that they brought made a massive difference to me personally and professionally, and to the school. P5</i></p> <p><i>So I think ... you know I met with them, just to say where do I go with this, you know ... because we'd experienced tragedies of pupils dying in the past – we'd had another one who lost his life up in the reservoir. And I know on that occasion the ed psychs had come and they'd actually done like two days in for the older pupils – this was a Year 11 boy – and they were in speaking to the pupils, and that was more hands-on. So I think they very much tailor it to the needs of what we want as a school, which I think is quite good P4</i></p>
	Support & Reassurance	<p><i>But the ... I suppose what I felt was I suddenly felt that ... I suddenly felt that I was on a tightrope and there was no safety net - and then they came in and put a safety net there. So at that point in time I had been nearly a quarter of a century in education. I had been 8 years in senior management, and I didn't recognise the landscape, and I didn't have a map. But what happened was the critical incident team came down and said 'Oh there is a map' (tapping table) So this is where we go – this is where we go and that's how we're going to get out of it - and that changed everything for me, because I was sitting in my office thinking I do not know what to do with this. P5</i></p> <p><i>There's something to do, there is a process, and that process is A, B, C, and we don't have to make any decisions – that was the critical thing for us really, because we had enough decisions to make back at the ranch, and to be told that actually you don't need to make decisions now, you need to work with us following the protocols - was great by me. Because I didn't need to be making any more decisions than I already was. So you're working within a structure ... and just walking into that room and sitting down and looking round and thinking ... all these people are working towards the same goal here, and that was very reassuring as well.p5</i></p> <p><i>But yeah the ed psychs were there ... yeah I can't emphasise how much of a difference it made to me p5</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, and they couldn't wave magic wands, and they couldn't kind of resolve everything overnight for me, but the fact that they were there made a huge huge difference. P5</i></p>
	Human Approach	<p><i>Because I think the realisation was that the police ... you know they're doing their job aren't they, but to the police it's a job isn't it? You know they do it like this, like this, like this don't they – you need something like the ECPS or ... you know or you know (inaudible 26:52) side of the LEA then to understand the human side of it, don't you really you know...P3</i></p> <p><i>And it's just like feeding off one another, so when we do have the meetings with H and J you're picking up on their vibes as well, I think you carry that as a staff as well then how we should deal with that P4</i></p> <p><i>I thought they were brilliant, they were absolutely ... I think I wrote to somebody afterwards to say how brilliant they were... Cos we're a very inclusive staff and we were very small at that time as a school as well, so it was very much a family thing with ... you know I can remember being round this table with all of us ... we</i></p>

		<p>came to the ECPS I think it was just H at the time and one of the ... but I had the key staff in here, and you know we filled that circle very quickly because we knew them all so well and we could work the links out you know. P3</p> <p>Yeah and ... no they were excellent. Because H being firm as well as being cwtchy looking after us you know, because with the police you know quite firm to say right well you need to do this, you need to do that – that was helpful P3</p> <p>But I would say that what made it not impossible was that. You know that the level of support and kindness and sympathy that we had then, and common sense got us through really. And I've said to H several times that you know if it wasn't for her and her team I don't know how we'd have managed.P5</p>
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Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Approach to direct support	Parental Support	<p>So um we had on the day as well umm about 10 parents turn up um which I didn't expect um of other children um and we had to deal with those as well so we found them an area provided them tea and coffee ah and the educational psychologists ended up speaking to them as well because they as soon as they found out they turned up to check on their children basically and how they were processing the information P1</p> <p>well um and they stayed to speak to parents after school as well one day after school and the grandparents of the children that had been there P2</p> <p>And said if they wanted help on a conversation on supporting children at home and they did they led a parent group as well which was really useful P2</p>
	Staff Support	<p>So they haven't stepped back and just left us to it either which is really good P2</p> <p>that to some extent is where the local authority EPS in all fairness came in with their staff and worked with our staff - and that element of the immediate support for groups of children is taken care of I think then – which it was. P7</p> <p>Yeah supported, knowing you know where we could turn to if we needed to. Like I said I know the form tutor, I think the form tutor was spoken to, I know L the head of year was spoken to. P4</p> <p>I had to go to the PRUDiC meeting, God I can't remember now ... yeah that's the one in the H so the two members of the team, they looked after me as it were that day, they met me in (the H) you know...oh But yeah the EPS, they were brilliant, they met me downstairs and then we went up you know. really really good. P3</p> <p>The ed psych support for the staff was tremendously beneficial. P5</p> <p>And I think even though I kept flagging it up to the staff that behind the scenes there is a very strong support mechanism in place, I don't think that you could possibly have appreciated it unless they saw what myself and K were P5</p>

	<i>Pupil Support</i>	<p>yea yea they came in in the morning and helped us do the circles at the beginning um and then because there was such a large group of children who uh didn't come into school had actually gone back to the site of the drowning two of our senior staff were alerted to them being there so ...We brought them back into school um so they did some group therapy work with them that day P2</p> <p>So they came back in the following day um and they took they worked in pairs and they took groups and done some specific work they said there had been research done in Scandinavia I think I can't remember the name of the therapy H led it um but it was specific to getting children to talk immediately after an incident so it helped the process of them being able to manage it really and process it going forward So they done that work following day they also came back in later in the week to meet with two children who weren't there on that day to speak with them them P2</p> <p>Yea and they're going to come back in now because there's been some wider issues with the group Which e to e don't feel that counselling is the right therapy if you like, the EP service is going to come back in at the minute were discussing how they are going to manage that P2</p> <p>year um and whereas we used e to e to check in with them all e to e referred them back to EP and they were quite happy to take the work on so it hasn't started yet P2</p> <p>So they did a group session if we needed to ... but a lot of them didn't want to talk about it, you know P4</p> <p>Because the ed psych support for the pupils was tremendously beneficial. P5</p>
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Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Screening and Monitoring	<i>Circles of Vulnerability</i>	<p>Another example of perhaps what I wouldn't have thought of is um the trauma for staff you know...I knew staff would be upset but actually hadn't thought or I didn't know you know I've got staff that have been here 20 to 30 years I've been here 9 so I'm a relatively new comer um I didn't know that two staff had lost children previously so you know the EPs asked a question are there staff members who have been through some sort of trauma with children or loss of loved ones recently and things came out across the table when we were debriefing with the senior leadership that I didn't know about and they were able to offer support about, So it's seeing being seeing the wider picture and the experience of things that would of happened along the way P1.</p> <p>Because they came in and they spoke to me obviously first of all to discuss the issues and so on, and I remember that they went and did a circle of something...Yeah, so they spoke to a number of staff who were close to the person and they worked out who the vulnerable people were in terms of staff, pupils and everything else. We didn't have a huge amount of follow-up support, but neither did we need it P6.</p> <p>They did the vulnerability thing, circle of vulnerability, and really just gave us advice more than anything else on how to manage pupil staff, community and everything else. P6.</p> <p>Yea yea it was good um we were commended as a staff for knowing our pupils really well because even though there was 16 children sort of there during the incident we then were able pin point a lot identify a lot of other children who had</p>

		<p>suffered bereavement trauma loss in some form that may be affected by this so yea the circles were massive to be honest P2</p> <p>yea yea they came in in the morning and helped us do the circles at the beginning P2</p> <p>my EP that said obviously these children are going to be people that we you know are going to be on the watch list for this year P2</p> <p>So we had ... H come in to the school and draw up – it was like a relationship circle of all the pupils that had been affected. So initially the boy, because he had siblings in the school as well, and friends who were there affected by who had witnessed it – obviously the stepbrother and how he was affected, because there could have been ongoing bullying incidences cos they were targeting ... there was some idea that the man had been under the influence, so that came with a whole host of things around that. P4</p> <p>Yeah cos it wasn't until that relationship circle had been done that we realised the impact on all of the different pupils. Cos so and so was related to them and this was related – so that was really helpful for us in helping us to identify where the needs were and where the support was needed. P4</p> <p>we just found that whole relationship thing and them tying it all together – I think that for us was probably the most valuable thing. P4</p> <p>And it was very much a broader picture than that...Yeah, really useful. Because we knew who we were keeping an eye on as well P4</p> <p>and we'd filled in ... don't remember when did this, but we'd filled in the circle ...That one I think yeah with all the little circles on. So a team of us did that ... that must have been the first day probably, wasn't it, I'm not sure ... came in, but we all sat here, everybody who knew anything about him, and that we could all think about ...P3</p> <p>I've got that if you wanted to see it actually, I kept it, because we'd written down all of the children, and it was huge when you started going through them you know, because C and her friends, the sister, were involved ... R was such a popular child it was incredible, so he had the close friends who were with him, he had all his year group, he had most of the school. He was exceptional, absolutely exceptional child you know. P3</p> <p>So then ... yeah we did all of that, so we used the circle of vulnerability and saw different people, and then ... if I remember rightly we came back to that at some stage some time later...Yeah, and it's interesting actually when you do look back on it, we were quite accurate in what we'd spotted. P3</p> <p>I found it very valuable, I've not seen that before. And for us I think myself and my colleague both thought because it was there for us to see and to look at it was fantastic. Because rather than just have a piece of paper, the way in which it would be mapped out, it was great for us to be able to make the connections that might not have necessarily made had it been just on a piece of paper with names and stuff. P 4</p> <p>And gave us that bit of breathing space really in terms of the grief in the school community and the grief amongst pupils, so that we could just make sure that we were just content in our minds that the children who were in the inner circle of vulnerability... were looked after..P5</p>
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Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Crisis Intervention	Practical Tasks	<p>So we liaised with RCT EPS we had a meeting straight after school and put together what we were going to do the next day P1.</p> <p>And it was agreed that we umm would hold a series of assemblies umm for the other year groups and different parts of the school to make the announcement and we would tell them about the expectations about how they should be behaving and how they should umm do things with social media P1.</p> <p>Yea yea we discussed it umm you know it was it isn't written down in the protocol what you do that's up to the head teacher of the school P1</p> <p>Um we had within the school umm areas where children could go um obviously were a catholic school so we had our chapel and our Chaplin um we had the eye to eye counsellors in one area and we had the educational psychologist team in another area...the children were told what's available in the chapel we had a book of condolences and you know prayer services held and everything was voluntary the children had the choice to where they go and where they felt most comfortable and they were told what each of those areas could provide P1</p> <p>Because they weren't really aware of the um we had actually set up following the training they'd said to set up a critical incident group in school P2</p> <p>And we decided to do ... I said what I'm going to do, I said I don't want ... we can't fit all the children in the hall at once anyway, so it doesn't work like that ... so I said we'll just have 10 minute assemblies and by 10 o'clock everybody will have been through, you know, and I'm just going to say the same thing to everybody so that nothing gets lost in translation. So I said it's the best we can do you know – by 10 o'clock within an hour of being here everybody knows. The staff knew first thing, we had a briefing with the staff, I told the children, the message was you know about the obviously sadness of it, but also for today we're just carrying on, you know. And if there were children who needed support ... who we'd already identified by then anyway ... cos they knew P7</p> <p>they're making sure that we were doing her justice and what she'd done for the school, and her life justice – which we were doing. But also recognising that things moved on as well and that the school needed to operate you know. P7</p> <p>So we had a few different areas then, a few different rooms set up ... I'm sure that must have been on H's advice, you know. So we used the 6th Form lobby which is a nice place with sofas and things, you know. So we had groups going on there then, so some of them were seen by J, some were seen by H and her team. P3</p> <p>There's pictures everywhere. So he'd made lots of newer friends all the way, top to the bottom of the school through that obviously, because Rhys was the star you know of the show as it were. We did all the usual things, we had a book downstairs you know, everybody wanted to do that, we said to the parents you know in the letter if you want to come in you're welcome. So lots of parents were in in the room upstairs, so it was parents and children together, which was nice. P3</p> <p>So one of the things ... we did quite a few things then to try and keep ... not to keep his memory really, we didn't need to keep it, but we wanted to you know. So in the September or October, don't remember, we did a service then, we wanted some kind of a memorial service, you know. So we haven't got a hall big enough for the whole school there, so we had to go up to the cow sheds... if you parked out there by the sports hall ... We had to do it in there you know – invited the parents and close friends and family as it were you know, and that was spectacular, the children you know really hard for them, they spoke about him. And then ... did something else, I can't remember then ... it's a charity now that they collect for all the time you know ...P3</p> <p>you know a classroom for his friends to go in. Some art work, some writing, design some cards – there was that kind of thing you know, a kind of memorial book was set up. And</p>

		<i>so those kind of things that that team was used to putting in place in a school which had lost a pupil. So all of that was happening, it was happening really strongly and powerfully from the start.P5</i>
	<i>Signposting</i>	<p><i>I sent letters out in the last week of term to parents just outlining where they could get support from the EP service gave me numbers that they could ring through the holidays e to e service they were setting up not a drop in you had to make an appointment but they were going to be in MA hospital one day a week so if they rang they would be able to get an appointment with them...The YEP service were up there as well offering support in the holidays so I put all of that in a letter um I think parents were grateful for that knowing there was stuff out there P2</i></p> <p><i>it must have been the ECPS who gave us all of the links to WUS charity , and all of those ...Yeah, and having all of that stuff given, which I hadn't heard of them before that either you know. P3</i></p>
	<i>Post Incident Tasks</i>	<i>, and even when they left in Year 11 we actually had ... when we did the leavers book we had a page designated for C, and we brought her up in the leavers assembly – so it was something that we remembered year on year, it wasn't a case of right well she's her, now she's not, and we move on. So we had like the anniversary, so we did a memorial garden and we had a bench designated for her. I think some of those ideas had come from you know our EP, it wasn't J - I can't think of the name. But just because it was something that the pupils were struggling to deal with and to cope with, so they almost still wanted her part of us as a school P4</i>

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Written procedures and protocols	<i>Accessibility</i>	<p><i>To have it written down in one place who you call what you do umm was absolutely essential umm as I say I didn't have any experience of it and you'd hope to go through your whole career without having to do anything like this umm but I don't think anyone does so when it does happen umm its essential that you've got it written down in one place what you do P1</i></p> <p><i>Yeah so we all had a copy. Heads of year had a copy, the form tutor, teachers were actually taught, so we met as a staff then just to cascade that information P4</i></p> <p><i>You know I'm not saying people wouldn't take any notice of it, but I think it's handy to have it I think ... because strangely this summer I was worried that something similar was going to happen because we had a child again in Year 11 actually who had a terrible accident in Italy on his summer holidays...So I texted ... I phoned G, the director of education, and in all fairness she sent again the stuff which I'd had that day. But I think that's a point maybe going forward – even though I'd done it and had been through it, when you actually are faced with that all of a sudden ... p3</i></p>
	<i>Content</i>	<p><i>so what is in the protocol is whose available to help and advised umm protocol about getting a meeting together rapidly um a conference call if you can't ways of engaging with the media P1</i></p> <p><i>ways of managing the parent body all of that is in there umm but what you actually do on the day you do what's right for your institution so as as part we agreed a script I wrote a script as to what everybody was saying so everybody had the same message P1</i></p> <p><i>Part of the protocol also talked about um establishing a list of vulnerable pupils who would be affected which we did I had already thought of vulnerable pupils who were connected with the girl who died P1</i></p> <p><i>What I didn't think of and what the protocol was very useful for is vulnerable pupils who are unconnected and would see this as a trigger so um that I wouldn't of thought of and you know that was very very useful to establish a list and put in proactive support for those wider pupils and they remained on a list for some months afterwards P1</i></p> <p><i>Yeah yeah definitely, because I look then just to ... just to remind myself of these kinds of things you know.P3</i></p>

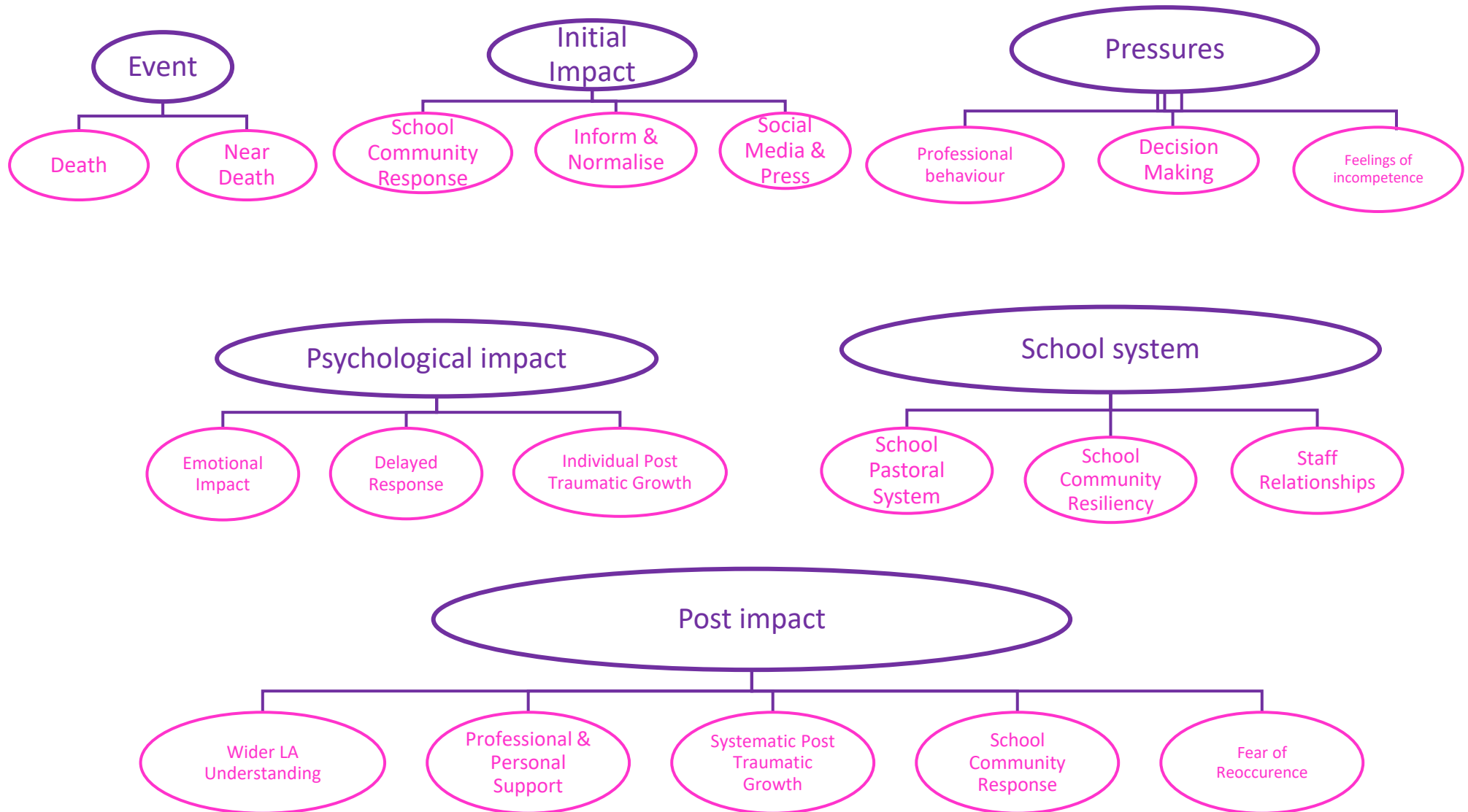
	<p><i>Reassurance</i></p> <p><i>It definitely focused what you needed to do when you come in um there was less of a sort of ah panic...(laugh)... response around it then because obviously it's a massive shock then within the school community P2</i></p> <p><i>Um so it was good that you had something to sort of stand by and say these are the things we need to do ...Yea so I was really pleased that we had that and certainly other members of SLT and even S who'd been on the training with me um they were looking to me for the guidance</i></p> <p><i>Because they weren't really aware of the um we had actually set up following the training they'd said to set up a critical incident group in school P2</i></p> <p><i>Because what became apparent to me from working with them was that these things happen and there is a protocol ... and that was the key thing for me, the thing that made the difference for me was knowing that there was a protocol, so knowing that right okay this is what we do next, then we do that, then we do this. And when we're doing that this person is going to be doing this, and this person is going to be doing that and this person is doing ... and then we meet again in 4 days' time...P5</i></p>
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Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Multi-agency working	<i>Liaisons within the LA</i>	<p><i>about a third of our children come in from C so we had to liaise with C ed psych service as well um but that was done via RCT ed Psych service...To ensure they they just, C didn't come in, but RCT ensured that they had all the information and They liaised wit supporting the children in Caerphilly um through this period P1.</i></p> <p><i>Yea and I know they went out to the primary school because there were siblings there and I know it was slightly different ah but I know that they went out there and did the circles there...the Eps went to the primary school and they done similar work there with them P2</i></p> <p><i>Yea yea definitely because when we met then in the IRG obviously HJs was there then from the EP service and you know she umm the head of the primary school was there as well so it was really ah joined up thinking. P2</i></p> <p><i>But just the information that they had, because I know that there was information from the primary schools, so making links from that. You know there was pupils that were in the school that were connected that we would never have known as pastoral staff that they were connected. So that was really good. P4</i></p> <p><i>So you know health were there, mental health were there, the police were there, the local authority representative, the ed psych service representative, we were there as education, social services were there, P5</i></p>
	<i>Liaisons with outside Agencies</i>	<p><i>and in between that then we had the e to e service that were here then everyday um and instead of us having just one counsellor we had four counsellors coming in For that week then the following week they were coming in um we sort of had two every day for a week so there was a huge increase in support provided for us that children could access P2</i></p> <p><i>The children bereavement charity and action for children as well who did some work with the children on an ongoing basis so all that was identified P1</i></p> <p><i>Yeah there was an element of working together really...Yeah 100%, of what I understand from other colleagues in other schools that's the same thing everywhere. P7</i></p> <p><i>And just the support put in place with regards to first of all speaking to the pupils, so counselling, so bringing E in and making sure that there was the links there with them, and just for us to monitor the situation really. P4</i></p>

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Pre & Post coping	<i>Increased EP time</i>	<p><i>Yes, I'll say one thing – I intend this in support of my educational psychology colleagues - and I know if somebody's going to say there's not - we need more of it, we need more time, we need more educational psychologist time. I mean I'm talking about the wider sense now, not just critical incidents P6.</i></p> <p><i>In general we'd like more EP visits across the years. P5</i></p>
	<i>Increased Resources</i>	<p><i>I don't think so other than resources other than seeing people early and there needs to be more child psychologists there needs to be more people in the ed psych service there needs to be more counsellors ah schools are inundated they've got parents now they're gone now a kid screaming in the car who is school phobic and won't come in and you've literally got a 12 year old curled up in a ball in the footwall of his car screaming and crying um we are waiting it's going to be he stared the first of September it's going to be the middle of October before he's seen and that behaviour will be more entrenched P1</i></p> <p><i>It the support after where they go back to be on waiting lists they can't get in to see somebody after the critical incident for the days and the couple of weeks after there's more people than you can shake a stick at um it's what happens before and after P1</i></p>

Overarching theme	Sub theme	Supporting Quotes
Lessons Learnt	Future Training	<p>Yes, the main thing I would say ... and I think this is a crucial bit of training that head teachers should have ... is how to deal with the phone call that comes to inform you usually in my experience from the deceased's partner to tell you that they passed away. So it's a big ask and I think heads would benefit from training on that. But again it's something that's very personal because different people react in different ways, and shock can affect people in different ways. P,6.</p> <p>Um we didn't, so we were very pleased however um in hindsight what we didn't do ah is contact the parents We assumed I assumed I think everybody assumed that they would be getting the support they needed Um and I thought that as well they would require space so I didn't contact parents until just over a week after...Um I got a lot of anger and hostility from parents um which was basically not so much directed at me or it was directed at me or where've you been for this period of time it was the fact that everybody stepped away from them everybody gave them time so it was the fact that they went home that night and literally had been given a couple of telephone numbers P1</p> <p>And ah that was it um so a lesson I would take away from it is even if they don't speak to you let them know very quickly that they can.. and that you that you just some sort of contact with parents that um would be the one thing that I would take away that we didn't get right um I don't think that you can I think that varies from people to people P1</p> <p>By the time I got to the second hole of the golf course I had a missed call and a voicemail message from the deceased's wife asking me to call her back. Now I'd never spoken to this person before or met this person, but that confirmed to me that what we'd heard was probably true. From my own experiences and my own sort of logic or thinking I knew I had to phone back straight away, so that that person didn't feel that we were abandoning her. But also I realised and recognised and told my friend is that I was going to have approximately 20 to 30 seconds of being a person to trust, because bearing in mind she was phoning me, having never spoken to me before, in huge amounts of shock herself because her husband had just passed away, and I had to make sure that I a) said the right things, b) didn't say the wrong things, more importantly, used the right tone and gained her trust very quickly so she knew I was there to support her. P 6.</p>
	Follow up contact	<p>you know make a note in their calendar a month down the road to give the head teacher a ring because at that point he's dealt with pupils he dealt with his the staff and then then it goes quiet and then you you have your own trauma I would put it as strongly as that as it's something you think wow it's just hit me and ah for me it was just about reading an article about something similar in the paper and ah you now I found it hugely upsetting not obviously particularly what had happened to the family in the newspaper I was reading about but generally just because I transposed all of that to the girl I knew that wasn't there anymore and the hole that had had through her friends her family and especially her mum her dad and her brother P1</p> <p>I wonder there might be some mileage in building into the critical incident ... and perhaps there is now protocols ... a kind of standard follow up, so 6 months down the line there's a phone call, a year down the line or something like that. That may be something that could be added in... Although you know I mean in my experience it might be ... that was happening anyway because the lines of communication were open P5</p> <p>In a sense I suppose so that the likes of myself, K, L, A, stay on somebody's radar.P5</p>

Appendix 14: Figure 3 Overall thematic map for Research Question 1



Appendix 15: Figure 4 Overall thematic Map for Research Question 2

