Submitted in partial fulfilment of the Lancaster University Doctorate in Clinical Psychology,

February 2020

Doctoral Thesis

Young People's Experiences of Abuse and Conflict Within Their Intimate Partner

Relationships

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Statement of Total Word Counts

	Abstract	Main Text	Appendices (including tables, figures, and references)	Total
Thesis Abstract	300	-	-	300
Critical Review	230	8,099	11,410	19,739
Research Paper	220	8,379	10,121	18,720
Critical Appraisal	-	4,000	662	4,662
Ethics Documentation	-	3,725	4,789	8,514
Total	750	24,203	26,982	51,935

Young People's Experiences of Abuse and Conflict Within Their Intimate Partner

Relationships

Research shows *Adolescent Intimate Partner Abuse* (AIPA) is a widespread problem

with potential to impact significantly upon wellbeing. This thesis aimed to further the existing

body of knowledge from a psychologically orientated perspective.

Section one presents a meta-synthesis of qualitative studies exploring young people's

experiences of the intersection between AIPA and new technologies. This followed the

seven-step meta-ethnographic approach of Noblit and Hare (1988). Twelve eligible papers

were identified that yielded three themes relating to technology as a platform for creating

jealousy, and enabling the subsequent *monitoring,* and *control* of partners. Production of an

overarching theme referring to technology and protection of *'self-interests'* was enabled.

Findings suggest technology represents a motivator and means for carrying out AIPA and

that this occurs against a backdrop of adolescent development, including acquisition of

gendered roles.

Section two presents a descriptive study, employing semi-structured interviews, that

set out to explore young people's experiences of psychological wellbeing in relation to AIPA.

Participants were sixteen young people, aged 13 to 17 years, who had encountered self-

defined 'difficulties' within their relationships. Data gathered were analysed using thematic

analysis, resulting in the emergence of three themes that, when viewed as a whole, suggested

events surrounding abusive acts cause considerable negative emotional impact of an anxious

nature, and technology is regarded as integral to how problems manifest, contributing a

significant burden for mental health.

Section three is an extended critique of the research paper, considering the role of

personal positionality in shaping the research process and concluding that reflexivity in this

area is of particular relevance to those working within caring professions and undertaking research.

Taken together, the thesis offers insights relevant to practice, policy, and future research, including furthering of theory. Clinical psychologists are well positioned to implement and further these findings within their practice and wider activities.

Acknowledgements

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Young People's Reflections on the Intersection of Technology and Abuse within Their

Intimate Partner Relationships: A Meta-Synthesis

In the past ten years, there has been increasing focus on the role new technologies, such as smartphones and social media, play in adolescent intimate partner abuse (AIPA). This review brings together the findings of qualitative studies in this area using Noblit and Hare's (1988) meta-ethnographic approach for the synthesis of interpretive studies. Twelve papers were identified across searches of ten databases, covering a range of disciplines. The main eligibility criteria for papers were reporting first-person accounts of young people aged 10-24 years and being published within a peer-reviewed journal. Through the process of *reciprocal translation*, three third-order interpretations emerged: (1) *"Stay the f*** away": Jealousy and mistrust within a virtually connected peer network*; (2); *"I've got her password and she's got mine": Seeking reassurances through technology enabled monitoring*; and (3) *"Show me how much you love me": Controlling partners through technology-based requests*. An overarching reading of these, the *synthesis of translation,* was enabled: *Technology as increasing young peoples' focus on intimate relationship 'self-interests' against a backdrop of gendered roles – A risk for AIPA*. Findings suggest that technology represents both a motivator and means for carrying out AIPA and that this occurs against a backdrop of adolescent development, including acquisition of gendered roles. Recommendations arising for practice, policy and research are presented within the limitations of the review.

Keywords: adolescents; young people; technology; intimate partner relationships; abuse; violence; qualitative methods

Young People's[1] Reflections on the Intersection of Technology and Abuse within Their

Intimate Partner Relationships: A Meta-Synthesis

Over the past decade significant advances in *new technologies*, including social media

and widespread availability of smartphones, have brought the issue of technologically

enabled (TE) Adolescent Intimate Partner Abuse (AIPA) to the fore (Van Ouytsel, Walrave,

et al., 2016). For example, the *Centres for Disease Control and Prevention* (CDC; 2012) now

have technology embedded within their definition of AIPA (that this papers adopts) as:

> the physical, sexual, or psychological/emotional violence between two people within a close
>
> or dating relationship, as well as stalking. It can occur in person or electronically such as repeated
>
> texting or posting sexual pictures of a partner online and may occur between a current or former dating
>
> partner.

Wood et al. (2015) observed TEAIPA can be broadly categorised into five groups:

(1) emotional online abuse, e.g. threatening or humiliating a partner through messaging or

social media; (2) controlling behaviours, e.g. checking a partner's phone or demanding

passwords to online accounts; (3) surveillance, e.g. constantly contacting a partner to check

where they are and/or who they are with; (4) isolating partners, e.g. requesting that the

partner remove certain friends from social media accounts; and (5) being coerced to send or

receiving unsolicited content, including sexual images, videos, or messages. These map onto

the categories of emotional/psychological and sexual abuse that are used in the wider AIPA

literature (Van Ouytsel, Walrave, et al., 2016).

Prevalence of TEAIPA and its Relationship with In-Person Forms

A recent synthesis of research reporting on the prevalence of AIPA (Stonard et al.,

2014) found the majority of studies reported rates for emotional/psychological TE forms

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[1] The terms 'adolescent' and 'young people' are used interchangeably throughout (see Method for
further discussion).

between 10-30% for victimisation, and 5-15% for perpetration. Rates for TEAIPA of a sexual

nature was between 4-22% for victimisation, and 3-5% for perpetration. It follows that

TEAIPA is interpreted as being "prevalent in a substantial number of adolescent romantic

relationships" (Stonard et al., 2014: 413). Of studies included in the synthesis providing a

breakdown in relation to gender, Barter et al. (2009) found females were more likely to

experience emotional/psychological forms of TEAIPA than males, whilst Zweig et al. (2013)

found females were more likely to be victims of sexual forms. Zweig et al. (2013) also found

males were more likely to report having perpetrated sexual TEAIPA, whilst females were

more likely to report perpetrating emotional/psychological TEAIPA.

While interpreting prevalence rates across the AIPA literature is inherently

problematic due to reporting issues and definitional/methodological differences between

studies (Shorey et al., 2008; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999), the above findings suggest TEAIPA

rates are, in general, lower than in-person, whilst reproducing the gendered differences seen

in victimisation/perpetration. Two explanatory hypotheses have been suggested to explain

this: (1) TEAIPA represents a continuum of abuse carried out/experienced in-person; and (2)

technology creates a novel group of individuals who carry out/experience abuse. Whilst the

first hypothesis has received greater support throughout empirical literature (e.g. Korchmaros

et al., 2013; Temple et al., 2016), further research is needed to determine if the second

hypothesis is of relevance (Temple et al., 2016). Indeed, both may offer valid explanations of

the relationship between in-person and TE forms, depending upon the specific nature and

circumstances of the TEAIPA taking place.

Impact of TEAIPA

The impacts of experiencing AIPA have been found to include substance misuse,

depressive symptoms, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), eating disorders, and suicidal

thinking/behaviours (Barter & Stanley, 2016). Few studies, however, have reported uniquely

on the outcomes of experiencing TEAIPA. Barter et al. (2017) found females were more likely to report a negative impact from experiencing TEAIPA than males, including feeling scared and/or upset. This mirrors the findings of the AIPA research more generally, showing females to report more subjective negative experience than males (Barter et al., 2009; Hird, 2000; Wood et al., 2010). Additionally, Picard (2007) found 60% of adolescents aged 13-18 years considered TE forms of abuse to represent a serious problem in young people's intimate relationships: this compared to a rate of 10-30% for those who reported personally experiencing TEAIPA. Whilst this research is in its early stages, it is suggestive of a greater perceived and/or actual impact of TEAIPA on wellbeing that requires further exploration.

Practice and Policy in Relation to TEAIPA

The potential harms of TEAIPA are increasingly recognised with some prevention/interventional programmes being updated to include content in this regard. For example, a number of 'by-stander' programmes, which are found to be particularly effective in reducing acceptance of abuse amongst young people (Coker et al., 2019), now include discussion of how to intervene when observing inappropriate online communications between peers (e.g. *SpeakUp;* Bovill et al., 2018). Gradual changes are also being seen at a policy level. For example, in the UK from September 2020, teaching of *Relationship and Sex Education* (RSE) will become mandatory within schools; this will highlight the need for the principles of respectful and consenting relationships to be replicated in the use of technology enabled/online spaces (Department for Education, 2019). Yet whilst such changes are generally recognised as a positive first step (e.g. Family Planning Association, 2019), without further research into the nature of TEAIPA, including development of theory, prevention and intervention efforts will lack the detail and foundation necessary to deliver effective long-term change (e.g. Shorey et al., 2008).

Contextualising TEAIPA within Existing Theory

Theoretical frameworks used to understand AIPA may be of value in exploring TE forms through offering "an effective means of linking novel issues to existing knowledge" (Burton et al., 2011: 1395). Some of the most influential theories in this area are attachment, social learning, behavioural, feminist, and gender theories. Yet, whilst these are of use in explaining various aspects of AIPA, two criticisms are: (1) limited integration of theories to produce a comprehensive understanding of AIPA (Stonard, 2019); and (2) theories have largely been segued from the field of adult intimate partner violence, thus overlooking potential age-related influences (Exner-Cortens, 2014). Further consideration of developmental theories, that emphasise the importance of transferring support from carers to peers as self-identity and independence are established (Carr, 2015), may be helpful in addressing these issues. For example, though not a contemporaneous theory, Exner-Cortens (2014) identifies Sullivan's (1953) *Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* as potentially relevant because its interpersonal approach aligns with understanding AIPA as a product of interpersonal relationships.

Sullivan's theory proposes two developmental stages occurring in adolescence. In *early adolescence* (12-14 years), young people seek relationships with others based on *intimacy*[2] and to satisfy emerging sexual desire (though not usually within the same relationship). In *late adolescence* (15-21 years), young people seek to integrate intimacy and sexual satisfaction within a single relationship. However, embarking upon intimate relationships and seeking sexual intimacy can be *anxiety*-provoking with the potential for rejection. This can impact upon feelings of security and self-esteem, and ultimately interfere with the completion of developmental tasks (Feist et al., 2017). In the worst case, anxiety can

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[2] This differs from relationships formed with parents/carers that are built on *tenderness* due to the differential status of 'parent' and 'child'.

result in the breakdown of, or withdrawal from, interpersonal relationships and result in *loneliness,* that Sullivan saw as the worst outcome of all. To reduce these anxieties, Sullivan saw young people as engaging in behaviours that attempt to meet the tension or reduce anxiety. These may be adaptive or maladaptive, and over time form a particular response-pattern to a situation. This might be of relevance in explaining the observation that violence in adolescent couplings is often carried into adulthood as relationships progress (Matud, 2007).

An aim of future AIPA research must be to develop an integrated theory of abuse that can explain its multiple facets, for example, perpetration, victimisation, onset, and impacts, including how TE forms fit within this wider picture (Stonard, 2019). Further consideration of developmental issues may be helpful in achieving this (Exner-Cortens, 2014).

The Value of Meta-Synthesis

Since around 2010, a number of qualitative studies have been published aiming to capture young people's experiences and understandings of the intersection between technology and abuse within their intimate relationships. Individual qualitative studies, however, have been shown to have limited impact on practice, policy, and the development of theory (Evans, 2002; Finfgeld, 2003). The process of meta-synthesis is a means of bringing together qualitative literature in a defined area, similar to the meta-synthesis of quantitative studies. Whilst there is continuing debate over how qualitative syntheses are best carried out (Dixon-Woods et al., 2005), meta-synthesis holds the potential to move our understanding of a phenomenon beyond that which might be produced through more traditional reviews of the literature (Downe, 2008; Sandelowski et al., 1997). This offers the possibility of generating new insights into the nature of TEAIPA, and for development of theory, both important in directing future research efforts.

Aims

As no meta-syntheses in the area of TEAIPA could be identified, the present study aimed to address this gap, defining the research question as: "What are young people's experiences and understandings of the intersection between abuse and technology within their intimate partner relationships?"

Method

The review was informed by Noblit and Hare's (1988) seven-phase methodology for the synthesis of qualitative studies, known as meta-ethnography (see Appendix A). This has several advantages over other methodologies, including its well defined, systematic approach, and the possibility of offering interpretations beyond those contained in individual studies (France et al., 2019).

Phase 1: Preliminary Research

This phase encompassed much of the thinking already set out in the introduction, including the preliminary research necessary to understand why a meta-synthesis in this area was important and offered an appropriate and useful means of knowledge development. This phase also represented the honing of the boundaries of the meta-synthesis through CHIP analysis (Table 1) and pilot searches of databases. A particular issue identified here were differences in participant age ranges across papers. Whilst the World Health Organisation defines *adolescence* as 10-19 years (WHO, 2014), many papers report on age-groups that span both adolescence and *youth*; the latter being defined as those aged 15-24 years (United Nations, 1981). For this reason, it was recognised that the meta-synthesis would need to take *young people* as its target age-range, that the WHO (2014) defines as spanning both adolescence and youth (i.e. 10-24 years), in order to capture the full range of adolescent experiences.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Phase 2: Identifying Relevant Papers

Developing a strategy to identify relevant papers was an iterative process, building upon the knowledge gained through Phase 1. As relevant studies were retrieved, both inclusion/exclusion criteria and search strategy were modified to ensure other similar studies might be located.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The final inclusion criteria were:

1. Reported young people's first-person accounts of their experiences or understandings of the role of technology in abusive relationships.

2. Related to abuse or conflict within young people's own intimate relationships.

3. Used qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, and provided direct quotes from data gathered.

4. Included young people aged 10-24 years.

5. Was published in a peer-reviewed journal. This acted as a measure of quality and avoided costs associated with accessing books and theses.

6. Was published in the English language. Involvement of interpreters was outside the scope of available resources.

The final exclusion criteria for papers were:

1. Had no clear delineation between romantic relationships and friendships/peer relationships.

2. Referred to online relationships only (i.e. relationships with no face-to-face contact).

Search strategy

Initial scoping searches highlighted the wide range of journals relevant studies might be published in. For this reason, a total of ten databases, covering a range of disciplines, were interrogated. These were: *Academic Search Ultimate; ACM Digital; Child Development and Adolescent Studies; CINAHL; ERIC; MEDLINE; PsychINFO; Scopus; SocINDEX;* and *Web of Science*.

A combination of five sets of free-text search terms were used to identify relevant literature across the databases (Figure 1). These were based on the CHIP categories, with 'issues' being split into 'technology' and 'abuse' sets. Individual search terms within each set were devised based upon pilot searches and were added to and edited according to need. Search terms were applied universally across all databases. Where available, thesaurus and indexing terms were used alongside the free-text terms to improve the retrieval of papers (Shaw et al., 2004; Table 2). Though this represented a complex search strategy, it was felt five sets of terms were needed in order to balance recall (number of papers identified) with precision (relevance of the papers; Salvador-Oliván et al., 2019).

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

The search was initially conducted in May 2018 and subsequently updated in April 2019, with a total of 5,496 papers identified. Citations were exported into bibliographic management software where they were de-duplicated and assessed against the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Papers were assessed by title and abstract. Full text versions of potentially eligible papers were sought. The process is detailed in Figure 2.

INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

Phase 3: Familiarisation with Identified Papers

Twelve papers were included in the final set for meta-synthesis. Papers were read several times to allow familiarisation with the data set. Next, data extraction templates were completed for each paper to capture key details and author interpretations (Appendix B).

Quality appraisal

Papers were assessed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP; 2018) checklist for qualitative studies in combination with a three-point rating scale devised by Duggleby et al. (2010). The CASP outlines several elements a meticulously undertaken and disseminated study will contain. The Duggleby et al. scale allows a numerical rating to be applied to each of these elements, where: a score of 3 denotes that the element has been fully addressed; a score of 2, that the element has been partially addressed; and a score of 1, that the element has not been, or has been poorly addressed. Using this system, the sum of scores for each element provides an overview of the quality of the paper out of a maximum of 24. As can be seen in Table 3, allotted scores ranged between 12-22.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

There is longstanding debate regarding the applicability and usefulness of quality scores in qualitative research (Mays & Pope, 2000). From a constructionist perspective, quality scores are not compatible with the view of "knowledge as particular, specific, and resistant to exact replication" (Downe, 2008: 6). From a reductionist perspective, quality scores can be used to identify and eliminate methodologically weak papers that might otherwise be used for decision making purposes or as a foundation for future research (Carroll et al., 2012). For the purposes of this review, no papers were rejected based on score,

but instead, a relativist position was adopted whereby scores were used to reflect upon the types of papers that contributed to interpretations (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2008).

Paper characteristics

Table 4 presents the key characteristics of the 12 included papers. All papers were published between 2010-2019. Eight were conducted in the USA, one in the UK, one in Norway, and two in Belgium. Two sets of two papers report on data collected though the same study and sample, therefore representing the same data set, however the aims of the analyses in each were different. Ten papers take mixed male-female samples, whilst two take female-only samples. Five papers required participants to have experienced an abusive relationship, whilst the remainder set no limitations on who could take part, in terms of experiencing abuse or having had a relationship more generally. Seven papers utilised focus groups as a data collection method, whilst four used individual interviews, and one a mixed methodology comprising data from focus groups and recordings of couples discussing conflict in their relationships. The majority of papers took an adolescent population (12-19 years) recruited from schools and community projects. Whilst there was some ethnic diversity, the majority of participants were white. There was little discussion of socioeconomic diversity throughout papers and most findings were in relation to heterosexual couples.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

Though few papers stated their epistemological underpinnings, the range of data collection and analysis approaches used throughout suggests that these were varied (Carter & Little, 2007). There are differing viewpoints as to whether studies grounded in differing epistemologies are amenable to meta-synthesis due to the different kinds of knowledge they produce (Suri, 2013); however, based in a constructionist paradigm, studies were viewed "as

the multivocal interpretation of... phenomenon, just as the voices of different participants

might be in a single qualitative study" (Zimmer, 2006: 312). It followed that all eligible

papers were included in the synthesis, even where epistemological positions were not

explicitly stated. To allow for the consideration of applicability to other settings, the process

of meta-synthesis is thoroughly documented, and detailed characteristics of both settings and

participants provided.

Phase 4 and 5: Determining Relationships and Identifying Interpretations

Key themes and concepts captured within data extraction templates were collated for

review (see Table 5). A number of similarities could be seen between papers, indicating a

reciprocal translation would best represent their content. This involves iteratively translating

papers into one another by identifying single interpretations that subsume the interpretations

of other studies. This resulted in the identification of three key interpretations (Table 6),

referred to as *third-order interpretations*, in reference to them being three times removed

from the original interpretations offered by participants. To confirm this structuring, relevant

key themes and concepts were tabularised against their third-order interpretations to allow for

assessment of consistency (Appendix C).

INSERT TABLE 5 HERE

INSERT TABLE 6 HERE

Phase 6: Synthesis of Translation

An overarching reading of the third-order interpretations was possible, referred to as

the *synthesis of translation,* and offers an understanding of the phenomenon beyond that

stated within the original papers.

Phase 7: Dissemination

The meta-synthesis was planned and conducted with publication held in mind throughout. A target journal was identified (see Appendix D) and the CASP guidelines for reporting systematic reviews referred to. It was hoped these measures would maximise chances of publication and effective dissemination.

Findings

Through the process of meta-synthesis, three interrelated third-order interpretations emerged from the included papers (Figure 3). These are presented below, concluding with the synthesis of translation. Quotes from included papers are presented throughout to preserve the original voice of participants.

INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE

"Stay the f* away": Jealousy and mistrust within a virtually connected peer network**

Across papers, with the exception of Weathers and Hopson (2015) and Weathers et al. (2019), young people described how being virtually connected to an extended peer network offered increased and more frequent opportunities to interact with members of the opposite sex[3], including friends and ex-partners. It was felt that engaging in opposite-sex interactions could signal, or be a pathway to, infidelity. This led to feelings of jealousy and mistrust between couples that resulted in conflict, either online or in-person, with potential for escalation to acts of abuse: "[she] found that he had been talking to another girl [via technology]...She threw a knife at him, and he retaliated by slapping her" (Draucker & Martsolf, 2010:138).

Young people spoke of feeling jealous when partners accepted friend requests from opposite-sex individuals on social media, especially ex-partners: "I don't like the fact that you want to be friends" [female](Rueda et al., 2015:435). Females were thought to be particularly jealous when partners accepted friend requests from females who were considered attractive: "she gets jealous or angry, because he is friends with a beautiful girl" [female](Van Ouytsel, et al., 2016:82). Commenting on opposite-sex friends' posts, or the

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[3] This terminology is used throughout to refer to friends of potential romantic/sexual interest and is reflective of the limited sexual diversity represented throughout studies.

same friends commenting on the partner's, was also upsetting, especially "if there are comments with hearts and kisses, you need to consider 'is this really normal?'" [female](Van Ouytsel et al., 2016:81). Interestingly, females were described as more concerned about opposite-sex interactions through social media (Lucero et al., 2014), whilst males were more concerned when they believed partners were contacting opposite-sex friends through text messaging: "Why do you text them… they're going to ruin our relationship" [male](Rueda et al., 2015:436).

Photographs were a particular point of contention and could lead to couples arguing. Young people described feeling jealous and mistrustful when they saw photos of their partners with opposite-sex friends on social media: "'What are you doing? Why are you taking pictures with other boys'" [female](Baker & Carreño, 2016:313). Similarly, problems arose when partners had photos of opposite-sex friends on their phones: "I can say: 'who is this?' And if she is offended by this a fight can ensue because of such a small issue" [male](Van Ouytsel, et al., 2016:81). 'Likes' and comments on a partner's photographs by opposite-sex friends were also problematic: "you don't want anybody to comment [on] her cause that's, that's your girl" [male](Baker & Helm, 2010:163). Conversely, young people could become upset when partners 'liked' or commented on photos of opposite-sex friends on social media, with females feeling particularly hurt if comments related to appearance (Van Ouytsel et al., 2016). Females felt that such interactions led to "insecurity… don't give a girl a reason to compare ourselves to another girl and bring down her self-esteem" [female] (Baker & Carreño, 2016:313).

Young people felt that, at times, online peers acted to deliberately cause feelings of jealousy between the couple. In particular, following the posting of relationship status updates, females might message males to "screw things up" [female](Baker & Carreño, 2016:313). It followed that young people differed in their views on the importance and

desirability of updating statuses on social networking sites to show that individuals are in a relationship, colloquially known as becoming "official" (Baker & Carreño, 2016; Van Ouytsel, et al., 2016). Some young people felt that official status updates were unimportant and indeed could lead to feelings of jealousy amongst friends: keeping the relationship private until it had become more established was, therefore, important (Van Ouytsel, et al., 2016). Conversely, recognising relationships through social media was seen as a means of letting others know that individuals were 'unavailable' and closed to the receiving of flirtatious messages: this could be achieved less overtly by posting pictures of the two people together or joint 'check-ins' (Van Ouytsel, et al., 2016). Some young people felt this acted as a warning to others to, "stay the f*** away" [female](Baker & Carreño, 2016:312).

Jealousy and mistrust was further heightened between couples because technology allowed them to communicate with opposite-sex friends in a more uninhibited and daring way: "in-person you're all shy… on Facebook you can say whatever" [male](Rueda, Lindsay, & Williams, 2015:430). Young people described how use of technology allowed females in particular to be more flirtatious than they might usually be, for example: "Oh let's talk, or text me sometime" [female] (Rueda et al., 2015:430). For females, flirting might also extend to the sending of sexual images of themselves (sexting) to individuals they were interested in: "that's actually to seduce you" [male](Van Ouytsel, et al., 2017:456). Females were also described as more upset when other females flirted with their partners: "like obviously you're going to get mad and then that starts another argument" [female](Rueda et al., 2015:430).

Ultimately, feelings of jealousy and mistrust could cause partners to engage in similar patterns of interacting with opposite-sex friends, thus perpetuating a cycle of upset and hurt: "we are both going to keep doing it and it's going to take us nowhere… I don't trust you because you don't trust me" [male](Rueda et al., 2015:437).

"I've got her password and she's got mine": Seeking reassurance through technology

enabled monitoring

Across papers, with the exception of Van Ouytsel, et al. (2017), young people

described ways in which technology was used to monitor partners in relation to their

interactions with opposite-sex individuals: "Boyfriends and girlfriends can probably keep a

lot better tabs on each other… nowadays than they ever could before" [female](Melander,

2010:265). Monitoring behaviours were initiated as a result of feelings of jealousy and

mistrust, and were seen as a way of seeking reassurance, or otherwise, that the partner was

being faithful: "they… go through and read all their messages to make sure they are not going

out with somebody else" [female](Stonard et al., 2015:2096).

One of the most frequently described means of monitoring was requesting login

details to partners' social media accounts. This was usually a mutual act in which both

partners shared passwords with one another, typically at the beginning of a relationship, to

demonstrate "trust" and "love" (Baker & Carreño, 2016; Lucero et al., 2014; Rueda et al.,

2015; Van Ouytsel, et al., 2016). Young people explained how it followed that there was an

unspoken assumption log in details would not actually be used: "I've got her password and

she's got mine, but I never check hers and she never checks mine" [male](Rueda et al.,

2015:431). Despite this, young people did access each other's social media accounts, using it

as an opportunity to see who their partners were friends with, and what kinds of

communications they were having. Females were described as being more likely to request

social media passwords from their partners and to access accounts than males (Lucero et al.,

2014; Stonard et al., 2015). They were also described as being more upset by their partner

having opposite sex friends (Van Ouytsel, et al., 2016).

Another way in which partners could perform monitoring was through checking each

other's phones (Baker & Carreño, 2016; Baker & Helm, 2010; Draucker & Martsolf, 2010;

Melander, 2010; Rueda et al., 2015; Stonard et al., 2015). This frequently happened with the awareness of the partner: "All he would do was just look through it real quick and then give it back" [female](Baker & Carreño, 2016:314). It also happened covertly when phones had been left unattended. Young people described this kind of monitoring as arising from technology creating spaces where: "you know everything about them, but you don't know everything about them" [female](Stonard et al., 2015:2096). Some young people felt that phone checking was additionally justified based on a partner's previous behaviour: "he cheated before so… I look through his phone" [female](Rueda et al., 2015:432). A slightly different form of monitoring using phones involved frequent calling or texting when apart. The aim of this was described as being to assess: "What are you doing? Who are you with?" [female](Melander, 2010:264). Females were perceived to carry out this form of checking more frequently than males with participants in the Stonard et al. (2015) paper explaining this difference as arsing because: "girls are usually more protective" [female].

Young people described how partners carrying out checking through social media accounts and mobile phones frequently led to "drama" (Baker & Carreño, 2016; Lucero et al., 2014). In many cases this was felt unwarranted, as partners could become upset by situations and/or communications having little relevance to the couple's current relationship: "they'll start getting jealous… and it was like a year ago!" (Lucero et al., 2014:485). At other times it led to current flirtatious communications being unearthed: "I think some forget they gave the password to their girlfriend and then you go and [find] like stuff that's not supposed to be said" [female](Rueda et al., 2015:431). It was noted these dramas could lead to arguments between the couple, with the potential for abuse and violence to occur, especially if the person was perceived to have been unfaithful: "if he's called other girls, it will cause a big fight" [female](Melander, 2010:264). Young people described how to 'avoid the drama' they would often pre-emptively delete communications with opposite-sex friends, even when sent

innocently: "I'll text other girls sometimes just to talk to them 'cause I'm good friends with them. But if she sees those, she gets really mad. So I just delete them" [male](Rueda et al., 2015:483). Females in the Weathers and Hopson (2015) and Weathers et al. (2019) papers also described taking steps to censor real-time conversations they had with opposite sex friends online in order to avoid conflict.

Overall, young people described finding monitoring behaviours as acceptable, if sometimes annoying: "Not abuse, but invade[s] your privacy… if you have a healthy relationship you would not have the need to snoop" [female](Rueda et al., 2015:432). Whilst most young people felt that monitoring behaviours stemmed from feelings of jealousy and mistrust and were an attempt to reassure themselves about their partner's fidelity, technology actually acted to create a "vicious cycle" (Baker & Carreño, 2016:313), propagating further doubts within the relationship.

"Show me how much you love me": Controlling partners through technology-based requests

Across papers, young people spoke of actions that went beyond mutual monitoring and introduced a power imbalance within the relationship: "[he] just like took over my whole life really [through technology]" [female](Hellevik, 2019:182). Some of these actions could be seen as an extension of monitoring, but with the added intention of controlling the behaviour of the other, for example, constant calling in order to curb the other's activities, or deleting friends/contacts from a partner's social media accounts or mobile phone: "she was like oooh can I have your Facebook [login]… some of them was his exes so she deleted all the females" [female](Stonard et al., 2015:2098).

Young people also described incidents in which one partner attempted to exert control following break-up of the relationship, such as by refusing to cease contact: "I had a girlfriend who had to change her number because the guy would constantly call her"

[female](Baker & Helm, 2010:164). In this way, young people noted technology acted to keep ex-partners connected through being only a call or message away, thus increasing the potential to reconnect with harmful relationships (Draucker & Martsolf, 2010; Stonard et al., 2015). Others took action to humiliate ex-partners: "He posted a status with her name and then he wrote: 'She is a whore. She did this and this with me'" [female](Van Ouytsel, et al., 2016:82). In some instances, technology was used in a verbally aggressive way or to make threats: "'If you don't return my phone calls, I will hunt you down. I will start at your house and work my way from there'" [female](Draucker & Martsolf, 2010:139). Interestingly, several participants in the Hellevik (2019) paper noted partners were abusive through technology only, and not in-person.

Whilst these behaviours were described as being enacted by both males and females towards their partners, acts of control appeared disproportionately weighted towards females. In addition, some behaviours were described as being directed uniquely towards females. For example, young people in several papers spoke of male partners attempting to aggressively isolate females from male friends: "my boyfriend didn't want me texting any boys. Like he forbade me from boys" [female](Rueda et al., 2015:433). This included limiting contact through breaking their phones (Baker & Carreño, 2016) or by curbing access to others through technology platforms: "Sometimes they even restrict you going on the Internet. 'Oh I don't want you to have a page anymore'… Like 'delete your page'" [female](Baker & Helm, 2010:164). This could lead to imposing physical restrictions, often enforced through geographical tracking apps or constant contact: "it's not so much, oh, I'm standing here telling you what to do…but I'm always in your inbox… messaging you or texting you" [female](Melander, 2010:265). Isolating females in this way was noted to impact upon the way in which they could seek useful input from male friends when experiencing relationship abuse: "I was like is this normal, like, I don't even know. So I needed like a guy's

perspective" [female](Weathers et al., 2019:14) . To compound this, males often minimised their actions, "it's not that big a deal" [male](Rueda et al., 2015:437), and females rationalised their experiences, "I was blindly in love with him so I was willing to put up with anything" [female](Weathers & Hopson, 2015:105).

Young people in four papers also spoke of how sending and receiving sexual images could be used to control females (Hellevik, 2019; Lucero et al., 2014; Van Ouytsel, et al., 2017; Weathers & Hopson, 2015). This was not because males did not send images to partners, but because females were thought of as more respectful and generally "they [males] just send pictures of their chest… it's nothing extraordinary, but with a girl's it is" [female](Van Ouytsel, et al., 2017:457). For example, within relationships, females found themselves being pressured into sending intimate photographs to demonstrate love: "I know someone who once said to a girl like 'show me how much you love me'" [male](Van Ouytsel, et al., 2017:455). At other times, male partners were described as using normalisation and threats to obtain images: "so-and-so's girlfriend does it for him too, and like it's what we have to do … we're away from each other… I don't want to cheat" [female](Weathers & Hopson, 2015:105). Furthermore, the threat of sharing images with the wider friendship group was described as being used by males to blackmail partners into other sexual acts or to stay in the relationship: "it will be used as a kind of weapon against her" [male](Van Ouytsel, et al., 2017:457).

Interestingly, young people also spoke of how technology offered a means of reasserting control within their relationships following being the subject of controlling behaviours (Baker & Carreño, 2016; Weathers & Hopson, 2015; Weathers et al., 2019). This was most frequently achieved through disconnecting from technology and included turning off or deliberately breaking phones, avoiding social media, and limiting contact through ignoring calls and messages: "There'd be times when he texted me and I would like not

answer on purpose" [female](Weathers & Hopson, 2015:105). This often acted as a means of indicating to a partner the relationship was over (Draucker & Martsolf, 2010). Others used technology to directly confront the partner: "it's like a wall, something you can hide behind… you can't hit me through my computer screen" [female](Melander, 2010:265).

Synthesis of translation: Technology as increasing young peoples' focus on intimate relationship 'self-interests' against a backdrop of gendered roles – A risk for AIPA

It was felt a further overarching reading of the third-order interpretations could be made that was not explicitly stated within the original research papers. This related to technology causing young people to focus on 'self-interests', which in this context concerned having and maintaining an exclusive[4] intimate relationship. This translated into risk for experiencing and perpetrating both technologically enabled and in-person AIPA.

In the first theme, the increased access to others technology afforded resulted in young people feeling constantly concerned about their partner's fidelity. This represented a threat to self-interest in the sense the relationship might be lost, or the partner might be unfaithful. In the second theme, young people could be seen as attempting to seek reassurances in relation to these threats to self-interest through capitalising upon the ways in which technology could be used to monitor partners' interactions with others. In the third theme, a proportion of young people could be seen as aggressively attempting to protect self-interests by using technology to control the behaviours of partners that were considered a threat (e.g. restricting online access). In some instances, sexual images of partners (sexts) were used as part of this control strategy. In this sense, technology acted to increase both the sense of threat to 'self-interest' and offered further avenues for managing it.

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[4] Referring to the desire for one's partner not to be involved romantically or sexually with others, however, this was not necessarily something that individuals would abide to from their own perspective.

The ways in which technology increased young people's focus on their intimate relationship self-interests was, to some degree, also dependent on gender. Whilst jealousy, monitoring and control were features across both the narratives of males and females, there were subtle differences in the way that these were experienced, along with controlling behaviours appearing weighted against females. This suggests that technology's intersection with adolescents' intimate relationships highlights self-interests as they stand in relation to gendered roles.

Discussion

The findings of the meta-synthesis are seen to offer two main contributions to the current body of AIPA literature, and these are discussed below.

Conceptualising the Manifestation of TE Abuse and its Links with In-Person Forms

The third-order interpretations appear interconnected as an explanation of how TE abuse manifests and can also lead to in-person abuse. In essence, young people saw connectivity to a large group of opposite-sex friends as a driver of jealous feelings. These could lead to monitoring, and potentially controlling behaviours, carried out through technology (covering all five of the TE acts observed by Wood et al., 2015). Furthermore, TE jealousy, monitoring, and control could lead to in-person conflict/abuse. As such, technology was described as both a motivator and means for carrying out AIPA. This is set out in Figure 4, along with a fuller text description for clarity.

INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE

Three key issues are seen as arising from this conceptualisation. Firstly, a major implication is jealous feelings caused by technological connectivity to others are the main driver of TEAIPA (i.e. monitoring and controlling behaviours). However, there was an absence of content in included papers relating to how characteristics of a couple's 'in-person' relationship, including jealousy arising from physical interactions with opposite sex friends, might relate to carrying out TEAIPA. This is despite data from several studies supporting the idea TE forms represent a continuum of in-person abuse (e.g. Korchmaros et al., 2013; Temple et al., 2016). Whilst this could indicate the novel nature of TEAIPA in some instances, it may also result from the majority of included papers framing research questions specifically in terms of young people's experiences of TEAIPA. Perhaps, given the clear integration of technology in the lives of young people (e.g. Joshi et al., 2019), future research

questions would be better framed by 'stepping back' and investigating broader experiences of

AIPA. This would allow a fuller exploration of the links and chronology between in-person

and TE forms. Nevertheless, addressing jealousy should form a key aspect of

education/prevention programmes.

　　　Secondly, young people frequently did not identify acts of monitoring through

technology, such as constant calling or messaging, as abusive despite being included in more

recent definitions of AIPA (e.g. CDC, 2012). Additionally, acts of TE control, such as

isolating partners from their online social networks, were often rationalised by females and

minimised by males. Whilst a lack of recognition/validation of abusive acts is well

documented throughout the wider AIPA literature (Gallopin & Leigh, 2009; Griffiths, 2019;

Jackson, 2002), this review highlights its existence in relation to TE forms, with significant

implications for the way young people will seek help and support for themselves and others.

Furthermore, given this conceptualisation suggested a progression of TE abuse similar to that

observed in-person, whereby smaller and less frequent acts of abuse might become more

significant and frequent over time (Bright Horizons, 2011), the importance of equipping

young people with the knowledge and skills needed to identify TEAIPA at the earliest

opportunity is emphasised.

　　　Thirdly, acts of TE control appeared to be disproportionately carried out against

females, despite jealousy and monitoring featuring across the accounts of young people. This

suggests behaviours taking place through technology are gendered in ways mirroring the

power relationships observed between males and females in other spaces (e.g. Fisk &

Ridgeway, 2018). Furthermore, given the severity of some controlling behaviours used (e.g.

message-based threats and online humiliation), a greater impact of TEAIPA for females

might be implied in line with Barter et al. (2017), who found females to report a greater

subjective impact of TEAIPA. Despite this possibility, there was limited direct discussion by

participants of the psychological impacts of experiencing TEAIPA and this requires further investigation.

Connecting the Phenomenon of TEAIPA with Theory

The synthesis of translation, relating to technology encouraging a focus on 'self-interests' and its subsequent role in AIPA was felt to hold relevance to theories of development, in particular, Sullivan's (1953) *Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry,* which Exner-Cortens (2014) suggests is a potentially useful framework for understanding the relationship between intimacy, anxiety, and AIPA.

Examining the findings in relation to this theory, a focus on 'self-interests' might be seen as important in terms of alleviating the *tensions* of adolescence. As young people move towards the goal of meeting both intimacy and sexual needs within a single relationship, they look for a partner with whom this can be achieved and are naturally protective of it. Furthermore, protection of the relationship avoids *loneliness,* which would result in the stalling of development. However, technology introduces an increased threat to 'self-interest' by allowing partners to communicate with extended friendship networks: this might be seen as analogous to the arousal of *anxiety* in Sullivan's theory. Technology also seemingly offers a means of managing this anxiety through the potential for monitoring partners; however, this acts to introduce further anxieties as various communications, lacking in context, are unearthed. In some instances, attempts to manage this growing anxiety might lead partners to use acts of TE control.

The findings also suggest, however, that technology's intersection with adolescents' intimate relationships highlights 'self-interests' as they stand in relation to gendered roles. For example, subtle differences were observed between males and females in why jealousy arose and why monitoring behaviours were enacted. Furthermore, the use of TE control strategies were weighted towards females. These findings might be explained through

gender-based theories such as that, during adolescence, gendered roles may take on a more pronounced form and importance than at other life stages, thus emphasising stereotypical behaviours such as male dominance/virility, and female desirability/monogamy (Pascoe & Herrea, 2018). Protecting relationship self-interests might, therefore, also be seen as protecting performance of these gendered roles. For example, females were described as being jealous when partners interacted with attractive opposite-sex friends through technology, and this might be seen as questioning their 'desirability'. Furthermore, males described jealousy when others commented on their partners online posts, with this appearing to threaten 'dominance'. Technology, therefore, can be seen as acting to increase anxiety around potential threats to performance of gendered roles, whilst also offering a means to control them.

It is suggested that future AIPA research and theorising should adopt ecological frameworks that hold the potential to integrate the developmental and gendered perspectives that this research has highlighted, as well as the sociocultural contexts that have been highlighted through other research (White, 2009; Zurbriggen, 2009). This holds the potential for creating an integrated understanding of the phenomenon of AIPA including how TE forms fit within this wider picture.

Implications

Three major implications/recommendations are seen as arising:

1. Universal prevention programmes, including relationship and sex education curriculums, must provide clear, detailed content in relation to AIPA, including TE forms. Specifically, consistent information regarding what constitutes TE abuse and content around understanding/managing jealous feelings that can arise in intimate relationships, particularly regards online connectivity. Bystander programmes should provide focused guidance to young people around intervening when witnessing

aggression between partners online or when friends use technology in unusual ways (e.g. non-stop texting or requesting access to phones). Early intervention programmes should include content on managing abusive online communications, using technology to seek help, and ensuring technological closure to relationships, should they ultimately breakdown.

2. However, education/intervention alone is not enough to shift underlying systems and structures, particularly of gender stereotypes, supporting the status quo, including that which underpins TEAIPA. It is suggested that schools, youth centres and other important settings are enabled to create environments challenging ideas about gender, power and other inequality issues. This would involve promoting gender equality and broader social equality, e.g., ensuring the environment is supportive of other issues relevant to AIPA, such as acceptance of sexual orientations and couplings outside a heteronormative view. Such environments would ideally be encountered in early stages of childcare provision, given gendered and other socially constructed identities begin to form early (Tolman & et al., 2003). This would require support through wider policy implementation, allowing teachers, youth leaders, and other professionals to challenge their preconceptions.

3. Finally, future research should consider how TEAIPA impacts upon individuals and how it fits within the wider landscape of in-person AIPA. Qualitative research would be particularly suited and could be further informed through use of ecological models that can integrate multiple perspectives, including integration of developmental and gender-based theories.

Strengths and Limitations of the Meta-Synthesis

Several strengths of the meta-synthesis are noted. Firstly, the third-order interpretations presented, along with the synthesis of translation, appear to provide an

interrelated and comprehensive account of how TEAIPA manifests, and can also lead to in-person conflict/abuse. That this emerged from papers representing a variety of methodological approaches, study settings, and participant characteristics is considered indicative of the robustness of the synthesis (Zimmer, 2006). This outcome was supported through use of Noblit and Hare's (1988) meta-ethnographic approach, which has been well defined throughout the literature (e.g. France et al., 2019), and holds the potential for furthering understanding beyond original findings (Campbell et al., 2003). Finally, by detailing the author's theoretical positioning, the characteristics of papers included, and their allotted quality scores, the applicability of findings to other settings might be determined (Zimmer, 2006).

A number of limitations are also noted. Firstly, a key paper by of relevance to the synthesis was discovered to have been omitted (see Aghtaie et al., 2018). This could have been avoided by performing supplementary searches of key authors' publications. Secondly, there are potential restrictions to the applicability of the findings to other settings given the characteristics of included participants, such as the majority being USA based, and a lack of commentary around LGBTQ+ and socioeconomic diversity. In addition, in the majority of papers, young people did not need to have experienced either an intimate relationship, or abuse, in order to take part. Whilst it is recognised that those who have not experienced abuse may hold similar conceptualisations to those who have (Barter & Lombard, 2018), this has not been explored specifically in relation to TE abuse. Further issues are the focus of most included papers on understanding negatives associated with technology (as opposed to the potential benefits within abusive relationships) and the exclusion of papers from the review where relationships were not clearly defined as 'dating' or were based online only. Future research should proceed in the context of addressing these limitations.

Conclusion

The way technology intersects with AIPA is of growing interest to researchers, given the accessibility of new technologies and their potential for shaping the way abuse is experienced amongst couples. This review attempted to draw together the existing body of qualitative research in this area to identify common themes that could shape future practice, policy and research. Through the process of meta-synthesis, a set of three interrelated themes (third-order interpretations), bound by an overarching reading (the synthesis of translation), emerged. This conceptualisation was seen to highlight the role of technology in increasing young people's concerns about the 'security' of their relationships, whilst at the same time giving them tools to assess and prevent perceived threats through monitoring and controlling behaviours. It is argued this occurs against the backdrop of adolescent development, including the acquisition of gendered roles. It follows that, whilst education and interventions aimed at tackling AIPA clearly need to include content in relation to identifying and intervening in TEAIPA, there is also a need to challenge gender stereotypes/inequalities at a wider level. This could be achieved through creation of environments within schools and other settings of importance to young people that model and encourage respectful, gender-neutral interactions, both in-person and online. Future research should consider the psychological/emotional impact of TEAIPA and how it links with the wider phenomenon of AIPA. This could be achieved through use of qualitative methodologies that take an ecological perspective and lead to development/integration of knowledge and theory in the area.

INSERT TABLE 7 HERE

INSERT TABLE 8 HERE

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* Denotes papers included in the meta-synthesis

Author Biography

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Tables to be Inserted in Main Text

Table 1

CHIP Analysis Based on Shaw (2012)

Study components	Description
Context	Young people's intimate relationships
How	Qualitative methods
Issues	Reflections on the role technology plays in abuse
Population	Young people (male and female)

Table 2

Limiters and Thesaurus / Indexing Terms Used Across Databases

Database	Limiters applied	Set	Thesaurus / Indexing used	Number of articles identified
Academic Search Ultimate	Scholarly (peer reviewed) journals Language: English	1	DE ("MOBILE apps" OR "SOCIAL networking mobile apps" OR "ONLINE chat" OR SMARTPHONES OR "TEXT messages (Telephone systems)" OR SEXTING OR "SOCIAL media" OR "ONLINE social networks")	693
		2	DE ("ROMANTIC love" OR "SOCIAL dating")	
		3	DE ("INTIMATE partner violence" OR "DATING violence" OR "RELATIONSHIP abuse")	
ACM Digital	-		-	44
Child Development and Adolescent Studies	Scholarly (peer reviewed) journals	1	ZW (sexting or cybersex or "mobile applications" or "cell phones" or "mobile devices" or "social network sites" or "electronic communication" or "social media")	74
		2	ZW (relationship or partner or couple or "boyfriend-girlfriend relationship" or "dating & intimate relationships")	
		3	ZW ("partner abuse" or "partner violence" or "cyber dating abuse" or "dating abuse" or "dating violence")	
CINAHL	Peer reviewed English language Exclude MEDLINE records	1	MH ("Text Messaging" OR "Smartphone" OR "Cellular Phone" OR "Social Media" OR "Social Networking")	185
		2	(MH "Sexual Partners" OR "Dating")	
		3	(MH "Intimate Partner Violence" OR "Dating Violence")	
ERIC	Peer reviewed Language: English	1	DE ("Social Media" OR "Handheld Devices")	366
		2	DE (Intimacy)	
		3	DE ("INTIMATE partner violence" OR "DATING violence"	
MEDLINE	English language	1	MH ("Text Messaging" OR "Smartphone" OR "Cellular Phone" OR "Social Media" OR "Social Networking")	546
		2	(MH "Sexual Partners" OR "Dating")	
		3	(MH "Intimate Partner Violence" OR "Dating Violence")	
PsychINFO	Peer reviewed English	1	DE ("Computer Mediated Communication" OR "Electronic Communication" OR "Blog" OR "Cybersex" OR "Social Media" OR "Text Messaging" OR "Online Social Networks" OR Internet OR "Mobile Devices" OR "Cellular Phones")	594
		2	DE (Couples OR "Same Sex Couples" OR Romance OR Intimacy OR "Social Dating"	
		3	DE ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner Violence")	

Table 2 Continued

Database	Limiters applied	Set	Thesaurus / Indexing used	Number of articles identified
SocINDEX	Scholarly (peer reviewed) journals Language: English	1	DE ("CELL phones" OR "SOCIAL media" OR "ONLINE chat" OR "COMPUTER sex")	187
		2	DE ("ROMANTIC love" OR "SOCIAL dating" OR "UNMARRIED couples" OR "SEXUAL partners")	
		3	DE ("INTIMATE partner violence" OR "DATING violence")	
Scopus	Article Article in press Journals English	-	-	1,548
Web of Science	Document Types: Article Language: English	-	-	1,259
Total				**5,496**

Table 3

Quality Appraisal of Papers Based on Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (2018) and Duggleby et al., (2010)

	Research design	Sampling	Data collection	Reflexivity	Ethical issues	Data analysis	Findings	Value of the research	Total score
Baker & Carreno (2016)	3	1	2	2	1	3	3	3	18
Baker & Helm (2010)	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	3	15
Draucker & Martsolf (2010)	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	20
Hellevik (2019)	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	20
Lucero et al. (2014)	3	3	2	1	1	2	2	2	16
Melander (2010)	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	12
Rueda et al. (2015)	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	21
Stonard et al. (2015)	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	3	22
Van Ouytsel et al. (2016)	2	2	2	1	2	1	3	2	15
Van Ouytsel et al. (2017)	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	16
Weathers & Hopson (2015)	3	2	2	1	1	3	2	2	16
Weathers et al. (2019)	2	2	2	1	1	3	2	2	15

Table 4

Characteristic of Papers Included in the Meta-Synthesis

Paper	Title and journal of publication	Research question / aim(s) of the study	Country and setting	Participants	Diversity	Data collection method	Data analysis method
Baker & Carreño (2016)	Understanding the role of technology in adolescent dating and dating violence *Journal of Child and Family Studies*	To explore how technology is used in young people's relationships, particularly in the context of dating violence and to examine differences by gender.	USA: Hawaii. Community based organisations.	39 participants (18 females; 21 males) aged 14-19 years. Had been in a relationship in the past year that they self-defined as problematic, but were not currently in an abusive relationship.	Authors chose not to record due to Hawaiian's seeing their culture as built upon interactions and intermarriage of diverse groups, rather than race/ethnic background. All participants identified as "local".	Focus groups (8 groups: 4 female only; 4 male only; each with 3-8 participants)	Grounded theory
Baker & Helm (2010)	Pacific youth and shifting thresholds: Understanding teen dating violence in Hawai'i *Journal of School Violence*	To explore young people's perceptions of abuse within their intimate relationships, particularly in relation to social media.	USA: Hawaii. Two public high schools.	51 participants (26 females; 25 males) aged 13-19 years.	16 Native Hawai'ian; 17 Filipino; 18 Samoan	Focus groups (9 groups: female only groups, male only groups and mixed female and male groups further organised by cultural background)	Grounded narrative analysis (Corbyn and Strauss, 2008)
Draucker & Martsolf (2010)	The role of electronic communication technology in adolescent dating violence *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*	To explore how technology is used in dating violence.	USA: Northeast Ohio. Organisations and schools across nine socioeconomically diverse communities.	56 participants (41 females; 15 males) aged 18 – 21 years. Had experienced dating violence as adolescents (i.e. between ages of 13-18 years).	Predominantly Caucasian and African American	Individual interviews	Content analysis

Table 4 Continued

Paper	Title and journal of publication	Research question / aim(s) of the study	Country and setting	Participants	Diversity	Data collection method	Data analysis method
Hellevik (2019)	Teenagers' personal accounts of experiences with digital intimate partner violence and abuse *Computers in Human Behavior*	To explore the nature of technology enabled abuse amongst victims and the relationship with in-person abuse	Norway Schools, NGOs, social media and youth camps.	21 participants (12 females; 9 males) aged 15-18 years with various living arrangements. All participants had experienced technology enabled intimate partner abuse.	Not stated	Individual interviews	Thematic analysis
Lucero et al. (2014)	Exploring gender differences: Socially interactive technology use/abuse among dating teens *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*	To explore gender differences in types of technology used/abused in relationships.	USA: Michigan. Two neighbouring schools in a large metropolitan area.	23 participants (13 females; 10 males) aged 15-16 years.	Diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds (6 Latino; 4 African American; 3 Middle Eastern; 10 White)	Focus groups (4 groups: 2 female only; 2 male only)	Grounded theory, constant comparison approach.
Melander (2010)	College students' perceptions of intimate partner cyber harassment *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*	To explore the role of technology in dating violence using Johnson's typology of relationship violence as a guiding framework.	USA: Kansas. Students from a single university enrolled in a sociology and communications studies course.	39 participants (number of males and females not stated) aged 18-23 years.	Predominantly White (87%). Others (13%) identified as Black, Hispanic, Asian, Biracial.	Focus groups (5 groups: 3 female only; 2 male only; each with approximately 8 participants)	Deductive analysis according to Johnson's typology of partner violence. Data not meeting these criteria were inductively analysed.

Table 4 Continued

Paper	Title and journal of publication	Research question / aim(s) of the study	Country and setting	Participants	Diversity	Data collection method	Data analysis method
Rueda et al. (2015)	"She posted It on Facebook": Mexican American adolescents' experiences with technology and romantic relationship conflict *Journal of Adolescent Research*	To explore young people's experiences of dating conflict in relation to technology	USA: Single southwest border state. High schools, community centres and citywide events.	Focus groups: 64 participants (24 males; 40 females) Couple observations: 68 (34 heterosexual couples) All aged 15-17 years.	Focus groups: Mexican Americans Couple observations: Mexican Americans plus their partners of any ethnicity (though 30 couples were both Mexican American).	Focus groups and videotaped observations of couple dyads discussing two selected areas of conflict within their relationships. (20 focus groups divided by level of acculturation - low, bicultural, high - and gender) (34 couple dyad observations)	QUAL + qual method (Morse and Niehaus, 2009). One deductive method forms core data set, followed by one inductive data set to complement data set.
Stonard et al. (2015)	"They'll always find a way to get to you": Technology use in adolescent romantic relationships and its role in dating violence and abuse *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*	To explore the role of technology in young people's intimate relationships, abusive behaviours and perceived impact.	UK One secondary school and personal contacts of the researcher.	52 participants (30 females; 22 males)| aged 12 – 18 years.	Predominantly White (92%)	Focus groups (8 groups: 1 female only; 7 seven mixed female and male groups; each with 3-12 participants)	Thematic analysis
Van Ouytsel et al. (2016)	Exploring the role of social networking sites within adolescent romantic relationships and dating experiences *Computers in Human Behavior*	To explore young people's motives for sexting and perceived consequences.	Belgium: Flanders. Two secondary schools.	57 participants (38 females; 19 males) aged 15-18 years.	Not stated	Focus groups (11 groups: 7 female only; 4 male only; each with 3-8 participants)	Not explicitly stated.

Table 4 Continued

Paper	Title and journal of publication	Research question / aim(s) of the study	Country and setting	Participants	Diversity	Data collection method	Data analysis method
Van Ouytsel et al. (2017)	Sexting: Adolescents' perceptions of the applications used for, motives for, and consequences of sexting *Journal of Youth Studies*	To explore young people's motives for sexting and perceived consequences.	As study above (different analysis of same data set)				
Weathers & Hopson, (2015)	"I define what hurts me": A co-cultural theoretical analysis of communication factors related to digital dating abuse *Howard Journal of Communications*	To explore the experiences of young females in digitally abusive relationships and the communicative strategies used for coping and overcoming the issue.	USA. Mid-sized north-eastern university.	10 participants (all females) aged 18-24 years. Currently in, or had been in, an abusive heterosexual relationship where technology played a role.	4 Caucasian; 3 African American; 3 Asian American	Individual interviews	Thematic analysis (theory and theme driven)
Weathers et al., (2019)	Digital media as a context for dating abuse: Connecting adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies to young adult women's well-being *Affilia – Journal of Women and Social Work*	To explore how various communication strategies used by young females in digitally abusive relationships impacts upon their experiences.	As study above (different analysis of same data set)				

Table 5

Key Themes and Concepts Identified in Individual Papers

Paper	Key themes and concepts
Baker & Carreno (2016)	Technology used to initiate relationships
	Statuses updated on social network sites to let others know unavailable
	Technology used to deliberately cause jealousy by partners and peers
	Females as deliberately trying to break up relationships by messaging males
	Females upset when males message or have pictures of other females on their phones
	Females felt males contacting other females led to comparison and self-esteem issues
	Jealousy leads to monitoring
	Password sharing as a demonstration of trust that leads to 'drama'
	Young people find monitoring acceptable
	Males used monitoring to 'keep' their partner
	Importance of relationship status being online
	Males as checking females' texts
	Males use geographical monitoring apps
	Mutual monitoring
	Isolating females from male friends
	Self-isolation from technology as a way of regaining control – could lead to further harassment
	Technology to break off relationship
	Continuing harassment via technology following breaking up
Baker & Helm (2010)	Monitoring seen as irritating, rather than abusive
	Technology enabled abuse occurs frequently
	Technology enabled abuse originates from embeddedness of couple in peer context
	Jealousy results when partner talks to someone of opposite sex – leads to fights
	Couples use fake profiles to find things out about each other
	Checking of partners phone and social networking pages
	Requesting passwords
	Restrictions might be placed on partners around going out or use of internet
	Monitoring partners through frequent phone contact
	Controlling partners through frequent phone contact
	Young people would turn off their phones or not pick up to avoid partner
	Could be stalked after breaking up with texts and unwanted calls
Draucker & Martsolf (2010)	Technology embedded in the relationship from the start
	Technology as establishing relationships before the couple knew each other
	Young people talk to their partner multiple times per day, text used to convey practical information
	Arguments generally happen through technology; can lead to in-person violence
	Young people check on each other by repeated calling
	Constant calling as leading to limiting of activities
	Turning off phones to limit impact of unwanted contacts or busying self with phone to avoid talking
	Constant calling motivated by both trust issues and concern
	Partners checked the other's messages
	Some acts categorised as aggressive, e.g. keylogging software and accessing accounts without permission
	Violence occurred when partner appeared to have been unfaithful
	Some aggression deliberately posted on social network sites to make public
	Phones used to summon help during violent episodes
	Breaking up through technology - can be preferable
	Following breakup, limiting ways in which partner can make contact through technology
	Technology allows people to reconnect after violent episodes or breakups

Table 5 Continued

Paper	Key themes and concepts
Hellevik (2019)	Technology used to harass partner directly, and indirectly through partner's social network
	Technology used to threaten 'in-person' violence
	Some partners are only abusive through technology
	Digital abuse not always considered as serious as in-person abuse
	Constant text messaging seen as exciting at beginning of relationship
	Understanding that messaging removes emotional cues: this can lead to saying hurtful things
	Re-victimisation through re-reading of hurtful messages
	Gendered abuse of females seen as stemming from male jealousy
	Monitoring partner's whereabouts through technology/messaging
	Partners, especially females, pressured to delete or block opposite sex friends on social networking sites
	Use of partner's passwords to control social media accounts
	Use of technology to spread rumours following break-ups
	Females prevented from communicating with male friends by partners
	Using messages sent by partner to blackmail them
	Females as having intimate images redistributed by partner
	Intimate images used to blackmail partner into further sexual acts
	Threats made through technology often framed as 'joking around' by perpetrator
	Co-occurrence of online and offline abuse, particularly over time
Lucero et al. (2014)	Females go to great lengths to watch partners, including fake profiles
	Female monitoring deemed overprotective and controlling
	Boys delete social media posts/messages to hide conversing with opposite sex friends
	Males felt jealous when their partner texted opposite sex friends
	Males might pretend to be their partner and text back opposite sex friends
	Females delete texts from opposite sex friends
	Sharing of passwords or giving access to technology to allow partner to monitor
	Password sharing not seen as problematic – symbol of trust / committed relationship
	Password sharing as a bad idea
	Password sharing as a cause of relationship 'drama'
	Unpermitted account access due to jealously; permitted account access acceptable
	Deleting messages avoids 'drama'
	Password sharing leads to relationship breakdown
	Males less happy about sharing passwords
	Social networking put relationships in social realm leading to conflict
	Sexting happens frequently to initiate relationships
	Sexting should be private, but sharing frequently occurs
Melander (2010)	Technology can be used in multiple control patterns between partners
	Technology abuse can be equal between partners and not related to asymmetrical control
	Technology starts argument that then play out face-to-face - connection between online and offline abuse
	Monitoring through phones and social network sites
	Geographical monitoring of partners through calls, texts and apps
	Monitoring can be considered caring
	Password sharing
	Dictating who partners can and can't communicate with, including deleting contacts
	Isolation of females from male friendship networks
	Reciprocal monitoring further enabled through technology
	Controlling behaviours further enabled through technology
	Technology as a form of self-defence when retaliating or ending relationship
	Quickness and ease of contact perpetuates abuse
	Public nature of technology abuse makes it more painful and others can join in

Table 5 Continued

Paper	Key themes and concepts
Rueda et al. (2015)	Technology as resulting in loss of 'in-person' skills
	Social network sites as problematic, leading to jealousy and trust issues
	Technology allows people to be more flirtatious
	Females as both more flirtatious and more upset by others flirting
	Males as more upset by partner texting others
	Jealousy and mistrust leads to monitoring, surveillance and controlling behaviours
	Password sharing as wanting and showing trust
	Perception that partners sometimes forget they have shared passwords
	Males felt constant contact was overbearing
	Males see texting as an appropriate way to monitor
	Permitted and unpermitted phone checking to monitor behaviour
	Some females see monitoring as 'cute', others as inappropriate
	Monitoring is assessed based on context
	Geographical tracking apps
	Females as restricted from talking to other males
	Males minimise their online harassment
	Social network sites, constant texting, or parental phone checking alert others to difficulties
	Public nature of social network sites is not always helpful
	Couples as playing out relationships online
	Technology platforms could lead to misunderstandings
Stonard et al. (2015)	Mobile phones as a key communication method
	Constant contact throughout day as unhealthy and obsessive
	Females might initially see constant contact as caring
	Partners check messaging histories/accounts, especially for opposite sex communications out of concern for trust/fidelity
	Females as instigating checking and monitoring behaviours more than males because more protective/obsessive
	Account checking even after the relationship has ended
	Females as more demanding of logins/passwords
	Dislike of opposite sex communications, especially if kisses used
	Females delete opposite sex friends from contact lists
	Constant checking of partner through phone calls and messages – others may become involved
	Constant messages and calls after end of relationship
	Females more likely to use constant calling/messaging because of concerns about cheating
	Mixed perceptions about acceptability of checking behaviours
	Mixed perceptions about acceptability of controlling behaviours
	Males and females differ in how harmful they consider technology enabled abuse to be
Van Ouytsel et al. (2016)	Screenshots of private conversations might be forwarded
	Sharing relationship status could cause friends to be jealous
	Sharing relationship status signalled that individuals are 'taken'
	Jealousy if partner commented on pictures of opposite sex, especially if about appearance or hearts/kisses used
	Jealous if partner appeared in pictures with opposite sex friend(s)
	Reading partners communications as common practice
	Control through sharing passwords or unauthorised access
	Login information as a symbol of love and trust
	Expectation that logins won't be used
	Reviewing 'friends lists' and requesting certain opposite sex contacts be removed
	Posting hurtful status updates following breakups

Table 5 Continued

Paper	Key themes and concepts
Van Ouytsel et al. (2017)	Apps like Snapchat falsely reassure that images cannot be forwarded
	Sexual images generally sent within the context of an intimate relationship
	Females feel images are expected by male partners and demonstrate love
	Males pressure females to send images as a sign of love/trust
	Females send images to keep partner
	Females use images to flirt with prospective partners
	Males might be off put by prospective partners sending images
	Multiple ways images can be shared
	Males as most likely to share sexual images to brag or as revenge
	Females don't share images out of respect / little interest in male images
	Sharing images or even talking about sent images as detrimental to girls' reputation
	Images used to blackmail females to stay in relationships or participate in other sexual activities
	Some peers as not paying attention when sexual images of others emerge
	Females seen as stupid for sending images
	Males as supporting or not supporting other males depending on context
	Males might produce fake sexual images to degrade females
Weathers & Hopson (2015)	Accepting or putting up with status quo of technology enabled abuse as part of wider societal discourses about male-female power – ultimately reinforces abuse
	Censoring information that could be inflammatory, and avoiding risky conversations
	Deleting messages to/from others to avoid conflict
	Mistaking tech abuse for love
	Responding to technology enabled abuse to prove love
	Pressuring females to send sexual images through normalisation or threats
	Excessive messaging and phone calls with intention of interrupting other activities
	Talking to other females for support, but risks being seen as stupid
	Talking to males to gain a different perspective and elicit change
	Males sharing females' sexual images with other males
	Males as both supportive and complicit
	Others as downplaying severity of technology enabled abuse through teasing
	Females deliberately avoid/limit technology to avoid abuse and maintain control
Weathers et al., (2019)	Being extremely respectful and polite during online abuse to defuse situation
	Online abuse as having multiple negative outcomes on wellbeing for abused partner
	Loss of self-esteem allows abuser to gain more power
	Preparing what might be said before communicating to avoid difficult topics
	Willingness to respond to constant messaging in order to avoid further conflict
	Sharing experiences with other females often not helpful as can be framed as 'normal'
	Trying to avoid abusive situations could lead to further difficulties
	Strategies used to manage digital abuse often do not allow for resolution of difficulties / ending of the relationship

Table 6

Third-Order Interpretations Arising from Distilled Key Themes and Concepts

Distilled key themes and concepts	Third-order interpretation
- Widespread feelings of mistrust and jealousy in relation to partners communicating with opposite sex friends through technology - Jealousy as a major source of conflict – plays out online or in person - Different threats associated with jealousy – impact upon self-esteem for females, fear of loss of relationship for males - Peers, especially females, might act to deliberately cause jealousy within others' relationships though their technology-based communications - Young people take action to protect their relationships by deciding what information they will or will not share online - Interactions with opposite sex friends through technology can cause partners to mirror this behaviour leading to a cycle of jealousy and mistrust	"Stay the f*** away": Jealousy and mistrust within a virtually connected peer network
- Young people use technology to monitor partners' interactions with opposite friends - frequently a mutual act - Differences between males and females in the types of monitoring carried out and the reasons for doing so - Partner's previous behaviour a factor in deciding whether or not to perform monitoring - Females perceived as more likely to carry out monitoring behaviours - Communications with others are deleted or moderated to avoid conflict – especially by females - Monitoring leads to conflict and potential abuse - Monitoring raises further doubts and leads to increased jealousy and monitoring	"I've got her password and she's got mine": Seeking reassurances through technology enabled monitoring
- Acts of control through technology aim to change or restrict a partner's behaviour - Acts of technology enabled control following break-up of the relationship by continuing contact or public humiliation through technology - Females disproportionately affected by technology-based acts of control - Use of sexting to control partners - Technology can offer a means of reasserting control including severing of relationships	"Show me how much you love me": Controlling partners through technology-based requests

Table 7

Summary of Key Findings of the Meta-Synthesis

- Technology is a motivator of abuse, enabling increased access to opposite sex friends. This creates uncertainty in the security of relationships, experienced through jealous feelings.
- Technology is also a means of abuse through TE monitoring and controlling behaviours.
- TE monitoring and controlling behaviours are not always recognised as abusive.
- Females appeared to be at greater risk of experiencing TE controlling behaviours, with a greater potential for harm.
- TEAIPA occurs against a backdrop of adolescent development, including acquisition of gendered roles.
- There remain gaps in our knowledge in relation to the impact of TEAIPA and the relationship between TEAIPA and other aspects of a couple's in-person interactions.

Table 8

Summary of Implications for Practice, Policy, and Research

- Education and intervention programmes should provide clear content in relation to what constitutes TEAIPA and discuss feelings of jealousy that might arise in the context of intimate relationships.
- Schools and other settings of importance to young people should be supported to model and encourage respectful, gender-neutral interactions, both in-person and online, through the development of policy.
- Future research should consider the impact of TEAIPA in addition to its connections to in-person forms of abuse. This could be achieved through broad-based studies of AIPA that take an ecological perspective.

Figures to be Inserted in Main Text

Set 1	blog* OR cyber OR "dating app*" OR digital OR electronic OR internet OR messag* OR "mobile device*" OR online OR phone* OR sext* OR SMS OR "social media" OR "social network*" OR technolog* OR texting OR "video call*" OR vlog* OR website*	**OR**	Database specific thesaurus / indexing terms relating to technology

AND

Set 2	boyfriend* OR couple* OR dating OR girlfriend* OR love OR partner* OR "intimate relationship*" OR "romantic relationship*"	**OR**	Database specific thesaurus / indexing terms relating to intimate relationships

AND

Set 3	abus* OR aggress* OR argu* OR challeng* OR conflict* OR difficult* OR harass* OR violen* OR monitor* OR pressur* OR coerc* OR stalk* OR surveil* OR jealous* OR isolat* OR fight* OR unhealthy	**OR**	Database specific thesaurus / indexing terms relating to abuse

AND

Set 4	adolescen* OR student* OR teen* OR "young adult*" OR "young person*" OR "young people*" OR "young men*" OR "young wom*" OR "young male*" OR "young female*" OR youth*

AND

Set 5	attitude* OR experience* OR "focus group*" OR interview* OR qualitative OR opinion* OR perception* OR view*

Final set of papers to be considered for inclusion

Figure 1. Search terms and strategy used in database interrogation.
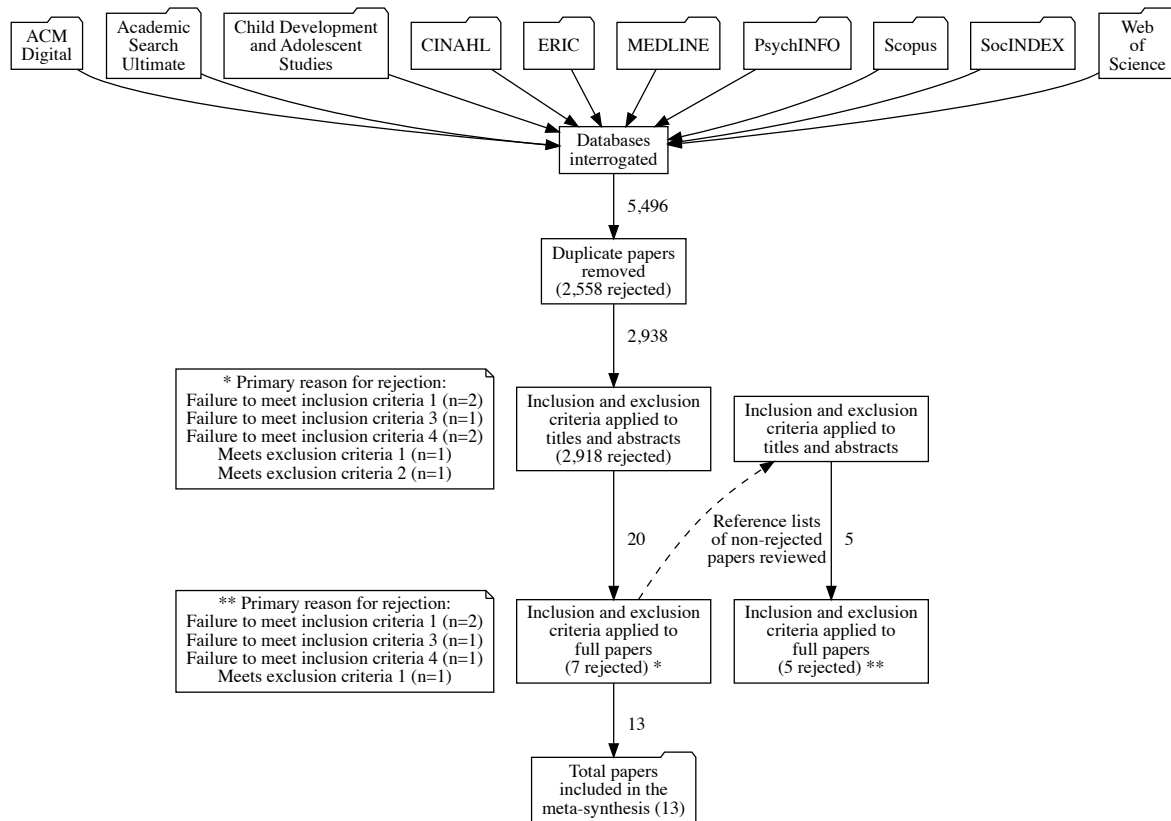
Figure 2. Flow diagram of assessment of papers against inclusion and exclusion criteria. *Note that retrieved full-text papers may have been rejected on the basis of multiple inclusion or exclusion criteria.*
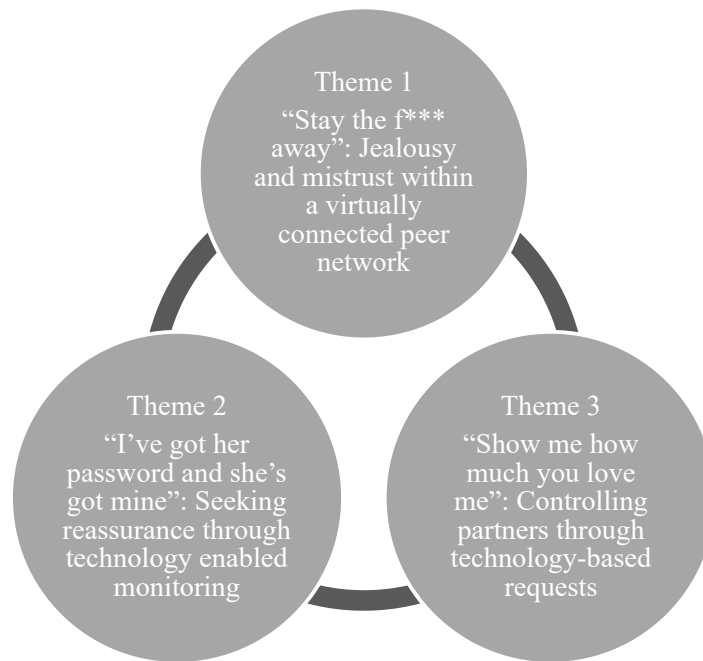
Figure 3. Diagrammatic representation of third-order interpretations (themes).
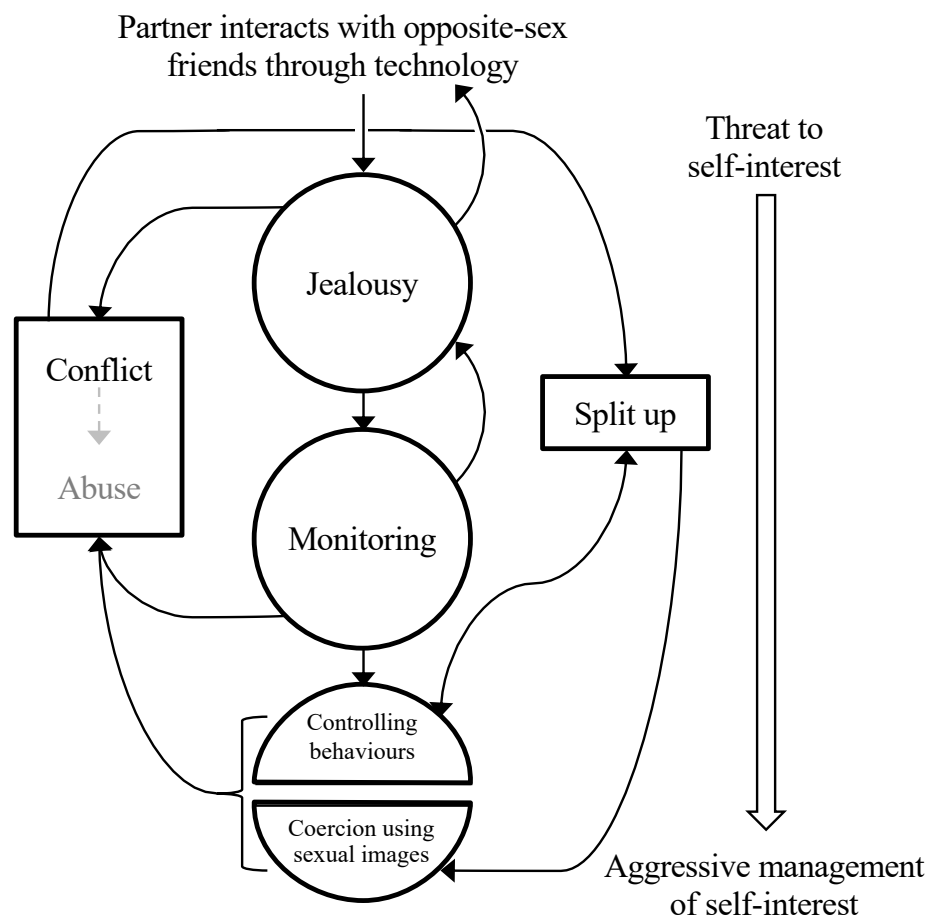
Figure 4. Conceptualisation of the intersection between technology and AIPA. *Technology was described as allowing increased access to a network of opposite sex friends of potential sexual/romantic interest. This generated feelings of jealousy in partners, especially since a proportion of communications were visible through social networking sites, such as when partners liked or commented on the photographs of opposite sex friends. Some young people would respond to this threat by engaging in similar behaviours thus perpetuating a cycle of mistrust and jealousy. In many cases, young people tried to alleviate feelings of jealousy through carrying out monitoring of their partner using technology. This included accessing the other's social networking accounts, checking mobile phones, and constant calling or messaging when apart. However, rather than alleviate jealousy, this often acted to further increase suspicion through the communications it unearthed. In some instances, young people extended monitoring into acts of control whereby attempts were made to change a partner's behaviour. This was achieved primarily through limiting a partner's use of technology and/or dictating who one could or could not be friends with. In some instances, pressure around sexual communications (sexting) was used as a means of control, though this did not always appear to arise directly from monitoring behaviours. All three stages could lead to conflict between partners with the potential for acts of abuse to occur, either in-person or using technology. Furthermore, some acts of technologically enabled monitoring could be seen as acts of abuse in themselves. If a couple split up, this posed a further risk for use of controlling behaviours through technology. Stages of the conceptualisation could be seen as initially being driven by a threat to 'self-interest' (relating to the importance of having and maintaining an intimate relationship), with some individuals progressing to use increasingly aggressive strategies to ensure this.*

Appendix A

Focusing of the Noblit and Hare methodology

Table A1 shows how the seven stages of Noblit and Hare's (1988) methodology were

re-titled to structure the method of the current review.

Table A1

Revisions to phase titles of Noblit and Hare's (1988) methodology

	Original title	**Revised title**
Phase 1	Getting started	Preliminary research
Phase 2	Deciding what is relevant to the initial interest	Identifying relevant studies
Phase 3	Reading the studies	Familiarisation with identified studies
Phase 4	Determining how the studies are related	Determining relationships and
Phase 5	Translating the studies into one another	identifying interpretations
Phase 6	Synthesising translations	Synthesis of translation
Phase 7	Expressing the synthesis	Dissemination

Appendix B

Example of a populated data extraction template

Table B1

Data extraction template for Baker & Carreño (2016) paper

Paper	Title and journal of publication	Research question / aim(s) of the study	Country and setting	Participants	Diversity	Data collection method	Data analysis method
Baker & Carreño (2016)	Understanding the role of technology in adolescent dating and dating violence *Journal of Child and Family Studies*	To explore how technology is used in young people's relationships, particularly in the context of dating violence and to examine differences by gender.	USA: Hawaii. Community based organisations.	39 participants (18 females; 21 males) aged 14-19 years. Had been in a relationship in the past year that they self-defined as problematic, but were not currently in an abusive relationship.	Authors chose not to record due to Hawaiian's seeing their culture as built upon interactions and intermarriage of diverse groups, rather than race/ethnic background. All participants identified as "local".	Focus groups (8 groups: 4 female only; 4 male only; each with 3-8 participants)	Grounded theory
Findings							
Getting in Technology used to initiate relationships. Particularly texts and social networking sites. Would lead to attempts to meet in person. Boys often use technology at this stage to "hook up" (p. 312). Saves them the embarrassment of being rejected in front of others. Girls use technology to "get to know" (p. 312) potential partners and therefore							

Table B1 Continued

prefer to stay in this stage for longer. "we became boyfriend and girlfriend after like 3 months of talking" (p. 312). When "official" (p. 312), status updated on social networking sites to tell others to "stay the f*** away" (p. 312).

Causing jealousy

Technology used to deliberately cause jealousy once in a relationship. If one partner did not make the relationship status official on social media, or chose to hide it, this could cause jealousy. "you shouldn't be 'taken' on your profile but 'single' on your inbox" (p. 313). Once official, female peers could try to "screw it up" (p. 313) by sending messages to the boy. Boys often replied to messages, causing the girls upset. Girls were also upset when boys had photos of other girls on their phones, "insecurity… don't give a girl a reason to compare ourselves to another girl and bring down our self-esteem" (p. 313). Boys recognised girls did not like them using technology to communicate with others girls "loads of girls like my pictures. And she get mad" (p. 313). Boys did not speak of technology causing jealousy in themselves, but girls across all groups noted boyfriends would "freak out" when they communicated with other boys, resulting in suspicion "What are you doing?" Why are you taking pictures with other boys" (p. 313). Peers could stir things in this regard. Jealousy also caused by delayed responses. Boys and girls felt partners should always be available to each other, "He would be angry if I didn't text him back right away…he would think that I was fooling around with other people" (p. 313). Enmeshment of jealousy and monitoring behaviours.

Monitoring

At beginning of relationship, passwords shared as a sign of trust and commitment. Leads to looking at each other's communications and "you can both end up with more dramas" (p. 313). Most young people do not see an issue with keeping an eye on their partner. Boys felt it necessary to keep their partner, "you're gonna want to like know everything about 'em just cause after you've been with this girl for so long… you're scared. You don't want them to learn that you're scared." (p. 313). Girl's described their monitoring behaviours as a concern for safety, "there's just some things that he wants to keep to himself and he doesn't want to worry me. So I'd occasionally check his Facebook or his Tumblr" (p. 314). Also, the belief that if partners aren't completely open, then there's something to hide, "to him it's wrong if you look at his phone cause that's his privacy. But if you got nothing to hide, you shouldn't be scared if I see your phone" (p. 314). Monitoring was typically rooted in jealousy. Girls wanted to

Table B1 Continued

see how boys presented their relationship on social media. "I wouldn't stalk him of Facebook… just be browsing through the page… our relationship wasn't posted" (p. 314). Girls described boys monitoring behaviours, "He sort of tried to give me the impression that he owned me. So when we would meet he would actually go through my cell phone to see who I text" (p. 314). One girl described boyfriend downloading geographical tracking app to her phone. "He asks for my password to see who I am talking, chatting with… When I'm gonna go online, he comes beside me and watches what I do" (p. 314). Girls described mutual monitoring to see if the other was communicating with the opposite sex. "All he would do was just look through it real quick and then give it back… because I was so protective of other girls, I guess he would feel the same about guys" (p. 314).

Partner-imposed isolation

Young people described how boys would try to isolate their girlfriends, due to jealousy and fear of losing them, "she's yours" (p. 315). Boys recognised that holding on too tight could result in losing their girlfriend, but this didn't stop them trying to isolate girls from other boys through damaging phones and de-friending boys by using passwords to log in as the partner's accounts. "he actually asked for my password and username, logged in, and de-friended him" (p. 315).

Breaking off contact

Young people recognised the power of self-isolation, where the partner's phone calls or messages were not responded to. Happened when young people were tired of being monitored, or the partner had attempted to isolate them from friends. Sometimes an attempt to regain control. Sometimes an opportunity to calm down. "I was just like 'you know what? I'm gonna break my phone so I don't have to talk to you'" (p. 315). This strategy could lead to harassment, "He would just keep texting or calling… he'd call me like 10 times until I actually picked up" (p. 315).

Getting out

Young people would use increasing time between communications or no further communications at all to signal the end of a relationship. Boys used this method more than girls. Technology also used to directly end relationships. Standard practice. This could lead to retaliatory abuse on social media, sometimes with the involvement of friends, "I wanted to say it but I couldn't do it myself" (p. 315). Immediacy of decision can be fuelled by drinking or drugs. Use of technology in break ups as standard

Table B1 Continued

practice. Continued harassment after breaking up via technology, "This girl was obsessed with me… They would write on your wall and Facebook. They miss you. Like

what the heck?" (p. 316).

Theories / frameworks

Developmental stages. Ecological perspectives.

Appendix C

Tabularisation of key themes and concepts against third-order interpretations

Table C1

Tabularisation of key themes and concepts against third-order interpretations

	"Stay the f* away": Jealousy and mistrust within a virtually connected peer network**	**"I've got her password and she's got mine": Seeking reassurances through technology enabled monitoring**	**"Show me how much you love me": Controlling partners through technology-based requests**
Baker & Carreno (2016)	Statuses updated on social network sites to let others know unavailable Technology used to deliberately cause jealousy by partners and peers Females as deliberately trying to break up relationships by messaging males Females upset when males message or have pictures of other females on their phones Females felt males contacting other females led to comparison and self-esteem issues Importance of relationship status being online	Jealousy leads to monitoring Password sharing as a demonstration of trust that leads to 'drama' Young people find monitoring acceptable Males used monitoring to 'keep' their partner Males frequently check females' texts Males use geographical monitoring apps Mutual monitoring	Isolating females from male friends Self-isolation from technology as a way of regaining control Technology to break off relationship Continuing harassment via technology following breaking up
Baker & Helm (2010)	Technology enabled abuse originates from embeddedness of dating dyad in peer context Technology enabled abuse occurs frequently Jealousy results when partner talks to someone of opposite sex – leads to fights	Checking of partners phone and social networking pages Requesting passwords Monitoring partners through frequent phone contact Monitoring seen as irritating, rather than abusive	Restrictions might be placed on partners around going out or use of internet Controlling partners through frequent phone contact Young people would turn off their phones or not pick up to avoid partner Could be stalked after breaking up with texts and unwanted calls
Draucker & Martsolf (2010)	Arguments generally happen through technology; can lead to in-person violence Violence occurred when partner appeared to have been unfaithful Some aggression deliberately posted on social network sites to make public	Young people check on each other by repeated calling Constant calling motivated by both trust issues and concern Partners checked the other's messages	Constant calling as leading to limiting of activities Turning off phones to limit impact of unwanted contacts Some acts categorised as aggressive, e.g. keylogging software Breaking up through technology - can be preferable Following breakup, limiting ways in which partner could make contact through technology Technology allows people to reconnect after violent episodes or breakups

Table C1 Continued

	"Stay the f*** away": Jealousy and mistrust within a virtually connected peer network	"I've got her password and she's got mine": Seeking reassurances through technology enabled monitoring	"Show me how much you love me": Controlling partners through technology-based requests
Hellevik (2019)	Messaging removes emotional cues: this can lead to saying hurtful things Gendered abuse of females seen as stemming from male jealousy	Constant text messaging seen as exciting at beginning of relationship Monitoring partner's whereabouts through technology/messaging	Technology used to harass partner directly, and indirectly through partner's social network Technology used to threaten 'in-person' violence Some partners are only abusive through technology Digital abuse not always considered as serious as in-person abuse Re-victimisation through re-reading of hurtful messages Partners, especially females, pressured to delete or block opposite sex friends on social networking sites Use of partner's passwords to control social media accounts Use of technology to spread rumours following break-ups
Lucero et al. (2014)	Males felt jealous when their partner texted opposite sex friends Social networking put relationships in social realm leading to conflict Sexting happens frequently to initiate relationships	Males delete social media posts/messages to hide conversing with opposite sex friends Females delete texts from opposite sex friends Sharing of passwords or giving access to technology to allow partner to monitor Password sharing not seen as problematic – symbol of trust / committed relationship Password sharing as a bad idea Password sharing as a cause of relationship 'drama' Unpermitted account access due to jealously; permitted account access acceptable Deleting messages avoids 'drama' Password sharing leads to relationship breakdown Males less happy about sharing passwords Female monitoring deemed overprotective and excessive	Males might pretend to be their partner and text back opposite sex friends Sexting should be private, but sharing frequently occurs

Table C1 Continued

	"Stay the f* away": Jealousy and mistrust within a virtually connected peer network**	**"I've got her password and she's got mine": Seeking reassurances through technology enabled monitoring**	**"Show me how much you love me": Controlling partners through technology-based requests**
Melander (2010)	Technology starts argument that then play out face-to-face - connection between online and offline abuse Public nature of technology abuse makes it more painful and others can join in	Technology abuse can be equal between partners and not related to asymmetrical control Monitoring through phones and social network sites Monitoring can be considered caring Password sharing Reciprocal monitoring further enabled through technology	Technology can be used in multiple control patterns between partners Geographical monitoring of partners through calls, texts and apps Dictating who partners can and can't communicate with, including deleting contacts Isolation of females from male friendship networks Controlling behaviours further enabled through technology Technology as a form of self-defence when retaliating or ending relationship
Rueda et al. (2015)	Social network sites as problematic, leading to jealousy and trust issues Technology allows people to be more flirtatious Females as both more flirtatious and more upset by others flirting Males as more upset by partner texting others Jealousy and mistrust leads to monitoring, surveillance and controlling behaviours Public nature of social network sites is not always helpful Couples as playing out relationships online Technology platforms could lead to misunderstandings	Password sharing as wanting and showing trust Perception that partners sometimes forget they have shared passwords Males felt constant contact was overbearing Males see texting as an appropriate way to monitor Permitted and unpermitted phone checking to monitor behaviour Some females see monitoring as 'cute', others as inappropriate Monitoring is assessed based on context	Geographical tracking apps Females as restricted from talking to other males Males minimise their online harassment Social network sites, constant texting, or parental phone checking alert others to difficulties

Table C1 Continued

	"Stay the f* away": Jealousy and mistrust within a virtually connected peer network**	**"I've got her password and she's got mine": Seeking reassurances through technology enabled monitoring**	**"Show me how much you love me": Controlling partners through technology-based requests**
Stonard et al. (2015)	Dislike of opposite sex communications, especially if kisses used	Constant contact throughout day as unhealthy and obsessive Females might initially see constant contact as caring Partners check messaging histories/accounts, especially for opposite sex communications out of concern for trust/fidelity Females as instigating checking and monitoring behaviours more than males because more protective/obsessive Females as more demanding of logins/passwords Females more likely to use constant calling/messaging because of concerns about cheating Mixed perceptions about acceptability of checking behaviours	Females delete opposite sex friends from contact lists Constant checking of partner through phone calls and messages – others may become involved Constant messages and calls after end of relationship Mixed perceptions about acceptability of controlling behaviours Males and females differ in how harmful they consider technology enabled abuse to be Checking-up on partner, even after the relationship has ended
(Van Ouytsel, Van Gool, et al., 2016)	Sharing relationship status could cause friends to be jealous Sharing relationship status signalled that individuals are 'taken' Jealousy if partner commented on pictures of opposite sex, especially if about appearance or hearts/kisses used Jealous if partner appeared in pictures with opposite sex friend(s)	Reading partners communications as common practice Login information as a symbol of love and trust Expectation that logins won't be used Monitoring through sharing passwords or unauthorised access	Reviewing 'friends lists' and requesting certain opposite sex contacts be removed Posting hurtful status updates following breakups

Table C1 Continued

	"Stay the f*** away": Jealousy and mistrust within a virtually connected peer network	"I've got her password and she's got mine": Seeking reassurances through technology enabled monitoring	"Show me how much you love me": Controlling partners through technology-based requests
(Van Ouytsel et al., 2017)	Females use images to flirt with prospective partners		Females feel images are expected by male partners and demonstrate love Males pressure females to send images as a sign of love/trust Females send images to keep partner Males as most likely to share sexual images to brag or as revenge Females don't share images out of respect / little interest in male images Images used to blackmail females to stay in relationships or participate in other sexual activities Females seen as stupid for sending images Males have low opinions of prospective partners who send images
Weathers & Hopson (2015)		Censoring information that could be inflammatory, and avoiding risky conversations Deleting messages to/from others to avoid conflict	Accepting or putting up with status quo of technology enabled abuse as part of wider societal discourses about male-female power – ultimately reinforces abuse Mistaking technology enabled abuse for love Responding to technology enabled abuse to prove love Pressuring females to send sexual images through normalisation or threats Excessive messaging and phone calls with intention of interrupting other activities Talking to other females for support, but risks being seen as stupid Talking to males to gain a different perspective and elicit change Males sharing females' sexual images with other males Males as both supportive and complicit Others as downplaying severity of technology enabled abuse through teasing Females deliberately avoid/limit tech to avoid abuse and maintain control

Table C1 Continued

	"Stay the f*** away": Jealousy and mistrust within a virtually connected peer network	"I've got her password and she's got mine": Seeking reassurances through technology enabled monitoring	"Show me how much you love me": Controlling partners through technology-based requests
Weathers et al., (2019)		Preparing what might be said before communicating to avoid difficult topics Willingness to respond to constant messaging in order to avoid further conflict	Being extremely respectful and polite during online abuse to defuse situation Online abuse as having multiple negative outcomes on wellbeing for abused partner Loss of self-esteem allows abuser to gain more power Sharing experiences with other females often not helpful as can be framed as 'normal' Trying to avoid abusive situations could lead to further difficulties Strategies used to manage digital abuse often do not allow for resolution of difficulties / ending of the relationship

Appendix D

Guidelines for authors of target publication journal

It is intended that this paper will be edited and submitted to the journal *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse* to be considered for publication. The guidelines for authors are included below. These have been followed in the preparation of this manuscript, except where they conflict with guidelines for submission of the thesis to the *Lancaster University Doctorate in Clinical Psychology*.
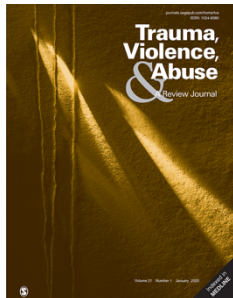
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A practitioner-oriented journal, *TVA* publishes review manuscripts that cover a body of empirical research and legal analyses, including briefs, which are based on research, laws, and case outcomes. Reviews must be based on a sufficient body of research or legal findings to warrant a review.

Impact factor: 4.329 (2017)
Editor: Jon R. Conte
LCCN: 99008561
OCLC number: 39928233
ISSN: 1524-8380 (print); 1552-8324 (web)

Manuscript Submission Guidelines:

TVA accepts comprehensive reviews of research or legal reviews that address any aspect of trauma, violence or abuse. Reviews must be based on a sufficient number of studies to justify synthesis. Reviewed literatures may come from the social or behavioral sciences or the law.

Each manuscript must:

- be prepared using APA style, and be **no longer than 40 double-spaced pages,** including references, tables, and figures;

- include an abstract of up to 250 words describing the topic of review, method of review, number of research studies meeting the criteria for review, criteria for inclusion, how research studies were identified, and major findings;

- begin with a clear description of the knowledge area that is being researched or reviewed and its relevance to understanding or dealing with trauma, violence, or abuse;

- provide a clear discussion of the limits of the knowledge that has been reviewed;

- include two summary tables: one of critical findings and the other listing implications of the review for practice, policy, and research;

- include a discussion of diversity as it applies to the reviewed research.*

All manuscripts are peer reviewed and should be submitted with a letter indicating that the material has not been published elsewhere and is not under review at another publication. Manuscripts should be submitted electronically to http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/tva where authors will be required to set up an online account on the SAGE Track system powered by ScholarOne. Inquiries may be made by email at jiv@u.washington.edu.

Authors who would like to refine the use of English in their manuscript might consider using the services of a professional English-language editing company. We highlight some of these companies at http://www.sagepub.com.ezproxy.lancs.ac.uk/journalgateway/engLang.htm.

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Please note:

Reviews of issues related to trauma, violence, and/or abuse are not appropriate for *TVA* unless they are based on a comprehensive review of research. *TVA* does not publish case studies or reports on individual research studies.

TVA does not respond to author inquiries regarding the interest of the journal in their manuscript or on the suitability of their manuscript for *TVA.* The mission and parameters of *TVA* are clearly stated above and *TVA* assumes that authors are in the best position to know if their work is consistent with the aims and scope of the journal.

*Journal policy on addressing diversity in manuscripts: **TVA** requires all submissions to include a discussion of diversity as it applies to the reviewed research (e.g., nature of the sample, limitations of the measurement). The discussion should address the body of knowledge reviewed as it addresses or fails to address issues of diversity. Diversity concerns are not a criteria for publication but must be addressed. The nature of the discussion and amount of space devoted to the discussion is the responsibility of the author(s).

TVA understands diversity to include all aspects of human differences such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, geography, ability, age, and culture.

Diversity as a core value embodies inclusiveness, mutual respect, and multiple perspectives and serves as a catalyst for expanding knowledge and practice with all human beings. While science seeks knowledge that can be generalized, it must appreciate that specific findings, while important in understanding the unique experiences of individuals or groups, are not necessarily applicable to all.

Manuscript Preparation

Manuscripts should be prepared using the APA Style Guide, and should be no longer than **40 double-spaced pages, including references, tables, and figures**. Text must be in 12-point Times New Roman font. Block quotes may be single-spaced. Manuscripts must include margins of 1 inch on all sides and pages must be numbered sequentially. All files should be in Word (.docx or .doc).

The manuscript should include five major sections (in this order): Title Page, Abstract, Main Body (blinded, with all author names and identifying information removed for peer review), References, and Author Biographies.

Sections in a manuscript may include the following (in this order): (1) Title page, (2) Abstract, (3) Keywords, (4) Text, (5) Notes, (6) References, (7) Tables, (8) Figures, (9) Appendices, and (10) Author Biographies.

1. Title page must be uploaded as a separate file. Please include the following:

Full article title

Acknowledgments and credits

Each author's complete name and institutional affiliation(s)

Grant numbers and/or funding information

Conflict of interests, if any

Corresponding author (name, address, phone/fax, e-mail)

2. Abstract. Copy and paste the abstract (150 to 250 words) into the space provided, headed by the full article title. Omit author names. Abstract must describe the topic of the review, method of review, number of research studies meeting the criteria for review, criteria for inclusion, how research studies were identified, and major findings.

3. Keywords. 5-7 keywords must be included in the manuscript.

4. Text. Begin text headed by the full article title. Text must be blinded, with all author names and other identifying information removed, for peer review.

a. Headings and Subheadings. Subheadings should indicate the organization of the content of the manuscript. Generally, three heading levels are sufficient to organize text.

Level 1: centered, boldface, upper & lowercase

Level 2: flush left, boldface, upper & lowercase

Level 3: indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period

Level 4: indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period

Level 5: indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period

b. Citations. For each text citation there must be a corresponding citation in the reference list and for each reference list citation there must be a corresponding text citation. Each corresponding citation must have identical spelling and year. Each text citation must include at least two pieces of information: author(s) and year of publication.

5. Notes. If explanatory notes are required for your manuscript, insert a number formatted in superscript following almost any punctuation mark. Footnote numbers should not follow dashes (—), and if they appear in a sentence in parentheses, the footnote number should be inserted within the parentheses. The footnotes should be added at the bottom of the page after the references. The word "Footnotes" should be centered at the top of the page.

6. References. Basic rules for the reference list:

- The reference list should be arranged in alphabetical order according to the authors' last names.
- If there is more than one work by the same author, order them according to their publication date – oldest to newest (therefore a 2008 publication would appear before a 2009 publication).
- When listing multiple authors of a source use "&" instead of "and."
- Capitalize only the first word of the title and of the subtitle, if there is one, and any proper names – i.e., only those words that are normally capitalized.
- Italicize the title of the book, the title of the journal/serial and the title of the web document.
- Manuscripts submitted to TVA should strictly follow the current APA style guide.
- Every citation in text must have the detailed reference in the Reference section.
- Every reference listed in the Reference section must be cited in text.
- Do not use "et al." in the Reference list at the end; names of all authors of a publication should be listed there.

7. Tables. They should be structured properly. Each table must have a clear and concise title. When appropriate, use the title to explain an abbreviation parenthetically, for example, Comparison of Median Income of Adopted Children (AC) v. Foster Children (FC).

8. Figures. They should be numbered consecutively in the order in which they appear in the text and must include figure captions. Figures will appear in the published article in the order in which they are numbered initially. The figure resolution should be at least 300dpi at the time of submission.

IMPORTANT: PERMISSION - The author(s) are responsible for securing permission to reproduce all copyrighted figures or materials before they are published in TVA. A copy of the written permission must be included with the manuscript submission.

9. Appendices. They should be lettered to distinguish from numbered tables and figures. Include a descriptive title for each appendix (e.g., "Appendix A. Variable Names and Definitions"). Cross-check text for accuracy against appendices.

10. Author Biographies. Author(s) are required to send a 40-60 word biography for publication at the end of the article.

Section Two: Research Paper

Adolescents' Experiences of Conflict and Abuse Within Their Intimate Partner

Relationships:

A Qualitative Exploration of Impacts and Influences on Psychological Wellbeing

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Main text: 8,379 words

Study reference: FHMREC15081

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Adolescents' Experiences of Conflict and Abuse within Their Intimate Partner Relationships:

A Qualitative Exploration of Impacts and Influences on Psychological Wellbeing

Research has shown *Adolescent Intimate Partner Abuse* (AIPA) to be a widespread problem, often with significant impact on the wellbeing of those involved. Whilst there are increasing numbers of qualitative studies exploring AIPA, there has been limited focus on emotional impacts from young people's own perspectives. Therefore, this qualitative study, employing semi-structured interviews, set out to explore young people's experiences of psychological wellbeing in relation to AIPA, within its wider context. Participants were sixteen young people (8 females; 8 males), aged 13 to 17 years, recruited from youth settings in a single unitary authority in Northwest England. Nine were considered 'more socially included' and seven 'less socially included'. Data gathered were thematically analysed, with three themes emerging: (1) *Unseen and unrecognised: The hidden nature of the couple's conflict*; (2) *Weaving worry: The significance of friendship group interactions in generating relationship negativity*; (3) *Seeking validation: The role of wider narratives in creating and concealing difficulties*. Findings suggested that events surrounding abusive acts cause considerable negative emotional impact, mainly of an anxious nature. Furthermore, technology is regarded as integral to how problems manifest, contributing a significant mental health burden. Recommendations for practice, future research, and policy are made in the context of the study's strengths and limitations.

Key words: adolescents; intimate partner relationships; abuse; violence; psychological wellbeing; mental health; qualitative methods

Adolescents'[1] Experiences of Conflict and Abuse within Their Intimate Partner

Relationships:

A Qualitative Exploration of Impacts and Influences on Psychological Wellbeing

While there are multiple definitions of *Adolescent Intimate Partner Abuse* (AIPA)

throughout the literature, recent years have seen a convergence towards more encompassing

definitions (see Stonard, Bowen, Lawrence, & Price, 2014). This paper adopts that of the

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC; 2012), conceptualising AIPA in its

broadest sense as:

> The physical, sexual, or psychological/emotional violence between two people within a close
>
> or dating relationship, as well as stalking. It can occur in person or electronically such as repeated
>
> texting or posting sexual pictures of a partner online and may occur between a current or former dating
>
> partner.

Research shows AIPA is widespread within young people's relationships, with two

recent reviews of prevalence data highlighting this. Stonard et al. (2014) found 20-25% of

young people report experiencing physical abuse; 35-36% emotional or psychological abuse;

and between 10-30% technologically enabled abuse. In terms of sexual abuse, when defined

as unwanted sexual intercourse, rates of 2-19% for females and 6% for males were found.

When defined as any unwanted sexual contact, rates increased to 26-33% for females and

23% for males. Comparable rates were found by Wincentak, Connolly, and Card (2017) for

both physical and sexual abuse (defined as unwanted sexual intercourse), to which the review

was limited. In both reviews, rates of abuse were interpreted to be high, and females were

considered to be at greater risk of sexual abuse, despite other types being experienced equally

by males and females.

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[1] The terms *adolescents* and *young people* are used interchangeably throughout. See Section One
(Method) for further discussion.

Impacts and Influences on Psychological Wellbeing in Relation to AIPA

Current understandings of impacts and influences[2] on psychological wellbeing in relation to AIPA are informed to varying degrees by both the quantitative and qualitative research[3].

Existing quantitative research

A review of the literature (Barter & Stanley, 2016) found mental health impacts have largely been studied from the perspectives of substance use, depressive symptoms, suicidality, and eating disorders. The review found overall positive associations between experiencing AIPA and each of these mental health impacts; however, there were differences when the type of AIPA experienced (e.g. physical versus sexual) and sub-category of mental health impact for any particular domain were taken into account (e.g. in the case of substance use, marijuana versus alcohol misuse). There were also differences in associations when sex, ethnicity, disability, age, and sexual orientation were taken into account, suggesting a complex system of interlinking factors and mediating/moderating variables.

The psychological impact of traumatic events has been conceptualised as resulting from both the nature of the event itself and multiple other factors relating to the individual and their environment (Harvey, 1996) that this paper terms 'influences'. For example, experiencing a higher frequency of abuse and/or multiple types (i.e. physical, sexual, emotional) leads to greater mental health impacts (Choi et al., 2017; Eshelman & Levendosky, 2012). Females appear to experience more severe forms of AIPA, resulting in greater negative health consequences (Reed et al., 2010). Some mental health difficulties, such as depression and substance misuse, also represent risk factors for experiencing AIPA,

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[2] Where impacts are defined as outcomes from having experienced abuse, and influences as factors with the potential to affect impacts.
[3] See Appendix A.

with a potentially cumulative effect (Chen et al., 2018) and being categorisable as both an influence and impact. Given this complexity, impacts and influences have largely been studied in terms of relatively simple models that isolate a selection of key variables (Choi et al., 2017). This, along with establishing prevalence rates, has been fundamental to the development of prevention programmes (Shorey et al., 2008; Stonard, 2019). It is noted, however, that in order progress the field, more nuanced models of AIPA need to be developed that can "explain variability in its consequences for survivors" (Banyard et al., 2008).

Existing qualitative research

Existing qualitative AIPA literature focuses on the ways abuse manifests and is conceptualised by young people (e.g. Chung, 2007; Reeves & Orpinas, 2012; Sullivan et al., 2010; Toscano, 2007). Since around 2010 this has been supplemented by several qualitative studies focusing specifically on how young people experience the intersection between AIPA and new technologies (e.g. Baker & Carreño, 2016; Draucker & Martsolf, 2010; Hellevik, 2019; Stonard, Bowen, Walker, & Price, 2015). When reviewing the content of these studies, 'jealousy' (i.e. intrusive thoughts and feelings that a partner is interested in another and, furthermore, might cheat on or leave them) is the closest to a psychological impact that consistently features across major themes. However, within the context of these studies, jealousy is framed as a motivator/risk for carrying out/experiencing AIPA, respectively, and its psychological impact remains largely unexplored.

In terms of wider factors that potentially influence the impact of abuse, several of the qualitative studies suggest identifying AIPA may be difficult for young people, including being confused regarding which acts within an intimate relationship might be classed as affirming or abusive (Griffiths, 2019), and mis-categorisation of abusive behaviours as 'romantic' (Chung, 2007; Weathers & Hopson, 2015). Furthermore, young people describe

very rarely choosing to disclose AIPA experiences to adults, including parents, teachers, and other professionals, and being more likely to share their experiences with friends, or not at all (Gallopin & Leigh, 2009; Jackson, 2002; Toscano, 2007). In both failing to identify relationship difficulties and not seeking adult help, young people are placed at risk of staying in abusive relationships. More recent research has also highlighted a negative role for technology, through the provision of additional avenues for abuse to be performed (Barter et al., 2009). This is intensified through the constant contact between partners (Draucker & Martsolf, 2010; Stonard et al., 2015) and the possibility for public humiliation (Melander, 2010; Van Ouytsel et al., 2016) technology allows.

Whilst these studies begin to offer insight into potential impacts and influences of importance, there remains limited research focusing specifically on the relationship between AIPA and psychological wellbeing from young people's perspectives.

Understanding Impacts and Influences from an Ecological Perspective

Understanding the mental health impacts of AIPA and influences that can lead to more or less positive outcomes clearly represents a complex undertaking. One way in which these multiple strands can be brought together is through *social ecological perspectives* that consider social phenomenon in terms of interactions between individuals and their environments (Darling, 2007; Eriksson et al., 2018). There are a number of social ecological models described throughout the literature, however both the *World Health Organisation* (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002) and *Centre for Disease Control and Prevention* (2004) use an adapted version of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model to understand intimate partner violence. Figure 1 presents this and shows how violence can be understood through interactions at the level of the individual, interpersonal relationships, the community, and wider society.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

The utility of this approach in informing intervention programmes and identifying areas for further research in the field of interpersonal violence has led to the conclusion: "Future research should consider using an ecological approach to understand… psychological experiences. Specifically, research should attempt to understand how variables at the multiple ecological levels interact to impact mental health outcomes" (Campbell, Dworkin, & Cabral, 2009: 240). In the specific field of AIPA, whilst several researchers have attempted to understand the wider causes of AIPA from ecological perspectives (e.g. Banyard, Cross, & Modecki, 2006; Connolly, Friedlander, Pepler, Craig, & Laporte, 2010; Foshee et al., 2008), those applying this approach to understanding mental health impacts remains limited (e.g. Banyard & Cross, 2008).

It is argued that qualitative research is particularly suited to setting the groundwork for developing ecological models, including understanding the relationships between key variables and complex feedback loops. For example, Lounsbury and Mitchell (2009: 219) state:

> The utility of using qualitative methods to develop a basic understanding of multi-level, dynamic, interacting structures and processes within an ecosystem cannot be understated. Arguably, qualitative methods and data analyses can more easily generate the contextual data and narrative needed to see the system or the problem of interest than traditional quantitative methods and analyses alone.

This offers a platform from which further avenues of research and enquiry can be structured, whilst holding issues of most importance to individuals at the centre of our conceptualisations (Özesmi & Özesmi, 2004).

The Current Study

It followed that the aim of this research was to qualitatively explore young people's experiences of psychological wellbeing in relation to abuse within their intimate partner relationships. This was to allow scope for young people to self-define what aspects of abuse,

and the wider context in which it is embedded, most contributed to feelings of distress and how these feelings were experienced. A secondary aim was to recruit a balance of males/females and those from the most/least socially advantaged backgrounds, in order to ensure voices from groups with potentially differing experiences were captured.

Method

Study Design

This was a qualitative study utilising semi-structured interviews. Qualitative approaches are particularly suited to the exploration of individuals' experiences (Agius, 2013) and semi-structured interviews allow issues of interest to be explored in a way that is responsive to participant-interviewer dialogue (Coolican, 2018).

Study Setting

The research took place across five youth centres in a single local authority area in the northwest of England. The local authority area covers an urban/rural setting and is in the top 10% of deprived areas nationally (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019). Four of the youth centres were authority funded and one a social enterprise.

Ethical Considerations

The study was reviewed and received ethical approval from the *Lancaster University Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee* (reference: FHMREC15081). Documents appertaining to ethics approval, along with the study protocol, can be found in *Section Four*.

Recruitment

Recruitment took place from March to July 2018. Contact was made with potential sites via a researcher who had conducted similar work in the local authority area. Five out of

six youth centres contacted responded and agreed to meet. Following detailed discussion with each contact, including provision of relevant study documentation, all five centres agreed to participate.

Youth centres were visited on several occasions to allow young people to familiarise themselves with the researcher and study. Young people mostly spoke to the researcher in small friendship groups. Those interested in taking part took away a paper slip with a link to the research website (see Section 4, pp.18-25). The website set out an overview of the research and provided links to information and consent sheets. It directed interested parties to contact the researcher using either the dedicated research number, email, or by leaving contact details. The aim was to recruit between 10-16 young people so a point of data sufficiency might be reached (i.e. "the researcher considers… sufficient depth of understanding has been achieved in relation to emergent theoretical categories"; Saunders et al., 2018:1901), whilst representing a balance of males and females who were socially included and excluded.

Participants

The inclusion criteria for participants were: (1) aged 13-18; (2) met the criteria of the Fraser Guidelines (if under sixteen: see Section 4, p.30); (3) attended one of the identified study settings; and (4) self-defined as being, or having been, in an intimate partner relationship with 'difficulties'. Potential participants were excluded if they required translation or interpretation services (due to a lack of study funds), however this was not the case for any interested parties.

Fifty-three young people took away slips for accessing the online research site and 20 young people (11 females and 9 males) subsequently contacted or left contact details for the researcher. This was done in combination with ongoing discussions between young people

and youth leaders to encourage interested and eligible individuals to take part: as a result, all

20 met study inclusion criteria.

Because receiving expressions of interest was staggered, and uncertainty in the early

stages of the research about how many young people would be recruited, the researcher

interviewed each young person as soon as possible. Sixteen participants were recruited into

the study to achieve a male/female and socially included/excluded balance (discussed further

below). Therefore, two females were contacted to thank them for their interest, but to advise

that recruitment had been fulfilled. In addition, one female was not present on the day of

interview and one male, who attended for interview, was excluded because of emotional

upset on the day that was unrelated to the study topic[4]. The recruitment process is set out in

Figure 2.

INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

Attempts to categorise young people as socially included/excluded occurred prior to

interview, and were based on discussions with youth centre workers around the *Bristol Social

Exclusion Matrix* (B-SEM; Levitas et al., 2007). Due to difficulties with this process, the

study switched to the terms 'more socially included' and 'less socially included', discussed in

Appendix B. Other basic demographic information was collected at the start of each

interview with young people themselves. It followed that participants were eight males and

eight females aged between 13 and 17 years (average age, 15 years). Nine were considered to

be 'more socially included' (4 males and 5 females) and seven 'less socially included' (4

males and 3 females). The primary relationship difficulties experienced, as self-defined by

participants, were frequent arguing, either online or in-person (13 participants) and partners

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[4] Supervisory process, as per ethical permissions, was acted upon to ensure the young person's
wellbeing.

demanding access to technology (3 participants); however, participants described a mix of difficulties. All participants described having current or past relationships with opposite-sex partners. Only one participant explicitly identified their sexual orientation, which for this person, a male, was self-described as "gay". No participants discussed personal experiences of difficulties outside of male-female relationships and all attended secondary schools or higher education settings. Further participant characteristics are summarised in Table 1.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Data Collection

Data were collected via a single interview with each participant. This was conducted in a private space at the youth centre the young person was recruited from. Prior to interview, participants were talked through the information and consent sheets and reminded, amongst other key points, of their right to withdraw. There was also opportunity to ask questions in order to ensure fully informed consent. In addition, where participants were under 16, competency according to Fraser Guidelines was assessed during the course of preliminary discussions.

During interview, participants were asked about their experiences of self-defined difficulties within their relationships, and the impact of this on psychological wellbeing, according to the semi-structured guide. To deal with potential safeguarding issues, youth centre leaders remained on-premises during interview, and supervision arrangements were in place with the supervisory team. All interviews were conducted by the researcher, thus the potential effects of multiple interviewers were mitigated (Coolican, 2018). Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher according to protocol. To maintain anonymity pseudonyms were used, and all potential identifiers removed from transcribed materials.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stage process (see Table 2). An inductive approach was taken, whereby themes were allowed to emerge from the data, rather than being driven by existing knowledge or predetermined categories. The process was documented at each stage to allow for assessment of trustworthiness (see below) and generalisability to other settings. Appendices C to E, set out the coding process, iterations of thematic maps, excerpts of coded transcripts, and examples of initial codes and their groupings.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is considered an indicator of rigor in qualitative research, and is analogous to the concepts of validity and reliability as measures of quality in quantitative research (Silverman, 2006). Trustworthiness has been defined as consisting of four elements: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba, 1981). Steps were taken to ensure these elements were met according to recommendations for operationalisation by Shenton (2004). These are detailed in Table 3, with key themes being thoroughness, transparency, and reflexivity in the research process.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

Researcher Reflexivity and Theoretical Positioning

The researcher is a female trainee clinical psychologist in her mid-thirties who has worked with young people in abusive intimate relationships during the course of her clinical work ███████ RESTRICTED CONTENT ███████. Though this latter point was not

shared with participants, it had implications for self-reflexivity in the research process (see Section 3).

The researcher takes the ontological stance of 'subtle realism' within a wider social constructionist paradigm, as set out by Hammersley (1992). This is characterised by a subjective and transactional epistemological positioning. This theoretical alignment considers there to be an independent reality that can be represented through the efforts of social research, but not reproduced. Participants and researchers involved in social research co-create representations, which may be multiple and shifting, thus the process is subjective (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, 'subtle realism' rejects the notion all representations are of equal value, and instead gives most credence to those building upon and furthering existing knowledge and understanding (Hammersley, 1992). The impact of researcher positionality on study outcomes is further considered within the discussion.

Findings

Through the process of thematic analysis three themes, each with two sub-themes, emerged from the interview data. These are shown in Figure 3 and are considered representative of the ways in which self-defined relationship difficulties had the greatest potential to influence psychological wellbeing.

INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE

This was in the context of participants not considering themselves to have experienced 'abuse' in a definitional sense, and generally minimising the direct psychological impact of their difficulties. However, when talking more widely about relationship difficulties, including their own and those of friends, young people described an interlinked series of events at the level of the couple, the friendship group, and wider society that had an

evident emotional impact. Interestingly, technology was seen as an integral aspect of this conceptualisation.

Theme 1 – Unseen and Unrecognised: The Hidden Nature of the Couple's Conflict

Participants described arguing and monitoring, both in-person and through technology, as two major difficulties taking place at the level of the couple. Not only were these acts largely carried out away from the observation of others, but the potential for these acts to be harmful or abusive was often unrecognised by participants, despite the emotional impact.

The ambiguity of arguments: "It weren't really awful"

Arguments were described as a frequent occurrence between partners, taking place mostly in private, be that physically, or through messaging platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram. As well as offering a medium for arguing, messaging was considered a primary cause of disagreement and escalation:

> I feel like a lot of arguments come through over texts because things are just completely misunderstood. [Asalia][5]

> When you're on messages it's different cos you're behind closed doors… so you end up start giving people crap… That's what happened with us two. [Rory]

It was acknowledged arguments could be "really bad" [David], involving aggression, swearing, and insults, and have an immediate emotional impact for individuals:

> We argued a bit… and then I said summet. I can't remember what it were, but it broke her heart. Like it were bad… she started crying. [Ellis]

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[5] To maintain anonymity, all names used are pseudonyms.

> In some cases they can get scared [when arguing], well I never get scared, but in some cases people do get scared. I know friends that get scared. [Louise]

Yet, at the same time, most young people saw arguments as a normal and acceptable part of relationships, regardless of content or emotional impact, that allowed them to work through their concerns:

> It weren't really awful… there'd be shouting, but nothing like that [abuse]. There'd be crying sometimes as well. [Kerry]

Whilst it was recognised arguments had the potential to escalate into more abusive acts, both online and in-person, this was described as infrequent, and nobody considered themselves to personally have been in an abusive relationship. However young people, particularly females, did describe events in their own relationships, and those of peers, that might be defined as abusive:

> If you're play fighting and then you take it too far, then they'll start actually punching you… And it'll be proper serious. They lift a fist at you and then you get scared. That's what happened to me actually. It happens in the youth club quite often. [Louise]

> We were sat upstairs and her boyfriend comes to the house… next thing we hear, we could hear banging, erm, shouting, crashing, and so we go downstairs, she's crying her eyes out, and she says that he like pushed her and all this. [Kerry]

Even when significant events such as these happened, young people perceived there was a reluctance to end the relationship. This was felt to relate to the importance of relationships to young people, and the fear of further conflict or abuse:

> I will let someone walk all over me because I'm scared of the outcome. Or like I'm scared that that person's going to leave my life and I don't want them to. [Jyotsna]

The normality of monitoring behaviours: "Girls and boys these days don't trust each other"

Arguments between the couple were seen as arising primarily from issues of trust. Trust referred to a partner being committed to the relationship and not 'interested' or 'cheating' on them with another. However, young people described feeling frequently suspicious this was not the case. Many participants indicated they felt this was unique to the current generation:

> The relationships in this day and age tend to be a lot more scared thinking. "Oh, is he talking to anyone?" "Is she talking to anyone?"… That has a big impact. [Tadeen]

> Because of social media, I think girls and boys these days don't trust each other. [Sarah]

Participants explained how they would seek reassurance that partners were trustworthy through monitoring. This happened primarily through technology, meaning it went largely unobserved by friends and adults, and included frequently calling / sending messages to find out where the partner was and checking each other's phones:

> They're always asking where you are [through messaging]… wondering where you are, if you're getting up to any trouble. [Rory]

> People check a lot of peoples' phones to see what, like who they've been speaking to, about what's happened…. sometimes we ask people if we can do it, and sometimes we have a quick sneak. [David]

Young people also used password-sharing for social media sites as a means of demonstrating "trust and loyalty" [David] to one another at the start of a relationship. This was from both the perspective the password giver had nothing to hide and the receiver would not actually log into the account. However, as relationships continued and doubts presented, passwords were frequently used to check-up on each other:

> That's usually a thing where they'll like have your Snapchat password and they'll check your messages to see if you're messaging any girlfriends, or any girls or any boys, or owt like that. [Rory]

Participants had mixed feelings regarding the use of monitoring. Some stated this behaviour could be upsetting, leading to feeling hurt and untrusted:

> Well I had an ex before. She checked my messages… [When I found out] I sat crying, cos I thought she didn't trust me enough. [Ellis]

However, some felt that it was acceptable to access each other's messages and accounts, especially if they had nothing to hide or if the partner had a history of cheating:

> At the same time, I do think if a boy might have a past of always speaking to loads of girls and stuff like that, then it's definitely going to make their girlfriends want to know what they're doing. [Asalia]

Theme 2 – Weaving Worry: The Significance of Friendship Group Interactions in Generating Relationship Negativity

Participants spoke of how difficulties between the couple stemmed from interaction with wider friendship groups, both in-person and online. For partners, this generated negative thoughts towards their relationship in the form of jealous feelings and concerns regarding rumours, representing a significant source of worry.

Jealousy and the rules of interaction: "Why are they with me if they want someone like her?"

Participants described jealousy as the driver of trust issues within their relationships. Jealous feelings arose when partners interacted with friends of the opposite sex by being overfamiliar, flirting, or, in some cases, simply talking. Such interactions could happen both in-person or through technology, and were seen as indicating the partner might be interested in another:

> Say if your best mate and your boyfriend are talking… it's like you feel they don't like you as much anymore and then they might move on to your best mate. [Louise]

Social media platforms were overwhelmingly identified as the major cause of jealous feelings by giving people more opportunities to easily access others:

> It's just that anxiety. You just think that other people are like going to be messaging them… And then you're just thinking about it. [Sarah]

However, posting photographs on social media represented the biggest problem. Participants described how partners posting photographs of themselves, in which they intended to present themselves in an attractive or suggestive way, could be interpreted as signalling they were no longer interested in their current relationship and were looking for the attention of others. This could lead to feelings of inadequacy and worry for the partner:

> Then you're just there [after seeing a photograph], like, so I'm not good enough… then it'll just go into the argument of, "So are we together, or are we not?" [Mark]

Photographs became even more problematic when they received 'likes' or comments from opposite-sex friends. Whilst there were differences in what kind of photographs / relationship types partners felt it was acceptable to comment on (e.g. selfies vs. group photographs / school friends vs. online friends), all agreed that comments relating to another's attractiveness and the use of emojis and kisses were inappropriate:

> It depends what the comment is… if they were like, "Oh my god, you're so sexy!"… I'd be like, ha, no… if they're in a relationship why would they think like that towards another person. [Cara]

> I get really mad if they put a winking face [emoji] on a girl. Oh I get so sick… That's too much flirt. [Louise]

This had the potential to affect young people's mental wellbeing, in the form of constant rumination and comparing oneself with others:

> You start to feel rubbish about yourself… because they're liking [an opposite sex person's photograph]… you just like think, why are they with me if they want someone like her? That's what you think. That's what's constantly going through your head… It sounds petty, but you do start to compare yourself to them… Zooming in, swiping along, looking… What are they doing? How can I look like her? How can I be like her? [Kerry]

The utility of rumours: "It always gets to them!"

Participants described the role of friendship groups in spreading rumours about individuals within relationships, particularly regarding fidelity and sexual acts. These were often furthered through technology:

> A lot of things happen on social media… that'll lead on and like just spread it everywhere and make it bigger. [David]

This caused a sense of worry for both the individual the rumour referred to and for their partner, with the potential for the creation of jealous feelings in the latter:

> It just gets to them. It always gets to them! [Ewan]

Participants saw rumours as being started by members of the friendship group who, for various reasons, had a desire to split the couple, for example:

> It's either, they like them and they want to be with that person… but then the other reason… maybe they don't like that other person, or think they're not suited to them… so they're trying to protect them. [Ben]

> I had a boyfriend and there was always like other girls saying stuff about me… cos they're not happy they don't want to see anyone else happy. [Jyotsna]

Participants also spoke of rumours in terms of young people needing something to talk about with friends. This could lead to the inadvertent spread of individuals' personal information and/or misrepresentations of what had actually taken place:

> When you're with your friends you always wanna have something to talk about. You don't want it to be a small conversation. If you talk about something like that [others' relationships] you can expand into so many categories where you, the conversation just goes on and on… you're giving your opinion and this person is giving their opinion and you're getting all interested about it. [Tadeen]

Regardless of intent, for the majority of individuals, the result of having rumours directed at themselves or partners was worry and humiliation. As Jyotsna expressed, following circulation of rumours regarding her fidelity:

> I just became more enclosed and I didn't go out much, I didn't speak too much to people on social media… I was just sick of it all… I got to the stage where I wanted everyone to forget about me.

Theme 3 - Seeking Validation: The Role of Wider Narratives in Creating and Concealing Difficulties

Participants spoke of how circulating ideas acted to shape their relationship difficulties through emphasising the importance of physical and social image over compatibility and minimising the importance and impact of relationship difficulties amongst young people.

The importance of appearances: "Present as picture perfect"

Participants felt many individuals entered relationships "just for like looks and that" [Tom], rather than a deeper attraction. This was described as leading to superficial couplings where status conferred by the relationship was valued over compatibility. This was seen as a pathway to frequent disagreements and 'on-off' relationships that needed to be concealed from public view:

Relationships nowadays are more like everyone wants to show everything to the world. They're like, "Look at me! I've got this relationship! I'm the best person in the world!" And they like kind of hide all their arguments and keep it away from everyone online… But they like take it out in real life. [Amber]

What happens in our group, someone'll split up and then they'll be like, "No I don't want to get back with them", but then next day they'll be there kissing them… It's just a bit mad. [David]

For other couples, an emphasis on physical attractiveness could lead to 'one-sided' relationships where one partner was more genuinely invested than the other:

Like one'll like one more than the other. It'll be like a one-way thing. Like it wouldn't be fair on the other one. [Louise]

Some participants felt females in particular could end up being 'used' because of this, whilst others felt that there was no difference between the intentions of males and females in this regard:

Like if a boy finds a girl who's fit… if you're one of them, what like people call now 'fuck boys'… you have sex with them and then you leave. Like you use them for stuff. Like I know a couple of them. [Ewan]

"It's just equal now. Boys use girls and girls use boys" [Ben].

Participants described the pressure to "present as picture perfect" [Amber] as rooted in social media and, to a lesser extent, reality TV. Female participants seemed particularly burdened by this, describing how influencers and celebrities presented perfect bodies that were deemed necessary for successful relationships. However, these ideals frequently felt unobtainable, sapping them of their self-confidence. For example, Sarah, felt that in order to be desirable:

I think girls are expected to have big bums, big boobs… like skinny waist and all that.

At the same time, celebrity culture fuelled the need to showcase their relationships in a positive light, even where this was not representative of actual experience:

It's like similar to celebrities where they show like happy marriages and stuff and then they're like arguing all the time and end up getting a divorce or something. [Amber]

The net result was for young people to credit social media as being a main cause of relationship difficulties:

It's definitely like judging people on social media that has made it very hard to have relationships [Jyotsna]

Young people's experiences as unimportant: "Adults don't really do much"

In talking about the direct emotional impact of relationship difficulties, young people spoke of feeling hurt at the time, but then moving on quickly. Furthermore, when talking about difficulties within their relationships, young people often categorised them as "stupid" or "childish" and spoke of their perceived immaturity in coping:

Like when you're younger like even the slightest of problems can seem massive to you. [Asalia]

Because of these personal evaluations, young people spoke of a preference to turn to friends when they experienced relationship difficulties, often using private messaging and group chats to express their feelings. Others used technology breaks as a way of dealing with distress or kept issues entirely to themselves:

Some people are like really open about their problems to their friends and have group chats where they, everyone talks about their problem, like in the friend group. But not everyone does that. Some people kind of keep it to themselves and don't talk about it. [Amber]

At the same time, participants emphasised impacts for friends, such as being depressed, withdrawing socially, and "hurting themselves or other things like that" [Louise].

Participants felt this was compounded when relationships had been long in length or when an individual faced other difficulties:

> I think for some people it could be [bad], because like if they've already got other things going on as well, then it could just make them worse. [Hannah]

Some participants spoke of seeking help from adults when disclosures made by friends appeared too serious or too much for them to deal with alone. However, there were also a number of individuals who said they would never break the confidence of something told to them by friends:

> Like, in some cases, people say friendship is when you tell somebody if you're scared for your other friend. In our case, we like, if we're scared that somebody else is doing something wrong, we won't tell anyone, we'll just tell each other. [Louise]

On a personal level, whilst some participants were willing to access school counselling services to discuss problems within their relationships, most talked of accessing adults, particularly parents, as difficult:

> Quite a lot of people probably don't go to parents. Some people do. I don't. I'd rather go to [name of school counselling service]… I don't really like telling my Mum and Dad stuff like that. [Hannah]

Participants described feeling embarrassed about talking to parents and feeling they would not take action. Ultimately this led to the contradictory position of concealing relationship difficulties, whilst at the same time feeling unheard:

> It's like you have this instinct to protect, to like hide things from adults… I always thought of it like, if you were ashamed or embarrassed… Or like, I think some teenagers feel like, whatever we tell adults, they don't really do much [Ben].

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore young people's experiences of psychological wellbeing in relation to experiencing AIPA. Through the process of thematic analysis, three themes emerged that focused on describing a wider system of events underpinning relationship difficulties. These had an evident impact for psychological wellbeing, in the form of: (1) potentially abusive acts going unobserved; (2) friendship group interactions in causing relationship worry; and (3) wider ideas around appearance and the value of young people's experiences in creating and then dismissing difficulties respectively.

Contextualising Findings within the Existing Literature

Recognition of AIPA

Young people in this study consistently did not identify the relationship difficulties they had experienced as abusive. This was despite describing a range of situations that would be definitionally considered as such in our pre-interview conversations (e.g. frequent conflict including hurtful, personal remarks; use of technology-based monitoring) and several acts described during interview that could be seen as constituting significant abuse. Whilst this may, in part, be due to the decision to use the term 'difficulties' as opposed to 'abuse' for the purposes of recruitment (see Section 3 for further discussion), it also reflects the wider literature in this area, which shows young people frequently do not identify acts of abuse within their relationships (Chung, 2007; Griffiths, 2019; Weathers & Hopson, 2015). Recognition is identified as a precursor for change (McMillan, 2004), without which young people risk remaining in abusive relationships, with implications for their psychological/physical wellbeing. That acts were frequently carried out in spaces not visible to others compounded this situation.

Sharing experiences of AIPA

Individuals generally acted to minimise the psychological impact of their experiences, and some focused on describing the experiences of friends or spoke in more general terms about AIPA. Interestingly, in these latter cases, the psychological impacts of experiencing AIPA were emphasised, particularly low-mood and self-harm. Sharing upsetting personal experiences, particularly those relating to abuse, is understandably a difficult task (e.g. Ungar et al., 2009) with other researchers in this field encountering similar situations. For example, females in the Barter, McCarry, Berridge, & Evans (2009) study of AIPA found it hard to talk about their experiences, and acted to downplay impact through their accounts. The wider narrative described in this study, that young people's experiences are less important than those of adults, might be used to understand this. This appeared to drive participants to trivialise and feel embarrassed about their relationship difficulties, resulting in a reliance upon the support of friends over adults (with the exception of school-based counselling), as has been found elsewhere (Gallopin & Leigh, 2009; Jackson, 2002; Toscano, 2007). This may go some way to explaining the process of minimisation against which the findings are contextualised, whilst at the same time emphasising psychological impacts for friends. Not only does this hold recourse for help-seeking behaviours, but for the way in which future studies are conducted.

The significance of jealous feelings

Young people spoke at length about events that led up to acts of conflict/abuse and how these contributed to feelings of distress. These largely centred around creation of feelings of jealousy in relation to a partner's actual or perceived interactions with opposite sex friends. In some cases, jealousy was further fuelled by rumours in relation to a partner's behaviour. This was described as causing a constant sense of worry, rumination, and fear (i.e. anxiety related emotions) in relation to the safety of the relationship. Whilst jealousy has

widely been found to play a key role in the manifestation of AIPA (Adams & Williams, 2014; Baker & Carreño, 2016; Sesar et al., 2012), this study also suggests its significant role in shaping associated psychological impacts. Early recognition of these emotions could, therefore, play a role in identification/help-seeking. Furthermore, jealous feelings appeared based in ideas regarding the importance of appearances, as perpetuated through influencers and celebrities that emphasised the importance of being attractive, having an attractive partner, and presenting a perfect relationship. Whilst the role of wider socio-cultural influences in AIPA, including reproduction of these through the media, has been identified previously, this has largely been in relation to the normalisation of gendered violence (Friedlander et al., 2013). This research would suggest, however, the value placed on appearance, as perpetuated through the media, is of significance and this has implications for wider policy aimed at tackling AIPA.

The significance of technology

As has been described elsewhere (e.g. Joshi et al., 2019), the integration of technology into the lives of young people in this study was clear, including its significant role in AIPA and in shaping associated psychological impact. Technology offered a medium through which abuse could be instigated, for example, through sending of abusive messages, or carrying out monitoring, similar to that found previously (Draucker & Martsolf, 2010; Stonard et al., 2015). However, most significantly, it played a key role in creating jealous feelings through enabling increased opportunities to communicate with opposite-sex friends and was thus identified as a significant source of anxiety. However, young people also highlighted a positive role of technology that allowed those experiencing relationship difficulties to reach out to friends. This is of importance when developing education programmes/policy: whilst the role of technology in abusive relationships clearly needs

addressing, this needs to proceed in a way that recognises its pervasiveness and encourages safe, respectful usage, as opposed to constantly highlighting risk.

Contextualising Findings within a Broader Theoretical Framework: Ecological Perspectives

The findings highlight the complexity of understanding how psychological wellbeing is impacted through experiencing AIPA, however several issues of importance to young people (as represented through themes and sub-themes) were identified. Comparing these to the ecological model currently used by the WHO (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002) and CDC (2004), impacts and influences on psychological wellbeing were largely described by the young people in this study at the levels of interpersonal relationships (i.e. those with the partner, friends, parents, and school-based counsellors) and wider society (i.e. narratives around appearance and the perceived value of young people's experiences): the significant role of technology at each of these levels was apparent. A conceptualisation of this is shown in Figure 4.

INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE

A notable absence within the themes and sub-themes generated was discussion of how young peoples' family context acted to shape their intimate partner relationships and subsequent experiences of psychological wellbeing. For example, witnessing violence at home is a known risk factor for both experiencing and/or carrying out AIPA (Taquette & Monteiro, 2019), and also increases the likelihood of psychological distress in adolescence (e.g. Russell et al., 2010) with potential additive effects for emotional impacts arising from experiencing AIPA. Whilst the absence of participant discussion in this area was likely due to the omission of specific questions in this regard within the interview guide, understanding the

impact of familial influences is vital to furthering an ecological understanding of AIPA and the associated impacts for psychological wellbeing.

It follows that the findings of the study provide an initial exploratory consideration of how psychological wellbeing is affected by AIPA, based in young people's descriptions of their experiences. This is useful in beginning to inform an ecological understanding of the phenomenon that can inform future research avenues (Lounsbury & Mitchell, 2009; Özesmi & Özesmi, 2004). Applying ecological perspectives to the study of AIPA is increasingly recognised as key to furthering our understanding, particularly through bringing together theory and knowledge in the developmental, socio-cultural, and gender contexts (White, 2009; Zurbriggen, 2009). Whilst the importance of the socio-cultural context was highlighted through this analysis of the findings, it was felt that a further analysis, relating to the gender context is possible (see Appendix F). This is based on the subtle differences observed between males and females throughout themes, despite young people personally conceptualising the difficulties and psychological impacts experienced by males and females as similar. Future research is also needed that considers how the developmental context comes to bear upon psychological impact.

Study Implications

The following recommendations are made.

Recommendations for educational settings

Schools and education settings should provide content through relationships and sex education curricular with regards what constitutes abuse, both in-person and online. Content should also be provided in relation to understanding and managing feelings of jealousy that can arise in the context of intimate relationships. Settings should also promote access to confidential counselling services given the willingness of young people to access these, and

consider establishing peer support programmes to build on young people's propensity to seek help from friends.

Recommendation for professionals working with young people

Professionals working with young people need to be aware of the significance and impact of AIPA. This is because individuals engaged in abusive relationships might not identify their experiences as such and may struggle to talk about their difficulties without guided, sensitive discussion (Ungar et al., 2009). Enabling professionals to identify, support, and/or onward refer young people in relation to AIPA needs to be underpinned by targeted training, appropriate to the particular setting/profession, and requires coordination at a wider policy level. Social workers and mental health professionals in particular have a vital role to play in enquiring about intimate relationships as part of their assessment processes and ongoing work with clients, particularly because they may work with more vulnerable groups. Building enquiry mechanisms into existing local policies would be a first step in achieving this. From an intervention perspective, further development of an ecological understanding of psychological wellbeing is important. This is particularly compatible with a formulation-based approach to distress (e.g. Stormshak & Dishion, 2002), meaning that clinical psychologists are well positioned to work with such conceptualisations within their practice, as well as further their development through wider research activities.

Recommendations for policy and guidance

Providing clear, evidence-based content in relation to AIPA within the mandatory *Relationships and Sex Education* curriculum[6] would support educational settings in delivering robust and consistent content. This, however, should be framed from a 'positive youth development' perspective (Lerner et al., 2011), emphasising a need for consent,

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[6] To be introduced from September 2020 (Department for Education, 2019).

boundaries and respectfulness in relationships, both in-person and online, as a means of mitigating risk. At the same time, wider policies need to consider the impact of prevailing social influences, including how gender intersects with these. Supporting educational settings to create reflective, gender inclusive environments is increasingly encouraged (Welcoming Schools, 2020).

Recommendations for future research

Future research into the psychological impact of AIPA should aim to build upon ecological frameworks that place young people at the centre of theorising. Further attention also needs to be given to both the impact of technology, and the family context, in shaping AIPA and its psychological impacts. However, enabling young people to talk openly about their experiences represents a challenge for qualitative research in this field, and use of novel approaches, such as participatory methods, should be investigated as a means to overcome this. These provide a platform from which young people can play a role in shaping research so that it best reflects their needs as 'recipients of benefit' from the knowledge created (Jull et al., 2017). In general, future research needs to attempt to include a greater diversity of participants, particularly in relation to sexual orientation/identity, ethnicity, and social groupings. This should take the form of both dedicated studies and representative recruitment into wider study samples.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The themes and sub-themes elicited through the process of thematic analysis produced a coherent and interconnected account of young people's experiences of psychological wellbeing in relation to AIPA. Additionally, by the time of the final interviews, it was felt a point of data sufficiency had been reached, whereby emerging themes had been adequately described and explored. Themes were produced over an equal split of males and

females, including individuals of varying ethnicity, and this gives weight to the ideas discussed. Whilst from a subtle-realist position the researcher recognises the subjective and transactional nature of the findings produced, that they can be contextualised within the existing AIPA literature and build upon common frames of reference is encouraging. These factors are considered evidence of the robustness of the findings and their relevance to comparable population groups/settings.

A number of limitations to the current study are also noted. Most significantly, young people consistently did not identify their difficulties as potentially abusive and, furthermore, it was clear that talking openly about their experiences was difficult. This potentially leads to a restricted view of the phenomenon. Changes to the methods used may have helped to address this, including use of participatory methods (as discussed previously) and secondary interviews. It is proposed that the latter would potentially allow for eliciting further information by building trust and familiarity with the researcher, allowing young people time to reflect on the experiences they had shared, and for the researcher to seek clarity around issues previously discussed. Whilst such adaptations are potentially challenging to implement, it is believed they could improve the trustworthiness of future research. Other limitations of the current study are that participants talked about difficulties within male-female relationships only (i.e. not same-sex or other relationships) and participants did not include those from the most socially included or excluded groups, despite efforts to do so, with those taking part appearing to represent a cluster around the centre of the social inclusion/exclusion spectrum. These factors place some limits on applicability to other settings.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore young people's experiences of psychological wellbeing in relation to AIPA within their intimate partner relationships. Based in young

people's descriptions, impacts were conceptualised as arising from an interlinked system of events, where much of the emotional impact experienced occurred in relation to jealousy and rumours that could then fuel abuse. Emotional impacts were generally of an anxious nature, including worry, rumination, and fear, and were considered heightened by technology. Furthermore, this wider system of events worked to conceal potentially abusive acts from view by emphasising the importance of presenting a perfect relationship and seeing adults as invalidating of concerns. Findings are supportive of the complex and interactive nature of understanding the psychological impact of AIPA. This suggests a role for further research that takes a broad-based perspective, such as those based in ecological theory. It follows that the study provides an initial, exploratory consideration of how psychological wellbeing is impacted by AIPA from the perspective of young people, on which future research can be based.

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Author Biography

Elizabeth Steyert-Woods is a final year Trainee Clinical Psychologist at Lancaster University, UK. Both her clinical and research interests lie in understanding psychological distress from a holistic and contextual perspective and this has extended into her focused studies on adolescent intimate partner violence.

Tables to be Inserted in Main Text

Table 1
Participant Characteristics

	Age range (years)	Average age (years)	Social Grouping	Ethnicity	Living arrangements	Relationship status
Females (n=8)	13 - 17	15.25	Socially included (n=5) Less socially included (n=3)	White British (n=5) Black British (n=1) British Pakistani (n=1) Indian African British (n=1)	Mum and Dad (n=4) Step-Mum and Dad (n=1) Mum (n=2) Grandparents (n=1)	Current relationship (n=4) No current relationship (n=4)
Males (n=8)	14 - 17	14.75	Socially included (n=4) Less socially included (n=4)	White British (n=7) British Pakistani (n=1)	Mum and Dad (n=1) Mum (n=6) Dad (n=1)	Current relationship (n=4) No current relationship (n=4)

Table 2

*Braun and Clarke's Six-Stage Process of Thematic Analysis (2006: 87)*

Phase	Processes
1. Familiarisation with data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systemic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Table 3

Actions Taken to Ensure Trustworthiness of Study

Element of trustworthiness[a]	Key steps to meet element[b]
Credibility Assurance that the findings are representative of the target participants.	The researcher assured participants that interviews were in strict confidence and that their identity and interview content would not be disclosed to youth centre staff. This was to facilitate trust and open discussions between participant and interviewer. During the final interviews it was felt that themes, subthemes, and groupings had come to be well explored and understood, leading to the conclusion that a point of data sufficiency had been reached. Relevant existing research is used to provide a comparison and highlight any differences found by the study.
Transferability The measure of which the research can be applied and relate to other settings or populations.	To help contextualise the study a record is included of the study setting and relevant characteristic of participants. Attempts were made to encourage all relevant individuals to take part in the research. It was hoped that this would maximizes transferability of the study to like settings. This was supported through an *en mass* approach to recruitment, being present within youth centre on a number of occasions to build familiarity, and flexibility in the interview process (e.g. a range of interview dates and times, offering regular breaks if subjects discussed caused distress).
Dependability That the study method is robust, documented, and consistently applied.	DClinPsy programme staff reviewed the study proposal to ensure methodological appropriateness and practicality of study. To facilitate future study replication the research process is recorded in detail.
Confirmability The data gathered and findings have fidelity and are not eroded by any predisposition of the researcher.	A selection of the whole body of transcripts was made available to supervisors and discussions were undertaken regarding the emerging analysis. A set of reflective notes were kept in relation to the impact of researcher positionality.

a Adapted from (Guba, 1981)
b Based on Shenton (2004)

Figures to be Inserted in Main Text
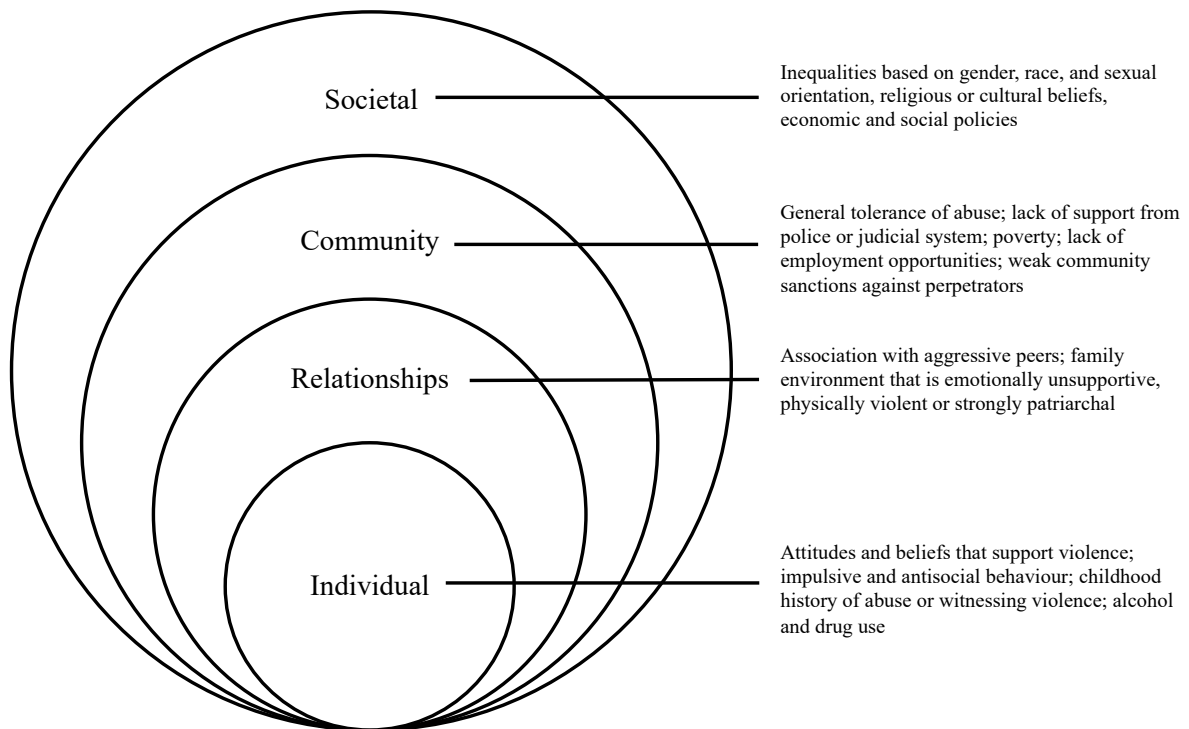
Figure 1. Ecological model of influences on inter-personal abuse and violence. *Adapted from World Health Organisation (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002) and Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (2004).*

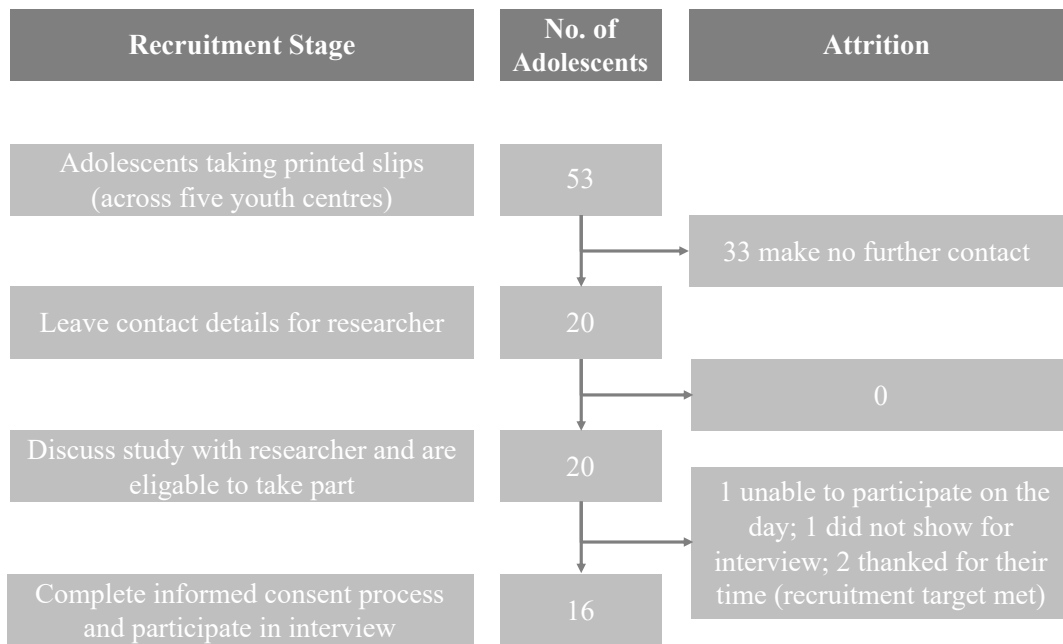| Recruitment Stage	No. of Adolescents	Attrition
Adolescents taking printed slips (across five youth centres)	53	
		33 make no further contact
Leave contact details for researcher	20	
		0
Discuss study with researcher and are eligible to take part	20	
		1 unable to participate on the day; 1 did not show for interview; 2 thanked for their time (recruitment target met)
Complete informed consent process and participate in interview	16	

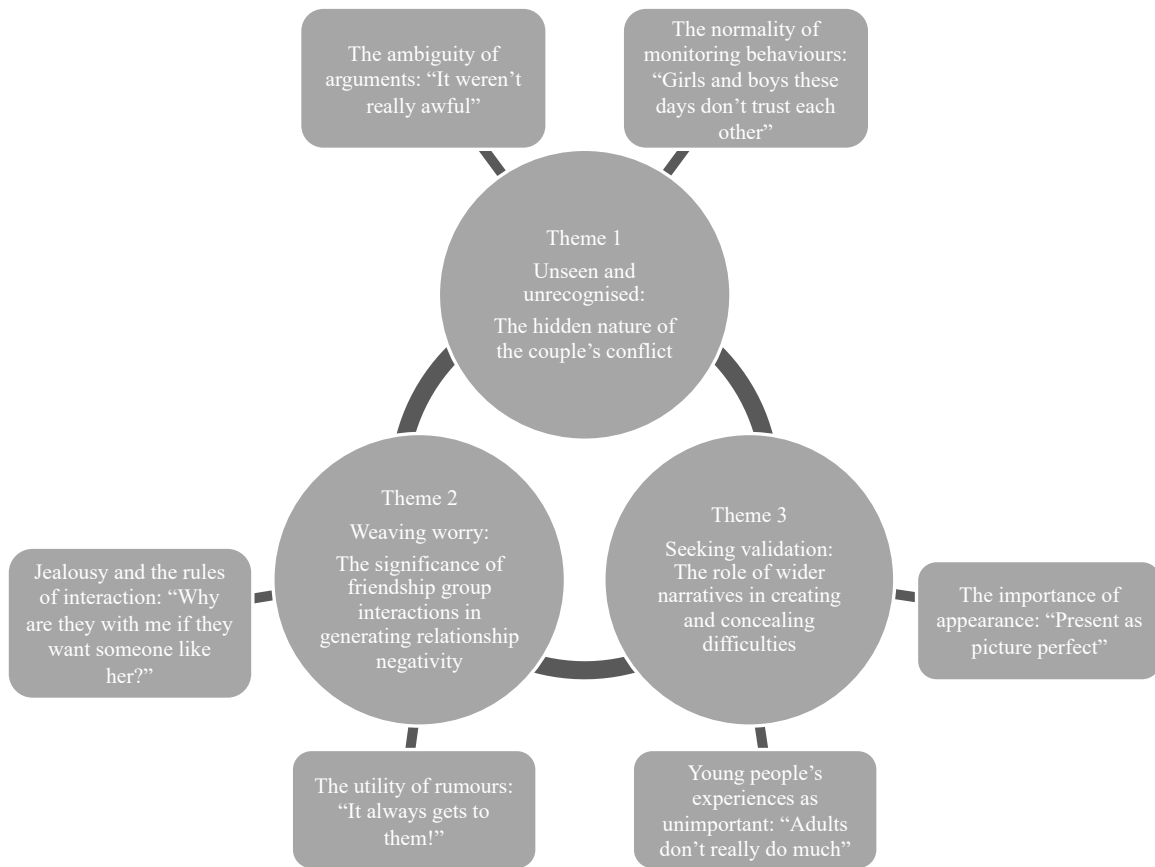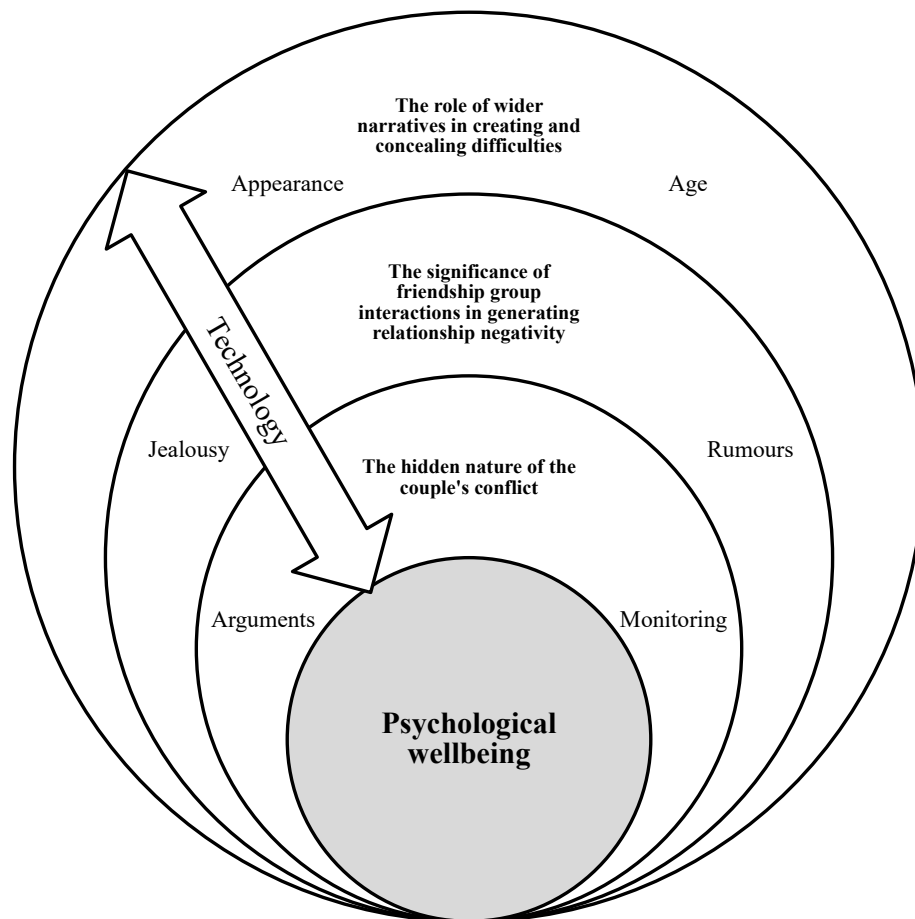*Figure 2.* Flow diagram of study recruitment process.

Figure 3. Diagrammatic representation of themes and sub-themes.

Figure 4. Conceptualisation of the relationship between themes and psychological wellbeing. *Young people described how feeling mistrustful of their partner could lead to monitoring and arguments. Arguments were considered the tipping point from which abusive acts could stem. Feelings of jealousy acted to fuel monitoring and arguments and were increased through the spread of rumours. Wider narratives in relation to physical and social appearances created pressures for individuals to enter incompatible couplings and/or increased jealous feelings. A sense of embarrassment and triviality led young people to keep difficulties to themselves, or within the friendship group, preventing them from seeking adult help or seeing the seriousness of their situations. Technology was a feature of each sub-theme, with young people placing a great emphasis on its role in creating relationship difficulties and thus impacting negatively on psychological wellbeing.*

Appendix A

Focused literature search strategy

Though the production of this specific research paper did not involve an exhaustive search of the literature, a basic search strategy was used to ensure that the most relevant and up-to-date resources were identified. This helped to shape and inform the research process.

The search terms used were: (adolescen* OR youth* OR teen* OR "young adult*" OR "young person*" OR young people*") AND ("dating abuse" OR "dating aggression" OR "dating violence" OR "partner abuse" OR "partner violence" OR "relationship violence") AND ("mental health" OR "wellbeing").

Search terms were applied to both title and key words in the following databases: Academic Search Ultimate; CINAHL; MEDLINE; PsychINFO. Limiters applied were: peer reviewed journals, published in previous 10 years, English language, exclude dissertations.

Searches were undertaken at the planning stage of the research and again in August 2019 to ensure that recent developments were captured.

Appendix B

Process of allocating social groupings

At the planning stages of the research, the concept of *social exclusion / inclusion* was chosen over *deprivation* because of its focus on a broader set of factors than access to resources alone. For example, an individual may live in an area of high deprivation, but not be considered socially excluded because of continued involvement "in their society and in various aspects of cultural and community life" (Bossert, D'ambrosio, & Peragine, 2007: 777).

It followed that social groupings were to be allocated in discussion with youth centre staff, as per ethical permissions, using The *Bristol Social Exclusion Matrix* (B-SEM; Levitas et al., 2007). The B-SEM sets out indicators of social exclusion in three key areas: resources, participation, and quality of life (see Table T1). Indicators are grounded in an extensive review of the available literature and are applicable to all life-stages. However, the B-SEM does not offer a means of numerically scoring an individual for either social exclusion or inclusion; rather it is a tool for producing a descriptive account. This is because a simple addition of indicators would not take into account those with the greatest effects, nor would it consider potential interactions between indicators (Mack, 2016). As such, the B-SEM was used as a guide for discussion with youth centre workers only.

Due to difficulties in accessing young people that youth centre workers felt would represent the most included or excluded, the research moved to using the categories of 'more socially included' and 'less socially included'. This recognised differences between the pool of young people taking part, whilst acknowledging that these were not wide ranging. This felt like a more accurate conceptualisation and is in line with the finding of the authors of the B-SEM, that: "It is… recognised that there are degrees of severity of social exclusion, just as there are degrees of inclusion" (Levitas et al., 2007: 117). This conceptualisation also gave

both research and youth centre staff greater confidence in allocating categorisations to

individuals based on subjective discussions.

Table B1

Indicators of social exclusion (adapted from (Levitas et al., 2007)

Area	Domain	Indicators
Resources	Material/economic resources	• Income (estimated income and components of income) • Possession of necessities (noting these will differ for children) • Home ownership • Other assets and savings (this would include child trust funds for children) • Debt • *Subjective poverty (people's perception of whether they live or have lived in poverty)
	Access to public and private services	• Public services • Utilities • Transport • Private services • Access to financial services (includes access to a bank account)
	Social resources	• Institutionalisation/separation from family (includes looked-after children and all those in residential care, young offenders' institutions or prison) • Social support (affective and instrumental) • *Frequency and quality of contact with family members/friends/co-workers
Participation	Economic participation	• Paid work (employed, self-employed, unemployed, non-employed) • Providing unpaid care • Undertaking unpaid work • Nature of working life (includes type of occupation and full-time/part-time status) • Quality of working life (includes anti-social hours of work, nature of contract, leave entitlement, flexible working arrangements, benefits, workplace injuries).
	Social participation	• *Participation in common social activities • Social roles.
	Culture, education and skills	• *Basic skills (literacy, numeracy, competence in English) • Educational attainment • *Access to education (includes school exclusion, but also includes access to lifelong learning for working-age adults and older people) • *Cultural leisure activities • Internet access
	Political and civic participation	• Citizenship status • Enfranchisement (voter registration and entitlement, as well as whether people voted) • Political participation • Civic efficacy (for example, feeling able to affect decisions) • Civic participation, voluntary activity/membership (note that this will include active membership of faith groups)

Table B1 Continued

Quality of life	Health and well-being	• Physical health and exercise
		• *Mental health
		• Disability
		• Life satisfaction
		• Personal development (including for children, but not only for them)
		• Self-esteem/ personal efficacy
		• Vulnerability to stigma (for example, long-term receipt of means-tested benefits)
		• *Self-harm and substance misuse
	Living environment	• Housing quality
		• Homelessness
		• Neighbourhood safety (including traffic, atmospheric pollution, noise pollution)
		• Neighbourhood satisfaction
		• Access to open space (demonstrated as important to well-being).
	Crime, harm and criminalisation	• Objective safety/victimisation (this includes actual and risk of abuse within the home for children and adults)
		• Subjective safety, for example, perceptions and fear of crime (home and
		• neighbourhood)
		• Exposure to bullying and harassment
		• Discrimination
		• *Criminal record
		• ASBO (Anti-social behaviour order)
		• Imprisonment

* Indicates some of the most common aspects of discussion

Appendix C

Detailed thematic analysis process

The steps set out below describe how the process of thematic analysis, as informed by Braun and Clarke (2006), was applied to the specific requirements of the research project.

1. **Familiarisation with interview content** – Audio recordings of interviews were re-played and brief notes made. This was important in terms of getting-to-know the data and in retaining the emotion and emphases conveyed verbally by interviewees.

2. **Transcriptions** – Audio recordings were transcribed using electronic transcription software. As accuracy can be variable (i.e. due to background noise, accents, etc.) care was taken to review and hand-edit each transcript produced, alongside the original audio recording. Once complete, electronic versions of the transcripts were stored according to ethical permissions.

3. **Initial coding** – Anonymised transcripts were transferred to NVivo, a specialist software package for the management and analysis of qualitative data. Here, initial codes could be attributed to segments of text and begin to be collated. Initial codes consisted of simple summary statements of text of interest.

4. **Summary codes** – The process of coding had produced in excess of 1,000 initial codes. To manage these, notes were taken across the full set using a 'distillation approach' to produce a set of summary codes.

5. **Code review** – Initial codes could now be placed under summary codes and reviewed alongside others of similarity. This resulted in merging / de-duplicating as necessary, and a final pool of 894 initial codes contained under 108 summary codes.

6. **Code groupings** – Next, summary codes appearing to relate to similar topics/ideas were identified. This resulted in the production of 36 groupings.

7. **Imposing structure** – Driven by the research question, groupings were reviewed for potential emerging structure. This suggested that there were emerging themes in relation to psychological impacts at the level of the couple, the friendship group, the media, and wider social influences. Figure F1 shows the first iteration thematic map and how groupings began to be positioned in relation to these emerging themes. As can be seen, some groupings appeared to hold relevance to more than one emerging theme.

8. **Review by academic supervisors** – A reading of the emerging coding/thematic framework by the academic supervisors suggested that a narrowing of focus would be required to produce a coherent paper based on the intended aims. It appeared that there were two routes that might be taken, (1) a gender-based analysis; (2) an analysis based on wider factors. The latter was decided upon, however details of a potential secondary analysis of the data from a gender perspective are contained in Appendix F.

9. **Stage one refinement of groupings and emerging themes** – Based on supervisory discussions, groupings were now allocated to an emerging theme. This is shown in Figure F2 which shows the second iteration thematic map. This resulted in the loss of the emerging theme 'the media' as the grouping could be subsumed by the emerging theme 'wider social influences'. Four groupings relating specifically to gendered issues were also removed for use in the potential secondary analysis. This resulted in 32 groupings being carried forward under three emerging themes and one miscellaneous label.

10. **Stage two refinement of groupings and emerging sub-themes and themes** - Figure F3 shows the third iteration thematic map. It was felt that groupings under emerging themes could be split into sub-themes and these were given initial labels. Some groupings were also felt similar enough to another to be subsumed by it.

11. **Stage three refinement of emerging sub-themes and themes** – This represented the final stage of refinement with the outcomes being shown in Figure 3 within the main body of the report. Here emerging themes and sub-themes were given their final labels as a better understanding of their content and relevance to the research question was gained. As can be seen, this moved the analysis from a linear depiction of discrete events to that of an interrelated set of phenomena. The emerging theme 'Integration of technology into relationships' was also not taken forward as a standalone theme as this was felt to be subsumed across final themes.

12. **Process documentation** – Appendix D presents excerpts from four interview transcripts, marked up with the final set of initial codes. Appendix E provides an aggregation of summary codes (along with initial codes from the excerpts), groupings, sub-themes and themes.
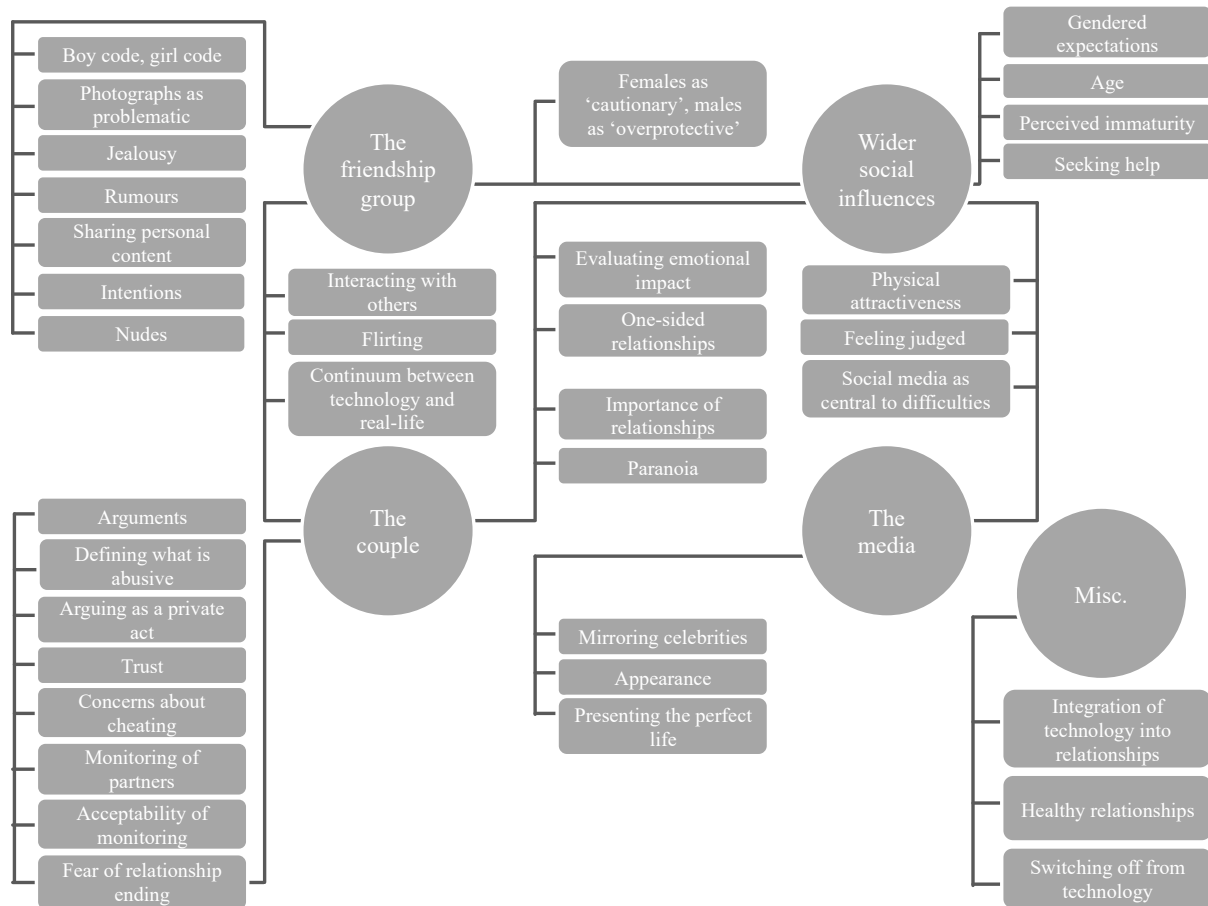
Figure C1 – First iteration thematic map. *Some groupings (rectangular boxes) could be seen to hold relevance with more than one emerging theme (circles). For example, at this stage, 'physical attractiveness' was positioned under both 'wider social influences' and 'the media'.*
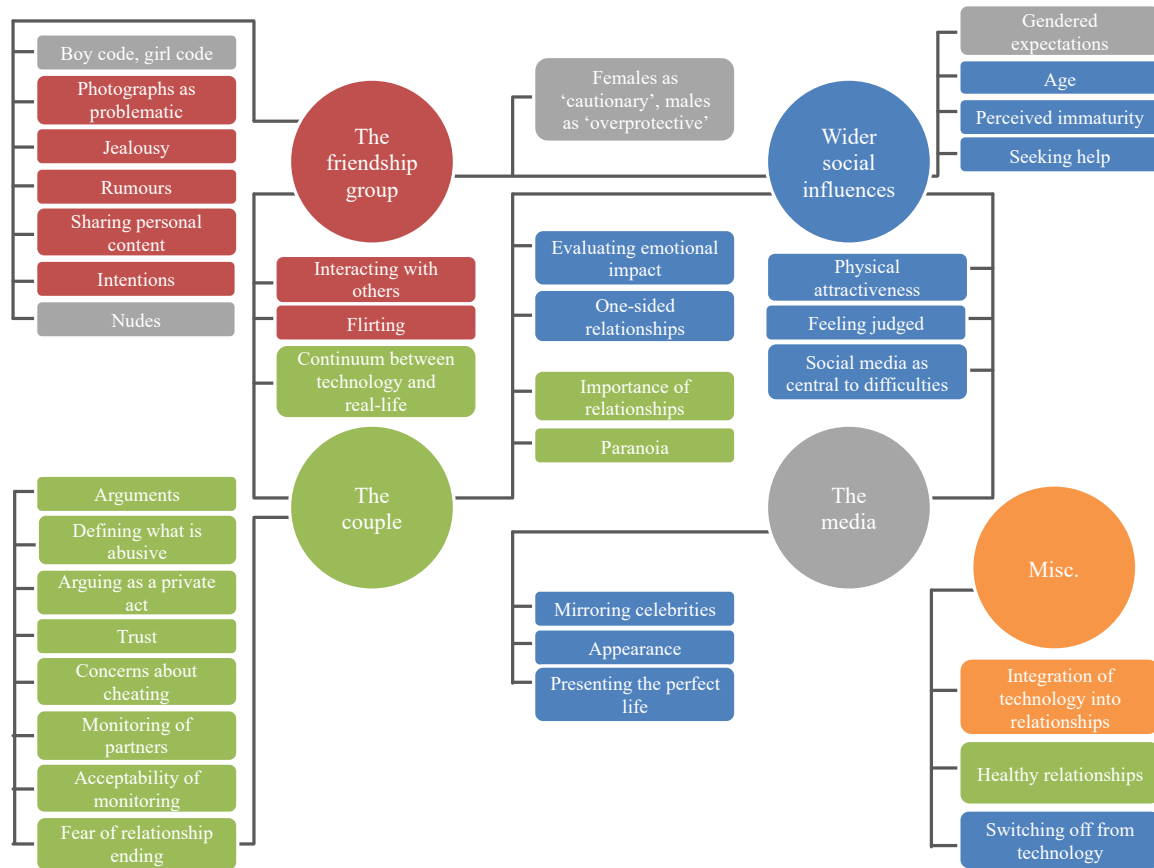
Figure C2 – Second iteration thematic map. *Groupings were allocated to an emerging theme as represented by the red, green, blue, and orange colour schemes shown. The emerging theme of 'the media' and the groupings remaining grey were removed from the current analysis.*
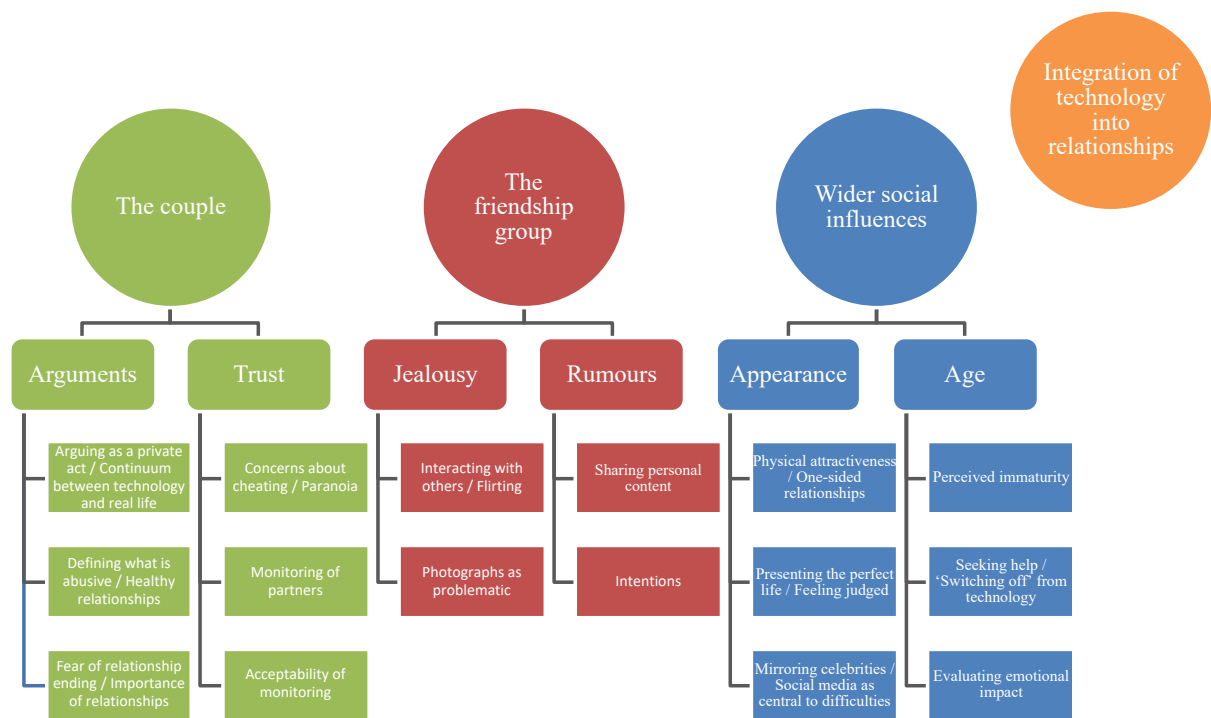
Figure C3 – Third iteration thematic map. *Emergent sub-themes were identified within emerging themes. These were headed-up using the most significant groupings titles. The emergent theme of 'integration of technology into relationships' was felt to represent a thread running throughout all other emergent themes and therefore was not taken forward in itself. At this stage, some grouping were also subsumed by another of similar content. For example, 'feeling judged' was subsumed by 'presenting the perfect life'.*

Appendix D

Coded interview transcript excerpts

Presented below are excerpts from four interview transcripts. These are intended to provide insight into how initial codes were attributed to the data. Excerpts were chosen to represent a balance of male / female and socially included / excluded participants. Redactions have been made where necessary and excerpts kept to minimal length to protect anonymity. (Key - [RES]: Researcher, [YP]: Young Person).

Excerpt 1: Amber (female; more socially included; age 13)

[RES]: How, so if like, erm, if, you know the argument you were saying about at the beginning, about if somebody likes a picture and it causes jealousy and upset between people, how do you think it affects like how they're feeling, sort of emotional well-being and health?

[YP]: Like I think people put on a brave face on social media. They could be like really upset about something and then be like fine with that, like pretending to be fine about it, like, coming up with like things to say back, but then they're secretly like crying their eyes out or something at it.

[RES]: And, and do they have anybody to tell about it? Do they tell friends?

[YP]: Erm, some people do, some people don't. It like depends on the person. Like some people are like really open about their problems to their friends and have group chats where they, everyone talks about their problem, like in the friend group. But not everyone does that. Some people kind of keep it to themselves and don't talk about it.

[RES]: So is it, it's quite like erm individual and personal how they deal with things.

[YP]: Yeah.

Codes (right margin):
- Putting on a brave face on social media
- Difficulties as negatively impacting emotions and behaviours
- Talking to friends about difficulties
- Differences in help seeking behaviours
- Use of technology in help seeking
- Not telling friends of difficulties
- Differences in help seeking behaviours
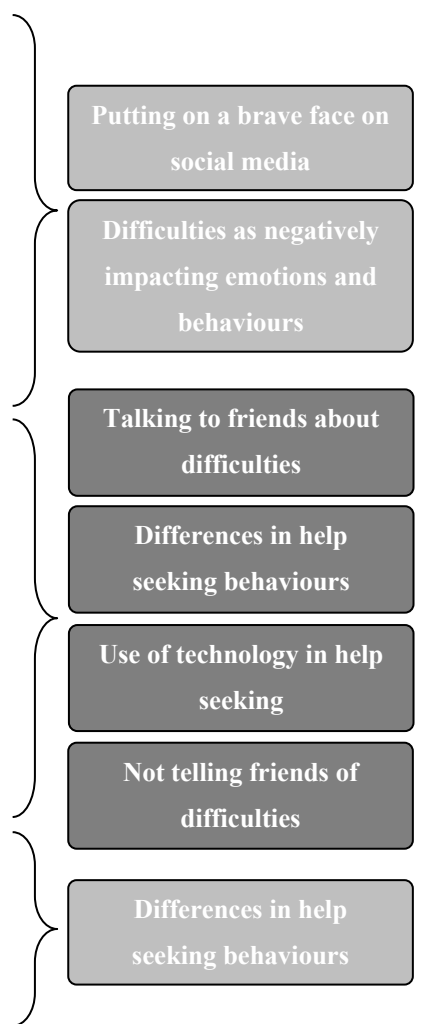
[RES]: Do you think social media ever alerts people to big problems in people's relationships where they might think, oh, something's wrong there, like that's not good, or...

[YP]: Er, I don't think so because if there was something wrong with their relationship they probably wouldn't share it at all. Like, they'd keep it hidden away.

[RES]: Because it's that need to be...

[YP]: Yeah.

[RES]: ... really perfect.

[YP]: Yeah.

> **Difficulties not evident on social media due to need for perfect presentation**

Excerpt 2: Kerry (female; less socially included; age 16)

[YP]: Well, that's a big problem like, it, when someone you're in a relationship with likes another girl's picture, you then start to compare yourself with that girl and then, you go like, well, why's he still with me if he wants someone like her.

> **Comparing self to person whose photos are liked by partner**
>
> **Questioning relationship when partner likes others' photos**

[RES]: Uh huh.

[YP]: And then you start to feel rubbish about yourself, but, it's just boys, it's just like, boys, it's not the girls, you start to feel like hate towards that girl.

[RES]: Okay, cos...

[YP]: Because of boys, but it's not the girl, it's boys.

[RES]: Because they're liking it, or...

> **Partner liking another's photo affects self-esteem**
>
> **Feeling resentment towards person whose photo is liked by partner**
>
> **Males as responsible for reducing female self-esteem through actions**

[YP]: Because they're liking it and they're, you just like think, why are they with me if they want someone like her? That's what you think. That's what's constantly going through your head, but...

[RES]: No, I get that.

> **Questioning relationship when partner likes others'**

[YP]: It's not yourself, it's them that's wrong. It's not yourself, yourself is not the problem, it's the boy.

[RES]: So they should have a bit more...

[YP]: They should have more respect for you. They should know that like if a girl, if your girlfriend sees you liking another girl's picture, it sounds petty, but you do start to compare yourself to them.

[RES]: Uh huh.

[YP]: Yeah. Zooming in, swiping along, looking...

[RES]: What are they like? What are they're doing?

[YP]: Yeah. What are they're doing? How can I look like her? How can I be like her? It's not worth it.

> **Needing to reassure self that good enough**
>
> **Males as responsible for reducing female self-esteem through actions**
>
> **Comparing self to person whose photos are liked by partner**
>
> **Females compare self to other females on social media**
>
> **Pressure of comparing self to others**

Excerpt 3: Tadeen (male, more socially included, age 17)

[YP]: … So, whereas if you look at it, the relationships in this day and age tend to be a lot more scared thinking. "Oh, is he talking to anyone?" "Is she talking to anyone?" On social media. That has a big impact. And I'm guessing back in 2004 social media wasn't...

[RES]: It wasn't there. That's right. Yeah.

[YP]: Wasn't there. So you know, you knew that, most of the time he weren't talking to any other girls. Whereas on social media, in the space of, what, five seconds, you can just text another girl in a split second, and you can have conversations with other people.

[RES]: Uh huh. So do you think social media's been a big change for young people? And been a big worry?

[YP]: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. It has. Cos the way, cos people tend to, at this day and age, they tend to make sure the way they are portrayed on social media is perfect. A lot of people, I've, I've seen it myself that a lot of people tend to, the way they post their pictures, or the way, the amount they post, they try to

> **Perceived differences between today's relationships and those before social media**
>
> **Social media impacts upon relationship security**
>
> **Ease of communicating with others through social media**
>
> **Perceived differences between today's relationships and those before social media**
>
> **Social media portrayal does not represent reality**
>
> **Presenting self on social media as perfect**

make themselves out to be like a bit too much of what they not are. So, they,

they're not being themselves at times on social media which, which can lead to

really really bad situations, because if you have to act a certain way to try to

impress people then, you know, you're just one of them.

[RES]: They'll be disappointed when they meet you, kind of thing.

[YP]: Yeah, they will be when they actually meet you and they know what

you're actually like, they're gonna be like, "Huh?"

[RES]: You're completely different.

[YP]: Yeah, this is, you know, I never expected this [laughs].

Risk in presenting on social media as perfect

[RES]: Why do you think people feel that pressure to present as perfect on

social media? Do you think there's anything that's driving it at the minute?

[YP]: I think it's mainly probably trying to imp... I think there are people to

impress. Because on social media, erm, the guy might have, he might have

feelings for a girl that he has on social media, but she won't know, or the girl

will have feelings for a guy, so, the pictures they post where they look, where

they're looking nice, they might post them for certain reasons, so that person

can see. That's what tends to happen nowadays. I mean, I've done it myself,

where, you know, you post a picture and you wait for that certain person to

see that picture where I look really nice, and then you feel, ah right so she's

seen it.

Presenting as perfect to impress a potential partner

Posting photos to indicate interest in another

Excerpt 4: David (male, less socially included, age 14)

[YP]: Yeah, people like, they do check. People check a lot of peoples' phones

to see what, like who they've been speaking to, about what's happened.

Monitoring through checking partner's phone

[RES]: And do you usually ask the other person if you can do it, or do people

have a quick sneak and have a look?

Phone monitoring as covert

[YP]: Yeah. Some people, sometimes we ask people if we can do it, and

sometimes we have a quick sneak.

Phone monitoring as overt

[RES]: Uh huh. What's the general reaction when you ask, you might say, "Oh can I look at your phone?" What does the partner usually react like?

[YP]: Pretty like awkward conv..., pretty like, I don't know, I can't swear...

[RES]: Do they get a bit like off with you, or...?

[YP]: Yeah.

[RES]: Yeah.

Partners unhappy when phone checking is requested

[YP]: Cos do people share passwords as well? So you can log into each others'...

[YP]: Yeah. For like trust and loyalty.

Password sharing to show trust / loyalty

[RES]: Oh, okay. Could we talk a bit about that? That's really interesting to me. So is, when you say trust and loyalty, what's that about?

[YP]: Yeah, like, say, because I know [girlfriend's name]'s snapchat details and all that and she knows mine, so she'll, like one day she'll go on mine, like see, like basically see if I've been texting other girls if you get me. And I'll go on hers and see if she's been texting other boys, like, you know, like, "Sorry for like finishing you" and all that. Like regret.

[RES]: And that's without you knowing.

[YP]: Yeah.

Mutual sharing of login details

Checking of partner's online accounts for faithfulness

Mutuality of monitoring using logins

Using social media logins without partner's permission

Appendix E

Aggregation of levels of analysis

Table E1 presents summary codes alongside their allocated groupings, sub-themes and themes. Examples of initial codes used to label pertinent segments of interview transcripts (taken from Appendix D) are also provided to show the full process (shown in *italics*). These could not be presented exhaustively due to size limits but are available in full in the supporting electronic data file. Text contained in brackets shows the working titles used during the early stages of refinement.

Table E1

Aggregation of Levels of Analysis

Summary Codes (- *example initial codes*)	Groupings	Sub-Themes	Themes
Arguing as a difficulty Arguing as happening frequently Arguing as a result of other difficulties Arguing privately in-person Arguing through messaging Arguments as 'really bad' Technology as a 'wall' heightening online verbal abuse Messaging as leading to misunderstandings Technology as increasing abuse Social media as making arguments worse	Arguing as a private act	The ambiguity of arguments: " It weren' t really awful" (Arguments)	Unseen and unrecognised: The hidden nature of the couple' s conflict (The couple)
Emotional impact of arguments Feeling frightened when arguing Acceptability / normality of arguing Arguing as sometimes deliberately hurtful Arguments as leading to abuse in-person Arguments as leading to abuse online Abuse as more verbal Abuse as infrequent Defining personal experiences as not abusive	Defining what is abusive		
Importance of intimate relationships Not wanting to lose partner Scared to leave partner because of potential outcome Control through fear	Fear of relationship ending		
Trusting others as difficult Social media as fuelling trust issues - *Social media impacts upon relationship security* - *Ease of communicating with others through social media* - *Perceived differences between today's relationships and those before social media* Suspicious of partners interactions with others Feeling paranoid about partner's actions Cheating as common Texting same sex friends	Concerns about cheating	The normality of monitoring behaviours: " Girls and boys these days don' t trust each other" (Trust)	

Table E1 Continued

Codes	Category	Subtheme	Theme
Seeking reassurances through monitoring *- Checking of partner's online accounts for faithfulness* Going through partner's messages *- Monitoring through checking partner's phone* Constant calling / messaging Password sharing *- Password sharing to show trust/loyalty* *- Mutual sharing of login details* Overt and covert monitoring *- Phone monitoring as overt* *- Phone monitoring as covert* *- Using social media logins without partner's permission*	Monitoring of partners		
Monitoring behaviour as hurtful *- Partners unhappy when phone checking is requested* Monitoring behaviours as necessary to protect self *- Mutuality of monitoring* Past reputations as leading to monitoring Partner should have nothing to hide	Acceptability of monitoring		
Jealousy when talking to opposite sex others Flirting Opposite sex interactions in-person Opposite sex interactions through technology Opposite sex interactions as signalling 'interest' Opposite sex interactions as a threat to the relationship Social media as increasing jealousy Social media as increasing opportunities for opposite sex interactions Potential for secret communications via social media increases anxiety Interconnectedness of friends with the relationship	Interacting with others	Jealousy and the rules of interaction: " Why are they with me if they want someone like her?" (Jealousy)	Weaving worry: The significance of friendship group interactions in generating relationship negativity (The friendship group)
Photographs on social media as problematic Posting suggestive pictures Posting attractive photographs as a sign of seeking another Partner's photographs as causing anxiety Calling others attractive as inappropriate Liking pictures as problematic *- Questioning relationship when partner likes others' photos* *- Partner liking another's photo affects self-esteem* *- Feeling resentment towards person whose photo is liked by partner* Comments and emojis as causing jealousy Comparing self with others that partner comments on *- Comparing self to person whose photos are liked by partner* *- Pressure of comparing self to others* Feeling upset that partner is 'liking' others' photographs *- Needing to reassure self that good enough*	Photographs as problematic		
Rumours about fidelity Rumours about sexual acts Rumours spread in-person Rumours spread online Rumours upsetting for individuals they refer to Rumours about partners upsetting for the other Rumours can cause individuals to modify behaviours	Sharing personal content	The utility of rumours: " It always gets to them!" (Rumours)	
Wanting to break-up the couple to 'get with' someone Wanting to break-up the couple as worried about friend Wanting to spoil another's happiness Rumours as something to talk about Misrepresenting what has been said Offers of help as an opportunity for gaining 'gossip'	Intentions of friends		

Table E1 Continued

Codes	Subtheme	Theme	Overarching theme
Importance of physical appearance Need to post attractive photos of self on SM Photos on SM used to initiate relationships - *Posting photos to indicate interest in another* Relationships as based on 'looks' rather than compatibility Relationships based on looks as 'on-off' Relationships based on looks as one-sided Females considered attractive as 'used' by males Equality in males and females using each other	Physical attractiveness	The importance of appearances: " Present as picture perfect" (Appearance)	Seeking validation: The role of wider narratives in creating and concealing difficulties (Wider social influences)
Importance of image Need to present as perfect on social media - *Presenting self on social media as perfect* - *Presenting as perfect to impress a potential partner* - *Social media portrayal does not represent reality* Feeling constantly judged Need to show the world your life Hiding arguments from friendship group - *Difficulties not evident on social media due to need for perfect presentation* - *Risk in presenting on social media as perfect*	Presenting the perfect life		
Celebrities as fuelling emphasis on physical attractiveness Perfect bodies as required for a successful relationship Ideals for body image as damaging to self-esteem Celebrities as presenting perfect lives Celebrities as concealing relationship difficulties Social media as central to relationship difficulties	Mirroring celebrities		
Arguments over stupid stuff Arguments over childish stuff Immaturity in coping Narrative of being young Feeling hurt at the time but moving on quickly	Perceived immaturity	Young people's experiences as unimportant: " Adults don' t really do much" (Age)	
Putting on a brave face - *Putting on a brave face on social media* Tell friends in person - *Talking to friends about difficulties* Tell friends via messaging groups - *Use of technology in help seeking* Don't tell anyone - *Not telling friends of difficulties* Technology breaks and use of 'blocking' Embarrassed to talk about problems Adults as not taking action School counselling or signposting popular due to being confidential Differences in approaches for seeking help for friends *Differences in help seeking behaviours*	Seeking help		
Not wanting to show upset Friends as more affected by relationship difficulties Relationship difficulties as leading to distress and self-harm - *Difficulties as negatively impacting emotions and behaviours* Impact as greater for those who are facing other difficulties More people happy, but a lot of sadness	Evaluating emotional impact		

Appendix F

Proposal for a future gender-based analysis of results

Participants described a series of events that led to conflict/abusive situations and had an evident emotional impact. Whilst this series of events was described as underlying the experiences of both males and females, the subtle differences described suggests differences by gender. These could form the basis of a further analysis of the data.

Widely, females appeared to describe experiencing more significant acts of abuse and more psychological impact than males. Several aspects of the data appeared to explain this. At the outermost level of the system, a focus on physical appearances was particularly emphasised for females, as propagated through social media and reality TV. This placed value on males engaging in relationships or sexual encounters with attractive females and could lead to situations where females were 'used' for sex.

At the next level of the system, participants described feeling jealous when partners interacted with opposite-sex friends. This could be indicative of potential loss of the relationship to another. For females, this concern was particularly fuelled when partners interacted with friends who were considered attractive, and this appeared to cause a greater level of emotional impact than the jealousy observed in males.

At the next level of the system, females could be seen as using monitoring behaviours particularly because of a partner's past infidelities, or the general notion that males are more likely to 'cheat'. This could lead to conflict between the couple and acts of abuse, more often than not directed toward the female.

A significant further issue across the data were 'nudes': explicit photographs and videos described as being sent mostly by females to potential or current partners. These were frequently shared by males, without consent, within the friendship group. Despite the sharing of nudes constituting a form of abuse, with an evident emotional impact, they could not be

consistently explained in the context of the system of events set out in the first analysis. However, their presence might be better explained from a gendered perspective, with the potential for further avenues of research being suggested.

It follows that the differences observed between males and females fit well with gender-based theories that see AIPA as embedded in:

> the socially constructed roles, behaviours, positions, responsibilities and expectations that are ascribed to men (and boys) and women (and girls), differentially informing ideas of how they are meant to behave and act (Lombard, 2016: 26).

Typically, acquisition of these roles results in women being seen as subordinate to men, holding less power, and sexually objectified (e.g. see Hattery & Smith, 2019). This potentially makes women more vulnerable to experiencing abuse and is considered critical in explaining why the burden of negative outcomes arising from AIPA lies with females (Reed et al., 2010). For example, AIPA studies have shown females being inducted into the socially coveted role of "angel" whereby one is attractive but not 'slutty', puts the needs of a partner first, and is sexually faithful within a 'love' relationship. By contrast, males are inducted into the role of "stud", whereby one gains social status through multiple heterosexual encounters, being in control within relationships, and ensuring the fidelity of female partners (Hird & Jackson, 2001). Acquisition of roles has the potential to create conflict within relationships that can lead to abusive acts. They can also act as a means by which females in particular become vulnerable to sexual manipulation under the narrative of love or feel unable to leave an abusive relationship because of the risk of being considered a slut if multiple relationships are pursued. This fits well with the data gathered. The tendency for participants to see gender as 'irrelevant' might also be linked to notions of achieved gender equality that see women as having achieved equal standing with men, and therefore are considered personally to blame for abuse (Chung, 2007).

Appendix G

Notes for contributors of target journal

It is intended for the research paper to be submitted to the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* for consideration. The manuscript has therefore been prepared in accordance with the notes for contributors / submission guidelines provided by the journal (SAGE Publications, 2019). These are presented below and have been followed except where they contravene the Lancaster DClinPsy thesis format guidelines.

Journal of Interpersonal Violence

2018 Impact Factor: 3.064

2018 Ranking: 17/82 in Psychology, Applied | 9/65 in Criminology & Penology | 5/46 in Family Studies

Source: Journal Citation Reports (Web of Science Group, 2019)

Concerned with the Study and Treatment of Victims and Perpetrators of Physical and Sexual Violence

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Editor

Jon R. Conte   University of Washington, USA

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eISSN: 15526518 | ISSN: 08862605 | Current volume: 34 | Current issue: 23-24 | Frequency: 24 Times/Year

JIV only publishes reports on individual studies in which the scientific method is applied to the study of some aspect of interpersonal violence. Research may use qualitative or quantitative methods. JIV does not publish reviews of research, individual case studies, or the conceptual analysis of some aspect of interpersonal violence.

Each manuscript must:

- be prepared using APA style, and be **no longer than 30 double-spaced pages**, including references, tables, and figures;

- include an abstract of 250-300 words that clearly and concisely summarizes the study questions, subjects, methods, findings and major implications;

- include a discussion of diversity as it applies to the reviewed research.*

* Journal policy on addressing diversity in manuscripts:

JIV requires all submissions to include a discussion of diversity as it applies to the reviewed research (e.g., nature of the sample, limitations of the measurement). The discussion should address the body of knowledge reviewed as it addresses or fails to address issues of diversity. Diversity concerns are not criteria for publication but must be addressed. The nature of the discussion and amount of space devoted to the discussion is the responsibility of the author(s).

JIV understands diversity to include all aspects of human differences such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, geography, ability, age, and culture.

Diversity as a core value embodies inclusiveness, mutual respect, and multiple perspectives and serves as a catalyst for expanding knowledge and practice with all human beings. While science seeks knowledge that can be generalized, it must appreciate that specific findings, while important in understanding the unique experiences of individuals or groups, are not necessarily applicable to all.

All manuscripts are peer reviewed and should be submitted with a letter indicating that the material has not been published elsewhere and is not under review at another publication. **Manuscripts should be submitted electronically to http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jiv** where authors will be required to set up on online account on the SageTrack system powered by ScholarOne. Inquiries may be made by email at JIV@u.washington.edu.

Authors who would like to refine the use of English in their manuscripts might consider using the services of a professional English-language editing company. We highlight some of these companies at http://www.sagepub.com.ezproxy.lancs.ac.uk/journalgateway/engLang.htm.

Please be aware that SAGE has no affiliation with these companies and makes no endorsement of them. An author's use of these services in no way guarantees that his or her submission will ultimately be accepted. Any arrangement an author enters into will be exclusively between the author and the particular company, and any costs incurred are the sole responsibility of the author.

Please note:

JIV does not respond to author inquiries regarding the interest of the journal in their manuscript or on the suitability of their manuscript for *JIV*. The mission and parameters of *JIV* are clearly stated above

and *JIV* assumes that authors are in the best position to know if their work is consistent with the aims and scope of the journal.

Manuscript Preparation

Manuscripts should be prepared using the APA Style Guide, and should be **no longer than 30 double-spaced pages, including references, tables, and figures**. (Brief Notes should be no longer than 12 double-spaced pages, inclusive.) Text must be in 12-point Times New Roman font. Block quotes may be single-spaced. Manuscripts must include margins of 1 inch on all sides and pages must be numbered sequentially. All files should be in Word (.docx or .doc).

The manuscript should include five major sections (in this order): Title Page, Abstract, Main Body (blinded, with all author names and identifying information removed for peer review), References, and Author Biographies.

Sections in a manuscript may include the following (in this order): (1) Title page, (2) Abstract, (3) Keywords, (4) Text, (5) Notes, (6) References, (7) Tables, (8) Figures, (9) Appendices, and (10) Author Biographies.

1. Title page must be uploaded as a separate file. Please include the following:

- Full article title

- Acknowledgments and credits

- Each author's complete name and institutional affiliation(s)

- Grant numbers and/or funding information

- Conflict of interests, if any

- Corresponding author (name, address, phone/fax, e-mail)

2. Abstract. Copy and paste the abstract (250 to 300 words) into the space provided, headed by the full article title. Omit author names. Abstract must clearly and concisely summarize the study questions, subjects, methods, findings, and major implications.

3. Keywords. 5-7 keywords must be included in the manuscript.

4. Text. Begin text headed by the full article title. Text must be blinded, with all author names and other identifying information removed, for peer review.

a. Headings and subheadings. Subheadings should indicate the organization of the content of the manuscript. Generally, three heading levels are sufficient to organize text.

Level 1: centered, boldface, upper & lowercase

Level 2: flush left, boldface, upper & lowercase

Level 3: indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period

Level 4: indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period

Level 5: indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period

b. Citations. For each text citation there must be a corresponding citation in the reference list and for each reference list citation there must be a corresponding text citation. Each corresponding citation must have identical spelling and year. Each text citation must include at least two pieces of information: author(s) and year of publication. Following are some examples of text citations:

(i) Unknown Author: To cite works that do not have an author, cite the source by its title in the signal phrase or use the first word or two in the parentheses. For example, "The findings are based on the study of students learning to format research papers" ("Using XXX," 2001)

(ii) Authors with the Same Last Name: Use first initials with the last names to prevent confusion. For example, "L. Hughes, 2001; P. Hughes, 1998."

(iii) Two or More Works by the Same Author in the Same Year: For two sources by the same author in the same year, use lowercase letters (a, b, c) with the year to order the entries in the reference list. The lower-case letters should follow the year in the in-text citation. For example, "Research by Freud (1981a) illustrated that…"

(iv) Personal Communication: For letters, e-mails, interviews, and other person-to-person communication, citation should include the communicator's name, the fact that it was personal communication, and the date of the communication. For example, E. Clark, personal communication, January 4, 2009. Do not include personal communication in the reference list.

(v) Unknown Author and Unknown Date: For citations with no author or date, use the title in the signal phrase or the first word or two of the title in the parentheses and use the abbreviation "n.d." (for "no date"). For example, "The study conducted by the students and research division discovered that students succeeded with tutoring" (Tutoring and APA, n.d.).

5. Notes. If explanatory notes are required for your manuscript, insert a number formatted in superscript following almost any punctuation mark. Footnote numbers should not follow dashes (—), and if they appear in a sentence in parentheses, the footnote number should be inserted within the

parentheses. The footnotes should be added at the bottom of the page after the references. The word "Footnotes" should be centered at the top of the page.

6. References. Basic rules for the reference list:

- The reference list should be arranged in alphabetical order according to the authors' last names.

- If there is more than one work by the same author, order them according to their publication date – oldest to newest (therefore a 2008 publication would appear before a 2009 publication).

- When listing multiple authors of a source use "&" instead of "and."

- Capitalize only the first word of the title and of the subtitle, if there is one, and any proper names – i.e., only those words that are normally capitalized.

- Italicize the title of the book, the title of the journal/serial and the title of the web document.

- Manuscripts submitted to JIV should strictly follow the current APA style guide.

- Every citation in text must have the detailed reference in the Reference section.

- Every reference listed in the Reference section must be cited in text.

- Do not use "et al." in the Reference list at the end; names of all authors of a publication should be listed there.

7. Tables. They should be structured properly. Each table must have a clear and concise title. When appropriate, use the title to explain an abbreviation parenthetically, for example, Comparison of Median Income of Adopted Children (AC) v. Foster Children (FC).

8. Figures. They should be numbered consecutively in the order in which they appear in the text and must include figure captions. Figures will appear in the published article in the order in which they are numbered initially. The figure resolution should be at least 300dpi at the time of submission.

IMPORTANT: PERMISSION - The author(s) are responsible for securing permission to reproduce all copyrighted figures or materials before they are published in *JIV*. A copy of the written permission must be included with the manuscript submission.

9. Appendices. They should be lettered to distinguish from numbered tables and figures. Include a descriptive title for each appendix (e.g., "Appendix A. Variable Names and Definitions"). Cross-check text for accuracy against appendices.

10. Author Biographies. Author(s) are required to send a 40-60 word biography for publication at the end of the article. A sample biography is given below:

Jessica Shaw, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at Boston College. Her research focuses on community responses to sexual assault and emphasizes improving community systems through collaborative, multidisciplinary efforts. She is interested in using evaluation as a tool to initiate and support policy-level change and improvement and in identifying mechanisms to translate research into practice.

Section 3: Critical Appraisal

Reflections on Personal Positionality Within the Research Process:

Impacts on Trustworthiness and Ideas for Furthering the Concept of Personal

Reflexivity in Clinical Psychology Training

Elizabeth Steyert-Woods

Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

Lancaster University

Word count: 4,000

RESTRICTED PAPER

Section Four: Ethics Documentation

Ethics documents relating to study, titled:

Adolescents' Experiences of

Psychological Wellbeing in Relation to Conflict and Abuse Within their Intimate

Partner Relationships

Elizabeth Steyert-Woods

Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

Lancaster University

Word count for ethical application form and overview: 3,725

Overview

This section contains the ethics application and associated documentation that underpins the research study. Only the final version of the ethics application (v.3) is provided, however all changes made to gain study approval, as well as researcher driven amendments that arose during the course of the research are highlighted. All correspondence between the researcher and the ethics committee is presented in chronological order, including the approval letter for the study. For completeness, study materials are included as appendices.

Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee (FHMREC)
Lancaster University

Application for Ethical Approval for Research involving
direct contact with human participants

Instructions *[for additional advice on completing this form, hover PC mouse over 'guidance']*

1. Apply to the committee by submitting:

    a. A **hard copy** of the University's **Stage 1 Self Assessment (part A only)** and **Project Questionnaire**. These are available on the Research Support Office website: LU Ethics

    b. The completed application **FHMREC form**

    c. Your full research proposal (background, literature review, methodology/methods, ethical considerations)

    d. All accompanying research materials such as, but not limited to,

        1) Advertising materials (posters, e-mails)
        2) Letters/emails of invitation to participate
        3) Participant information sheets
        4) Consent forms
        5) Questionnaires, surveys, demographic sheets
        6) Interview schedules, interview question guides, focus group scripts
        7) Debriefing sheets, resource lists

    Please note that you DO NOT need to submit pre-existing handbooks or measures which support your work, but which cannot be amended following ethical review. These should simply be referred to in your application form.

2. Submit the FHMREC form and all materials listed under (d) by email as a **SINGLE** attachment in PDF format by the deadline date. **Before converting to PDF ensure all comments are hidden by going into 'Review' in the menu above then choosing** *show markup>balloons>show all revisions in line.*

3. Submit one underlined collated and underlined signed paper copy of the full application materials in time for the FHMREC meeting. If the applicant is a student, the paper copy of the application form must be signed by the Academic Supervisor.

4. Committee meeting dates and application submission dates are listed on the FHMREC website. Applications must be submitted by the deadline date, to:

    Dr Diane Hopkins
    B14, Furness College
    Lancaster University,
    LA1 4YG
    d.hopkins@lancaster.ac.uk

5. Prior to the FHMREC meeting you may be contacted by the lead reviewer for further clarification of your application.

6. Attend the committee meeting on the day that the application is considered, if required to do so.

---

1. **Title of Project**: Adolescents' experiences of psychological wellbeing in relation to abuse within their intimate partner relationships

2. **Name of applicant/researcher**: Elizabeth Steyert-Woods

---

3. **Type of study**

☑ Includes *direct* involvement by human subjects.

☐ Involves existing documents/data only, or the evaluation of an existing project with no direct contact with human participants. Please complete the University Stage 1 Self Assessment part B. This is available on the Research Support Office website: LU Ethics. Submit this, along with all project documentation, to Diane Hopkins.

4. If this is a student project, please indicate what type of project by marking the relevant box/deleting as appropriate: (please note that UG and taught PG projects should complete **FHMREC form UG-tPG**, following the procedures set out on the FHMREC website

PG Diploma ☐   Masters dissertation ☐   PhD Thesis ☐   PhD Pall. Care ☐

PhD Pub. Health ☐   PhD Org. Health & Well Being ☐   PhD Mental Health ☐   MD ☐

DClinPsy SRP ☐   [if SRP Service Evaluation, please also indicate here: ☐]   DClinPsy Thesis ☑

Applicant Information

5. **Appointment/position held by applicant and Division within FHM**   Trainee Clinical Psychologist, Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

6. **Contact information for applicant**:
E-mail: e.steyert@lancs.ac.uk   **Telephone**: XXXXX XXXXXX (please give a number on which you can be contacted at short notice)
Address: Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Health and Medicine, C16 Furness College, University of Lancaster, Lancaster, LA1 4YG

7. **Project supervisor(s), if different from applicant**: Dr Mark Limmer and Dr Anna Daiches

8. **Appointment held by supervisor(s) and institution(s) where based (if applicable)**: Lecturer in Public Health, Division of Health Research, Lancaster University and Clinical Director, Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Lancaster University (respectively)

9. **Names and appointments of all members of the research team (including degree where applicable)**
   N/A

The Project
NOTE: In addition to completing this form you must submit a detailed research protocol and all supporting materials.

10. **Summary of research protocol in lay terms (indicative maximum length 150 words)**:

Research has shown adolescent intimate partner abuse (AIPA) to be a widespread problem, often having a significant impact on the wellbeing of those involved (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001). Review of the existing qualitative literature highlights a lack of focus on the impact of AIPA on psychological wellbeing. There is also limited consideration of experiences by social groupings and the interconnectedness of the latter with gender.

This study aims to address these gaps using a qualitative research methodology, utilising 10 – 16 semi-structured interviews with young people recruited from schools and community settings in a single local authority area in the North West. Young people will self-define as having experienced difficulties within their relationship(s). Data gathered will be analysed using Thematic Analysis.

11. **Anticipated project dates (month and year only)**

Start date: August 2016   End date: May 2018

12. **Please describe the sample of participants to be studied (including maximum & minimum number, age, gender)**:

Participants will be ten to sixteen young people recruited from schools, further education settings and community projects located in a single any local authority area in the North West of England. In the case of recruitment difficulties it is indicated that the research would remain viable with six to eight participants. Studies have shown data saturation to occur within the first twelve interviews, with basic meta-themes emerging as early as the sixth interview (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). However, from the perspective of future publication prospects, the higher recruitment target of ten plus participants would be desirable and therefore aimed for.

Participants will self-define as being, or having been, in an intimate partner relationship that has had 'difficulties'. Difficulties may include times when a potential interviewee's partner has said upsetting things, sent upsetting messages, hit them, grabbed them, pushed them, or made them do things that they didn't want to, such as inappropriate touching / sexual contact. Difficulties may also include times when the potential interviewee has done these things to their partner. Though the term 'difficulties' is expanded upon, using the terms violence and abuse is avoided as a first line of description in the participant research materials and recruitment events. This is to capture adolescents' range of experiences in relation to abuse (some participants may not categorise certain events such as pushing or shouting as abusive) and to also avoid leaving potential participants feeling exposed.

In order to explore social groupings, there will be two groups of participants; socially excluded and socially included. This will be determined based on factors including engagement with education and criminal justice systems, and level of deprivation in the area of residence as defined by the Social Exclusion Unit (2001). These factors will be determined through the nature of settings where participants are recruited from, the knowledge of key staff when introducing the researcher to groups of young people, and pre- interview conversations with participants.

To explore gender a roughly equal split of male and female participants will be sought in each group; as such, interviewees will be purposively selected based upon their gender and social exclusion/inclusion grouping.

The inclusion criteria are as follows:
• Aged 13 to 18 years
• Meet the criteria of the Fraser Guidelines (if under sixteen years)
• Attending one of the identified study settings
• Self-define as being, or having been, in an intimate partner relationship that has had 'difficulties'

Potential participants will be excluded if:
• They require translation or interpretation services (due to a lack of study funds for provision of these services)

13. **How will participants be recruited and from where? Be as specific as possible**.

The researcher will be introduced to potential recruitment sites and associated key staff (who will support the research process) by a youth worker known to the supervisory team. This contact has knowledge of young people's services in the local authority areas of interest and experience of recruitment into similar studies. The role of the youth worker is to act as an external advisor only, with no direct involvement in recruitment or data collection.

Once key staff have been identified within the research sites and briefed on the study they will be able to advise young people of the research being conducted through means of group information sessions or individual conversations. Group information sessions (i.e. an en mass approach) will be used in schools. Group information sessions as well as individual conversations will be used in youth centres and community projects. These approaches reflect the way young people access, use and are known to settings: for example, youth centres are more likely to operate drop-in systems, thereby enabling the use of private individual conversations for the purposes of recruitment, whereas in schools, young people are more visible to peers due to set attendance hours. Taking a tailored approach, based on setting, ensures that individuals are not singled out as 'eligible' for participation within peer groups.

Depending upon the approach of key staff, the researcher may be in attendance at research sites at the time of group discussion / individual conversations in order to provide further information as required. A web link to further details about the research will be provided to young people at this time (further information below). There may be a need for the researcher to have an informal presence at research sites on several occasions prior to

recruitment, as due to the nature of the research, young people may need to get to know and trust the researcher before they feel able to share their personal experiences in a research interview. This does open up the possibility of reduced anonymity for potential or actual participants; to counter this care will be taken to ensure that private space is found for any planned individual meetings with the researcher, for example, the use of school nursing offices where students would not instantly be recognised as attending for the purposes of the research.

The process of introductions to and discussions around the research will be supported through the use of posters, displayed in strategic points in research sites (e.g. common rooms, cafeterias), that will raise awareness of the study (see Appendix A). These will encourage young people to either visit the dedicated research website. If applicable, dates/times/venues when the research will be introduced by key staff / the researcher will be displayed.

As such, either through sessions led by key staff / the researcher or poster information, those interested in participating in the study will be encouraged to visit the research website. The web link for this site has a generic name that is not indicative of the nature of the research (http://research.elizabeth-steyert.com). Screenshots of the website are provided in Appendices B-D. The website consists of a main page, summarising the research (equivalent to a traditional Letter of Invitation) with links to further participant information and consent details (equivalent to a traditional Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form). At the bottom of the main page, participants are asked to complete and submit their contact details if they are interested in finding out more about the study and would be willing to be contacted by the researcher. Alternatively, young people are invited to contact the researcher on the dedicated research mobile telephone number (a handset and SIM solely for the purposes of the study) or by email to the researcher's university email account.

Upon receiving submitted contact information, telephone calls or email enquiries the researcher will communicate with the young person (according to preference) to discuss the study further, explain the research process in detail and answer any questions. Should the young person wish to proceed the researcher will go through the consent form, discuss the arrangements for ascertaining consent using Fraser Guidelines (where the young person is under 16 years of age), and arrange a mutually convenient date and time for the interview to take place.

As participants are to be purposively selected based upon social grouping and gender, the possibility that they may not be invited to interviewed will be discussed. The researcher will explain that this is because they are looking to interview an equal number of males and females from differing social backgrounds. The terms socially included and excluded would not be used.

14. **What procedure is proposed for obtaining consent**?

Consent will be visited when the researcher and potential interviewees have initial conversations about the study (either by phone or email, as described above). This discussion will revolve around the consent information given on the research website (see Appendix D of the protocol). The researcher will ensure that the young person is given information regarding each statement and has the opportunity to ask and have any questions answered. Understanding of each statement will be checked by inviting the young person to briefly summarise each in a conversational style. Where a person is under 16 years of age the researcher will take additional steps to ensure that the individual meets the criteria of the Fraser Guidelines (see Appendix H of the protocol). These guidelines encompass the Gillick competencies that will be assessed for following British Medical Association (BMA; 2010) guidance. Where it is uncertain that a young person under 16 meets Fraser Guidelines, consideration of whether to inform caregivers of the young person's interest or involvement in the research will need to be made on a case-by-case basis and in conjunction with the supervisory team.

At the stage where participants attend for interview the consent process will be formally undertaken: namely, the participant's right to confidentiality, except where issues of risk are identified, and the right to withdraw from the study up to two weeks after the interview. At this time, it will be ensured that the young person initials each section of a paper version of the consent form and provides an overall signature, indicating having understood the contents (Appendix E). In the case of young people who are under the age of sixteen, the researcher will again ensure that the individual meets the criteria of the Fraser Guidelines due to its contemporaneous nature.

15. What discomfort (including psychological eg distressing or sensitive topics), inconvenience or danger could be caused by participation in the project? Please indicate plans to address these potential risks. State the timescales within which participants may withdraw from the study, noting your reasons.

During initial telephone and email contacts with the researcher, young people will be advised that interviews will be held at the setting in which they picked-up the website link. This means that anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed. However, all attempts will be made, to find a private space where the participant would not necessarily be associated with involvement in the research as a result of attending. For example, in schools, use of nurse's offices could be made. The researcher would wait in the identified space for the arrival of the participant (i.e. would not collect the participant or walk with them to the room). Where such a space is unavailable, interviews would be arranged outside of normal operating hours.

Participants will be asked about their experiences of psychological wellbeing in relation to their intimate partner relationships. This has the potential to cause distress for some participants as difficult memories and emotions may be brought to mind. Participants are made aware in the Participant Information Sheet that sensitive questions may be touched upon during interview. This sheet also provides a range of online resources and help-lines and participants will be reminded of these during interview. If participants appear distressed attempts will be made to explore this further so that necessary actions can be taken. If a young person is distressed to a degree such that the researcher feels this indicates they are at risk of harm (i.e. presenting an immediate risk), safeguarding policy for the setting in question will be acted upon. The supervisory team will also be informed so that any further necessary longer term actions can be taken. If they are distressed but assure the researcher that they are 'ok', they will be signposted to further help and support, including the youth workers from the services they were recruited from and their own GPs.

In terms of risk potentially being identified during interview, all participants are informed interviews are confidential except where a risk to self or others is identified. Where possible, the researcher would discuss disclosure with participants in advance of it taking place. Disclosure of risk would in the first instance be to the supervisory team. This would be followed by comprehensive assessment of the risk identified, and the timely conduct of appropriate actions (e.g. referral to other agencies) to ensure the best possible management and outcomes. It is worth noting that due to the topic of this research, much of the material shared may involve risk – depending upon the nature of risks shared, not all will need to be disclosed. For this reason, participants will be given examples of what does and does not constitute risk issues that need to be disclosed based on the script in Appendix J. To summarise, risk will be assessed on whether what is disclosed involves coercion / represents a current risk to the participant or others.

It is possible that some participants will ask for further support following interview. Where a participant agrees that the researcher can discuss this request with the supervisory team a joint plan for onward signposting/referral will be devised and fed back to the participant. Where this permission is not given, participants will be advised that they seek the advice of their GP or another trusted source within the recruitment setting (e.g. school counsellor).

Participants will be advised that they are able to withdraw from the study up to two weeks following interview.

16. What potential risks may exist for the researcher(s)? Please indicate plans to address such risks (for example, noting the support available to you; counselling considerations arising from the sensitive or distressing nature of the research/topic; details of the lone worker plan you will follow, and the steps you will take).

It is anticipated that interviews will generally take place in service working hours (i.e. potentially including evenings in the case of youth services) at the site where the young person was identified as a potential participant. This is to ensure the safety of the researcher when conducting private interviews with participants. Extra staff cover will need to be secured where interviews need to take place outside of normal working hours. Staff should be located close to the room where interviews will take place should help be required, and will be aware of anticipated start and finish times.

It is possible that the researcher will be exposed to distressing and upsetting information during the interview process. Effects will be mitigated through the researcher having access to both an academic and field supervisor with which it will be possible to discuss any emotional impacts the research might have.

The researcher provides a mobile phone number for participants to use in connection with the study. This is a research dedicated mobile phone (i.e. not a personal mobile phone).

17. **Whilst we do not generally expect direct benefits to participants as a result of this research, please state here any that result from completion of the study**.

There are no anticipated direct benefits from taking part, however, young people may value contributing to research that has the potential to help others in similar situations. They may also find the process of sharing their experiences with the researcher useful.

18. **Details of any incentives/payments (including out-of-pocket expenses) made to participants**:
Participants will be reimbursed their travel expenses, up to a value of £10, where they have travelled to the research site for interview outside of their normal commitments (e.g. attending for the school day).

19. **Briefly describe your data collection and analysis methods, and the rationale for their use. Please include details of how the confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be ensured, and the limits to confidentiality**.

This will be a qualitative research study using semi-structured interviews. Qualitative methods are suited to the exploration of participant experiences (Al-Busaidi, 2008) and semi-structured interviews offer a flexible and responsive means of gathering data according to the natural flow of conversation and issues arising that the researcher wishes to pursue (Coolican, 2009). A single, private interview will be held with each participant, lasting between 40 and 60 minutes. All interviews will be led by the researcher. Interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed within two months of the interview taking place. Transcription will be undertaken by the researcher.

All interviews are to take place at the settings in which potential participants are identified. This means that staff at the settings may see participants arriving or departing from interview, thus becoming aware of their involvement in the research and compromising confidentiality. Participants are advised of this possibility through the Participant Information Sheet allowing them to make a fully informed consent decision.

Participants are informed that all interviews are confidential except where a risk to self or others is identified. Where possible, the researcher would discuss disclosure with participants in advance of it taking place. Disclosure of risk would in the first instance be to supervisory team. This would be followed by comprehensive assessment of the risk identified, and the timely conduct of appropriate actions (e.g. referral to other agencies) to ensure the best possible management and outcomes.

Participants will be informed that the information they provide may be presented in the final report in the form of direct quotations. In this case, the information they share is not technically confidential, but anonymous, in the sense that identifying features (e.g. names and specific details) will have been removed thus reducing the likelihood of the participant being identified.

Data will be analysed using thematic analysis. This is a theoretical and epistemologically flexible method that at a basic level "minimally organises and describes" data sets, but that can also offer interpretive insights (Braun and Clark, 2008: 79). This makes it accessible to the multi-disciplinary audience that it is thought the results will be relevant to.

20. **If relevant, describe the involvement of your target participant group in the *design and conduct* of your research**.

There has been no opportunity to involve members of the target participant group in the design of the study, however, development of the protocol has been guided by a supervisory team with expertise in this field and insights from the literature have been drawn upon.

21. **What plan is in place for the storage of data (electronic, digital, paper, etc.)? Please ensure that your plans comply with the Data Protection Act 1998**.

• Data custodianship – The researcher will act as the data custodian for the duration of the study. At the end of the study, the data custodian will be the DClinPsy Research Administrator to whom all relevant data will be securely transferred and stored for a period of five years following submission of the final report, or in the case that a paper is submitted for publication, five years after publication. At the end of the data storage period, the DClinPsy administrator is responsible for securely destroying the data.

• Online consent to be contacted by researcher data – This data will be sent to a cloud-based spreadsheet via an encrypted data path and secured using two-factor authentication. No personal data will be stored on the website itself. The spreadsheet will only be accessible to the researcher. It will be permanently deleted once the final research report has been submitted for assessment, or when research summaries have been sent to participants in the case of those who wish to receive them.

• Consent forms – These will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and accessed only by the researcher. At the end of the study they will be scanned and saved to the University Server before being transferred to the DClinPsy Research Administrator as data custodian. Hard copies will at this point be destroyed.

• Demographic information forms – These will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and accessed only by the researcher. They will be confidentially destroyed once the demographic information from all interviews conducted has been collated.

• Transcriptions – As previously stated, transcription will be undertaken by the researcher. Typed transcripts of interviews will be saved to the University Server and at the end of the study they will transferred to the DClinPsy Research Administrator as data custodian.

• Coded data produced during analysis – These will be saved to the University Server. At the end of the study they will be submitted to the DClinPsy Research Administrator.

• USB storage encryption – All data mentioned above, saved to the University Server, will be password protected / encrypted according to the requirements of Lancaster University.

• Data submitted to the DClinPsy Research Administrator as data custodian – All necessary data (as described above) will be transferred electronically from the University Server to the data custodian using a secure method that is supported by the University.

22. Will audio or video recording take place?   ☐ no   ☑ audio   ☐ video
If yes, what arrangements have been made for audio/video data storage? At what point in the research will tapes/digital recordings/files be destroyed?

Audio recordings will be made on a password protected and encrypted device. Following interview audio recordings will be transferred to the university server at the earliest opportunity (and stored securely in the meantime). Original recordings will be erased from the audio recording device. Recordings will be transcribed and erased from the University Server within two months of the date that the interview took place. Both the audio recorder and University Server space, will be password protected / encrypted according to the requirements of Lancaster University.

23. **What are the plans for dissemination of findings from the research? If you are a student, include here your thesis**.

The study will be written-up in the form of a detailed report that includes a literature review, methods section, presentation of findings, discussion in relation to existing literature, and conclusions summarising the key outcomes for practice, policy, and future research. This will be submitted for assessment to the Lancaster University Doctoral Programme in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy), forming part of the final year thesis. Upon the

successful completion of this assessment it is intended that the report will be edited and submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal or professional outlet.

The outcomes of the study will also be communicated to staff at the various study sites via a short written report and presentation/discussion at relevant team meetings.

A short report will be provided to those participants who expressed an interest in receiving such a summary at interview.

24. **What particular ethical considerations, not previously noted on this application, do you think there are in the proposed study? Are there any matters about which you wish to seek guidance from the FHMREC**?

Most ethical considerations have been addressed within the main body of the form, however, it is recognised that there are potential safeguarding/risk issues in interviewing this population. These will need to be comprehensively addressed on a case-by-case basis with the supervisory team with a clear action plan being put into place. There is also the potential that participant interviews might expose professional practice deemed inappropriate or potentially harmful (for example, by teachers or youth leaders). Again, these would be discussed with the supervisory team in the first instance before being taken forward.

Signatures: Applicant: …………………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………………………………

*Project Supervisor (if applicable): ………………………………………....................

Date: …………………………………………………………………………

*I have reviewed this application, and discussed it with the applicant. I confirm that the project methodology is appropriate. I am happy for this application to proceed to ethical review.

Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee

Our ref: FHMREC15081

17 May 2016

Elizabeth Steyert-Woods
Division of Health Research
Faculty of Health and Medicine
Lancaster University

Dear Elizabeth,
Re: FHM Research Ethics Committee application for project titled: *'Adolescents' experiences of psychological wellbeing in relation to abuse within their intimate partner relationships.'*

Thank you for sending in the paperwork for your application. We appreciated reading about the project, and meeting with you. We have a few minor concerns, and ask that you address the following in revising your application materials:

- **Application section 11**
  - o Amend the start date to take into account the timescale for ethical approval.

- **Application section 12**
  - o State the minimum number of participants which will ensure your study is viable.

- **Application section 13**
  - o Please clarify the role of the youth worker referred to in this section.
  - o You note that the information pack may be handed out by key staff, clarify how you will ensure anonymity, or consider alternative ways of making the pack available. Please amend this section accordingly.

- **Application section 14**
  - o Clarify where the conversations held in person will take place.

- **Application section 15**
  - o Amend the term 'consent form' to 'participant information sheet' where highlighted in the marked up version of your application attached with this letter.
  - o Where there is an immediate risk of harm it may not be sufficient to only inform your supervisors. Please comment on the action you would take in the moment.
  - o Provide a summary of the risk issues which you will make participants aware of.
  - o Clarify why you would not need to disclose mention of previous underage, consensual sexual activity. Comment on whether your approach will change if both parties are underage.
  - o Standardise references to data withdrawal in this section.

- **Application section 16**
  - o Clarify you will address confidentiality issues where interviews take place on school premises. We suggest that you consider an alternative location, or ensure that interviews do not take place during the school day.

- **Application section 18**
    - o Confirm that you are able to provide the Amazon voucher, so that this can be mentioned in the PIS.

- **Application section 19**
    - o Where will face to face interviews take place? If this is at the school please comment in section 24 on how you will address confidentiality issues.
    - o Clarify here that you will be carrying out the transcription.

- **Application section 21**
    - o If you are putting in place means by which participants' data can be withdrawn at any point, clarify where the participant personal/identifying details will be kept, in what manner and for how long. Note that personal details should be kept separately from data, in a secure locked cabinet in locked office or in a separate file on the password, encrypted server. They should be deleted once the thesis has been assessed.

- **Application section 22**
    - o Please note here that your reason for earliest possible upload or your audio recordings is that it is not possible to encrypt your portable devices. If it is possible to encrypt them, please state this here. Confirm that in the meantime the recording device will be stored securely.

- **Appendix A – poster**
    - o Please add the location of interviews, and the key contact person.

- **Appendix E -Consent form**
    - o Add an item noting that you will share and discuss data with your supervisor.

- **Appendix F**
    - o Please reword the questions marked up to reduce the chance of a participant disclosing the identity of their partner.

In addition to the above a number of minor changes and typos are noted on your application form, attached with this letter. Please address these, as well as the matters above.

Ensure consistency between the application form, the Research Protocol and the supporting materials in line with the changes requested above.
Please use Lancaster University letter-headed paper for all participant materials
We ask that you attend to these in writing by (re)submitting to the FHMREC via Diane Hopkins (d.hopkins@lancaster.ac.uk) the application document and materials with any changes highlighted. If your responses to the above are satisfactory then approval will be recommended on Chair's action. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

R. W. Pickup

Prof Roger Pickup
Chair of the Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee
Lancaster University

![Lancaster University logo]

Applicant: Elizabeth Steyert-Woods
Supervisor: Mark Limmer
Department: Health Research
FHMREC Reference: FHMREC15081

19 July 2016

Dear Elizabeth,

Re: Adolescents' experiences of psychological wellbeing in relation to abuse within their intimate partner relationships
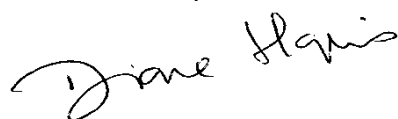
Thank you for submitting your research ethics application for the above project for review by the Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee (FHMREC). The application was recommended for approval by FHMREC, and on behalf of the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), I can confirm that approval has been granted for this research project.

As principal investigator your responsibilities include:

- ensuring that (where applicable) all the necessary legal and regulatory requirements in order to conduct the research are met, and the necessary licenses and approvals have been obtained;

- reporting any ethics-related issues that occur during the course of the research or arising from the research to the Research Ethics Officer (e.g. unforeseen ethical issues, complaints about the conduct of the research, adverse reactions such as extreme distress);

- submitting details of proposed substantive amendments to the protocol to the Research Ethics Officer for approval.

Please contact the Diane Hopkins (01542 592838 fhmresearchsupport@lancaster.ac.uk) if you have any queries or require further information.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Diane Hopkins
Research Development Officer

CC Ethics@Lancaster; Professor Roger Pickup (Chair, FHMREC)

Health & Medicine | Lancaster University

Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee (FHMREC) Lancaster University
Application for Amendment to Previously Approved Research

1. Name of applicant: Elizabeth Steyert-Woods

2. E-mail address and phone number of applicant: e.steyert@lancs.ac.uk / XXXXX XXXXXX

3. Title of project: Adolescents' experiences of psychological wellbeing in relation to abuse within their intimate partner relationships

4. FHMREC project reference number: 15081

5. Date of original project approval as indicated on the official approval letter (month/year): July 2016

6. Please outline the requested amendment(s)
   Note that where the amendment relates to a change of researcher, and the new researcher is a student, a full application must be made to FHMREC

   We would like to remove the statement from our original application that referred to recruiting from a single local authority. We would like to broaden rectruitment to any local authority in the north west.

7. Please explain your reason(s) for requesting the above amendment(s):

   We would like to broaden our geographical recruitment area to facilitate meeting recruitment targets and improve generalisability of the research.

<u>Guidance</u>:

a) Resubmit your research ethics documents (**the entire version which received final approval, including all participant materials, your application form and research protocol**), with all additions highlighted in yellow, and any deletions simply 'struck through', so that it is possible to see what was there previously.
b) This should be submitted as **a single PDF** to <u>Diane Hopkins</u>   There is no need to resubmit the Governance Checklist

Applicant electronic signature: Date 26/03/18

Student applicants: please tick to confirm that you have discussed this amendment application with your supervisor, and that they are happy for the application to proceed to ethical review   ☒

Project Supervisor name (if applicable): Drs Mark Limmer and Anna Daiches   Date application discussed 26/03/18

July 2016

You must submit this application from your Lancaster University email address, and copy your supervisor in to the email in which you submit this application

![Lancaster University logo]

Applicant: Elizabeth Steyert
Supervisors: Mark Limmer and Anna Daiches
Department: Health Research
FHMREC Reference: FHMREC17076

27 March 2018

Dear Elizabeth

Re: Adolescents' experiences of psychological wellbeing in relation to abuse within their intimate partner relationships

Thank you for submitting your research ethics amendment application for the above project for review by the **Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee (FHMREC)**. The application was recommended for approval by FHMREC, and on behalf of the Chair of the Committee, I can confirm that approval has been granted for the amendment to this research project.
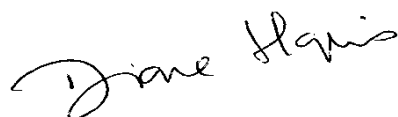
As principal investigator your responsibilities include:

- ensuring that (where applicable) all the necessary legal and regulatory requirements in order to conduct the research are met, and the necessary licenses and approvals have been obtained;

- reporting any ethics-related issues that occur during the course of the research or arising from the research to the Research Ethics Officer at the email address below (e.g. unforeseen ethical issues, complaints about the conduct of the research, adverse reactions such as extreme distress);

- submitting details of proposed substantive amendments to the protocol to the Research Ethics Officer for approval.

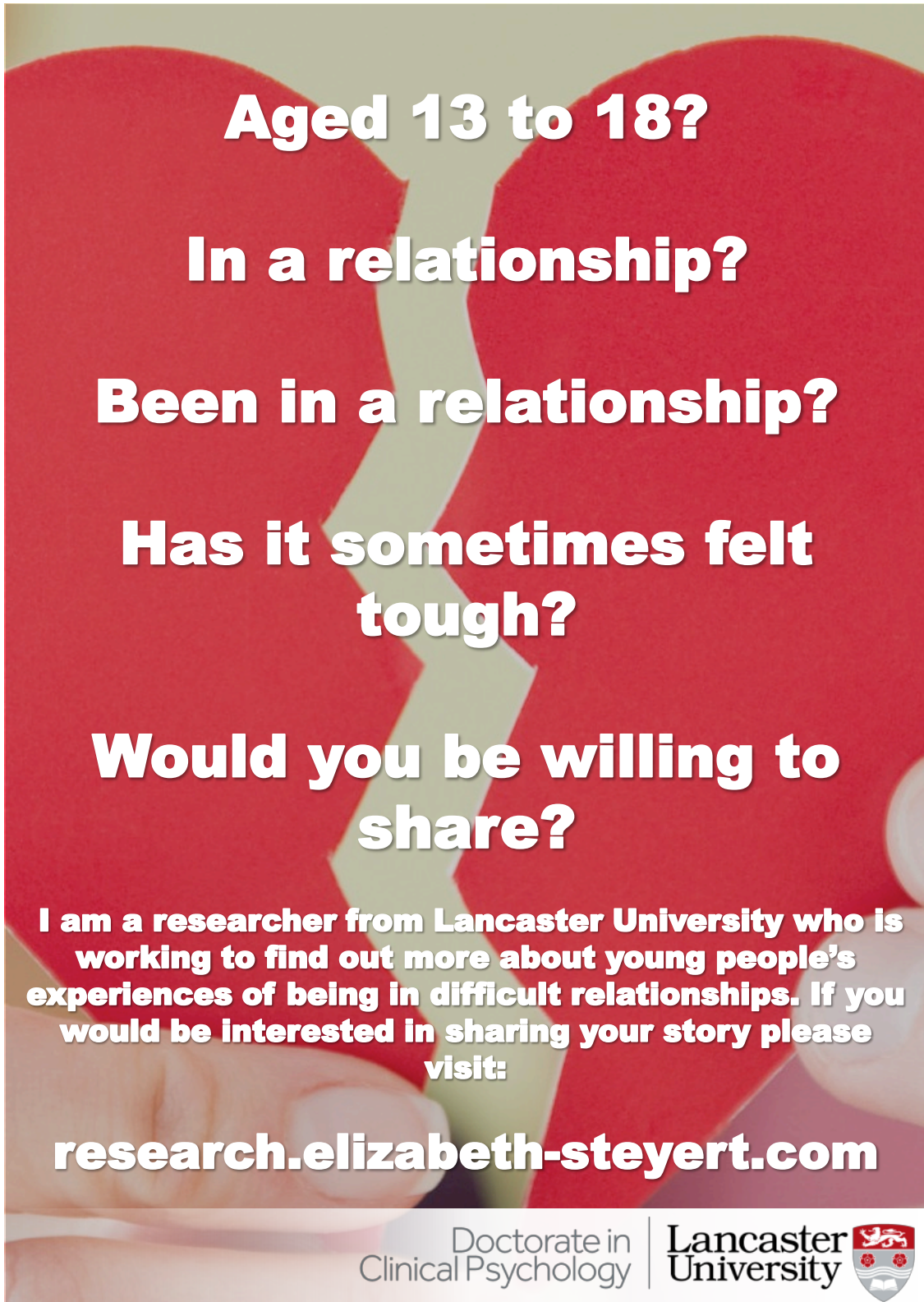Please contact me if you have any queries or require further information.

Tel:- 01542 592838
Email:- fhmresearchsupport@lancaster.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

Dr Diane Hopkins
Research Integrity and Governance Officer, Secretary to FHMREC.

Appendix A – Poster to advertise study

Appendix B – Research website main page

Relationship Difficulties Research

Thanks for visiting. My name is Lizzy and I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist based at Lancaster University.

What's the research about?

I'm looking to talk to people who are in, or have been in, a relationship that has felt difficult. Basically, that's anyone who's had a boyfriend or girlfriend where sometimes things between you haven't been great. Your boyfriend or girlfriend may have shouted at you, said upsetting things to you, or sent you upsetting messages. They may have hit you, grabbed you, pushed you, or made you do things that you didn't want to, such as touching or having sex. Alternatively, you might sometimes have done these things to your boyfriend or girlfriend. The research isn't about making people feel blamed or judged - I'd like to hear about your experiences and how they made you feel.

Why is the research happening?

We know that difficulties in young people's relationships are common. We want to find out more about these difficulties and how they affect you so we can support others in similar situations in the future. Though there won't necessarily be a direct benefit from taking part, you may find it useful to share your experiences with someone.

What happens if I take part?

I would speak with you on the phone or by email to give you further details of the research and answer any questions you may have. If you decide to take part we would then discuss how you would give consent and arrange a date and time to sit down and talk about your experiences. This would be a 40 to 60 minute interview with me in a private space, where we couldn't be overheard, at the place where you picked up this link.

How can I get involved?

If you would like to find out more about the research, please get in touch. You can do this by calling me on 07760 120125, emailing me at e.steyert@lancaster.ac.uk, or by completing the form below.

Contact form

By submitting your information, you agree to be contacted by the researcher, Lizzy Steyert-Woods.

*Required

Name *

Your answer

Phone number or e-mail address *

Consider providing a personal mobile number, rather than landline, for confidentiality

Your answer

SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This form was created inside Elizabeth Steyert. Report Abuse - Terms of Service - Additional Terms

Google Forms

Contact form

Thanks. Your details have been submitted. Lizzy will be in touch soon.

Appendix C – Research website participant information page

Relationship Difficulties Research

Participant Information

This page provides further detailed information about the study

Young People's Experiences of Wellbeing in Relation to Difficulties in their Intimate Partner Relationships.

My name is Lizzy Steyert-Woods and I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist based at Lancaster University. The research forms part of my training and I would be very grateful for your help.

What is the study about?

I'm looking to talk to people who are in, or have been in, an intimate partner relationship that has felt difficult at times.

Basically, that's anyone who's had a boyfriend or girlfriend relationship where sometimes things between you haven't been great. For example, maybe there was hitting, hurtful things said or making the other person do something they didn't want to.

I'm hoping to find out more about these kinds of relationship difficulties and how they affect you so that we can support other young people in similar situations in the future.

Why have I been approached?

The study needs to hear from young people who might have experienced these kinds of difficulties in their boyfriend or girlfriend relationships.

Do I have to take part?

No. It's completely up to you to decide whether or not you take part.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you would like to take part you will be invited to come and share your experiences with me in an 'interview'. This is a chance for us to sit down and talk through your experiences in private. It would last between 40 and 60 minutes and would happen in a room at the place where the research was introduced to you. Nobody else would be there or be able to hear what you say.

During the interview I would like to ask you about how the difficulties you experienced in your relationship affected your wellbeing.

You will be offered a drink at the start and if you have travelled in especially to talk with me (for example, outside of the times that you would normally attend the setting) you will be paid back your travel expenses up to the value of £20. Unfortunately, we are unable to fund translation or interpretation services for those people who would require this.

Will my data be Identifiable?

The data collected for this study will be stored securely and only the researchers conducting this study will have access to this data:

- Audio recordings will be destroyed following being typed-up – this will happen within two months of the date of the interview.
- Hard copies of any paperwork you or the researcher complete will be kept in a locked cabinet. All hard copies of paperwork will be destroyed by the end of the
- study.
- Any computer files associated with the study will be encrypted (that is no-one other than the researcher will be able to access them). Computer files will be kept for five years following the end of the study, or after the publication of any associated papers, before being deleted.
- The typed version of your interview will be made anonymous by removing any identifying information including your name. Anonymised direct quotations from your interview may be used in the reports or publications from the study, so your name will not be attached to them.
- All your personal data will be confidential and will be kept separately from your interview responses.
- The interviews will be held at the place where the research was introduced to you so it is possible that staff might recognise you as you arrive for or leave. This could mean that staff become aware of your involvement in the study. Though this would have no impact on your relationship with staff, you should be aware of this possibility.

There are some limits to confidentiality: if what is said in the interview makes me think that you or someone else is at significant risk of harm, I will have to break confidentiality and speak to a member of staff about this. If possible, I will tell you if I have to do this.

What will happen to the results?

The results will be summarised and presented in a report. This may be submitted for publication in an academic or professional journal.

Are there any risks?

There are no obvious risks, however, you may find some of the questions asked touch upon sensitive issues. For example, "How did the difficulties you experienced in your relationship affect your wellbeing?" If you feel upset following taking part you are encouraged to tell the Researcher and use of the resources at the end of this sheet.

Are there any benefits to taking part?

Although you may find it interesting and useful to share your experiences with someone, there are no direct benefits in taking part.

Who has reviewed the project?

This study has been reviewed by the Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee, and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee at Lancaster University.

Where can I get further information about the study if I need it?

If you have any questions about the study, please contact the researcher:

(Lizzy) Elizabeth Steyert-Woods
Trainee Clinical Psychologist
Faculty of Health and Medicine
Lancaster University
Lancaster
LA1 4YG
Tel: 07760 120125
Email: e.steyert@lancaster.ac.uk

You may also contact the research supervisors:

Dr. Mark Limmer
Lecturer in Public Health
Faculty of Health and Medicine
Lancaster University
Lancaster
LA1 4YG
Tel: 01524 593015
Email: m.limmer@lancaster.ac.uk

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint or raise concerns about any aspect of this study and do not want to speak to the researcher, you can contact:

Prof. Bill Sellwood
Chair in Clinical Psychology
Faculty of Health and Medicine
Lancaster University
Lancaster
LA1 4YG
Tel: 01524 593998
Email: b.sellwood@lancaster.ac.uk

If you wish to speak to someone outside of the Clinical Psychology Doctorate Programme, you may also contact:

Prof. Roger Pickup
Associate Dean for Research
Faculty of Health and Medicine
(Division of Biomedical and Life Sciences)
Lancaster University
Lancaster
LA1 4YG
Tel: 01524 593746
Email: r.pickup@lancaster.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information

Resources in the event of distress

If you feel upset after taking part, the following telephone numbers and websites might be helpful:

This is Abuse
The Help is Here page of this website provides the contact details for a range of organisations dealing with relationship difficulties.
Visit: thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/need-help

Childline
Helpline: 0800 1111 (open 24 hours a day)
Website: www.childline.org.uk

Samaritans
Helpline: 08457 90 90 90 (open 24 hours a day)
Email: jo@samaritans.org
Website: www.samaritans.org

Women's Aid
Helpline: 0808 2000 247 (open 24 hours a day)
Website: www.womensaid.org.uk

The Men's Advice Line
Helpline: 0808 801 0327 (open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)
Email: info@mensadviceline.org.uk
Website: www.mensadviceline.org.uk

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Appendix D – Research website consent information page

Consent Information

This page is for information only - a paper copy will be provided at the interview.

Study Title: Young People's Experiences of Wellbeing in Relation to Difficulties in their Intimate Partner Relationships.

We are asking if you would like to take part in a research project exploring how difficulties in young people's intimate partner relationships affect their wellbeing. We hope that this research will provide a better understanding of young people's lived experiences and that we can use this information to help support others in similar situations.

Before you consent to participating in the study we ask that you read the participant information sheet and mark each box below with your initials if you agree. If you have any questions or queries before signing the consent form please speak to the researcher, Elizabeth Steyert-Woods.

- I confirm that I have read the information sheet and fully understand what is expected of me within this study.
- I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask any questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that my interview will be audio recorded and then made into an anonymised written transcript.
- I understand that audio recordings will be kept for up to two months following the date of the interview.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw up to two weeks after the interview without giving any reason, without my medical care or legal rights being affected.
- I understand that the information from my interview will be pooled with other participants' responses, anonymised and may be published
- I consent to information and quotations from my interview being used in reports, conferences and training events.
- I understand that the researcher will share and discuss data with the research supervisors.
- I understand that any information I give will remain strictly confidential and anonymous unless it is thought that there is a risk of harm to myself or others, in which case the researcher will need to share this information with the research supervisors.
- I consent to Lancaster University keeping written transcriptions of the interview for 5 years after the study has finished, or after the publication date of any associated papers.
- I consent to take part in the above study.

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Appendix E - Consent form for young people

Doctorate in Clinical Psychology | Lancaster University

Consent Form

Study Title: Young People's Experiences of Wellbeing in Relation to Difficulties in their Intimate Partner Relationships.

We are asking if you would like to take part in a research project exploring how difficulties in young people's intimate partner relationships affect their wellbeing. We hope that this research will provide a better understanding of young people's lived experiences and that we can use this information to help support others in similar situations.

Before you consent to participating in the study we ask that you read the participant information sheet and mark each box below with your initials if you agree. If you have any questions or queries before signing the consent form please speak to the researcher, Elizabeth Steyert-Woods.

Please initial each statement

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet and fully understand what is expected of me within this study. ☐

2. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask any questions and to have them answered. ☐

3. I understand that my interview will be audio recorded and then made into an anonymised written transcript. ☐

4. I understand that audio recordings will be kept for up to two months following the date of the interview. ☐

5. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw up to two weeks after the interview without giving any reason, without my medical care or legal rights being affected. ☐

6. I understand that the information from my interview will be pooled with other participants' responses, anonymised and may be published ☐

7. I consent to information and quotations from my interview being used in reports, conferences and training events. ☐

8. I understand that the researcher will share and discuss data with the research supervisors. ☐

9. I understand that any information I give will remain strictly confidential and anonymous unless it is thought that there is a risk of harm to myself or others, in which case the researcher will need to share this information with the research supervisors. ☐

10. I consent to Lancaster University keeping written transcriptions of the interview for 5 years after the study has finished, or after the publication date of any associated papers. ☐

11. I consent to take part in the above study. ☐

Name of Participant_____ **Signature**_____ **Date** _____

Name of Researcher _____**Signature** _____**Date** _____

Appendix F - Preliminary interview schedule

The schedule provides a list of potential questions to be asked during interview. The interview process is intended to be flexible and responsive to matters discussed; as such, the structure will be shaped according to each young person's participation.

Introductions

- Offering participants a drink
- Thanking participants for attending
- Housekeeping (including location of toilets, fire alarms, pausing the interview to take a break)
- Recap of confidentiality, disclosure of risk, and the right to withdraw
- Re-assessing Fraser Guidelines (where under 16 years)

Recapping what the study is about and what will be discussed

- Study is about difficulties arising between young people in their intimate partner relationships and how they affect wellbeing
- Give examples of difficulties, e.g. shouting, hitting, saying upsetting things, unwanted sexual contact
- We know that difficulties are common. We want to hear about them and how they made you feel so that we can help other people in similar situations.

Background to the participants experiences

- Can you tell me a little bit about what has happened in the relationship(s) that felt difficult?

[Get a sense of what language the young person is using to refer to partners and the difficulties experienced in order to frame the proceeding questions]

Further details of participants experiences

[Remind participants that there is no need to provide names – suggest that the use of terms such as (ex-) boyfriend, girlfriend, partner could be helpful]

- Can you say a little bit about the difficulties?
- What happened?
- How did the difficulties begin?
- What did you do?

Participants' understandings of the experiences

- Why do you think that happened?
- Why did they do that? Why did you do that?
- What do you think it meant?
- Why do you think young people experience difficulties in their relationships?
- What do you think the main causes of difficulties in young people's relationships?
- Where do you think these ideas come from?
- What makes young people more at risk of difficulties?
- Do you think 'difficulties' are ever ok?

The impact on wellbeing

- How did it make you feel?
- What did it make you do? (including self harm, use of alcohol, drugs, etc.)
- Did it make you change in anyway? (mood, friendships, attending school, etc)
- Do you think it affected your wellbeing?
- How do you think relationship difficulties affect wellbeing?
- How did it affect how you thought about yourself?
- How did it affect your mood?
- How did it affect your health? (including appetite, sleep, etc.)
- How did it affect your friendships?
- How did it affect your relationships with others?
- How did it affect your usual activities, such as going to school, helping at home?

Seeking help

- [If the relationship is over] How did the relationship end?
- Did you feel able to talk to anyone?
- Did your friends know? What did they think/do/say?

- Did any adults know? What did they think/do/say?

- Do you feel that there are adults you can trust to talk to?

- How useful was talking to others in stopping the difficulties?

- What makes you feel able to talk to others?

- What makes you feel unable to talk to others?

- What would help you get out of a difficult relationship?

- What helped you get out of a difficult relationship?

- What would you do in the future if you found yourself in a similar situation

- How could we try to prevent relationship difficulties?

[Where participants are currently experiencing relationship difficulties, checking for safety and the need for further input as per protocol]

Endings

- Thanking participants for their time

- Asking participants if they would like to receive a short report summarising the findings of the study (if yes, ensuring up-to-date contact details)

- Reminding participants of their rights regarding the withdrawal of their data

- Ensuring that participants have the researcher's contact details should they wish to withdraw at a later date

- Reimbursing travel expenses where appropriate

Appendix G – Fraser Guidelines assessment

For a young person under the age of 16 to be competent, s/he should have:

- the ability to understand that there is a choice and that choices have consequences
- the ability to weigh the information and arrive at a decision
- a willingness to make a choice (including the choice that someone else should make the decision)
- an understanding of the nature and purpose of the proposed intervention
- an understanding of the proposed intervention's risks and side effects
- an understanding of the alternatives to the proposed intervention, and the risks attached to them
- freedom from undue pressure.

(British Medical Association 2010)

Appendix H - Demographic information form

The first section of this form collects basic demographic data and data that will aid in the allocation of participants to study groups. The second half, as indicated, is not routinely collected and only noted for the purposes of the contextualisation of findings if mentioned in interview.

Demographic data

Participant ID: _____

Gender: _____

Age:

_____

If under 16 years, tick to confirm that Fraser Guidelines are met: ☐

Setting: _____

Living arrangements: _____

Socially excluded: ☐   Socially included: ☐

If discussed during interview (i.e. not routinely collected):

Current / previous relationship status

_____

Sexual orientation

_____

Appendix I - Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Processes
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systemic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

(Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87)

Appendix J – Script for discussing risk and potential disclosures

"When I'm thinking about things I might need to share with someone else, I'm thinking about whether what you tell means that you or another person could be in danger right now or in the future. If what you tell me is concerning, but happened in the past and isn't going to happen again to you, or anyone else, and I don't know any names, then I can help you think about whether you want to tell someone, but I don't need to share it. Does that make sense?

So, to give some examples, I **wouldn't** need to tell anybody if you told me that:

- [if underage] you are having sex with another underage person, as long as you both agree to it and do not feel pressured, and that one person is not considerably younger than the other
- in the past you had sex with someone older than you, even if you were underage at the time, as long as you agreed to it and didn't feel pressured
- in the past, you had been in a relationship where someone was harming you in some way – like by hitting, grabbing, pushing or making you do things you didn't want to – as long as you or someone else isn't at risk of it happening again

I **would** need to tell somebody if you told me that:

- someone is seriously harming you in some way at the moment
- someone is pressuring you into touching or sexual activities you don't want to do
- (if underage) you were having sex with someone who I thought seemed considerably older than you, even if you had agreed to it

How does that sound? What questions come up for you?"