
An illuminative enquiry of one secondary school's experiences of stress, school support and the potential effects this may have on the wider systems in which they work: An action research model of developing a support-based intervention with staff.

Submitted by Sarah Sidaway to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Educational, Child and Community Psychology, August, 2011.

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

(Signature)

Sarah Sidaway

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I would like to give particular thanks to all those participants who took part in this piece of research. All participants were more than generous with their time which I am aware is a precious commodity when working in the education system. It was a great honour and privilege to have had the opportunity to listen to the participant's personal views and experiences which they shared so freely during the research process.

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Thank you to my family, particularly my brother Richard, who never doubted I would complete this chapter of my life successfully. I am only where I am because of where I came from.

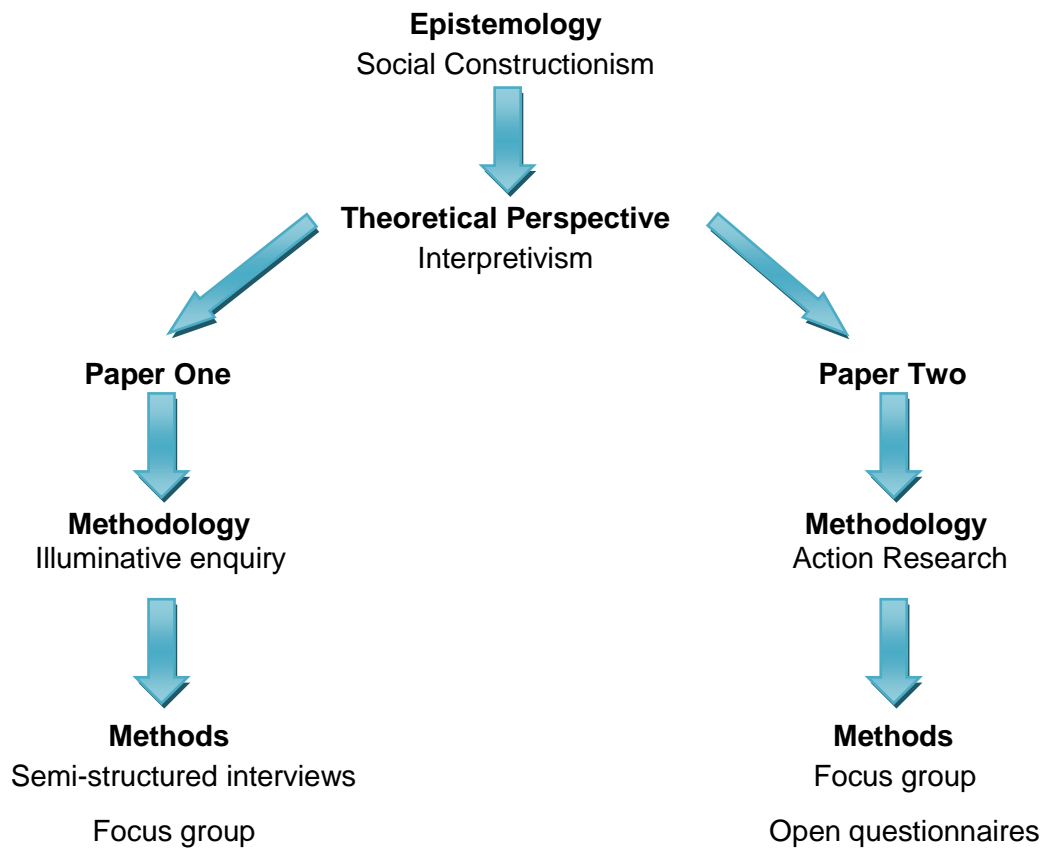
To a special friend who, without their listening ear, good company, sense of humour and encouragement, submitting may not have been possible.

Overview of Thesis

Teaching has been reported to be one of the most stressful professions in the UK (HSE, 2000). There is vast international literature that has documented for many years the negative implications that stress and burnout can have on educators' health and well being and the wider systems and individuals' connected to their work. The research also clearly documents that the development of school support systems can mediate the negative effects of stress for educators (Zellars & Perrewe, 2001). Given that teachers are one of the UK's largest groups of public sector employees (Bowers, 2001) and that the education system is once more in a period of rapid change, it makes this piece of research timely in the current context of education policy and practice. This study calls for policy makers to recognise that stress in the education system is becoming an increasingly worrying trend and one that with the right kind of support systems in place could be alleviated in the future.

Focus of thesis

Two papers form this thesis. A flexible design consistent with an interpretive approach and a social constructionist philosophy has been adopted.



The purpose of paper one was to generate new understandings and gain insights into participants' experiences regarding school staff stress, school support systems and the implications of this. The findings from the first paper informed my second paper. In paper two I worked with school staff to develop and evaluate a support-based intervention in order to address the gaps in support that staff identified in the first paper.

This thesis was conducted in a large secondary community college, with a specialist subject status. This was located in a unitary authority in the South West of England. All participants that took part in this research were employed as teachers, support staff and/or members of middle or senior management team at the school.

Paper one findings

The findings in this study showed school systems to be complex environments, affected greatly by a range of internal and external factors. Participants' experiences indicated that stress and burnout are a function of the quality of work life in the education system for many, with negative implications associated with those closely connected to them and the education system.

This paper contributes to the existing body of knowledge in this area by drawing participants from across the school meso system, as opposed from one part of the system, ensuring that all those working at different levels within the school were represented. A key issue uncovered by this study and adding to the existing literature in the field is the hierarchical nature of schooling. This hierarchy served to maintain the causes of stress experienced by my participants. These causes were systemic in nature as the issues raised were common across my participants and originated from the way the school system was organised and operated.

The implication of this is that the focus of support needs to be aimed at adapting the school environment to reduce the main areas of stress faced by teachers and support staff and helping teachers to deal more positively with the stress factors within the environments and systems in which they work.

The evidence also showed that my participants had a limited knowledge of the wider roles of the EPS and this may be significant area for the local authority in which this research was conducted to focus on in the future.

This paper's contribution is timely given the current context of education policy and practice

Paper two findings

The focus of this paper was developing and evaluating, in collaboration with participants, a staff support-based intervention. The staff's support intervention of choice was a series of short training workshops focused on developing a better understanding of stress, promoting EHWB, assertiveness and methods of support.

There were four stages to the creation of the intervention: Development of the intervention (through a focus group and the collaboration of school staff); Recruitment of participants (conducted through the senior management team through emails and staff reminders); Implementation of the intervention (five one hour, after-school workshops, using a range of teaching strategies, including practical skills; Outcomes (gained through an open pre and post training questionnaire which considered the practical strategies the participants had adopted from the workshop and applied to their practice).

Despite working with staff including teachers, non teachers and senior staff to design the intervention, attendance at the after-school training workshops was poor, with only five members of the school's support and special needs team attending. There were no teachers or members of the senior management team present. However those staff that did attend the training intervention provided positive feedback and found it useful in their practice. The questionnaires suggested that the training increased staff's knowledge of how to manage their stress and to promote their well-being. Staff also stated that they were able to apply the practical strategies provided directly to their practice.

One of the main purposes of paper two was to begin the process of change in participants' perceptions and practice. As a direct result of conducting this piece of research the school of focus have set up a staff well-being forum, open to all staff, to meet on a termly basis to discuss matters relating to staff EHWB and support. The school are also considering setting up staff consultation groups for the teaching assistants in the future, in addition to creating a staff well being notice board, a suggestion box, having a staff well being awareness day, creating a staff well being policy and also providing yearly drop in sessions for staff on stress management.

The role of the EP

EPs are well placed to offer their services to schools in supporting them with examining professional support systems. EPs are experienced researchers and could conduct small pieces of individual school-based research looking at those areas of the workplace where stress is experienced the most and be able to identify gaps in staff support systems. EPs are equipped with the training and experience to provide bespoke packages of support for individual schools that may include staff training aimed at prioritising staff support and EHWB both in policy and practice. It seems then that EPs are well placed to work in collaboration with schools to develop their staff support systems in this area of staff development and school improvement.

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Paper One

An illuminative enquiry of one secondary school's experiences of stress, school support and the potential effects this may have on the wider systems in which they work.

CHAPTER ONE

Abstract

The aim of this paper was to generate new understandings with regard to school staff stress, school support systems and the consequences of this on staff's EHWB (emotional health and well being) and their work (particularly the teaching and learning of pupils). This illuminative enquiry was conducted in one large secondary community college in the South West area of England. Participants were teachers, support staff and/or members of the school's senior management team. Data was collected from 12 participants through semi-structured interviews, in addition to a focus group to triangulate the data set. A thematic approach to analysis was adopted.

This study indicates that stress and burnout are a function of the quality of work life in the education system for many with negative implications for all those connected to the education system. The causes of stress amongst my participants were systemic in nature as the issues raised were common across my participants and originated from the way the school system was organised and operated. The implication of this is that the focus of support needs to be aimed at adapting the school environment to reduce the main areas of stress faced by teachers and support staff and helping teachers to deal more positively with the stress factors within the environments and systems in which they work.

The evidence indicates that support systems in the school of focus need to be more formal and incorporated into policy. It provides a case for more explicit and regular intervention sessions designed to alleviate stress, and the provision of EHWB and support systems which the educational psychology service would be well placed to

offer. As a result of the initial interviews, the school initiated a staff well-being forum. At the time of writing this, it is continuing to occur on a termly basis to ensure issues regarding stress, EHWB and levels of staff support, remain an important consideration.

This paper is timely given the current context of education policy and practice and the effects on school staff.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

2.1. Purpose

The aim of this paper is to generate new understandings in relation to:

- *Teacher stress*

The implications for staff's health and well being and their work (in particular teaching and learning) was considered.

- *Staff support systems*

Staff were asked to evaluate the current support systems in their school and identify any areas for development.

As a result of focusing on the above areas the role of the EP in supporting schools with this area of school development were also explored. The role of the EP is central to this piece of research and the implications for future EP work are referred to throughout.

2.2. Context

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE, 2000) reported that teaching was the most stressful profession in the UK with forty-one point five percent of teachers reporting themselves as 'highly stressed'. Many new teachers in the USA leave the profession after just a few years, with estimates indicating that twenty to twenty-five percent of new teachers leave within two years and only fifty percent remain after five years (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2001). Teachers in particular are at high

risk from stress-related illness and the burn-out rate (becoming physically and psychologically depleted, Freudenberg & Richelson, 1980) is high (Fisher, 1996).

Given that teachers are the UK's largest group of public sector employees (Bowers, 2001) these statistics have implications for local authorities and the government in terms of the cost, both financially and otherwise to teachers, schools, pupils and society as a whole.

2.3. Rationale

According to Lath (2010) there are four different types of stress: *Reactive stress* – occurring when a person perceives that they do not have the capacity to cope with demands placed on them; *Cumulative stress* – stress caused by a number of stressful factors over time; *Critical incident stress* – A reaction to sudden unanticipated demands; and *Post traumatic stress* – Stress caused by memories of a traumatic episode.

(Lath, 2010, p. 424/425)

The focus of this paper is on reactive and cumulative stress. This paper does not focus on critical incidents, traumatic events or on stress experienced as a direct result of a major life event (such as death, divorce or chronic/long-term illness of a spouse/family member).

2.4. Selected literature

I will begin by providing a summary of the key terms and concepts to be used throughout this paper. For a more thorough examination of the literature please see the literature review. This has been marked and examined separately from the

examination of this thesis. It has been provided to give coherence to the thesis as a whole.

2.4.1. Sources of literature

Literature was identified through key word searches using academic search engines such as EBSCO and Psych ARTICLES. Exeter University library and personal books were also accessed. A range of literature was sought, primarily written within the last ten years. Literature beyond this was accessed to provide a historical context. Primary sources of information were sought where possible. A small number of secondary sources have been used due to texts being unavailable (due to the year they were published) or were papers used at conferences therefore making them difficult to locate.

2.4.2. Emotional health and well-being (EHWB)

Although definitions of the term EHWB may vary, Danna and Griffin (1999) provide a definition of the term that refers to two main aspects; the physical and the psychological;

The first is that *health and well-being* can refer to the actual physical health of workers, as defined by physical symptomatology and epidemiological rates of physical illness and diseases. The second is that *health and well-being* can refer to the mental, psychological, or emotional aspects of workers as indicated by emotional states and epidemiological rates of mental illnesses and diseases.

(Danna & Griffin, 1999, p. 361)

The well-being of school staff is of great importance. Briner and Dewberry (2007) demonstrated that average levels of teacher wellbeing within schools has been found to be linked to pupil performance as assessed by SATs and value-added measures (Briner & Dewberry, 2007). Hanco (1995, p.1.) further explains "...[teachers] cannot be expected to meet children's needs if they get no support with their own".

The research from Briner and Dewberry (2007) suggests a link between teacher well-being, their experience of stress and pupils' learning and development. This will be an area of consideration in this research.

2.4.3. Professional Support Systems

Professional support is an umbrella term encompassing a range of different support systems aimed at promoting staff EHWP (additional information can be found in Appendix 3 regarding this term). Gray, Miller and Noakes (1994, p.5) argue that there is a need for professional support systems to be developed for staff and argue that, "Teachers and schools now face potentially more difficult problems in a context which is less supportive than in the past. The need therefore for effective support from both within schools and from outside agencies is greater than ever". Humphreys (1995) supports this and similarly argued that staff development and support systems have been major areas of neglect in schools and teaching training.

The literature review will provide a detailed summary of a range of professional support systems, including definitions. There will be a focus on individual types of professional support in paper two.

2.4.4. Stress research

The term 'stress' lacks precise definition and is considered to be a contested concept by authors in this field. Although the term stress can be difficult to define clearly, the literature review details four of the more commonly used definitions. These definitions describe the potential effects that stress may have on wellbeing and focus on the interaction between the individual and their environment.

There are a large number of stress models documented in the research dating back to the 1950s. A detailed overview and critique of these models of stress can be found in the literature review.

Teacher stress in particular, has become a major topic of research and public interest (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977). In addition to this, burnout (a state of emotional, physical and attitudinal exhaustion which develops in teachers who have been unable to cope with stress over a long period of time, Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999) is a phenomenon often discussed in conjunction with teacher stress. The literature review provides a detailed overview of both these areas.

I will examine in the next section the direction of future research on stress.

2.5. Gaps identified in the literature

2.5.1. School Climate

There has been considerable debate about how to define school climate, due to it being a multi-dimensional concept. There is still no consistent agreement as to the components and importance of what constitutes it (Marshall, 2004). Please see the literature review for further information.

Research in the field of school climate and organisational psychology indicates it has a significant impact on job satisfaction for staff and on educational outcomes for pupils (Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995; Marshall, 2004). A positive, supportive and culturally-conscious school climate are likely to increase the likelihood of academic success, achievement and better socio-emotional health, particularly for urban students (Marshall, 2004; Tableman and Herron, 2004; Haynes & Comer, 1993). As Freiberg (1998, p.22) argues “school climate can be a positive influence on the health of the learning environment or a significant barrier to learning”. This suggests that teacher stress and the support provided to school staff may have some effect on the development of a positive school climate.

2.5.2. Teacher Voice

DeMulder and Rigby (2003) argue that accessing the voice of teachers is an area lacking from existing literature and that this is fundamental in developing reflective practice. Both DeMulder and Rigby (2003) and Troman and Woods (2001) found that virtually none of the authors who set out to promote and encourage change in classrooms and schools began their analyses with detailed testimony of the voices and experiences of classroom teachers. Seeking out teachers and school staff’s views and perceptions is integral to both this and the second paper in this study.

2.5.3. Stress research

Troman and Woods (2001) have called for research on teacher’s experiences of stress, how their work is stress producing and those coping strategies used to deal with stress. A recent paper by Kyriacou (2010) continues to emphasise that there are considerable gaps in teacher stress research and emphasizes the importance of continuing to explore:

- Prevalence and sources of teacher stress.
- Coping strategies adopted by teachers.
- Research focusing on the effectiveness of intervention strategies aimed at reducing staff stress.
- Impact of teacher – pupil interaction and classroom climate on stress

Kyriacou (2010), Troman and Woods (2001) and the school climate research provides further support to why the areas of teacher stress continue to need to be focused on in research and practice. This paper seeks to address the areas of development identified.

In the next section I will consider more closely the underlying theoretical aspects of Eco-systemic Psychology in relation to the focus of this paper.

2.6. Theoretical Aspects: Systems Psychology

What is a system?

There has been wide debate about what constitutes a system within the literature and this has been demonstrated by Sadovski (1974) who listed thirty-five different definitions of a system. Bertalanffy (1968, p.38) provides a simplistic definition: “Sets of elements standing in interaction”. Stein (1974) suggests that the word ‘sets’ implies that each unit/element is influenced or dependent upon the other units (Stein, 1974).

Schools are examples of open systems which exchange information within the environment and have a number of variables that cannot be foreseen (Goodman, 2002). A simple system has been described by Colucci-Grey et al (2006, p.229) as having a number of components, but that they and the connections between them

are “single and uniform”. In contrast schools and the teaching and learning process are known to be complex systems (Bowen, 2004, Cooper & Upton, 1991, Colucci-Grey et al, 2006).

Cybernetics and General Systems Theory (GST)

Eco-systemic psychology is derived from Cybernetics (the feedback and transfer of communication and information, Weiner, 1967) and General Systems Theory (GST, principles formed from the relationship between biological organisms and the environment, Bertalanffy, 1968). The literature provides a detail discussion of these theories.

GST uses assumptions and rules from systems theory to study living things and their relationships (Barker, 1999). Social systems, such as schools and other organisations, apply a general systems perspective to individual people or groups of people. From a general systems perspective “a school functions in a dynamic interaction with its larger context” (Bowen, 2004, p. 63). Schools are social systems with complex properties, subsystems and environmental contexts.

Ecological systems theory will be discussed in the next section.

Ecological Systems Theory

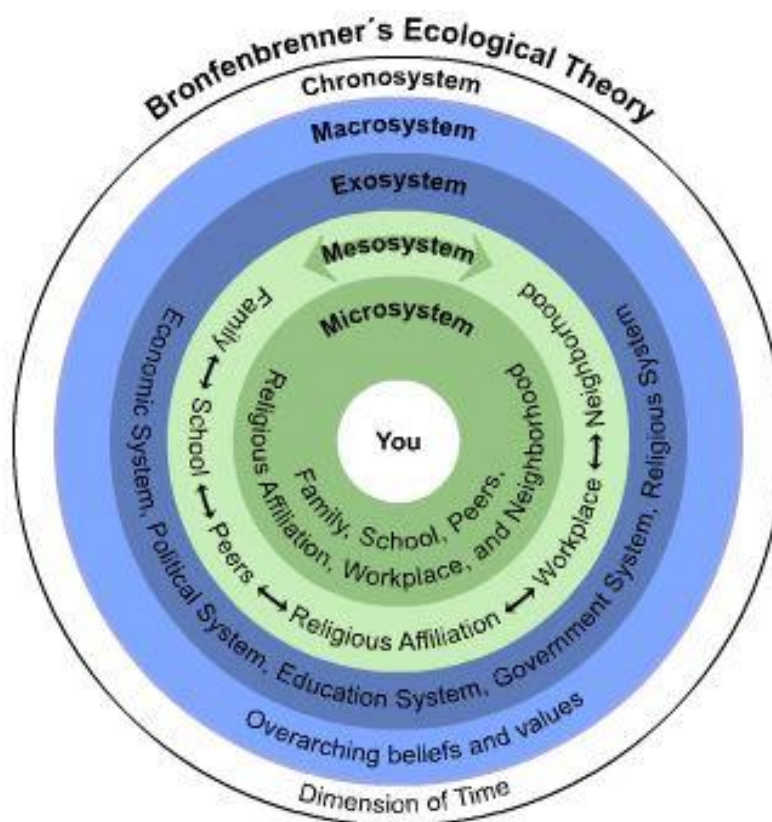
I will be using Bronfenbrenner’s (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) Ecological Systems theory (otherwise known as systemic, Colucci-Gray, 2006 or eco-systemic theory, Cooper & Upton, 1991) to frame this paper. This theory looks at an individual’s development within a context of relationships and environmental factors. According to Cooper and Upton (1991) systems are continuously interacting with other systems within the environment (e.g. the social ecosystem) and change in any one part of the ecosystem will result in an overall change in the ecosystem as a whole.

This theory conceptualises individuals within a series of embedded systems (Paquette & Ryan, 2001);

- **Microsystem** - The level closest to the individual and those structures the individual has direct contact with, for example, the family or school.
- **Mesosystem** - This level connects the structures of the individual's microsystem and is more distant to the individual, such as the family and school interactions, the local community.
- **Exosystem** – This level is the larger social system that the individual does not interact directly with, but that may impact on the individual's development by interacting with some structure in the microsystem, for example, parent work hours.
- **Macrosystem** - The outer layer in the individual's development. For example societal and cultural norms/values.

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of ecological systems theory.

Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory (Nielson, 2011)



I have chosen Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to frame this paper as the causes and implications of stress and burnout and the creation of staff support systems are affected by and occur within a complex system. This paper focused primarily on the meso (school) system. In addition to this the eco-systemic approach was considered when gaining a sample of participants. This will be discussed further in the methods section (chapter three).

2.7. Summary and research questions

Raising standards has been at the heart of education reform for many years and the expectations of teachers are great: "our future as a prosperous nation depends on our education and training system (DfES, 2006, p.). According to Lath (2010, p.423) "teachers are the nation builder and the eyes of society are on teachers". These

expectations by both the government and society as a whole has led to a range of policy initiatives and accountability measures placed on schools (Elkins & Elliot, 2004). Given the recent change in government to a Coalition and the new initiatives and policy that inevitably follows, there are likely to be more changes ahead. The Coalition government have already disbanded the General Teaching Council (GTA), who monitor the recruitment, selection and training of teachers and are proposing to reform initial teacher training programmes and the current 33 QTS (Qualified Teacher Status) standards (DoE, 2010b). Both of these revisions by the Coalition may cause further changes to the professional standards in which teachers are governed which may be a source of stress for them. The addition of the schools Academy programme (DoE, 2010a) will also be another onset of change over the next few years.

The literature discussed so far makes this piece of research both relevant and timely to education policy and practice. Teachers and support staff will continue to need more developed systems of support to aid them in the teaching and learning of children and young people (Bowers & McIver, 2000; Humphreys, 1995; Halfacree, 1992; Chappell et al, 1992). The purpose of my research is to work collaboratively with teaching and school staff to develop a creative solution to this issue.

The following research questions are to be the focus of this paper:

RQ1) How do a group of secondary school staff experience stress?

RQ2) What do staff think the implications/consequences are for:

- Their work (in particular teaching and learning)?
- Their health?
- Their emotional well being?

RQ3) How do staff experience and understand the available support systems?

RQ4) How do staff think the educational psychology service might be able to support schools with providing effective levels of professional support?

CHAPTER THREE

3.1. Design and Methods

A flexible design consistent with an interpretive approach and a social constructionist philosophy has been adopted for the purposes of this research. Interpretative research allows for a more flexible and creative approach which considers the context. Social Constructionism emphasises that perspective, meaning and experience are socially produced rather than stemming from the individual (Burr, 1995) and suggests that meaning is not discovered but is constructed by human beings as they engage in the world they are interpreting (Crotty, 2009).

3.2. Methodology

An illuminative enquiry methodology has been used for the purposes of this paper. The primary aim of this methodology is description and interpretation (Partlett & Hamilton, 1972).

Burden (1998) argues that illuminative enquiry or evaluation is;

.....A classic early example of the post-positivist or interpretative approach to research and evaluation, placing as it does, its emphasis upon interpreting educational practices, participants' experiences, institutional procedures and management problems in ways that are recognizable and useful to these for whom the study is made (Parlett & Dearden, 1977). Its intention is to shed light on a situation in a way that makes things clear for everyone concerned and is seen as helpful by them.

(Burden, 1998, p.16)

This approach focuses on exploring attitudes, perceptions and attributions of the participants involved.

One of the advantages of collecting qualitative data is that it presents a detailed picture of the participant's views and perceptions which can provide the researcher with rich sources of information to interpret (Cresswell, 2007). Additionally given that one of the main gaps within existing literature is teacher voice, qualitative data collection allowed this to be captured and evidenced in more detail and depth than quantitative methods may have done.

Reliability and validity were addressed by considering credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, which are more in keeping with qualitative research (Robson, 2008, for additional information see Appendix 22).

3.3. My position as a researcher

It is important to acknowledge my position as a researcher in this paper (this has been discussed in Appendix 1).

3.4. Participants

A total of 12 participants, took part in the semi-structured interviews (10 female and 2 male participants, as demonstrated by the female to male ratio of staff working in the education system - teaching is a predominately a female profession, Bartlett, 2004, Lahelma, 2000). 11 participants attended a focus group. All participants that attended an interview and/or the focus group were employed at a large secondary community college, with a specialist subject status. This was located in a unitary authority in the South West of England. Participants were teachers, support staff and/or members of middle or senior management team.

I applied the eco-systemic approach by ensuring that participants I collected data from held a range of roles in school to ensure that all those in the meso (school) system were fairly represented and that one part of the system was not creating a bias across the data set (additional information regarding the recruitment of participants can be found in Appendix 2).

3.5. Measures used

Data was collected using a semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix 4). The interview schedule was developed using Tomlinson's (1989) paper, "Using hierarchical focusing as a research interview method". Tomlinson (1989) shows the progression from open to closed framed questions and 'top-down' questions that moved from the general to the specific (Tomlinson, 1989). It is most appropriate to use open ended questions and probes as they seek out in- depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge (Patton, 2002), which supports the chosen methodology. Using a semi-structured interview schedule additionally allows both the participant and researcher to deviate where appropriate from the schedule, should an area of interest in relation to the research questions be raised. The schedule was piloted and amended before use. Amendments to the semi-structured interview schedule included rephrasing the language used in some of the questions and ensuring as much as possible that assumptions were not being made. E.g. Before asking participants about stress, a proceeding question asking whether participants actually experienced stress or not was required.

3.6. Procedures

Data was collected at two points during the school year. There were a number of significant changes that occurred during the period in which data was collected from participants. This may have impacted on the data (Appendix 2 provides additional

information). All interviews and focus groups were recorded digitally for data and analysis purposes

3.6.1. Semi-structured interviews

Participants were provided with a brief introduction to the research prior to commencing the interview (see Appendix 6). The semi-structured interview schedule can be found in Appendix 4 (additional information regarding how a qualitative interview should be conducted can be found in Appendix 5).

3.6.2. Focus group

Data was collected from a 40 minute focus group to feed back initial findings from the interviews to further triangulate the data set (additional information regarding the focus group can be found in Appendix 12 and 13). There were a series of delays that occurred with the planning and implementation of the focus groups (Appendix 10 provides the additional details of why the delays occurred).

3.7. Analysis

Data was analysed using thematic analysis, a method for searching a data set to find repeated patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A six phase model of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used. Figures 2 and 3 outline the process and quality criteria of thematic analysis (additional information regarding the process of the thematic analysis can be found in Appendix 15).

Figure 2: Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of thematic analysis (Howitt, 2010, p.170)

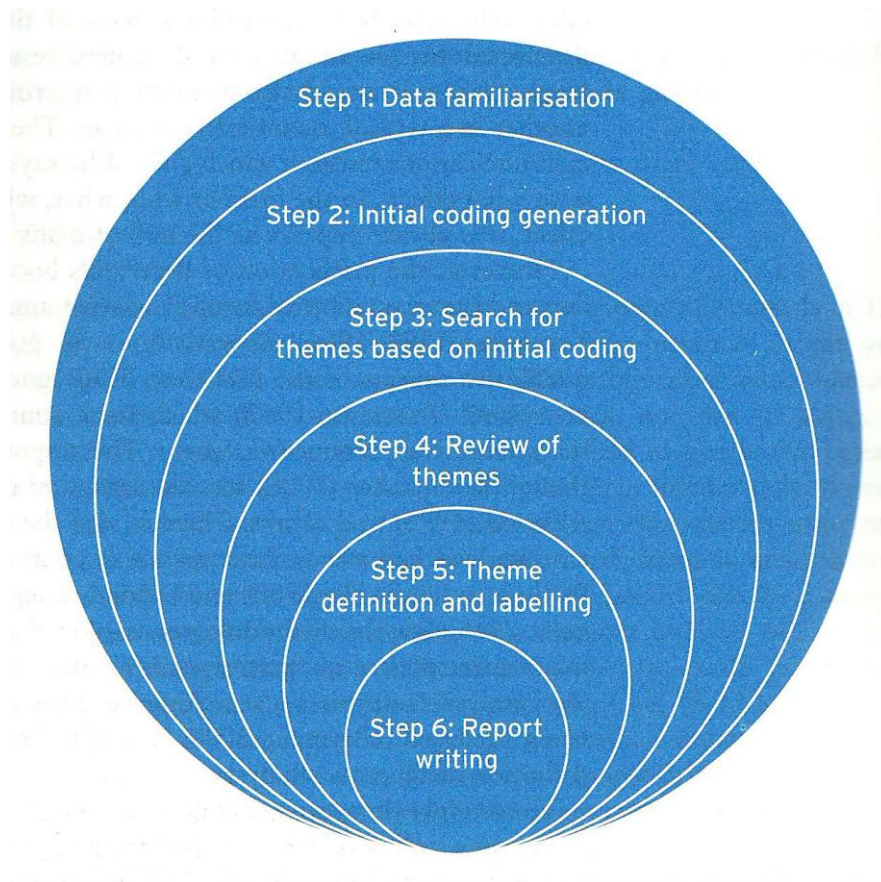
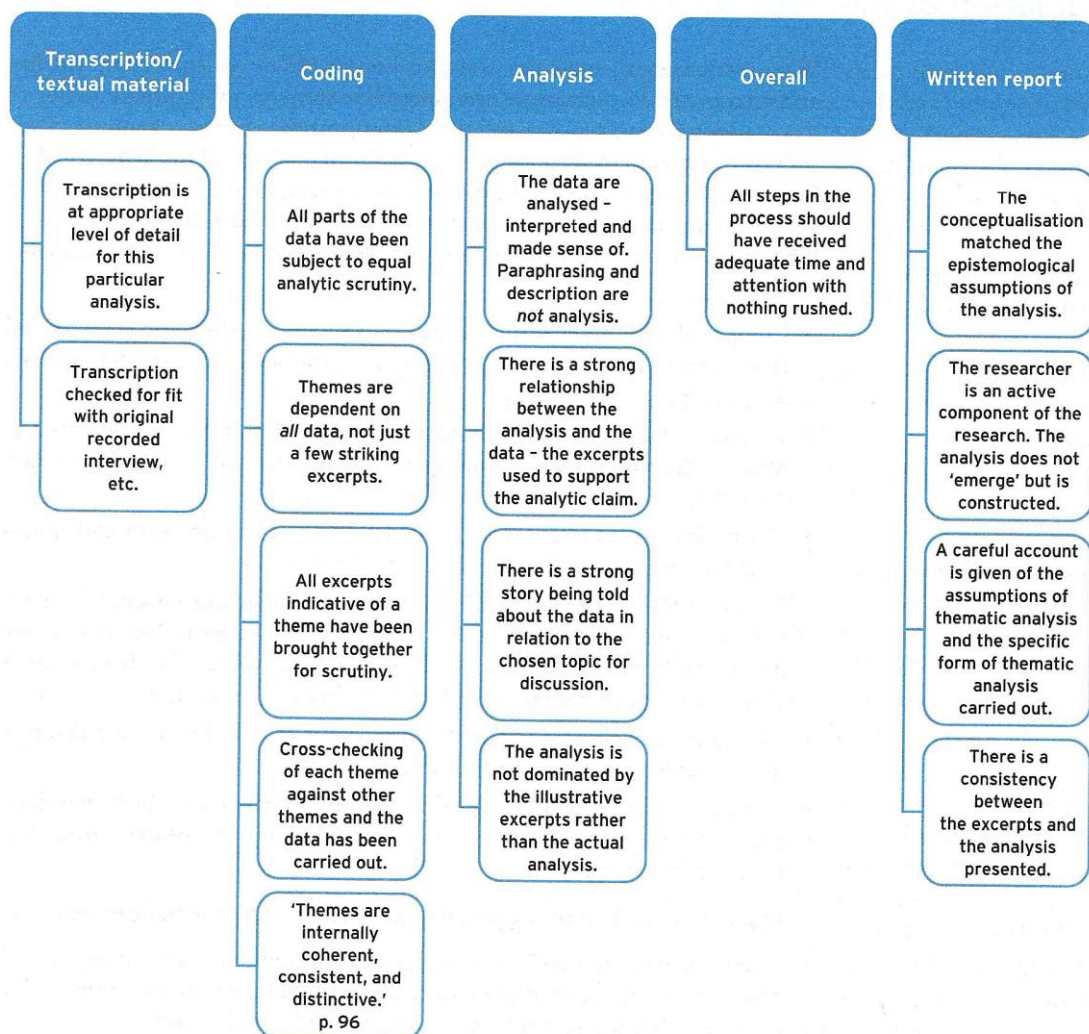


Figure 3: The quality criteria for thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, cited in Howitt, 2010, p.184).



Data was analysed inductively ('bottom-up process with the themes identified linked specifically to the data and not to the researchers theoretical interest), without fitting the data to a pre-existing coding framework. Latent themes were selected (themes which are identified beyond the explicit or surface level meanings). Thematic analysis suits the interpretive methodology and the qualitative nature of this research.

3.8. Ethical consideration

I fully complied with the ethical code of Practice of the British Psychological Society (BPS) and gained consent from the University of Exeter research ethics committee (Appendix 7 provides additional information regarding the ethical considerations for this paper. Participants completed consent forms (Appendix 8) and the nature of their participation was explained fully prior to their involvement in an interview or focus group (Appendix 9 contains the completed University of Exeter research ethics form). Any quotes taken from the data collection set remained anonymised and confidential to protect the identity of individual participants. It is for this reason that participant's specific job titles have not been identified. Reference has only been made to whether they were middle management, or members of the senior management team.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

I have presented the findings under four key headings in this chapter:

- 4.2 - Individual triggers versus systemic triggers
- 4.3 – Impact of stress
- 4.4 – My participants' experiences and understanding of support
- 4.5 – Role of the EP

Within these sections I have presented the data under headings that use the topics that emerged from my transcripts (for additional information regarding the thematic analysis process see Appendix 14 – 19 and Appendix 20 for the final themes to emerge from the analysis). Each of these three sections concludes with a reflection on the evidence presented in order to identify and highlight the key findings that emerge from the data.

Three additional themes emerged from the thematic analysis:

- Knowledge and understanding of stress
- Individual coping strategies
- Barriers to support systems

Whilst these themes were of interest and related to the areas of focus, they were not directly relevant to the research questions and are therefore not discussed as part of this section (additional information can be found in Appendix 21).

Interview Vignettes

Each vignette is displayed with the details of the participants in brackets below it.

The information within these brackets includes the following:

- A number is provided for each participant which corresponds to their interview transcript. This was to ensure participant's anonymity was retained. Those with two numbers, for example, transcript 43/44, are when the digital recorder had to be interrupted during the interview resulting in two audio files being created for one participant's interview. The relevant page number of the transcript is also included.
- Participants have been identified either as part of the senior management team (SMT), middle management (MM) or not part of the senior management (None-SMT). Non-SMT and MM are referred to as 'junior' members of staff throughout this chapter.
- All participant quotes are represented in italics. 'I' refers to the 'Interviewer' and 'P' the 'Participant'.
- Those parts of interview extracts in bold, is representative of where a word or sentence was verbally stressed by the participant.
- Those quotations containing ***** indicates where a name has been removed to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

4.2. Individual triggers versus systemic triggers

My purpose in this section is to describe and characterise the causes of stress as experienced and understood by my participants. Although the causes of stress and high stress points were spread throughout the year in the day to day work of school staff, my interest was in identifying the key triggers that emerged as significant in the interview transcripts. These were workload, long hours, lack of regular breaks, parental pressures and child protection issues. I present the evidence for each of these below.

Workload and long hours

Workload and long hours was the most frequently mentioned challenge or cause of stress throughout all twelve of the interviews. According to Green (2001) Britain has a culture of working longer hours than nearly all of Europe. Also Davidson (1998) reported from a review of the literature that amongst the top stressors for teachers was their workload. Likewise Dewe (1986) found that workload consistently came top as the most frequent problem, the most anxiety-inducing problem and the most fatiguing problem in a study of 800 teachers in New Zealand. My participants' experiences support these findings:

*P: Don't get me wrong, the workload is horrendous, it's absolutely horrendous.....Oh, it's so bad. And there have been times this year when you do literally feel that you're going under. It's just so much work.....And you've already got loads of work. And like I said to you every day you come in and there's **more**. And you think 'I've already got enough to **do!***

(Transcript 40/41, SMT, p.7)

P: I was coming in at half past six in the morning and I was working whether it was here or at home right the way through till ten o'clock at night....I remember feeling really stressed then that I was still here at half past six trying to set cover work knowing I was driving to Manchester that night...I got home and my partner was saying you know you've gotta just sit down for a minute and calm down.

(Transcript 45 & 46, SMT, p.2/4/5)

Heavy workload and long hours was exacerbated by the lack of regular breaks when participants were not working or away from their desks.

P: I work through my lunches. I shouldn't do but at the end of the day they are always students in here asking for help, so I sort of eat on the go.

(Transcript 43/44, SMT, p.2)

P: ...Sometimes we get five minutes for a coffee but very often there are students knocking at the door....it's very much a quick sit down and....out of our twenty minute break we probably have say six or seven minutes.....And once a fortnight we also have a meeting as a whole department....and that's normally in the lunch hour.....So you very rarely get a lunch hour either.

(Transcript 96, non SMT, p. 7)

Parental pressures and child protection

Two additional sources of stress identified by a small number of participants, which were not found during the original review of literature, were the challenges linked to working and dealing with parents and child protection issues. A further search of the literature highlighted a study conducted by Van der Linde, Van der Westhuizen and Wissing (1999), who indicated that parents' attitude towards education can be negative and that many school staff feel that they do not receive the necessary

support and appreciation from parents and the community (Steyn & Kamper, 2006).

Participant's experiences support this:

P:For me it's not the kids, it's parents (laughs). I've kind of got better at dealing with parents and sort of honing my technique if you like. But, I think that is still the hardest part of.... You know, some parents are incredibly supportive and know what to do and know the right things but when you are dealing with situations where you've got a child that's displaying behaviour problems or something and you sometimes feel the parents aren't supporting you and they're slightly blinkered to what their child's doing, that becomes difficult.....And also anything, anything child protection.....It's just, it's, yeah, not, not nice at all. Especially since having my own child. That kind of really, yeah, totally changed my outlook, yeah changed my outlook completely on teaching really.... Yeah, so those bits are difficult.

(Transcript 92, MM, p.5/6)

P:...Parents with mental health issues..... You know, we've got cycles out there, we've got generations that haven't had experience of work, haven't had experience of personal responsibility..... And you can get some... quite irrational people expecting quite unbelievable things which are totally unreasonable.....

(Transcript 95, SMT, p.27/28)

There are numerous sources of stress found in the education system according to the literature over the years (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1977; Kyriacou, 1980, Dunham, 1984; Johnstone, 1989; Smith & Bourke, 1992; Travers and Cooper, 1996; Pithers and Soden, 1998; Benmensour, 1998. Appendix 21 summarises these findings). My paper has not only replicated these previous findings in the literature, but also uncovered some additional sources of stress for educators, namely, lack of regular breaks, working and dealing with parents and child protection issues.

Reflections on stress triggers

The narratives that have emerged from my participants depict a system which increasingly overworks and overburdens staff causing increased stress. Workload, long hours and the lack of regular breaks were some of the factors highlighted by participants as causing stress and this is supported by the literature (Bartlett, 2004; Benmansour, 1998; Pithers & Soden, 1998; Travers & Cooper, 1996). Where this paper offers a contribution to knowledge is that participants in this study also highlighted working with parents and child protection issues as a stress trigger and this is a finding that is not currently cited in the literature.

Additionally the causes of stress (above) were discussed by most if not all of the participants during their interviews suggesting that these are not isolated or individual problems, but common to those that work within the school system. This indicates that there are some generic sources of stress that appear to be present in the culture of secondary schools and infers that stress is a systemic issue within the environment in which staff work. The causes of stress therefore remain deeply embedded within the system and culture of the education system. This finding contributes to the existing literature in this field.

According to Stobie (2002) most systems, with the exception of families, are controlled by managerial aims and objectives and policies and politics. Stobie (2002) argues that it is these aspects that need to be the focus of change to affect an organisation's functions. Therefore a change in policy and practice on a larger macro level may be required to address the difficulties faced by many educators in their work.

4.3. Impact of stress

The purpose of this section is to describe and characterise what my participants saw as the main impacts of stress. I document four key effects of stress that emerged from the narratives of my participants.

Impact on the participants themselves

The negative effects of stress and burnout on all those concerned have been well documented in the literature. For individual school staff, figures provided by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in 2003/2004 show that stress is the predominant cause of work related illness in the education sector, with 50% of all absence caused by stress-related ill health. The education sector has among the highest prevalence rates for stress, depression or anxiety, with the rate of incidence nearly twice the 'all industries' average (HSE, 2007). This was supported by my participants' experiences:

P: As far as health and wellbeing is concerned, I know of friends this year who have really – I've struggled as well.....And it's a question of there's so much to do you're literally, you're paralysed.....Then you do nothing because you just don't know what to do first and you can't switch off, weekends you can't sleep. They're has been a lot of that recently.....A lot of that.

(Transcript, 40/41, SMT, p.10)

P: I was coming in at half past six in the morning and I was working whether it was here or at home right the way through till ten o'clock at night and actually I got to the point when I was like if I don't stop I am going to be seriously ill. Actually when I went to the doctors my blood pressure was really, really high. I can feel it in my body 'no this isn't right' and then you know not sleeping or waking up at night.

The next vignette provides a detailed account of one participant's experience of stress, as a result of taking on a new senior management role. This led to her to being off work due to ill health for a period of time. This participant talks about other colleague's perceptions of her whilst she was unwell, e.g. being unable to cope with or manage the demands of her work:

P: I got myself so that I was so ill...I couldn't actually remember about four or five weeks previous to when I got really ill....which is very, very unlike myself.... but then I got genuine, I got the flue, genuine flu....because I'd been overworking...I was completely run down...My closest knit friends they knew I had genuine flu.....I was so ill..... Actually the perception within another field was 'oh no she can't manage'.....'She's not talking to us', actually I was so ill I'd lost my voice, I could hardly breathe.

I: Were you still in school at that point?

P: No, no basically what happens with me is I'm fine and then all of a sudden bam and that's it, I'm really ill....You know being really, really, sick....physically and unable to even go to email...when I'm ill, I'm really ill and that's it.....I had flu for nine days, proper. The real bad chest infection went to pneumonia and that happened to co-ordinate with the start of the holidays. I think after ten days.... I truly thought 'oh it'll take me ~~5~~ five days to get over it and I'll be back in school'. But I won't touch my school work cos I can only just lie here actually, I can't do anything. When I went to doctors they were like there is no way you will be going back to school, just look at you it's a disaster'. Then I had the Easter holidays and I slowly got myself back up.

The impact on their families

The demands of the job meant that staff must take work home to keep up with their workload and this is viewed as the 'norm' to educators. Although the attendance requirement for teachers is lower than the national average (one hundred and ninety-five school days a year) it is unrealistic to suggest that teachers only work on the days they are present in school (Bowers, 2001). According to Bowers (2001) few teachers are free from work or work-related task at weekends and evenings during term time. This was evident from my participants' responses during the interviews.

I: Does that (discussing workload) leak into your home life?

P: Oh, definitely..... Hours, hours and hours. Every – it was like going home and having a tea break. So you'd have a break, you'd have a lunch break, you'd go home, have a tea break, start again.

(Transcript 40/41, SMT, p.15)

P:... I've got students that I'm seeing in a minute and so I would have had to have gone home and made sure all the essays were marked for them today because this is the last time I see them. I always take work home. Try not to work on a Friday. I don't work on a Friday. I refuse to work on a Friday night. I try and have most of Saturday off depending on – I say Saturday off, I mean that's when I do my cleaning at home and go to my mum's, change the beds and shopping and things like that. And then Sunday I have a bit of a lazy morning and then I work from twelve sometimes right through until eight or nine o'clock....So that's Sundays I work.

(Transcript 43/44, non SMT, p.2)

Schwab, Jackson, and Schuler (1986) argue that work stress results in the deterioration of the quality of home life. Participants felt that the demands of their work came at a personal cost to them as individuals and to their families at times:

P: Most challenging is the fact that - sometimes there is so much work to do and you go home and – especially because I'm a single parent with two young children – by the time I get them in bed and get everything sorted if there's course work or something that's got to be done and marked, obviously it's got to be done and it's not unknown for me to be up all hours of the night doing it. That's horrible.

(Transcript 47, non-SMT, p.7)

P: I guess also there's certain deadlines that come about that aren't always presented to you with enough time to be able to work to those deadlines and that's when you end up taking the job home and you end up spending hours working when you should be spending time – I've got a little girl at home.

(Transcript 93/94, non-SMT, p.6)

The vignette below details the notion of 'presenteeism culture'. The term 'presenteeism' has developed from the term 'absenteeism' and was originally coined by Dr Gary Cooper in the late 1990's. 'Presenteeism' is defined as the practice of working long hours at a job without the real need to do so and the practice of coming to work despite illness or injury, often resulting in reduced productivity. In this case the participant discusses whether presenteeism influences the opportunities for promotion and the implications of this on the rest of the staff body. This is relevant to the workload debate discussed in the previous section.

P: We're all here at god knows what time and so I've really tried to put that message across to the senior leadership team, you know we have to think about what we're modelling to other people....We've got some young colleagues who are sort of second to third year teaching who are often here till seven o'clock at night and again you know, it worries me that they've now got...some leadership responsibilities and its almost, are they being rewarded

for those very long hours? Its presenteeism culture really isn't it? You know it's not that healthy...

(Transcript 45/46, SMT, p.8)

The senior management team and other staff seemed to have an awareness of not working late at school and cultivating a 'presenteeism' culture. However what was not acknowledged was that staff may now be leaving school earlier, but may be taking the work home as an alternative, causing many to have a poor home-work balance.

The impact on pupils

Pupils are also affected by educator's well being and stress levels. Kyriacou (1987) argued that there are concerns that stress and burnout may impair the working relationship a teacher has with their pupils and also affect the quality of teaching that pupil's receive. Wilson (2002) argues that it is difficult to believe that stress does not impact on school staff's interactions in the classroom in some way. Similarly Bowers (2001) describes how a teacher who is absent from work due to illness or who leaves because of persistent illness becomes 'lost' to the children they teach and that we could expect that this absence may "lower the quality of the school experience for the student" (Bowers, 2001, p. 135/136). Participants' experiences supported this.

P: Oh gosh yeah, the kids, it really does. It can't – If you're not happy in your job it reflects right on to the kids.

(Transcript 98/99, non-SMT, p. 14)

P: ...If we're not functioning as we should be then it's going to have a negative effect on the students anyway, isn't it?.....Nobody can work at their best when they are under stress and so it has knock on effects. If they are not working properly, they are not working with the children properly and the children aren't getting what they should be getting.

(Transcript 96, non-SMT, p.2 & 34)

P: ...But you can still not be performing your best if, you know, if you've got other things on your mind....And we all do, course you do. You come into work if you've had an argument or your kid's not very well or your partner's not very well or whatever.....You can't leave people on their own because then their performance suffers, the kids performance, which is the reason why we're here, their performance suffers...

(Transcript 92, MM, p.7/21)

The impact on the school and education system

Stress also has negative implications for the whole school, such as a high turnover of staff, greater absenteeism and reduced productivity (Iverson, Olekalns, & Erwin, 1998; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). The challenging nature of working within the education system has also impacted on the recruitment and retention of teachers (Roehrig, Pressley and Talotta, 2002). Teacher stress is increasingly costly and damaging to the economy (Troman & Woods, 2001) and the estimated cost of stress to the education system in 1998 in England and Wales has been estimated as £230 million (Brown & Ralph, 1998).

Participants felt that the well being of both staff and pupils was crucial to a successful school.

I: What do you think the benefits are to having support in school for staff?

P: I guess less sickness, I mean the staff have a better working environment where people are happier, people enjoy coming to work more,...generally, a more jolly place.....I mean I truly believe that well being of both students and staff is actually what makes a school successful and, and when students are happy and staff are happy you get the end thing you know the result of good grades because people have not got those barriers to learning, teachers can't teach if they're stressed, you know.

(Transcript 45/46, SMT, p.8 & 9)

Reflections on the impact of stress

Whilst a limited amount of stress can be good and indeed educational productive for staff (Renvoize, 1986), the evidence from participants (and supported by the literature), suggests that high volumes of stress can have negative implications for all those connected to the education system (Jepson & Forrest, 2006; Bartlett, 1998; Furnham, 1992; Briner & Dewberry, 2007). For example stress impacts on staff's abilities to perform their duties as educators which may potentially influence pupil's learning. Long, Avanta, and Harrison (1986, p.21) argue "that there is little question that teachers are facing serious difficulties in their jobs and that this is taking a toll on the quality of education in this country". There are also implications for staff's personal well being and their ability to have a well balanced home life. Schwab et al (1986) supports this and argues that the negative effects of stress on family life may be especially detrimental because, over time, family members are likely to find it increasingly difficult to remain supportive of the afflicted parent/spouse. In addition to the difficulty of workload the teacher then finds that the effects of work stress create pressures at home which, no doubt, add to the problems at work.

The previous section illustrates how this study has uncovered new findings to suggest that the causes of stress were not personal to individual staff, but that they arose from the school environment and were deeply embedded in the culture of the

school. Since the underlying causes of stress are largely systemic in nature, the evidence from participants presents a strong argument for a focus on the development of school support systems at this level. The evidence from participants reinforces the literature which demonstrates that providing systems of support for school staff can mediate the negative effects of stress (Zellars & Perrewe, 2001; Hawkins & Shohet, 2001, Grey et al, 1994). It is this finding and the timing of this paper in the current political and educational context that contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this area.

4.4. My participants' experiences and understandings of support systems

The purpose in this section is to describe and characterise my participants' experiences and understandings of the support systems available to them at the time of the interviews. Participants also had the opportunity to discuss areas of further development regarding support systems. This data directly fed into paper two, where developing a support system with participants was the main focus.

Organisational factors: Hierarchical and horizontal support systems

A key issue that emerged in the analysis in this section concerned junior members of staffs' dissatisfaction with what the senior members portrayed as support systems. There seemed to be a disparity between the realities of those staff directly teaching and supporting pupils and those responsible for managing the school and the staff body. The participant vignettes below reflect this:

P: I don't think there's anything in place. No, not at all. I don't think there's anything in place. I can honestly say that.....And, for example, that member of staff I'm talking about.....Which we all know is having a really stressful time and we all know who's aware of it. Nothing has been done to help.....Which I think is appalling.

(Transcript 96, non-SMT, p. 25/26)

P: No, I think there's always more that can be done, certainly with promoting the health and well-being of staff.....I think if we invest all that time and effort to making sure that students' well-being and health are ok, then certainly they should do that for the staff.

(Transcript 93/94, non-SMT, p.15)

P: Well I'm sure it could be better but I don't know any different (laughs).....and I'm quite happy with the way things are done here.

(Transcript 40/41, SMT, p.16)

P: It's difficult isn't it because again, yeah, I'm sure some people would say there is. From a personal point of view, no, I've never felt anything was lacking.

(Transcript 92, MM p.23)

I: Do you think the current systems in school are sufficient...?

P: Personally, I think (brief pause), I think they are. I'm not saying it's perfect and I'm not saying there's not more we could do. But I think within our time and budget constraints we're probably not doing too badly.

I: Is there anything else that you think you would like to see (in terms of support for staff)?

P: Not really because (pause). Because I know the constraints on the budget, really.

(Transcript 95, SMT, p.43 & 47)

In contrast to the junior staff, who felt more could be done to support them in their work, some members of the senior management team felt that all staff members were adequately supported. This difference between the views of junior and senior members of staff is a common narrative to emerge in this section. Whole school meetings and briefings and the performance management process were viewed by senior staff as part of the support mechanism for staff in school. However, many of the junior staff felt that both of these mechanisms put staff under more pressure and added to their workload as they took place during lunchtimes or after school. This

prevented junior staff from focusing on other core tasks such as preparing lessons and marking pupil's work. The participant vignettes below support this:

P:To add even more meetings on top of the ones we have already would just give more workload and add even more stress anyway.

.....Because you know if I think about last year there was only maybe two lunches all week that I didn't actually have a meeting or something to attend and on those days I'd have students coming in because those were the only days I was free to see them if they'd missed lessons to catch up. So to add another meeting would be good but not practical maybe.

(Transcript 47, non-SMT, p.24/26)

Performance management was another aspect where junior and senior members of staff did not agree. Many junior staff felt that performance management could be very subjective and also stressful for staff, in contrast some senior staff felt this to be part of the staff support system:

P:...I suppose it's how it's done. Because if it's supervision, that's observing lessons and if it's observing lessons that's so subjective. That can be quite stressful actually...

(Transcript 47, non SMT, p.23)

P:...But after that you know in terms of ten years, five years down, we've got performance management but that's not really the arena for discussing well being

(Transcript 45/46, SMT, p.20)

P: Well, yeah, I mean, I performance manage like the progress manager and the admin assistant and then some learning support assistants so that – support naturally is kind of built into that...

(Transcript 92, MM, p.14/ p.15)

There were a number of 'systems' that my participants identified as supporting them currently in their work which demonstrated that their main support systems were horizontal rather than hierarchical.

Relationships with peers

One important area to be raised by many of the participants was the relationships they had with the colleagues they worked with at the same level within the system. Many staff relied on this implicit and informal support to aid them in their work. The vignettes below demonstrate the importance of peer support and having an overall supportive staff body to work alongside.

P: And we sort of pride ourselves really on the closeness of the team....It's always been a policy....one member of staff said yesterday 'I felt like crying when I came out of that classroom'.

(Transcript 96, non-SMT, p.23)

P: I think there is (pause), I think we are very good at looking out for each other um and I know if I have got a stressful situation or problem or whatever I can go to certain people and talk to them.

(Transcript 38, MM, p.16)

P: There is always persons' there to offer support.....You know, we are definitely approachable, friendly, supportive and it's team work so nobody kicks anybody down...

(Transcript 39, SMT, p.25, 26 & 29)

Although some staff spoke positively about their informal peer support systems, this tended to depend upon the department staff were part of and the colleagues who made up that team.

P: I think it (slight pause) depends which department you work in and who the line managers are.....ultimately, it's your line manager that would have the effect on how things were for you.

(Transcript 47, non-SMT, p.18)

Relationships with senior colleagues

Whilst the hierarchy of the school system often left participants under stress, many of the participants felt they were individually supported by members of the senior management team and that they were an approachable team.

P: I think as a whole senior managers are great and I think senior managers have got a good system going so I think the school is good with that kind of thing.

(Transcript 47, non-SMT, p.18)

P: Whereas I would say here, as school's go, much as it's a stressful job, it is a nice environment and senior management are really great actually. They are quite approachable and that side of things is brilliant....It's still a stressful

job but if you've got the support of senior management it makes such a difference, it's unbelievable.

(Transcript 47, non-SMT, p.12)

*P: They're very good at kind of making you feel supported and certainly with senior management, certainly *** *****.....very good with personnel. She'll always say that if you need someone to listen to you, then come up and the door is always open. Yeah, definitely, without a doubt. From what I have seen of other members' of staff that have struggled with things like stress in the classroom, I am well aware that the school have always been very supportive of making sure they get the time needed in order to overcome certain situations.....Certainly, bereavement and that sort of thing, they've always been very very good – they're not precious about saying 'Let's be realistic about this. You need time to recover from what you've been through'.*

(Transcript 93/94, non-SMT, p.12/ p.13)

P: But to be honest I feel I could speak to anyone; the head, deputy head, I'd chat to and have done in the past, have chatted to them, yeah.....Yeah, absolutely. Any one of them, any one at all...say if there's a difficult time with my child, like with my little boy or anything, I'd always feel I could go and say look-.....But yeah, to be honest, there's no one in a position of responsibility I don't feel I could go and ask.

(Transcript 92, MM, p.19)

However the experiences of participants provides further evidence that the causes of stress are systemic in nature and are not currently being addressed through changes to the school environment or through whole school support systems. Alternatively the issues are seemingly being addressed by the established positive relationship that SMT have with their staff. Whilst this is positive in itself, this does not address the systemic and complex issue of the causes of stress in the education system.

Individual factors: Commitment to the profession and relationships with pupils

Although nearly all of the participants spoke of the challenges, difficulties and stresses of their work, many of them enjoyed their work, felt they made a difference to pupil's lives and had a passion for teaching. Borg and Falzon (1989) found that, despite the high prevalence of stress, the majority of teachers regarded their profession as highly rewarding. This commitment to the job despite the difficulties in the system seemed to act as a buffer to the challenges my participants faced in their work. The rewards the staff received from seeing the pupils achieve and make progress provided them with the motivation to remain in a difficult profession.

*P: I think all of it is rewarding, although I might moan.....It's all rewarding, because....occasionally you do something good, not every day....but the once in a while you feel that you've **done** something, **achieved** something and made a difference.*

(Transcript 42, non-SMT, p.3)

*P: I've kind of made an effort, over the last couple of years, so that I still teach decent lessons because then it's brilliant...I've got Year 11's and it's brilliant. Nothing better than teaching those kids, they're fantastic, you know? They're great...The other stuff I do with the Year 11's, like *****; I mean that's just...fantastic. That's what it's about. That's the nice bits. But I love it, yeah. I love my job, you know? I never moan about the job. I love it, yeah. But I find a lot of people like that here, to be honest. That's why I've never kind of seemed to want to move.....I love it. Yeah, it's tiring and you're absolutely exhausted and it's stressful and difficult and you are dealing with situations that are very difficult but, yeah, I love it, it's alright.*

(Transcript 92, MM p.5)

Spaces and Interventions designed specifically to alleviate stress

As part of my interview I was interested in my participant's reaction to spaces within the school and interventions that had been specifically designed to alleviate stress. SMT felt that some of the systems identified by staff already existed in school. For example; Training workshops, buddies, coaching, a relaxing space for staff, lunch clubs and staff/team days. However these systems either happened infrequently (e.g. staff/team days) and staff wanted to see them occur more regularly or there were particular requirements in order for the support systems to be provided. For example buddies and mentors were provided for new members of staff, newly qualified teachers and those under performance management measures.

Some SMT members felt that the new school building would have a new staff room and that this would meet the requirement for a relaxing space for staff. However staff did not identify the staff room as a relaxing place;

P: No, well I say I use the staffroom I sometimes occasionally go in there in the morning but that's just to sit down before briefing. I don't use it as a place.....We've only got the staff room, which like all staff rooms you know they're not exactly conducive to relaxing....

But if it was up to me it would be all running water (laughs) and sort of you know rooms you can lie down in (laughs).

(Transcript 45/46, SMT, p. 13/14)

Additionally with coaching, staff were trained and the concept introduced, but it was never fully embedded into the school.

*P: ...The coaching stuff that we did...it's not been continued...we had in house training...I had a **very** difficult GCSE group, very, very difficult. Demanding boys who were clever but disaffected and who actually were taking too much of my time. I was allowing them to take my attention away from the others and I was coached through that actually and given some good advice.*

I: And was that useful, was it effective?

P: It was. Yes it was, yeah.

(Transcript 40/41, SMT, p.35/36)

Reflections on my participants' experiences and understandings of support systems

The evidence in this section illustrates the contrast in participants' views regarding the current support systems available to them. Many of the junior members of staff felt that the school support systems were inadequate, whilst senior staff perceived the support systems to be effective given the time and budget restrictions they faced in the current political climate.

Another key issue that this study has uncovered is the hierarchical nature of the school, with junior members of staff mainly seeking out support through their horizontal systems e.g. peer support. The evidence presented in this section shows how this hierarchy places further stress and pressure on those in the system directly working with and supporting pupils. This finding is not one that frequents the literature in this area and thus adds to the existing body of knowledge on teacher and school staff stress.

Due to the discrepancy in perceptions that exists between those in the school, junior staff are forced to rely on informal peer and mutual support from those that work at

the same level of the system. However, this depends on the department in which staff work and the members of the team that make up the department, making the support inconsistent and unreliable for many. Furthermore, those spaces and interventions that had been specifically designed to support staff were not perceived by many of the participants to do so, further emphasising the hierarchical culture of schooling. This finding is also an addition to the literature in this field.

Despite the system, staff survive because of their passion and commitment to the pupils they teach. However, this and the informal support systems fail to address the negative implications of stress on those working within and connected to the education system.

4.5. Role of the EP

This section focuses on my participants' views and understanding of the role of the EP. I was also interested in how the staff saw the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in terms of helping with the sort of issues relating to stress that have been documented in this paper. I was particularly interested as there have been radical changes to the role and function of the educational psychologist (EP), since it first became known to the education system in 1913. Over the past 20 years, in particular there has been much debate about the EP role (e.g. Gillham, 1978) and frequent questions as to their distinct contribution (Dessent, 1992, Norwich, 1995).

Despite (or because of) this debate the five core functions of EP work has been outlined as assessment, intervention, consultation, training and research (Scottish Executive, 2002; Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009). These core functions have been identified in the following areas: early years work; work with schools (primary, secondary and special) and multi-agency work (Farrell, Woods, Lewis, Rooney, Squires & O'Connor, 2006) and delivered at three levels: at the individual child (or family) level, at the whole school level and at the local authority level (Scottish Executive, 2002; Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009).

Gersch (2004) has recently proposed that educational psychology is currently undergoing a huge period of rapid and immense change. He argues that EP's work must be seen as valuable and useful as evidence by their actions and results and seen as relevant to major national developments in order for the profession to be adequately funded and to have an assured future (Gersch, 2004).

It is likely that the role of the EP will continue to change according to what is need by those they work with, Gibb (1998) notes that “the debate around the role of the EP is one that is permanently ongoing”.

Given this debate about the role of the EP it was of interest that my participants’ responses demonstrated a lack of understanding with regard to the EP role.

P:..Your service tends to get pigeon-holed into doing assessments or writing those reports or supporting people getting statements and stuff.

(Transcript 45/46, SMT, p.15)

Many of the participants also considered the EP service to be an agency there to support young people and not staff.

P:...See now I look at you and I just immediately think it’s for the children don’t I? We’ve been talking about adults. Well that would be ideal (laughs).

Transcript 96, non-SMT, p.39)

P: I guess we tend to think about the EP – well, we do, we think about it for the children.

(Transcript 95, SMT, p.49)

However, when the EP service was discussed it was viewed positively by participants.

P: I think we need a school psychologist in school full-time.....I really do.....I mean I think we should have somebody like you, in school, every day.

(Transcript 98/99, non-SMT, p.48)

P: I just think it's a really good idea and I think – it's a superb idea to have a psychologist involved to look after the staff who look after the children.

(Transcript 96, non-SMT, p.40)

Although some participants did not mention the EP service as an agency to help schools develop their staff support systems, some did discuss the importance of providing an outside agency for staff to talk to. It was stressed that outside agencies can often bring alternative perspectives and ensure that staff's views were kept confidential.

P: ...I think it would be nice if there was someone you could go....but someone you could go and talk things through in a sort of... just you know who, that was their sort of remit so you knew that you were probably gonna be speaking to someone like minded.....so if there was just someone they could offload to or talk....probably an independent person, someone who came into school maybe um.

(Transcript 45/46, SMT, p.13)

I: Do you think any kind of outside agencies could support the school with that in any way?

P: It would almost be easier if that were the case.

I: Why would that be easier?

P: When you're offloading sometimes just to be able to – not that you're offloading to somebody that isn't involved directly.

I: Or biased, or who isn't going to pass it on or....

P: Yeah. You'd like to think that whoever you are working with would never do that. But there's always a reason at the back of your mind that that is a possibility....It was always good having that additional input from other professionals and their point of view.....I guess you can almost, not get brain-washed, but your way of thinking can be set in one direction.....Whereas it's always handy having other people from outside 'actually in this case, this solution might have been better'.

(Transcript 93/94, non-SMT, p.25 & 28)

Reflections on my participant's views on how the educational psychology service can support schools with developing support systems

The evidence to emerge from this chapter reveals that participants were unaware of how useful the EP service could be in assisting their school with developing their support systems. Staff at the school of focus had a limited knowledge of the wider role of the EP and felt this was a support mechanism for pupils rather than for professionals. Many participants were unaware of the variety of work the EP service conducts, particularly regarding work with staff. This is likely to be due to the ongoing changes to the role and function of EPs over the years.

The finding that EPs are viewed by participants in this study as a support mechanism for pupils and not staff is of direct relevance to the continuing debate regarding other professionals' knowledge and understanding of the role of the EP, as it demonstrates specifically how some of the confusion has arisen for staff at the school of focus and also offers a way in which it may begin to be resolved. This offers important insights into how schools and staff view the role of the EP and how the EPS may work alongside schools to develop staffs' understanding of how their EPS can offer their skills and support in this context.

The next section will draw together the findings from this analysis, discuss these and consider the implications. The strengths and limitations of this study will also be considered.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1. Conclusions and Implications

The aim of this paper was to generate new understandings with regard to school staff stress and school support systems and the consequences of this on staff's EHWB and their work (particularly the teaching and learning of pupils). The data collected has added to existing research by providing an up to date account of the views and experiences not just of teaching staff but also a range of staff. Unlike previous research, participants in this study were drawn from members of the support staff and members of the senior management team as well as members of the teaching staff. I, therefore, drew my interviewees from across the school meso system.

This approach is timely given the current context of education policy and practice and the effects on school staff. For example, Austin, Shah & Muncer (2005) found that the number of referrals of teachers to occupational therapists with stress-related disorders such as anxiety, depression, and burnout is increasing. Of even more concern is that it has been reported that teachers have a higher risk of suicide compared with other professions (Teacher Support Network, 2011) and that there have also been reports of teacher suicides being linked particularly to Ofsted inspections (Mansell, 2000).

The evidence I have presented indicates that there is a need for support systems in the school to be more formal and incorporated into policy. This might include identifying new policy areas and the drawing up of new documentation such as stress reduction and staff well-being policy documentation and the provision of a map of support systems that staff could make use of during times of need.

My evidence also provides a case for more explicit and regular intervention sessions designed to alleviate stress, and the provision of EHWP and support systems. For example a specially designed package might go some way to keeping the area in focus, having a uniformed approach to stress alleviation across departments to ensure consistency in support systems for all staff to compensate for the possible high turnover of staff. This is important as the research on school climate emphasises that a positive, supportive school climate can significantly shape the degree of academic success for pupils and increased job satisfaction for staff (Marshall, 2004; Haynes and Comer, 1993).

The process of data collection for this study has encouraged staff to reflect upon the systems in place in their school to support stress reduction, and the strategies the school staff used to manage their own stress levels. In addition to this and as a result of the initial interviews, the school initiated a staff well-being forum. At the time of writing this, it is continuing to occur on a termly basis to ensure issues regarding stress, EHWP and levels of staff support, remain an important consideration.

A key issue that the study uncovered was the hierarchical nature of the school. Bowen (2004, p, 63) describes what he terms as “typically hierarchical social systems”. In this system the head teacher and their management team are usually the leaders of the school, teachers and other professionals (such as the school EP) operate under the authority of the head teacher and their management team. Pupils tend to be at the bottom of the hierarchy (Bowen, 2004). Schools also exist within a local authority, the local community and institutional level. The evidence presented above show how this hierarchy served to maintain the causes of stress experienced by my participants. The evidence also showed that my participants had a limited

knowledge of the wider roles of the EPS and this may be significant area for the local authority in which this research was conducted to focus on in the future.

Whilst some forms of stress may be due to personal attributions located within the individual, the evidence in this study strongly suggested that the causes of stress amongst my participants were systemic in nature as the issues raised were common across my participants and originated from the way the school system was organised and the way these systems operated. The implication of this is that the focus of support needs to be aimed at adapting the school environment to reduce the main areas of stress faced by teachers and support staff. In addition the focus needs to be on helping teachers deal more positively with the stress factors within the environments and systems in which they work. Bowen (2004, p. 63) argues that from a general systems perspective “a school functions in a dynamic interaction with its larger context” and that schools are social systems with complex properties, subsystems and environmental contexts. This, therefore, raises issues at the larger macro level of the education system and is likely to require changes in both education policy and practice.

The findings in this study show how school systems are complex environments affected greatly by a range of internal and external factors. This study, in common with previous studies, indicates that stress and burnout are a function of the quality of work life in the education system for many (Cedoline, 1982, as cited in Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999). This can have a detrimental effect on all those connected to the education system (individual staff, pupils, school organisations, the local authority and society as a whole) and this was demonstrated in this study.

5.2. Strengths and limitations of research

There were a number of constraints that may have impacted on the findings that emerged from this paper. Given that school staff experienced high levels of stress and workload and that they had little time to successfully complete their work, I was unable to spend longer than an hour interviewing each participant. Although participants were generous with their time and keen to meet and discuss their experiences, a prolonged involvement approach to this research might have allowed the collection of more in-depth data than was collected in this paper.

The nature of discussing how an individual experiences stress is a personal and private issue such that some participants may have felt unable to discuss in depth with someone that was new to them – although the reverse could also have been the case making my position as an ‘outsider’ a strength. It is also worthy of mention that there are always elements of our individual experiences and feelings which we chose to keep private and not share with anyone. It is for these reasons that a prolonged involvement approach might be more advisable for future research in this area, allowing time to meet and collect data from participants over time. However time and resources always limit research. For example, a prolonged approach would be dependent on whether school staff would have the time available to commit to such a piece of research and that the senior management team within the particular school saw this as a good use of staff’s time.

Additionally the data was collected from staff during or after the school day and the interviews were conducted in the school in which the staff worked. This may also have impacted on participant’s ability to be as honest and open about their experiences and views in their interviews. Participants were offered to meet elsewhere, but for most it was more convenient for the interview to be conducted on the school grounds in which they worked.

One of the main strengths of this piece of research was the way in which I was able to work closely with participants to gain their confidence. This allowed me to collect good quality data regarding participant's experiences of stress, the impact this had on them and the support systems available to them to alleviate the effects.

5.3. Implications for future research and practice

Whilst this paper has made an important contribution to knowledge in the fields of school staff stress and support systems there are a number of areas that future research should prioritise. Nearly all my participants made reference to their EHWP and levels of stress having an impact on their abilities to teach and, by implication, on the learning and development of pupils. Several other authors (e.g. Bartlett, 2004; Briner & Dewberry, 2007; Creese, Norwich & Daniels, 1997 and Jenkins & Calhoun, 1991) have made reference to the potential impact stress may have on pupils in school. Further work is therefore needed to focus on this issue before the implications can be considered more carefully.

Future research also needs to give consideration to ways in which policy and legislation impacts on school systems and the way in which these systems impact on the roles of teachers and support staff. However, it is recognised that addressing this area of the education system is likely to be a complex process that will need to occur over time. The starting point for this kind of research would need to involve a recognition by policy makers that stress in the education system is becoming an increasingly worrying trend and one that with the right kind of support systems in place could be prevented in the future. This study indicates this might be the case.

5.4. Implications for the role of EPs

EPs are well placed to offer their services to schools in supporting them with examining professional support systems. EPs are experienced researchers and could conduct small pieces of individual school-based research looking at those areas of the workplace where stress is experienced the most and be able to identify gaps in staff support systems. Baxter and Frederickson (2005) support this contention by arguing that EPs are amongst the most qualified professional groups to carry out research.

EPs are also well placed to provide bespoke packages of support for individual schools that may include staff training aimed at prioritising staff support and EHWP both in policy and practice. Stringer et al (1992) emphasise the value of EPs being involved in this area of professional support and comment on the valuable contribution EPs could make, particularly at a time when teachers are under increasing amounts of stress.

Stringer et al (1992) also emphasise that EPs' training and experience equips them to offer support with relationships and empowering other practitioners as well as being active partners in creating "new, more adequate and effective solutions to deal with traditional problems" (Stringer et al, 1992, p. 95). EPs are therefore well placed to work in collaboration with schools to develop their staff support systems in this area of staff development and school improvement. It is to this issue that I now turn my attention as the findings from this first paper inform my second paper.

In paper two I work with school staff to develop and evaluate a support-based intervention in order to address the gaps in support that staff identified in this first paper. Staff training was the most common suggestion, as being one method of increasing staff's knowledge and understanding of how to manage stress and

promote positive EHWB. Participants' suggestions and ideas have been incorporated into the staff support package that forms the basis of paper two.

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Paper Two

An action research model of developing a support-based intervention with staff.

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CHAPTER ONE

Abstract

This piece of participatory action research (with staff collaboration being integral) was conducted in one large secondary community college in the South West area of England. Participants worked as teachers, support staff and/or members of the senior management team at the school of focus.

The aim of this paper was to create a change in the perspectives of individual school staff by developing their knowledge and understanding of possible methods of reducing stress and improving emotional health and well-being (EHWB). It was hoped that a change in individual staff's perspectives would result in a change in the support systems provided to staff within the school (meso) system.

Through the use of a focus group staff were able to discuss which area of the school's staff support systems required attention (following on from data collected in paper one). The staff's support intervention of choice (to be the focus of this paper and to be evaluated) was a series of short training workshops, with an emphasis on practical strategies. A pre and post questionnaire was completed by participants looking at the extent to which strategies were applied to their own practice.

Attendance at the training was poor, with only five members of the school's support and special needs team attending. There were no teachers or members of the senior management team present. Although the day and time of the training was chosen by staff at the focus group, many staff were unable to attend the training intervention due to other school commitments.

As the training was after school (considered as 'twilight' training by staff) this may have prevented those members of staff who may have had family commitments from attending the training. Staff were not specifically allocated time to attend this training intervention.

Those staff that did attend the training intervention provided positive feedback and found it useful in their practice. The questionnaires suggested that the training increased staff's knowledge of how to manage their stress and to promote their well-being. Staff also stated that they were able to apply the practical strategies provided directly to their practice.

As a result of this and the previous paper, the school set up a staff well-being forum, open to all staff and meeting on a termly basis. The main focus of the forum was to consider the ways in which stress can be reduced and staff well-being promoted. In addition to this the school are planning on setting up staff consultation groups (input was provided during the intervention) for their team of teaching assistants who currently have no allocated time to meet as a group or to be formally provided with support.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

2.1. Purpose

The purpose of paper two is to examine my role as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP) as I work with the school staff to set in motion the process of change in (i) their perspectives by developing their knowledge and understanding of the possible methods of reducing stress and improving well-being (ii) the school support systems provided to staff within the school (meso) system.

To achieve the above, I worked alongside school staff to develop, run and evaluate an intervention programme aimed at their professional support needs as identified by them and perceived as being under-developed or lacking from the school's current support systems (paper one).

2.2. Context

Headlines depicting the education system such as 'Depression hits hard in schools' (Thornton, 2000) and 'Teaching can make you sicker for longer' (Dean, 2000) are commonplace in the current climate. The literature cites that more than 40% of teachers experience serious symptoms of stress (Austin, Shah & Muncer, 2005). Paper one was developed as a consequence to the literature in this area.

Participants' experiences in paper one indicated that stress and burnout are a function of the quality of work life in the education system with negative implications associated both for those within the education system and those closely connected to it. Paper one argued that the causes of stress amongst my participants were systemic in nature as the issues raised were common across my participants and

originated from the way the school system was organised and operated. This view is supported by the literature. Additionally paper one uncovered a key finding relating to the hierarchical nature of schooling. This hierarchy served to maintain and aggravate the causes of stress experienced by my participants.

The evidence from paper one indicated that there is a need for support systems in the school to be more formal, incorporated into policy and provides a case for more explicit and regular intervention sessions designed to alleviate stress, the provision of EHWB and support systems. This second paper attempts to address the lack of explicit and regular interventions aimed at alleviating stress and promoting EHWB, by developing, in collaboration with participants, a staff support based intervention.

2.3. Theoretical Framing: The importance of support systems

The research indicates that school support systems can act as a 'buffer' to challenges within the teaching profession and can mediate the negative effects of stress and burnout (Zellars & Perrewe, 2001, Hawkins & Shohet 2000, Gray, Miller and Noakes, 1994, Eisner, 1979). However it is well documented that current support systems provided for school staff are less developed than in other related professions (Halfacree, 1992, Chappell et al, 1992) and have been major areas of neglect in schools and teaching training (Humphreys, 1995). It is for this reason that this paper focuses on developing and evaluating a support based intervention for school staff.

The role of the EP is also a key factor in this paper. I have carefully considered throughout the development and delivery of the staff support intervention, the benefits of EP involvement when working with schools to bring about change (section four will provide more detailed literature on the change literature).

EPs and other outside agencies are unique in that they are able to remain neutral (Beaver, 2003) and 'meta' to the school system (as they are not directly part of the system and can therefore act as outside consultants). EPs are able to develop an in depth understanding and awareness of how a particular school system operates (Beaver 1996). This allows EPs the opportunity to consider the wider context and act as a 'critical friend' to school staff. It is this that allows EP to support the process of effective change in schools by creating the conditions and processes that will enhance the likelihood that those in the system will move down a path of greater ownership and commitment of an issue or problem (Fullan, 2003), in this case developing staff support systems and promoting staff well being.

I will examine in the next section how this paper provides a contribution to the literature in the field of study.

2.4. Selected Literature

A small selection of literature has been presented in this section. Due to the nature of my research further reference to relevant literature will be made during the presentation of my data in the analysis and discussion section (section four). Paper one, section 2.2.1 provides the sources of literature used in this section.

The literature in the next section focuses on three types of support systems that have been used in schools and found to be effective according to the literature. This research was taken into consideration in helping to inform what was included in the staff support intervention.

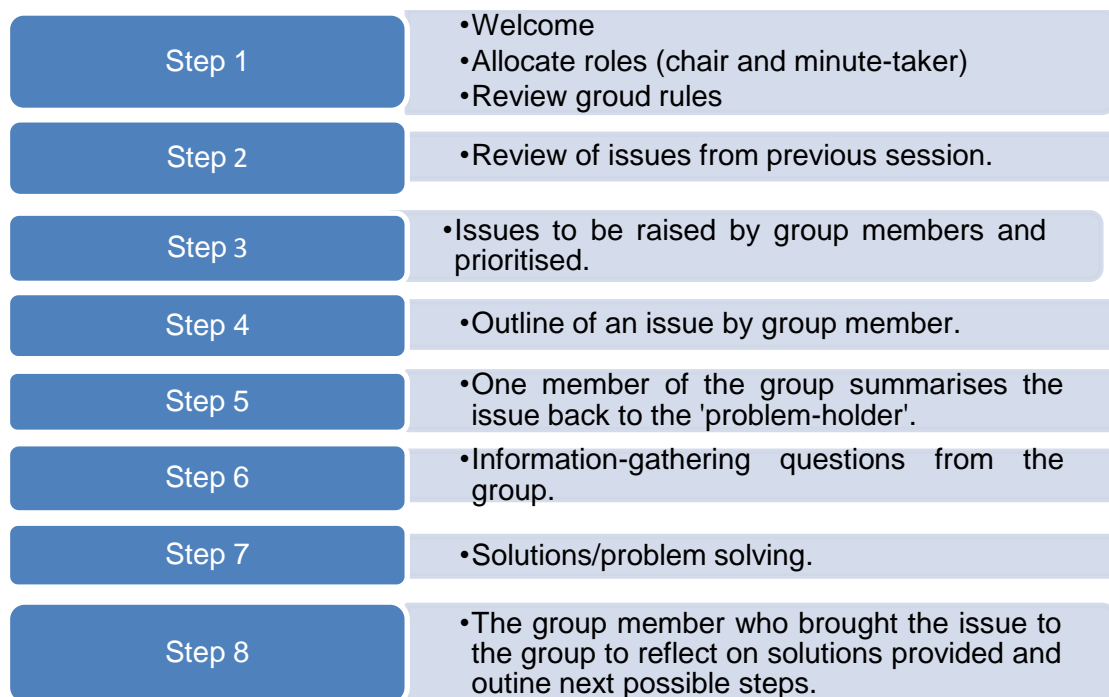
Staff Consultation Groups and Teacher Support Teams (TSTs)

Group consultation has emerged from the consultation process that is used by EPs as key tool in their practice (operating at three levels; individual, group and

organisational) and represents one example of how staff can come together and support one and other in a more formal and systematic way.

Stringer, Stow, Hibbert, Powell and Louw (1992), who worked for the Newcastle EPS at the time their paper was written, drew upon the group consultation work of Hanko (1985) and created a course to train teachers in order for them to set up and facilitate staff consultation groups in their own schools (Bozic & Carter, 2002). Many schools went on to set up groups and schools found this a useful addition to their current school support systems. Figure 7, below, outlines the process of group consultation.

Figure 7: The process of group consultation



Dewe (1986, p.180) found that by using social support, individuals “significantly reduced the impact of stress on general well-being and somatic complaints”. Leithwood, Menzies, Jantzi & Leithwood (1999) argue that stress and burn-out is less likely for teachers when social support is received, where they have

opportunities to share professional experiences and do not become professionally isolated. The elements that Leithwood et al (1999) cite, are part of the group consultation process incorporated into the intervention and may be one possible method of supporting staff in their work and preventing work-related stress.

Teacher support teams (TSTs, Creese, Norwich & Daniels, 2000) are another form of staff support and are viewed as being similar to group consultation (Bozic & Carter, 2002). Bozic and Carter (2002) describe TSTs as being made up of a small number of school staff (usually three) who meet regularly and who receive referrals from other teachers in the school who are experiencing difficulties teaching pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

The TST initiative has been very well received in schools and teachers were positive about the potential contribution it could make to their school (Creese et al, 2000). One study showed that 95% of referring teachers felt that the strategies offered by the TST had been 'fairly' or 'very useful' (Bozic & Carter, 2002). This has been replicated in previous evaluations (Creese, Daniels & Norwich, 1997).

The work of Hanks (1985;1999); Stringer et al (1992) and Creese et al (2000) involved using their self-developed support interventions and inviting schools to take part in a project to evaluate them. Where this study differs and adds to the existing literature in the field is that the intervention itself was created, developed and evaluated in collaboration with staff. Group consultation was one aspect incorporated into the intervention to fulfil staff's aims of completing the intervention with some practical strategies they could apply to their practice (additional information regarding the support systems discussed in this section can be found in the literature review).

The next section will consider the effectiveness of staff training as a source of professional support for school staff.

Staff training

Renvoize (1986) argues that the holding of regular workshops for teachers where insights can be gained into those situations where stress is likely to be caused and the emotional and psychosomatic responses which may follow has considerable merit. Renvoize (1986) goes on to argue that workshops could be provided for school staff where they are taught practical, individual and collective coping skills against stress. In addition groups where teachers are encouraged to talk freely, share information, ideas and mutual support are recognised as being helpful. All of Renvoize's (1986) suggestions have been incorporated into this paper's support intervention for school staff.

Jenkins and Calhoun (1991) argue that there are major sources of stress and effects of stress in teacher's environments. They felt that schools must begin to provide opportunities for teachers to manage these stressors at work by gaining insight into stress management training effectiveness (Jenkins & Calhoun, 1991). Unfortunately, little research evaluating the effectiveness of these workshops (Murphy & Sauter, 2003; Cotanch, 1984) has been conducted. A review of the literature has demonstrated that more research is required to evaluate stress workshop effectiveness. This is one of the main focuses of this paper.

Keable (1996) and Stein, Bentley and Natz (1999) emphasised that educating individuals about the signs and symptoms of stress is an important part of coping with and preventing stress and enables them to know when to apply the learned techniques. This should enable individuals to take steps to avoid the causes of stress and will help them to recognise when they are becoming stressed again in the

future (NHS, 2008). This was one area identified by staff as lacking from current support systems in their school and as a result was focused on during the five week training intervention in this paper.

I would also argue that this paper provides a contribution to knowledge by offering insights to other EPs working to create change within school systems. This will be discussed further in chapter four.

The research demonstrates that further work in this area is required and it is for this reason that the areas discussed above are the focus of this paper.

2.5. Summary and research questions

The literature relevant to this paper has called for systems to be developed to support staff in their work and prevent stress. Friedman (1999) argues that professional support systems such as informal social support and other stress prevention measures such as critical friends, mentors, pairing and buddying schemes are important systems in alleviating stress. Training workshops on stress prevention have also been detailed in the literature as an effective method of supporting school staff to deal with stress (Keable, 1996 and Stein, Bentley and Natz, 1999). It is for this reason that this paper focuses on the development of the areas discussed.

The following research questions for this paper have emerged from the gaps found within the literature:

RQ1) How can I as an EP work effectively with school staff to bring about change in their knowledge and understanding of:

- The effects of stress and coping strategies.
- Personal emotional health and well being.

- Professional support systems. For example; setting up and running a staff consultation group.
- Assertiveness

RQ2) How can I as an EP work effectively with school staff to bring about change in the use of practical strategies aimed at alleviating stress and in their responses to stress?

CHAPTER THREE

3.1. Methodology

An adapted form of participatory action research has been the methodology adopted for this paper. One of the fundamental principles of action research is collaboration with and the participation of those being researched in order to gain a better understanding of the issues and to influence, create and implement change (Lawson, 2009). As I worked alongside the participants to collect the data, the close and collaborative nature of the relationship between myself and the participants in this piece of action research, fits well with the flexible, qualitative design.

Evaluation can be an important part of action research according to Lawson (2009) and Robson (2008) who argue that it can be important to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy for change during or after the change has occurred. Evaluating the staff support intervention was a key element of this paper.

Action research is about improving knowledge about existing situations. As each situation is unique to the people or situation the knowledge cannot be generalised or applied but can be shared (McNiff & Whitehead, 2009). For example a model of good practice to be used and developed by other schools.

3.2. Design & Methods

As with paper one a flexible design consistent with an interpretive approach and a social constructionist philosophy has been adopted for the purposes of this research (paper one, section two provides further detail regarding this). Qualitative data was collected whilst working alongside staff, through a focus group and a single pre and post self-completion questionnaire (with open questions). Due to the nature of my research questions and my methodological approach, the development of the

intervention, the recruitment of participants and the implementation of the intervention formed key parts of my data set. Therefore, the methods I used to collect data at each stage in this process are outlined in greater detail within relevant sections of the following chapter. Data on outcomes was also collected through and a single pre and post self-completion questionnaire using open-ended questions. For reasons of consistency and coherence in presentation, the methods used for this purpose also appear in the relevant section of the following chapter.

3.3. My dual role as an EP and as a researcher

For the purposes of this paper I had a dual role as both a practising EP facilitating the development and implementation of the intervention programme and as a researcher monitoring and recording the process and outcomes of that programme. It must be acknowledged, therefore, that I was researching an intervention I had collaboratively designed and evaluated alongside participants. I also delivered the five training workshops. My role as an EP was fundamental to the process of this paper as my purpose was to examine the benefits of having an EP involved in such an enterprise as I wanted to provide insights for other EPs wishing to undertake a similar project or working in other areas with schools to effect a change in their systems. However, also crucial to the outcomes of this paper was to monitor the impact of collaboration of participants.

3.4. Ethical consideration

I have complied with the ethical code of Practice of the British Psychological Society (BPS) and gained consent from the University of Exeter research ethics committee. Appendix 25 contains the completed University of Exeter research ethics form and Appendix 26 the consent form completed by participants (Appendix 7 provides details of the ethical considerations for this piece of research).

CHAPTER FOUR

Data, analysis and discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyse and interpret my data using relevant literature. I have chosen to present the chapter in such a way as to provide a coherent narrative of the stages of developing, delivering and evaluating the intervention. The chapter has thus been separated into five key sections detailing:

- The development of the intervention (4.1)
- Recruitment of participants (4.2)
- Implementation of the intervention (4.3)
- Outcomes of the intervention (4.4)

Participants have been referred to as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 throughout this section to ensure participant's anonymity is preserved. During participant vignettes 'I', refers to the researcher/interviewer.

In each section I consider the theoretical aspects relevant to framing and interpreting the data. In this way I will use my data to reflect on their significance in the context of an existing body of literature. At each juncture I will consider my role as an EP and as an external agent working with a school to bring about change.

4.1. The development of the intervention

The focus group

The first stage of the development of the intervention in this paper was to feedback back the results of paper one to participants (regarding their views and experiences of stress and support) and discuss with staff what they felt needed to be included in a short support-based intervention. This first stage was achieved through the use of a focus group which is an open-ended group interview on a specific topic (Robson, 2008), in this case stress, well-being and support.

A focus group method was selected because, according to the literature, it is an effective way to collect qualitative data as it increases the amount and range of data that can be collect from more than one person at a time (Robson, 2008). Also Evason and Whittington (1997) suggested that focus groups can be used to amplify and understand findings.

A total of 11 participants attended the focus group (recruited through a whole school email sent from SMT). This was a useful number as it has been suggested that 8-12 people is a suitable number for a focus group (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). All participants that attended were female and included three members of the SMT, five teachers and three support staff. The senior management team were present as they felt it important to be part of this discussion with staff (see appendix 2 for more information on the school context).

Participants discussed a range of ideas such as a staff well being day, staff social events (which participants viewed as a support mechanism) and relaxation sessions. These ideas from participants required expertise I was unable to provide, however

some of the participants themselves could and I encouraged the development of these ideas outside of the project we were working on.

To begin with participants were not considering ideas within the remit of the educational psychology service. For example, using corporate businesses to run staff-only days. My role as the facilitator to the group was to refocus the participants in considering how my expertise could be used to support them in developing an intervention.

Facilitating the focus group was challenging due to the limited time available, staff turning up at various times throughout, managing the group to ensure everyone had the opportunity to share their ideas and also, due to the presence of three members of the senior management team. Whilst the literature suggests that SMT involvement is crucial to the change process, in this case having SMT present for the focus group was a constraining factor. For example, when I suggested training a small team of staff in dealing with stress and how to promote EHWB who would then provide support to other staff, SMT did not approve this as they felt that staff had a large enough existing workload.

Staff favoured the idea of drop-in sessions and also staff training. This idea from staff was adapted and developed into the final intervention - training workshops, with topics selected by staff. Topics selected for inclusion in the workshops were:

- The causes and effects of stress and effective coping strategies
- Emotional health and well being
- Professional support (staff consultation groups)
- Assertiveness and home-work balance

It was originally agreed that six workshops would be conducted to allow for one workshop per topic and an additional two practical workshops to run 'mock' staff consultations groups. However, due to time constraints for both the participants and I, it was agreed that I would deliver five workshops (one workshop on stress and EHWB, three workshops on staff consultation groups, with two being practice-based, and one workshop on assertiveness and maintaining a positive home-work balance). The decision to run three workshops on staff consultation groups was due to the participants requesting an emphasis on practical strategies during the training.

It was also agreed that the workshops would be delivered for one hour on a Wednesday afternoon, as this was a day that was free of any whole school or departmental meetings. Lunchtimes were briefly considered, however staff and pupils only had 40 minutes for lunch which left little time after eating to effectively conduct the workshop sessions. To finalise the intervention programme methods, materials and content, it was agreed that I would meet with the senior management team (other data and relevant information from the focus group can be found in Appendix 12 and 13, Figures 9 and 10. E.g. the agenda and minutes).

The focus group was found to be a useful way to gather a large group of participants together. It was convenient for both participants and as a researcher in terms of effective time management. However, there were challenges to this process. Without my presence to facilitate the meeting, it was unlikely staff would have concluded the meeting with a viable idea for an intervention. The focus group in many ways was an intervention in itself. I was required to chair and facilitate the meeting, keep participants on target and to help them reach a conclusion as to the best way forward. It was also my role to carry out follow-up action points.

Theoretical framing: the change literature

A selection of literature on organisational change provides a useful framework for considering the processes involved in developing the intervention (additional information regarding the change literature can be found in Appendix 23 and 24). This literature is also appropriate for the purpose of conducting a piece of action research that is intended to prompt or create a change in perception and/or practice. Moreover as both papers take place in a complex system, the change literature provides a useful link to systems theory used to frame paper one. The research on systems change provides a realistic overview of what may be achieved through the use of an action research methodology.

The role of the SMT in the change process

Creese et al (2000) found that for effective change to occur across a school system, staff well-being and support interventions need to be prioritised by those in the system who can support, manage and maintain a change. The development of the staff intervention used in this paper was created through collaboration with school staff and in consultation with the school senior management team, who are critical to the change process. Without SMT support, the literature suggests, staff support initiatives are unlikely to be protected, embedded into school life or operate successfully (Creese et al, 2000; Dean, 1993; Torrington & Weighman, 1989; Weindling & Earley, 1987). The literature particularly cites the importance of having the senior management team (SMT) involved in any decision making to ensure they fully support and continue to develop such an intervention in the future (Creese, Daniels & Norwich, 1997). The SMT were fully involved with the planning and creating of the intervention.

The complexity and speed of change

Even with senior staff on board, change is an intricate phenomenon and does not occur quickly in a complex system. Stobie (2002) argues that change is an ongoing, dynamic process which does not take place in a vacuum, but within systems. The organisation in which the change is taking place is crucial (Dawson 1994), as systems are made up of their history, culture, beliefs, values and assumptions that influence the way in which people perceive, think and behave (Stobie, 2002). Change, therefore, can often require people to alter what they believe in and what they value and this can often be a direct barrier to change. Stobie (2002) argues that major blocks to change include people's feelings of threat, anxiety and insecurity. Perceived loss of status and power may cause individuals to preserve the status quo by attempting to resist change through active opposition, passive resistance or 'sabotage' (Stobie, 2002).

Fullan (2003) argues that for change to occur in education, the vast majority of those people in the system must 'own' the problem and become the agents of solution (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Fullan (2003) goes on to add that rather than the 'problem' being handed over, we must create the conditions and processes that will enhance the likelihood that those in the system will move down a path of greater ownership and commitment. I, therefore, deliberately used an action research methodology to ensure that participants were involved in creating and developing an intervention which they 'owned' as I believed this would be crucial to the change process. This is a role an EP can take when working with schools to create change. It is to this issue I now turn my attention.

The role of the EP as an outsider working with schools to bring about change

As discussed earlier, EPs are an outside agency that support staff and pupils across the school system and are, therefore, in a position where they are 'meta' to the

system (not directly part it). This allows EPs to gain knowledge about how school systems operate and to work with schools in developing better systems. This can often include making changes to the current systems in place.

EPs themselves are working in a context that is highly subject to change according to Gersch (2004, p.11) who describes the "...rapid and uncertain change that is occurring in their (EPs) own profession" allowing them to empathise and understand the responses that change may invoke in school staff. e.g. fear, anxiety, loss of confidence, increased competitiveness and worries about the future (Gersch, 2004). EPs are engaged in offering advice and support to others experiencing radical change (Gersch, 2004) and are aware of the responses that change can cause (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) and some of the stresses that can be created by the process. EPs are equipped with the knowledge and awareness of how the change process occurs in complex systems such as schools making them well placed to work with schools on this aspect of development.

Reflections on the development of the intervention

Robson (2008) argues that involvement is central to action research methodology and this has been the focal point throughout this paper. It was participants' own ideas and plans that were selected and used to plan a way forward. These ideas were moulded into the final development of the intervention. School staff involvement in research is also viewed as an important contribution to self-evaluation and improvement in professional learning (Handscomb & MacBeath, 2003) and therefore has additional benefits for staff.

Whilst participants selected the time, date and content of the workshops, I had concerns regarding adding to their existing workload. Particularly after the views and experiences of participants in paper one:

P: But to add even more meetings on top of the ones we have already would just give more workload and add even more stress anyway.....So if I had to meet with a specific person in addition and it had to be on a weekly basis, to be totally honest it would be something else to do.....to fit in another meeting somewhere else as well, to be honest, much as it would be helpful, would add to the stress levels. Because you know if I think about last year there was only maybe two lunches all week that I didn't actually have a meeting or something to attend and on those days I'd have students coming in because those were the only days I was free to see them if they'd missed lessons to catch up. So to add another meeting (a meeting to support staff) would be good but not practical maybe.

(Transcript 47, p.24/27)

The issue of finding a suitable time for the support intervention to be delivered was also highlighted by participants during the focus group:

Staff raised the issue that although the suggested interventions were good ideas, that many of them would take up additional time when teaching and support staff already have very busy timetables and little enough time to get through their large workload. This was raised as a possible barrier.

(Focus group minutes)

These extracts suggest that staff might have preferred any additional meetings or workshops to have been incorporated into the schools existing meeting structures to avoid adding further to their workload and stress levels. However, this, was never discussed. I also think it was unlikely to be considered, given that this would have had to be a decision made by the SMT and one that would have involved prioritising staff well being above other school issues and concerns. Creese et al (2000) describes how schools are under increasing pressures to respond to external initiatives (for example changes in policy and legislation) with the primary focus on raising standards and an emphasis on performance, effectiveness, targets and outcomes (Creese et al, 2000). Creese et al (2000) argues that within the current education context, it is very difficult for schools who are finding it a challenge to

respond to the major external demands made of them, to focus on developing internal support systems for staff.

Although the workshop intervention was created and designed by staff at a time convenient to them, it unwittingly added another layer of work for participants.

Personal reflections

There were a number of constraints and delays between the completion of paper one and the process of beginning paper two which ironically increased my stress levels as a researcher. I was contacted by the school SMT, after requesting permission to contact staff regarding organising a focus group. SMT were under immense pressure with the recent change in government and the prospect of moving to academy status and felt nervous about raising the aspirations of the staff in terms of what I could deliver to them and what the school could provide in the future. The school had also had negative experiences in the past when working with people conducting research in their school in terms of giving up resources and time and gaining nothing in return. I met with SMT to discuss this and to reassure them that the purpose of this paper was for the school to gain something useful from the process. We made plans in this meeting regarding how the next stages of the research would progress.

Recruitment will be the focus of the next section.

4.3. Processes of recruitment

An email was sent out by SMT to all staff at the school with an attached programme detailing the intervention dates, times and content. Workshops were scheduled for five weeks, on a Wednesday after school four till five pm and refreshments would be provided. Staff members were asked to email me to confirm their wish to attend. There was a low response from the initial email. A small number of staff emailed to send their apologies due to other school commitments. However the overall response was poor, particularly given that the workshops were created and developed specifically by staff. I contacted the SMT and they advertised more widely by sending out reminder emails and verbal reminders in staff meetings and briefings. Despite the poor attendance the first workshop was delivered as planned.

A total of five participants, took part in the five week, one hour, workshop intervention. All participants that attended were female and had roles as teaching assistants or special needs support staff. No teachers or SMT were present.

Participants at workshop one suggested changing the time of the workshops to accommodate staff. One of the participants emailed staff with a reminder about the workshops and I received an email prior to the second session to say that attendance may improve if sessions ran straight after school from three fifteen till four fifteen pm (instead of four till five pm). The remainder of the sessions were conducted at this time. The change in time did not improve subsequent attendance at the next four workshops.

Attendance at the workshops may have been affected by the mandatory attendance at all five of the workshops. This condition was put in place due to the workshops being evaluated at the beginning and end of the workshops to analyse the difference in participants' learning, this would not have been possible if staff only attended one

or two of the workshops. Secondly I was also aiming to build a trusting relationship within the group in preparation for the sessions two – four when we would be running group consultation. This would allow participants to share their difficulties without feeling inhibited. However, I am aware that the condition to attend all five workshops may have acted as a barrier to staff attendance. I am also aware from members of staff approaching me during the delivering of the workshops that a number of school-based commitments also acted as a direct barrier to staff's attendance.

Reflections on the process of recruitment

The literature from previous authors and EPs who have delivered and evaluated support systems, such as a teacher support team in school, was that the involvement of SMT was crucial to the effectiveness of the programme. SMT were involved in all decision making processes and were consulted at every available opportunity throughout both papers, with the exception of attending the workshops (due to a busy timetables on their behalf). As a result of this continued involvement I would have expected there to have been a more positive response to the workshop programme. However, given the reality of staff's workload and pressures the workshops were perhaps not viewed as a high priority either by staff or SMT. As discussed previously, staff were not specifically allocated time within their timetables to attend the workshops. The decision for staff to attend was undoubtedly affected by their workload. Paper one's findings would support this.

Most if not all staff in paper one had argued that more was needed to support them in their work and help them to manage their stress and promote their well being. However, when such a support system was created and provided in response to this and in accordance to their own needs as a staff body, staff's workload and pressures amongst other reasons prevented them from attending. SMT could infer from the low attendance that staff either are not in need of additional support or do not feel it

is high priority. One can see how the cycle would continue. This issue is returned to in the next section.

4.3. Development of the materials and Implementation of the intervention

Developing the materials used to create the workshops

The materials used were collected from various sources: from colleagues at the service I worked with who had delivered training on stress prevention in the past; from my university tutors, one of which had attended some training on assertiveness who lent me the resources she received and also from research articles and resources I had collected through writing the literature review for my thesis. All of these sources were drawn upon to create the five workshop sessions (Appendix 29 to 32 details the resources and materials used to deliver the five workshops).

Staff and SMT at the focus group were keen to make sure the workshops provided participants with practical strategies. To ensure this and from my previous experiences of delivering training to schools in the past, I included a range of individual, group and paired activities, opportunities for participants to ask questions or to provide feedback from previous sessions and made two of the five sessions practical in nature. Additionally, the literature discussed previously in section two on group consultation, teacher support teams and staff training also influenced the development of the content of the workshops.

Workshop discussions

Each of the five workshops was digitally recorded. Dominant themes that emerged from the discussions are presented, with participant vignettes to support (additional information regarding themes can be found in Appendix 34).

Themes from participants' discussion during workshops

The following themes emerged from participants' discussions during workshops 1-5. These have been analysed and interpreted with reference to relevant literature.

Lack of teacher participation

Participants expressed their disappointment that no members of the teaching team had been able to attend the workshops.

*P4: I'm disappointed there is no teaching staff here....When ***** started the group (the school well being forum) quite a few came in didn't they and all said 'what a good idea'...*

P5:....But I've tried quarter past three and I've tried quarter past four, but no teachers came to either. It's not the day, Wednesdays though cos its bang in the middle.

....P5: ...I sent that email (to all staff about the workshops) the meeting will be bla, bla, bla and I got very few replies....

(Session two, participants four and five)

Nias (1993) found that 'lack of time and opportunity' in school makes it very difficult for staff to discuss and talk to each other about issues relating to their practice. The purpose of the workshop intervention was to provide an opportunity for staff to meet together regularly, with the focus on supporting them in their work. However, a general lack of time and opportunity to attend these workshops due to other commitments and workload was undoubtedly a barrier for many school staff.

Resentment towards absent staff

Teacher absence impacts on the rest of the staff as they are likely to have to take on additional work or responsibilities on top of their existing workload and roles whilst their colleagues is absent from school (Bowers, 2001). This was one of the themes raised by staff during the workshops.

P5: People and events around me (part of previous task identifying causes of stress), well that's a biggy at the moment because we have.....a lot of

sickness in our department and I think the sick people should realise that just one sick person can have an effect on the whole department, let alone the children and it's really beginning to make me feel stressed....

P5: I don't want to make it too personal to me....we've all got different stress levels, different pain levels, different thresholds and this is why someone being home sick, I can't really understand that because I'm not like that. You might be feeling sick and have a headache....and the same pain you have, I might have but I'll still come in and you won't.

P2: ...You build up a resentment then because you're carrying the department.

P4:...Because your stress levels rising as a result of someone elses...

(Session one, participants, two, four and five)

Participants discussed the resentment they felt at times when a member of staff was absent due to ill health, as it put extra pressure on the other members of staff in the department.

Staff resilience

Resilience is a multi-faceted and unstable construct (Gu and Day, 2006; Oswald, Johnson & Howard, 2003). Bernshausen and Cunningham (2001) have suggested that resiliency equals a unique, powerful combination of tenacity (willingness to keep trying in the face of setbacks), optimism (belief in the probability of success) and impact (commitment to standards). Resilience occurs as a result of the interaction between the individual and the environment, varies from one person to the next and can differ over time for any one individual. Gu and Day (2006, p.1305) argue that resilience is not innate, but a developing and dynamic construct “cannoting the positive adaptation and development of individuals in the presence of challenging circumstances” (Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999; Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Rutter, 1990).

Resilience was raised by participants during session one when considering the differences in how individuals react to and cope with stress. According to Gu and Day (2006) resilience is important for staff in the education system for three reasons:

- Resilience may be defined as the capacity to “bounce back”, to recover quickly and efficiently in the face of adversity and can be linked to self-efficacy and motivation to teach with the focus of promoting achievement in all aspects of pupil’s lives (Gu & Day, 2006).
- Working in the education system is a demanding job (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Much of the literature in this area focuses on stress and burnout, rather than those educators that are resilient. Focusing on the promotion of resilience in school staff (how some educators manage and sustain their motivation and commitment during periods of change) offers an alternative to post alleviation strategies for stress. (Gu & Day, 2006).
- School staff are considered to be one of the main role models in the lives of pupils. Staff who demonstrate resilient qualities support the development of resilience in pupils (Henderson & Milstein, 2003).

Participants felt that they were resilient individuals, not only in their professional lives, but their personal lives also. The literature suggests that educational organisations should invest in the building of resiliency, as they invest in not only the well being of the person, but that they invest in the success of students (Bernshausen & Cunningham, 2001). Further research supports the premise that if the well being of the educator is enhanced, so is the well being of students (Ryel, Bernshausen & van Tassell, 2001). This conversely links to paper one and the negative effects that stress can have on pupils learning (Briner & Dewberry, 2007).

'Us and them' culture

There were also discussions in this workshop regarding support staff not feeling equal to teaching staff and the lack of recognition about the stress experienced in support staff's roles:

P5: It's weird it is the TAs (attending the workshops) because the support staff - we're all stressed.

P2: Yeah but that's not taken into consideration

P3: No, no no

P2: ...They wouldn't recognise that. I know we shouldn't say that but I don't think it is recognised what is on our plates...

P5: ...But perhaps people do forget that you know we're down on ground level aren't we and take the brunt of it Sarah sometimes.

P2:So we don't get acknowledged...

*P5: **** pioneers diversity and everything else doesn't she?*

P2: She does look after us that way

P5: Yes, yeah and she wouldn't have it any other way. But is it like that across the school?

*P2: No ******

..... P5: It shouldn't be so, we're asked to be equal to them, we're told to be equal to them.

(Session two, participants two -five)

Staff Isolation

Participants mentioned throughout the five week intervention of the isolation they often face in their work. The workshop intervention, according to participants, enabled them to come together as a group and share issues of concern, thereby reducing isolation and adopting a proactive approach to practice-based issues. Rogers (1990) and Hanco (1995) emphasise and acknowledge that peer support reduces feelings of teacher isolation and stress. Pisanti, Garliardi, Razzino & Bertini (2003) concluded that social support at various levels contributed to teacher well-

being. Peer support can also be one of the key factors in protecting school staff from burnout (Kahn, Schneider, Jenkins-Henkelman & Moyle, 2006). The workshop intervention, therefore, provided a preventative approach to manage the negative implications of stress.

Staff consultation groups

Workshop two – four focused on staff consultation. In workshop two I explained the research on group consultation and the process. Participants were then given the opportunity to ask questions and to consider the advantages and the possible barriers to such a group. At the end of this session participants were asked to bring a practice-based issue with them to the next session. In workshop three we ran a staff consultation group. Participants were given copies of how group consultation occurs in practice to help them during the session and to follow the process clearly (Appendix 31). For this session I chaired to provide a model to the participants as to what the role entailed and how the process of group consultation should occur in practice. For workshop four I then took more of an observer role and enabled the participants themselves to run the staff consultation group and assign roles between them. Participants provided feedback after each session.

An example of an issue raised by a participant during the staff consultation group

Description of issue raised by group member – P1 raised a difficulty she was having with a year seven pupil with additional needs. This pupil presented with very rude and challenging behaviour, often making personal remarks to other students and staff. This pupil would often put inappropriate items, such as glue, in their mouth. Participant one was looking for strategies to help her to continue to support this pupil.

Information gathering from the group – Participants in the group asked a range of questions and established that there did not seem to be an obvious pattern in this pupil's behaviour. Further questions and discussion revealed that the pupil's behaviour worsened in those lessons that were more active and practical in nature, such as art and design. Furthermore there were a number of support staff working with the pupil, some of which were also in attendance at the group.

Problem solving strategies suggested by the group:

- Another support staff at the group had found that giving the pupil two choices when behaviour is poor resulted in a positive outcomes and suggested using it in the future.
- Keep a written record of the pupil's behaviour to see if any further patterns emerge.
- Use sanctions that are immediate and link in with the family of the pupil, as the school are aware that there are also concerns with behaviour at home.
- Pupil to work separately during main activity for the more practical lessons to avoid an environment where over-stimulation may occur.
- Participant one to set up a peer observation to gain further strategies.
- Participant one to meet with other support staff working with the pupil to joint problem solve and share strategies.

Review – P1 used the strategy suggested from the group the previous week by using choices with the pupil and this was successful. P1 also arranged to have a peer observation and to meet with other members of staff working with the young person to share strategies. Overall P1 was pleased with the strategies and felt she would be able to continue supporting this pupil in the future.

Reflections on the staff consultation group strategy

Participants found the two practical sessions on staff consultation groups (Stringer et al, 1992) particularly useful to them. They found the informal style of the sessions helpful, felt they had built up trust and confidentiality within the group allowing them to share their difficulties freely and received some valuable tools and strategies from the group problem solving aspect of the sessions that they could apply to their practice. Farouk (2004) argues that as well as supporting individual teachers, the process of group consultation can have a strong influence on the school as a whole, as teachers become increasingly used to supporting each other in their work.

Barriers to developing staff consultation groups

Participants voiced their concerns regarding the creation of consultation groups across their school. Trust and confidentiality were raised, in addition to their view that teaching staff would particularly find it difficult to share those aspects of their practice that they found challenging.

P2:We all discussed when we went out of here the other day, would we have spoken up....?

P5: I wouldn't have spoken up if there were certain teachers here

P4: I think that is a barrier if you've got someone there that stops you, I think it's a barrier....I think a lot of people would worry, don't you think? I think a lot of people would, especially teaching staff would find it find it hard to admit, they're not coping.

P5: They would see it that they were failing.

I: It's not failing is it?

P4: They would see it as that, I feel.

P2: Just because you were having a problem with one thing, doesn't mean you haven't had success in other things.

P4: No it's not, but they might see it like that.

(Session two, participants two –five)

This notion of the difficulties in asking for help has been documented as far back as the 1980's when the Elton Report (DES, 1989) was published. This report suggested that teachers tend to avoid others teachers' classrooms and do not discuss the challenges they face with their colleagues. Teachers often do not seek help as this can feel like an admission of incompetence and conversely do not offer help so as not to make other colleagues feel as if they are incompetent practitioners (Elton Report, DES, 1989). There is a need for school staff to adopt a culture where it is acceptable to admit to and make mistakes and see them as opportunities to learn and not as indicators of professional incompetence (Troman & Woods, 2001). Rogers (1990) and Hanco (1995) emphasise the importance of peer support in generating a culture where issues can be pursued supportively. This would also support the use of staff consultation groups as a way of supporting staff in their work.

4.4. Outcomes

This section outlines the measures used to collect data, how this was analysed and the outcomes to emerge from this linked to the literature in the field.

4.4.1. Measuring outcomes

Data was collected at the beginning and end of the five-week intervention period. Participants completed a pre intervention questionnaire (Appendix 28) at the start of the five week training package and a post intervention questionnaire (Appendix 33) at the fifth and final session.

The pre and post evaluation questionnaire was created using open-ended questions. The items on the questionnaire were designed specifically with the research questions in mind. Robson (2008) who argues that the questions included on a survey or questionnaire should be designed to help achieve the goals of the research and particularly to achieve the research questions (Appendix 27, Figure 6 suggests some aspects to consider when developing a questionnaire which were used when the pre and post questionnaire was developed).

4.4.2. Analysis of questionnaires

Those questions requiring an open-ended response from each participant and focusing on strategies to be applied directly to practise have been summarised in Table 6 and the most prominent strategies discussed in relation to the literature. This element of the data looks directly at the changes participants made to their practice as a result of attending the workshop intervention.

4.4.3. Practical outcomes of the pre and post questionnaire

Table 5 summarises provides the practical strategies that participants were planning on, or already were, applying to their practice.

Table 5: Practical strategies

| Workshop Number | Focus of workshop | Practical strategies arising from the workshops which participants intend to apply to their practice |
|------------------|--|---|
| Workshop 1 | Stress & EHWB | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small targets that are achievable • Making realistic lists - 3 things and then add them if achieved. • Have regular meetings, being able to discuss any issues or problems. • Being able to share and feel less stressed. • I would ask a colleague for help/advice before becoming stressed • To keep within my working hours and to not take work home with me. • Learning to have a lower expectation of myself will contribute to my emotional health and well-being. |
| Workshop 2 - 4 | Professional support: Group consultation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a staff support group. • Use staff consultation group to clarify problems; thereby making it easier to decide on a strategy to address the problem. • Try to use what I have learnt with the teaching assistants, students and colleagues. • I now know how to set up and run a support system and may do so in the future. • Speak to the head of school and line manager |
| Workshop 5 | Assertiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel confident about giving opinion to any member of staff. • I need to clearly identify the problem and have a dry run before tackling it. • Body language meaning and get through what I am trying to say and get my point over. • Stop, think and learn to say no to more workload. |
| Overall comments | All workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to talk to others confidentially and have meetings on a regular basis. • I will use the assertiveness training in my home life. • I intend to improve my stress levels by readjusting my work-life balance. • Staff consultation group and student consultation groups. • What you are grateful for each day – gratitude diary • Talk to people and not feel isolated • Be more assertive |

One of the most successful practical strategies adopted and applied to practice by participants was the use of gratitude diaries. A gratitude diary requires participants to write down five items in life they are grateful for each day. The purpose of a gratitude diary is to focus on the positives aspects of an individual's life (Emmens & McCullough, 2003). This was discussed in workshop one and found by participants' to be particularly helpful.

P: Just write five things you are grateful for that day, number one you're putting it on paper and number two it makes you feel good about yourself.....Whether it's a child who wants to speak to you or like I probably said to you in the email just grateful just to have got home that day...It's so simple and I did meet a lady in Asda, whose husband is quite disabled and she works at one of the academies now and she had to have some time off work cos she was feeling really down and I said 'look have you thought about writing some good things down about the day' and she said 'thank you so much and went on her way and I though I've done something good, because I've helped her.

(Participant five, workshop two)

Emmens and McCoulough (2003) examined the effect of a grateful outlook on psychological and physical well-being and found that those that completed gratitude diaries exhibited heightened well-being across several outcome measures. This research showed that a conscious focus on blessings may have emotional and interpersonal benefits. Most participant implemented gratitude diaries for both their work and home lives and also recommended it to other colleagues.

Other practical strategies gained by participants from the workshop and applied to practice was a greater understanding and awareness of the effects and sources of stress and a range of coping strategies that they could use to alleviate the effects (these areas have been discussed in more detail in Appendix 34).

Table 6 details the general comments and feedback from participants about the workshops and which elements they found to be helpful or positive.

Table 6: Concluding questions and comments from participants on the post-questionnaire

| Question | Participant's answers |
|--|---|
| Are there any elements of the course that you have implemented or may implement in the future? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to put into practice what has been discussed, it very useful. • I will use the assertiveness training in my home life. • I intend to improve my stress levels by readjusting my work life balance • A staff consultation group. • Talked to the students in a different manner. |
| What was your highlight of the training? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to discuss any problem and listen to colleague's advice. • Assertiveness training. • The therapeutic aspects of the sessions. • What you are grateful for today |
| Were there any moments of insight or understanding that you experienced during the intervention? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realising that you are not on your own and that others have similar issues. • Assertiveness and passiveness – I reflected on my past behaviours. • Lots of recognition of feelings have been discussed. |
| Any other comments? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very useful and therapeutic • Excellent course – thank you • Enjoyed the first session – very informative • I found the informal sessions relaxing |

Feeding back to the school

Prior to meeting with the school SMT, I sent an executive summary of both papers (a shortened version was requested by the school) and list of suggestions for future work (Appendix 35 provides this list). The purpose of the meeting with SMT was to: feedback the results of both papers; discuss the relevant findings; and consider future work. Whilst the emphasis in this meeting was focused on feeding back the positive findings and where the school staff may take this piece of work forward in the future, the more negative findings communicated by participants was not well received by most of the SMT present at the meeting (Appendix 36 provides a more detailed overview of the content of this meeting).

Reflections on the outcomes of the intervention

Whilst the attendance at the workshops was considered poor, given the work that had been put in to developing it, the process of having just five participants together as a group was greatly appreciated by the participants themselves. The absence of both teachers and SMT, although disappointing, resulted in being a positive element of the intervention, as it meant that participants could speak freely and share their concerns openly. Participants made reference to the improvements in their knowledge and understanding of stress, well being, assertiveness and methods of support in the questionnaires they completed. Participants were also able to apply the practical aspects of the workshops to their practice. This was the aim of this paper.

The next chapter will consider the findings from this paper and the implications they have for both policy and practice. Particular consideration will be given to the role of the EP working with schools to prompt a change in the provision of support systems aimed at alleviating staff's responses to stress.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and implications

Steyn and Kamper's (2006) paper showed that a sample of teachers that took part in their study on teacher stress did not appear to have the opportunity to deal with stress at work nor did they perceived many options for them to deal with stress in the teaching environment. This paper aimed to address this by developing options for teachers to learn about stress management, share their difficulties and problem solve methods of managing them by sharing their collective expertise and experience. As discussed in the review of the literature in (chapter one) there is little research evaluating the effect of staff training on stress prevention methods (Murphy & Sauter, 2003; Jenkins & Calhoun, 1991; Cotanch, 1984). This is one of the main contributions of this paper. The second important contribution of this study is the insights it can offer to other EPs working with schools to bring about change.

5.1. Key Findings

The key findings with regard to the first contribution are summarised in the following paragraphs. The focus group, originally designed to feedback the findings from paper one and to create with staff a support-based intervention was an intervention in itself and involved careful facilitation and guidance on my part to ensure a fully developed intervention was formed by the commencement of the meeting. Participants were very enthusiastic about the prospect of creating the intervention, but specific guidance was needed to move the group to something practical and useful for them as a staff body and as a school.

The choice of intervention by staff was a training workshop programme. Whilst the time, dates and content of the intervention was developed by staff, the choice of

intervention may have ironically increased staff's workload and pressures by adding to their workload for those who attended.

Whilst the poor attendance was initially disappointing to both myself as a researcher and to the staff involved in the project, the intervention remained worthwhile for the group of support staff who attended as they felt it had increased their knowledge and understanding of the five topics selected for focus in the intervention, in addition to learning some practical skills they could apply to their work in the future. This successfulness of the group, despite the small numbers was particularly due to the common interest the participants shared in terms of their job roles. The participants found the workshops helped to alleviate isolation and build relationships with members of staff they might not have interacted with before. They felt the workshops helped to extend their support network within school and promote self-reflection.

The school have already set up a staff well-being forum, open to all staff, to meet termly to discuss and focus on matters relating to staff EHWP and support. This was a direct result of the findings from paper one. Participants fed their comments back to their senior managers after the intervention from this paper was complete and the school are considering formally setting up staff consultation groups for the teaching assistants in the school in the future. In addition to this and upon the suggestions and recommendations from this study, the school SMT were considering creating a staff well being notice board, a staff suggestion box, setting up a staff awareness day about well being, creating a staff well being policy and also providing yearly drop in sessions on stress management.

5.2. Strengths and limitations of research

Whilst the research suggests that you use 11 – 12 participants for a focus group it would have been more beneficial for the purposes of this study to have run focus groups with five to six participants in attendance to allow all participants to have the opportunity to contribute and to make the process of facilitating more manageable. It may also have been of use to run separate focus groups for support staff, teachers and SMT.

Although the time and day of the workshops was agreed by school staff in the focus group, attendance was poor, despite reminders about the workshops and changes made to the time they were delivered. Potential barriers to attending the workshops may have been mandatory attendance at all five workshops and the workshops being held after-school.

Hillenberg and DiLorinzo (1987) have criticised the use of a “standard package” or global approach to stress management (as was used in this paper) where every individual is given the same set of information on stress management and left on their own to decide what is applicable and how to utilise the materials. Hillenberg and DiLorinzo (1987) recommend tailoring the training to the individual’s needs. Although Hillenberg and Di Lorenzo (1987) are critical of these methods, no comparative evaluations of these methods of training were cited. In addition to this a more individualised approach would have been more time-consuming and potentially costly to participants in terms of their workload.

The key strength and contribution of this paper lies in the collaborative nature of the relationship between the participants and I (as a research and TEP) in this piece of action research. This collaborative approach allowed a support system to be

created, delivered and evaluated in accordance to the schools own needs as a staff body.

5.3. Implications for EPs working with schools and other complex systems to create change

Implications to emerge from this study

Creese, Norwich and Daniels (2000) made several generalisations from their evaluation of the conditions that support the setting up of teacher support teams (TSTs) in schools. Some of these were:

- No hidden agenda – clarifying the aims of the initiative.
- Support from senior management
- Trust and non-interference from senior management
- Maintaining a high profile
- Ethos of the school

Similarly in this study both the support and trust of senior management was crucial to the success of the staff support intervention. Creese et al (2000) discuss how part of the support from SMT in their project was ensuring that staff were provided with cover when attending the TST. This was an issue that arose in this paper as the intervention may have had more success has it been incorporated into the school's existing timetable and thus afforded staff the time to attend outside of their professional roles and workload.

Additionally Creese et al (2000) discussed the importance of ensuring there were no hidden agendas by clarifying the aims of the initiative. What I learnt as an EP and a researcher in this study is the importance of this stage in the process. Although I met with SMT to gain their approval for the study to commence, I think it is of crucial

important that plenty of time and discussion is afforded to this part of the process. If this stage is not given the time and importance it requires it could almost certainly cause difficulties in future stages of the study (as it did in this instance when SMT were unsure about the second stage of the research, paper two). This combined with effective communication is one aspect that EPs should be mindful of when working with schools to effect change. It is advisable that formal meetings should be made in advance to regularly meet to discuss any difficulties arising so solutions can be identified as quickly as possible.

Barriers to change

There are numerous barriers to bringing about change, particularly given that change is an ongoing, dynamic process which often occurs within complex systems (Stobie, 2002) , which research argues schools are an example of (Bowen, 2004, Cooper & Upton, 1991, Colucci-Grey et al, 2006).

Cameron (2006) argues that EPs often find themselves introducing the idea of change to schools, many of whom may not see the need to change. This can present a difficult professional challenge. Cameron (2006) argues that EPs are equipped with strategies that have been developed to help move 'reluctant' clients from the pre-contemplation stage (a period in which an individual may be unconsciously aware that a change may be required) to the contemplation stage of the change process (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1986). I have highlighted this research, as although participants in paper one argued that there was a need for a change in how staff managed stress and were supported at work, some members of the school (particularly those members of the senior management team) were less aware that a change was required. The research documents that change must be supported by those in the system who can support, manage and maintain a change (Creese et al, 2000). The senior management team are critical to the change

process and without their support, staff support initiatives are unlikely to be protected, embedded into school life or operate successfully (Creese et al, 2000). Whilst SMT were involved in all aspects of the study, the biggest challenge I faced was convincing them of the stressors their staff faced on daily basis. What this study has achieved is that it has raised the profile of the issue of staff stress and well being in the school of focus and began to look at time and cost-effective methods of addressing it. However there is further work to be done for this issue to be prioritised in earnest by the school who took part in this study. There are a number of explanations for this discussed below.

According to Stobie (2002) change can only occur if the perceived reason for change is shared by all those in the system and affects those within and outside the system in terms of improved effectiveness. The school that took part in this piece of research had recently been inspected by Ofsted and received a very complimentary report, the students' exam results were of a good level and the reputation of the school was extremely positive. School staff support systems and stress therefore would be easy to overlook when the school is seen to be running so effectively. Additionally schools are governed by legislation and policy coming from central government and both time and budget restrictions have been raised as being barriers to prioritising this aspect of school development (Dunlop and Macdonald, 2004). EPs wishing to conduct similar pieces of work should remain aware of these potential barriers.

It is also important to be mindful of the differences in perspectives that may emerge in a study such as this (in this case between junior and senior members of the school team). It often means that as a research you are 'juggling' the demands and agendas of several different parts of the system. In this case I wanted to incorporate the staff's need to change their support systems, whilst being mindful of their

individual workload, at the same time wanting to ensure SMT did not feel I was raising the aspirations of staff or impinging on budget and time demands. Taking a psychological perspective (which an EP can provide) to complex difficulties such as these have been advocated by Cameron (2006) who argues that a perspective such as this involves: taking an interactive rather than a single-factor view of a problem; recognising that human problems have different layers; and attempting to understand and reconcile the different perspective which people may bring to a particular problem situation. These are all aspects that I was mindful of during this study. The advantages my training as an EP brought were the skills to provide people with a deeper understanding of problematic situations, offer research-based, creative and effective ways of managing these problems and also promote pro-active approaches to minimise the occurrence and impact of such problems in the first place (Cameron, 2006). I would argue that this has been the role of the EP in this study, with some success.

Despite the difficulties that arouse, EPs are ideally placed to provide support to schools by working with them to create or develop more effective staff support systems. EPs could also work with schools to create a staff well being or stress reduction policy and to increase staff's resilience levels. The research shows that this is one area that needs to be more focused on and that stress prevention work should be aimed at raising school staff's resistance to stressful events and environments (Gu & Day, 2006). As has been demonstrated in this study EPs are equipped with the skills and experience to offer training opportunities to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of stress. Hanko (1995) argues; "In recognition of their unique position – EPs are increasingly expected as a matter of course to contribute substantially to in-service training of teachers and allied professionals and support schools in developing and implementing whole school policies" (Hanko,

1995, p.146). EPs are, therefore, ideally placed to support schools in making significant changes to the environments in which staff work.

This piece of research demonstrates that even with the participation and guidance of school staff, an intervention focusing on staff well being and support is a challenge to establish and embed in to a school system. The attendance at the workshops demonstrates this. However, as Fullan (1982, adapted by Robson, 2008) argues, change takes time (at least two years), involves ambiguity, uncertainty and conflict and disagreement is an inevitable part of the process. It is, therefore, unsurprising that there are so many barriers to effective change and suggests that the change that has occurred as a result of this and the first paper are significant and to be celebrated.

5.4. Implications for future research and practice

One of the main aims of this paper was to bring about a change in the school meso system. Whilst the research questions for this paper have been addressed and some changes to the school meso system have occurred as a result, these changes will need to be maintained to remain effective. A continued focus on staff EWHB and support will be required by the school and this will facilitate further change and improvement to occur after this piece of research is completed.

Where further work is needed on a larger scale in this area is to prompt a significant change in the legislation, policy and practice regarding staff stress and well being. This is similar to the implications found in paper one. Cox (1993) argues that the publication of a clear policy statement on stress at work is required to demonstrate “the government’s recognition of the problem and commitment to its active management” (Cox, 1993, p.90). In addition to this recommendation Cox’s (1993)

also argues for the education of managers, employees and inspectors about work stress. Troman and Woods (2001) argue that staff EHWP and support is only likely to be prioritised if there is a change in the way head teachers are trained and selected. Currently, the appointment and professional development of head teachers is driven by organisational and managerial foundations. Hargreaves (1998) argues that there is no training for the development of emotional understanding vital for leadership and stress prevention.

The literature (both national and international) demonstrates clear evidence for why a change is required in how educators are supported in their work. Clear policy and legislation in this area is now required to ensure that schools and local authorities follow a policy to reduce stress in the workplace and promote staff well being.

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PAPER ONE APPENDICES

Appendix 1

My position as a researcher

As a qualified teacher myself, prior to training as an EP, I am more than aware of the demands school staff face in their work. Whilst in the teaching profession I often reflected on the difference in support systems compared to other professions, such as health and social care (Halfacree, 1992). It was these reflections and the lack of support I received when I began teaching that led me to carry out this piece of research in this particular field.

My role as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP) involves daily contact and consultation with school staff regarding schools, families and pupil's needs. Working so closely with school staff on a regular basis allows EPs to build and maintain effective and trusting working relationships with these school staff (Beaver, 1996). This is a key part of the EP role and can often be fundamental to successful practice and school development. It is my experience that as a result, EPs often consult with staff their regarding their own needs (whether that is a personal or work related factor affecting their ability to carry out their duties). Often staff will discuss with you the lack of support and training they or other staff members are experiencing and ask for your support or guidance in these areas.

It is this reason why I have chosen to conduct a piece of research in this area. I acknowledge that this may affect my interpretation of the data collected and have conducted this piece of research with this in mind. As Coffey (1999) points out:

It is totally necessary and desirable to recognise that we are part of what we study, affected by the cultural context and shaped by our fieldwork

experience. It is epistemologically productive to do so, and at best naive to deny the self an active, and situated place in the field.

(Coffey 1999, p.37)

Cresswell (2007) argues that this influences and informs the writing up process and cannot be separated from an individual's own experiences and beliefs:

Researchers bring their own world views, paradigms or sets of beliefs to the research project and these inform the conduct and writing of qualitative study.....the researcher's interpretations cannot be separated from their own background, history, context and prior understanding.

(Cresswell, 2007, p.15 & 39)

Cresswell (2007, p.21) argues that researchers are able to recognise that their own background and experiences impact on their understanding and interpretation of events: "...the researcher makes an interpretation on what they find, an interpretation shaped by their own experiences and background". Cresswell (2007) also acknowledges that both the participants involved in the research and also the readers of this piece of research will "embrace" different and multiple realities and will ultimately interpret the content according to their own experiences and background.

It is not possible to ensure that this piece of research will be interpreted in the same way it is intended. However certain procedures have been carried out to ensure that my data was both credible and transferable (Appendix 22 provides additional details).

Appendix 2

Making initial contact, school information & recruitment

Making initial contact

An appointment was made with a member of the senior management team at the appointed school to initially discuss the purpose of the research and how best to access staff at the school. During this meeting information and relevant paperwork were provided with the following information;

- A two page research plan
- A list of expectations from staff

It was agreed during the meeting that the collaboration could go ahead. The following actions were agreed;

- All paperwork was to be emailed and checked prior to use.
- A recruitment email and poster was to be created and then checked before sending it out to all staff.
- A semi-structured interview schedule would be created and checked prior to use.
- Data collection would need to cease by the end of June 2010 (as staff would be preoccupied with other responsibilities) and could not begin again until mid/end of September 2010 (to allow staff time to return to work and normal routines after the summer break).

Recruitment

Recruitment for the semi-structured interviews was done via email. I met with members of the senior management team to agree the content of the recruitment information prior to it being sent to staff. The email was circulated electronically to all staff working at the school, making potential participants aware of the research project and what would be required of them.

Recruitment for the focus group was done electronically with an agenda attached to the email providing details of the meeting. Also attached to this email was a brief outline of some of the initial outcomes of the twelve interviews conducted. This was sent to staff so that they could familiarise themselves with this information prior to the meeting (which would last 40 minutes long due to the length of the school lunch hour).

School information

The school was selected by the educational psychology service by which I was employed. They felt it was important to undertake this piece of work in a large secondary school setting where systems are likely to be more complex than in primary schools (which tend to be smaller in both staff and pupil numbers). In addition to this research has shown that secondary school staff experience greater levels of stress and burnout than do primary school staff (Geving, 2007).

There were a number of structural changes within the school that occurred just prior or during data collection:

- The introduction of vertical tutor groups - mixed age groups
- The separation of year groups and pupils into separate 'schools' and teams of staff.

- The school were in the process of moving from their current school building into new buildings situated on the same site (some of which were still under construction during the data collection period).

In addition to this the school had recently had an Ofsted Inspection (during the summer term) in which they received a complimentary report.

Due to the recent Ofsted inspection and the school being under construction it is likely that staff's workload was significantly increased during the data collection period and that this may have affected their reported stress levels and perceptions of available support systems.

Appendix 3

Defining professional support

Support can be defined as bearing all or part of the weight of, holding up, to be actively interested in and concerned for the success of and giving assistance, approval, comfort, or encouragement (Oxford University Press, 2011).

I have decided to use the term 'professional support' in my research. This is a broader umbrella term that will encompass a number of different forms of professional support aimed at maintaining staff EHWP and development in schools.

One type of professional support that takes place in some professions is supervision. Proctor (1986, as cited in Hawkins & Shohet, 2000) examined the key purposes of supervision and suggested three main areas;

- Formative (educative, developing skills and understanding)
- Restorative (supportive, a safe place for the professional to be restored through the expression of and a meeting of their emotional needs) and
- Normative (managerial, monitoring and evaluating work and normalising practice).

I have decided against using the term 'supervision' within this piece of research as I find it is a term that conjures images of being observed and inspected rather than supported professionally. George & Protherough (1989, p.3) support this by saying that "the concept of supervision as inspection has come to be accepted since the nineteenth century". However the term 'supervision' may be referred to by other authors within this research and the review of literature.

The emphasis of my research therefore will be at the formative and restorative levels. When using the term 'professional support' (as a replacement for the term 'supervision') I will be referring back to Proctor's (1986, as cited in Hawkins & Shohet, 2000) definitions of these two levels of support.

Appendix 4

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Details of the creation of the semi-structured interview schedule

Seven main sub-areas were initially created with direct reference to paper one's research questions. Section one was aimed at rapport-building with the participants. Sections two - seven relate directly to the research questions for this paper. The schedule was checked by a practising educational psychologist and research tutor at Exeter University, who suggested some changes with regard to using open rather than closed questions. The schedule was then piloted (with one female primary school teacher/Special Educational Needs Coordinator) and amended before use.

Semi-structured interview schedule

Teacher roles & Responsibilities

- Please describe a day in school for you this week.

- Do you have any posts of responsibility?
 - What are these?
 - What are the requirements?

- What aspects of your job do you find most rewarding?
 - What makes these aspects rewarding for you?
 - Why?

- What aspects of your job do you find most challenging?
 - What makes these aspects challenging for you?
 - Why?

Teacher stress

- Do you think you experience stress at work?
 - What is it about your job that makes you not experience stress? **OR**
 - What is it about your job that causes you to experience stress?
 - What particular aspects of your work cause you stress?
 - Why are these aspects stressful?

- Would you say there were certain stress points within the academic year?
 - If so when are these experienced and what are they caused by?

- What strategies do you use to cope with a stressful time or situation at work?
 - Have you found these coping strategies to be effective?

- In what way are these strategies effective?
- Are you aware of colleagues at work who are currently under stress?
 - Would you recognise stress in other colleagues?
 - How might stress at work be noticeable?
- How would you support a work colleague experiencing a stressful time or situation?

Staff well being and support

- Does your school prioritise staff well being?
 - In what way does your school prioritise staff well being?
 - Are these methods effective at promoting staff well being?
 - How do you know these methods are effective?
- Are there specific policies at your school which focus on staff well-being and support?
 - If there is such a policy;
 - Were all staff involved in developing these policies?
 - Do you think these policies have been implemented effectively in school?
 - Are these policies reviewed regularly?
 - If there is no such policy;
 - In what way might having a school policy on staff well-being and support benefit staff?
 - What are the barriers to having a staff well-being and support policy in school?

Existing professional support available in school

- What systems are there in place in your school to support staff?
- What is the nature of these support systems?
 - Are there key members of staff in school who provide professional support?
 - Who are these staff?
 - Do these key members of staff have a recognised responsibility in school for this?
 - Are they given additional time to provide such support?
 - Are you aware that they have been given training to provide professional support to staff?
 - Are school staff aware that this is who is responsible for professional support?
 - Do staff members access this support? If not why?
- What do you think the benefits to having professional support may be for school staff?
- What are the barriers to gaining professional support in school?
 - Are support systems easy to access in school? If not why?
 - Is accessing professional support in school seen positively by other staff and senior management? If not why?
- Would you personally access professional support if you felt it was necessary? If not why?

Evaluating the existing system of support in school

- Is the current system in school for providing professional support sufficient? If so or if not why?

Additional forms of professional support that could be provided in the future

- What additional forms of support/supervision would you like to see in place in the future?
 - What would this look like?
 - How often would it be provided?
 - Who would be responsible for providing it?
 - Do you think this is a realistic method of providing professional support in school?
- What could some of the possible barriers of providing additional professional support be?
 - How might these barriers be overcome?
 -

The role of EP and other agencies in supporting schools with appropriate and effective levels of professional support.

- Could any outside agencies be used to help schools with providing professional support?
 - Which agencies and why?
 - What support could particular agencies provide to schools?
- If not already mentioned – in what way could the schools Educational Psychologist support the school in providing appropriate and effective levels of professional support?
 - How would the EP service go about delivering this?

- Would this be best taken from their time allocation to schools or bought in as additional time?

Appendix 5

How to conduct a qualitative research interview

Table 1: The main aspects of a qualitative research interview.

Life world

The topic of qualitative interviews is the everyday lived world of the interviewee and his or her relation to it.

Meaning

The interview seeks to interpret the meaning of central themes in the life world of the subject. The interviewer registers and interprets the meaning of what is said as well as how it is said.

Qualitative

The interview seeks qualitative knowledge expressed in normal language, it does not aim at quantification

Descriptive

The interview attempts to obtain open nuanced descriptions of different aspects of the subject's life world

Specificity

Descriptions of specific situations and action sequences are elicited, not general opinions.

Deliberate Naïveté

The interviewer exhibits an openness to new and unexpected phenomena, rather than having ready-made categories and schemes of interpretation.

Focused

The interview is focused on particular themes; it is neither strictly structured with standardised questions, nor entirely "non-directive".

Ambiguity

Interviewee statements can sometimes be ambiguous, reflecting

contradictions in the world the subject lives in.

Change

The process of being interviewed may produce new insights and awareness, and the subject may in the course of the interview come to change his or her descriptions and meanings about a theme.

Sensitivity

Different interviewers can produce different statements on the same themes, depending on their sensitivity to and knowledge of the interview topic.

Interpersonal Situation

The knowledge obtained is produced through the interpersonal interaction in this interview.

Positive Experience

A well carried out research interview can be a rare and enriching experience for the interviewee, who may obtain new insights into his or her life situation.

(adapted from Kvale, 1996; p. 29)

Appendix 6

Introduction to interviews

I'm Sarah Sidaway and I'm an educational psychologist (EP) in training. I'm doing a piece of doctoral research as part of my training to be an EP. My research is looking at school staff stress, emotional health and well-being and support systems. The purpose of my visit today is to interview you about elements of this. I will be recording the content of the interview for data collection purposes. This will be anonymised and stored confidentially. Please complete a two consent forms before we begin, one for you to keep for your records and one for mine. You may decide to withdraw your consent and therefore your data at any time. Thanks you for giving up your time and agreeing to be interviewed.

Before we begin I just want to give you a brief explanation of some of the terminology I'll be using.

I have decided to use the term professional support in my research. This is an umbrella term that will encompass a number of different forms of professional support aimed at maintaining staff EHWP and development in schools. For example; supervision (formal/informal, group/individual), peer support (support from colleagues at work), critical friends, mentoring, pairing schemes or use of buddies and coaching between staff.

There are three purposes of professional support;

- Formative (educative, developing skills and understanding, for example CPD and any training)
- Restorative (supportive, a safe place for the professional to be restored through the expression of and a meeting of their emotional needs) and

- Normative (managerial, monitoring and evaluating work and normalising practice, for example your performance management observations).

I'm going to be focusing mainly on the restorative and formative levels rather than normative aspects of professional support.

Any questions before we begin?

Appendix 7

Ethical Consideration

One of the most important aspects of this is ensuring all participants have given informed consent. At the beginning of all semi-structured interviews, focus group or training sessions all participants were made aware that interviews would be confidential and that their individual data would be anonymised so that information could not be traced back to an individual staff member.

Participants signed two consent forms (Appendix 8 for paper one and Appendix 26 for paper two), one for them to retain (explaining the purpose of the research project, information regarding how their data would be stored and contact names and numbers should they decide to withdraw their data at any time) and the second for documentation purposes. All participants were made aware that the content of the interview would be digitally recorded for data collection and analysis purposes and were offered copies of their transcripts when completed.

Great care and consideration was taken when reporting back the findings of the interviews and focus groups to ensure that specific examples of data (particularly those that may include potentially negative or controversial comments about the school or another staff member) could be traced back to specific individuals. This also allowed participants to remain anonymous. It is for this reason that participant's specific job titles have not been provided to the reader. The only information to be provided about participants is whether they were a member of the senior management team.

All those who took part were provided with a debrief and/or feedback of the findings.

**Appendix 8
Participant consent form**



Psychology Service

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

This is a piece of action research focusing on school staff emotional well - being and support. Views of staff will be sought and this will feed into a support-based intervention which will be jointly developed and evaluated.

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.
I understand that:

There is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation.

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me.

Any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications.

All information I give will be treated as confidential.

The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Printed name of participants)

(Date)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s). If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

Sarah Sidaway

Trainee Educational Psychologist
Psychology Service
Tel:

Senior Educational Psychologist
Psychology Service
Tel:

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

**Appendix 9:
Paper one ethics certificate**

STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH



Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

STUDENT RESEARCH/FIELDWORK/CASEWORK AND DISSERTATION/THESIS
You will need to complete this certificate when you undertake a piece of higher-level research
(e.g. Masters, PhD, EdD level).

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site:
<http://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/category/publications/guidelines/> and view the School's statement on the
'Student Documents' web site.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Sarah Sidaway

Your student no: 580031514

Return address for this certificate: Flat 2, 31 Queens Road, Lipson, Plymouth, PL4 7PL

Degree/Programme of Study: Doctorate in child and community psychology

Project Supervisor(s): Margie Tunbridge and Elias Avramidis

Your email address: ss406@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: 07904 113 216

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my dissertation / thesis (delete whichever is inappropriate) to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: Sarah Sidaway Date: 26.03.10

NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must not be included in your work. It can be kept for your records.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Certificate of ethical research approval

Your student no: 580031514

Title of your project: Teacher supervision and stress (this consent form is for paper one of my research project on teacher supervision and support. Ethical approval for paper two, on teacher stress, will be applied for at later date)

Brief description of your research project:

Paper one will involve a focus group of 8-12 teaching staff on the topic of supervision and support in school. I will then carry out semi-structured interviews with several teachers and senior management members discussing what support is in place already and how it is provided, whether something additional is required and what the role of the educational psychologist might be in supporting schools with this.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

I will be working with school staff only (including teachers and senior management members, such as special educational needs coordinators, head teachers, deputy heads, heads of year or subject coordinators).

Give details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) a blank consent form can be downloaded from the SELL student access on-line documents:

All participants will be required to complete a written consent form to show that they have fully consented to taking part in this research (which includes that they have a proper understanding of the nature and consequences of what is being proposed). A straight forward written statement conveying the aims of the research and potential consequences to participants will be used on the university consent form. Simple and understandable language will be used. Influence will not in any circumstances be used to obtain consent. All participants will be unknown to the researcher prior to starting the research. It will be made clear to participants that they can at any moment withdraw from the research.

All data collected will be non-identifiable. All data and results will be kept confidentially and will not be disclosed to unauthorised third parties. Any reports written will not include any individuals details nor will the school participating be identified. Once my research is complete I will debrief staff members and the school with my findings. Again any data will be kept anonymous so that individual participant information will remain confidential.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Data collection will be through focus groups and semi-structured interviews. A thematic analysis will be done on the data received looking at common and divergent views. Care will be taken not to cause any participant undue stress during the data collection period.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

All data will be kept safely and securely either in a locked filing cabinet or on a computer enabled with a security password to gain access. Access will not be permitted to anyone but the researcher. Special arrangements will be made for anyone with a special need.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):
None known of

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: March 2010 until: June 2011

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): * Margie Tunbridge date: 23/04/2010

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occurs a further form is completed.

SELL unique approval reference: D/09/10/75

Signed: Salah D. Ali date: 23/04/10
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from <http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students/>

* Elias Arramidis is also a supervisor but I am handing this in the hope that it can be actioned.
M Tunbridge

- ok
SI

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Appendix 10

Focus group: Explanation of delays

It was initially planned that a focus group would be conducted before any interviews took place to support the development of the semi-structured interview schedule. However difficulties with recruitment and gaining access to the senior management team at the school prevented this.

The senior management team had a number of questions and issues they wanted clarifying before the second stage of the research could take place (paper two). The main issues were;

- How much time would be required of staff for the second stage of the research.
- Concerns raised about placing too many demands on staff during this process.
- Raising staff's expectations too high in terms of what could be provided and achieved through this piece of research.

The meeting clarified that the recent change in government and the implications of this had put staff at the school (including senior management) under increasing pressures. Anxieties with regard to the expected changes that schools' would have to make were heightened at this particular time. The school had also had previously negative experiences in the past with other researchers/students that made them cautious about the nature of this type of work.

The schools' questions were answered and further clarification was given about their concerns. The senior management team were reassured that the aim of this type of research was for the school to benefit and gain from the experience and process as

much as the researcher would (in terms of meeting the requirements for submission).

As a result of this change it was decided that two focus groups would take place; one conducted after the interviews as a method of feeding back the data to triangulating the data set and a second to be conducted with the main aim of discussing ideas with staff with regards to the development of a support-based intervention for the second stage of the research (paper two).

As a result of further delays the first focus was conducted without the researcher present (see Appendix 11 for the minutes of the meeting recorded by school staff). However it was felt by senior management that the content of this meeting broadly reflected the content of the interviews conducted and thus could still be used as a method of triangulation.

A second focus group was then led by the researcher to feed back the information gathered from staff and develop ideas as to the support-based intervention that could be created and evaluated for the second stage of the research. (see Appendix 12 for the agenda and Appendix 13 for the minutes of this meeting).

Appendix 11

Well being forum minutes

Friday 5th & 12th November 2010

18 staff present

Thanks again for a very interesting lunchtime and for giving it up to talk at the forum. Everyone added something to the debate and I believe we came up with some excellent points to help start the ball rolling. I am just going to list these and if you can think of any more please let me know.

A list of teachers that can help coach others and some that want to train as a coach

Team building exercises - inter-school challenges...

Some staff felt isolated only focusing on their own subject and felt there should be cross-curricular links within subjects

Early revival of secret Santa

Have time allocated on SODs for well being time/activities

Staffroom use was discussed and ideas on how to encourage more usage were: giant jenga, puzzles...

It was highlighted that many staff felt 'overwhelmed' with the amount of extra work they have to do, on top of their lesson planning and preparation, and recognise the need to prioritise and learn to assertively 'say no'.

MHO, NDA, JPE agreed to take part in a work-balance audit that RGO is completing, which she will feed back on.

There are various websites to research on work-life balance and to check out how well you fair, for example: the teacher support network.

After school activities could include: staff junk band, musical instrument training, relaxation sessions, book club, walking, swimming, outdoor challenges, staff mixed badminton, art classes, massage sessions, meeting up for a drink/meal before you go home to 'unwind'

Thank you again for your support and hopefully we will have a meeting before Christmas, if not in the New Year

Appendix 12

Focus group agenda (03.12.10)

Focus of forum: Research focus group

Duration: 40 mins

- Sign in sheet (set going around the room). Reminder about recording the session, everything will be confidential and anonymised.
- Introduce today's activity:
 1. Feeding back results of paper one.
 2. Creating a support system in school.
- Flip chart/handouts – talk through some of the support suggestions from staff. Discuss the barriers to these suggestions in groups (includes capacity, time and financial implications for the school). Vote/decide upon which ideas the group would like to proceed with.
- Discuss next steps – SS to meet with SMT & discuss whether staff's ideas are feasible. Intervention to begin in January 2011 for 5 wks. Require staff to give up no more than an hour a week. Ask for people to sign up/volunteer.
- Discuss that this could be something, if found to be effective, that the school could develop and have in school on an on-going basis.

Appendix 13

Focus group minutes (emailed to all staff in attendance)

- Introductions & an explanation of the research project on staff well-being and support – stage one and two.
- Explained to staff that this was to be a collaborative process and how the second stage of my research would work.
- Looked at list of possible interventions – individual, group, whole school. Suggested we aim our brainstorm towards the individual and whole interventions as they are more feasible given the time frame.
- One member raised a meditation session that could be run over at the ***** on a Wednesday evening and that this could be the focal point for a well-being centre.
- Staff discussed some of the things that were already in place. For example departmental outside of school social events, whole school staff get-togethers (e.g. Christmas meal/secret Santa).
- A staff well-being day was looked into but it was very expensive as was being held by an outside service.
- Staff raised the issue that although the suggested interventions were good ideas, that many of them would take up additional time when teaching and support staff already have very busy timetables and little enough time to get through their large workload. This was raised as a possible barrier.
- The teacher-drop in was a popular idea, as was a series of training sessions. Topics such as stress management, managing emotions/managing challenging situations, assertiveness and how to set up a staff consultation group were suggested by staff at the focus group.
- It was suggested that the members of the well-being forum could be trained up and other staff could access them should an issue with well-being arise. It was felt that staff had enough workload and responsibilities and that this would not be viable.
- Staff agreed to proceed with training sessions starting from the end of January for five weeks for one hour on a Wednesday 4 -5pm. All staff would be emailed with the programme once it was agreed with SMT and then staff could sign up by emailing Sarah Sidaway directly.

Appendix 14

Example transcript with codes

Interview 45 & 46

KEY

I – Interviewer

P - Participant

Dhdhdhdhdh – to note verbal emphasis placed on words

() *in italics* – Gestures & non-verbal utterances

() Acronyms

***** - used for names/places to ensure confidentiality

I: So um the first question is please describe a day in school for you this week.

P: Um

I: Any day, could be yesterday

P: Monday um in the morning I dealt with um three phone calls to parents about work-related curriculum um I was um completing some um policies which are going to governors, um that was most of my morning. I then went up to um ***** **** primary school to talk to the head and the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) about child protection issues and um special needs issues. Um I then came back and attended a meeting about Literacy and how we were going to develop it across the curriculum. I then attended a 15 minute HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) assessor interview where I was talking about a colleague of mine who's going in for HLTA. I then attended COBRA which is our um strategy meeting for national challenge that went on till about um quarter past four. Then came back down to my office worked on my emails that was about five um I then did some planning, answered some phone calls and left here about quarter to six.

I: Is that fairly typical leaving about sixish, would you say?

P: Yeah

I: What sort of time do you normally get in, in the morning?

P: About ten to seven

I: Wow ok that's quite early isn't it? Do you normally get chance for a break during the school day?

P: No

I: Ok

P: I was on duty I forgot to say on Monday. I was on duty at lunchtime, I, I, I do the reflection room, so I do an hour, sorry forty-five minutes in the reflection room um with students in detention.

Code 1: Long days

Code 2: No/few breaks in the school day

I: Eat on the go then is it?

P: Um, um

I: Um could, could you tell me your official kind of job title and then tell me a little bit kind of what that involves?

P: I'm the assistant principle for inclusion, that includes SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator), it also includes the strategic lead for the college for attendance, um it includes work related curriculum and being curriculum leader for the students who are in school for work related curriculum, organising training placements for students who aren't in school for that, I'm also lead for G&T, gifted and talented students, um as well as I teach fourteen hours health and social care a week

I: Wow ok that's a lot isn't it?

P: Um

I: It's a lot of different roles

P: I'm also training to do my head teacher training for NVQH (National Vocational Qualification Headship) as well so at the moment you know things are, probably it's been a more difficult year than, than normal as I've had that additional study on top of what I've been doing

I: Does that involve a lot of written work?

P: It's not so much written work, but um you, you sort of have to do a blog or a log throughout it and then they're short course and what short courses, it's very self-directed, so you sort of go through an assessment you've got a development points both on your strengths and your areas for development and then it's finding or giving yourself opportunities to develop those experiences.

I: Um what aspects of your job do you find most rewarding would you say?

P: Um (pause) I think things like doing leading attendance, you can see, you can see outcomes, I wouldn't say, the special needs is fairly rewarding and training staff is fairly rewarding you know the sort of that element of it, um sort of the, you know, some of the day to day stuff in special needs I can't do because you know I have an assistant SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) that does that, um the leadership aspects I really enjoy that sort of development things, teaching the students is obviously really rewarding, um you know I do, I enjoy that as well so yeah.

I: Within your role do you, would you say you provide quite a lot of support for different staff sort of under your...

P: Yeah, I would yeah I support special people at the ***** learning centre, um learning support and other colleagues as well, um you know the heads of school, two of whom have had a new roles this year um I've had quite a supportive role in terms of you know just being there for someone to, to talk things through really, um yeah.

Code 6: Support other staff

Code 7: Challenging aspects of job

Code 8: Job negatively affecting health.

Code 9: Learning from a stressful time at work

Code 10: Planning for a busy/stressful time at work.

Code 11: Self-inflicted stress at work

I: Ok what aspects of your job do you find most challenging?

P: Um the sheer workload to be honest. I got to a point this year and I did think it was going to make me really ill um because I had coursework, you know, year eleven health and social care portfolios which are always a big bring in at the end but I also had the annual reviews for statemented students, so all that came at once. I was working, I was coming in at half past six in the morning and I was working whether it was here or at home right the way through till ten o'clock at night and actually I got to the point when I was like if I don't stop I am going to be seriously ill and actually when I went to the doctors my blood pressure was really, really high, cos I went at the end of that period and it had gone up so

I: You can't keep that kind of workload up

P: No, no and I've been a bit better since then. I did learn from it actually cos I thought I've got to really, I think sometimes in school you get so on this rollercoaster of and you, you forget to look and think what's coming up and almost planning so things don't coincide and you know so it was difficult this year to be honest (*laughs*)

I: Um do you think you experience stress at work?

P: Um (*short pause*) I think it's, I think I do and I think it's, it's stress, it's self inflicted stress you know, when you're in a leadership position you're, you're very much you take things on, but you're not having things put, put on you to that degree um but you know when we the run up to Ofsted was very stressful for everybody you know um and yeah I do um and it's not sort of when they're a deadline to do and certain points in the year. I don't suffer stress you know all the time, I'd say there were three points this year where I've felt stressed.

I: What was it about your job that kind of made you feel?

P: I think it was just getting stuff done, the sheer amount of workload that had to be done, you know. We had to review um lots of policies, I'd taken on the designated person role for safeguarding, so you know the Ofsted framework was all on that area um so that was a time when it was quite stressful and then those two days when Ofsted were in we're relatively I.... The point that I talked to you about, you know just finishing off the year, like going up on a placement in Rochdale, before that that Friday night you know I still had to, cos I hadn't had chance, I still had to set all my cover work for that week and I remember feeling really stressed then that I was still here at half past six trying to set cover work knowing I was driving to Manchester that night cos I have an ongoing disability as well which means that if I don't get enough rest I become very ill so um I was at that point then. I got home and my partner was saying you know you've gotta just sit down for a minute and calm down so yeah.

Code 12: Ofsted visit very stressful

Code 13: Stress points in the year.

Code 13: Stress points in the year

Code 1: Long days

Code 13: Stress points in the year

Code 14: Lots of change

I: The next question was about would you say there were certain stress points within the year and I think you've kind of pointed some of those out already. Are there any others that you would mention?

P: Um I mean I think the main stress points are around exams and around, you know, if you've got exam classes um and whenever they're any change going on um

I: Cos they're a lot going on at the moment isn't there with the move to the new building and....

P: They're a lot going on yeah, yeah. This is, I mean I feel this year's possibly been, not the most stressful year

I've had um, but it's been one of the most challenging in terms of the amount of change.

Appendix 15

Thematic analysis protocol

For the purposes of analysis a rich description of the entire data set was conducted in order to give readers a sense of the most important themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) this is a useful analysis to conduct when investigating an under-researched area and one where participant's views on the topic are unknown. This supports the aims of this research, one of which was to highlight teacher voice (as this lacks from current literature and research in the field).

Additionally a more detailed analysis was conducted in relation to the following questions;

- What aspects of your job do you find most rewarding?
- What aspects of your job do you find most challenging?
- Would you say there were certain stress points within the academic year?
- What strategies do you use to cope with a stressful time or situation at work?
- How would you support a work colleague experiencing a stressful time or situation?
- What additional forms of support would you like to see in place in the future?

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) there are two ways for themes or patterns to be identified when doing thematic analysis; inductively ('bottom-up process with the themes identified linked specifically to the data and not to the researchers theoretical interest) or deductively ('top-down' process with a more detailed analysis of some aspects of the data linked to the researchers theoretical interest in the area). Therefore an inductive thematic analysis is coded without fitting the data to a pre-existing coding framework.

An inductive analysis was selected for the purposes of this analysis to ensure the thematic analysis was data driven and therefore represented the views and perceptions of participants interviewed. However it is important to note that by doing an inductive analysis this does not allow for data to be coded in an 'epistemological vacuum' (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This analysis focused on latent themes (themes that are identified beyond explicit or 'surface' level meanings) and identified the underlying ideas and assumptions that may be informing the semantic (surface level) content of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise that latent thematic analysis involves interpretative work and is not just a description of the data. This supports the design of this piece of research.

Stages of analysis

The first stage of the thematic analysis process requires the researcher to familiarise themselves with the data (immersing yourself in the data). This can be achieved by personally transcribing the verbal data. This is recommended as this informs an early stage of the analysis. All twelve of the interviews were transcribed by the researcher for paper one.

Data was then coded (see Appendix 14, for an example of a coded transcript and Appendix 18 for a list of the paper one's codes) and themes were then generated from the initial codes sought from the data (see Appendix 19 and 20 for themes). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) themes 'capture' something important within the data in relation to the research questions and provides a level of 'patterned' response from within the data set.

The next stage requires the researcher to generalise the initial codes (the production of initial codes from the data). Stage three involves the searching for themes

(sorting different codes into potential themes and collating the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes). The researcher must then review the themes in stage four, before defining and naming the themes in stage five. This last stage (six) is the production of the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis of data from this research was conducted using this six-stage model.

Appendix 16

Individual themes and related codes.

Current support systems

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|---|
| Relationships factors | 6 | Ways of supporting other staff experiencing stress. |
| | 38 | Importance of peer support |
| | 76 | Supportive staff body |
| | 38 | Importance of peer support |
| | 94 | Support – mainly implicit/informal |
| | 113 | Good support network when people need it. |
| | 115 | Group problem solving |
| | 121 | Building rapport with other staff |
| | 147 | Important to prioritise time to see other staff. |
| | 154 | Communicating to teaching team that SMT are under pressure. |
| | 155 | Speaking highly of other colleagues |
| | 156 | Feel supported in work |
| | 257 | Nice environment to work |
| | 258 | Good will of staff |
| Organisational factors | | |
| | 17 | Current school less stressful and more supportive than previous school. |
| | 32 | Supportive senior management |

| | |
|-----|---|
| 36 | Support systems in place for new and trainee teachers. |
| 45 | Staff support and EHWB is seen as important. |
| 58 | Staff equally as important as pupils |
| 60 | Whole school meetings and briefings |
| 74 | Schools have a duty of care to staff. |
| 78 | Staff meetings to support workload |
| 94 | Support – mainly implicit/informal |
| 97 | Each day is a fresh start |
| 99 | Current SMT structure more hierarchical |
| 100 | Approachable SMT |
| 137 | Support naturally built into performance management. |
| 140 | STM not wanting to overburden staff |
| 143 | Staff stay in their jobs a long time and tend to send their children to the school for a reason |
| 144 | Support systems in place are good enough |
| 157 | Positive school ethos |
| 161 | Receive positive feedback about the school. |
| 169 | Range of activities and pace of job seen as a positive. |
| 194 | Social events being organised – viewed as support. |
| 201 | Promoting to staff that offloading is |

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----|---|
| | | important |
| | 213 | Developing staff's own career aspirations |
| | 218 | Staff driven by what is right for the students not by external assessment. |
| | 226 | Valuing staff |
| | 257 | Nice environment to work in. |
| Individual factors | 5 | Rewarding aspects of the job |
| | 75 | Emotional intelligence of staff affects their ability to understand student's emotions. |
| | 91 | Achievement |
| | 128 | Love for the job |
| | 152 | Passion for teaching/job |
| | 210 | Staff are very resourceful |
| | 211 | Staff work very effectively |

Barriers to support systems

| | | |
|-------------------------|----|--|
| Individual level | 4 | Additional studying/training |
| | 42 | Some school staff have a lack of awareness of professional support systems |
| | 43 | The term 'supervision' can be Misunderstood |
| | 50 | Teachers not wanting to share difficulties with other colleagues. |
| | 65 | Change only occurs if the individual wants to change. |

| | |
|-----|--|
| 70 | Lack of time for staff to reflect on work |
| 80 | Personality clashes |
| 81 | Professionalism |
| 83 | High expectations of yourself |
| 84 | Different points of view |
| 90 | Time constraints |
| 93 | Juggling different demands |
| 103 | Internalising difficulties |
| 104 | Peoples previous experiences – affect Behaviour |
| 105 | Defence mechanisms |
| 110 | Some staff more approachable than others |
| 111 | Support exists but staff need to seek it out. |
| 116 | Not helping yourself |
| 119 | Judged for asking for help |
| 122 | Staff not wanting to seek out support |
| 127 | Other roles can interfere with main role as a teacher. |
| 195 | Time to be viewed as a person rather than a member of staff. |
| 198 | Support is available if staff chose to accept it. |
| 204 | Staff cautious about sharing difficulties with other ‘in house’ staff. |
| 209 | Lack of control |
| 223 | Balance between personal and professional issues. |
| 224 | Wearing a mask in school – shielding true feelings. |

| | | |
|---------------------|-----|---|
| | 227 | Managing well-being comes in different forms |
| | 229 | EHWB is individual |
| | 232 | Staff make personal sacrifices in their work |
| | 237 | Can't help staff if not aware of the problem |
| | 238 | Asking for help – part of learning |
| | 239 | Some staff think they are coping but are not (denial). |
| | 240 | Staff are replaceable/expendable |
| | 250 | Part of teaching is being an actor. |
| | 256 | Time management |
| School level | 1 | Long hours |
| | 2 | No/few breaks in the school day |
| | 3 | Various job titles/responsibilities |
| | 4 | Additional studying/training |
| | 18 | Stress linked to style of leadership |
| | 27 | Presenteeism culture |
| | 28 | SMT modelling appropriate work hours to other staff. |
| | 29 | Staff EHWB viewed as a low priority |
| | 33 | Lack of explicit focus on staff EHWB |
| | 34 | Lack of policies on staff EHWB and Stress reduction. |
| | 37 | Performance management systems not focused on staff EHWB. |
| | 39 | Resistance to supervision in education |

| | |
|-----|--|
| 40 | Lack of organisational factors in schools for support systems |
| 43 | Term 'supervision' can be Misunderstood |
| 44 | Main barrier to providing support is prioritisation. |
| 48 | Focus on staff EHWB needs to be top down from senior management |
| 63 | Never enough hours in the day to get everything done. |
| 71 | Lack of transition time back to work when staff have been off work |
| 79 | Training is available, but infrequent due to cost of course, transport and time off. |
| 82 | SMT pose threat to other staff/can talk freely |
| 88 | Balance of challenge and support within roles. |
| 90 | Time constraints |
| 93 | Juggling different demands |
| 101 | School politics |
| 106 | Balancing work that needs to be done and well being of staff. |
| 107 | High school standards |
| 110 | Some staff more approachable than others |
| 111 | Support exists but staff need to seek it out |
| 114 | Having formal policies on staff support and EHWB could be problematic due to compliance/capability issues. |
| 117 | Support systems going wrong |
| 127 | Other roles can interfere with main role as a teacher. |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 141 | Who you would approach for support depends on the issue. |
| 148 | High levels of workload |
| 158 160 | Budget constraints Time and money are barriers to Providing professional support. |
| 168 | Unofficial extra responsibilities |
| 189 | Volume of meetings is too high |
| 198 | Support is available if staff chose to accept it. |
| 202 | Social events need to be structured so emphasis is not on work. |
| 205 | Current systems of support – issues with time for all staff to share difficulties. |
| 207 | No divisions between SMT and staff |
| 212 | Capacity an issue |
| 220 | SMT often have to be the bearer of bad news |
| 228 | Policies on EHWB would not change anything |
| 230 | Written policies of EHWB may act as a barrier |
| 233 | Being realistic about what can be offered |
| 240 | Staff are replaceable/expendable |
| 244 | Boundaries |
| 247 | Lots of support in place for young people but not for staff. |
| 252 | Pupils needs are prioritised above staffs |
| Government/societal | |

| | | |
|--------------|-----|--|
| level | 1 | Long hours |
| | 2 | No/few breaks in the school day |
| | 3 | Various job titles/responsibilities |
| | 29 | Staff EHWB viewed as a low priority |
| | 33 | Lack of explicit focus on staff EHWB |
| | 40 | Lack of organisational factors in schools for support systems. |
| | 44 | Main barrier to providing professional support is prioritisation. |
| | 63 | Never enough hours in the day to get everything done. |
| | 64 | New initiatives and knowledge |
| | 114 | Having formal policies on staff support and EHWB could be problematic due to compliance/capability issues. |
| | 148 | High levels of workload |
| | 158 | Budget constraints |
| | 160 | Time and money are barriers to providing professional support. |
| | 178 | Teachers need to be able to justify/evidence poor pupil outcomes. |
| | 233 | Being realistic about what can be offered |
| | 240 | Staff are replaceable/expendable |
| | 247 | Lots of support in place for young people not for staff |
| | 252 | Pupils needs are prioritised above staffs. |

Stress

| | | |
|---------------|-----|--|
| Causes | 7 | Challenging aspects of the job (see table) |
| | 12 | Stress points in the academic year |
| | 13 | Ofsted visit very stressful |
| | 14 | Lots of change |
| | 15 | SMT like change as they initiate it. |
| | 16 | Lots of change in a short time is stressful for the rest of the staff body. |
| | 18 | Stress linked to style of leadership |
| | 19 | Stress linked to challenging pupil behaviour |
| | 61 | Disengaged students |
| | 66 | Unpredictable nature of job can be Stressful |
| | 68 | Quantity of paperwork/admin can cause stress. |
| | 69 | Stress caused by passed duties that could not be done to an individual's usual standard. |
| | 72 | Stress may not be caused by work but by other factors. |
| | 73 | Stress may not be caused by work but by other factors |
| | 133 | Some roles more stressful than others. |
| | 150 | Feel frozen due to volume of workload – don't know where to start. |
| | 162 | Stressed by morning routine clashing between home and school. |
| | 163 | Managing family responsibilities. E.g. childcare alongside work responsibilities. |
| | 164 | Timetable issues for part time staff. |

| | |
|-----|--|
| 165 | Worrying about how arriving late and leaving early will be viewed by SMT/line manager. |
| 166 | Feel have to justify work hours |
| 167 | Feel pressure to work extra hours |
| 168 | Unofficial extra responsibilities |
| 170 | Balancing pupil timetables, ability and motivation with getting good exam results. |
| 171 | Teachers outside of comfort zone and training |
| 172 | Challenge of teaching difference age ranges. |
| 174 | Feeling guilty when having to choose between a home and work responsibility. |
| 176 | Pressure for teachers to get high exam results. |
| 180 | Sometimes it is the job itself that is stressful and not the environment. |
| 184 | Support systems ironically may increase staff stress by adding an additional meeting or something to do. |
| 188 | Performance management very stressful |
| 216 | Priorities as a women - a choice between work and family. |
| 240 | Staff are replaceable/ expendable |
| 242 | Difficult year |
| 243 | Frustration |
| 255 | Dealing appropriately with challenging situations. |
| 258 | Good will of staff |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|---|
| | 259 | Saying no |
| Knowledge & Understanding | 9 | Learning from a stressful time at work. |
| | 10 | Planning for a busy/stressful time at work. |
| | 11 | Self-inflicted stress at work |
| | 21 | Important to identify cycles/triggers of stress. |
| | 22 | Recognising stress in other colleagues |
| | 23 | Easier to recognise in those you know/have a relationship with |
| | 56 | How many staff would attend training/sessions if they were provides on stress reduction and EHWB? |
| | 62 | Emotional intelligence |
| | 67 | Stress can be positive and negative |
| | 85 | Perspective and context of stress – one person's stress might not be a problem for someone else. |
| | 102 | Stress thresholds |
| | 108 | Stress levels depend on how you manage it. |
| | 118 | Stress perceived as 'not coping' |
| | 120 | Lack of preventative support |
| | 123 | Greater awareness of stress |
| | 134 | Stress dealt with in different ways |
| | 135 | People are always stressed to some extent – inevitable. |
| | 208 | Staff have their own 'internal |

| | | pressures' |
|--------------------------|-----|---|
| Coping strategies | 9 | Learning from a stressful time at work. |
| | 10 | Planning for a busy/stressful time at work. |
| | 20 | Individual coping strategies (see table) |
| | 21 | Important to identify triggers/cycles of stress. |
| | 24 | Prioritising workload |
| | 86 | Resilience – once feeling hurt by other staffs response to you. |
| | 97 | Each day is a fresh start |
| | 108 | Stress levels depend on how you manage it. |
| | 134 | Stress dealt with in different ways. |
| | 136 | Sharing stress/responsibility/ workload amongst the team. |
| | 192 | Positive management of stress levels |
| | 236 | Family are a high priority |
| | 244 | Boundaries |
| | 245 | Face problems head on |
| | 246 | Supportive family |

The impact of stress

| Children and young People | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|---|
| | 31 | Teachers cannot teach effectively if they are stressed. |
| | 96 | Staff stress affects student's learning |
| | 159 | Providing professional support for staff results in better outcomes for students. |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|--|
| | 248 | Burnout |
| Teaching & support staff | 8 | Job negatively affecting health |
| | 25 | Managing home-work balance |
| | 41 | Challenging teaching experiences can affect teachers' self-esteem. |
| | 124 | Taking work home seen as a normal part of the job. |
| | 151 | When staff are stressed so are SMT. |
| | 159 | Providing professional support for staff results in better outcome for students. |
| | 197 | Better support would reduce staff sickness |
| | 248 | Burnout |
| | 253 | Take stresses home |
| Whole School | 5 | Rewarding aspects of the job |
| | 124 | Taking work home seen as normal part of the job. |
| | 197 | Better support would reduce staff sickness. |
| | 203 | Staff at their limit. |
| | 248 | Burnout |

Changes to support systems

| | | |
|--|-----|--|
| | 52 | Suggested support systems by staff (see table). |
| | 112 | Support for staff made transparent |
| | 146 | Psychology service are well placed to support schools with staff support and EHWB. |
| | 173 | Lack of support/training when experienced teachers are facing new |

| | |
|-----|--|
| | roles/responsibilities/challenges. |
| 181 | Lack of extra adult support in KS3/4 and FE |
| 182 | Level of support depends on department/line manager |
| 183 | Support systems need to be more formal and standardised across departments. |
| 186 | Making support systems the same across all departments would be beneficial. |
| 190 | Staff training on EHWB/stress reduction more well received if includes practical strategies. |
| 235 | Little time to see other staff. |

Role of the EP/other agencies

| | |
|-----|--|
| 49 | Availability of an outside individual for staff to talk to. |
| 57 | The role of the EP is often reduced to assessment and statutory work. |
| 146 | Psychology service are well placed to support schools with staff support systems and EHWB. |
| 206 | Importance of working with an outside agencies that can bring alternative perspectives. |
| 234 | EP support seen as being for the young people not for staff. |
| 249 | EP involvement viewed positively |

Miscellaneous

| | |
|----|--|
| 28 | SMARTER working |
| 30 | Staff EHWB in other schools/counties |
| 35 | Having a staff EHWB committee could lead to a school policy being created. |
| 87 | Transference |

| | |
|-----|---|
| 91 | Achievement |
| 109 | Worked way up through the ranks |
| 125 | The more years experience in the job the easier it gets. |
| 130 | Having own children changes outlook on teaching. |
| 131 | Stress in teaching is high but lower compared to other professions. |
| 132 | Feeling like you've done a good job |
| 138 | Mix of staff – experienced and new |
| 139 | Some staff have been through a similar journey. |
| 145 | Would be good to reward/thank staff for their hard work. |
| 149 | Level of workload makes you want to consider other job possibilities sometimes. |
| 153 | Prioritise marking/pupil feedback as improves learning and motivation. |
| 193 | Feeling appreciated |
| 200 | Staff relating to emotional literacy work doing with pupils. |
| 215 | Many SMT do not teach in addition to their roles |
| 217 | Positive Ofsted – a good reward. |
| 221 | Generations of negative cycles in society |
| 241 | Best to remove yourself in a conflict situation |
| 254 | Matching individual skill sets to roles/responsibilities. |

Appendix 17

Omitted Codes

List of codes removed from analysis due to not being present in collation process.

| Code number | Code name |
|-------------|--|
| 53 | Number not used |
| 54 | Number not used |
| 55 | Number not used |
| 59 | Research interviews have prompted reflection on staff EHWB & support |
| 89 | Communication |
| 92 | Achievement |
| 95 | Benefits of support – being open and honest |
| 129 | Negative aspects of the job |
| 142 | SMT have a responsibility to the EHWB of staff they manage. |
| 175 | Teachers are answerable/responsible for pupils meeting expectations |
| 179 | Other schools – teachers are put under capability procedures if pupils results are not good, regardless of context/circumstances |
| 185 | Different schools have conflicting Procedures. |
| 196 | Most people have a good awareness of school support systems. |
| 219 | Getting the balance right in the |

| | |
|-----|--|
| | curriculum for students – not limiting them. |
| 222 | Carrying others difficulties around with you. |
| 225 | Support is available and people are available however it is a personal choice to access support. |
| 231 | Teachers are roles models to students. |
| 251 | Taken advantage of. |

Appendix 18

Example of collation of extracts into codes

Code 25 – Managing home-work balance

Transcript 96, p. 9

I: *OK. Do you work at home as well?*

P: Yeah, sometimes.

p. 21

P: Basically, you've probably come across people who work in schools, I could probably work 45 – 50 hours per week, every week - and still have more to do.

Transcript 43/44, p.2

I:.....Then go home. If there's any essays to mark. I've got students that I'm seeing in a minute and so I would have had to have gone home and made sure all the essays were marked for them today because this is the last time I see them.

I: *Yeah. Do you often take work home?*

P: Always. Try not to work on a Friday. I don't work on a Friday. I refuse to work on a Friday night. I try and have most of Saturday off depending on – I say Saturday off, I mean that's when I do my cleaning at home and go to my mum's, change the beds and shopping and things like that. And then Sunday I have a bit of a lazy morning and then I work from 12.00 sometimes right through until 8:00/9:00.

p.10

P: It's capacity.

I: *Yeah.*

P: And understanding then that I can't do everything.

I: *Yeah.*

P: And I've learnt that over 10 years.

I: *Yeah.*

P: To my detriment really, because I've just done too much.

I: *Yeah.*

P: So the challenging bit is still doing too much.

I: *Yeah.*

P: And not having a good enough work/life balance.

p.14

P: Because nobody's going to be able to come in and teach the next day if they work much after 9.00.

I: *Yeah.*

P: And I'd say you've got to have a couple of hours, say if you don't go to bed until 11.00. I know they fall asleep on their work like I do and they've got kids and I've got kids.

p.36

P: Erm (*slight pause*). To be honest I'd like just to get home, have a glass of wine, put my feet up and have my tea... After being up at six o'clock in the morning. I mean I'm not 21. So I mean, but that is not – you know and then I have my, you know, what's expected of me by **my** mum to do then at the weekend.....Yeah. So there's no 'me' time. Not that much 'me' time except for Sunday morning maybe.

Transcript 45/46, p.7

P: I went for a coaching, I have a coach for my NVQH (National Vocational Qualification Headship) and you know I went with that question like I feel like my work life balance has gone completely out of control and he sort of posed to me well what am I modelling if you do those hours, he said it doesn't matter if you come in early but if you're staying late as well you know as a leader should we really be modelling those messages?

Appendix 19
Initial themes

**Appendix 20:
Final themes**

Appendix 21

Additional findings

Sources of stress according to the literature

Historical literature in the field show that many researchers (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1977; Kyriacou, 1980, 1987; Dunham,1984) have attributed the major causes of stress to:

- Pupils' failure to work or behave
- Poor working conditions, generally in terms of relations with colleagues
- Workload, in terms of overload or routine work
- Poor school ethos.

(Johnstone, 1989)

More recently Smith and Bourke (1992, p.39) has found that the five main stressors amongst Australian secondary school staff were:

- Conflict
- Students and conditions
- Lack of rewards and recognition
- Time pressures
- Staff cutbacks

(Smith and Bourke, 1992, p.39)

Kyriacou (2010) summarised in his recent paper research the main sources of stress facing teachers. According to the work of Travers and Cooper (1996), Benmansour (1998) and Pithers and Soden (1998) the main sources of stress were:

- Teaching pupils who lack motivation
- Maintaining discipline
- Time pressures and workload
- Coping with change

- Being evaluated by others
- Dealing with colleagues
- Self-esteem and status
- Administration and management
- Role conflict and ambiguity
- Poor working conditions

(Travers and Cooper, 1996; Pithers and Soden, 1998; Benmensour, 1998)

Benmensour (1998) found that the four main stressors amongst Moroccan secondary school staff were:

- Curriculum changes
- An emphasis on quantity over quality
- Working under time pressures
- Teaching mainly for examinations

(Benmansour, 1998, p.29)

Neither Smith and Bourke (1992, who's research was conducted in Australian secondary schools) nor Benmensour (1998, who's research was conducted in Moroccan secondary schools) feature workload as being a major stressor to staff. Perhaps workload is more prominent, as a stress factor, in European schools than in other countries. Kyriacou (2010) stresses the importance of considering that the main sources of teacher stress are unlikely to be the same between countries. The education systems in some countries, in addition to the societal views and attitudes of that country, are likely to differ somewhat (Kyriacou, 2010).

Additional themes to have emerged from the thematic analysis

Knowledge and understanding of stress and coping strategies

My purpose in this section is to describe and characterise participant's knowledge and understanding of stress and the individual coping strategies they use. An important part of managing stress and employing the appropriate stress coping strategies is to first have the ability to recognise the signs and have a good knowledge and understanding of the causes, effects and ways to prevent stress. Friedman (1999) suggests that teachers often believe their failure to cope with stress is their own fault. Troman and Woods (2001) argue that this can be avoided if knowledge about sources of stress, the identification of somatic, psychological and emotional symptoms and coping strategies are provided to staff.

Participants described how they were able to notice stress in their colleagues by changes in their behaviour, attitude and body language:

P: By witnessing their behaviour....Yeah. Really poor body language and always having a negative viewpoint and never anything positive, you know.

(Transcript 96, non SMT, p.21/22)

P: I mean I've got a colleague who when they get really stressed their emails go like you know one long string of words, rather than spaces in between because they're typing so fast and it is that sort of 'it's getting to me and I've got so much to do' and you see it in that sorts of behaviours as well.

(Transcript 45/46, SMT, p.7)

P:...You can sense it through their body language because they don't want to take part in anything, they just don't want to be there. They just do not want to support the child....You know, you can sense it. Then they end up just like 'That's it' and they go off sick....

(Transcript 98/99, non SMT, p.12)

Figure 4 outlines how participants felt they were able to recognising stress in other colleagues at work. This included behavioural, emotional and physical signs.

Figure 4: How participants felt they were able to recognising stress in other colleagues.

Behavioural signs

Absence/sick leave.

Way they behave with their class or pupils.

Shouting in class

Concentration - Lack of focus on work.

Work patterns.

Changes in usual behaviour/
Not being themselves

Tone of emails.

Not talking to others

Emotional signs

Short tempered/irritable

Being 'down'

Change in attitude

Being negative

Lower tolerance threshold

Physical signs

Not smiling

Body language

Facial expressions

Tone of voice

Appearing flustered

Other signs

Saying they are finding it difficult.

Being told by another colleague that someone is under stress.

Do not want to be there.

Knowledge of other colleague's workload.

Individual coping strategies

Although it is recognised that stress is a larger systemic and organisational issue that needs to be dealt with both proactively and preventatively, there are a number of strategies that can be adopted at an individual level that can prevent stress or ease the negative implications of it for the individual.

According to Louw and Viviers (2010) an exact definition of a coping strategy is hard to locate in the literature. However they argue that coping strategies are mental sets brought by the individual to a stressful event. The individual has to make a choice amongst the coping strategies available to them depending on the perceived usefulness in dealing with the stressor in any given situation (Carver, Scheier and Weintraub, 1989; Zeidner and Endler, 1996). Louw and Viviers (2010) go on to add that a coping strategy may be an approach to deal with or alternatively to avoid stress. They also acknowledge that some coping strategies are more useful than others.

According to Kyriacou (2010; 1998) there are two main types of coping strategies for teacher stress: Direct action and palliative techniques.

Direct action

Dealing positively with the source of stress and using techniques to eliminate the source. Direct action will require the individual to locate the source of stress and to then take action to successfully deal with the demands that are causing the stress both currently and in future circumstances. Direct action techniques may include:

- Organising oneself more effectively.
- Developing new insights, skills and working practices; and

- Negotiating with colleagues so that stress aspects of one's situation are changed or managed by others.

(Kyriacou, 1998)

The most effective direct strategies were as follows:

- Understand the work you are about to teach.
- Prepare lessons thoroughly.
- Abandon sessions that are going well.
- Discuss your concerns with other educators in school.
- Get to know your learners as individuals.
- Set priorities.
- Make lists of priorities.
- Share your failures.
- Talk to your colleagues about recreational interests.

(Kyriacou, 1998, p.10)

Palliative Techniques

Requires the individual to accept the source of stress, but attempt to ease the experience of stress which may follow and lessen the feeling of stress that occurs.

There are two types of palliative techniques;

Mental techniques – Altering the perception of the individual's perception of circumstances. E.g. keeping a sense of humour or putting things in perspective.

According to Kyriacou (1998) mental techniques may include:

- Putting the source of stress in perspective;
- Realising the problem is not as great as it first appears and;

- Seeing the humour in the situation

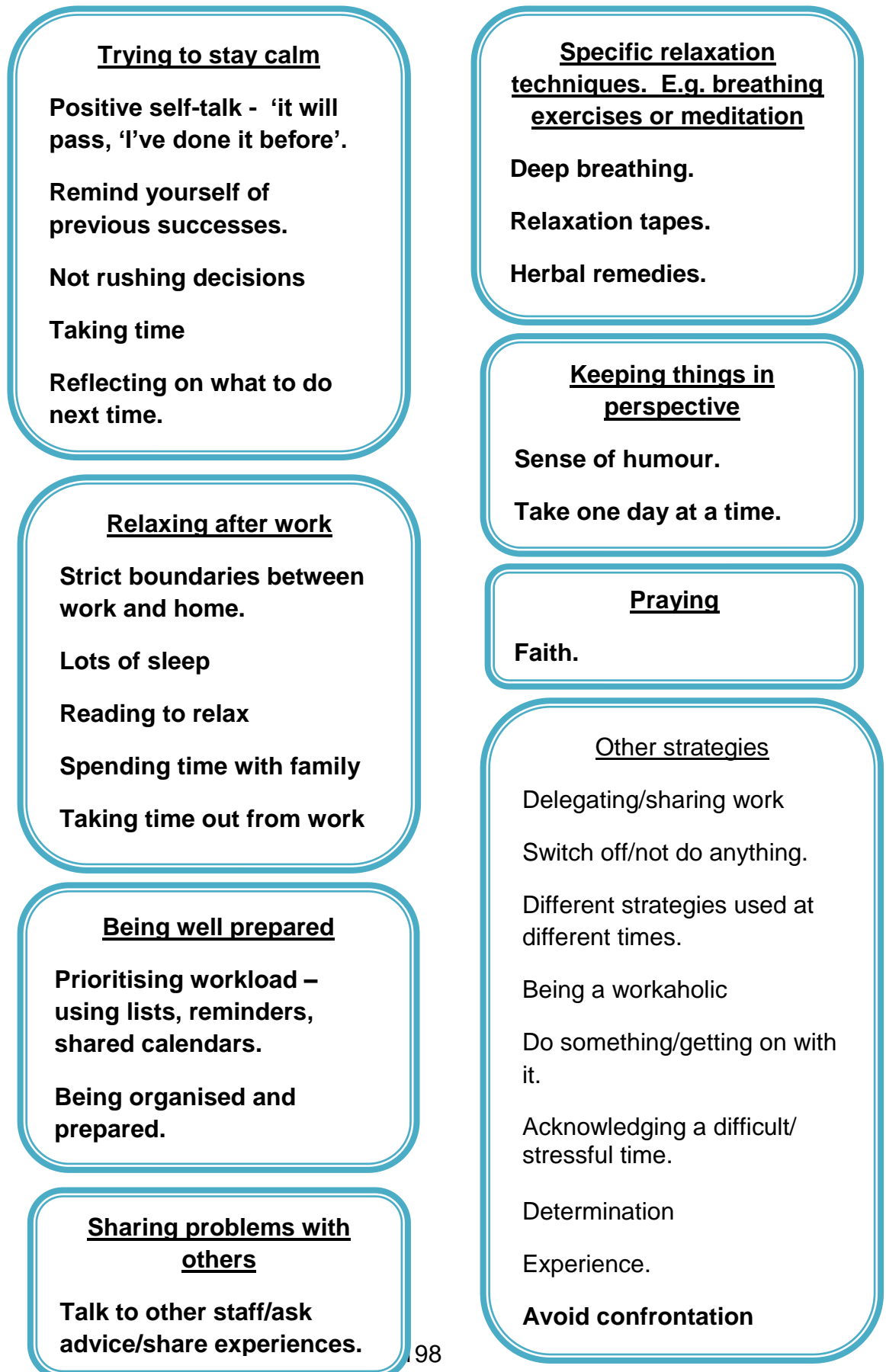
Physical techniques - Using relaxation techniques or exercise to relieve the tension and anxiety caused by stress. Physical techniques may include (Kyriacou, 1998):

- Activities that help the educator to gain a sense of composure;
- Having a hot bath while listening to relaxing music and;
- Taking part in recreational activities.

Palliative techniques are likely to be effective, but should the source of stress continue then it is likely that the individual will experience some form of stress as a result (Wilson, 2002). As Wilson (2002) points out that some coping strategies are not particularly specific, nor are the strategies provided within the context in which they were used. Additionally it is important to note that what school staff say they do when confronted with a potentially stressful event of time is not necessarily what they do in these circumstances (Wilson, 2002).

Table 2 provides a synthesis of the literature on coping strategies. Figure 5 provides a comparison between individual coping strategies mentioned by my participants in this study and those found by Kyriacou (1980) and Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1979).

Figure 5: My participant's individual coping strategies compared with those found by Kyriacou (1980) and Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1979, indicated in bold).



'Other strategies' detailed above are those provided by my participants in this study and not found in the literature by Kyriacou (1980) and Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1979).

Reflection on participant's knowledge and understanding of stress and coping strategies

This section has demonstrated that my participant's were able to recognise and identify stress in their colleagues at work (either behaviourally, emotionally or physically), indicating they had some knowledge and understanding of stress. A number of researchers have documented the early symptoms of teacher stress and burnout (Brown & Ralph, 1998; Hinton & Rotheiler, 1998; Kyriacou, 2001; Troman & Woods, 2001) in the literature. The majority of these symptoms were highlighted by participants in this study. The exception to this was that most participants in this paper did not make specific reference to noticing physical illness or ill health in other colleagues experiencing stress. This was only referred to by participants in their interviews when asked about their own stress. This may be due to the fact that ill health may not always be physically visible. E.g. digestive disorders, heart palpitations or insomnia may not alter the physical appearance of an individual. In addition participants in this study were able to add to the existing symptoms of stress found in the literature.

Although it is recognised in this paper and in the current literature that stress is a larger systemic and organisational issue that needs to be dealt with both proactively and preventatively there are a number of coping strategies that can be adopted at an individual level that can prevent stress or ease the negative implications of it for the individual. These have been documented above. Table 2 provides a synthesis of coping strategies used by those in the education system that have been found by a range of researchers over the years. Many of these have been highlighted by participants in this study.

One important factor to be mindful of in this section is that what school staff say they do when confronted with a potentially stressful event of time is not necessarily what they do in these circumstances (Wilson, 2002). This suggests the data may not be a true reflection of the coping strategies participants use in their daily lives.

Table 2: A synthesis of coping strategies

Barriers to participants seeking out support

There are a number of constraints and barriers that prevent school staff from seeking out support. I have provided only a brief description of the findings from participants as barriers are an area of detailed consideration in paper two.

According to Dunlop and Macdonald (2004) barriers include:

- Issues around confidentiality and teacher mistrust
- Lack of time for teachers to engage in support systems
- Finance to fund support systems

Participant's experiences support the literature, particularly around confidentiality and teacher mistrust:

P:....Some people are quite resistant to it in education for some reason I don't know why um.....Sometimes teachers don't want, because in the classroom it's a fairly autonomous position some people don't want to admit to themselves or to other people that things have got really stressful.

(Transcript 45/46, SMT, p.11 &13)

P: There's the whole – I suppose there's the whole kind of thing about people not wanting to admit if they're struggling. Which is difficult.....I think there is always an element of pride, I suppose.

(Transcript 92, SMT, p.27)

I: Do you think teachers find it hard to ask for help or to say 'I'm struggling, I'm finding this difficult'?

P: ... Yeah, because teaching is a very responsible job.... You've got to be able to be in control and responsible...and it's like juggling all the balls in the air, I'm not sure how many would go and seek help before it became an overwhelming problem....

(Transcript 47, non SMT, p.23)

P: I anticipate that a lot of people would find it difficult to admit that they get stressed.

(Transcript 39, SMT, p.9)

Lack of time for staff to engage in focusing on developing staff support systems was also highlighted by participants:

P: (Pause). Um some people might not see that as important (setting up a well being policy)...Another policy, another thing to be written up, another policy to be renewed.....Again it's just another piece of work for someone to do isn't it on the workload that is already perhaps high.

(Transcript 42, non SMT, p.13/14)

P: (Talking about support systems) - I think barriers are time and commitment cos you will you need a hardcore of people that fundamentally believe that that's the way to you know. Either you're the head and you sell that vision to the staff or you're a small part that can try things out but you can't necessarily prioritise it.

(Transcript 45/46, SMT, p.12)

Appendix 22

Addressing reliability & validity

Collecting qualitative data and using a flexible design makes the consideration of reliability and validity more challenging and it has been suggested (Robson, 2008) that credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are used as alternatives. I will address how I will overcome 'threats' to these four areas below.

Credibility

Interviewing and giving questionnaires to those who are directly experiencing existing professional support gives a certain credibility to this type of research, as the data collected will be first-hand information. There is a subjective element to it, but by drawing common themes from a range of teaching staff and by using two data collection methods (semi-structured interviews and focus groups) this should ensure triangulation in that common themes will emerge allowing for a more overall objective data set.

Transferability

As mentioned previously the data collected for this research will not be transferable but can be shared. This may act as a tool to promote this area of school and staff development for other schools to consider.

Dependability

Before collecting data in paper one, the semi-structured schedule interview that was created was piloted with a teacher from another school. This enabled any changes that may be required to be done prior to using the schedule 'live'. Additionally to this it allows the researcher to practice conducting an interview and a chance to practice using the schedule. Some of the vocabulary that was used was adapted after the

pilot. Once changes had been made, advice was also sought from a member of staff who I will be working with at the school I am using for data collection. Recordings of the interview will enable me to evaluate my performance in the interviews.

Confirmability

This refers to providing a valid description of what you have seen or heard (Robson, 2008). This is reliant on accurate data. This will be addressed by ensuring all interviews are recorded and this will accompany any notes that are taken. Data collected from interviews were also triangulated with a focus group.

Paper Two Appendices

Appendix 23

Types of organisational/systems change

According to the Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus, change can have many different meanings, which suggests that it may occur on a continuum (Stobie, 2002). There are many different types of change that can occur in organisations, including:

- Planned versus emergent change
- Episodic versus continuous change
- Developmental, transitional and transformational change

Planned versus emergent change

Change can sometimes be deliberate. Planned change is a result of conscious action and reasoning. Alternatively change can sometimes occur spontaneously and in an unplanned way. This is known as emergent change (Iles & Sutherland, 2000).

Episodic versus continuous change

Another distinction can be made between episodic and continuous change. Episodic change, according to Weick and Quinn (1999), is 'infrequent, discontinuous and intentional'. An episodic change often involves the replacement of a strategy or programme with another (Iles & Sutherland, 2000). Alternatively continuous change is 'ongoing, evolving and cumulative' (Weick & Quinn, 1999). This type of change is recognisable by people constantly adapting and editing ideas gained from other sources. Continuous adjustments made across the system at the same time can create substantial change (Iles & Sutherland, 2000).

Developmental, transitional and transformational change

Ackerman (1997) has distinguished between three types of change: developmental, transitional and transformational.

Developmental change

Developmental change may be either planned or emergent and tend to be incremental. It is change that enhances or corrects existing aspects of an organisation, often focusing on the improvement of a skill or process (Iles and Sutherland, 2000).

Transitional change

Transitional change opts to achieve a known desired state that is different from the existing one and is episodic and planned in nature (Iles and Sutherland, 2000).

According to Iles and Sutherland (2000) the model of transitional change is the basis of much of the organisational change literature (see for example Kanter, 1983; Beckhard and Harris, 1987; Nadler and Tushman, 1989).

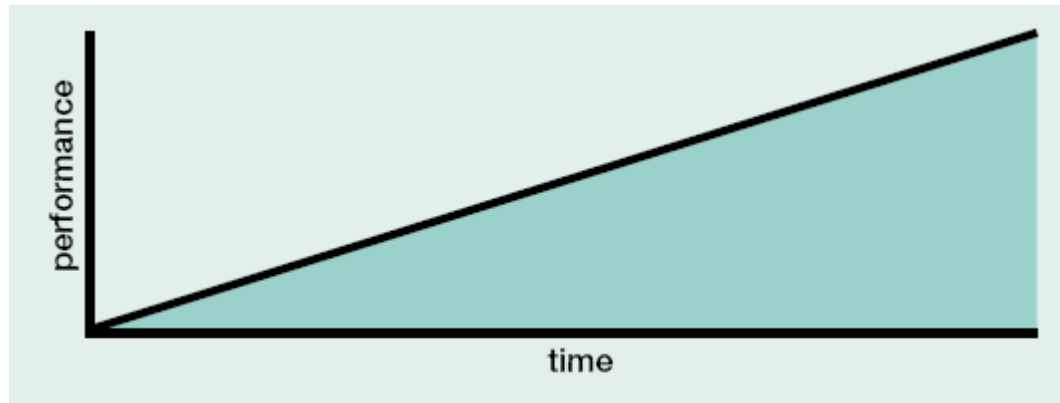
Transformational Change

Transformational change is radical and requires a shift in the assumptions made by the organisation and its members. Transformation by its very nature can result in an organisation that differs significantly in terms of structure, processes, culture and strategy. A transformational change may lead to the creation of an organisation that continuously learns, adapts and improves (Iles and Sutherland, 2000).

Figure 8: Perspectives on change (Iles & Sutherland, 2000, adapted from Ackerman, 1997)

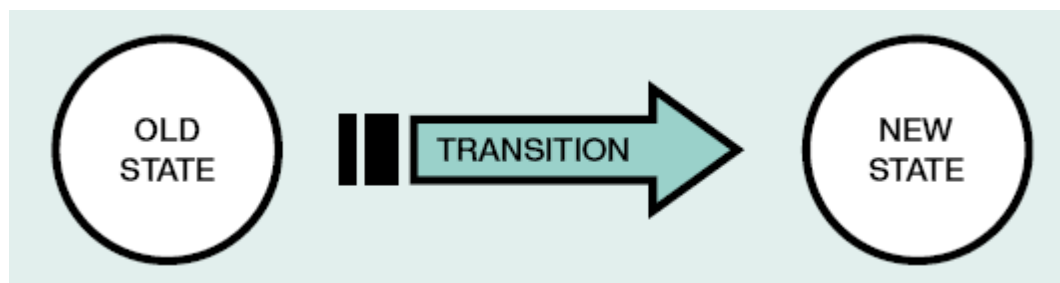
Developmental change

Improvement of existing situation.



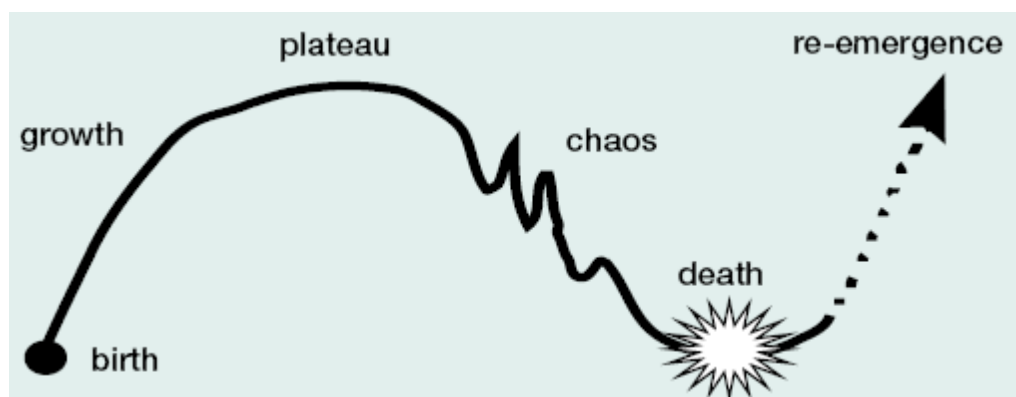
Transitional change

Implementation of a known new state; management of the interim transition state over a controlled period of time.



Transformational change

Emergence of a new state, unknown until it takes shape, out of the remains of the chaotic death of the old state; time period not easily controlled.



Fullan (1982) has created eight complex change lessons that have been considered as part of this paper (see below). Fullan's (1982) change lessons suggest that change is a complex process that occurs over time. The focus of change in this paper is the introduction of a new support system or the adaptation of an existing one.

Table 3: Complex change lessons (Robson, 2008, adapted and abridged from Fullan, 1982, p.91).

Lesson One

Do not assume that your version of what the change should be is the one that could or should be implemented. You have to exchange your reality of what should be through interaction with others concerned.

Lesson Two

Change involves ambiguity, ambivalence and uncertainty about the meaning of the change. Effective implementation is a process of clarification

Lesson Three

Some conflict and disagreement are not only inevitable but fundamental to change.

Lesson Four

People need pressure to change (even in directions they desire) but it is only effective under conditions that allow them to react and interact. Re-socialisation is at the heart of any change (otherwise you need to replace the people involved).

Lesson Five

Effective change takes time. It is a developmental process that takes at least two years.

Lesson Six

Lack of implementation isn't necessarily attributable to rejection or resistance. There are many other reasons, including insufficient resources or time elapsed.

Lesson Seven

Don't expect all, or even most, people or groups to change. Progress occurs by increasing the number of people affected.

Lesson Eight

You need a plan based on these assumptions and underpinned by knowledge of the change process.

Lesson Nine

Change is a frustrating, discouraging business. If you are not in a position to make the above assumptions, which may well be the case, don't expect significant change, as far as implementation is concerned.

(Robson, 2008, adapted and abridged from Fullan, 1982, p.91)

Appendix 24

Pre-requisites for change (Stobie, 2002)

Table 4: Pre-requisites for change (Stobie, 2002)

| |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is supported internally and externally |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The complexity of change can be understood by all |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The change presents solutions to perceived problems |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff can accept that there may be unintended outcomes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It creates communities with whom the new paradigm can be shared, applied, evaluated and reflected upon. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It recognises itself as a learning organisation for which change may only be temporary as new paradigms emerge leading to further change. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It permits dissent, uses it constructively and considers change as a personal and organisational matter |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It perceives its existence in the context of other systems, which make transactional influences possible |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It remains an open, purposive and goal-seeking system, adaptive both internally and externally, utilising both negative and positive feedback mechanisms to enhance its efficiency but most importantly its effectiveness in relation to the microscopic and macroscopic problems it encounters. |

(Stobie, 2002, p.210)

**Appendix 25:
Ethics certificate**

STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH



Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

STUDENT RESEARCH/FIELDWORK/CASEWORK AND DISSERTATION/THESIS

You will need to complete this certificate when you undertake a piece of higher-level research (e.g. Masters, PhD, EdD level).

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/category/publications/guidelines/> and view the School's statement on the 'Student Documents' web site.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND

Your name: Sarah Sidaway

Your student no: 580031514

Return address for this certificate: Flat 2, 31 Queens Road, Lipson, Plymouth, PL4 7PL

Degree/Programme of Study: Doctorate in ^{education} child and community psychology

Project Supervisor(s): Margie Tunbridge and Flora McCleod

Your email address: ss406@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: 07904 113 216

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my dissertation / thesis (delete whichever is inappropriate) to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: Sarah Sidaway Date: 7.12.10

NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must **not** be included in your work. It can be kept for your records.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Certificate of ethical research approval

Your student no: 580031514

Title of your project: School staff support systems

Brief description of your research project:

Ethical consent has already given for paper one. Paper two will focus on delivering to staff 5/6 one hour training sessions based on issues such stress management & coping strategies, assertiveness, well-being, home-work balance and setting up a staff consultation group. The topics of these sessions will have been agreed by staff and the senior management of the secondary school I am working with.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

I will be working with school staff only (including teachers and senior management members).

Give details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) a blank consent form can be downloaded from the SELL student access on-line documents:

All participants will be required to complete a written consent form at the start of the training programme to show that they have fully consented to taking part in this research (which includes that they have a proper understanding of the nature and consequences of what is being proposed). A straight forward written statement conveying the aims of the research and potential consequences to participants will be used on the university consent form. Simple and understandable language will be used. Influence will not in any circumstances be used to obtain consent. It will be made clear to participants that they can at any moment withdraw from the research.

All data collected will be non-identifiable. All data and results will be kept confidentially and will not be disclosed to unauthorised third parties. Any reports written will not include any individuals details nor will the school participating be identified. Once my research is complete I will debrief staff members and the school with my findings. Again any data will be kept anonymous so that individual participant information will remain confidential.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Data collection will be through a pre and post questionnaire with open questions. A thematic analysis will be done on the data received looking at the distance travelled in terms of learning and effectiveness of the training sessions for staff. Care will be taken not to cause any participant undue stress during the data collection period.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

All data will be kept safely and securely either in a locked filing cabinet or on a computer enabled with a security password to gain access. Access will not be permitted to anyone but the researcher. Special arrangements will be made for anyone with a special need.

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Staff may want to bring up during the training sessions on staff consultation a controversial or difficult situation they are experiencing in school. Staff will be advised prior to these sessions to bring problems they don't mind sharing, not to use names of pupils or other staff members so as not to implicate other staff. Groups will be advised to keep any issues raised in these groups confidential.

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: December 2010 until: July 2011

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): *Margie Taboridge* date: *10-12-2010*

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occurs a further form is completed.

SELL unique approval reference: *D.10/11/20*

Signed: *Sarah J. [Signature]* date: *13/12/2010*
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from <http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students/>

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

**Appendix 26:
Consent form**



Psychology Service

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

This is a piece of action research focusing on school staff emotional health and well-being and support systems. Views of staff have been sought and this has fed into a support-based intervention jointly developed and evaluated by staff. A five week training package will be delivered and evaluated on topics such as; management of emotions, stress reduction strategies, staff consultation groups and assertiveness.

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

There is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me

Any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications

All information I give will be treated as confidential

The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

.....
(Signature of participant)
(Date)

.....
(Printed name of participants)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

Sarah Sidaway

Trainee Educational Psychologist
Psychology Service

Senior Educational Psychologist
Psychology Service

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

Appendix 27

Checklist for creating a questionnaire

Figure 6: Checklist to help avoid problems in question wording (Robson, 2008, adapted from de Vaus, 1991, p.83-86).

Keep the language simple

Avoid jargon. Seek simplicity but avoid being condescending.

Keep questions short

Long and complex questions are difficult to understand.

Avoid double-barrelled questions

Doubled-barrelled questions ask two questions at once (e.g. 'Is your key working caring and supportive?'). Split into separate questions

Avoid leading questions

Leading questions encourage a particular answer (e.g. 'Do you agree that...?')

Avoid questions in the negative

Negatively framed questions are difficult to understand; particularly when you are asked to agree or disagree.

Ask questions only where respondents are likely to have the knowledge needed to answer

'Do you agree with the government's policy on foreign aid?' is unsatisfactory if respondents don't know what it is. Either tell them or ask a preliminary filter question to establish whether they know what the policy is. Then ask only those who said yes.

Try to ensure that the question mean the same thing to all respondents

Meanings and terms used may vary for different age groups, regions, etc.

Avoid a prestige bias

This occurs when a view is linked with a prestigious person before asking the respondent's view.

Remove ambiguity

Take great care with sentence structure.

Avoid direct questions on sensitive topics (in interview situations)

Several indirect strategies are possible (e.g. using numbered cards with the alternatives; respondent gives relevant number).

Ensure the question's frame of reference is clear

When asking for frequency of an even, specify the time period.

Avoid creating opinions

Respondents don't necessarily hold opinions on topics. Allow a 'no option' alternative.

Use personal wording if you want the respondent's own feelings etc

Impersonal wording gives their perception of other people's attitudes

Avoid unnecessary or objectionable detail

It is unlikely that you will want precise income or age; use income or age grouping.

Avoid prior alternatives

Give the substance of the question first, then the alternatives. Not the reverse.

Avoid producing response sets (particularly in interview situations)

With 'agree/disagree' questions, some people tend to agree regardless of

their real opinion ('acquiescence response set') or provide answers making themselves look good ('socially desirable response set'). Seek to put people at their ease and avoid giving the impression that some answers are normal or unusual.

(adapted from de Vaus, 1991, p.83-86)

**Appendix 28:
Pre-evaluation questionnaire**



Psychology Service
EDUCATION

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF

Pre-intervention questionnaire for participants attending a five week training package

Name:

School role:

Outline of course:

| Session | Content |
|----------------|---|
| 1 | Stress management & staff emotional health & well-being |
| 2 | What is a staff consultation group? |
| 3 | Practical session: Staff consultation groups |
| 4 | Practical session: Staff consultation groups continued & a review of last week session. |
| 5 | Assertiveness and home-work balance. |

Q1) What additional topics to the five above (if any) would you have liked to have been included in this training package?

Q2) What practical elements of the training course would you ideally like to take back to your practice/life in the future?

For each question below, please circle on a scale from one (very little knowledge) to ten (a lot of knowledge), about how much you know about each topic area and how you use this in your practice.

Q3a) How much do you currently know about stress management and coping strategies?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Q3b) Please give an example/s of the way you use your current level of knowledge about stress management and coping strategies in your practice.

Q4a) How much do you currently know about personal emotional health and well-being?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Q4b) Please give an example/s of how you use your current level of knowledge about personal emotional health and well-being in your practice.

Q5a) How much do you currently know about professional support systems. E.g. staff consultation groups?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Q5b) Please give an example/s of how you use your current level of knowledge about professional support in your practice.

Q6a) How much do you currently know about assertiveness?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Q6b) Please give an example/s of how you use your current level of knowledge about assertiveness in your practice.

Any other comments:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. You will be asked to complete a similar questionnaire at the end of five sessions to help evaluate the effectiveness of the training. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Appendix 29

Session one training slides

Staff well-being & support systems: A five week training package



Sarah Sidaway
Educational Psychologist in Training

House-keeping

- Refreshments
- Toilets
- Prompt finish at 5pm

- If you haven't already please take the time to complete;
 - Consent form
 - Questionnaire

Outline of training course (1)

Session One: Wed 26th Jan 2011
Stress, coping strategies & staff well being.

Session Two: Wed 2nd Feb 2011
Staff consultation groups – what are they?

Session Three: Wed 9th Feb 2011
Practical session – staff consultation group.

Outline of training course (2)

Session Four: Wed 16th Feb 2011
Practical session – staff consultation group & review.

HALF TERM: 21st - 25th February 2011

Session Five: Wed 2nd March 2011
Assertiveness and home-work balance.

Stress management & emotional health and well-being (EHWB)



Stress management & well-being

Aims

- Greater understanding of stress and emotional health and well-being (EHWB).
- Increase self awareness of work related and personal stress.
- Strategies to prevent and manage stress and promote EHWB.

What is emotional health and well-being(EHWB)? (1)

“A state of emotional and psychological well-being in which an individual is able to use his or her cognitive and emotional capabilities, function in society, and meet the ordinary demands of everyday life”

(The American Heritage Medical Dictionary, 2007)

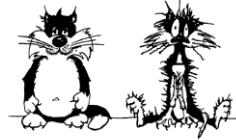
What is EHWB (2)

“Psychological wellness is a relative state of mind in which a person is able to cope with and adjust to the recurrent stresses of everyday living in an acceptable way”

(Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 2009).



STRESS



Before Work After Work

Definition of stress (2)

Human perception of stress influences the level of strain.

Our interpretation of an event determines the stress level.

(Lazarus, 1966)

How well individuals assess that they can cope with the causes or effects of stress.

(Cooper, 1978)

What is stress and who has it?

"Everybody has it, everybody talks about it, yet few people have taken the trouble to find out what stress really is... The word 'stress' - like 'success', 'failure', or 'happiness' - means different things to different people, so that defining it is extremely difficult"

(Selye, 1976)

The stress league

- Teachers topped this particular league table, with 41% reporting high levels of stress.
- The more people earned, and the higher their level of education, the more likely they were to feel under stress.
- Next was nursing at 31% then "managers" at 27%.
- The least-stressed group was those working in 'moving/storing'.

Definition of stress (1)

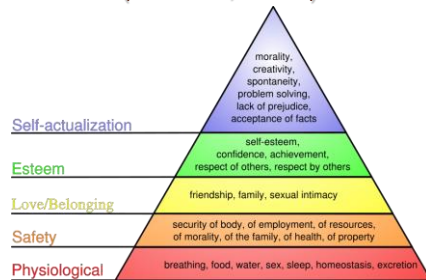
Stress versus Strain

In physics: stress (pressure) is a force that leads to strain.

$$> \text{STRESS} = > \text{STRAIN}$$

The greater the stress
The greater the strain

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1954)



The Stress League

Please rate the following professions in pairs. Rating is from 0 - 10, the higher the number the greater the stress.

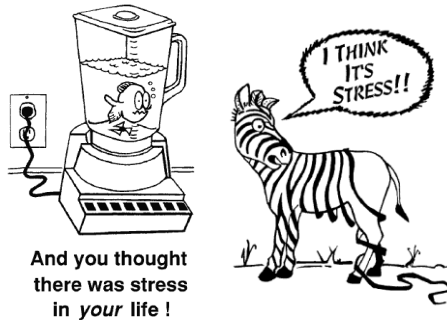
- Vet
- Librarian
- Police
- Optician
- Managers
- Miner
- Nurse
- Removal/storage workers
- Musician
- Vicar
- Hairdresser
- Dentist
- Nursery Nurse
- Teacher
- Psychologist
- Journalist

Stress: Some interesting facts..(1)

- 40 million working days are lost to British industry each year due to stress-related illness.
- Teachers report themselves as being under more stress than most other groups.

Stress: Some interesting facts..(2)

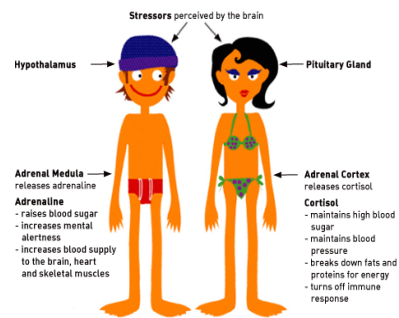
- Many new teachers leave the profession after just a few years.
(Roehrig, Pressley and Talotta, 2002)
- It is estimated that 20–25% of new teachers leave within 2 years and only 50% remain after 5 years.
(National Centre for Education Statistics, 2001)



Stress: Some interesting facts..(3)

- German research has shown that one out of every two teachers was highly susceptible to a heart attack.
- French research indicates that teachers have a higher incidence of depression than any other occupation.

The bodies biological reaction to stress



Identifying the signs of stress

Physical Responses

- Taut muscles
- Clenched teeth
- Pounding heart
- Feeling sick
- Headaches/migraine
- Tiredness
- Mood swings
- Sweating palms
- Dry mouth
- Rapid breathing
- Indigestion

Identifying the signs of stress

Emotional Response

- A feeling of failure
- Loss of positive feelings
- Anger and resentment
- Feeling immobilised
- Guilt
- Suspicion and paranoia
- Feeling discouraged and
- Feeling confused/indifferent
- Sad for no reason
- Feeling helpless
- Unduly anxious and panicky
- Inexplicable episodes of crying
- Inappropriate laughter

Monitoring the effects of stress

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| ON BODY | ON EMOTIONS |
| ON BEHAVIOUR | ON THINKING |

Identifying causes of stress

- World at large
- Within me
- People and events around me

Common Life Stressors (Moos & Swindle, 1990)

- Illness/ medical problems
- Home and local environment
- Family finance
- Relationship with partner
- Children
- Extended family
- Work
- Relationships outside the family

A Hardy Personality (Kobasa & Maddi, 1977)

- Some people are naturally resistant to stress (because they were hardy).
- Being hardy results in reduced physiological arousal to potential stressors.
- Results in lower blood pressure etc and so lower likelihood of developing stress related illnesses.

A Hardy Personality (Kobasa & Maddi, 1977)

Hardiness training aims to increase self-confidence and a sense of control so that individuals can deal more successfully with change.

- **Focusing**
- **Reliving stress encounters**
- **Self-improvement**

Re-framing Process

Re-framing is a way of examining problems from a different point of view.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| -Stress as a positive force | -A solution? |
| -Stress is inevitable | - Change |
| -Should and must? | - Pacing |
| -No blame approach | - Priorities |

Building your buffers

ACTIVITY ONE

Creating a better nights sleep: Think about ways which help you to achieve a better night sleep.

ACTIVITY TWO

Creating an escape route: Think about 5 or six ideas that might reduce signals of stress.

A Hardy Personality (Kobasa & Maddi, 1977)

What is a hardy personality?
Those with...

- **Control**
- **Commitment**
- **Challenge**

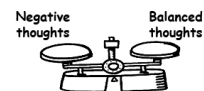
Problem solving approach

- List factors
- Select priorities
- Choose highest factor YOU can influence
- Clarify problem
- Consider reframing
- Generate solutions
- Set goals
- Plan to reach your goal

Challenge unhelpful thinking

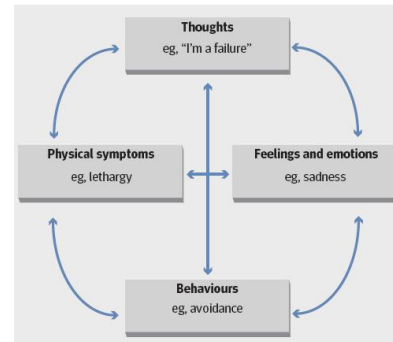
Where am I?

- Lacking evidence
- Not seeing the full picture
- Over-generalising
- Maximizing
- Over-controlling
- Minimizing
- False assumptions
- Perceptions of self-esteem





Thought: I'm going to fail my driving test
Feeling: Anxious & nervous.
Behaviour: Drive over-cautiously
Reinforces initial thought – I'm going to fail my driving test.



Gratitude (Emmens & McCoulough, 2003)

- Examined the effect of a grateful outlook on psychological and physical well-being.
- Those that completed gratitude diaries exhibited heightened well-being across several outcome measures.
- Results show that a conscious focus on blessings may have emotional and interpersonal benefits.

Gratitude (Emmens & McCoulough, 2003)

"Reflect on your pleasant blessings, on which every man has many, not your past misfortunes, of which all men have some". (Charles Dickens, 1897, p.45)

Techniques for relaxation

These include;

- Deep breathing
- Meditation
- Progressive relaxation e.g. relaxation tapes.
- Positive visualisation



How to do a gratitude diary

There are many things in our lives, both large and small, that we might be grateful about. Think back over the past week and write down in a notepad up to five things in your life that you are grateful or thankful for.

Examples of gratitude-inducing experiences are: "waking up this morning," "the generosity of friends," "to God for giving me determination," "for wonderful parents," and "to the Rolling Stones."

Managing your emotions

Managing your emotions

Ways of reducing unwanted emotions

- Control your breathing
- Counting to Ten
- Changing hats
- Attention Switching
- Taking a break from a situation
- "STOP!!!!"

Expressing Emotions

- Physical outlet
- Trying on both hats
- Put a word to the feeling
- Write it down or talk about it
- Counselling

Managing your emotions

Telling the person concerned directly

1. Be clear and specific
2. Try to clear minor annoyances
3. Avoid emotive and blaming words



Develop a support system both

At work.....



and at home



Social support

- Hugging children is both reassuring and stress reducing.
- Emotional support – increases self-esteem and self-worth
- Practical support – support groups, friends.
- Advice – friends and support groups help you to learn from experience.

Social support

- Make a list of all the people you think provide you with social support.
- Who do you offer support to?
- Can relationships harm an individual's health or increase stress?

Coping strategies: Reducing stress & increasing well-being (1)

- **Identify the triggers of stress.**
- **Recognising changes** - emotional, behavioural and physical.
- **Distancing** - seek out situations which promise a positive self-image and removing yourself and actively avoiding those situations that do not.

(Troman and Woods, 2001)

Coping strategies: Reducing stress & increasing well-being (2)

- **Regaining perspective and balance** - reprioritising aspects of your life. For example; family, friends, health and outside of school activities.
- **Keeping a diary/reflective journal** - Writing about the stress you are experiencing - has been found to be therapeutic. Allows you to identify the symptoms of stress as they arise and supports the use of coping strategies at key times.

(Troman and Woods, 2001)

School resilience factors (1)

- Involve staff in how work is organised, resourced and evaluated.
- Regular opportunities for feedback & reflective practice.
- Good levels of communication between staff.
- Collaborative practice
- Peer/social support

School resilience factors (2)

- Measures to prevent, alleviate or compensate pressures.
- Maximising staff independence and responsibility
- Promoting professional development

ALL increase self-esteem+ empowerment
= reduces stress

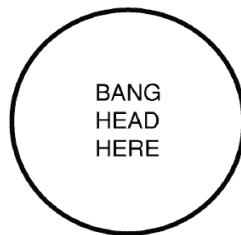
Monitoring your use of stress coping strategies

Write down 2 or 3 stress 'busters' or 'buffers' which you will try and use in the next week to counteract the effects of stress that you completed earlier.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

ANTI-STRESS KIT

1. PLACE ON A FIRM SURFACE
2. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS IN CIRCLE
3. REPEAT UNTIL YOU ARE UNSTRESSED OR BECOME UNCONSCIOUS



Summary

Stress is a process of mental, physical and emotional reactions, caused by a significant increase in pressures, without the strengthening of coping resources.

- Stress can be good for you
- Stress is not a personal failing
- You can help yourself

References

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Session two training slides

Staff consultation groups



Sarah Sidaway
Educational Psychologist in Training

Training course

Session Two: Wed 2nd Feb 2011
Staff consultation groups – what are they?

Session Three: Wed 9th Feb 2011
Practical session – staff consultation group.

Session Four: Wed 16th Feb 2011
Practical session – staff consultation group & review.

Individual Consultation (1)



Educational psychologists use this in their practice.

- School staff
- Other professionals
- Parents
- Young people

Individual Consultation (3) Meyers et al (1979)

- The goal is to solve a current work problem of the help-seeker.
- Help-giver may learn new skills from the process that can be used in future problems.

House-keeping

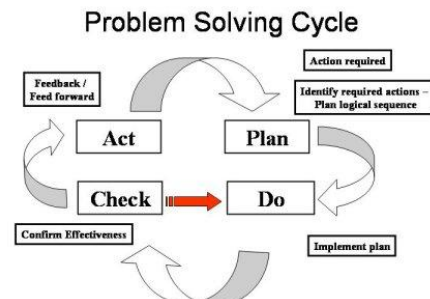
- Refreshments
- Toilets
- Prompt finish at 4.15pm
- If you haven't already please take the time to complete;
 - Consent form
 - Questionnaire

Consultation is based on;

- Equal relationships.
- Mutual trust.
- Open communication.
- Joint approaches to problem identification.
- Pooling personal resources.
- Selecting strategies.
- Shared responsibility.

Individual Consultation (2) Meyers et al (1979)

- Problem solving process.
- Occurs between professional help giver and a help-seeker.
- Voluntary relationship.
- The help-giver and the help-seeker share in solving the problem.



Group consultation (1) (Stringer et al, 1992)

- **Welcome**
- **Allocate roles** (facilitator or chairperson/minute taking)
- **Reminder of ground rules**
 - Listening and respect
 - Confidentiality
 - Minimal note taking
- **Review**

Any previous items can be brought back to the group to update on progress.

Group consultation (3) (Stringer et al, 1992)

- **Summarise issue back to group member**

Facilitator asks a different member of the group to summarise the issue back to the consultee (who may offer additional clarification).
- **Information-gathering questions from the group**

The group is invited to ask information gathering questions to further illuminate the issue (no possible solutions to be offered at this stage).

Remember to.....

Retain a persons anonymity if discussing an issue relating to;

- Staff members
- Young people
- Other professionals

Group Consultation

Existing Research

- **Hanko (1985)**

“The solutions which teachers attempted were their own and arose from their active involvement in the joint exploration of workable alternatives.”
- **Creese, Norwich & Daniels (1997)**
 - Teacher support teams
- **Stringer et al (1992)**

Group consultation (2) (Stringer et al, 1992)



Issues to be raised by group members and prioritisation

Facilitator invites group members to share any issues (negotiating and prioritising will need to be done if several are offered).

Outline of an issue by group member

One group member (consultee) to briefly outline an issue.

Group consultation (4) (Stringer et al, 1992)

Solutions/problem solving

Rest of the group to suggest/discuss possible solutions, strategies or approaches that could be used by the consultee.



Reflection and outline of Possible next steps.

Facilitator asks consultee to reflect on the process, to comment on the extent to which the process has been helpful and to say what, if any, the next steps will be.

How should they be used?

Staff setting up these groups should receive training prior to doing this.

Staff consultation groups could be set up;

- As a whole school support system
- Within different departments
- Certain groups of staff. E.g. TA's

Why use group consultation?

- Other professionals use it.
- Support systems in education are less developed.
- This is despite the challenges many teachers and support staff face in their work.
- Initiative overload.
- Little time for reflection & to think and plan proactively.



Any questions?

Barriers

- Time and work demands
- Prioritisation
- Commitment of staff
- Lack of training
- Trust within groups/confidentiality issues.

How to embed them into your school

- Need to be prioritised by schools as an important part of staff support.
- Regular time slots need to be set aside.
- Should aim for the groups to meet at least once a month.
- Will need to set aside 1hr/1hr 30 mins
- Groups of between 3 – 10 people.

For next weeks session

Please come prepared to next weeks session with;

- A small problem/issue
- Relating to you practice
- An issue you are happy to share with the group.

Activity

Please get in to pairs/small groups

Discuss the benefits and barriers of setting up and using staff consultation groups;

- For schools
- For staff
- For children, young people and families

Please be prepared to share your discussions with the rest of the group.

Benefits

- A form of in-house training
- Capacity building – sharing skills and experience that already exists amongst staff.
- Encourages staff to work with other colleagues they might not have done previously.
- Encourages staff to seek support/help when needed and normalises it.
- Makes staff facing professional challenges 'normal'.
- Encourages trusting relationships between staff.

How to embed them into your school

- Each group will need separate rooms to meet.
- Need to consider how to put the groups together.
- Specific details raised by the group should remain confidential.
- Minimum note-taking. Brief minutes can be recorded for review purposes.
- Whole school issues raised later.

References

Hanko, G. (1985). *Special needs in ordinary classrooms: From staff support to staff development*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

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Meyers et al

Stringer, P., Stow, L., Hibber, K., Powell, J., & Louw, E. (1992). Establishing staff consultation groups in schools: A programme to train facilitators of school based staff support groups in consultancy. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 8, (2), 87 – 96.

Appendix 31

Session three and four resources

Staff consultation/supervision groups

(Stringer, Stow, Hibbert, Powell, Louw 1992)

1. Welcome

2. Allocate roles (facilitator or chairperson/minute taking)

3. Reminder of ground rules

- Listening and respect
- Confidentiality
- Minimal note taking

4. Review

Any previous items can be brought back to the group to update on progress

5. Issues to be raised by group members and prioritisation

Facilitator invites group members to share any issues (negotiating and prioritising will need to be done if several are offered).

6. Outline of an issue by group member

One group member (consultee) to briefly outline an issue

7. Summarise issue back to group member

Facilitator asks a different member of the group to summarise the issue back to the consultee (who may offer additional clarification).

8. Information-gathering questions from the group

The group is invited to ask information gathering questions to further illuminate the issue (no possible solutions to be offered at this stage).

9. Solutions/problem solving

Rest of the group to suggest/discuss possible solutions, strategies or approaches that could be used by the consultee.

10. Reflection and outline of possible next steps.

Facilitator asks consultee to reflect on the process, to comment on the extent to which the process has been helpful and to say what, if any, the next steps will be.

NB: Continue in this cycle if more than one group member has an issue to bring to the group and there is time to discuss more than one

Session ends with reminder about next meeting

Appendix 32

Session five training slides

Assertiveness & Home-work Balance



Sarah Sidaway
Educational Psychologist in Training



Make a list of situations where you'd you would like to be more assertive.

Housekeeping

- Last of our five sessions – thank you all for coming.
- Return any questionnaires from session one.
- You will be asked to complete another at the end of today's session – please take your time to complete this in detail as this is part of my doctoral thesis.
- Reflections – one each now. More detailed reflections please send by email to: sarah.sidaway@plymouth.gov.uk

When, where and with whom?

- The first task in becoming assertive is to work out the situations where you do not stand up for yourself.
- Does it occur at work, at home or when you are out with friends?
- Does it occur more often with certain types of people (e.g. those in authority, young people, relatives, the opposite sex)?

The Psychology of Assertiveness

Assertiveness is a form of behaving in a mature way in a difficult situation.

It's a way of communicating how we feel about a situation and what we want to happen.

In order to do this we have to be clear ourselves. We have to know how we feel and know what we want to happen.

The Psychology of Assertiveness

We have to tell the other person that whilst we understand his/her position, we still know what we want to happen.

By being clear about where we stand, we are more able to discuss the issue and reach a joint agreement.

Assertiveness – what it is and what it isn't

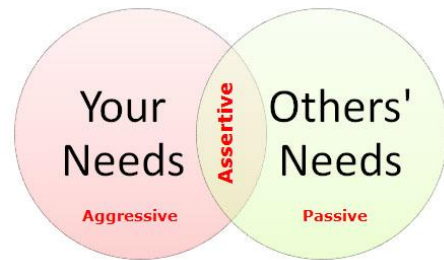
- Being assertive is not a way to be 'selfish' or aggressive, it is not about winning or getting your way all of the time.
- Assertiveness or assertion is not about being aggressive, passive or about avoiding conflict.

Being Passive

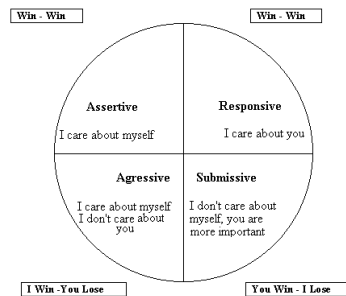
- Ignoring your own interests, needs and goals.
- Not being active.
- Often means putting up with a situation which makes you 'burn' inwardly, rather than being honest about what you really think and what you really feel.

Being Assertive

- Means being honest with yourself & others
- Being able to state what you want, need or feel, but not at the expense of others.
- Can often mean needing to negotiate and reach workable compromises.
- Having self-respect for yourself and others.



Who gains?



The short term affects of non-assertion (Thorne & Fritchie, 1985)

- A reduction in anxiety because you have avoided a potential conflict.
- An escape from guilt feelings which would have followed from saying no.
- Such immediate consequences are usually pleasant for you and reinforce non-assertion.

The long-term affects of non-assertion (Thorne & Fritchie, 1985)

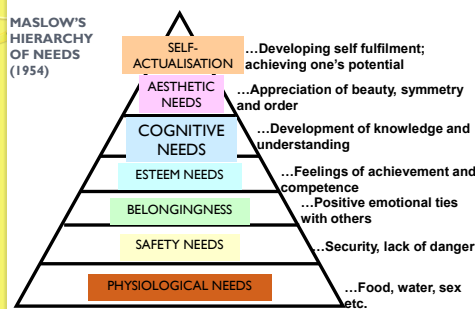
- Growing loss of self-esteem.
- An increase in anger, hurt & self-pity.
- More internal tensions, nerves & anxiety.
- Increasing inability to act assertively.
- Creates a vicious circle.
- Others initially feel sorry for you
- Eventually others will cease to respect you

The Four Pillars of Assertiveness



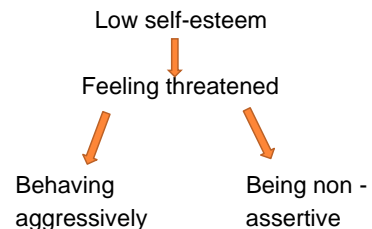
- **Self Esteem:** feeling good about yourself.
- **Self-Knowledge:** Clarity about your role and asking yourself how you feel about a situation, and what you would like to happen.
- **Respect for others:** listening carefully to the other person, his/her feelings and his/her needs.
- **Clear communication:** telling that person that you understand what he/she feels and wants, and then telling him/her clearly what you feel, and what you would like to happen.

What do you really need?



Sources of behaviour

Non-assertion and aggressiveness often comes from the same source;

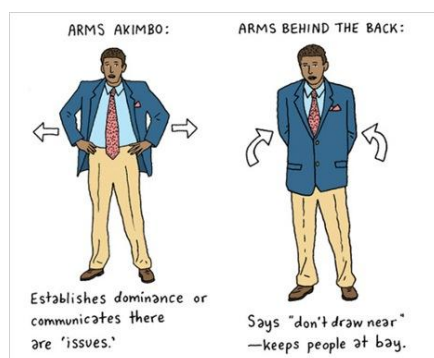
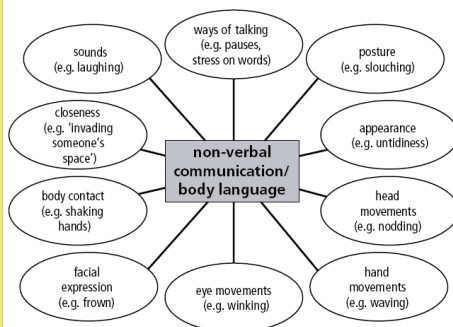


How you may have become non-assertive (Thorne & Fritchie, 1985)

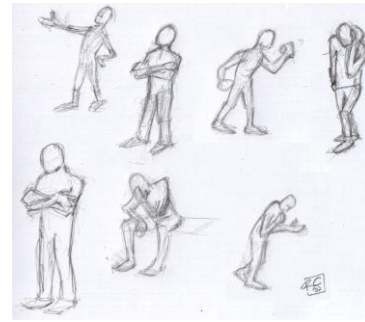
- Fear of unpleasant consequences from assertion.
- Perceiving situations or other people as threatening (being unaware of your ability/adopting a 'low' profile).
- Failure to think rationally about yourself (frequent deferential & apologetic).
- Equating non-assertion with politeness (keeping quiet rather than disagreeing with someone else).
- Confusing non-assertion with helpfulness (reverse may often be true).

The Psychology of Body Language

- Non Verbal Communication (NVC) or Body Language can be **more powerful** than what you actually say.
- Body Language adds to our words: **it shows INTENT.**
- It confirms the content of our verbal communication(or not): **shows sincerity**



Body Language



What do you think works?

- In pairs, consider your own style, and/or that of other staff you see that is effective.
- Describe those non-verbal approaches that make for an effective communication style (e.g. *What type of 'tone of voice' make for an effective interaction?*)

Components of NVC

Tone of voice Eye contact
Posture Facial expression
Use of space Territory
Gesture

Put these together and you can create a confident interaction style which is hard to ignore

Research shows that up 93% of all our inter-personal communication is non-verbal; only 7% of our message is sent through what we say (Miller, 1984)

The Choices for Interpersonal Behaviour



- **NON-ASSERTIVE/PASSIVE** (uses low status non verbal communication)
- **HOSTILE/AGGRESSIVE** (uses low status non verbal communication)
- **THE ASSERTIVE/EFFECTIVE** (uses high status non verbal communication)



Non-Assertive: Passive/submissive

- Pleading and passive tone
- Inconsistent
- Unclear
- Questioning
- Inconsistent
- Uses ignoring too much
- Feels powerless
- Ineffectual



USES LOW STATUS BODY LANGUAGE



Non – Assertive: Hostile

- Short fuse & impatient
- Shouts & threatens
- Angry tone (verbal & non-verbal)
- Tries to frighten essentially abusive
- Public shaming & humiliation
- Inconsistent
- Actions are 'over the top'



USES LOW STATUS BODY LANGUAGE



Assertive: Confident

- Relaxed & empathising
- Firm and friendly tone
- Focused on target: avoids the hooks
- Builds relationships with pupils, other staff and parents.
- Expects 'support'
- Positive
- Knows where to stop and say 'no'



USES HIGH STATUS BODY LANGUAGE

Clear, Quality Communication

'Telling that person that you understand what he/she feels and wants, and then telling he/she clearly what you feel, and what you would like to happen'



Try to include these in verbal responses

Planning and Rehearsal

- Chose a situation
- Identified the problem
- Plan what you are going to say and do and the best way of saying it.
- Have a "dry run" or rehearsal before actually going into the situation.

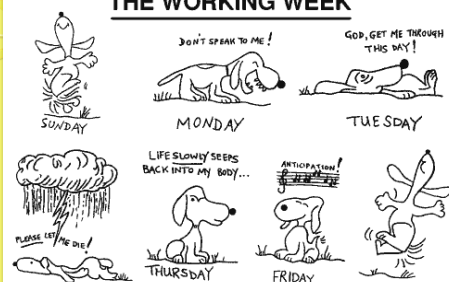
Summary: Assertiveness

- Keep what you want to say clear and to the point.
- Avoid long explanations.
- Look at the other person, stand (or sit) upright and keep a calm tone of voice.
- There's no need to apologise if you feel you are in the right.
- Be polite but firm.
- Try to relax, rather than becoming angry.

Home-work balance



THE WORKING WEEK



Be realistic!

- In education there is always more to do than there is time!
- Don't set yourself up to fail.
- Set realistic targets for yourself in terms of what you can get done in any one day.

Home Working

If you must take work home have strict boundaries.....

- Have a set night for working a week
- Have a cut off time. E.g. 9pm to ensure you get some time to unwind & a good nights sleep.
- During busy times when workload is high make sure you have at least a night of during the week – Wednesdays are good!

Prioritisation

When you've an overwhelming workload.....

- Make a list of jobs
- Then prioritise them – what actually has to be done by/for tomorrow? Be strict with yourself!
- Be realistic - what can wait till the next day, next week or end of the term?
- Can you delegate any tasks elsewhere?

"Our ultimate freedom is the right and power to decide how anybody or anything outside ourselves will affect us."

Stephen R. Covey



**Appendix 33:
Post evaluative questionnaire**



Psychology Service

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Post-intervention questionnaire for participants attending a five week training package

Name:

School role:

Outline of course:

| Session | Content |
|----------------|---|
| 1 | Stress management & staff emotional health & well-being |
| 2 | What is a staff consultation group? |
| 3 | Practical session: Staff consultation groups |
| 4 | Practical session: Staff consultation groups continued & a review of last week session. |
| 5 | Assertiveness and home-work balance. |

Q1) What additional topics additional to the five above (if any) would you have liked to have been included in this training package?

Q2) What are the practical elements of the training course that you may take back to your practice/life in the future? Please give two/three examples.

Q3) Are there any elements of the course that you have implemented or may implement in the future? Please give details.

Q4) What was your highlight of the training?

Q5) Were there any moments of insight or understanding that you experienced during the training?

For each question below, please circle on a scale from one (very little knowledge) to ten (a lot of knowledge), about how much you know about each topic area and what new knowledge or strategies you have obtained from the training course.

Q6a) How much do you now know about stress management and appropriate coping strategies?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Q6b) Please give an example/s of the knowledge and practical strategies that you have learnt about stress management and coping strategies that you can use in your practice
Q7a) How much do you now know about personal emotional health and well-being?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Q7b) Please give an example/s of the knowledge and practical strategies that you have learnt about personal emotional health and well-being that you can use in your practice.

Q8a) How much do you now know about professional support systems. E.g. staff consultation groups?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Q8b) Please give an example/s of the knowledge and practical strategies that you have learnt about professional support systems that you can use in your practice.

Q8a) How much do you now know about assertiveness?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Q8b) Please give an example/s of the knowledge and practical strategies that you have learnt about assertiveness that you can use in your practice.

Any other comments:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. You will be asked to complete a similar questionnaire at the end of five sessions to help evaluate the effectiveness of the training. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Appendix 34

Further themes and findings

Additional themes to emerge from participant's discussions at the workshops

Media influences

Participants discussed the negative effects of the media in session one, both in relation to the media's tendency to report negative world events and also the continuing negative coverage of the education system. This is supported by the literature. Kelchtermans and Strittmatter (1999) make comments with regard to the negative impact that the media has had on societies' distrust of the teaching profession; "For improvement in teachers' experience of work and in the quality of education they provide, there needs to be a public restoration of trust in teachers and teaching, a significant part of which is a balanced media image".

Stress and gender differences

Participants were interested to know if there was a difference in the experience and coping mechanism of stress between males and females. Research has shown that women tend to suffer high levels of perceived stress (Gardiner & Tiggemann, 1999) and that they adopt different coping strategies to men (Gianakis, 2002). Physical exercise and social support are important 'buffers' against stress-induced illness and these vary between genders. Research has shown that males have less social support, more unhealthy habits and more stressful occupations, but tend to take more physical exercise than women. Carroll (1992) found that women make more use of social support networks, such as friends and confidants, compared to men. However other studies have found no difference in stress between genders (Paese & Zinkgraf, 1999) and that gender differences in relation to stress have been inconsistent (Antiniou, Polychroni & Walters, 2000).

Additional practical strategies which participant's gained from the workshop intervention and applied to practice

Greater understanding and awareness of the effects and sources of stress

Teachers, when under stress, often blame themselves for not being able to cope (Friedman, 1999). According to Troman and Woods (2001) these feelings can be negated by ensuring staff have knowledge of sources of stress, the psychological symptoms and useful coping strategies. This was a key component of the workshop intervention delivered to staff. Many participants through an activity in workshop one realised that there were multiple sources of stress resulting from several areas of their lives (causes of stress in education have been discussed in further detail in paper one). Participants also had a detail discussion in workshop one about what their individual triggers for stress were and how their bodies signalled to them that they were under stress. Participant's felt much more aware of the individual signs of stress to look for and pay attention to as a result of the workshop and that this would signal to participants when to put in place the appropriate coping strategies.

Coping strategies for stress

Participant's discussed a range of coping strategies that they used to combat stress. For example: exercise, hobbies, taking regular breaks, social support and maintaining perspective and the priorities of their work. Murphy (1996), Schafer (1996), and Stein and Cutler (2002) have identified that methods of relaxation, nutrition, sleeping patterns, prescriptive exercises, anger management, biofeedback, social skills training and self-talk strategies can be useful in mediating the symptoms of stress. This supports the coping mechanism that participants identified (Appendix 21 paper one provides additional information regarding effective coping strategies).

Appendix 35

Suggestions and recommendations to reduce stress and promote staff emotional health and well-being

- **Provision map**

School to consider creating a school provision map of staff support systems (similar to SEN provision map). To be shared with staff.

- **Notice board**

Staff well-being notice board to be created at a focal point in the school (staff room perhaps) – information displayed regarding where to seek out support and further assistance. Copy of provision map and information regarding the forum to be displayed.

- **Suggestions box**

A suggestions box to be created for ways in which the school might go about promoting well being. Staff to post ideas confidentially. Results to be discussed at each well being forum meeting.

- **Termly forum**

Staff well being forum to continue to meet once a term. All staff to be invited to attend. Minutes to be kept and circulated to the whole school.

- **Termly pamphlet**

A short staff well being pamphlet to be created once a term notifying staff what events/support systems are coming up.

- **School policy**

To consider putting together a staff well being or stress reduction policy for the school. This should be done in consultation with a range of school staff (including support staff) and should be shared with staff before finalising.

- **Staff awareness week/Celebration day**

To consider having a staff well being awareness week or a celebration day in school. Special events to be arranged for staff. Staff will need to be allocated time to attend these events in school.

- **Allocate a coordinator**

Consider a member of staff being given the role of well being coordinator to monitor and arrange the forum, staff well being awareness week, notice board, well being pamphlet, to create relevant school policy and other events. Named coordinator will need to be provided with additional time to perform relevant duties.

- **Termly reminders in staff meetings (beginning of term preferably)**

Time should be allocated in a staff meeting to remind staff of the staff well being notice board and where to seek out the relevant support in school – specifics may need to be given regarding different departments. Staff-well being forum minutes should also be shared as a whole staff during this time.

- **Once yearly staff training session from EP/other agency**

This training should focus on understanding the effects of stress, relevant coping strategies and the promotion of positive well being. Reference should be made to home work balance. This should be organised in place of the usual staff meeting to ensure staff do not have to attend an additional meeting. All staff to attend where possible.

- **Monthly/half termly peer group meetings for TA's**

Staff consultation groups to be set up for the school's team of teaching assistants. To meet once a month initially. School EP to support where necessary with setting up of groups.

- **Half termly whole school peer group meetings**

To consider setting up staff consultation groups on a whole school. Staff will need to be split into groups of 6 – 8 and consideration given to group dynamics. This should replace an existing meeting and all staff should be required to attend. School EP to support where necessary with setting up of groups to ensure they run as an effective staff/peer consultation group.

- **Senior management team peer support groups**

As above but for specifically for staff with leadership and management responsibilities. Peer support groups could be organised between SMT staff from local schools in the area to promote problem solving. Other agencies could also be invited to this. E.g. Members of the locality team.

- **Staff well being incorporated into performance management systems**

Staff well being to be incorporated into yearly performance management process. Each member of staff to set themselves one well being target for the following year. I.e. I will try not to take work home once a week. This target to be reviewed at the following performance management meeting.

- **Yearly confidential stress questionnaire**

This will provide feedback to the SMT as to what the stress points are for staff. Results should be summarised and fed back in staff meeting. Staff should jointly decide some targets to address the main causes of stress where possible. EP to support with the selection of an appropriate questionnaire for use.

Appendix 36

Feedback to the school of focus

I met with three members of the senior management team to feedback the results of my work with the school. The school were given an executive summary of the findings of the research (both paper one and two) as they had requested a shortened version of the findings. In addition to this they were also given Appendix 35 which was a list of suggestions or recommendations for future work and consideration.

I began by summarising the literature in the field which describes school staff facing many challenges in their work which results in stress and the consequences this may have on all those within the system. One member of the group I was feeding back to felt this reflected those in the field who had a negative outlook.

I then fed back the positive findings from the two papers – that SMT were viewed as by individuals to be approachable and supportive, that staff preferred their current school to others they had worked at, that the staff felt they supported one another well through peer and mutual support and worked well as a team. SMT appeared pleased with these outcomes.

The three members of the senior management did not agree with some of the more negative findings of the research. They felt that the negative experiences voiced by participants at the school stemmed from those staff who were under performance management procedures or who had a general negative outlook. They felt that since I had only interviewed twelve participants that this could not represent the views and experiences of the staff body as a whole. After much discussion one of the SMT present accepted that the findings might represent some individual staff's views and perceptions of how they had experienced the school system.

Those at the meeting felt that attendance had been poor at the workshop intervention due to staff having to attend all five of the workshops (this was to ensure they could be evaluated fully). This has been acknowledged in my discussion (section 5.2). They explained that members of staff had approached them and were interested in attending one or two of the sessions but were not able to commit to all five. I asked if anything else could have affected attendance, but SMT felt this was the main reason. I had been approached by numerous members of staff who wanted to attend the workshops but were unable to be released from their school commitments to do so.

We moved on to discuss future work. The three members of the senior management team felt that time and budget constraints were considerable barriers to future work in this area. The team felt that the smaller-scale suggestions in Appendix 35 could be provided for staff. It was felt that the school could provide future drop-in sessions focusing on managing stress for staff and that this could be conducted yearly. One of the team felt that it would be possible to create a staff well being or stress reduction policy for the school in the future. Other suggestions such as a provision map of support, a staff well being notice board and a suggestions box would also be manageable. It was felt that having a awareness day solely for staff well being might not be possible, but that it could be incorporated into other staff days that were planned in the academic calendar. The school have already set up a staff well being forum for staff to meet on a termly basis to focus on reducing stress and improving well being. The school are also considering setting up group consultation for the support staff (e.g. teaching assistants) in the school.

I discussed that the school EP had wanted to attend the meeting to keep up to date with the piece of research and I mentioned that I would feed back to the school EP about the meeting should the school want further support in the future. One of the

three SMT members felt that EP work needed to be determined by the school and not by this piece of work. However as this piece of research was also conducted in the educational psychology service I worked in I was obligated to inform the EP service and the school EP about the outcomes of my research.

Literature Review

The literature review has been marked and examined separately from the examination of this thesis.

Contents

SECTION ONE

- Aims
- Sources of Literature
- Terminology

SECTION TWO

- Context & rationale
 - Stress in the teaching profession
 - Professional support systems

SECTION THREE

- Systems theory
 - What is a system?
 - Complex and simple systems
 - Cybernetics
 - General Systems Theory (GST)
 - Organisational systems
 - Ecological systems theory

SECTION FOUR

- Stress
- Burnout
- Environmental factors
 - School climate
 - What kinds of environments increase the likelihood of stress?

SECTION FIVE

The factors that may prevent stress

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SECTION ONE

Aims

I will begin with an explanation of the sources I have used to conduct this literature review before moving on to signpost the reader to a discussion of the relevant terminology and a summary of my research aims and questions to be found in Appendix 1.

I will discuss the relevant gaps found within the literature which I propose my research will fill and will give a detailed rationale for examining the topics which are the focus of my research. A review of the literature in the areas of professional support, staff emotional health and well being (EHWB) and teacher stress will be provided with a critical overview and analysis of key themes that emerge. In addition to this I will examine the role of the educational psychologist in supporting schools and settings to provide effective levels of professional support to their staff.

Sources of literature

Literature was identified through key word searches using academic search engines such as EBSCO and Psych ARTICLES. Exeter University library and personal books were also accessed. A range of literature was sought, primarily written within the last ten years. Literature beyond this was accessed to provide a historical context. Primary sources of information were sought where possible. A small number of secondary sources have been used due to texts being unavailable (due to the year they were published) or were papers used at conferences therefore making them difficult to locate.

Terminology

The following key terms and concepts will be referred to throughout this text:

- Emotional health and well being (EHWB)
- Support
- Professional support
- Supervision
- Stress
- Occupational stress
- Teacher stress
- Burnout
- Peer support
- Reflective practice

Appendix 2 provides a summary of the terms and concepts referred to above. The reader should read this Appendix prior to reading the rest of this text. Some reference to defining these terms may also be made in individual sections.

The next section will consider the context in which this piece of research has been conducted and the rationale behind selecting the areas of focus. Section two will also identify the areas of further development within the literature and clearly justify why this piece of research is an area worthy of further investigation.

SECTION TWO

Context & rationale

Relevant literature suggests that those working in the education system are under increasing pressures and experience high stress levels (Geving, 2007). Bartlett (2004, p. 567) reports that in-depth portraits of teachers work show the role to be “difficult, complex and emotionally draining work, entailing long out of the classroom hours, leading to those in the helping professions being particularly susceptible to stress and burnout” (Davidson, 1998, Skillern, Richardson, Wallman, Prickett & Wallman, 1990).

Stress in the teaching profession

Stress is a common issue for those working in the caring professions and has been of particular concern in the teaching profession for some time (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1979). Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) found that 20% of 257 British comprehensive school teachers rated teaching as very or extremely stressful (Renvoize, 1986). Fletcher and Payne (1982) reported that 4% of 148 British primary and secondary school teachers found work pressure a constant source of stress, 44% experienced a lot of stress but managed to cope and 82% felt that teaching should be less pressurised (Renvoize, 1986). The Health and Safety Executive (HSE, 2000) reported that teaching was the most stressful profession in the UK with 41.5 % of teachers reporting themselves as ‘highly stressed’. Teachers in particular are at high risk from stress-related illness and the burn-out rate (becoming physically and psychologically depleted, Freudenberg & Richelson, 1980, see Appendix 2 for more detail) is high (Fisher, 1996).

Professional Support Systems

The term professional support is an umbrella term that will encompass a number of different forms of professional support aimed at maintaining staff EHWP and development in schools. Section five will provide a more detailed summary of some of these areas (including definitions). Individual types of professional support will be the focus of paper two.

Research indicates that school support systems can act as a 'buffer' to challenges within the teaching profession and can mediate the negative effects of stress and burnout (Hawkins & Shohet 2000, Gray, Miller and Noakes, 1994, Eisner, 1979). Fewer experiences of stress and burn-out are particularly linked to higher levels of social support from managers and co-workers (Zellars & Perrewe, 2001).

However it is well documented that current support systems provided for school staff are less developed than in other related professions (Halfacree, 1992, Chappell, Hotham, Linge, Steadman, Sweetingham & Webb, 1992). Humphreys (1995) argues staff development and support systems have been major areas of neglect in schools and teaching training. Gray, Miller and Noakes (1994, p.5) add that; "Teachers and schools now face potentially more difficult problems in a context which is less supportive than in the past. The need therefore for effective support from both within schools and from outside agencies is greater than ever". This supports the aims of this research. Bowers and McIver (2000) further support this by arguing that there is call for a comprehensive workplace support service to be made available to all teachers. Given that teachers are the UK's largest group of public sector employees (Bowers, 2001) the evidence in the literature has implications for local authorities and the government in terms of the cost, both financially and otherwise to teachers, schools, pupils and society as a whole. It is for this reason that the areas of focus in this research are worthy of further investigation and aims to

support and add to existing literature. Appendix 3 details how this piece of research addresses the areas of further development within the current literature.

In this last section I have discussed the context and rationale for this piece of research and identified some of the areas for further development in the chosen fields. In the next section I will consider more closely the underlying theoretical aspects of Eco-systemic Psychology in relation to this.

SECTION THREE

What is a system?

There has been debate about what constitutes a system within the literature and this has been demonstrated by Sadoski (1974) who listed thirty-five different definitions of a system. However Goodman (2002) has attempted to summarise some of the more widely accepted definitions in his paper. Bertalanffy (1968, p.38) provides a definition: "Sets of elements standing in interaction". Stein (1974) suggests that it appears that the word 'sets' implies that the units or elements in Bertalanffy's (1956, 1968) definitions have similar characteristics and that each unit/element is influenced or dependent upon the other units (Stein, 1974). Stein (1974, p.3) goes on to add his own definition of a system as: "As a whole made up of interdependent and interacting parts".

Open and closed systems

Bertalanffy (1968) one of a number of authors who developed the difference between an open and closed system (Goodman, 2002). Open systems according to Goodman (2002) exchange information within the environment, compared to closed systems which have clear boundaries, preventing the exchange of information and isolating itself from the environment (Bertalanffy, 1968). A cause and effect relationship operates within a closed system where an open system in comparison has a number of variables that cannot be foreseen (Goodman, 2002). Every living organism according to Goodman (2002) is essentially an open system. This would include schools and other organisations.

Complex and simple systems

Colucci-Grey, Barbiero and Gray (2006, p. 229) summarise complex systems as "rich pattern of interconnections between diverse components". In contrast, a simple

system, has been described by Colucci-Grey et al (2006, p.229) as having a number of components, but they and the connections between them are “single and uniform”. Schools and the teaching and learning process are known to be complex systems (Bowen, 2004; Cooper & Upton, 1991, Colucci-Grey et al, 2006).

Cybernetics

Cybernetics is concerned with communication, particularly the feedback and transfer of information (Goodman, 2002) and was developed by Weiner (1967). Bertalanffy (1968, p.21) refers to cybernetics as a “...theory of control systems based on communication (transfer of information) between systems and the environment....within the system the control (feedback) of the systems function in regard to the environment”. The creation of cybernetics was to explain how different forms of feedback were used by organic, artificial, mechanical and social systems to direct behaviour (Goodman, 2002).

General Systems Theory (GST)

Bertalanffy (1954) originally approached GST from a biologist’s perspective (Goodman, 2002) analyzing the relationship between biological organisms and the environment (Bowen, 2004). Bertalanffy (1954) then applied the common principles of the systems approach to a range of disciplines, including biology, social sciences and economics (Bowen, 2004). It is an approach that is well known for its use in family therapy (Bateson, 1972, 1979) as it draws on therapeutic approaches developed from general systems theory (Cooper & Upton, 1991).

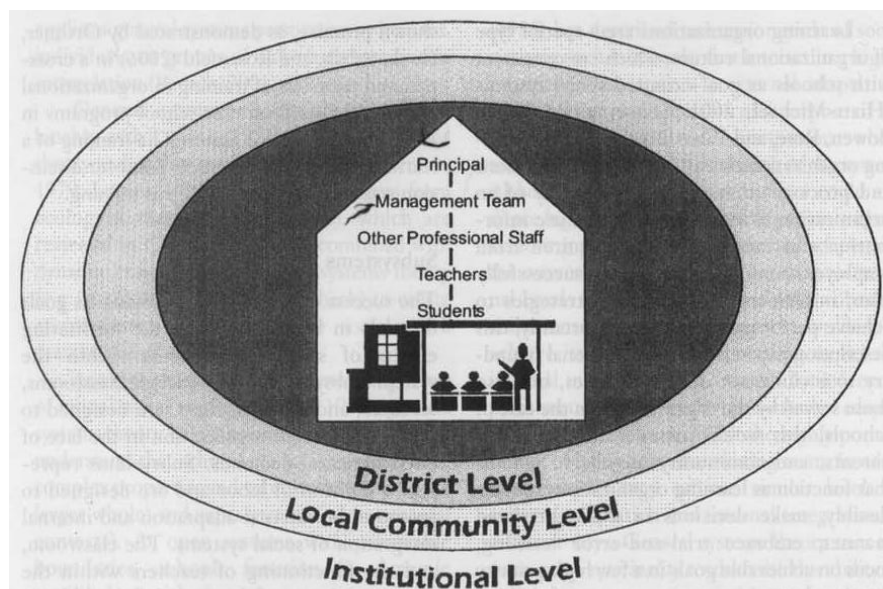
GST uses assumptions and rules from systems theory to study living things and their relationships (Barker, 1999). Social systems, such as schools and other organisations, use a general systems perspective to individual people or groups of

people. From a general systems perspective “a school functions in a dynamic interaction with its larger context” (Bowen, 2004, p. 63).

Organisational Systems

Schools, according to Bowen (2004), are a specific type of social system that is also known as a formal organisation. Schools have complex properties, subsystems and environmental contexts. Bowen (2004, p, 63) describes schools as “typically hierarchical social systems” (see Figure 1). Usually the head teacher and the management team are the leaders of the school, teachers and other professionals (such as the school EP) operate under the authority of the head teacher and the management team. Pupils tend to be at the bottom of the hierarchy (Bowen, 2004). Schools also exist within a local authority (referred in Figure 1 as district level), the local community and institutional level.

Figure 1: The organisational structure of schools (Bowen, 2004)



According to Bowen (2004) environmental factors exert influence on the system and from a general systems perspective “a school functions in a dynamic interaction with its larger context” (Bowen, 2004, p. 63). Eco-systemic psychology originates from Cybernetics (Weiner, 1967) and General Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968). GST is linked closely to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Bio-Ecological theory which will be discussed in the next section.

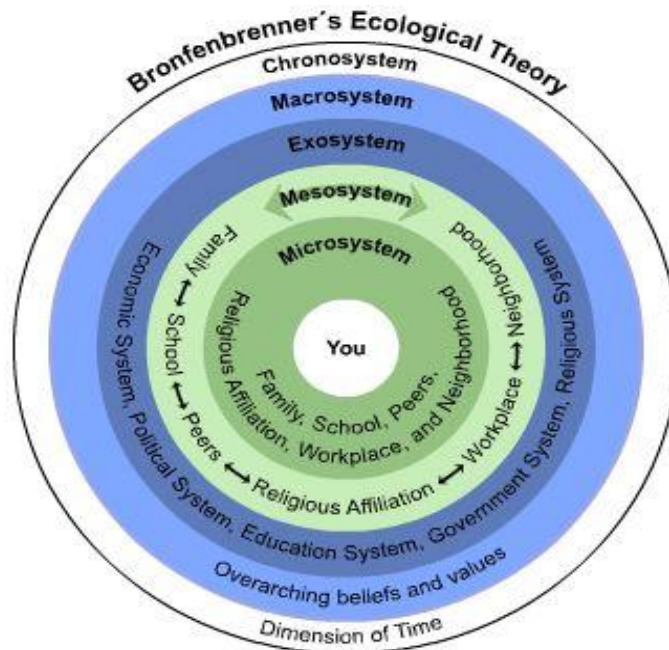
Ecological Systems Theory

I will be using Bronfenbrenner’s (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) Ecological Systems theory (otherwise known as systemic, Colucci-Gray et al, 2006 or eco-systemic theory, Cooper & Upton, 1991) to frame paper one of the research. This theory looks at an individual’s development within a context of relationships and environmental factors all interacting and influencing an individual’s development. Ecological Systems

theory conceptualises individuals within a series of embedded systems (Paquette & Ryan, 2001);

- Microsystem - The level closest to the individual and are those structures the individual has direct contact with. E.g. Family or school),
- Mesosystem - This level connects the structures of the individual's microsystem and are more distant to the individual. E.g. Family and school interactions, the local community).
- Exosystem – This level is the larger social system that the individual does not interact directly but that may impact the individual's development by interacting with some structure in the microsystem. E.g. Parent work hours.
- Macrosystem (the outer layer in the individual's development. E.g. societal and cultural norms/values).

Figure 2: Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory.



Eco-systemic psychology according to Cooper and Upton (1991) is an approach which:

...Is based on the idea that human interactional structures such as families, schools and other organisations are self-regulating systems, which function in a way which is analogous to the natural ecosystem. Such systems are sustained by repeating interactional patterns among the participants (subsystems) which are shaped and continually modified by the survival needs of the system as a whole.

(Cooper & Upton, 1991, p.23)

According to Cooper and Upton (1991) systems are continuously interacting with other systems within the environment (e.g. the social ecosystem) and change in any one part of the ecosystem will result in an overall change in the ecosystem as a whole.

I have chosen Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to frame paper one, as the causes and implications, of stress and burnout and the creation of staff support systems are affected by and occur within a complex system. This approach will be considered when gaining a sample of participants to ensure that those individuals I collect data from hold a range of roles throughout the school (including support staff, teaching staff and members of the senior management team). This will ensure that all those in the meso (school) system will be fairly represented and that one part of the system will not be creating a bias across the data set.

This paper focused primarily on the meso (school) system. School systems are heavily influenced by other larger systems, such as the local community, local authority and national and government agendas and legislation. The aim of this research is to bring about a change in the perspectives of individual school staff that will ultimately result in practical changes with the school (meso) system. With continued research in the area of staff EHWP and professional support I would hope to see some changes made to the policy and practice in this area of the education system (macro level). This however is a long-term objective and further work on a much larger scale will be required in this area for changes of this nature to occur.

SECTION FOUR

Stress

Occupations such as teaching, nursing, housing and welfare, customer services, and certain professional and managerial positions have high prevalence rates of self-reported work-related stress (Health and Safety Executive, HSE, 2010).

There are difficulties in the recruitment and retention of teachers, perhaps indicating that teaching is an increasingly unattractive profession for many (Troman & Woods, 2001). Roehrig, Pressley and Talotta (2002) found that many new teachers leave the profession after just a few years. There are estimates indicating that 20–25% of new teachers leave within 2 years and only 50% remain after 5 years (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2001).

The negative impact of stress and burnout on teachers' health and well-being has been well documented (Newton, Handy & Fineman, 1995; Bartlett, 1998). Occupational stress is associated with heart disease, hypertensive diseases, gastrointestinal disorders, insomnia, depression and alcoholism (Furnham, 1992; Sethi & Shuler, 1984).

Teacher stress is increasingly costly and damaging to the economy (Troman & Woods, 2001). Negative implications of stress for an organisation can include a high turnover of staff, greater absenteeism and reduced productivity (Iverson, Olekalns, & Erwin, 1998; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). According to Jepson and Forrest (2006) stress impacts on staff retention and therefore causes an increase in the cost of covering sick leave and providing replacement staff (Ganster & Schaubroeck, 1991; O'Driscoll & Cooper, 1996; Sethi & Schuler, 1984). The estimated cost of

stress to the education system in 1998 in England and Wales has been estimated as £230 million (Brown & Ralph, 1998).

In addition to this research has shown that teacher stress can impact directly on school pupils. Briner and Dewberry (2007) demonstrated that **average levels of teacher wellbeing within schools has been found to be linked to pupil performance as assessed by SATs and value-added measures (Briner & Dewberry, 2007)**. As Farouk (2003, p.218) further explains; “those schools that have a professionally and emotionally supportive staff are also those that are most successful in being supportive towards their pupils”. Hanko (1995, p.1) explains “they (teachers) cannot be expected to meet children’s needs if they get no support with their own”.

The research from Briner and Dewberry (2007) suggests a link between teacher well-being, their experience of stress and pupils’ learning and development. This will be an area of consideration in this research.

It is of importance to note that the term ‘stress’ lacks precise definition and is considered to be a contested concept. A search for the term ‘stress’ supports this as it yields a variety of different results, perhaps suggesting that how stress is experienced and caused can be very individual. Although the term stress can be difficult to define clearly, Appendix 2 details four of the more commonly used definitions. Reference has been made to both occupational and teacher stress (occupational stress; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, Spielber, Vagg & Wasala, 2003, as cited in Snyder, Krauss, Chen, Finlinson & Huang, 2008, teacher stress; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977, Woods, 1995). These definitions describe the potential effects that stress may have on wellbeing and focus on the interaction between the individual and their environment.

Models of stress

There are a large number of stress models documented in the research dating back to the 1950s. These can be separated into four main types of models according to Steyn and Kamper (2006):

Stimulus-based models of stress

This model views stress as a condition of the environment that is external to the individual and influences him or her in a disruptive way. The perceptions of the individual are not taken into account in this approach.

Response-based models of stress

This model views stress in terms of the individual's response to a threatening stimulus. The focus is on physiological, psychological and behavioural responses as the consequences of stress.

Interactional models of stress

This model views stress as an individual phenomenon which is both interactive and situational. Different individuals respond differently to the same situation.

Some examples of interaction models of stress are:

- Person-environment fit model, (P-E, Lewin, 1951)
- Demand-control-support model (DCS, Karasek, 1979)
- Job characteristics model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980)
- The Vitamin model (Warr, 1987)

Transactional models of stress

This model views stress as neither an individual or an environment phenomenon, but the interrelationship between the stressor, the individual's perception of the situation and his or her subjective responses.

(Steyn and Kamper, 2006, p. 117 - 118)

More recently transactional theories of stress have become more prominent, emphasising cognitive aspects and focusing on the dynamic relationship between the individual and the environment (with particular focus on subjective perceptions and individual difference). Examples of these models include:

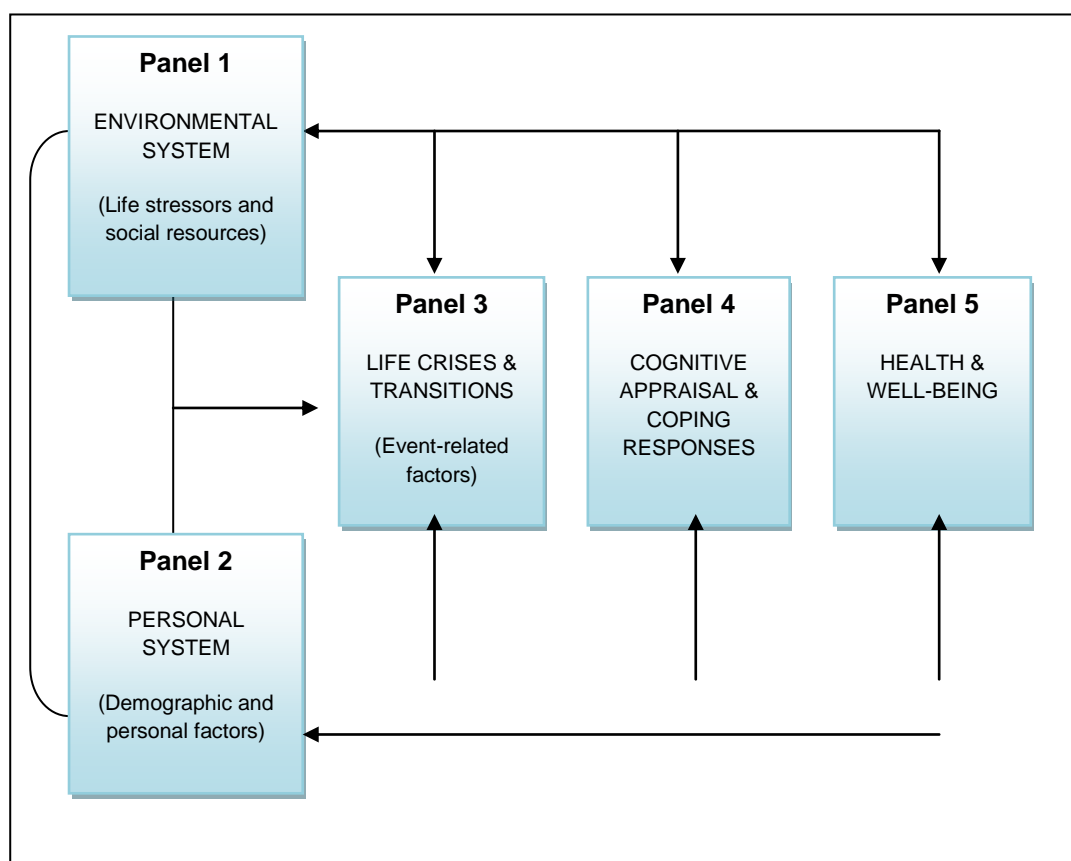
- Transactional model of occupational stress (Cox, 1978)
- Psychological stress and coping theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)
- Effort-reward imbalance (ERI, Siegrist, 1996)
- Demand induced strain compensation model (De Jonge et al, 2000)
- Job-demand-resources model (Demeroun, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001).
- Demand-skill-support-model (Van Veldhoven, Taris, De Jonge & Broersten, 2005).

Many of these models have been criticised for being too narrow and lacking in emphasising the role of individual differences or conversely for being too broad and complex and lacking in validity measures (Mark & Smith, 2008).

Moos (1994, see Figure 3) has produced a general conceptual framework of the stress and coping process which is more comprehensive than other models of stress. This model explains the interaction between stress and the coping process, with reference to an individual's own personal and social coping resources (Louw &

Viviers, 2010). This model was originally derived from Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional stress and coping theory.

Figure 3: Moos' (1994) conceptual framework of the stress and coping process (a schematic representation, Louw & Viviers, 2010).

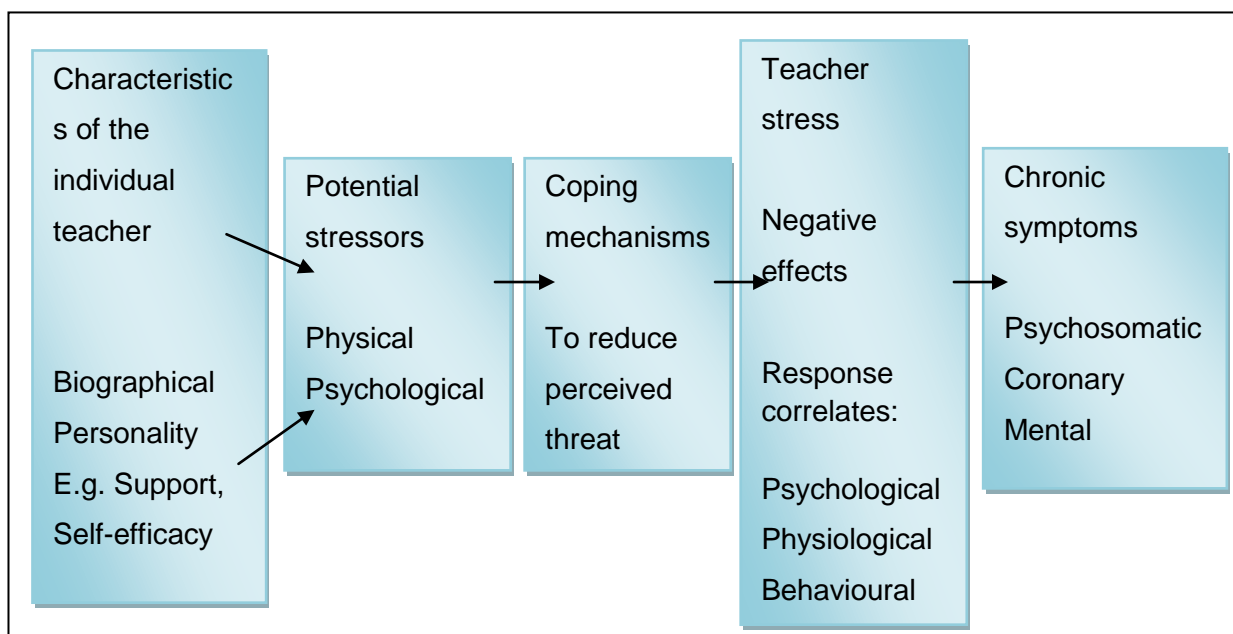


This model emphasizes how each part of this model interacts with the others and that the combined influences shape an individual's health and well-being (Louw & Viviers, 2010). This is a useful model to be aware of when considering teacher stress, health and well-being and support systems.

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) have created a model of teacher stress that has been created from the work conducted by Lazarus and colleagues (Lazarus & Launier, 1978, Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This model was created to help predict teachers'

stress reactions. Figure 4 is a simplified version of this model (Van Dick & Wagner, 2001).

Figure 4: A model of teacher stress (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978, p.3)



Both Moos (1994) and Kyriacou and Sutcliffe's (1978) stress models are useful when considering teacher stress.

It might be argued that the teaching profession as a whole could be said to be experiencing stress and indeed an element of stress is inevitable and possibly educationally productive. Renvoize (1986) argued that some degree of stress is normal and necessary for effective teaching to take place. Most professionals it could be argued work under pressure (Troman & Woods, 2001). However Troman and Woods (2001) argue that there is a tendency to individualise the problem and pathologise teachers when it comes to stress.

Renvoize (1986) argues that the amount of stress felt by an individual at work is dependent on a range of factors, not only the nature and intensity of the work but

also the personality characteristics, perceptions and internal responses of the individual concerned. Similarly Davidson (1998) argues stress is neither good nor bad; it depends upon the individual's perceptions and behaviours (Swick, 1989). Davidson (1998) goes on to add: "The history of the person's stress response has much to do with his or her way of dealing with stress. An event that may be stress-producing for one person may be seen as a challenge by another (Kerr, 1988; Swick, 1989)". This suggests that how an individual perceives and copes with stress is a crucial element in understanding this term. Renvoize (1986) adds that major life events (such as death of a relative, divorce and illness) may affect an individual's ability to cope with stress and carry out their work. In addition to this susceptibility to occupation stress according to Renvoize (1986) can be influenced by the level of family and social support available to a person and in addition to this the coping mechanisms that an individual has developed throughout their life.

Burn-out

A discussion of the term burnout can be found in Appendix 2. According to De Heus and Diekstra (1999) and Byrne (1999), who conducted research in the US, high school teachers experience more burn-out than any other professionals who serve the public (including nurses, mental health professionals, physical-health professionals and domestic and person-care professionals).

Burn-out can lead to a variety of possible health problems and has negative implications not only for the individual experiencing it but the organisation in which the individual works (Kahn et al, 2006). This can include a high turnover of staff, greater absenteeism and reduced productivity (Iverson, Olekalns, & Erwin, 1998; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

Much of the past literature focusing on teacher stress and burnout has lacked strong empirical grounding according to Geving (2007). Byrne (1994, p. 651, as cited in Geving, 2007) supports this by saying; “although the body of teacher burnout literature is vast, there is a paucity of systematic empirical research on the topic, most studies have been of an anecdotal nature”. In addition nearly all of the research conducted on teacher stress has involved too great a dependence on self-report measures as instruments of data collection (Geving, 2007).

Environmental factors influencing stress and burnout

School culture

School culture is an important area to consider in the areas of teacher stress and support systems. School climate continues to be examined as a result of its significant impact on educational outcomes according to Marshall (2004). A number of studies have indicated that schools which have a more positive school climate are more likely to have higher achievement and better socio-emotional health (Tableman & Herron, 2004). Freiberg (1998, p.22) argues that “school climate can be a positive influence on the health of the learning environment or a significant barrier to learning”. According to Haynes and Comer (1993) a positive, supportive and culturally conscious school climate can significantly shape the degree of academic success experienced by urban students (Marshall, 2004). Additionally Taylor and Tashakkori (1995) found that a positive school climate is associated with increased job satisfaction for school staff (Marshall, 2004). This suggests that teacher stress and the support provided to school staff may have some effect on the development of a positive school climate.

Troman and Woods (2001) argue that some schools unwittingly produce 'socially toxic environments'. In order to become healthier workplaces the emphasis on the individualisation of stress must be targeted with a need to look beyond person-centred and reactive methods of stress prevention (Troman & Woods, 2001). This infers that there is a need to base policies in preventative interventions by considering the whole range of factors, other than personal ones, that can impact on and cause stress in the workplace. Handy (1988) and Ganster, Mayes, Sime & Tharp, (1982) have argued that focusing stress reduction strategies at the individual level is both "conceptually naive" and "ethically questionable". The Health and Safety Executive state that "the work situation itself should be the initial focus of concerns in stress prevention" (Parkes & Sparkes, 1998, p1). Parkes and Sparkes (1998) go on to add that attributing work-related stress to the individual gives responsibility for managing this to the individual employee rather than to the organisation which is it should belong. Preventing stress should be directly linked to school improvement strategies according to Kelchermans and Strittmatter (1999) and Miller (1999).

What kinds of environments increase the likelihood of stress?

The Yerkes-Dodson curve or law (1908, which can be depicted on a graph, (see Appendix 4) is an empirical relationship between arousal (stress) and performance and demonstrates the effects of long-term stress. The curve dictates that performance increases with physiological or mental arousal up to a certain point (known as 'health tension'). However once high levels of physiological arousal (stress) are reached individuals hit 'fatigue point' and performance is significantly reduced. Should arousal or stress continue at such a high level this can lead to exhaustion, ill health and even a break down (this may be similar to what is described as 'burnout').

The flow graph (Csíkszentmihályi, 1998, see Appendix 5) demonstrates a similar phenomenon to the Yerkes-Dodson curve (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908). Flow is a mental state in which the positive aspects of human experience (such as joy, creativity and the process of total involvement of life) are felt when human attention is fully immersed in one activity. This occurs precisely because the individual is focusing all their attention on the flow state and therefore has no further attention to be allocated to anything else. An individual cannot decide to enter flow or predict when it may occur, as it happens naturally (Csíkszentmihályi, 1993).

The flow graph (Csíkszentmihályi, 1998) depicts the relationship between the perceived challenges of a task and one's perceived skills (self-efficacy). High challenge, low skill results in raised anxiety (stress). Low challenge, high skill conversely can result in boredom. The appropriate balance between the level of challenge and level of skill is where flow is likely to be experienced.

The Yerkes-Dodson's (1908) healthy tension point on their curve could be said to have similarities to Csíkszentmihályi's (1998) concept of flow.

According to Troman and Woods (2001) head teachers' of schools are the representative of an employer, who has a statutory duty of care for employees. This is clearly laid out in the Health and Safety Executive Laws (HSE, 2010). The employers' duty to employees is to support and train them and to allocate work appropriately (Troman & Woods, 2001). This would include ensuring that the work environment is proportionate in the level of challenge, skill and support required to fulfil the role successfully and avoid arousal (stress) and anxiety elevated to the point where persistent stress is experienced and/or burnout is reached.

The next section examines what could be done to minimise the risk of this for employees.

SECTION FIVE

Factors that may prevent stress

This section will consider the measures that can be adopted to prevent or cope with stress at two levels; the school (meso level) and the education system (macro level). These levels are separated in to the same levels of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory.

School (meso level)

Individual staff coping strategies

Troman and Woods (2001) looked at those 'survival strategies' that could be adopted when an individual is already under a high level of stress and preventative steps have not be applied or support not offered. They conducted a piece of qualitative research using semi-structured interviews to gain an in-depth life history of 20 teachers (13 women, 7 men, mainly forty years of age or above who had worked across a range of primary schools in both urban and rural locations. All had experienced stress at work and been diagnosed by their doctor or an independent psychiatrist as suffering from anxiety, depression or a stress related illness.

The following strategies were adopted by teachers: Distancing (removing themselves from and actively avoid social situations which they perceived to have caused their illness and to seek out situations which promised a more positive self-image); Self-determining (requiring teachers to have a level of determination and that was required if they were to succeed in coping); Regaining perspective and balance (reprioritising aspects of their lives. For example; family, friends, health and outside of school activities); Reading and writing (most participants in this study read books or articles on stress and how best to manage it. Writing about the stress that had

been experienced was found to be therapeutic and some kept a diary, which allowed them to chart the trajectory of their illness. This also allowed them to identify the symptoms of stress as they arose and supported the use of coping strategies at key times). Lastly Troman and Woods (2001) found that seeking alliances or support from medical professions, colleagues, family, friends and trade union officials was useful in supporting these teachers during their period of stress related illness.

The main aim of these strategies was survival; continuation in the post, getting through the day, week, year without giving way to stress or illness, rather than focusing on the key aspect of the job; teaching. However Pollard (1982) argues that some stress survival strategies run counter-intuitively to teaching practice.

Friedman (1999) suggests that teachers often believe their failure to cope with stress is their own fault. Troman and Woods (2001) argue that this can be avoided if knowledge about sources of stress, the identification of somatic, psychological and emotional symptoms and coping strategies are provided to staff.

Education system (macro level)

Organisational preventative strategies

Kyriacou (2001) has provided a number of organisational factors that can prevent teacher stress, such as; consulting with teachers on matters of curriculum development and planning (which directly affects their lessons), providing adequate resources and facilities, providing teachers with clear job descriptions and expectations, establishing good levels of communication between teachers and administrators and allowing time for and encouraging professional development activities (including mentoring and networking opportunities). Many of these

suggestions from Kyriacou (2001) could be incorporated into a staff support programme for staff.

Wood and McCarthy (2002) suggest that those organisations that allow teachers some control over their daily challenges are more likely to prevent teacher burnout.

Greenberg (1999, as cited in Woods & McCarthy, 2002) argues that maintaining perspective and having a good level of self-efficacy can act as 'anxiety-buffers' for individuals. Troman and Wood's (2001) research has shown that one of the biggest effects of stress is reduced personal and professional confidence and lowered self-esteem. This results in a lower sense of self-efficacy and commitment to the workplace. Maslach et al (2001) supports this by noting that fewer accomplishments achieved as a result of stress can lead to individual's developing less of a commitment to their organisation. This can impact negatively on the quality of teaching. To teach effectively, teachers must feel psychologically and emotionally 'well' and must have a sense of self-efficacy.

Teachers favour a workplace which is a fair and just place, where what teachers say is listened to and teacher well being is cared about, suggests Beatty (1999, p. 3, as cited in Troman & Woods, 2001); "collaborative cultures support and affirm the teacher.....teachers who know their leaders care about them and support them in shared values and moral purposes seem to thrive emotionally, intellectually and spiritually". This has implications for both school culture (discussed in the previous section) and the approach of schools senior leadership and management teams which will be considered next.

The role and training of head teachers

According to Pollard (1995) the head teacher is at the centre of a low-stress, collaborative work place and is an important influence on school culture. Head teachers therefore need to be knowledgeable about sources of stress in teaching and how best to prevent this. Troman and Woods (2001) argue that this is only likely to be achieved if there is a change in the way head teachers are trained and selected. Currently the appointment and professional development of head teachers (through schemes such as NPQH and HEADLAMP) are driven by organisational and managerial foundations. As MacMahon (2000) points out “the National Standards for Head Teachers (TTA, 1999) state that heads should be able to ‘work under pressure and to deadlines, not that they should seek to manage or control the pressures in the work place” (MacMahon, 2000, p.9.). Hargreaves (1998) argues that there is no training for the development of emotional understanding vital for leadership and stress prevention.

Another important aspect in enabling senior management in schools to offer support to the staff body is to ensure that head teachers are being provided with emotional and practical support themselves. This should be provided by appropriately experienced peers throughout head teachers’ careers and particularly during the early stages of headship (Troman and Woods, 2001).

All of the literature discussed so far makes this piece of research both relevant and timely to education policy and practice. Teachers and support staff will continue to need more developed systems of support to aid them in the teaching and learning of children and young people (Bowers & McIver, 2000; Humphreys, 1995; Halfacree, 1992; Chappell et al, 1992). The purpose of my research is to work collaboratively with teaching and school staff to develop a creative solution to this issue.

The next section looks at specific systems that could be put in place to support staff and some of the potential barriers facing schools in providing these support systems for staff.

SECTION SIX

Types of professional support

Types of professional support can be separated into individual, group and whole school systems (again broadly reflecting Bronfenbrenner's, 1979, ecological systems theory). This research focuses mainly on the school (meso) system.

Collaborative practice and peer support

Appendix 2 provides a summary of the definitions of reflective practice and peer support/networking to be found in the literature. Rogers (1990) and Hanks (1995) emphasise the importance of peer support in generating a climate where issues can be pursued supportively and acknowledge that peer support reduces feelings of teacher isolation and stress. Moonen & Voogt (1998) found that using teacher networks to enhance professional development offered enriched learning environments for participants. Pisanti, Garliardi, Razzino & Bertini (2003) concluded that social support at various levels contributed to teacher well-being. Kahn et al (2006) supports this and argues that social support is one of the key factors that can protect teachers from burnout.

The research acknowledges the importance of collaborative working and social support to maintain school staff's professional development and learning. The next section considers reflective practice as a key aspect of school staff's work.

Reflective practice

Scaife (2001) refers to two types of knowledge when considering reflective practice: declarative (learnt through reading of theories, concepts, principles and facts); and procedural knowledge (process of application of theories and principles to practice). According to Scaife (2001) procedural knowledge is regarded as tacit and automatic

and is what Schon (1991) refers to as 'knowledge in action'. Schon (1991) argues that there should be a focus on enhancing this type of knowledge within the education professions in order to promote 'reflective practitioners'.

According to Rhodes et al (2004);

Good teachers are by definition reflective practitioners. They are relentless about striving for improvement in their practice, they challenge and question themselves, they look for new and improved ways of working so that all their learners are enabled to make the best possible progress”

(Rhodes et al, 2004, p.55).

Rhodes et al (2004) argues that developing and using reflective practice will not only bring ideas to the fore to help and improve an individual's own performance, but will support others in doing the same. Those environments that encourage practitioners to be reflective about their practice are known to promote development and learning in the future and could act as a 'buffer' to challenges and stress within the school system.

The next section will focus on school staff receiving regular feedback on their practice and how this helps to support them in their work.

Regular feedback on practice

Research indicates that teachers improve their practice and view of themselves as teachers, if given regular constructive feedback on their performance (Rosenholtz, 1989). Troman and Woods (2001) support this and argue that receiving regular feedback will promote the emotional needs of staff. Troman and Woods (2001) go on

to add that this can be achieved through peer support and collaboration as an alternative to monitoring and managerial observations and inspection agendas.

The last section argues clearly that those professional support systems that incorporate collaboration with peers, encourage reflective practice and enable school staff to receive feedback on their work are those that are most effective in improving practice and reducing stress.

In the next section I will be discussing both staff consultation groups and teacher support teams. Both of these support systems have been used in schools and found to be effective according to the literature and could be viewed as being a type of peer support system. Within these sections I will be examining both the national and international literature and evidence on the topic of these two support systems.

Staff Consultation Groups

Staff consultation groups represent one example of how staff can come together and support one another in a more formal and systematic way compared to informal peer support between colleagues. Farouk (2003) argued that as well as supporting individual teachers, the process of group consultation can have a strong influence on the school as a whole as teachers become increasingly used to supporting each other in their work.

Consultation

Group consultation has emerged from the consultation process that is used by EPs as a key tool in their practice (operating at three levels; individual, group and organisational). According to Wagner (1995) consultation is “a process in which concerns are raised and a collaborative and recursive process is initiated which combines exploration, assessment, intervention and review” (Wagner, 2005, p.2).

Consultation is underpinned by three main theoretical frameworks; Personal Construct Psychology (PCP, Kelly, 1955, the theory and technique of understanding individuals), Symbolic Interactionism (Mead, 1991, a social framework in which to develop an understanding of the meaning of behaviour) and Systems Thinking (originally stemming from the field of family therapy, it addresses the wider social systems and networks).

Group consultation

It has been suggested that group consultation was influenced by Caplan's (1970) medical health consultation (Farouk, 2004) and is widely adopted within the health professions.

Stringer, Stow, Hibbert, Powell and Louw (1992), who at the time were members of the Newcastle Educational Psychology service, set up consultation groups in schools by training members of staff as facilitators. Groups met for an hour and a half and followed the single case approach described by Hanko (1985). Hanko's (1995) work was originally offered as an approach to meet the recommendations made in the Elton Report (DES, 1989) with regard to providing teacher peer support systems. Please see Appendix 6 for a summary of how group consultation occurs in practice.

Stringer et al (1992) provided training to school staff on how to set up and facilitate these groups independently from an outside agency. Staff attended a five session workshop course that ran over two and half days. Manuals were provided and follow-up groups and support were provided. Staff could meet up fortnightly with trainers for a term after attending the training course and Stringer et al (1992) found attendance to be good at these.

An evaluation of this programme was conducted by Stringer et al (1992, using a pre and post and follow-up questionnaire nine months later). It was found that out of 42 staff, from 29 different schools that underwent training, 7 groups had set up and ran staff consultation group and met for 6 – 12 sessions. It should also be taken into consideration that not all schools who attended the training created staff consultation groups in their schools, no reasons were provided for this in Stringer et al's (1992) work. The authors did not attach a copy of the pre and post evaluation questionnaires in their appendix section, making the interpretation of the results and feedback challenging.

Farouk (2004) who has conducted research in this area and developed his own version of staff consultation groups (process consultation) is critical of the Hanks (1985) single case approach to group consultation that Stringer et al (1992) used. Although Farouk acknowledges the usefulness of Hanks's (1985) work with groups of teachers he argues that there is a lack of consideration of the influences of school culture and the interactions that may occur within the group itself. Bales (1953) supports this by arguing that the effectiveness of small groups is influenced by the "emotional needs and preconceptions that individuals bring to the group as well as the dynamics within the group" (Bales, 1953, as cited in Farouk, 2004, p.209.).

Farouk (2004) argues for an outside consultant to act as a group facilitator in these staff consultation groups. However given time and budget constraints this may be an unrealistic system for schools to operate. Stringer et al's (1992) model of providing training to schools to allow them to manage and run their own groups (with available support if needed) presents a more realistic and practical model to be used by schools.

The next section considers another professional support system that has been used in schools and evaluated as to its effectiveness.

Teacher Support teams (TSTs)

TSTs were originally set up as a way to support school staff with issues relating to Special Educational Needs (SEN) and could be viewed as being similar to group consultation (Bozic & Carter, 2002). The aim of TSTs is to develop staff's confidence and competence in making provision for children with SEN in mainstream classes and make use of the existing knowledge and skills that staff have. TSTs can therefore be seen to complement existing SEN support and also inform mutual peer support systems that are already being used.

TSTs are made up of a small number of school staff who meet fortnightly (usually for 45 minutes during lunch time or after school). This team received referrals from other teachers in the school who are experiencing difficulties teaching pupils with SEN and who would like some practical support (Bozic & Carter, 2002). Typically only one case is dealt with per meeting (either a new request or a follow-up). For all issues brought to the team there is a process of follow-up and review to evaluate how successful suggested strategies have been for the teacher.

TSTs provide a forum for professionals to share, name and solve problems that may arise in their day to day practice (Creese, Daniels & Norwich, 1997). These teams are aimed at providing school-based problem solving which supports pupils indirectly through teacher collaboration.

Creese, Daniels and Norwich (1997) argue that TSTs are noticeably different from the informal peer support that exists in many schools, mainly because there is little opportunity for reviewing the effect of advice given from other colleagues. However

they do suggest that peer support may be used alongside TSTs to resolve general problems that teachers may experience within their classroom or school and that they are aimed at complimenting existing models of informal mutual peer support that already exist in schools.

Creese, Daniels and Norwich (1997) suggest that TSTs have the potential to enhance the working conditions of teachers by providing individual teachers with support and assistance. Creese, Daniels and Norwich (1997) go on to suggest that many classroom teachers feel that they do not have sufficient training and support to meet some of the challenges they face when presented with children with SEN in their classes. The quote below demonstrates the potential implications if adequate professional support is not provided;

Facing the task of meeting a wide range of needs in isolation can lead to acute stress and disaffection. This can happen to any teacher working in unfavourable circumstances.....They (TSTs) provide a forum for teachers to share teaching knowledge and skills and to express and receive collegial and emotional support.

(Creese, Daniels and Norwich, 1997, p.50)

Creese, Daniels and Norwich (1997) also support earlier arguments about teacher EHWB and levels of support affecting quality of teaching and therefore pupils learning. They suggest that if teachers do not feel that they are achieving their aims and if they become de-motivated and frustrated the children in their class are unlikely to experience the same quality of teaching as when their teachers feel that they are able to engage with the demands of teaching and tolerate the pressures that the task exerts.

Research on TSTs comes mainly from the US. Teacher assistance teams (the origin of TSTs) has been adopted and mandated in some parts states of the USA (Ritter, 1978, Chalfant & Pysh, 1989, Graden, Casey & Christenson, 1985). Also in the US a department of education taskforce (Will, 1986) recommended that schools establish support systems for teachers as a way to respond to concerns about over-referral rates, misclassification of students and rising costs. The research in America has demonstrated that TSTs can lead to a drop in the number of inappropriate requests to outside agencies (Chalfant & Pysh, 1989). Fewer requests make it easier for outside agencies to reallocate their time to other more urgent priorities.

The UK based research on TSTs comes mainly from Mead (1991), the Newcastle educational psychology service (Stringer et al, 1992) and Hanco (1985; 1995) both of which have been previously discussed in this section.

Mead's (1991) work focused on task-orientated peer support groups (PSG) in order to increase the reflective nature of work in schools. The aim of these groups was to reduce teacher stress and increasing teacher effectiveness. The PSG's that were set up were viewed as providing forms of organisational structure that reinforced social support and resulted in greater feelings of ownership and personal competence (Creese, Daniels & Norwich, 1997).

Due to the limited work conducted in the UK on TSTs (compared to the US), Creese, Daniels and Norwich, (1997) carried out two UK studies; a pilot project in three primaries and one in a further eight primary schools. The outcome of the work discussed in the TSTs from these primary schools was positive. Teachers' reported that they felt their professional development was enhanced through the discussion of strategies within the TST. TST members were very positive about and valued their

TST work and all were keen to continue as members. Head teachers also corroborated these views.

Barriers to professional support

There are a number of constraints and barriers that exist for schools in ensuring regular professional support is provided. According to Dunlop and Macdonald (2004) barriers include: finance to fund support systems, lack of time for teachers to engage in support systems and issues around confidentiality and teacher mistrust.

Spencer (1983, p.11) suggests that; “professional pride is a major barrier to teachers sharing their anxieties and frustrations in attempts to tackle their difficulties”. The Elton Report (DES, 1989) supports this and notes that teachers tend to avoid others teachers’ classrooms and do not discuss with colleagues the challenges they face. Often teachers do not seek help as this can feel like an admission of incompetence and conversely do not offer help so as not to make other colleagues feel as if they are incompetent practitioners (Elton Report, DES, 1989). Stringer et al (1992) noted that there needed to be more awareness that everyone is challenged by their work and this is not a sign of incompetence or weakness. Stringer (1999) goes on to add that it is becoming more acceptable to share concerns and to look actively for support. This last barrier is one that is commonly featured in schools.

Nias (1993) found that ‘lack of time and opportunity’ in school makes it very difficult for staff to discuss and talk to each other about issues relating to their practice. This piece of research aims to work around the barrier of time management for staff by allowing volunteers to take part. Those that volunteer will have prioritised EHWP as an area of importance to them as a practitioner. Using an action research approach (a process aimed at gaining a better understanding of the particular issue, in this case professional support, and creating and implementing improvements, Lawson,

2009; where the participation of those involved is seen as a central component, Robson, 2008) allows staff to make the decisions about when and for how long professional support is provided. This should result in the intervention fitting in around their already pre-planned and busy timetables. The purpose of using action research is about empowering individuals and ultimately by using this methodology in paper two of this piece of research gives staff ownership of the problem, allows them time to consider and problem solve it in a way that best suits them.

Professional support becoming embedded in the culture of schools

In order for support systems to be provided and accessed, some schools need to adopt a culture where it is acceptable to admit to and make mistakes and see them as opportunities to learn and not as indicators of professional incompetence (Troman & Woods, 2001). A culture such as the one described by Troman and Woods (2001) is more likely to foster a critical reflective stance amongst staff. However this often runs counterintuitive to government agendas based on raising standards. The last thirty years has seen an erosion of teachers' public credibility and this coupled with the start of the National Curriculum has given further credibility to the argument that teachers can no longer be trusted to teach effectively unless the method and content have been prescribed (Grey et al, 1994). Gray et al (1994) adds that schools have been 'actively encouraged to compete' and that the notion of 'good' and 'bad' schools has been extended to 'good' and 'bad' teachers through using appraisal systems and the threat of performance related pay. This is clearly a barrier in some schools for asking for and accepting professional support.

It has been advocated that channelling these sorts of challenges into a piece of action research may be a way of maintaining meaning in teaching, professional development and stress prevention (Vulliamy & Webb, 1991). This supports the

methodology of the second paper of my research. Appendix 7 provides a short discussion regarding whether teacher involvement in research is a good use of their time.

The last section will provide a synthesis of the relevant points discussed in this literature, with particular focus on the importance of the role of the EP in working with schools to develop professional support systems for staff.

SECTION SEVEN

Conclusion: The role of educational psychologists

Discussions and debates about emotional health and well being have grown significantly in the last few years. Linley, Joseph, Harrington and Woods (2006) argue for example that positive psychology (“the focus on what works, what is right and what is improving”, Sheldon & King, 2001, p.216) could become a constructive force for social improvement and that they are starting to address the issue of happiness, health and well being from a national and societal perspective (Huppert, 2004, Veenhoven, 2004). Linley et al (2006) further add that within the UK the government have expressed interest in the state of the nation’s happiness (Donovan & Halpem, 2002) and that there is a growing social agenda to promote well-being (E.g. A well- being manifesto for a flourishing society).

With regard to the teaching profession, rising levels of stress and burn-out has caused a newfound focus on the EHWB of staff and on providing better systems to support school staff with their practice. Leithwood, Menzies, Jantzi & Leithwood (1999) argue that stress and burn-out is less likely for teachers when social support is received, where they have opportunities to share professional experiences and do not become professionally isolated. Friedman (1999) adds that professional support systems such as informal social support and other stress prevention measures such as critical friends, mentors, and pairing and buddying schemes are important systems in alleviating stress.

This is of particular interest to educational psychologists (EPs). Stringer et al (1992) emphasise the value of EPs being involved in the area of professional support and comments on the valuable contribution they could make, particularly in a time when teachers are under increasing amounts of stress. Stringer et al (1992) also

emphasises that EP's training and experience equips them to support with relationships, empower other practitioners and be active partners in creating "new, more adequate and effective solutions to deal with traditional problems" (Stringer et al, 1992, p. 95). EPs are able to support schools in reflecting upon the professional support systems they have available and are ideally placed to support schools in this area of school improvement.

In the current financial and economic climate, the importance of school based CPD and learning from other professional's practice through shared 'in-house' learning may be a feature of professional development for some time to come. Not only does this reduce the need to seek outside training from private companies (which can come at a significant cost to schools and their increasingly reduced budgets) but also builds capacity within individual schools (Earley, 2003). EPs would be well-placed to provide training and support packages to schools in the setting up of professional support systems. The research shows that teachers, when under stress, often blame themselves for not being able to cope (Friedman, 1999). According to Troman and Woods (2001) these feelings can be negated by ensuring staff have knowledge of sources of stress, the psychological symptoms and useful coping strategies. Therefore training from an EP on the development of individual understanding and responses to stress could be incorporated in to training packages and meet this need.

The Health and Safety Commission (HSC, 1990) reports that current policies and laws on occupational stress, emphasise risk reduction and stress prevention. Research on work interventions, and stress prevention policies and practice shows that preventative measures such as these are more effective and financially stable than post hoc alleviation strategies (Cox, 1993). Providing staff with regular training

on stress is a preventative approach to stress management and is something EPs could easily provide to schools on a yearly basis during a staff meeting as a reminder to existing staff and an induction to any new staff.

EPs are experienced researchers and this could be utilised in schools. EPs may conduct small pieces of individual school-based research looking at the areas that staff feel stress in the most and those situations or areas they would like more support. EPs may also support schools in developing and setting up a peer support group. This could then be evaluated and changes made to ensure it continued in the future to meet staffs needs.

To conclude, the research shows clear evidence and support for EPs to be involved in supporting schools with their thinking and practice around staff EHWP and systems to support with this. As Hanko (1995) argues; “In recognition of their unique position – EPs are increasingly expected as a matter of course to contribute substantially to in-service training of teachers and allied professionals and support schools in developing and implementing whole school policies” (Hanko, 1995, p.146). Given Hanko’s (1995) statement this makes EPs well placed to offer their services to schools in providing packages of support (some may be bespoke for individual schools) in which to prioritise staff support both in policy and in practice.

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Appendix 1

Research aims and questions

Broad aims of research

This piece of research is made up of two papers.

Paper one

The aim of paper one is to generate new understandings in relation to the following areas:

- Teacher stress
- Staff support systems

According to Lath (2010) there are four different types of stress:

Reactive stress – Occurring when a person perceives that they do not have the capacity to cope with demands placed on them.

Cumulative stress – Stress caused by a number of stressful factors over time.

Critical incident stress – A reaction to sudden unanticipated demands.

Post traumatic stress – Stress caused by memories of a traumatic episode.

(Lath, 2010, p. 424/425)

The focus of paper one is therefore on reactive and cumulative stress. This paper does not focus on critical incidents, traumatic events or on stress experienced as a direct result of a major life event (such as death, divorce or chronic/long-term illness of a spouse/family member).

School staff's views, experiences and perceptions were sought in the above areas through the use of semi-structured interviews and a focus group. Staff were asked

to evaluate the current support systems in their school and identify any areas for development.

As a result of focusing on the above areas, the implications for staff's health and well being and their work (in particular teaching and learning) will be considered. Additionally the role of the EP and other external agencies in supporting schools with this area of school development will also be explored.

Research questions for paper one

RQ1) How do a group of secondary school staff experience stress?

RQ2) What do staff think the implications/consequences are for:

- Their work (in particular teaching and learning)?
- Their health?
- Their emotional well being?

RQ3) What are school staff's perceptions of and reactions to professional support system which are or might be on offer?

RQ4) What do staff think the role of the educational psychology service might be in supporting schools with providing effective levels of professional support for staff?

Paper two

The aim of paper two is to work with school staff to develop and evaluate a support-based intervention in order to address the gaps in support that staff identify in paper one.

The role of the EP is central to this piece of research as a whole and the implications for future EP work will be referred to throughout.

Research questions for paper two

RQ1) How can EPs work effectively with school staff to bring about change in:

- The effects of stress and coping strategies.
- Personal emotional health and well being.
- Professional support systems. For example; setting up and running a staff consultation group.
- Assertiveness

RQ2) How can EPs work effectively with school staff to bring about change in the application of practical strategies aimed at alleviating stress and their responses to stress?

Appendix 2

Key terms and concepts

Emotional health and well-being (EHWB)

I will be referring frequently to the term EHWB during this text. Although definitions of this term may vary, Danna and Griffin (1999) provide a definition of the term that refers to two main aspects; the physical and the psychological;

The first is that *health and well-being* can refer to the actual physical health of workers, as defined by physical symptomatology and epidemiological rates of physical illness and diseases. The second is that *health and well-being* can refer to the mental, psychological, or emotional aspects of workers as indicated by emotional states and epidemiological rates of mental illnesses and diseases.” (Danna & Griffin, 1999, p. 361)

This explanation is of importance due to its reference to both the physical and psychological aspects of a person's EHWB, acknowledging that both or either one may be affected. As Troman and Woods (2001) demonstrate (from a study they carried out with teachers experiencing stress related illness) individuals suffered severe psychological, physical and emotional damage as a result of work-related stress. This supports Danna and Griffin's (1999) view of EHWB as it acknowledges both the physical and psychological aspects.

Another term linked to EHWB is 'psychological wellness' which is characterised by; “A state of emotional and psychological well-being in which an individual is able to use his or her cognitive and emotional capabilities, function in society, and meet the

ordinary demands of everyday life” (The American Heritage Medical Dictionary, 2007) and “psychological wellness is a relative state of mind in which a person is able to cope with and adjust to the recurrent stresses of everyday living in an acceptable way” (Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 2009). Both of these definitions of EHWB refer to meeting or coping with day to day life and the stresses that may accompany this.

For this literature review and for the purposes of this research I will be using Danna and Griffin's (1999) and the definitions from the medical dictionaries (Mosby 2009, and the American Heritage Medical Dictionary, 2007) when referring to the term EHWB. These definitions together encompass the term.

Professional Support

Support can be defined as bearing all or part of the weight of, holding up, to be actively interested in and concerned for the success of and giving assistance, approval, comfort, or encouragement (Oxford University Press, 2011).

I have decided to use the term ‘professional support’ in my research. This is a broader term that will encompass a number of different forms of professional support aimed at maintaining staff EHWB and development in schools. Some of these may include:

- Supervision - formal/informal and group/individual (Hawkins & Shohet, 2000, Hess, 1980, Loganbill, Hardy & Delworth, 1982, Kasushin, 1976).
- Peer support (Moonen & Voogt, 1998, Smith, 1999, Rhodes, Stokes & Hampton, 2004 & Bott, 2008).
- Staff consultation groups (Farouk, 2005, Bozic & Carter, 2002, Hanko, 1995, Stringer, Stow, Hibbert, Powell, & Louw, 1992).
- Teacher support teams (Creese, Norwich, & Daniels, 2000)

- Critical friends (Beaver, 1996, Swaffield & MacBeath, 2005)
- Mentoring, pairing schemes or use of buddies (Hudson, 2007, Forbes, 2004)
- Coaching (Veenman, De Laat & Staring, 1998, Basile, Olson & Nathenson-Mejía, 2003).

Some of these methods of professional support will be examined in more detail later in the literature review (see section six) where clear definitions will be provided for each of the terms.

One type of professional support that takes place in some professions within Children's Services is supervision. Proctor (1986, as cited in Hawkins & Shoet, 2000) examined the key purposes of supervision and suggested three main areas;

- Formative (educative, developing skills and understanding)
- Restorative (supportive, a safe place for the professional to be restored through the expression of and a meeting of their emotional needs) and
- Normative (managerial, monitoring and evaluating work and normalising practice).

I have decided against using the term 'supervision' within this piece of research as I find it is a term that conjures images of being observed and inspected rather than supported professionally. George & Protherough (1989, p.3) support this by saying that "the concept of supervision as inspection has come to be accepted since the nineteenth century". However the term 'supervision' is referred to by other authors within this review of literature.

The emphasis of my research therefore will be at the formative and restorative levels. When using the term 'professional support' (as a replacement for the term

'supervision') I will be referring back to Proctor's (1986, as cited in Hawkins & Shohet, 2000) definitions of these two levels of support. This definition will also be used to explain to the research participants what I mean by professional support prior to collecting data from them.

Stress & burnout

The term 'stress' lacks precise definition and is considered to be a contested concept. A search for the term 'stress' supports this, as it yields a variety of different results. Kyriacou (2010) summarises the definitions and models of stress in his recent paper. He notes that some researchers have referred to stress with the use of the term 'strain', as the response to the level of pressure and demand placed on an individual. Other researchers have focused on the balance of the demands made of an individual and the ability of the individual to cope with the demands. Lastly others have focus on teacher burnout (becoming physically and psychologically depleted, Freudenberger & Richelson, 1980).

Although the term stress can be difficult to define clearly, below are four of the more commonly used definitions (occupational stress; Lazarus & Folman, 1984, Speilber, Vagg & Wasala, 2003, as cited in Snyder, Krauss, Chen, Finlinson & Huang, 2008, teacher stress; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977, Woods, 1995). Note that I have selected definitions for both occupational and teacher stress.

Occupational Stress

Stress can be defined as; "A particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 234).

Speilberger et al (2003, as cited in Snyder et al, 2008, p.1713) add that work-related stress is "the process by which the characteristics of the work environment (e.g. job

demands) interact with employee characteristics (e.g. skills) to affect psychological and physical well-being". Both of these definitions clearly make reference to the potential effects that stress may have on wellbeing and focus on the interaction between the individual and their environment.

Teacher Stress

The term 'teacher stress' first appeared in the literature in the 1970s when a review of the research on teacher stress was published (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977). Since this time it has become a major topic of research and public interest.

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) define teacher stress as "the experience by a teacher of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher". This is a later definition from Kyriacou and Stuclyffe (1978) and appears simplistic in its description. It does not clearly outline the complexities of how stress is caused or experienced. However according to Kyriacou (2010) the definition above was created with a view of stress as a negative emotional experience that could be triggered by the teacher's perception that their work posed a threat to their self-esteem or well-being (Kyriacou, 2010). What Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) do refer to here is 'teacher's perceptions'. This suggests that how an individual perceives and copes with stress is a crucial element in understanding this term.

Below Woods (1995) provides a more recent definition that makes reference to the complex systems and environments in which we work and live. This definition emphasises both the individual and personal elements, as well as the situational and environmental factors that interact together to cause a person stress in their work as a teacher.

Woods (1995) provides a fairly comprehensive and specific definition of teacher stress.

...a multi-dimensional and multi-levelled phenomenon. Personal (micro), situational (meso) and structural (macro) factors are involved in its production. It is an individually experienced phenomenon which is socially produced. There are certainly the personal elements of personality, commitment, career, role and values involved. There are situational ones too such as school organisation, teacher culture, teacher/pupil relationship. There are also wider factors such as the restructuring of schools and teaching which has taken place in recent years.

(Woods, 1995, p.1)

For the purposes of this piece of research when I referred to the term stress I will be using Woods (1995) definition.

Burnout

There are a variety of definitions of burnout to be found within the literature.

Davidson (1998) describes burnout as “a distinctive kind of job-related stress that inhibits the person’s capacity to function effectively because of the body’s resources for resisting stress have become exhausted” (p. 47). Vandenberghe & Huberman (1999) suggest burnout is a state of emotional, physical and attitudinal exhaustion which develops in teachers who have been unable to cope with stress over a long period of time. Shirom (2003) argues burnout is:

An affective reaction to ongoing stress, whose core content is the gradual depletion over time of an individual’s intrinsic energetic resources, resulting in the expression of emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue and cognitive

weariness. Furthermore it is a state that manifests when individuals experience a cycle of resource losses over a period of time at work.

(Louv & Viviers, 2010, p.3)

Kahn, Schneider, Jenkins – Henkelman and Moyle (2006) describe burn-out in more detail and as being comprised of three dimensions. The first dimension is emotional exhaustion, characterized by feelings of emotional and physical overextension, such as when a teacher feels drained and depleted because of work. Secondly is cynicism (referring to a detached attitude toward the people encountered at work). Lastly feelings of reduced professional efficacy (demonstrates a lack of confidence with regard to productivity at work). A reduction in professional efficacy can affect multiple teaching tasks and other areas, including emotional aspects of teaching.

For the purposes of this piece of research when I referred to the term burnout I will be using the definitions suggested by Shirom (2003) and Kahn et al (2006).

Peer support/Peer networking

Peer support is defined as “people providing emotional and practical help to each other” (Bott, 2008) or additionally as;

Peer networking may be taken as a generic term to encompass two or more individuals working together to enhance information exchange, dissemination of good practice and the organisation of mutual support and learning. Such networking may occur between individuals or groups within individual organisations or in collaboration with other organisations.

(Rhodes et al, 2004, p.14).

Reflective Practice

Atkins and Murphy (1993) provide a working definition of reflective practice; "...those intellectual and affective activities which individuals engage in to explore their experience in order to lead to new understandings and appreciation".

Scaife (2001) when discussing being reflecting described two types of knowledge, declarative (learnt through reading of theories, concepts, principles and facts) and procedural knowledge (process of application of theories and principles to practice). According to Scaife (2001) procedural knowledge is regarded as tacit and automatic and is what Schon (1991) refers to as 'knowledge in action'. Schon (1991) argues that there should be a focus on enhancing this type of knowledge within the education professions in order to promote 'reflective practitioners'.

According to Rhodes, Stokes and Hampton (2004);

Good teachers are by definition reflective practitioners. They are relentless about striving for improvement in their practice, they challenge and question themselves, they look for new and improved ways of working so that all their learners are enabled to make the best possible progress"

(Rhodes et al, 2004, p.55).

Appendix 3

Original contribution to the field

A recent paper by Kyriacou (2010) emphasises the future directions of teacher stress research and emphasizes the importance of continuing to explore:

- Prevalence and sources of teacher stress.
- Coping strategies adopted by teachers.
- Research focusing on the effectiveness of intervention strategies aimed at reducing staff stress.
- Impact of teacher – pupil interaction and classroom climate on stress

Troman and Woods (2001) reported that little is known about how teachers experience stress, feel about work, how teachers feel their work is stress producing and the coping strategies they used to deal with stressful experiences or events. Troman and Woods (2001) work, ten years previously, suggests similar recommendations for future work as does Kyriacou's (2010) recent paper.

DeMulder and Rigby (2003) argue that accessing the voice of teachers is an area lacking from existing literature and that this is fundamental in developing reflective practice. They found that virtually none of the authors who set out to promote and encourage change in classrooms and schools began their analyses with the voices and experiences of classroom teachers. Troman and Woods (2001) add to this discussion by arguing that work in the field of teacher stress lacks detailed testimony from teachers.

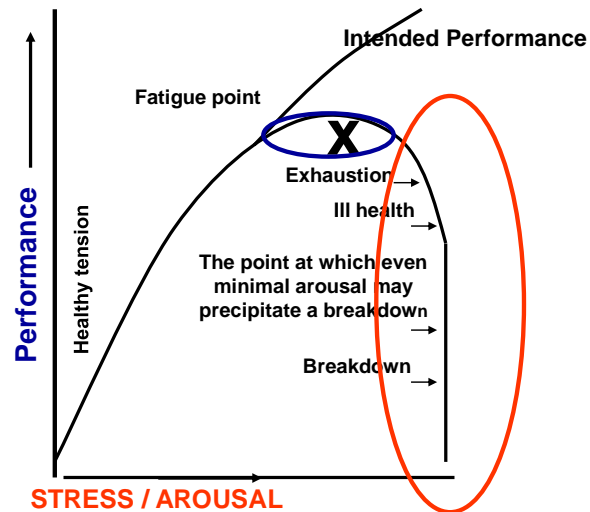
The work of Kyriacou (2010), Troman and Woods (2001) and DeMulder and Rigby (2003) provides further support to why the areas of teacher stress continue to need to be focused on in research and practice. Seeking out teachers and school staff's views and perceptions is integral to both this and the second paper in this study. My

research specifically aims to address these areas of development: by asking school staff about their experiences of stress; the sources of stress and the coping strategies they make use of. Paper two of this study will develop, deliver and evaluate the effectiveness of a support-based intervention aimed at reducing stress and improving well-being.

Appendix 4

Yerkes Dodson Curve (1908)

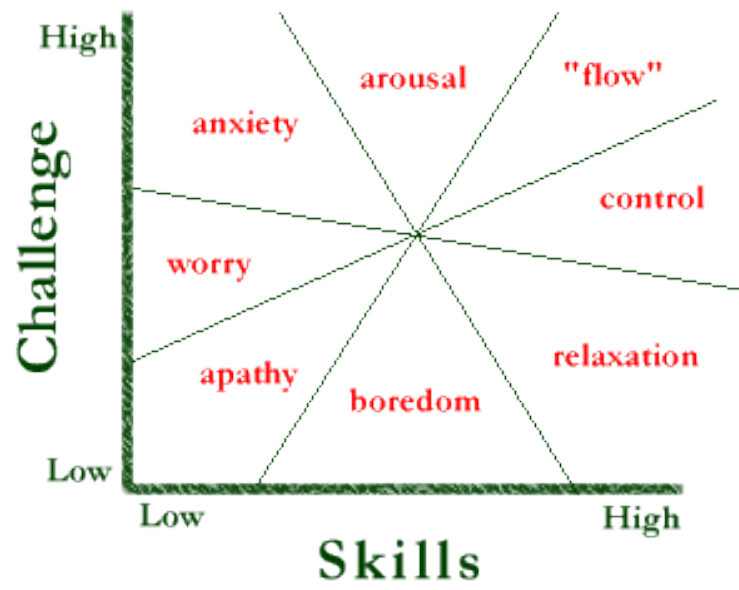
Stress and performance Interactions



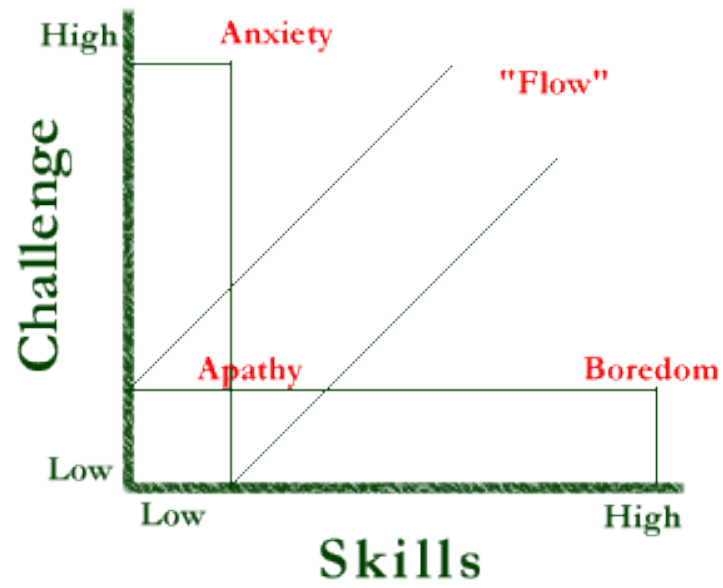
When fatigue point X is reached, the harder the person tries the less he achieves. If the arousal continues at a high level it can lead to exhaustion, ill health and eventually breakdown. Relaxation techniques can reduce fatigue and raise the level of performance.

(Yerkes Dodson Curve, 1908)

Appendix 5
Flow Matrix



Flow Graph



(Csíkszentmihályi, 1998)

Appendix 6
The process of group consultation
(Stringer et al, 1992)

Groups begin with a welcome and reminder of ground rules (compiled at an earlier point by the group) and prioritising those that wanted to raise a problem or issue for discussion. Work on a concern raised involves using a problem-solving framework, where a brief outline of the concern is given before there is a chance for other group members to ask questions to elaborate on the initial concern. A process of feeding back the main points of the concern to the group member would occur before potential solutions could be discussed by the group. The last 15 minutes of the session is an opportunity for group members to reflect on the session.

Groups are not encouraged to discuss school policy concerns, as this may cause non-members to perceive the group as threatening. Stringer et al (1992) support Hanko's (1985) view on the absence of head teachers from groups due to their role in school.

Appendix 7
Teacher involvement in research

Teacher involvement in research

This last point leads me to consider whether, given that those working in schools already have large demands made on them and their time, is participating in a piece of research a good use of teacher's time? There is an increasing body of literature that demonstrates how effective it can be for teachers to become involved in research activity. This is being viewed as an important contribution to self evaluation, improvement and professional learning of staff (Handscomb & Macbeath, 2003). According to Handscomb and Macbeath (2003, p.1) engaging with research encourages "practitioners to question, explore and develop their practice, making a significant contribution to improved teaching and learning". Therefore to create a school culture where it is the norm for teachers to consider and reflect upon their own practice, participating in research can be seen as an important aspect of continuing professional development (CPD).

In 2001 the DfES published document entitled 'CPD: The strategy for professional development'. This document emphasised the importance of school-based CPD, with a focus on learning together, learning from the best and learning from what works (Handscomb, 2002). Handscomb and Macbeath (2003) describe that those teachers who take part in research in their own school and classrooms bring about new insights, new levels of understanding, new challenges and that it has enhanced the quality of teaching and learning.

Appendix 8
Matrix of possible support interventions

This matrix shows the three possible levels of intervention; individual, group or whole school. Along the top of the matrix are the psychological approaches underpinning a professional support intervention.

| | Personal Construct Psychology | Psychodynamic Approaches | Solution focused approaches | Cognitive-behavioural |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Individual intervention | Regular one to one supervision with a senior member of staff Learning logs/diaries– selections to be shared with a buddy/mentor Coaching | One to one supervision with a senior member of staff Coaching | Writing 5 positive things that have happened each day. Share with a colleague Individual annual health review by SMT. Coaching | Counselling. Online programme of CBT strategies and activities to follow. |
| Group level intervention | Buddies Paired mentoring | Peer group consultation (Hanko, 1995, Stringer et al, 1992). Teacher support teams (Creese, Norwich & Daniels, 2000). Staff buddy system Paired mentoring | Process consultation (Farouk, 2004) | Series of cognitive behaviour activities conducted in groups. |
| Whole school intervention | Whole school buddy system – dedicated time put aside for this. | | Buddy system using solution focused questions as a framework. Whole school staff well being policy | Staff training on stress with practical strategies. |