# What motivates staff to work at a therapeutic school for children identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties?

**Alex Wilding**

*The Institute for Arts in Therapy and Education (IATE)*

## Abstract

Those who work at schools with children identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD),[1] work in considerably challenging, stressful and undesirable environments (Shuttleworth, 2005). Taking this into consideration, this study focuses on staff motivation, in an attempt to pinpoint what motivates individuals to pursue and commit to a career in this field of work.

Staff members working with children identified as having SEBD at a therapeutic primary school in the UK were interviewed (*N* = 7). Semi-structured interviews were prepared and carried out inside the school premises in a private space. Interviews were recorded using an audio recorder and were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) was applied to the data and referred to as a framework.

Five key themes were developed from the data, three of the key themes were deemed to be most relevant to the research question: 'What motivates staff to work at a therapeutic school for children identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties?' These were:

**Emotional connection**: Occasions when participants spoke of feeling deeply connected to others. This connection was either with children through relatedness, or with colleagues (team spirit).

**A sense of feeling good**: This was summarised as pride, enjoyment, appreciation, a sense of feeling right/suited, feeling valued, and even 'the challenge' and 'hard work'.

**Responsibility**: Participants felt driven by a sense of responsibility, for example comparisons were made to being like parent-figures to the children.

These three themes were considered to be the key forms of motivation identified from this particular sample of staff members.

## Introduction

The motive for this project came from my time working at the therapeutic school in question. At the time of the interviews, I worked there on a part-time basis as a senior support worker. Having worked at the school for over 18 months, often finding it tough-going, I was curious to know what kept my colleagues and me returning to do the work.

The school involved in this research project is known as a therapeutic school. It provides a space for these children to be educated together, under the same roof, working towards the national curriculum, with considerably more leniency and flexibility than found in a mainstream approach.

Previous research has suggested that working in this area of education can be a challenging, stressful and undesirable experience. Shuttleworth (2005) summarises this in her study 'Why on earth do you want to teach those kids?'

Some people with no experience of the children within these schools see SEBD schools as the sin bins of the educational society. The schools can be seen as a form of crowd control, keeping the unruly delinquent children off the street. (p. 26)

More recently, Bell (2012) carried out research into the lived experiences of teachers of students with emotional behaviour disorder; one of her participants summed up the challenges faced in her job:

At its most extreme, children jumping out of windows, people jumping on roofs, umm running out of the classroom, slamming doors, peeing on floors, throwing

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[1] Note, at the time of writing the new special educational needs categorisation of SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) had not been introduced.

things across the room, being verbally aggressive, cursing out staff members, throwing food across the cafeteria…Those were some things that were problematic. (p. 40)

Prather-Jones (2011) carried out a study exploring experienced teachers of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) and their reasons for remaining in the field. Some of her participants felt committed out of a sense of duty to the world or a need to make a difference. She describes that these teachers believed being a 'good fit' or being personally suited to a career in educating students with SEBD, was a critical factor in their decisions to remain in this profession:

Each participant suggested that she or he was personally suited for the position and also indicated that some people would not be "cut out" for a career in this field. These teachers felt rewarded by the idea that they were "doing the right thing" and "making a difference" in children's lives. (Prather-Jones, 2011, p. 183)

I shall now describe self-determination theory, a theory of motivation applied to this study.

Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory (SDT: Ryan & Deci, 2000) is a formal theoretical approach to the study of personality growth, development and motivation, which is supported by over 35 years of research (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Central to SDT is the ontological belief that 'all individuals have

natural, innate and constructive tendencies to develop an ever more elaborate and unified sense of self' (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 5).

I chose to apply SDT as opposed to other theories of motivation, because it is concerned with our natural intrinsic tendencies of behaviour, which I felt would be relevant to the participants. I assumed that motivation would be something they are not fully aware of when working with these children; it is something that occurs naturally and unconsciously. Another strong consideration was that SDT is a theory that has received widespread attention from the field of education, so I chose it as a respectable, established theory for the question in hand for this study.

Ryan and Deci (2000) speak of our innate, natural tendencies as human beings; the fullest representations of humanity show people to be curious, vital and self-motivated. At their best, they are agented and inspired, striving to learn; extend themselves; master new skills; and apply their talents responsibly. This is all dependent on three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness; we strive for these nutriments and when possible, gravitate towards situations that provide them (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

Figure 1 illustrates the organismic integration theory taxonomy of motivational types, arranged from left to right in terms of the degree to which the motivations emanate from the self (i.e. are self-determined) (Deci & Ryan, 2000).
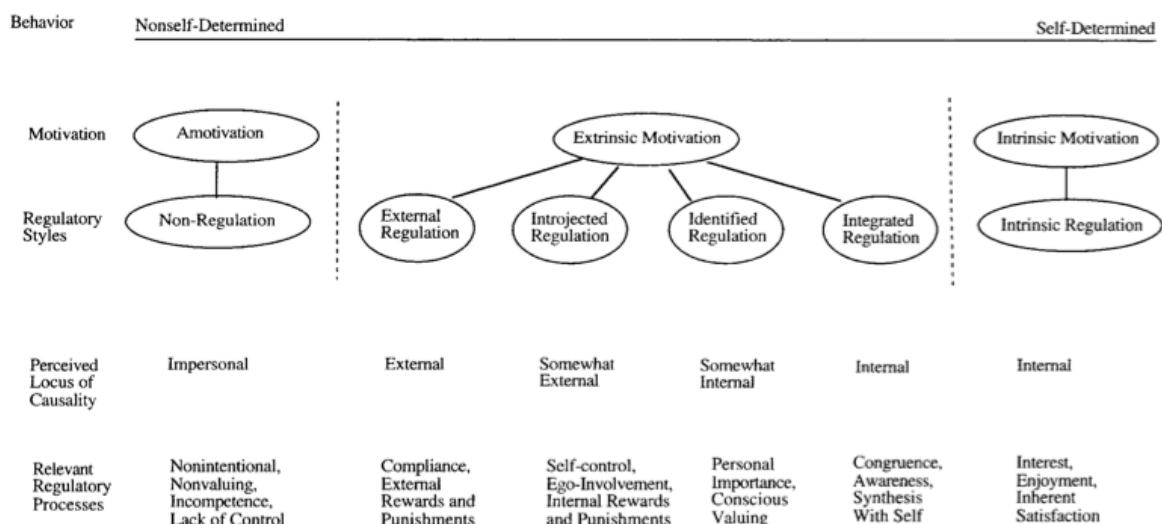


Figure 1: The organismic integration theory taxonomy of motivational types (Deci & Ryan, 2000)

## Method

Staff members from an independent therapeutic primary school in the UK were interviewed (*N* = 7) and their responses were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The interviewer was a colleague at the same workplace and is the main researcher of this project.

Invitation letters were distributed to all staff, and seven members who were most available and willing to do the interview were selected. Ethnicity, age, gender and job role were not a consideration for the research, although the participants were of a variety. None of the senior staff (management) were interviewed.

Semi-structured interviews were prepared by the main researcher, who carried them out inside the school premises in a private space. An audio recorder was used to record the conversation. Disclaimers were prepared with a thorough description of the research project. Each participant read these through and signed consent forms beforehand. Interviews happened on Friday afternoons, after school had finished for the weekend and children had left to go home. The main researcher held no more than two interviews each Friday; these lasted between 30 and 45 minutes each, and participants were given the opportunity to raise any concerns at the end of the interviews.

Ethics were considered; the disclaimer presented each participant with the right to withdraw their data if they so desired. Contact details of the project supervisor were also included should participants have any concerns or a need to withdraw their data after the interviews had taken place. Participants were also informed that the data would be kept on file at the University of East London until the student files are destroyed.

Data were transcribed by the main researcher who listened to the audio files whilst typing the words spoken, as well as noting any particularly relevant behaviours, for example:

**Interviewer: *What gets you out of bed every day?***

**Participant: *I can't say, can I say money? (laughs)***

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcribed interviews and to produce the final results in the form of an analytic narrative. This kind of analysis was devised by Braun and Clarke in 2006, they describe it as searching across a dataset – be that interviews or focus groups or texts – to find repeated patterns of meaning.

## Results

Data analysis generated five key themes and 13 sub-themes derived from the researcher's interpretation of motivation in relation to the research question (see Figure2)
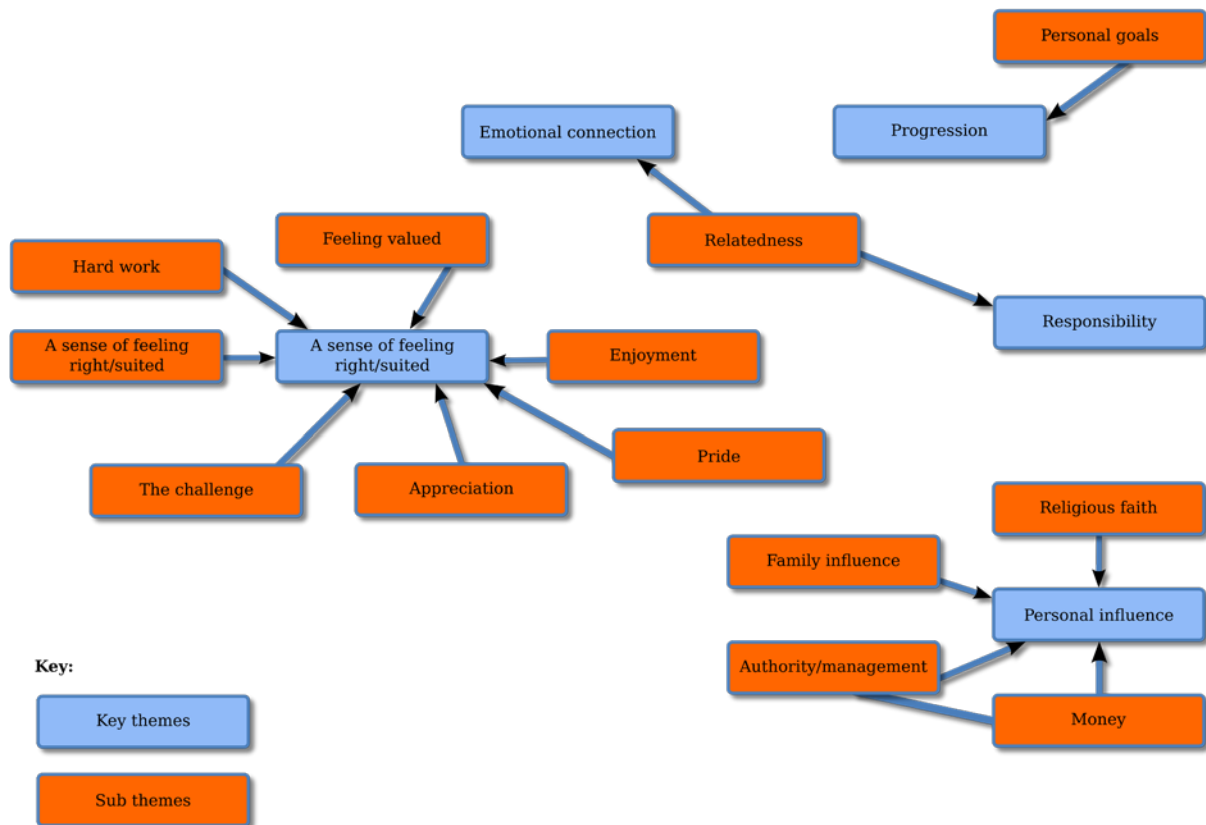


Figure 2: Overall thematic map
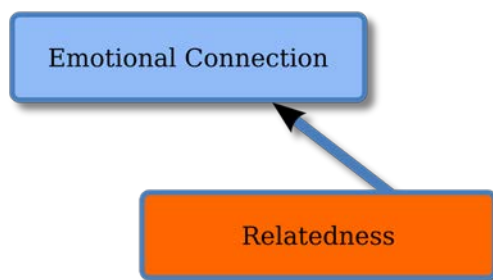
## Key theme: Emotional connection



Table 1: Initial codes for 'Emotional connection' (In order of prevalence)

| | Participant 1 | Participant 2 | Participant 3 | Participant 4 | Participant 5 | Participant 6 | Participant 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Team spirit | Relatedness | Emotional connection to the children | Relatedness | Personal experience/relatedness | Emotional connection | Relatedness |
| 2 | Relatedness to the children and personal experience | Team spirit | Relatedness | Feelings for the children | Team spirit | Relatedness/Personal Experience | Team spirit |
| 3 | Emotional connection | Fear for the children | | Family environment | Togetherness with the children | Team spirit | |
| 4 | | | | Mutually beneficial relationship with children | | | |

Emotional connection refers to aspects of human relationships that go beyond just the physical and become a deeper, more meaningful form of relationship. This theme was apparent and common in every interview, whether it was an emotional connection between staff and children or between staff as colleagues (team spirit).

See Table 1 for the codes that contributed towards the theme 'Emotional connection'.

Participant 6 speaks briefly of their emotional connection when the children fight:

*'Sometimes, when I see them fight I feel upset for them.'*

Participants also shared positive experiences of emotional connection; participant 3 talked specifically of how these moments can be a source of motivation: -

*'You get these moments where you know you might have had a hard week where you, you witness a small thing, kids sharing something, erm, or even a child asks you if you're alright, which makes your heart really kind of like swell up. It's those kind of things that kind of motivate me I think.'*
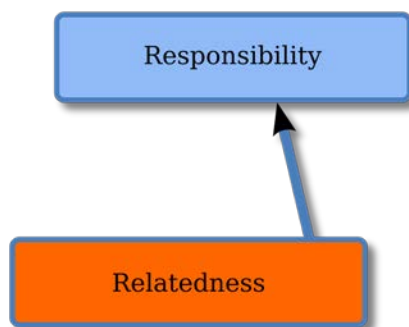
## Key theme: Responsibility



Table 2: Initial codes for 'Responsibility' (in order of prevalence)

|   | Participant 1 | Participant 2 | Participant 3 | Participant 4 | Participant 5 | Participant 6 | Participant 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Relatedness to the children and personal experience | Sense of responsibility/pressure | Sense of responsibility | Relatedness | Child-centred purpose and responsibility | Relatedness/personal experience | Relatedness/personal experience |
| 2 |   | Relatedness to the children | Relatedness to the children | Feels responsible | Personal experience/relatedness |   | Responsibility |
| 3 |   | Fear for the children |   |   |   |   |   |

As with 'Emotional connection', the key theme of 'Responsibility' also links with the sub-theme 'Relatedness'. The concept here being that those who can relate to considerably less fortunate others are likely to feel a sense of responsibility. This motivates them to work with the individual who may be experiencing a situation they can relate to.

A sense of responsibility was also shown in other ways; Participant 4 describes how they were affected by how a particular child would feel if they didn't turn up to work:

*'Well, to be honest what gets me out of bed every day is, I'm thinking, if I just decide I'm not going to go in, how is this child going to feel? He's going to miss me, he's going to feel like, oh my teacher, my teacher doesn't want to work with me.'*

Participant 2 speaks of the responsibility from knowing how important school life is to these particular children:

*'If you look at the kids' lives, it's divided into the home life and school life and school life is such a big part you could really you know there's so much responsibility there, that…you know, you could make that, you could make a big chunk of their life happy, you know you could make big part of their life happy, even if the other part is you know, not so happy…'*

Participant 2 goes on to emphasise how important responsibility is towards their personal motivation:

*'…I guess the responsibility is first to be honest, that's what motivates me.'*
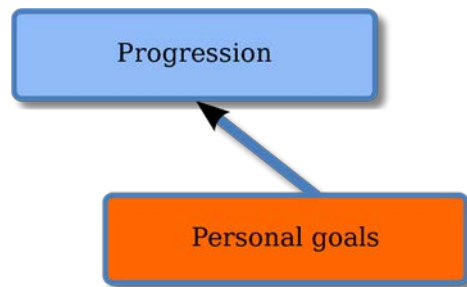
Key theme: Progression



Table 3: Initial codes for 'Progression' (in order of prevalence)

|  | Participant 1 | Participant 2 | Participant 3 | Participant 4 | Participant 5 | Participant 6 | Participant 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Drive to progress (for themselves) | | Driven by progress and sees light ahead | Children's progression | Children's progress | Goals to aim for | Children's learning/progression |
| 2 | Drive to progress (for the children) | | Motivated by personal learning | Driven by future career | Personal learning | Career drive/personal learning | Personal development |
| 3 | Education/learning for the children | | Career drive and a desire to teach | | Personal career goals | | |

Whether in relation to the children's progression or the participants own personal growth, there was often dialogue that suggested participants were driven by a sense of moving forward or getting somewhere (progression).

Participant 3 expresses:

*'But all the children are, you can see them progressing, and I think, I think, that, you have, you being a part of their development and having that really strong connection with them is definitely what keeps me going really… It is very rewarding to, to see people that you're behind, you're kind of really fighting for them in a way, and to see them making progress is, you know, it's an incredible thing really.'*
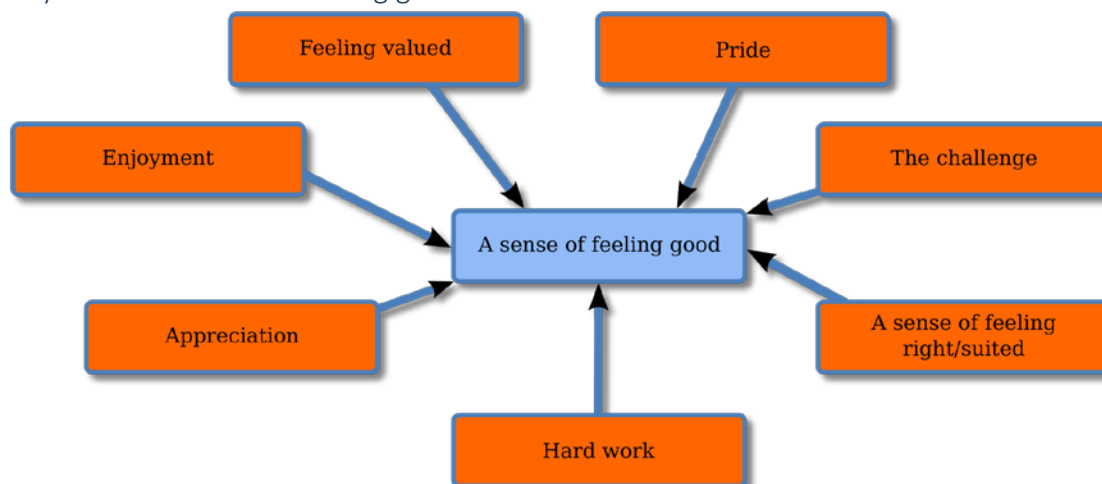
## Key theme: A sense of feeling good



Table 4: Initial codes for 'A sense of feeling good' (In order of prevalence)

| | Participant 1 | Participant 2 | Participant 3 | Participant 4 | Participant 5 | Participant 6 | Participant 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A sense of feeling good/right | Confident and feeling positive in role | Appreciation from the children | Personal insight of the children | Feels valued by the children | Likes children | Personal insight/view of children |
| 2 | Other job comparison | Challenging work | Need to feel "above the children" | Feels valued, needed and good at the job | Other job comparison | Needs routine | Comparison to other jobs |
| 3 | Appreciation from the children | Feels valued and finds value within | Alternative drive/focus outside of work | School as better alternative to children's home life | Enjoys the challenge | Feels valued by the children | Feels appreciated by the children |
| 4 | Challenging work | Other job comparison | Psychological awareness | | Excited by enjoyment with the children | Feels she treats the children better than others | Likes the children |
| 5 | | Sense of humour | Resilient through life experience | | Finds role rewarding | Better alternative to children's home life | Believes in his approach compared to others, e.g. parents |
| 6 | | Roots for the underdog | | | | Proud of job | Enjoys job/challenge |
| 7 | | | | | | Likes to work hard | |

Seven sub-themes collated to create the key theme of 'A sense of feeling good' (see Figure 6). This theme represents occasions when participants spoke of their general experience at the school and staff members would speak of areas in the job that generally gave them a good feeling, which they liked.

Participant 1 attributed the feeling to being a moral person:

*'It's just knowing that I'm doing something good, it's just knowing that like…I like to think that I'm quite a moral person'*
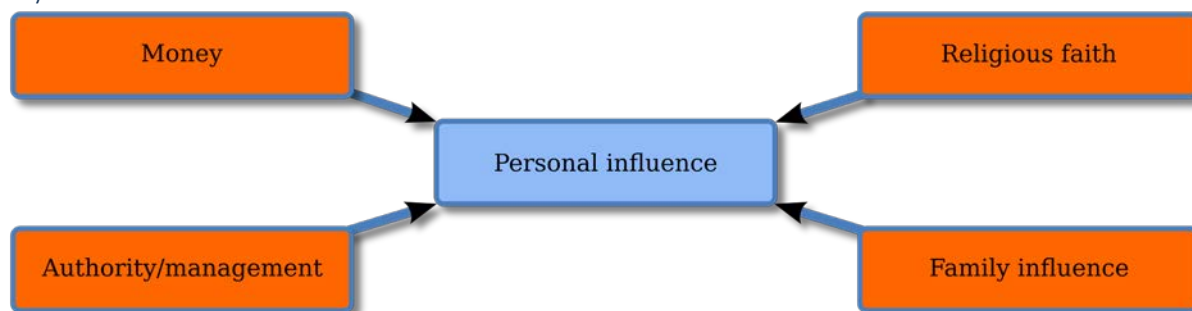
## Key theme: Personal influence



Table 5: Initial codes for 'Personal influence' (In order of prevalence)

| | Participant 1 | Participant 2 | Participant 3 | Participant 4 | Participant 5 | Participant 6 | Participant 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | Money as a factor | Influence by senior staff above | | Faith-driven | Money as motivation | Driven by leadership team |
| 2 | | | | | Family work ethic | | |

Personal influence was the least prevalent theme across the interviews and was the only key theme that wasn't mentioned by all participants. However, for Participant 5, it was the most prevalent code. Participant 5 spoke mostly of their motivation and drive to work at the school being mostly influenced by religious faith and principles. Others spoke of a family work ethic being a consideration, as well as the leadership team/management and money.

## Themes most relevant to the research question

During the thematic review process, three key themes and two sub-themes were identified as being most relevant to the research question (see **Table 6**).

Table 6: Themes most relevant to the research question

| **Key themes** |
|---|
| Emotional connection |
| A sense of feeling good |
| Responsibility |

| **Sub-themes** |
|---|
| Hard work |
| The challenge |

These themes are the researcher's answer to the research question as a whole, not only covering what motivates staff to work, or what motivates staff to work with children identified as having SEBD but ultimately in this instance what motivates staff to work at a therapeutic school for children identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. These aren't to dismiss alternative themes that have been identified but to focus on the specifics of the research question.

## Discussion

### Key theme: Emotional connection

Past research has shown that individuals who are in touch with their own emotions and have more patience and sensitivity towards others are likely to have better-quality emotional relationships. Katz et al. (1999) introduced a concept referred to as 'parental meta-emotion philosophy' an organised set of thoughts parents have about their own emotions and their approach to their children's emotions. Parents who have an emotion-coaching philosophy have better quality marriage and parent–child relationships. Whereas parents who are critical, disapproving and not empathic to their children's emotional experiences, and see emotion as a behaviour that needs to be controlled or got over have considerably more negative experiences with their children.

Although the above example is based on parenting, it is relevant here because the participants in this project are likely to hold the 'emotion-coaching philosophy'; for example, Participant 4:

*'You'll feel, you'll be very, you feel sad for them, you have a lot of empathy for them, a lot of sympathy for them as well because you kind of see, wow, you actually are struggling, and you actually are having to work hard to behave yourself because you don't know how else to behave so it is quite sad.'*

Therefore in the context of this school, the sense of an emotional connection may be unique to this environment, as the staff members are likely to hold an 'emotion-coaching philosophy' and this may well catalyse the emotional bond with colleagues and children. This is why this theme of 'Emotional connection' was considered to be one of the most relevant, because it is unique to the context provided by the question.

### Key theme: Responsibility

Responsibility was also considered to be a critical factor in Prather-Jones's (2011) study with teachers who work with children identified as having SEBD. Prather-Jones discovered that some of her participants felt committed out of a sense of duty to the world or a need to make a difference. She describes that these teachers believed being a 'good fit' or personally suited to a career in educating students with emotional and behavioural disorders was a critical factor in their decisions to remain in the profession, this would also associate with the code 'a sense of feeling suited/right' used in this study. In Prather-Jones's (2011) study, there was also a sense that others would not be 'cut out' for the work, which hints at a sense of responsibility from those who feel they are 'cut out' for it.

### Key theme: A sense of feeling good

Participants often expressed 'A sense of feeling good'; this theme was the umbrella theme for seven sub-themes; 'Feeling valued', 'Pride', 'The challenge', 'A sense of feeling right/suited', 'Hard work', 'Appreciation' and 'Enjoyment'. With reference to SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000) these are considered to be extrinsically motivated as they sit in the middle of the self-determination continuum (see Figure 1), with the exception of the sub-theme 'Enjoyment', which is a good example of intrinsic motivation as it is a natural, innate occurrence.

### Key theme: Progression

When speaking of progression, participants often referred to it as a feeling of getting somewhere, whether through their own progression or seeing the children progress, it was a good feeling. This refers to the mutually beneficial relationship that some participants spoke of having with the children, if the children progress, the staff progress and the same vice versa.

### Key theme: Personal influence

This theme highlights more individual differences than any other in the project. The other themes generally swept across the sample but this one is more focused on the individual. The notion of being driven by 'personal influences' applied to Participants 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 (see Table 5).

'Personal influence' sits in the extrinsic motivation area of the SDT continuum (see Figure 1), as it is externally influenced. With sub-themes 'Money' and 'Authority/management' applying to external regulation, which is described as behaviour performed because of external demand or possible reward (Deci & Ryan, 2000), in this case, financial rewards or demands from management. Whilst 'Religious faith' and 'Family influence' would sit further along the scale with introjected regulation, as they have been taken in from external sources but are somewhat internalised. Introjected regulation describes behaviours that are performed in order to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego enhancements such as pride (Deci & Ryan, 2000), in this instance family-based or religious pride.

### The influence of the interview questions

Upon reflection, it does seem possible that the interview questions and probes should be considered as potential factors that have guided the results. See Table 7 for the interview questions alongside the themes that each question may have prompted.

Table 7: Themes potentially prompted by questions

| Question | Theme potentially prompted |
|---|---|
| Tell me about your role at the school. | N/A |
| Talk to me about the challenges you face in your job. | The challenge |
| What in particular do you think you are working towards? | Progression |
| Why does this field of work suit you? | A sense of feeling right/suited |
| How do you relate to the children? | Relatedness |
| Tell me about motivation for you. | N/A |
| How do you know you are valued or appreciated in your role? | Feels valued |

Qualitative research needs a structure of some kind; in this instance, it was provided by 'semi-structured interview questions', which are naturally going to guide the results. What needs to be considered here is how influential the questions were to the answers. Interviews were carried out in a fairly relaxed manner, with the intention to make them open for discussion. Also, when coding the transcript, codes were only taken into account if they were clearly relevant to the research question. Therefore, it should be made clear that although participants were prompted to talk about certain pre-assumed themes (by the researcher), they had the freedom to state that certain aspects raised did or did not motivate them personally.

Being a fellow-colleague, the researcher had pre-existing views on personal motivation in this field of work, therefore it is evident and worth stating that themes prompted were based around these pre-existing views. The fact that there wasn't a clear money-related question is a good example of this, as the researcher is not particularly driven by money; therefore it is not a factor he/she wanted to explore. Should there have been a money-related question, it may have been a prevalent theme in the results. This is worth noting for future research.

## The researcher/interviewer
The researcher carried out the interviews whilst being a colleague of the participants; therefore it is possible that participants spoke with less descriptive intention but rather about personal experience in relation to whom they were speaking. It is also considered that they felt more at ease talking to someone they know and trust and someone who has a mutual interest and understanding.

A disadvantage of the pre-existing interviewer/participant relationship could be that the participant may have been speaking with the intention to impress or stay on a mutual understanding with the interviewer, being someone who they already know and have pre-conceptions of.

## The interview schedule
The timing of the interviews is something that should be considered. The time available for the interviews to take place was once a week on Friday afternoons after the children had left the school for the weekend. This was the only time when there was a private room available to use and the staff (participants) had some time to give for the interview. It is worth considering that attitudes towards motivation may have been affected by the fact that it was the end of the week. This is appropriate to mention, as it is a factor that applies to the whole sample.

In support of interviews being held on a Friday, participants were more likely to be willing to talk in an explorative way, whilst they had the time and headspace to do so with the weekend ahead and no planning to do for the following day.

## Sticking to the question
It was made a priority to stick to the specifics of the research question, which is, why at the end of the results, an overall 'most relevant' answer was formed (see Table 8).

Table 8: The overall answer to the question 'Motivation of staff: What motivates staff to work at a therapeutic school for children identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties?

|  | Included in the overall answer | Not included in the overall answer (but still relevant) |
|---|---|---|
| **Key themes** | Emotional connection<br>A sense of feeling good<br>Responsibility | Progression<br>Personal influence |
| **Sub-themes** | Hard-work<br>The challenge | A sense of feeling right/suited<br>Religious faith<br>Pride<br>Enjoyment<br>Family influence<br>Feeling valued<br>Appreciation<br>Relatedness<br>Personal goals<br>Authority/management<br>Money |

The key themes and sub-themes in Table 8 were divided considering the specifics of the question, these being:

Motivation of staff

to work with children identified as having SEBD

at a therapeutic school.

Generally, the overall answer was formed considering the specifics above and taking into account what themes were most relevant.

Brief descriptions of why the overall answer was formed are provided in Table 9.

Table 9: Reasons for arriving at the overall answer

| Theme | Relevance to question |
|---|---|
| **Emotional connection** | Due to the uniqueness of the relationships formed in such an emotionally driven environment, this stands out as a factor unique to this workplace. |
| **A sense of feeling good** | Staff generally described 'A sense of feeling good', no matter how hard or challenging the work was, they felt good about their work, and that is a clear factor for motivation at this particular school. |
| **Responsibility** | This theme also applies to other fields of work; however, it is responsibility often felt through relatedness with the children that makes it so relevant to this setting. |
| **Hard work and The challenge** | Applying to the specifics of working with children identified as having SEBD at a therapeutic school; it was said to be hard work and challenging to work at this school. In the results, interestingly, these themes were seen to be prevalent factors for motivation. |

The themes that weren't included in the overall answer remain relevant to the question; however, the themes that were selected as most relevant were selected in relation to what is unique about motivation to work at this type of school with these particular children.

## Respecting individual differences

This study is particular to its context, for these individuals at this workplace; therefore, whilst the process was aiming to create one thematic narrative, individual differences were respected. To do this the researcher created a table (see Appendix A) that split the participants responses into key themes and how prevalent they were in the interviews. Themes were sorted in order of prevalence for each participant. This helped the interviewer to address themes that applied to individuals as well as themes that represented a wider range of participants from within the sample. This is important with such a small sample size (e.g. acknowledging that although religion was a prominent theme it came from one participant and therefore did not represent the whole sample, whereas other themes, such as team spirit or emotional connection, did).

## Future steps

An explorative step that hasn't been mentioned thus far would be to carry out a comparison study with staff that the interviewer isn't associated with at an alternative school of the same nature.

Furthermore, it might be possible to clarify results from this sample of seven participants –the school in question has a further five employees, who could be interviewed in a separate study to see if the same themes develop. This would provide a healthy comparison study as various limitations could be accounted for (e.g. different questions could be asked in an attempt to reveal how much of an influence they have on results).

## Summary and concluding remarks

This project provides a detailed and rich account of experiences of a sample of staff working at a therapeutic school for children identified as having SEBD. A real focus and interest towards staff motivation was applied. It explores human nature and reveals some inner truths with regards to why people are motivated to work at this school, with children identified as having SEBD.

The theme 'A sense of feeling good' sums up an underlying feeling, which seems to keep the staff going through their working days and remain in the job, even when the going gets tough. The results also highlight how these individuals use a sense of responsibility to stay motivated i.e. through relatedness to children. This source of motivation is not necessarily fully conscious to them in the moments they are working with the child but can become clear after. Participants from the sample seem to thrive from a sense of emotional connection with others and on an individual level; personal influences affected some participant's motivations much more than others.

Since carrying out this study, what struck me, as the researcher was how engaged participants were with the interview process, it seemed to be a sense of relief for them to have an opportunity to think about what motivates them and share with someone who can relate. It was almost as if they responded by saying to themselves, 'Why do I do this job? I want to know too.'

Ultimately, I think the motivation stems from a feeling rather than a conscious thought process, and it was that feeling which I wanted to explore.

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## References

# Appendix A: Table of prominent themes per participant

Codes in order of prominence: 1 being the most prominent code for that participant

Key Themes: Sense of feeling good  Emotional connection  Progression  Personal influence  Responsibility

| Participant 1 | Participant 2 | Participant 3 | Participant 4 | Participant 5 | Participant 6 | Participant 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Sense of feeling good/right | 1. Confident and positive feeling in role | 1. Emotional connection to children | 1. Children's progression | 1. Faith-driven | 1. Emotional connection | 1. Relatedness and personal experience |
| 2. Team spirit | 2. Sense of responsibility/pressure | 1. Sense of responsibility | 2. Personal insight of the children | 2. Child-centred purpose and responsibility | 2. Relatedness and personal experience | 2. Children's learning/progression |
| 3. Relatedness to the children and personal experience | 3. Challenging work | 2. Relatedness to the children | 2. Driven by future career | 3. Personal experience and relatedness | 3. Likes children | 3. Team spirit |
| 4. Emotional connection | 3. Feels valued and finds value within | 3. Appreciation from the children | 2. Relatedness | 4. Feels valued by the children | 4. Goals to aim for | 4. Personal insight/view of children |
| 5. Drive to progress (for themselves) | 3. Relatedness to the children | 3. Driven by progress and sees light ahead | 3. Feelings for the children | 4. Team spirit | 4. Needs routine | 5. Comparison to other jobs |
| 5. Drive to progress (for the children) | 4. Other job comparison | 3. Influenced by senior staff above | 3. Feels valued, needed and good at the job | 4. Togetherness with the children | 4. Team spirit | 5. Responsibility |
| 6. Other job comparison (better than other jobs) | 4. Team spirit | 3. Need to feel "above the children" | 3. Feels responsible | 5. Children's progress | 5. Money as motivation | 6. Feels appreciated by the children |

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| 6. Education/learning for children | 4. Fear for / the children | 4. Motivated by personal learning | 4. School as better alternative to children's home life | 5. Other job comparison | 5. Feels valued by the children | 6. Likes the children |
| 7. Appreciation from the children | 5. Sense of humour | 5. Alternative drive/focus outside of work | 5. Family environment | 5. Personal learning | 5. Career drive/personal learning | 7. Believes in his approach compared to others, e.g. parents |
| 8. Challenging work | 6. Roots for the underdog | 5. Career drive and desire to teach | 5. Mutually beneficial relationship with children | 6. Enjoys the challenge | 5. Feels she treats the children better than others | 7. Enjoys job/challenge |
| | 6. Money as a factor | 6. Psychological awareness | | 6. Excited by enjoyment with the children | 6. Better alternative children's home | 7. Personal development |
| | | 6. Resilient through life experience | | 6. Family work ethic | 6. Parental influence | 8. Driven by leadership team |
| | | | | 6. Finds role rewarding | 6. Proud of job | |
| | | | | 6. Personal career goals | 6. Likes to work hard | |

Note: Sub-theme: 'Relatedness' links to two key themes: Emotional connection and Responsibility so relevant codes appear like this –