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and enhanced in social workers?

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WHAT IS RESILIENCE AND HOW CAN IT BE ASSESSED AND ENHANCED IN SOCIAL WORKERS?

by

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What is resilience and how can it be assessed and enhanced in social workers?

Abstract

The outputs chosen for inclusion for this PhD by publication comprise seven articles published in peer reviewed journals, two book chapters, one research paper and two resource guides commissioned by professional bodies.   These outputs explore two major themes.   The first concerns the nature of resilience in social workers and identifies the inter- and intra-individual competencies associated with the concept.   The second concerns how resilience and its underpinning competencies can be enhanced in social work education, both pre and post qualification.   The report begins by contextualising the research within the existing literature, outlining my epistemological and methodological position and highlighting the importance of a pragmatic mixed-methods approach to research design, data collection and analysis.   A critique of the outputs is subsequently provided together with a discussion of how I developed as a social work academic and a researcher during the research programme.   Finally, the significance of the contribution to the body of social work knowledge provided by these outputs is demonstrated by identifying how the research has enhanced understanding of improving wellbeing in social workers though the development of a tool box of strategies to manage stress and foster resilience in social work training and practice.

Authors Declaration

I declare that this report is my own unaided work.   Although some of the outputs included are based on research conducted with others, the nature and extent of the author's individual contribution is stated in the report and accompanying declarations.

Name of Author: Louise Grant   Signature

Date:

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Acknowledgments

Section 1: Introduction

Social work is an emotionally demanding profession, with higher levels of work-related stressors reported than many other occupations (Coffey *et al.,* 2004; Lloyd *et al.,* 2002).   It is widely acknowledged that social workers need to demonstrate resilience not only to cope effectively with the pressures they encounter, but also to learn from setbacks and enhance their personal development.   This requirement was emphasised in the Laming Report, where it was argued that a key role of social work training was to help students develop the "resilience to manage the challenges they will face in dealing with potentially difficult families" (Laming, 2009:52).

Despite the relevance of resilience as a potential resource for managing work-related stress in social work, prior to the present programme of research little was known about the concept in this occupational context. Some studies had systematically explored the nature and impact of stress and wellbeing in samples of social work students and qualified staff (Collins *et al.,* 2010) and begun to consider the relevance of resilience to social work (Collins, 2007). Nonetheless, why some social workers showed resilience in the face of adversity whereas others were merely surviving or experiencing burnout was generally unexplored.

From personal experience gained as a social worker and manager, and subsequently as a social work academic, I had observed that although most social workers and students appeared to experience stress and emotional demands at work, some were able to cope effectively while others were not, resulting in long term absenteeism and burnout.   This initial interest became the focus of an on-going research project and a number of published outputs which form the basis of this submission.   This research aimed to better understand the nature of resilience in social work and provide an evidence-base to inform the development of interventions which would enhance resilience in trainees and qualified staff.

The outputs derive from a series of research studies undertaken between 2008 and 2014 jointly with Professor Kinman, an occupational health

psychologist and, where indicated, other colleagues.   This partnership, which began with myself as the novice researcher has evolved over the years into a relationship of peers where I have led research projects.

The aim of this report is to provide evidence of the significant and original research underlying the published works and their contribution to the understanding of resilience and wellbeing in social workers.   It further aims to demonstrate how the works have informed a broader consolidation of knowledge as well as the wide-ranging practical implications of the findings. This report will detail my personal contribution to the research undertaken, identifying the contribution of co-authors where relevant.   Moreover, as Niven and Grant (2012) assert, submitting a PhD by publication requires the author to 'take stock' of their personal contribution, and engage in subjective reflexivity, where they consider the direction that knowledge acquisition has taken: this is also a key feature of the report.

The submitted outputs provide considerable insight into the concept of resilience in the context of social work and the underpinning individual competencies.   Other research outputs are also presented which explore these competencies in more detail, identify their contribution to resilience and aspects of wellbeing in social work contexts, and evaluate how they can be developed through education and training.

The use of the term competence requires clarification before proceeding further.   In social work education, the term has become associated with a reductionist approach (Hyland, 1995) where performance and behaviours are emphasised rather than the development of broader-based cognitive and reflective skills.   Competence-based education, it has been argued, overlooks the meaningful experiences of students and professionals in their practice and reduces assessment of learning to a 'tick box exercise' to validate minimum standards of technical performance (Hyland, 1995).   This approach to competence-based education ignores the use of cognitive skills, creative abilities and other psychosocial resources such as motivations, attitudes and values.

The programme of research presented in this thesis reclaims the term

'competence', considering it to embrace much more than simple behavioural activities. This approach reflects the definition of competencies applied by Drisko (2014) seeing them as holistic, comprising the ability to reflect on knowledge, demonstrate values and skills, and practical application.

As well as the competencies that underpin resilience, its meaning and the implications of this for wellbeing more generally, this thesis will also consider research which has explored educators' perceptions of resilience, the strategies that are currently utilised in the social work curriculum, and the acceptability of various interventions to lecturers and students. Together these works represent a substantial advancement of knowledge and understanding of resilience in the social work context which has been of great practical and academic interest across the social work community. The research also has strong potential to be applied to other helping professions; indeed work is underway to evaluate interventions emerging from this programme of research in healthcare contexts. In particular, it has the potential to enhance policy and practice such as the design of recruitment, selection and retention strategies. Future research is planned to evaluate the use of interventions that are informed by the research presented in this thesis in relation to key outcomes such as performance and retention.

Section Two will place the work presented in the context of the existing literature on resilience, wellbeing and associated constructs in social work. Section Three provides an evaluation of the epistemological position taken in the empirical studies included in this submission and outlines the methodology utilised and its mutual complementarity. Section Four critically evaluates the outputs, setting out their distinct, significant and original contribution to academic and practice knowledge within the field of social work. Section Five reflects upon the ways in which the research has impacted on my research profile and academic and personal development. Finally, Section Six offers an overview of the programme of research to illustrate its contribution, calibre and applied nature.

To aid the reader the outputs are listed and numbered in Appendix One.

Section 2: Placing the work within the existing literature

Each submitted output contains substantial literature reviews; therefore it is not the intention to repeat this information or to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature. Instead, this section will outline how the research presented in this report was situated within the literature published prior to the research being undertaken, thereby highlighting its contribution.

2.1 Literature reviews

Literature reviews help authors develop a rationale for research projects and enable new insights (Aveyard, 2014; Neale, 2009). Prior to all the outputs, whether these were based on empirical data or a synthesis of published work, a systematic and comprehensive approach to searching the relevant literature from the fields of occupational health psychology and social work was applied. The approach taken could not be considered a formal systematic review as outlined by the Cochrane Collaboration (Aveyard, 2014), but followed the frameworks recommended by Aveyard (2014) and Hart (2003). Clear inclusion criteria were developed so that the literature review focused explicitly on the research question and ensured that only high quality papers were included. The literature cited in the published works is multi-disciplinary and it was important to identify and comprehend material predominantly derived from psychology. Although Prof. Kinman took the lead in this process during the initial stages, I soon became familiar with the key journals, concepts and authors of relevance to the topic.

2.2 Resilience in the literature

Prior to the development of this research, few studies had examined the nature and implications of resilience in organisational settings. The available research typically focused on resilience in children (e.g. Haggerty *et al.,* 1996) and adults who have experienced traumatic events (e.g. Bonanno, 2004). A few studies were available that applied the concept of resilience to workplace contexts (e.g. Jensen *et al.,* 2008) and this work had inspired leading researchers with an interest in stress in social work to explore the potential contribution resilience might make to improving wellbeing in this context (Collins 2007; Collins *et al.,* 2010). There was, however, a lack of in-depth analysis of the nature of resilience in social workers, or insight into the underpinning competencies and how they might

be enhanced.

This programme of research was developed to address the gaps in the literature in relation to the meaning of resilience in the social work context and the lack of published research to guide the development of interventions to enhance resilience. The literature search, therefore, had two key aims: firstly, to identify definitions of resilience and the competencies associated with it and secondly, to identify whether an evidence base existed regarding how it could be enhanced.

2.3 Resilience research in children

The majority of the studies available at the time focused on understanding resilience in childhood, typically exploring why some children are able to manage adverse childhood experiences successfully whilst others struggle (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011). Early researchers found that some children had specific traits which enabled them to be resilient during periods of adversity (Anthony, 1974), whereas others considered resilience to be a personal resource developed through life experience (Rutter, 1999). The move away from the notion of resilience as a trait to resilience as a learned behaviour indicated that it was possible to foster the quality in vulnerable children to improve their life chances (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011).

Subsequent conceptualisations of resilience in childhood tended to see it as a combination of personality characteristics and a learned ability which enable a child to utilise the support mechanisms necessary for successful coping. It is important to acknowledge, however, that these characteristics are both culturally and situationally specific (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011). Recent research has focused on how inter-personal and intra-personal resources can be developed to enable successful management of adversity and emphasises that professionals can play a significant part in such development (Daniel *et al,* 1999).

2.4 Resilience research with adults and occupational groups

Resilience as a concept within adult experience had received limited attention. Indeed, in 2006 Campbell-Sills *et al.,* (p.586), argued that 'little is known about how resilience operates in adulthood' and that, compared to explorations of stress and trauma, limited attention had been given to how

resilience might contribute to adult flourishing.   It is important to emphasise, however, that some notable studies had investigated the role played by resilience in protecting psychological well-being in adults who had experienced traumatic events such as bereavement, war and terrorism (e.g. Bonanno, 2004).

Some authors had recognised the potential of resilience as an alternative approach to managing stress and adversity.   It was argued that the focus on salutogenic rather than pathogenic approaches to problems could be useful in improving wellbeing and performance (e.g. Coutu, 2002).   Indeed, the concept of resilience was gradually recognised as having the potential to help adults who experience stressful work to develop more adaptive coping mechanisms to help them protect their wellbeing.   Furthermore, the potential for resilience to be enhanced through training was considered to be particularly appropriate for people working in emotionally challenging environments (Campbell-Sills *et al.,* 2006).

In order for resilience to maximise its potential in workplace settings, a more in-depth understanding of its nature was necessary.   Resilience in adults has been defined in various ways but in the field of occupational psychology it is generally accepted to be a "dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (Luthar *et al.,* 2000:543).   Although a useful starting point for the current programme of research, this definition was considered overly generalised and provided no guidance on how resilience could be developed.   During the initial stages of the research, a definition of resilience provided by Pooley and Cohen (2010) was considered more useful: 'the potential to exhibit resourcefulness by using available internal and external resources in response to different contextual and developmental challenges' (p.34).   This perspective considers resilience as synonymous with resourcefulness: i.e. the ability to respond to adversity positively and flexibly, to adjust to change and to retain a sense of control over the environment.

Some early studies had identified competencies thought to underpin resilience at work.   For example, Klarreich (1998) emphasised an internal locus of control, optimism, social support and the effective regulation of

cognitions and beliefs as particularly important qualities in enhancing resilience to stress. Nonetheless, researchers had also emphasised the need for greater insight into the precise mechanisms underlying resilience in different occupational groups (Fisk & Dionisi, 2010). It was anticipated at the outset of the research that gaining greater insight into the context-specific nature of resilience had strong potential for developing evidence-based and appropriate interventions to enhance resilience and wellbeing in social workers.

2.5 Resilience in social work and other helping professions

The concept of resilience was beginning to be considered particularly relevant to those who work in the helping professions to aid effective stress management and, accordingly, promote wellbeing (e.g. McAllister & McKinnon, 2008). A few published papers had examined the personal capacities that were thought to underpin resilience in nurses (Jackson *et al.,* 2011), doctors (Jensen *et al.,* 2008) and social workers (Collins, 2007; 2008; Howe, 2008). A study of family doctors conducted by Jensen *et al.,* (2008) highlighted the importance of several factors with the potential to enhance resilience: work-life balance, effective communication skills, successful peer-support mechanisms and enhanced self-awareness. Literature reviews by Collins (2007; 2008) were also useful in recognising the importance of positive emotions, effective coping strategies, social support and an optimistic outlook as likely key components of resilience in social work contexts. Other papers emphasised the importance of emotional intelligence and accurate empathy in promoting resilience and managing stress in social work settings (Morrison, 2007). Research conducted with Canadian social workers by Stalker *et al.,* (2007) was particularly informative. Findings indicated that social workers who were more goal oriented, had more social support and who utilised effective coping strategies also tended to enjoy their work and find it personally fulfilling, although they too experienced work-related stress.

Although many of these papers were useful, published work which examined resilience in the helping professions were often derived from very small qualitative studies or from a synthesis of the existing literature (Collins, 2007). Literature searches of several databases failed to identify any

studies that examined the context-specific nature of resilience and ways in which it could be enhanced in social work practitioners.   This gap in the literature was a key driver for the research studies.

Section 3: Epistemology and Methodology

The epistemological and methodological position taken has been influenced by a long career in social work and several years as a social work academic, whereby the link between practice, theory and research has been a source of particular interest.   This section will outline the approach taken in the research programme and provide a rationale for this position.   A brief description of the methods used in each output will be provided, to be examined in more detail in Section Four.   One of the potential pitfalls of a PhD by publication, i.e. a lack of theoretical and methodological coherence (Niven & Grant, 2012), will be addressed.   How the ethical considerations have been attended to will also be outlined.

It has long been recognised that there is a lack of evidence-based research which aims to inform improvements in social work practice (Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), 2005).   Many research studies in social work tend to be based on very small samples and use qualitative analysis. Although such studies can produce rich and interesting data, transferability is problematic.   Alternatively, but less frequently, research is based on data obtained from large cohort studies on areas of concern for social workers in general, but such studies frequently fail to address the nuances of individual lives or provide specific guidance to inform changes in social work practice. Unlike nursing and related professions, there are few studies in social work that combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to knowledge production.

This methodological imbalance appears to stem from historical epistemological disagreement.   Morgan (2007) has argued that a shift in social science away from quantitative to qualitative methods in the late twentieth century reflected the move away from outmoded positivism to favoured constructivism.   A new paradigm subsequently emerged which regarded quantitative and qualitative methods as fundamentally opposed (Morgan, 2007).   For social work academics, this paradigm shift led to the rejection of positivist approaches and the associated quantitative methods and a move towards qualitative methods and constructivist ideas (Wakefield, 1995).   This has resulted in a paucity of quantitative studies in

the field.   The implications of this for social work research has been widely debated (e.g. Scourfield & Maxwell, 2010).   Indeed, the two most recent Research Assessment Exercises (RAE) expressed concern about the lack of quantitative research and mixed-methods approaches in UK social work research (McCambridge *et al.,* 2007).

The disagreements underpinning tensions between quantitative and qualitative methods became clear whilst studying for a MA in Social Policy, where much of the required reading related to epistemology (Smith, 1998), the foundations of social scientific knowledge, and the associated paradigm shifts (Kuhn, 1962).   The contested nature of reality and truth, and the associated move from positivist to constructivist approaches to knowledge generation was particular interesting.   Although post-modern and realist ideas, particularly constructivism and interactionism, were initially attractive when framing the research presented in this thesis, the emphasis on subjectivity and the potential lack of transferability was difficult to reconcile. On the other hand, the application of wholly positivist approaches to knowledge generation was also problematic, particularly the suggestion that speculation can and should be eradicated from empirical evidence and that deduction was the only true method of data production (Smith, 1998).   This implied that reflexivity could play little part in the research process, which was incongruent with the nature of social work values.   What emerged was an interest in using approaches to research which recognised that: a) knowledge is both constructed and based on the reality of the world we live in and b) which stressed the importance of reflexivity.   A desire for a "middle ground" became particularly important.

Developing a research interest around work-related stress and resilience in social work contexts warranted an approach which measured the amount of stress experienced and the attributes associated with resilience, as well as one which also recognised variation in personal experiences.   An observation from practice was that stress was widespread in social workers, with many possessing similar personal attributes, coping styles and protective factors.   It was also clear that people's individual and inter-relational responses to the stress they experienced varied, as did the relationship between the demands of the work and their particular reactions;

this also warranted investigation.   An appropriate approach to the study of resilience in social workers seemed to require the use of qualitative and quantitative methods; more specifically, a pluralist approach to research methodology that moved away from hard oppositional epistemologies (Morgan, 2007).

3.1. Pragmatism

Pragmatism, as an approach to knowledge construction, recognises the existence and importance of the natural and physical world while also having a high regard for the reality of perceptions, experiences and actions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).   This rejection of the traditional divisions in philosophical perspectives facilitated a different approach, emphasising the need to utilise the most appropriate research methodologies to address particular research questions.   Pragmatic approaches do not merely emphasise the pursuit of knowledge, but the importance of applying this knowledge to real-world problems (Welford *et al.,* 2011) which is particularly attractive.   Furthermore, pragmatism offers a researcher freedom of methodological choices with decisions made on the goodness-of-fit between the method and a particular research question (Patton & Patton, 2002).

One of the criticisms of a pragmatic approach, is that it can be perceived as a Trojan horse for positivism (Giddings, 2007), whereby researchers hide their desire for statistical "certainty" by including a tokenistic qualitative element which is insufficiently integrated.   This critique is based on the view that it merely offers a new name for old concepts. It fails to recognise that pragmatism offers a new methodological paradigm based on a philosophical and ontological shift which is designed to address the dichotomy of the quantitative and qualitative divide (Morgan, 2007).   A pragmatic approach sidesteps ontology by arguing that what is known about the world is known through human experience and therefore seeks to solve problems identified though experience (Neale, 2009).   Pragmatism also differs from quantitative and qualitative approaches to problem solving, incorporating a new approach to reasoning, rejecting induction (building theory from data) used in qualitative research and deduction (testing theory from data) which is used in quantitative research to abduction (where ideas are derived from observation and subsequently tested from data).

Additionally it rejects the view that the world can only be experienced with objectivity or subjectivity, arguing that all research moves through different objective and subjective reference points. Pragmatism prefers to see the relationship of the researcher to the research process as intersubjective where concepts have a shared resonance.

A pragmatic approach, therefore, was selected as the most appropriate way to address the questions posed during the research.   Determining at which points in a research programme different methods are adopted can be complex (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012).   The philosophical approach of pragmatism does affect the type of methodology selected.   Some approaches to research such as a qualitative phenomenological approach are more inclined to favour the subjective and are therefore more difficult to reconcile to pragmatism's philosophical position (Rosenthal, 1980).   Others such as thematic analysis can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches.   The following section provides an overview of the research methodologies utilised in the submitted outputs and provides an explanation for their selection.

3.2 Quantitative cross sectional questionnaires
The collection of data using standardised measures and self-reported observations obtained from a representative sample allows for the inference of the results to the wider population (Rattray & Jones, 2007).   Results can also identify relationships between variables and variations between groups.

In Outputs Two, Three, Four and Five, cross-sectional questionnaires were used to collect data.   A range of widely-used and well-validated measures was included.   In Output Two, scales were used to assess resilience as well as variables such as empathy, social support and reflective abilities. These measures were selected to assess the competencies discussed in Section Two which previous researchers and commentators had associated with resilience in occupational samples.

The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12: Goldberg & Williams, 1988) was used to assess psychological distress in Output Two.   This measure is very widely used in a range of community, clinical and occupational settings and normative scores are available from a range of occupational groups

(Stride *et al.,* 2007) thus comparisons can be made between levels of psychological distress reported by social workers and other professionals. Indeed, one of the key findings of Output Two was that the level of psychological wellbeing of the social work students sampled was poorer than many other occupational groups. The validity of these measures in relation to the study population was assessed and several were used in subsequent studies (Outputs Three, Four and Five). Output Five utilised a longitudinal design including some of these validated measures plus a qualitative element.

A cross-sectional survey was also used In Outputs Six and Seven. As these outputs aimed to examine an issue that had not previously been investigated (i.e. opinions of social work educators on resilience and the development of an emotional curriculum in general), no existing measures were available. The survey questions were developed by the author in collaboration with the research team. The measures were constructed in accordance with best practice using a systematic, logical and structured approach to maximise reliability and validity (Neale, 2009; Rattray & Jones, 2007). All the questionnaires used were piloted before implementation to ensure they were valid and reliable; their adjustment was based on comments received (Aveyard, 2014).

The main benefits of utilising surveys for data collection is that they are relatively quick to complete, economical and the data analysis is not overly complex (Bowling, 1997). They can also be helpful in obtaining information on self-reported behaviours and beliefs anonymously (Neuman & Krueger, 2003). Although quantitative measures have many advantages and are widely used to explore relationships between stressors, outcomes and protective/risk factors, it should be noted that they are unable to capture depth and detail (Neale, 2009) particularly if they are used without recourse to other methods.

It is important to note that the process of design in quantitative studies is not neutral or wholly objective. This was mitigated by the rigorous design and use of evidence based judgments and reflexivity (Marshall, 2002) which is discussed in more detail below. Although the research presented in this

thesis may be described as quantitatively dominant (Neale, 2009), it is not informed by a positivist epistemology but from one which favours abduction and regards the research process as intersubjective and that data generated as transferable not generalisable.

3.3 Qualitative Methods: Thematic Content Analysis

Qualitative methods were used in many of the outputs to obtain richer understandings of the nature of resilience in social workers and information on other issues such as strategies used by social work educators to enhance resilience in students.   Each of the studies used a similar research method for data analysis.   Outputs One, Five, Six and Seven used thematic analysis to analyse the qualitative data obtained.   In Outputs Five, Six and Seven this was combined with quantitative data collection; the benefits of using a mixed-methods approach are revisited below.

In Output One, a series of three questions was used to elicit free text response from participants regarding the nature of resilience.   In Output Five, data from students' reflective accounts of their emotional experiences in practice was utilised.   In Outputs Six and Seven semi-structured interviews were used to provide more detailed responses of social work educators on the emotional curriculum which supported the quantitative data obtained.

Unlike quantitative forms of content analysis, where proportions of respondents answering in particular ways are calculated, in thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) themes are drawn from the data and coded semantically, with sub themes identified and subsequently analysed for inter-coder reliability.   Thematic analysis is very widely used and of considerable appeal to those pursuing a pragmatic approach to research and can be applied in a wide range of research contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2006).   Thematic analysis offers "theoretical freedom" (Braun & Clarke 2006:5) and the ability to obtain a rich and detailed account of complex data.   One of its advantages is that issues and themes emerge from the data which may not be detected at first glance although continuity or contradiction of statements in any one individual account can be difficult

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to track (Braun & Clarke, 2006).   For this research programme this form of analysis had strong potential to enrich understanding of resilience and associated competencies.

3.4 Utilising a Mixed-methods Approach

Mixed-methods approaches allow different kinds of research questions to be addressed empirically at different levels within the same project.   This complementarity of research approaches may enhance reliability and credibility, enabling triangulation if the findings generate consistent results (Bronstein and Kovacs, 2013).   A mixed-methods approach also has the potential to compensate for mono-methodological limitations and counter-balance the shortcomings of each method (Ponterotto *et al.,* 2013).

A perceived weakness of mixed-methods research is that a single researcher may be perceived as finding it overly challenging to conduct both qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This risk was mitigated by working alongside Prof. Kinman who is very experienced in quantitative methods and mixed approaches.   This has facilitated personal growth and development which would not have been possible working as a sole researcher whose experience was mainly restricted to qualitative methodologies.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Social researchers are required to comply with a code of ethics which informs research design and execution (Seedhouse, 2009).   In all of the submitted works, ethical codes of practices of the University of Bedfordshire and the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2009) have been complied with. The research was also conducted with reference to the British Psychological Society's guidance for conducting online research (BPS, 2013).   These ethical frameworks are based on respect for participants, maximising benefit and minimising harm, confidentiality, informed consent and the importance of voluntary participation.   Furthermore as Neale (2009) argues, fundamental to ethical research are the values and attitudes, knowledge and skills of the researcher and are assured through experience and reflection.

Using Output Five as an example, of how research ethics was considered in

the design and implementation of the research.   In this and other studies, research participants were students at the University of Bedfordshire.   As a researcher "in situ", particular vigilance was required to ensure students did not feel obligated to participate, their confidentiality and anonymity was protected, and enable supports to be in place if the research process caused distress (Neale, 2009).

For the study it was important that students were giving their informed consent to the research. To achieve this information was provided about the research topic, with a clear statement explaining that participation was voluntary and non-participation would not be detrimental to their studies. Students were also informed that they could withdraw their consent at any time.   As some students (n=4) stated that they preferred not to take part, it can be assumed that participants did not feel any undue pressure.   Any queries students raised were answered before consent was sought.

Neale (2009) asserts that special attention is necessary in research relationships where a dependent relationship exists and this was a key consideration in this study.   In this study with one of the researchers also being a lecturer additional measures were made to assure confidentiality and not compromise that relationship. This involved ensuring the anonymity of individual students' responses in the data collected to avoid comparisons to other work that had been academically assessed.   Students completed questionnaires on line using a password-protected website maintained by a professional survey design organisation.   The original data with student identifiers was not seen by the lecturer who also taught on the programme with only anonymised data shared across the whole research team. In writing up the research, this confidentiality was also assured as no names were referred to in the finalised paper.

The wellbeing of participants is vital when conducting research on sensitive topics. Although no adverse emotional reactions were anticipated, participants were informed about the services on offer from the University counselling service; who had been alerted to possible referrals from the student cohort. Throughout the research process reflexivity has been utilised to ensure that the principles of good ethical research have been

abided by and that the wellbeing of participants is secured.

Section 4: Evaluating the Works

This section provides a critique of the selected outputs, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses and identifying their contribution to the generation of knowledge.   The process of peer review and subsequent redrafting and eventual publication in well-respected, peer-reviewed journals has been extremely helpful in refining approaches, content and argument, developing academic rigour whilst also honing more basic academic writing skills.   Many social work journals strongly emphasise methodological thoroughness and the peer review process has facilitated the development of a greater understanding of research design, data analysis and the reporting of findings.   Writing the book chapters and resource guides (Outputs Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven, a and b) has developed writing skills for a practitioner audience.

To aid the process of critical evaluation evaluative frameworks have been utilised.   The seven quality criteria for quantitative research set out by Harden *et al.,* (1999) were used to evaluate the quantitative studies. These criteria stress the importance of a thorough literature review; clearly stated aims and objectives; a clear description of the focus for the study; description of the sample; clarity of methodology; collaborations and corroboration in the data analysis and original data submitted to demonstrate interpretation.   Critical evaluation of the qualitative studies was informed by the work of Popay *et al.,* (1999).   Their comprehensive set of evaluative criteria includes the importance of studies reporting the subjective meaning of research participants, adequate description of the findings, evidence of data quality and its potential for transferability.

There are few evaluative frameworks developed to assist in the critical appraisal of mixed-methods research.   The validation framework for mixed-methods research developed by Leech *et al.,* (2010) is an exception. This framework has elements shared with other evaluative frameworks; a strong literature review, methodological clarity.   However, they emphasise that the choice of a mixed-methods approach should be clearly justified and

for the findings to be reported in an integrated way with their applicability to practice clearly articulated.

A brief description of each output is provided below, together with an analysis of impact and contribution to knowledge generation.

4.1. Output One
Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2013).   Bouncing back: Personal conceptualisations of resilience in experienced social workers and trainees.

Using a lay theories perspective, this paper aimed to develop a greater understanding of personal conceptualisations of resilience in both social workers and social work students.   It further explored the perceived importance of resilience and how it might be enhanced.   Comparing the personal representations of resilience expressed by participants with 'academic' definitions drawn from the literature review was also a key aim of this study.

The output analysed qualitative data from a series of open-ended questions elicited from a short questionnaire completed by 100 qualified social workers and 200 students.   Thematic analysis was utilised to explore the meaning of resilience, its perceived importance and how it might be enhanced.   Similarities and differences in representations expressed by trainees and qualified staff were explored.   Considerable variation in personal meanings of resilience emerged, with experienced social workers typically articulating a more complex and multi-faceted understanding than students.   The breadth of responses, alongside the wide range of underpinning competencies previously identified in the literature, meant that developing a precise definition of resilience was impossible.   It was therefore concluded that resilience should be used as a rubric, comprising a range of conceptualisations, skills and strategies relevant to the context of social work.   The implications of the findings for the development of interventions to enhance resilience were considered and recommendations for how they might inform subsequent training and education were discussed, demonstrating the potential for transferability (Popay *et al.,*

1998).

Aveyard (2014) argues that questionnaires used in qualitative research should be appraised carefully.   This is particularly important where personal judgment about individuals' responses may be inferred.   The questions developed for the study were general, simply phrased and not controversial.   The method used was considered appropriate to capture a range of personal representations from a large group of people.   Whilst a focus group or personal interviews may have elicited more in-depth data, the sample size would have been restricted and transferability compromised.   Focus groups may also have led to a false consensus with less assertive participants reluctant to speak out, especially if their views conflicted with those expressed by others (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990).

The data obtained was rich, unstructured and plentiful.   As the lead researcher, it was important to avoid the pitfall of mistaking idiosyncratic ideas expressed by participants for representative themes (Bryman, 2007). The use of template analysis (King, 2004) was used to identify the frequency of individual themes and how they were related (Waring & Wainwright, 2008).   Template analysis is a qualitative approach which can be applied to text derived from many epistemological positions.   The technique involves the development of a coding 'template', which summarises themes emerging from the data.   In the development of the initial template, some *a priori* codes were identified from the literature, which were expected to be relevant to the analysis.   A sub-section of the data was read and the *a priori* codes modified and/or dispensed with and new themes added.   This working template was agreed by the research team and the remaining data analysed.   Subsequent themes were added when identified with the final template becoming the basis for interpretation and reporting.

One of the strengths of this output is the emphasis placed on highlighting the importance of practitioners' personal understandings of resilience (Popay *et al.,* 1998).   The need to be succinct when reporting the findings, however, meant that representing the richness of the data was challenging.

The size of the sample is unusual in qualitative studies and the time and effort required to analyse the data was considerable.   In retrospect, when designing the study, the management of this volume of data should have been considered.   This was an excellent learning experience.   Owing to the need for brevity in both the questionnaire and the journal article, the role played by gender, status and culture in conceptualisations of resilience expressed remained unexplored.   This has been identified as a priority for future research.

Although this paper has only recently been published, it has been viewed 187 times on the journal website.

4.2 Output Two
Kinman, G. & Grant, L. (2011).   Exploring stress resilience in trainee social workers: the role of emotional and social competencies.

Output Two built on the findings of Output One (Output One was completed before Output Two but publication delayed) by identifying the key competencies that underpin resilience in social work students and the extent to which resilience is related to psychological wellbeing.   Several emotional and social competencies were examined as predictors of resilience in a sample of 240 students from two UK universities.   Although this study was cross-sectional and causality cannot be imputed, the findings highlighted the importance of inter- and intra-individual emotional competencies in promoting resilience and enhancing well-being.   High levels of psychological distress were found, but social work students tended to be more resilient and less distressed if they were more emotionally intelligent, socially competent, demonstrated accurate empathy (i.e. able to show empathic concern and take the perspective of others but avoid empathic distress) and had stronger reflective abilities.

The competencies measured in this study were identified from a wide-ranging literature review and themes emerging from Output One.   A questionnaire comprising validated measures to assess the competencies, resilience and psychological distress was completed online and the findings analysed.   One criticism of quantitative research is that measures selected are often of interest to the researchers, not to the participants (Humphries,

2008).   Although the literature review played a part in the research design, considerable weight was placed on the initial data collected from Output One, making the method and measure more acceptable to participants (Ryan *et al.,* 2001).   The data obtained from this study were analysed primarily by Prof Kinman, but I quickly learned the appropriate techniques which were then utilised in subsequent studies.

This research met the seven quality criteria for quantitative research set out by Harden *et al.,* (1999) as it clearly outlined the rationale, the measures utilised and original data was included which would to enable another researcher to replicate the study.

Although it did not claim that the findings could be generalised to other populations (Humphries, 2008) nor that cause and effect were established, the cross-sectional design and fair sample size indicated a strong potential for transferability to the wider population of social work students. Nonetheless, it should be recognised that respondents were from only two Universities so transferability cannot be demonstrated unambiguously. This paper has received more than 45 citations.   The article has been included on the reading lists of several post-qualifying training courses, demonstrating its utility to the social work community.   Although a co-authored output, I was responsible for the contribution of the social-work specific content and the discussion section.

4.3 Output Three
Grant L (2013).   Hearts and minds: aspects of empathy and wellbeing in social work students.

The survey findings from Output Two were extended with a further group of 359 social work students to investigate the notion of "accurate" empathy in social work and how this might be enhanced.   Based on a review of the literature, accurate empathy was defined as the ability to: take the perspective of others and show compassion and warmth; process the "affect" of the interaction and demonstrate self-other awareness and emotional control.   Findings indicated that students with more advanced reflective skills were better able to regulate their emotional reactions to the relationships they formed in practice; they tended to avoid over-involvement

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with service users and experienced less empathic distress. Accurate empathy was positively associated with resilience and psychological wellbeing. This suggests that the social work curriculum should place greater focus on helping students develop their perspective-taking abilities and empathic concern, and on helping them develop emotional boundaries between themselves and service users. The development of self-awareness and emotional regulation via reflective practice was emphasised.

The sample was substantial, suggesting that validity could be achieved (Aveyard, 2014) but was limited to two Universities. Although, as in Output Two, the correlational design meant that causality could not be established, the findings highlighted the protective role played by reflective abilities in mitigating psychological distress in social work students.

As discussed above, the quality of outputs should be measured by the extent to which research makes a contribution to knowledge, is relevant to practice and builds upon existing research (Tooley & Darby, 1998). Output Three's findings are directly applicable to the social work curriculum and further emphasise the findings of Output Two: the importance of developing emotional literacy, self-regulation and emotion management through reflective practice. Prior to this study, little research had established an evidence base for the benefits of reflection in enhancing empathy; the output therefore makes a strong contribution to the knowledge base and curriculum design. Output Three was single authored and was an opportunity for my voice to be heard independently, which was crucial for personal development as an academic.

Although several limitations were recognised, including the lack of a social work specific measure of empathy and the reliance on quantitative methodology, it has proved to be of interest. It has already received two citations and 263 views. Following the publication of this output, a co-authored chapter on empathy in the helping professions in an edited book was commissioned and is awaiting publication (Kinman & Grant, 2014).

A priority for subsequent research is to build on the research using qualitative or mixed-methods methodologies.

4.4 Output Four
Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2012).   Enhancing wellbeing in social work students; building resilience in the next generation.

Findings from the first three outputs indicated that the social work curriculum should place greater emphasis on building individual competencies associated with resilience.   Output Four outlined and discussed several evidence-based interventions with the potential to enhance resilience and wellbeing in social work students.   The output outlined the development by the authors of a series of 'Wellbeing Days' which introduced students to a range of techniques designed to develop resilience and its underpinning competencies.

Referencing the literature base, this paper provides a strong rationale for the introduction of evidence-based techniques to help students enhance self-care and manage stress more effectively (Harden *et al.,* 1999).   A particular strength is that it demonstrates how prior research findings can be applied in the social work curriculum to the direct benefit of social work students.   Emphasising application of research to practice meets many of the standards for quality of research in social work (e.g. SCIE, 2005).

The 'Wellbeing Days' have been delivered to trainee, newly-qualified and experienced social workers working for several local authorities and charities.   Feedback from attendees has been extremely positive.   A longitudinal evaluation of the impact of the training sessions with a wait-list protocol is ongoing.   It is anticipated that this will provide a strong evidence base for the value of this training.

A potential criticism of Outputs Two and Three is that the burden of responsibility is placed on individuals to promote their own resilience.   It is acknowledged in both outputs, however, that interventions which aim to enhance individual coping abilities without addressing the structural causes of stress are not effective or sustainable, and that employers have

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responsibilities for safeguarding the wellbeing of their staff (Health and Safety Executive, 2010).   Little is known about the features of the organisational culture and the knowledge, skills and attributes of managers required to enhance resilience and this requires urgent attention.

Several subsequent studies published in high impact journals have cited this output (e.g. Rajan-Rankin, 2013; Beddoe *et al.,* 2013; Collins, 2013).   To date, it has received 12 citations and 1,759 views.

4.5 Output Five
Grant, L., Alexander, K. & Kinman, G. (2014).   What's all this talk about emotion: Developing Emotional Literacy, in Social Work students.

The findings so far have clear implications for enhancing the social work curriculum and the training of social workers more generally.   They informed this study, which evaluated evidence-based interventions designed to enhance key competencies associated with resilience. Although this paper was co-authored, I undertook the research analysis and wrote the article.

In an attempt to demonstrate causality, this output aimed to examine whether interventions designed to develop reflective ability and emotional awareness would enhance resilience over time.   The study utilised a mixed-method pre–post design whereby social work students initially completed an online survey and wrote reflective logs.   The intervention was based on a framework of emotional intelligence developed by Salovey *et al.,* (2008) which involved introducing students to the emotional realities of social work practice and the importance of emotional regulation skills.   A particularly innovative aspect of this study was the use of videos of three experienced social workers from diverse fields describing a series of practice situations which had provoked strong personal emotional reactions and reflecting on how they had managed these reactions.   Following the intervention, students completed the questionnaire for a second time and wrote reflective logs.

The study found firm evidence that the teaching intervention improved reflective ability and emotional intelligence, although some students with

underdeveloped reflective ability before the intervention showed no improvement.   Since reflective ability has been identified as a key competency for social work practice and personal wellbeing, this highlights the importance of further investigating the scope for its development and possibly for better recruitment procedures.

This study was originally designed to utilise a quasi-experimental wait-list protocol (Balnaves & Caputi, 2001).   However, the group of social work students from another campus (who were scheduled to be trained after the primary data was collected) failed to engage with the project.   This was partly because the sickness of a key member of staff meant that the project was not sufficiently "championed".   This highlights the difficulties commonly encountered in this sort of research design (Humphries, 2008) and was a valuable learning experience.   Motivating participants in longitudinal research is difficult as they can often lose interest.   Nonetheless, although a control group would have strengthened the findings, the potential benefits of the interventions was highlighted.

The strength of this output is the construct validity, in that the choice of a mixed-methods approach is clearly articulated with the integrated data analysis demonstrating interpretive rigour (Leech *et al.,* 2010).   Data findings were reported in a manner which avoided the artificial paradigmatic dichotomy often created between quantitative and qualitative research methods, resulting in a blended reporting of the key findings which evidenced triangulation and inferential consistency (Leech *et al.,* 2010).

This output was published in 2014 so its citations are yet to be recorded. Nonetheless, it has already attracted 126 views.

4.6 Outputs Six and Seven

Output Six

Grant, L., Kinman, G. & Baker, S. (2014).   "Put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others": Social work educators' perspectives on an "emotional curriculum".

Output Seven

Grant, L., Kinman, G. & Baker, S. (2014).   *Resilience in the Social Work curriculum: a research report.*

The research outputs discussed so far have focused on the meaning of resilience, the competencies of social work students and the impact of interventions to enhance key competencies and wellbeing.   Little was known about the extent to which universities were providing training to foster effective self-care strategies and resilience or educators' attitudes to the development of "an emotional curriculum".   Outputs Six and Seven addressed these issues.   They resulted from a commission by the Higher Education Academy to examine the extent to which universities in England were preparing social work students for the emotional demands of the profession.   This study aimed to examine:

- how social work educators perceived emotional resilience and the extent to which they see it as intrinsic to the curriculum;
- the extent to which emotional resilience and its underpinning qualities feature in existing social work curricula and to explore the teaching and learning strategies currently utilised;
- educators' views about the development of an emotional curriculum.

The study utilised a mixed-methods approach comprising: a) an online survey designed to assess educators' attitudes to emotional resilience and b) follow-up interviews of a sub-group of respondents.   Descriptive data from the questionnaire were utilised, whilst the data from the

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semi-structured interviews were analysed using thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).   The study was designed in conjunction with the second author.

Two outputs resulted: Output Six is a journal article which contextualises the research, presents the findings and discusses the outcomes and their practical implications, whereas Output Seven is a report that presents the findings more fully.   Assessing the impact of these recently published outputs is difficult.   Nonetheless, the results have been widely disseminated at social work educators' conferences and a seminar is planned to present/debate the results.

The findings provided considerable insight into the attitudes and practice of social work educators relating to developing resilience and self-care. Some were particularly noteworthy: that emotional resilience is a multi-dimensional, context-specific concept; that social work lecturers perceive high levels of stress in their students; and that an evidence-based emotional curriculum is considered vital in supporting students.   Effective self-care strategies were generally considered vital to enhancing professional practice as well as personal wellbeing.   The majority of respondents, however, required more information and training to deliver the emotional curriculum.   Some educators were concerned that an overt focus on building individual competencies to manage work-related stress and protect wellbeing "let employers off the hook".

The semi-structured interviews were conducted and transcribed by co-author three, (a research assistant).   Professor Kinman helped to design the research and data collection methods and to edit the completed texts.   I analysed the data and wrote the majority of both outputs.

Synthesising and integrating the qualitative and quantitative findings of a large complex study into a concise research report and journal article whilst ensuring that diverse opinions emerge proved challenging.   As Bronstein and Kovacs argue (2013), research reports based on well-designed mixed-methods research that are written accessibly can move the social work field forward.   This study indeed demonstrated that mixed-methods

research can offer a depth of analysis and understanding that may contribute to a détente in the debate between conflicting epistemologies (Caddigan & Pozzutto, 2006).   It is hoped they facilitate a wider understanding and constructive dialogue of how this methodology can contribute to knowledge generation and inform evidence-based interventions in the social work field.   More research utilising mixed-methods is planned.

4.7 Outputs Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven a and b.

Output Eight.

Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2014).   *What is resilience*?   in Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (Eds) (forthcoming, 2014).   Developing Resilience for Social Work Practice.

Output Nine.

Grant, L. & Brewer, R. (2014).   *The role of critical reflection and reflective supervision in enhancing resilience*, in Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (Eds) (forthcoming, 2014).   Developing   Resilience for Social Work Practice.

Output Ten.

Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2012).   Something for the Journey, The road to resilience Developing resilience for Social Work practice.

Output Eleven-a.

Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2014) Resilience in the helping professions and how it can be enhanced..

Output Eleven-b.

Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2013).   Resilience in the helping Professionals; A Research Briefing.

These submissions are grouped together as they all utilise the research findings discussed in the previous outputs to provide guidance for enhancing resilience in social workers (and, in the case of Output Eleven a

and b, helping professionals in general) and those who educate them. These outputs particularly demonstrate not only the importance of methodological rigour but relevancy to current policy and practice (Boaz & Ashby, 2007).

Output Eight is a peer-reviewed book chapter which draws on the research findings outlined above and other key sources to explore the nature of resilience in the social work setting.   Written specially for a practitioner audience, it provides vignettes to illustrate how the development of the competencies associated with resilience may aid the management of the professional challenges they face.   It provides practical advice to develop the competencies associated with resilience.   Drawing on the research it is co-authored, but was written by myself with editing undertaken by Professor Kinman.

Output Nine, a chapter from the same book, emphasises the importance of professional supervision for resilience; it places particular focus on the role of supervision in developing reflective thinking, a key component of the resilient social worker.   It also includes vignettes to demonstrate how reflective supervision can improve resilience for social workers and their managers.   Although a practising social worker was consulted on the relevance of the vignettes and is credited as a co-author, I was primarily responsible for its content.   At the time of writing, these chapters are in press so their impact cannot be assessed.   Nonetheless, they have been received enthusiastically by peer reviewers and the publishers who have predicted that the book will be widely read by social workers and make a significant contribution to the knowledge base.

Output Ten is a peer reviewed resource guide commissioned by Community Care Inform to help social workers understand the nature of resilience. Written in an accessible style it includes an evidence-based diagnostic tool to identify strengths and areas for development in personal resilience.   It has generated much interest and many practitioners from several countries have made contact providing feedback on the usefulness of the tool for improving wellbeing.   Several Local Authorities in the UK have also used

this resource with their social workers, which has resulted in the commissioning of several workshops and invited keynote presentations (Appendix Two).   One Local Authority has formally utilised the resource guide to support their supervisory processes.   Community Care has indicated that this output has been by far the most downloaded resource guide they have produced and have commissioned an accompanying guide for managers.

Outputs Eleven a and b are included to illustrate how the findings of the research programme are applicable to the wider group of helping professionals.   Commissioned by the Higher Education Academy, they have been targeted towards clinical practitioners and were presented as a professional briefing (Output Eleven-a) and a journal article (Output Eleven-b).   Together these outputs demonstrate how the work has created new opportunities to disseminate the research findings to different audiences and emphasise the applied nature of the knowledge generated.

4.8 Conclusion

Since these publications other authors have corroborated many of the research findings.   Fletcher and Sarkar (2013) conceptualised resilience as a personal resource that can be developed through training and life experience, potentially enabling people in demanding occupational settings to manage adversity more effectively.   A small qualitative study undertaken by Adamson *et al.* (2014) echoed the understanding of resilience, suggesting that resilience comprises three components: internal personal characteristics, organisational features of the practice context, and the ability to utilise external supportive resources.   Other studies have also supported the approach taken to social work education and training (Rajan-Rankin, 2013; de las Olas Palma-Garcia, & Hombrados-Mendieta, 2014)

Section 5:   Reflecting on the development of a research profile

Longstanding professional experience has influenced my research interests and focus.   Personal experience of observing varying degrees of stress and emotional resilience in social workers has impacted the nature of the research programme.   This section of the report begins with an analysis of how reflexivity has been employed to mitigate against researcher bias.   It then discusses the professional and personal development gained as a result of engaging in the research.

5.1 Reflexivity in research

The research programme has arisen from a desire to improve the wellbeing and performance of social workers and to provide them with tools to help them cope with the realities of practice.   Observing many excellent social workers who are no longer able to continue in the job due to burnout, and others who had begun to compromise their professional values and integrity as a survival technique was a major motivator in the selection of the research topic.   As Clough and Nutbrown (2012: 22) point out "we do what we do because we are committed to the purposes of our research".   As a consequence there is no doubt that being a social work practitioner has affected the direction and nature of this research and continues to do so.   It has therefore been important throughout to ensure reflexivity in the research process.

Defined by Marshall (2002:176) as a "perpetual source of questioning and self-revelation", reflexivity ensures that the researcher is constantly aware of their own feelings, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes and how these might impact on research design and why and who is being studied (Payne & Payne, 2004).   Reflexivity is essential to ensure that researchers acknowledge their position from the outset in terms of the research process and to ensure compliance with ethical requirements.

As a developing researcher, reflexivity has ensured a continued openness and willingness to listen to ideas suggested by others.   It has also underpinned necessary reflection on inherent values, beliefs and personal

perspectives that may influence research design, execution, analysis and interpretation of results.   Applying research to practice has been a cornerstone of this programme and listening to social workers' views and feedback of the interventions developed has been crucial in development from a novice to an expert in the field.

5.2 Personal and professional development

The research has been possible due to the collaborative partnership with Prof. Kinman.   This collaboration has been fruitful in developing my research profile and enhancing my skills, as well as the production of a number of high quality outputs.   Indeed professional development from novice to an experienced researcher and published author has been made possible with her support, mentorship and guidance.   The relationship developed from a traditional supervisor/supervisee relationship to a true partnership of equals and allowed for the development of a body of well regarded, widely cited and applied research.   My development in academic writing skills and my confidence in conducting research and writing for different audiences have been substantial.

My unique contribution to this partnership has been an understanding of the realities of social work practice resulting from a long-standing professional background; this was pivotal for the development of the research from the outset.   This background has enabled strong links to be made with the world of social work, informed the research questions and design of the studies and has underpinned the credibility, acceptability and applicability of subsequent interventions.   My contribution to all the research and associated publications has been substantial both in the generation of the research ideas and their application to practice.   As outlined above, initially I was learning quantitative research methods which meant my contribution to Output Two was less than to the subsequent outputs. However, by the time Output Three was written I was responsible for both research design and analysis.   Subsequent outputs have been very much rooted in my practice knowledge and experience and have resulted in applied outputs (Outputs Eight, Nine, and Ten) having a demonstrable resonance with social work practitioners.

I have also sought to model the mentoring approach adopted by Prof. Kinman in encouraging other less experienced researchers and practitioners to become involved in the research (Outputs Five, Seven and Nine).   This collegiate approach has enhanced the professional development and research skills of colleagues; the voices of practitioners has also expanded the currency and relevance of the publications particularly in relation to the vignettes presented in Output Nine.

A PhD is designed to facilitate the development of skills that make up "academic craft" and allow the researcher to be seen as a professional researcher in their field (Brewer, 2007).   The PhD by publication route differs from a more traditional journey and with it comes opportunities and challenges.   In terms of professional development, the PhD by publication route demands a high level of discipline (Robins & Kanowski, 2008) which has required considerable tenacity in publishing the outputs contained in this thesis.   Without this motivator, the outputs may not have been published in a timely fashion.   This process has required a resolve, determination and personal resilience which have on occasion been challenging to maintain.   The peer review process, in particular, has been a steep learning curve and allowed the research to be subjected to rigorous appraisal and examination.   Indeed, it has been critical in the development of knowledge, skills and self-confidence for on-going scholarly activity (Robins & Kanowski, 2008).   Peer review has often resulted in adjustments to and re-focusing of the papers and has informed the design of subsequent research.   When faced with a rejection or a call for major modifications it is difficult to remain motivated when your PhD is resting on a positive result. Nonetheless, the long-term aim has kept me going and enabled me to revise and resubmit avoiding excessive procrastination.

The applied nature of the research and the development of a strong, internationally-recognised research profile have increased my confidence as a researcher.   Collating this thesis has also been useful in helping me evaluate the contribution made to the wider body of research and reflect on its original contribution to the field of social work.

Section 6: Conclusion

There is a consensus that the "crucial, defining quality of a doctorate is that it must display originality and constitute a contribution to knowledge" (Niven & Grant, 2012:107). As demonstrated above, I have conducted a sustained, critical investigation and evaluation of the resilience of social workers resulting in a body of work which has made a demonstrable, significant and original contribution to knowledge at a national level. Prior to this research, very little was known about the nature and implications of resilience in social work, despite increasing calls for staff to demonstrate this competency. The work, therefore, offers a strong contribution to the knowledge base. This section concludes the report and will focus on highlighting the impact and reach of the research studies.

6.1 Impact and reach of the outputs

The research has received considerable attention in the UK and internationally. As discussed above, the applied nature of the research has indeed been warmly welcomed within the academic and professional community with many invitations to present keynote lectures and workshops to Local Authorities, Charities and professional organisations, articles in professional magazines and extensive coverage in regional and national press and radio. Invitations to deliver keynotes at conferences across the country and internationally have also been satisfying and well received (Appendix Two). There have been many requests to deliver workshops on strategies to foster resilience; indeed, demand has now outstripped capacity and creative thinking is now required to disseminate the research findings to social workers nationally. It is hoped that the publication of the book on resilience and plans to develop an associated workbook may help meet this demand.

Expressions of interest from over 200 academics and professionals have been received and the launch of a professional network on resilience in the helping professions and a conference is planned for 2015.

Furthermore, the outputs have been utilised by several national social work bodies to illustrate the impact of emotional reactions to practice on wellbeing and practice. For example, the work has been used by Skills for Care and

the National Skills Academy, who support employers to develop the competencies of the nearly 1.6 million social care workers. The findings of the research programme have been disseminated widely resulting in commissioned projects from the Higher Education Academy and Community Care Inform. A book chapter on empathy in the helping professions is also in the publication phase, part of an edited book written by an eminent professor from Harvard University (Professor Doug Watt).

The research has directly led to an improved understanding of resilience in social work, the identification of some of the underlying competencies, and the development of an applied toolkit. The biggest compliment received in developing as an academic has been the feedback from social workers and students that the research resonates with the realities of their practice and, therefore, has genuine application to the real world. The research also has the potential to contribute to both improved recruitment and selection processes for social work students and social workers and to enhance retention strategies. The findings from Output Five, that the students with underdeveloped reflective skills may be unable to develop them subsequently through training and development, has serious implications for recruitment into the profession. Further research is required, however, particularly with regard to the potential for diagnostic testing resulting from the findings of the research presented in this thesis. This body of research also has the potential to inform improved retention in the social work and social care workforce which at the time of writing are considerable challenges faced by the sector (Skills for Care 2014).

Through the development of advanced, individual and systematic study, I have displayed an advanced knowledge of the field of study, expertise in a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods, and an original contribution. This results in a coherent programme of work which is comparable to a traditional PhD in the field. The PhD by publication route has allowed me to utilise professional knowledge, develop research skills and demonstrate direct practical application of ideas to the social work community.

All the published works have been subjected to rigorous peer review, and evaluated by social work academics. This process has contributed to my personal growth and development and a desire to keep investigating this important subject area.

6.3 Further Research

The programme of research is on-going with a longitudinal study of the impact of training in resilience on newly qualified social workers in the write up phase. Research in other areas such as the impact of mindfulness on the resilience of social workers is planned. Further research on compassion fatigue and satisfaction and crying is planned. Finally, and importantly, it is also proposed to undertake research into whether the qualities associated with resilience are linked to improved outcomes in direct practice. These research programmes have strong potential to improve the selection processes of both students and qualified workers, to improve working conditions of social workers and to ensure that workers have the emotional resilience necessary for their own psychological wellbeing and excellent professional practice.

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Appendix One: List of Published Works

The Outputs

1. Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2013). Bouncing back: Personal conceptualisations of resilience in experienced social workers and trainees. *Practice:Social Work in Action25 (5)* pp. 349-366

2. Kinman, G. & Grant, L. (2011). Exploring stress resilience in trainee social workers: the role of emotional and social competencies, *British Journal of Social Work*. 41, pp. 261–275

3. Grant. L. (2013). Hearts and minds: aspects of empathy and wellbeing in social work students. *Social Work Education: The International Journal.* 33 (3) pp. 338-352

4. Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2012). Enhancing wellbeing in social work students; building resilience in the next generation. *Social Work Education: The International Journal. 31, (5)*

5. Grant, L., Alexander, K. & Kinman, G. (2014). What's all this talk about emotion: Developing Emotional Literacy, in Social Work students. *Social Work Education An International Journal.* DOI:10.1080/02615479.2014.891012

6. Grant, L., Kinman, G. & Baker, S. (2014). "Put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others": Social work educators' perspectives on an "emotional curriculum" *British Journal of Social Work.*

7. Grant, L., Kinman, G. & Baker, S. (2014). *Resilience in the Social Work curriculum: a research report*, York, UK. HEA.

8. Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2014). *What is resilience*? in Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (Eds) (forthcoming, 2014). Developing Resilience for Social Work Practice. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK.

9. Grant, L. & Brewer, R. (2014). *The role of critical reflection and reflective supervision in enhancing resilience*, in Grant, L. & Kinman, G.

(Eds) (forthcoming, 2014).   Developing Resilience for Social Work
Practice.   Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK.

10. Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2012).   Something for the Journey, The road to
resilience   Developing resilience for Social Work practice Community
Care Inform http://www.ccinform.co.uk/

11. a. Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2014).   Resilience in the helping professions
and how it can be enhanced.   Journal of Health and Social Care
Education. 3(1), pp. 23-34.

11. b. Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2013).   *Resilience in the helping
Professionals; A Research Briefing*.   York, UK.   HEA.

Appendix Two: List of Invited Conferences, Consultancy and Grants

Conference Presentations

Grant, L. (2014).   Thinking about emotion: enhancing students' use of self in practice.   JSWEC Conference Royal Holloway University July, 2014

Grant, L. (2014).   Navigating your professional journey – developing emotional resilience.   Pride in Social Work Conference Stone UK.   Invited Key Note

Grant, L. (2013).   Emotional Resilience for Social Workers; thriving not merely surviving.   Valuing Social Work; Emotional Resilience Conference. Gateshead.   December, 2013.   Invited Key Note.

Kinman, G. & Grant, L. (2013).   Developing an emotional curriculum for 'helping professionals.   University of Bedfordshire Annual Conference, Luton.   July, 2013.

Grant, L. (2013).   Making the Shoes fit, understanding accurate empathy and how to develop it.   JSWEC Conference Royal Holloway University. July, 2013.

Grant, L., Kinman, G. & Baker, S. (2013).   Developing an Emotional Curriculum in Social Workers.   Innovation in Health & Social Care Learning and Teaching: HEA Health & Social Care, 2013 Annual Conference, Leeds. June, 2013.

Kinman, G. & Grant, L. (2013).   Enhancing emotional resilience and accurate empathy in social work students BPS Division of Occupational Psychology Conference, Chester.   January, 2013

Kinman, G. & Grant, L. (2012).   Developing student competencies and professional capabilities: The development of emotional literacy and resilience in social workers.   University of Bedfordshire Annual Conference, Luton. July,2012

Grant, L. (2012).   Something for the journey: Thriving in social work not just surviving.   Developing emotional resilience for practice Hertfordshire County Council Launch of the Academy for newly qualified social workers, Stevenage. May, 2012 Invited Key Note

Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2012).   Developing emotional literacy, resilience and wellbeing in social work students.   Research Seminar, University of

Sussex, April, 2012

Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2011).   Developing emotional literacy and reflective practice in social workers.   Conference on Emotional Intelligence in Practice, Leonardo de Vinci European Partnerships Project, Gzira, Malta, February, 2012

Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2011).   Emotional resilience in social work. National Organisation of Practice Teachers Annual Conference, Manchester, July, 2011

Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2011).   Protecting and developing the emotional resilience of trainee and newly qualified social workers.   SWAP HEA Teaching and Learning Event, University of Bedfordshire, April, 2012

Kinman, G. & Grant, L. & Leggetter, S. (2011).   Enhancing reflective practice, resilience and wellbeing in the caring professions.   Resilience Why Bother?   Conference, University of Brighton, May, 2011.

Kinman, G & Grant, L. (2010).   Emotional competencies, resilience and wellbeing in trainee social workers, British Psychological Society Division of Occupational Psychology Conference, Brighton, January, 2010.

Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2010).   Developing a curriculum to facilitate and support social work students to become better reflective practitioners and enhance their resilience to stress.   16th International Reflective Practice Conference, Bedford, June, 2010.

Grant, L. & Jones, K. (2010).   Mapping the Territory Historical contexts present frameworks and future challenges.   Practice Education Practice Educator Conference, Hertfordshire County Council Hertford UK, July, 2010

Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2010).   Emotional intelligence, reflective abilities and wellbeing in social workers.   RIPEN Seminar, University of Bedfordshire, May, 2010.

Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2009).   Developing emotional resilience in social work: supporting effective reflective practitioners, JSWEC Conference, The University of Hertfordshire, July, 2010.

Grant, L. & Kinman, G. (2009).   Developing emotional resilience in social work: Supporting better reflective practitioners, MRC Seminar, University of Bedfordshire, May, 2010.

Research Consultancy:

£500.00.   Consultancy and Training "Emotional Resilience in Social Workers and allied professionals", East Renfrewshire Council Glasgow (February, 2013).   (Grant, L., Kinman, G. & Alexander, K.)

£150.00.   Consultancy and Training "Enhancing Emotional Resilience in Children and Families Social Workers and associated professionals ",Key 2 Homes and Support for Young People Leaving Care Oxford (May, 2013). (Grant, L. & Kinman, G.)

£500.00.   Consultancy and Training "Developing emotional Resilience in Newly Qualified Social Workers.   Oxfordshire County Council, (July, 2013) (Grant, L. Kinman, G. & Alexander, K.)

£500.00.   Consultancy and Training "Understanding the benefits of emotional resilience for Social Workers InTrac training and consultancy in the field of Health & Social Care, focussing on the welfare of vulnerable   children, adults and their families (October, 2013).   (Grant, L. Kinman, G. & Alexander, K.)

Research Grants (Selected):

£5,000.   Central Bedfordshire Council Enhancing Emotional Resilience in Newly Qualified Social Workers (March, 2013).   (Grant, L. & Kinman, G.)

£2,500.   Higher Education Academy.   Emotional Resilience in the Social Work Curriculum; A study of HEI's in the UK. (January, 2013).   (Grant, L. & Kinman, G.)

£1,200.   Community Care Inform Development of Resource Guide (June, 2012).   (Grant, L. & Kinman, G.)

£20,000 (2010-2011).   Skills for Care Practice Educator Professional Standards Pilot Project. (Grant, L. for University of Bedfordshire.)

£500.   SWAP HEA (June, 2010).   Teaching and Learning Event. Seminar on protecting and developing the emotional resilience of trainee and newly qualified social workers. (Grant, L. & Kinman, G.)

£5,000.   IASR (2009 – 2010).   Research and Wellbeing in Social Work Students. (Grant, L.).

£6,000.   CETL (2008 – 2010).   Emotional intelligence, reflective abilities and wellbeing in trainee social workers. (Kinman, G. & Grant, L.)